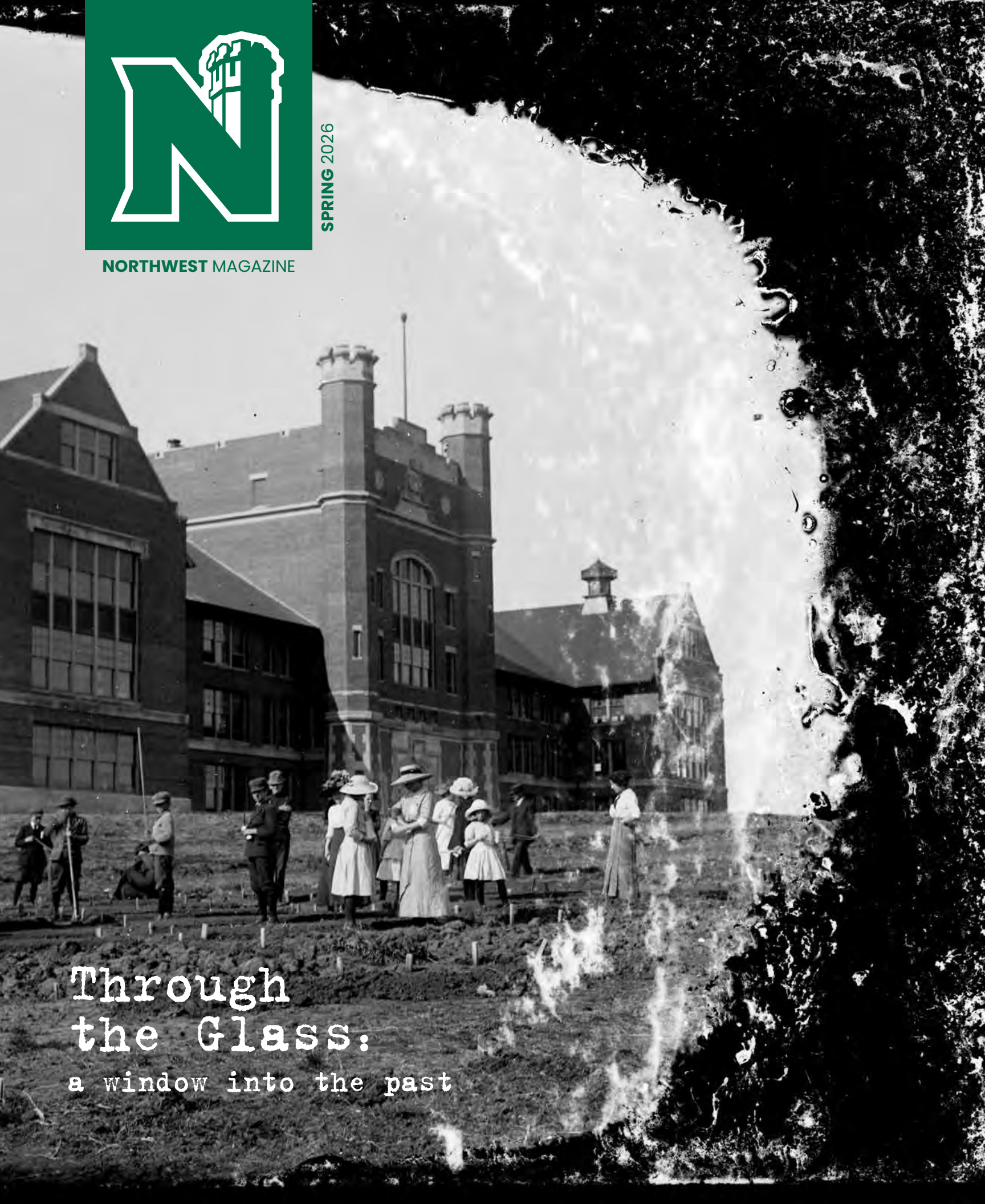




SPRING 2026

NORTHWEST MAGAZINE



Through
the Glass:
a window into the past

CONTENTS

NORTHWEST MAGAZINE

Vol. 59 | Issue 2 2026

IN EVERY ISSUE

Northwest News	/ 06
Alumni Connections	/ 20
Bearcat Sports	/ 28
Class Notes	/ 34
Memoriam	/ 39



Dr. Harmon Mothershead reflects on his long association with Northwest and interest in history.

NORTHWEST NEWS

Leadership changes	/ 06
Governor's Award goes to Tish Warner	/ 06
Agriculture students earn national recognitions	/ 07
Jason Offut pens his 20th book	/ 07
Administration Building closed until further notice	/ 08
Hubbard Hearth celebrates legacy, relationships	/ 09
Northwest bid farewell to 6 retiring faculty	/ 09

ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

Alumni Award recipients discuss their Northwest experiences and career lessons	/ 20
'Powering Dreams' celebrates students, donor generosity	/ 22
New scholarships support students in criminology, education, geology, business	/ 24



THROUGH THE GLASS: A WINDOW INTO THE PAST

In 1995, Mary Sullivan uncovered an expansive collection of glass plate negatives that are now more than 100 years old. It wasn't until a couple of years ago that she realized their connection to Northwest and chose to donate them, giving the University priceless documentation of its early history.

FEATURED

Donation helps student build skills in archival work	/ 18
Peek at other items in Northwest Archives and Special Collections	/ 19



Mark Rosewell achieves more milestones

BEARCAT SPORTS

- Highlight reel / 28
- Q&A with Austin Meyer / 30
- Bearcat Steppers are champions again / 32



KXCV veterans joining broadcasting hall of fame

CLASS NOTES

- Meet Northwest's Family of the Year / 36
- Jim Davis is bringing people together, one cup of coffee at a time / 37
- McCollum shines in first year at University of Iowa / 38



TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Scan the QR code to send us your feedback on this issue of the Northwest Magazine and offer ways we can improve future issues.



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The mission of *Northwest Magazine* is to foster connections among the Northwest Missouri State University community – including its students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends. The magazine strives to inform readers of Northwest achievements and the people who positively position the University in the hearts of its stakeholders.


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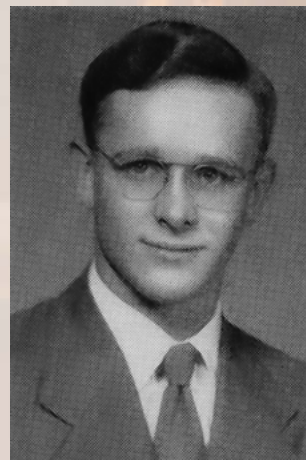
STARTING POINT

Aside from the time he spent serving overseas in the Army during the Korean War and 10 years of teaching at a high school in Colorado, Dr. Harmon Mothershead '53 has lived the majority of his life in northwest Missouri.

With a special interest in the history of the American West, Mothershead returned to Maryville and joined the Northwest faculty in 1965. He taught American history and social studies courses – in addition to serving 15 years as a department chair – before his retirement as a professor of history in 1996 concluded 40 years of teaching.

His association with the institution began when it was still known as Northwest Missouri State Teacher's College, and it had spanned four presidents when he retired. Reaching the age of 95 in June, he also has the distinction of being Northwest's oldest living retiree.

To open this issue of *Northwest Magazine*, we sat with him in his Maryville home of 55 years to ask about his memories of living in the region and the value of studying history. His answers have been edited for length and clarity.



1952 Tower yearbook.

WHAT IS YOUR EARLIEST MEMORY OF GROWING UP IN NORTHWEST MISSOURI?

Christmas 1936. Dad worked where the college farm is now; that was Hartness Dairy. There was a little house just north of Gray's Truck Stop, where that field is now. That's where we lived, and I can remember Christmas that year. It was right in the middle of the Depression. We didn't give anybody gifts.

WHAT SPARKED YOUR LOVE FOR HISTORY?

I went to one-room country schools for the first eight years – four different ones – and one of them had a really good selection of classical literature. "The Death of King Arthur," "The Man in the Iron Mask," "The Three Musketeers," some Shakespeare. I suppose somebody had to get rid of their stuff and move on during the Depression, and they gave it to the school. But I enjoyed it, and that was my first introduction to that sort of thing. I always enjoyed reading.

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER MOST ABOUT YOUR UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE AT NORTHWEST?

I was not familiar with Northwest, even though I only lived 12 miles north. I drove down to the Administration Building and wandered around. I don't know who pointed me in what direction, but

I got enrolled that day and took classes. There were no men's dorms. There really wasn't a place to take a break. There was a little room in the Administration Building, where you could get a Coke or a cup of coffee, maybe a cup of soup. I spent my free time in the library because I didn't want to drive back home and then come back for another class. So to me, Wells Library was my home, and it still is. I can't visualize Wells Library as what it is today.

WHAT ABOUT MAKING YOUR HOME IN MARYVILLE HAS GIVEN YOU SATISFACTION?

I walked to work every day, and I could walk home for lunch if I wanted to. Since I came here in '49 as a freshman – and I had 12 years out in the Army and in Lakewood, Colorado – it's been pretty much home. After we moved into this house, there was a poker group in town. Leon Miller, Chuck Thate; one was dean of the graduate faculty, and one was vice president of the University. My chairman, John Harr. President Foster showed up one night. He just walked over and walked in, and it was that way.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE SECRET TO LONGEVITY?

Staying active, and I have a mantra: All things in moderation. Drink, but don't drink too much or too often. Don't overdo things, but always do something. Always have a project, a plan, a worthwhile project.



Leadership changes



Baker departs for presidency

Dr. Matt Baker, who served Northwest in multiple roles during the last 30-plus years, assumed a new role in March as the president of Emporia State University in Kansas.

Baker advanced to vice president of student affairs at Northwest in 2011, overseeing co-curricular activities as well as dining services and residential life. He joined the Northwest staff in 1993 for three years as a residence hall director and returned in 1998. Additionally, his wife, Jill Wood Baker '97, '01, has been a member of the Northwest faculty since 2003, teaching in the School of Education.



Ward assumes provost role

Dr. Rose Marie Ward joined Northwest in February as its next provost and vice president of academic affairs, taking leadership of undergraduate and graduate instruction as well as areas that include enrollment management and academic support services.

She had served the University of Cincinnati since 2022 in roles that included vice provost of graduate education, dean of the Graduate College and professor of psychology. Before that, she was employed for 20 years at Miami University in Ohio in administrative and faculty roles.



Hooyman retires

Dr. Jamie Hooyman retired in December after eight years in the provost role at Northwest. She joined the University in 2016 as vice provost and was appointed its first female provost in 2017.

As the University's chief academic officer, she oversaw the successful launch and retooling of several degree programs, including the relaunch of the University's RN-to-BSN program in 2018, followed by the launch of a Master of Science in Nursing program in 2020, both of which have earned accreditation and national recognition.



Warner is 2026 Governor's Award Recipient

Tish Risser Warner '94, '05, a senior instructor of chemistry, is Northwest's Governor's Award for Excellence in Education recipient, earning the honor presented annually to an outstanding faculty member at each of Missouri's four-year public institutions.

Warner, who joined the Northwest faculty in 2013, teaches courses related to physical science and chemistry. Her student evaluation scores consistently rank among the highest in her discipline, while students praise her helpfulness, patience and ability to explain difficult concepts.

THROUGH THE YEARS: LOOK BACK AT NORTHWEST HISTORY

100 YEARS AGO

Jan. 9, 1926: The gymnasium, known today as Martindale Hall, was dedicated with a basketball game between the Bearcats and the Kansas City Athletic Club. The Bearcats lost 32-18.

50 YEARS AGO

March 27, 1976: The agriculture department's judging teams captured the sweepstakes trophy at the National Association of College Teachers of Agriculture judging contest in Texas.

25 YEARS AGO

July 5, 2001: Sen. Jean Carnahan and more than 100 members of the Northwest community gathered to dedicate the Mel Carnahan Reading Room in the J.W. Jones Student Union, less than a year after Gov. Mel Carnahan died in a plane crash.

Ag students earn national recognitions

Two Northwest agricultural education majors claimed national awards in recent months for their work to grow interest in their professions.

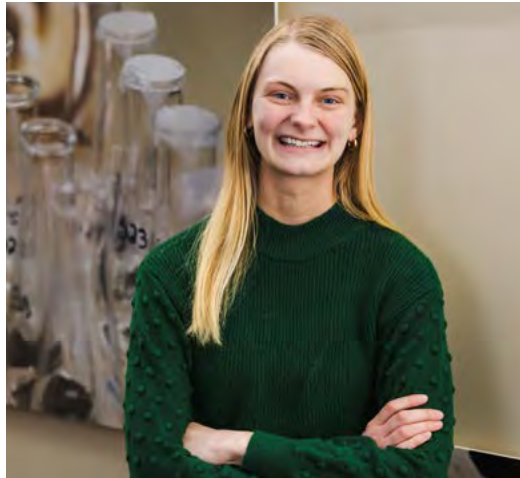
Lynn Dyer, a junior from Higginsville, Missouri, was named the National FFA Agricultural Education Proficiency Award winner, which recognizes FFA members who are exploring and becoming established in agricultural career pathways.

School of Agricultural Sciences faculty offered encouragement and helped Dyer prepare for the national award interview process. She also says the skills she builds through her coursework helped her preparation.

“I really love the School of Ag specifically, and how it kind of has this community feeling,” Dyer said. “All my peers, professors, everyone is here for each other. I can go to anyone anytime I need anything or have a question. I love how hands-on everything is as well. I feel like I’ve gained actual skills that I’m going to use in my career from my classes.”

Kaitlyn Ballard received the top scholarship prize in the Animal Agriculture Alliance’s College Aggies Online contest, which connects college students, industry experts and social media-savvy farmers to engage online about current and emerging issues facing the animal agriculture community.

Throughout the competition, students learn how to spread positive, factual information about agriculture and share personal stories while actively developing their communication skills. Through Northwest’s agricultural advocacy course, Ballard, a senior from Marengo, Iowa, created captivating videos and infographics to spread awareness



Lynn Dyer



Kaitlyn Ballard

of agricultural practices.

“It helped me be mindful about things that I’m sharing with others, making sure that I’m sharing factual information,” Ballard said. “Your story of agriculture could be the only one that someone hears, and it’s important that you shine a positive light on it.”

Fall enrollment tops 8,500 students for fourth consecutive year

8,747

TOTAL STUDENTS

5,279

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

3,468

GRADUATE STUDENTS

51

COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

50

STATES REPRESENTED



Offutt continues ‘chasing monsters’ with publication of 20th book

Jason Offutt, a senior instructor of mass media, celebrated the publication of his 20th book last fall. “Chasing North American Monsters” is a compendium featuring monsters and folklore creatures stretching from Greenland and the Arctic Circle down to Panama. The book is the second in his “Chasing Monsters” series with a third book in the series scheduled to be published later this year.

His lighthearted, informative, easy-to-read writing style has led to numerous awards. He won the Independent Book Publishers Association’s best horror novel in 2022 and best audio horror novel in 2023.

Closed until further notice

Northwest's historic Administration Building was closed in December, and all of the offices within it were moved to other campus locations while the institution progresses on its infrastructure modernization project.

Completed in 1910, the Administration Building stood as the campus's sole academic building until the completion of Colden Hall in 1959. In 2010, the building was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The building survived tornado damage in 1919, but a devastating fire in 1979 destroyed 60 percent of the original structure, including its north wing

auditorium. Reconstruction in the wake of the fire placed offices throughout the campus and kept the building from being fully occupied for more than two years.

Administration Building offices also were relocated temporarily for approximately two weeks in May 1992 while the building was closed for bat abatement and cleaning.

Northwest's campuswide infrastructure modernization project began in 2024 and is entering its third and final phase this summer. The University's revitalized utility systems will deliver more reliable, sustainable and cost-effective services to campus facilities.

Northwest Missouri
State University

A COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY,
AND INCLUSION. WE PREPARE
STUDENTS TO LIVE AND WORK IN A
DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT.
AS AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION,
WE ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO REACH
OTHER IN A CIVIL
MANNER WHERE ALL VOICES ARE HEARD,
AND VALUED.



The Hubbard Hearth and Fireplace was completed last fall as an extension to the patio of the historic Thomas Gaunt House, the residence for Northwest presidents, and stands as a symbol of the desire of former president Dr. Dean L. Hubbard and former first lady Aleta Hubbard to nurture relationships, often near a fire.

Hubbard Hearth dedicated to legacy of building relationships

The Northwest community gathered last fall to dedicate an addition to its presidential residence that will nurture relationships and connections for generations to come.

The Hubbard Hearth and Fireplace is an extension to the north patio of the historic Thomas Gaunt House that, with its limestone dressing, matches the home's brick exterior as well as the architecture of other campus buildings. The project was made possible with funding provided through a multi-year gift from the Hubbard family after Dr. Dean L. Hubbard, Northwest's president from 1984 to 2009, died last year.

"It was within the context of relationship-building activities that my parents told the Northwest story," Dr. Melody Messner, a daughter of Dean and Aleta Hubbard, said during remarks at the dedication ceremony. "They invited support for the challenges that Northwest faced. They explained the Northwest mission, and they helped connect the dots between the strategic goals and initiatives, thereby continuing to move the Northwest agenda forward."

Dr. Tom Vansaghi '91 recalled not only President Hubbard's pursuit of excellence but the mentorship he provided to individuals who had the privilege of knowing and working alongside him.

After working as a member of then-Gov. Mel Carnahan's staff in Jefferson City, Vansaghi returned to Northwest from 1999 to 2004 and served as an assistant to Hubbard. Today, he is employed at the University of Missouri-Kansas City as managing director of its Midwest Center for Nonprofit Leadership.

"Dean taught me that leadership was not about titles or accolades," Vansaghi said. "It's about lighting fires in others and helping them burn brightly with purpose, compassion and hope. So the Hubbard Hearth and Fireplace will forever stand as a symbol of that light – a place where future generations will gather, learn, dream and grow. It will remind us that we were all called to mentor, to lift, to nurture and to ignite the potential in those around us."

6 faculty members announce retirements

Northwest bid farewell this spring to six faculty members who have dedicated a combined 109 years of service to the University.

DR. DEBBIE BROWN

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF MUSIC
School of Fine and Performing Arts

NINE YEARS OF SERVICE

DR. RICHARD FIELD

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

33 YEARS OF SERVICE

DR. DAN GORDON

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

School of Education

15 YEARS OF SERVICE

DR. DAVID KIENE

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

School of Education

13 YEARS OF SERVICE

DR. GREGORY RICH

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

School of Education

13 YEARS OF SERVICE

KENTON WILCOX

SENIOR INSTRUCTOR OF ENGLISH

School of Language, Literature and Writing

26 YEARS OF SERVICE



Through the Glass:
a window into the past



Until a couple years ago, the existence or whereabouts of Northwest Missouri State University hadn't crossed Mary Sullivan's mind. She knows it now as the result of a serendipitous discovery she made three decades ago.

In 1995, while salvaging wood from a crumbling barn in Iowa, she discovered several wood crates filled with glass plate negatives – a discovery that launched a 30-year odyssey and led to her donating the collection to Northwest last year.

“Save these,” she remembered thinking. “These can't be allowed to just sit here and rot away.”

What she eventually discovered within the negatives were photos depicting the life of John E. Cameron, a teacher of agriculture and natural sciences, and the time he spent as a member of Northwest's faculty from 1910 to 1915, when the college was still in its infancy.

Although environmental conditions and the passage of time degraded the photographic emulsion on the plates – making them appear as if someone spilled a jar of ink on them – the photos captured by Cameron more than a century ago reveal new perspectives and long-gone views of the campus, its students and classrooms. The collection also includes images Cameron captured of bird species and crops, in addition to landscapes from Kansas City to Yellowstone National Park.

Under the supervision of Jessica Schmidt Vest '07, the head of archives and special collections at Northwest, a team of student interns is working diligently to preserve and digitize the collection of glass plate negatives, which totals more than 500 photos.

Some of the most notable images Cameron captured at Northwest are presented on the following pages.

There is so much more to see and share from this wondrous donation to Northwest.

Scan the QR code to read more about the collection, see additional photos and watch a mini-documentary about how the images are being preserved.



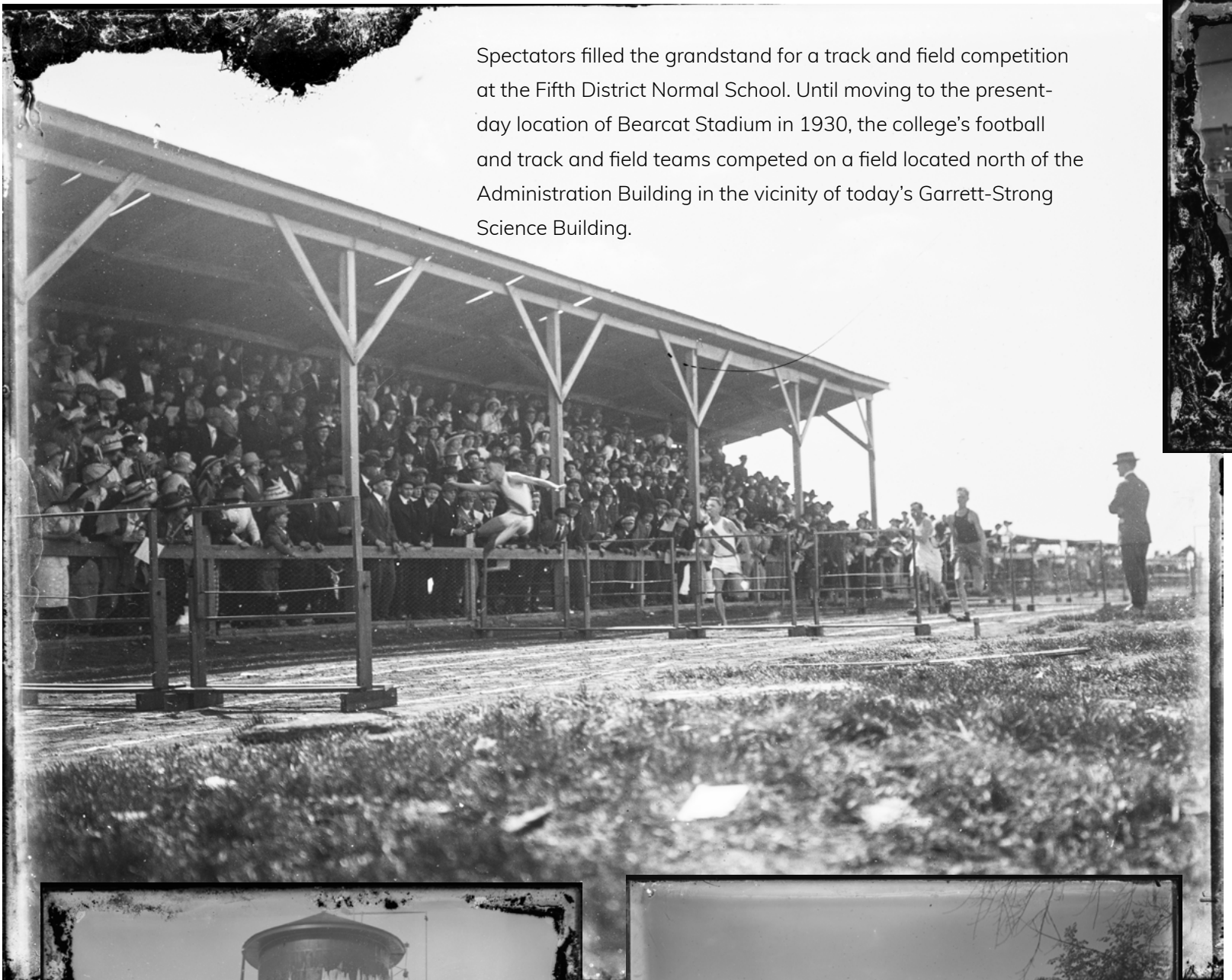


“Save these. These can’t be allowed to
just sit here and rot away.”

Mary Sullivan

With paper tablets in hand, a group of students appears to be inspecting horses in front of the Administration Building. Completed in 1910 and known then as Academic Hall, the building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2010 and remains an iconic symbol of the college’s strength.

Spectators filled the grandstand for a track and field competition at the Fifth District Normal School. Until moving to the present-day location of Bearcat Stadium in 1930, the college's football and track and field teams competed on a field located north of the Administration Building in the vicinity of today's Garrett-Strong Science Building.



A water tower tank in Maryville is covered by icicles in this winter scene with the Administration Building and the campus's power plant in the background. A set of railroad tracks that ran behind the Administration Building for decades is visible to the right of the water tower.



John Cameron captured this photograph of the Administration Building and the campus grounds during winter, circa 1912.



This photo appears to show lab equipment in an Administration Building classroom. Although John Cameron was hired by the Fifth District Normal School in 1910 to teach agriculture, he also was considered an expert in physics, botany and zoology. Cameron departed Northwest in 1915, but science classes stayed in the Administration Building until the Garrett-Strong Science Building was completed in 1968.



Students study ears of corn inside an Administration Building classroom. Until Colden Hall opened in 1959, the Administration Building housed virtually all of the college's academic programs.



Above, a great horned owl sits on a fence post. John Cameron's collection of glass plate negatives included numerous images of wildlife that he likely used to supplement his teaching and presentations.

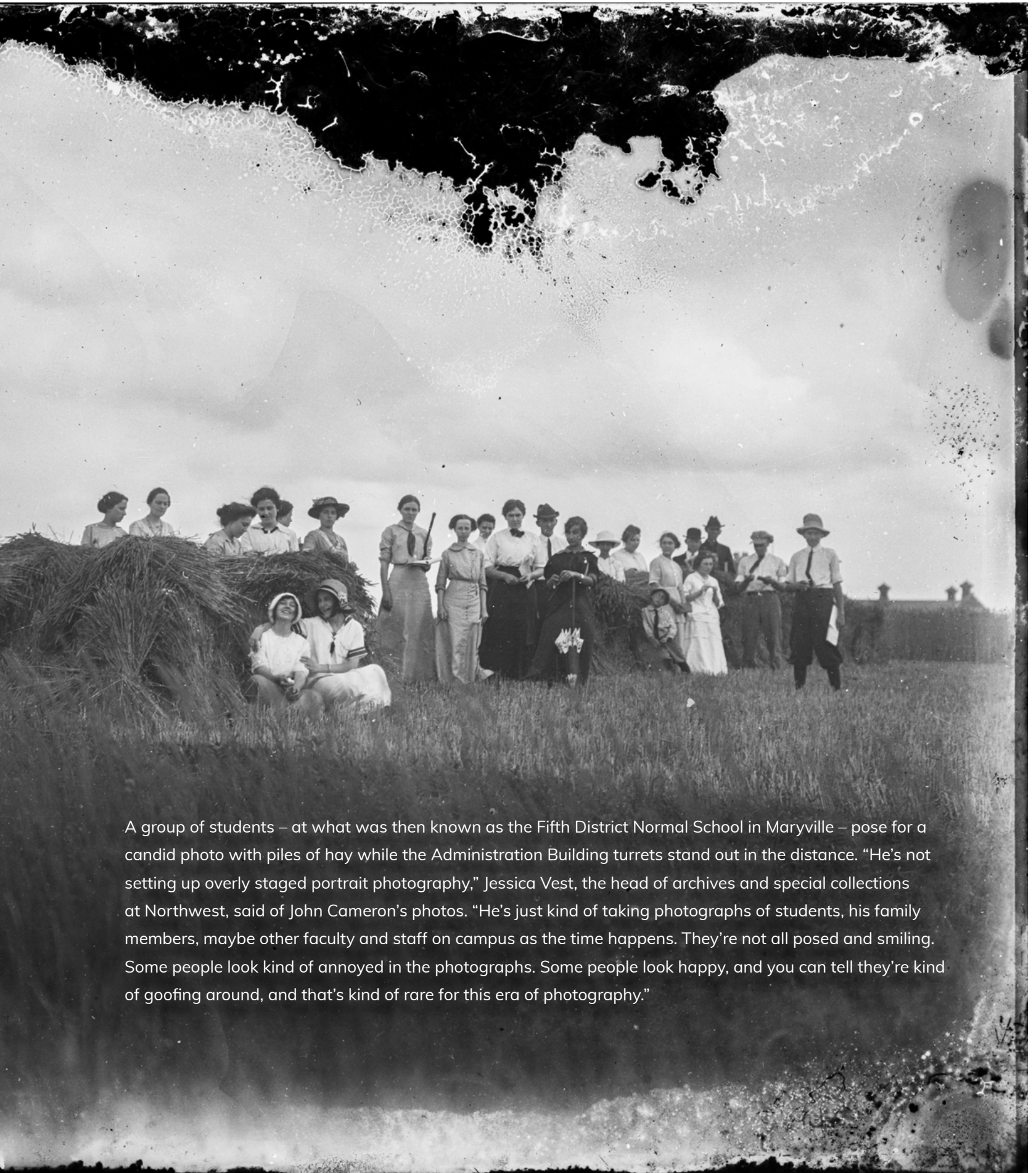
At left, a line of blossoming trees borders a fence and railroad tracks in the foreground of this photo, as the Administration Building and the campus's original power plant are visible in the distance. Roberta Hall, the college's first residence hall, wouldn't occupy this view until 1922, and Wells Hall, then a library, was completed in 1938.

In the top photo, four men study in a field far behind the Administration Building. In the lower photo, two men tend a field with corn stalks. Both photos show the Administration Building's north wing, which was destroyed by fire in 1979, and the campus's original athletic field. "From the photographs, it always kind of struck me how the building was intended to have this showy impression but also with it just standing alone out in the middle of empty fields," said Mary Sullivan, who salvaged John Cameron's photos in a barn and donated them to Northwest.



Fifth District Normal School students inspect a dairy cow. As a member of the faculty at the college, John Cameron expanded the institution's agriculture science program and regularly involved students in hands-on learning projects.





A group of students – at what was then known as the Fifth District Normal School in Maryville – pose for a candid photo with piles of hay while the Administration Building turrets stand out in the distance. “He’s not setting up overly staged portrait photography,” Jessica Vest, the head of archives and special collections at Northwest, said of John Cameron’s photos. “He’s just kind of taking photographs of students, his family members, maybe other faculty and staff on campus as the time happens. They’re not all posed and smiling. Some people look kind of annoyed in the photographs. Some people look happy, and you can tell they’re kind of goofing around, and that’s kind of rare for this era of photography.”



Eye-opening experience

Donation helps student build skills in archival work

Nora Crowley has taken an interest in history for much of her life and – with an eye on the profession-based opportunities Northwest offers – opted to pursue her bachelor’s degree at the University as a history major with a minor in public history and museum studies.

In just three years, the junior from Kansas City, Missouri, has gained experience volunteering at the National World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City and as an intern at the Andrew County Museum in Savannah, Missouri. She also has helped organize exhibits at the Nodaway County Historical Society Museum and contributed history columns to the Maryville Forum newspaper.

Yet, her work as a student employee with Northwest Archives and Special Collections has given her experience like no other. After Mary Sullivan delivered a collection of glass negatives to the campus last year, Crowley was tasked with the delicate responsibility of cleaning the hundreds of glass slides and then scanning, documenting and processing them for safekeeping at Northwest and for future public access through an online database.

“It’s been super eye-opening and very cool to get this hands-on experience with a medium that’s very unique and

a medium that I personally hadn’t really dealt with before,” Crowley said. “It’s also just been a really neat process to look at these images and see photos of campus that are over a hundred years old. I feel like every day, I see something new or something cool – that’s been really exciting to work with.”

Similar to Sullivan’s exploration of the slides since she salvaged them decades ago, Crowley has had the fortunate experience of being among the first people to view the images as she scans each one to a computer.

“A lot of the photos are very interesting and something that I think everyone could find to be neat or cool,” Crowley said. “I think that it’s also just an important thing to recognize the importance of understanding your own history and also understanding the history of the places that you are at. These photos are just incredibly valuable in preserving Northwest history.”

After completing her bachelor’s degree at Northwest, Crowley wants to attend graduate school and pursue a master’s degree in museum studies. She hopes to have a career as a museum curator with a particular interest in contemporary history.

“To have an experience like this and to still be an undergrad and still being early into my academic career is incredibly special,” she said. “This will definitely be a key point that I’ll point out to future employers, or when I’m looking for more internships.”



More gems in Northwest's archives, collections

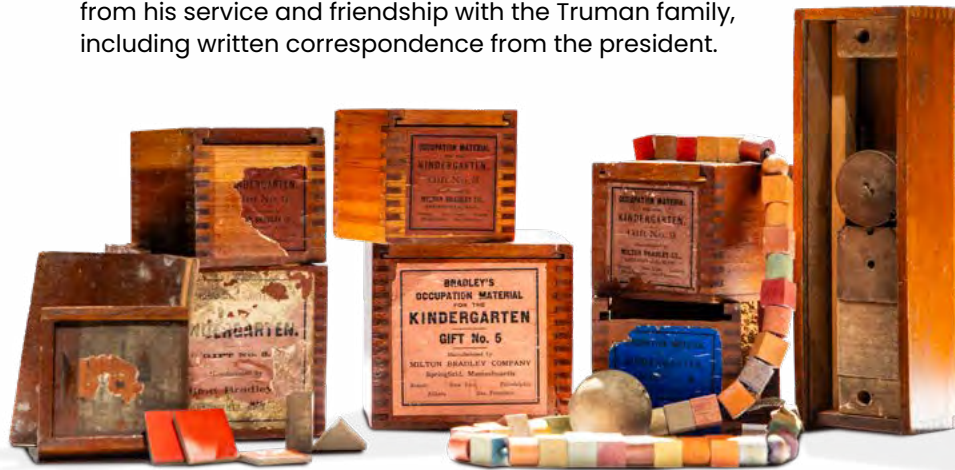
The glass negatives produced by John Cameron and donated to Northwest by Mary Sullivan are an extraordinary addition to the University's Archives and Special Collections – but its holdings contain so much more. It fosters the institutional memory of Northwest by acquiring and preserving materials that document the history of the campus, its programs and people who have helped shape them. Here are six other unique items housed at Northwest.

1 1960s-era Bobby Bearcat mascot head. The art department crafted the fiberglass head for the first mascot costume in 1966.

2 Ray L. Miller collection. A Maryville native and 1937 Northwest graduate, Miller had an illustrious military career that included World War II service and participation in D-Day as a tank destroyer artillery officer. After graduating from George Washington Medical School, he served as a physician for the Truman family in the White House. The collection contains Miller's medical equipment, military artifacts, and mementos from his service and friendship with the Truman family, including written correspondence from the president.



3 "The American Woods," 14-volume set. The renowned collection by Romeyn Beck Hough was published between 1888 and 1928, and each book includes framed pages with slices of actual trees.



4 Percival DeLuce Memorial Collection. After the 1970 death of Olive DeLuce – who established the fine arts department at Northwest in 1915 and taught at the college until 1959 – the institution accepted a collection of drawings, paintings, prints and furniture dating back to the 18th century from the DeLuce estate. The collection includes artwork produced by Olive as well as her father, Percival, a renowned artist who maintained a studio in New York.

5 Froebel gifts. Chloe Millikan, who taught elementary education at Northwest from 1928 to 1961, acquired a collection of Froebel gift boxes that include dolls children played with at Horace Mann Laboratory School. Froebel gift boxes were a forerunner to a child-centered approach to education that remains fundamental to instruction at Horace Mann today.

6 Hickory sticks. Northwest possesses two sticks awarded to the winner of the rivalry football game played with Truman State University from 1931 until 2011, when the Bearcats won the last meeting. Northwest has the original piece of hickory, measuring 30 inches, and a replacement that was used during the 1940s, while the original was declared lost until it was found in a vault.



Reflections from Northwest's

2026 *Alumni* AWARDS RECIPIENTS

Northwest honored seven distinguished individuals this spring who have dedicated their time, talents and service to the University as well as for accomplishments in their chosen fields.

We asked them to reflect on the Northwest experiences that helped shape who they are today and share lessons they've learned since their time walking the University campus.



Scan the QR code to learn more about this year's recipients and their achievements.



JIM OLIVER '71 | Distinguished Alumni Award

What lesson from your time at Northwest shows up in your work today?

I had opportunities through Student Senate, Union Board, debate team, Tower Choir, Phi Sig fraternity and Blue Key to learn the importance of being prepared, sharing goals, encouraging participation, valuing fairness, respecting others, how to preside at a meeting, moderate a discussion and achieve good results. You learn not to waste people's time, to build friendships and make people glad they were part of the endeavor. Much of my career in law has been spent in conference rooms, boardrooms, conference calls and video conferences where important decisions required the contributions of multiple people, sometimes from multiple areas of knowledge and experience. Best of all, these lessons equip Northwest students like me to contribute to their communities in various organizations.



DR. NANCY JOHNSON ZELIFF '81 | Distinguished Faculty Emeritus Award

If you were a Northwest student now, what would you do differently?

I did not take full advantage of joining and contributing to student organizations as a student. I worked part-time my first two years of college and then full-time as a secretary in the School of Business my last three years as an undergraduate. Those last years, I lived off campus and took classes during my lunch breaks and in the evenings, so I had little time for student organizations. As a faculty member and advisor to student organizations when I taught at Northwest, I saw my own students grow personally and professionally by their involvement in student organizations.



GINA HAWK MCNEESE '83, '94 | Distinguished Faculty Award

What did you not appreciate about your Northwest education until years later?

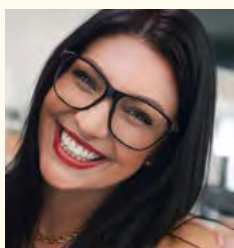
Until I took a group of Northwest students to Colorado for a college class, I did not realize how wide the sphere of Northwest's influence is. Northwest alumni at every venue and in every community reached out to bond with the group and tell us about their Bearcat experience at Northwest. We have alumni everywhere who are proud to claim they are still Bearcats.



DR. CLARENCE GREEN JR. '94, '10 | Turret Service Award

How do you handle uncertainty when you're expected to have answers?

This is the life of a police officer, a teacher, a leader, a parent. Uncertainty brings stress, and I believe you first must bring clarity, direction and confidence. I use something called the OODA loop. I observe what is occurring; orient myself while using sense-making occurrences and engage a team of folks to work through the uncertainty; and then decide, plan and follow with putting it into action. I believe the process being used should be visible and open to critique. I debrief all decisions. This builds a sense-making vault of occurrences, reducing the time needed to make decisions.



TIFFANY FIXTER '07 | Public Service Award

How has your definition of success changed over time?

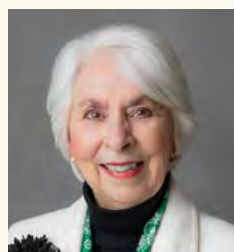
Early in my career, I probably defined success in more traditional ways, such as career milestones, recognition or achievements. Over time, my definition has changed. Today, success means creating opportunities and watching other people thrive. When one of our employees gains confidence, learns a new skill or tells me they are proud of their job at Brewability, that feels like success. It is less about personal accomplishments and more about building a community where everyone has a place and a purpose.



MICHELLE GREENWELL WESTHUES '17 | Young Alumni Award

What belief did you hold early in your career that you've since changed your mind about?

Early in my career, I thought I had to work all the time, especially to get ahead. What I have realized as I have gotten older is that the work will always be there. Use your paid time off, travel and – of course, the thing no one wants to do – go to your doctor's appointments.



ALETA HUBBARD | Honorary Alumni Award

What habit or routine has had an outsized impact on your life?

One of my habits is to keep in touch with current events — local and otherwise, politics, medical, social, sports, etc. I'm not bothered by needing to know all the answers to things. Sometimes the questions are more interesting.



Annual ‘Powering Dreams’ event celebrates students, donor generosity

Northwest students came face-to-face again last fall with the alumni and friends who support them through their contributions to University scholarships during the annual “Powering Dreams” celebration of donors and scholars.

The celebration provides an opportunity for students to thank donors for their investment while exchanging stories about their experiences and career goals. Through table conversations and live testimonials, scholarship recipients express the ways donor support lessens the burden of paying for college and helps them reach their degree goals.

Among the scholarship recipients who shared their voice at the celebration was Keegan Peterson, a senior public accounting major from Chillicothe, Missouri, who received the Hancock-Woods Scholarship and the Kenneth D. Griggs Accounting Scholarship. The scholarships funded by private donors have helped instill confidence in his academic pursuit.

“There’s a lot of times I encounter challenges from studying accounting,” Peterson said. “It makes me second-guess myself, but when I remember that somebody believes in me that I’ve never met, it gives me the confidence to overcome those challenges.”



Home is where ambition is nurtured, and potential finds its purpose.



First Lady Jill and President Dr. Lance Tatum

The Northwest campus has a feel all its own. With our designation as the Missouri Arboretum, the campus is stunning in all seasons. The majestic Administration Building, the ringing chimes of the Memorial Bell Tower or a stroll alongside Colden Pond add to the beauty that makes our campus a memorable destination.

Northwest is, was and always will be a place you call home. When is the last time you strolled through the Joyce and Harvey White International Plaza or attended a Bearcat sporting event?

The Office of University Advancement invites you to come home! Take a walk on campus. Enjoy a night attending a lecture or concert. Bring a future Bearcat for a tour. Whatever the reason, stop by the Michael L. Faust Center for Alumni and Friends and say hello.

We also welcome and appreciate your generous financial support. Your gift ensures future generations of Bearcats experience the same transformative journey Northwest has offered since 1905. Help us continue to build our legacy of excellence.

Give back. Come home. Go 'Cats!



Save the Date
FAMILY WEEKEND
Sept. 19, 2026
**HOMECOMING WEEKEND
AND 50TH-YEAR REUNION**
Oct. 31, 2026

Alumna honors mother with scholarship for art, criminology majors

When Gina Gruhn '93 reflects on her experiences at Northwest, she recalls fondly the ways it created friendships, opened doors to her career and laid the foundation for a professional network that continues.

"I knew I had made the perfect decision for me in finding a home away from home," Gina, who now resides in Morristown, New Jersey, said of attending Northwest. "I had worldly aspirations but was very 'green' in life experiences. Northwest showed me the art of the possible."

While most of her career has been in pharmacy benefits – leading large teams serving all types of payors, focusing on client growth, retention and corporate strategy, and tackling complex issues – Gina also has worked on the international level in business insurance, leading change management initiatives and merger and acquisition activity to develop a go-to-market approach for North America.

"I saw a clear career path and way to make a difference by providing medicine to those who need it, and as health care became increasingly more complex, focus on managing costs and creating access to care and affordability programs became a primary focus," she said.

With her appreciation for Northwest – and as a tribute to her mother, who modeled dedicated service to others – Gina and her husband, Randy Hurley, gifted \$28,000 to the Northwest Foundation and established the Karen Gruhn Scholarship. The scholarship is available to first-generation students coming to Northwest as residents of Iowa or Missouri and who have declared a major in art or criminology.



Randy Hurley and Gina Gruhn

It was Karen who instilled in Gina from an early age the importance of serving and assisting other people. Karen worked various office jobs around Des Moines, Iowa, and eventually turned her interest to public service. She was among the first women to graduate from the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy and became a member of the Iowa Capitol Police, serving primary duty at the Iowa governor's mansion until retiring in 2000.

Gina hopes the Karen Gruhn Scholarship inspires its recipients to be active on the Northwest campus and seek volunteer opportunities.

"That's how my mom lived her life, so my desire is to support someone in an area that doesn't always get support and for them to be a good citizen once they graduate and to be a leader in their community," Gina said.

New scholarship seeks to support education majors, Fraternity and Sorority Life



Emily Wormsley Greene

Emily Wormsley Greene '71 has created a scholarship for future teachers in hopes of inspiring the spirited experience she enjoyed as an undergraduate student at Northwest.

By pledging a gift totaling \$30,000 during the next five years, she established the Emily Wormsley Greene Scholarship for students pursuing a bachelor's degree in early childhood

education or elementary education with involvement in Fraternity and Sorority Life.

Greene knew she wanted to be a teacher at an early age. While her grandmother and mother both taught in one-room schoolhouses, Greene regularly participated in after-school programs at the North Kansas City YMCA and was highly

involved in clubs and organizations at her high school.

"I always wanted to be a teacher since the time I was 6 years old, and I ran what was called a busy bee club in my basement as a little kid, and I was the teacher," she said. "That is all I ever wanted to do was be a teacher, and oh boy, did I love it. I loved every minute of it, and I knew Northwest had a great reputation for education degrees."

Her experiences at Northwest propelled her into a student teaching role with the North Kansas City School District and eventually a 30-year career as an elementary teacher in the school district. She spent the last 13 years of her education career as a trainer and coordinator for substitute teachers.

Greene says she would not be the person she is today without Northwest, prompting her to create a scholarship that assists future educators.

"I really want somebody else to have that same joy of teaching and getting their education at Northwest," Greene said. "We all know that money gets tighter and tighter as time goes on, and for somebody not to be able to finish just because they're short an amount of money – I hope to help a little bit with that."

Couple creates geology scholarship after oil industry career took them around world

A Northwest alumnus and his wife have established the George and Diana Kerns Scholarship in their names to support geology students.

Though George Kerns '63 did not earn his degree in geology, his 36-year career in the oil industry centered on interpreting seismic data and drawing maps to inform oil drillers. Now retired, he and Diana want to assist students who aspire to work in similar fields.

"That's where it all began," George said of the couple's desire to help future Northwest students. "Then I got a job with Mobil. Then we had children and went overseas and saw the world. It all started at Northwest Missouri State. I received a lot at Northwest Missouri, so this is just my way of paying back."

Newly married in 1960, George and Diana moved to Maryville, which led to George completing his bachelor's degree at Northwest. For \$35 a month, the couple secured housing in Vets Village, a neighborhood of apartments for married students located where the Garrett-Strong Science Building is today. George maintained janitorial jobs at a tractor dealer and at the former St. Francis Hospital in

Maryville to help pay their rent and his tuition. Diana worked for Everett Brown, a longtime administrator at Northwest.

After graduating, George secured employment with Mobil Oil Corp. and his work took him throughout the world – from Dallas to Corpus Christi, to 28-day sea rotations to conduct seismic surveys of continental shelves. The latter work took him to parts of West Africa and Indonesia, ending with George, Diana and their three children spending five and a half years in Medan.

Subsequent assignments took George to Jakarta for three years and to Saudi Arabia to assist Aramco, though the family always returned to Dallas in between.

"When I retired in '99, they made up a map of the world and showed I'd been to 69 different countries – all 50 states, around the world 12 times and visited six of the seven continents. I hadn't been to Antarctica yet."

While living in Dallas, Diana earned an associate degree in architecture and designed hotels. Today, the couple shares time at their homes in Farmers Branch, Texas, and in the Blue Ridge Mountains of northern Virginia.

Lasting impacts inspire business scholarship

A new scholarship that honors a couple's deep roots in Maryville and association with Northwest is helping students pursue degrees in the Melvin D. and Valorie G. Booth School of Business.

Rebecca Summa Sullivan created the John and Virginia Summa Scholarship to honor her parents, who attended and met at Northwest. Through her pledge totaling \$25,000 during five years, a scholarship of no less than \$1,000 will be awarded annually to a full-time Northwest student studying a major in the Booth School of Business.

"I wanted to dedicate this scholarship to my parents – not only for their love and devotion to Northwest and their belief in the importance of a good education but also to honor the sacrifices they made to make a good education a reality for their children and grandchildren," Sullivan said. "They sacrificed a lot for me and my siblings, and it is humbling for me to be able to set up a scholarship in their name. Having parents that make the education of their children a priority is golden."

After graduating from Northwest in 1950 with a bachelor's degree in business economics and Officer Candidate School in San Antonio, Texas, John joined the U.S. Air Force's Office of Special Investigation. His career took him to all parts of the world on classified assignments.

Although the Summa family frequently returned to Maryville, they made it their permanent home in 1966. After

retiring as a major in the Air Force, John became a loan officer at Nodaway Valley Bank, where Virginia was already an officer in charge of certificates of deposit.

"They loved Maryville," Sullivan said. "It was always home, despite the fact that we lived everywhere else. It was always the place we were going to come back to, and that was so true of Northwest, too."

For her part, Sullivan attended Northwest from 1969 to 1973 before completing her bachelor's degree at Avila College in Kansas City, Missouri. Now retired, she went on to a successful 45-year career in the insurance industry. She spent the last 30 years as the senior vice president and healthcare practice leader at Lockton Companies.

"I credit Northwest, my upbringing in a small town, my parents' work ethic – all of that – for taking me from a job where I didn't make very much money to a job where I really had a lot of responsibility," Sullivan said. "I learned from growing up in a small town about the importance of working with people and getting along with people."



John and Virginia Summa

Northwest Foundation reports successful FY25 with increases in scholarships, total giving

Northwest Foundation Inc., the fundraising arm of the University, maintained its focus on scholarship funding during Fiscal Year 2025 while raising awareness about the importance of supporting the University and its students.

“Through the Northwest Foundation, philanthropy fuels progress, opening doors for students and strengthening the future of our communities,” said Mike Johnson '85, the vice president of university advancement at Northwest and executive director of the Northwest Foundation. “We thank all our donors who believe and give to Northwest Missouri State University in the spirit of advancing our students' success.”

Learn more about giving to Northwest and review donor listings by scanning the QR code.



\$6.4 million

secured in total giving, a **12 % increase**

\$1.54 million

in scholarship support, a **10.3 % increase**

16

endowed scholarships created, established through gifts totaling a minimum of **\$25,000**

\$979

was the average scholarship amount awarded

3,792

donors contributed to Northwest initiatives

Board of Regents

The Board of Regents is appointed by the Missouri governor and is responsible for sound resource management of the University and determining general, educational and financial policies. Six members must live in the University's 17-county district; not more than four members may belong to the same political party. The nine-member board currently has two vacancies, including a non-voting student regent.

Jason Klindt '99 (R), Kansas City
Shanda Stockton Durbin '10 (I), Saint Joseph
Leisha Beckemeyer Barry '84 (R), Holt
Mel Tjeerdsma '77 (R), Maryville
Deborah Roach (D), Grant City
Steven Black '87 (R), Maysville
Stephen Coppinger '98 (I), Kansas City

Northwest Foundation Inc. 2025–26 Board of Directors

The Northwest Foundation, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, develops and stewards philanthropic resources for the benefit of Northwest Missouri State University and its students. It is governed by a 32-member volunteer board and staffed by Northwest's Office of University Advancement.

President

Ted Place '99, Kansas City, Mo.

President Elect

Angela Moskow, Gladstone, N.J.

Board Members

Jody Athen, Hamburg, Iowa
 Dr. Terry Barnes '70, '72, Columbia, Mo.
 Mike Baumgartner, Maryville
 Jenny Arthur Burkhead '78, Kansas City, Mo.
 Bill Burns '06, Kansas City, Mo.
 Bilal Clarence '05, Berkeley, Calif.
 Jim Davis '98, '00, Maryville
 Dr. Rodney Edge '84, Upper Marlboro, Md.
 Kevin Fullerton '88, Mission, Kan.
 Matt Gaarder '97, Maryville
 Emily Wormsley Greene '71, Riverside, Mo.
 Derrick Griffin '01, St. Paul, Minn.
 Gina Gruhn '93, Morristown, N.J.
 Dr. Nancy Headrick '78, Kansas City, Mo.
 Jennifer Hewitt '86, Lenexa, Kan.
 Susan Johnson Hockensmith '72, Manchester, Mo.

Mike Kelly '78, Lee's Summit, Mo.
 Christian Murphy '98, Omaha, Neb.
 Brock Pfof, Maryville
 Pat Pijanowski '84, Greenwood, Mo.
 Deryk Powell '93, Lake Quivira, Kan.
 Dr. Kerry Miller Roe '91, '95, Kansas City, Mo.
 Margee Shaffer '74, Audubon, Iowa
 Gina Smith, Maryville
 Darin Stephens '95, Independence, Mo.
 Corey Strider '96, Lathrop, Mo.
 Rebecca Summa Sullivan, Leawood, Kan.
 Rich Tokheim '82, '84 Omaha, Neb.
 Dr. Gary Tunell '67, Dallas, Texas
 Dr. Tom Vansaghi '91, Kansas City, Mo.

Ex-Officio Directors

Dr. Lance Tatum, University President
 Dr. John Jasinski, President Emeritus, Springfield, Mo.
 Dr. B.D. Owens '59, President Emeritus, West Des Moines, Iowa

2025-26 Northwest Alumni Association Board of Directors

The Northwest Alumni Association fosters lifelong relationships through initiatives and opportunities that advance the University, its alumni, future alumni and friends. It is governed by a volunteer board of up to 20 members and staffed by Northwest's Office of University Advancement.

President

Kimberly Massey Cole '93, Overland Park, Kan.

Vice-President

Brandon Benitz '00, '08, Kearney, Neb.

Past-President

Matt Gaarder '97, Maryville

Members

Marie Schreck Agey '90, '08, Des Moines, Iowa
 Chris Blum '92, Lincoln, Neb.
 Kevin Daniel '89, '95, '97, Lee's Summit, Mo.
 Michelle Mattson Drake '98, Maryville

Scott Ellis '98, Chillicothe, Mo.
 Emily Wormsley Greene '71, Riverside, Mo.
 Maureen Mader Freese '86, Arcadia, Iowa
 Mike Harbit '84, Nevada, Mo.
 Cherine Heckman '77, '83, Columbia, Mo.
 Valerie Lemke Hunt '04, Walton, Neb.
 Debra Parsons James '82, Kearney, Mo.
 Denise Bower Kretschmar '71, Hemple, Mo.
 Amaira Peterson, student member, Platte City, Mo.
 Brad Summa '91, Ballwin, Mo.
 Sheila Yoder Wogomon '95, Blue Springs, Mo.

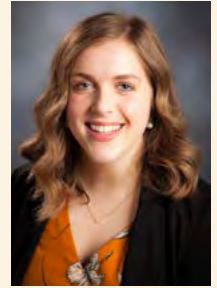
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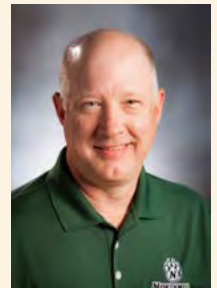
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Melissa Giza Wellhausen '03, '19
 Chief Financial Officer
 mwellhausen@nwmissouri.edu

Numbers that stand out from the 2025-26 SEASON

HIGHLIGHT REEL

2,503

Career assists by senior setter Ella Caffery, who is one of 12 Bearcat volleyball players all-time to surpass 2,000 and completed her career ranked No. 8 in program history.



5

Game-winning goals by junior forward Makenna West, tying the Bearcat soccer season's single-season record.



3.83

Grade-point average by the women's cross country team, which tied for second-best in the nation.

374

Career saves by senior goalkeeper Lily Ellis. She is just the fourth Bearcat soccer player to record more than 300 saves, and she set a school record with 36 career shutouts.



27

NCAA Division II Playoff appearances by Northwest football, which is a record. The Bearcats returned to the playoffs in 2025 but lost their first-round matchup at Harding University in Arkansas.



31

Tackles by senior defensive back Shane Fredrickson in the Bearcats' first-round playoff game at Harding on Nov. 22, setting the NCAA Division II single-game record.





30

The number of victories both the Bearcat baseball and softball teams exceeded this spring. Baseball accomplished the feat for the first time since 2018, and softball did it for the first time since 2016.

FOLLOW BEARCAT SPORTS THROUGH ALL SEASONS

Keep up with Bearcat teams and student-athletes throughout the year.

Scan the QR code and save bearcatsports.com to your bookmarks.



9

The number of Bearcat softball players in program history who have surpassed 200 career hits, with senior outfielder Omara Love joining the list this spring.

40

Points scored on Nov. 14 by junior guard Andrea Lopreato to set the Northwest women's basketball single-game scoring record against the University of Sioux Falls. Lopreato also set the single-game school record for free throws made (19) and attempted (21).



14.4

Average points scored per game this season by senior guard Royce Williams, who became the first in Bearcat men's basketball program history to lead the team in scoring, rebounding, assists and steals.

1-2-3

Maxime Touron, **Aziz Mohammed** and Grant Bradley – who became the first in program history to complete the mile in less than four minutes and finished 1-2-3 on Jan. 17 during the Coach Richard Alsup Open indoor track and field meet on the Northwest campus. Mohammed was a three-time MIAA Track Athlete of the Week recipient this year.

Q&A with Austin Meyer

Austin Meyer '06, '08, has been a part of some of the most memorable moments in the Bearcats' hardwood history as a player and coach. He finished his playing career with a then-record 215 three-pointers made and, as a member of the men's basketball coaching staff from 2008 to 2018, helped lead the Bearcats to the school's first basketball national championship. Since then, he has served as head coach of the Bearcat women's basketball program.

NW How special is it to be a part of Northwest?

AM What makes this place unique isn't just the tradition or the success — it's the people. I get to work alongside outstanding colleagues across campus and within our athletic department who genuinely care about students and about each other. There's a shared investment. We root for one another's success, we show up for each other, and we take pride in representing something bigger than ourselves.

NW What are your best memories of being a Northwest student and basketball player from 2002 to 2006?

AM What I valued most were the relationships that were built through that journey. To this day, many of my former teammates still talk regularly and stay connected. That brotherhood has lasted far beyond the final buzzer. If I had to pick one on-floor moment, it would be our Sweet 16 win at Tarleton State. Jesse Shaw, who is now an assistant coach at Iowa, hit a buzzer-beater to send us to the Elite Eight.

NW Did you ever imagine you'd be a head coach at Northwest?

AM I've always believed you focus on the job you have, pour everything into it and let the rest take care of itself.

I've tried to approach my career with gratitude and presence. Be fully invested in the role you're in, serve people well and give your best every day. When you do that, opportunities tend to take care of themselves. For me, becoming the head coach at Northwest wasn't something I chased. It was something that grew out of simply trying to do the job in front of me the right way.

NW What type of impact do you think you have had on women's basketball at Northwest?

AM It's fair to say we've raised the bar and elevated the program. The consistency we've built and the progress we've made speak to that. At the same time, we're not satisfied. The next step is turning that foundation into a true championship-level program on the floor. That's the standard at Northwest, and that's what we're chasing. Beyond the scoreboard, I believe our greatest impact comes through the culture we're building. We want to create a culture of excellence in how we work, how we treat people, how we celebrate others, and how our players grow as leaders and as women.



Rosewell inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame



The legacy of Mark Rosewell continues to grow for the Bearcat head tennis coach who recently completed his 41st season at Northwest.

In March, with a 5-2 win over Southwest Baptist in men's tennis play, Rosewell claimed his 1,300th career coaching victory at the Mark Rosewell Tennis Center. The new facility – which features NCAA regulation courts, a tennis-specific electronic scoreboard and spectator areas – was completed on the west side of the Northwest campus last fall and retains Rosewell's name, an honor that was dedicated to the former tennis facility in 2019.

Additionally, in November, Rosewell was inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame, granting him one of the highest accolades an individual can attain in the state's sports assemblage. He became the 15th individual with Northwest ties to join the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame.

"Most of the time, when coaches have facilities named after them or are inducted into halls of fame, it is years after they have moved on or retired. He's still in it, and our programs are still competing at very high levels," Northwest Director of Athletics Dr. Andy Peterson '07, '08, '10, said. "To see him

hitting these milestones and getting the recognitions while he's still working for the Bearcats is so satisfying for all of us who love Coach Rosewell."

Roswell began his coaching tenure at Northwest in 1984, after two seasons and 22 coaching victories at his alma mater, the University of Central Missouri. He is the all-time winningest coach in any sport in Bearcat history with 1,267 victories as the head coach of both men's and women's tennis and a winning percentage of .677 at Northwest.

He is a 29-time MIAA Coach of the Year, and he has been honored seven times as the ITA Regional Coach of the Year.

His teams have claimed 30 MIAA regular-season championships, with men's and women's championships occurring in the same year seven times, most recently in 2023. The Bearcats also have made 45 NCAA Tournament appearances – 23 for the men and 22 for the women – under his leadership.

Bearcat Steppers claim national title for second consecutive year

For the second consecutive year, Northwest's Bearcat Steppers dance team is a national champion.

The Bearcat Steppers competed in April at the National Dance Alliance Collegiate Cheer and Dance Championship in Daytona Beach, Florida, and claimed a national championship in the Division II Pom category, defending the title they earned a year ago. The dance team also placed seventh in Division II Jazz.

"Winning one national championship is special, but doing it twice in a row – especially in just my second year coaching this team – speaks to the heart, discipline and belief that our athletes bring every single day," said Taylor

Deen Merrill '15, '17, the head spirit coach at Northwest. "I couldn't be more proud of how they've grown, trusted each other and represented our program on the national stage. We wouldn't be able to make it happen without the generous support from the Steppers community and families."

The national championships featured colleges and university dance teams from throughout the country competing in Division IA, Division I, Division II, Division III and Junior College classifications. Teams performed a variety of dance styles, including jazz, hip hop and pom.





FLEX YOUR POWER OF THE PAW

The Bearcat network is strong, and Career Services is always looking for Northwest alumni and friends to assist the next generation of professionals.

- Be an interviewer for **VIRTUAL MOCK INTERVIEW DAYS**
- Share your journey at **MEET THE PROS EVENTS**
- Recruit for your organization at **CAREER DAYS**

Scan here to get involved.



KXCV VETERANS JOINING BROADCASTING HALL OF FAME

Two Northwest alumni and longtime staff members of its award-winning National Public Radio affiliate will soon be members of the Missouri Broadcasters Association (MBA) Hall of Fame.

John Coffey '82 and the late Sharon Cross Bonnett '65 will join the MBA Hall of Fame during the organization's induction banquet in June.

After graduating from Northwest, Coffey began his career as the news director for a radio station in Fairbury, Nebraska, and then returned to Maryville in 1983 to join KNIM as its news and sports director. In 1999, he moved to KXCV and, with Bonnett's leadership, helped launch the Bearcat Radio Network, for which he provides play-by-play on all Bearcat football and basketball games. He has served

as KXCV-KRNW general manager since 2019.

Coffey also marked a milestone last fall by calling his 500th consecutive Bearcat football game, a 21-14 victory against Missouri Southern State University, on Sept. 20 in Joplin. He began calling Bearcat football games in 1985 and has called every contest since, including all 10 of the Bearcats' NCAA Division II football national championship game

appearances.

"I'm humbled to go into the Hall of Fame with such a great induction class, but what makes this incredibly special for me is to go in with Sharon," Coffey said. "She had such huge impact on so many Northwest students who have worked at KXCV, including myself. I benefited from her guidance as a student and later when she hired me to be a part of her staff. She was also a great mentor for me after I was

promoted to station manager at KXCV."

Bonnett served as a producer, program director and general manager of KXCV-KRNW for more than three decades until her retirement in 2006 and earned multiple MBA Awards and national Corporation for Public Broadcasting Awards. She died in 2023, and Northwest renamed its radio studio in her honor last year.





Corporation in Omaha, Nebraska. He was a member of the Northwest Foundation Board of Directors from 2002 to 2020, serving as president from 2008 to 2010.

Richard Miller '75 resides in Madill, Oklahoma, and serves as chairman of the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board. He is a retired district court judge and previously served as a member of the Emergency Division of the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals.

Kay Espey Wilson '76 discontinued operations of the Nodaway News Leader in December after 30 years as publisher and owner of the newspaper, which she launched in 1996. She also owns Rush Printing Co., which maintains its printing and promotion operations in Maryville.

1980s

Dr. Bruce Johnson '86, '88, was honored last year by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as one of six Pioneers in Education. He had a 29-year career in education as a teacher, coach and administrator in the northwest Missouri region, retiring from the Stanberry R-II School District after 17 years as its superintendent. He then served for 11 years as a vice president with the L.J. Hart Company, working with school districts and superintendents on school finance issues.

Jeffery Koster '86 retired from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service after 41 years. He worked in Iowa, Nevada, Colorado and Minnesota, where he now resides, as a conservationist, community development coordinator, and a wetland and easement specialist.

George Speckman '89 was appointed in January by Gov. Mike Kehoe to the Missouri Real Estate Appraisers Commission. He is a long-time real estate appraiser with Pinnacle Valuation Services Inc. and previously worked as a publisher for Touchdown Publications.

1990s

Juan Rangel Jr. '91 joined SparkWheel, a Kansas-based nonprofit, last fall as its vice president of metro expansion. He has more than 30 years of experience with nonprofits, education and community engagement, most recently as chief partnership officer with SchoolSmartKC.

Lisa Kenkel Carlsen '92 finished her first season as an assistant coach for women's basketball at Drake University. She spent the previous 10 seasons as the head coach at Northern Illinois University after coaching at Lewis University, Winona State University and the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Antony Jones '92 was promoted last fall to partner at Stange Law Firm. He joined the firm in 2017 and works as a divorce attorney out of its office in Lee's Summit, Missouri. He has 30 years of legal experience.

Kari Mosser Kirchoefer '92 has advanced to senior vice president for marketing and sales with Union Pacific Railroad in Omaha, Nebraska, where she has been employed for more than 30 years.

Lorinda Rice '92, '97, was honored last fall by the Nebraska Arts Council with its Excellence in Arts Education Award. She is the visual art curriculum specialist at Lincoln Public Schools, where she has been employed since 1998.

Don Munsch '93 joined the Edwardsville (Illinois) Intelligencer in December as a reporter. He has worked as a reporter and editor at newspapers in Texas, Oklahoma and Missouri during a career spanning more than 30 years.

Tracy Gotto '94 was named last summer as the administrator for Buena Vista County Public Health and Home Care in Iowa, which he joined as a community resource specialist in 2024. He has nearly 30 years of experience as a social worker.

1960s

Glendena Taylor '64 and **Richard '64 Heiman** celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary last August. Glendena taught high school home economics, health and science. Richard worked as a medical laboratory technologist before teaching at Scott Community College and at North Scott High School in Eldridge, Iowa, where they have lived for 60 years.

Barb Biffle, attended '68-'75, was selected as one of 10 people to present her story, titled

"Purristence," at the Fourth Annual Nebraska Storytelling Festival last October in Lincoln. She is employed as an administrative coordinator for the Great Plains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

1970s

Mike Faust '74 was appointed last year by Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen to serve on the District 2 Judicial Nominating Commission for the Supreme Court. Faust retired in 2015 after 36 years with Kiewit

Katie Crites Fields '96 recently was appointed director of the Andrew County Museum in Savannah, Missouri. She worked previously as an administrative assistant at the museum after stints with the Andrew Soil and Water Conservation District and the U.S. Census Bureau as a geographic specialist.

Dr. Tracy Bottoms '97 retired last year as superintendent of the Montgomery County (Missouri) R-II School District. He worked in education for 29 years, including the last five with Montgomery County.

Erin Lynch Rocha '99 recently earned certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in Early-Middle Childhood: Literacy-Reading and Language Arts. She teaches seventh-grade English language arts in the St. Joseph (Missouri) School District.

Kevin Sorensen '98 teaches psychology in Las Vegas, where he has been employed for the last nine years.



Rice family of Maryville is Northwest's Family of the Year

The Rice family of Maryville was honored last fall as the 2025 Northwest Family of the Year. Pictured in the front row, left to right, are Robert Rice '00; Alyssa Pace holding Asher Rice; Alex Rice, a junior accounting major; Sarah Rice Woodward '04; and Sandy Coan. Standing in the middle row are Carrie Coan Costanzo '00, Sarah Coan Rice '00, Kathy Rice and Ruth Rice '82. In the back row are Nathaniel Rice '11 and Lewis Rice '82.

2000s

Dan Hernandez '00 was recognized last year through the Ohio Arts Council's Individual Excellence Awards program for his accomplishments as a visual artist, the third time he has received the award. He is a professor in the art department at the University of Toledo, a community digital artist in residence at the Toledo Museum of Art and past president of the Board of Trustees at The Arts Commission in Toledo.

Scott Graf '01 joined Idaho Public Television last summer and was named director of content and operations. He was employed for the previous nine years in communication roles in Idaho state government after beginning his career with radio station WFAE in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Jason Greer '01 was named last summer as the head coach for cross country and track and field, as well as a high school instructor, at

Windermere Preparatory School in Florida. He has worked in education, administration and athletics for more than 25 years. He also is the founder and chief executive officer of High Performance Athletics, a training facility that supports student-athletes in their transitions from high school to collegiate competition.

Justin Frederick '03 was recognized last year by the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Public Health Alumni Association as a Distinguished Alumnus. He plans to graduate this spring from the college with a Doctor of Public Health degree. He is employed as the deputy health director and chief of epidemiology and preparedness at the Douglas County Health Department in Omaha.

Bobby Gumm '03 was appointed vice president, head of music, at Requiem Creative, a new entertainment marketing firm founded last year in

Burbank, California. He had been a vice president at Trailer Park, a globally renowned advertising agency, and has worked on high-profile campaigns for films and series, including "Oppenheimer," "Wednesday" and "Stranger Things."

Joel Miller '03 was recognized last fall by the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts as its 2025 Educator of the Year, and he was honored last summer by the Nebraska FFA Foundation, Nebraska Agricultural Education Association and Nationwide Insurance with the organizations' Golden Owl award. He has been employed as an agriculture teacher for Hampton Public Schools for 19 years.

Valerie Lemke Hunt '04 is executive director of the Bryan Foundation and Bryan Health in Lincoln, Nebraska, where she has been employed since 2012.

Dr. Shaunda French-Collins '06 was named last summer as dean of the

School of Business, Mathematics and Science at Chadron State College in Nebraska. She began her teaching career at Chadron State in 2011 and had served most recently as a professor of communication arts and department chair.

Nick Triche '08 was promoted last year to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army and selected to command the 710th Brigade Support Battalion in Fort Polk, Louisiana. He has served as a member of the armed services since 1997.

Ashley Elfrank Dodson '09 is pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Missouri-Columbia. She resides in Columbia with her husband and their son.

Amy Stone Fast '09 is a first-grade teacher with the Fairfax (Missouri) R-III School District. She resides with her husband and their two daughters in Skidmore.

Brewing community

Jim Davis is bringing people together over his passion for coffee



Photo courtesy of Davin Davis

At their Maryville home, Jim and Dixie Davis roast coffee beans that are imported from farms throughout the world.

Jim Davis '98, '00, tells a story about his love for coffee beginning as a high school student in King City, Missouri. His wife and high school sweetheart, Dixie, called him an old soul because he was a young person drinking straight black coffee.

"Coffee was something that was always an interest of mine," Jim said. "I probably started drinking coffee too young. In high school, I had a friend, and we would go get a cup of coffee, and we really enjoyed drinking the coffee together."

But in 2010, coinciding with the adoption of their daughter in Ethiopia, Jim experienced coffee in a different way than he ever had before. When the Davises participated in an Ethiopian coffee ceremony, Jim was struck by the care taken in roasting, grinding and brewing coffee beans – and, most of all, the ritual of bringing people together to laugh and share stories.

"The thing I noticed about that ceremony that I don't think I'll ever forget is it really was about community," Jim

said. "It was really about just stopping and taking time to enjoy something."

Jim, who has held the roles of chief financial officer and executive vice president at Nodaway Valley Bank in Maryville since 2000, felt such a strong sense of community and connection that it inspired him to work toward creating similar spaces within his own community. He invested in equipment and began experimenting with roasting coffee beans at his Maryville home.

Now, he has nurtured that vision into Third Flame Coffee, an entrepreneurial venture using beans harvested from small farms throughout the world and imported from places like Colombia, Nicaragua, Brazil, Indonesia and, of course, Ethiopia.

Jim's passion for brewing also has grown into a fruitful collaboration with entrepreneurs Kent and Stephanie Campbell Yount, who opened Haven Coffee and Goods, a coffee shop and boutique in downtown Maryville, last fall. While the Younts own and operate the business, Jim is the roaster and sole

supplier of its coffee beans.

"We want to see the community have a spot that's like that coffee ceremony," Jim said. "Coffee should be shared in a way that you're sitting down and not thinking about all the struggles of life for a few minutes. You can enjoy each other and laugh or encourage each other or share hard things. But coffee's usually right there in the center of that."

All generations of people comprising the Northwest community have quickly adopted Haven as a go-to spot for everything from study sessions to meetups with friends or coworkers.

"The connection between Kent and Stephanie and Dixie and I is very much a common denominator in creating a space that is intended for this community to stop and to enjoy each other," Jim said. "I couldn't begin to tell you how pleased I am with being able to walk in there and see people from all different walks of life."

To learn more, visit www.thirdflamecoffee.com.



McCollum shines in first year at University of Iowa

Ben McCollum '03, '05, in his first year as the head coach of the men's basketball program at the University of Iowa, led the Hawkeyes to the Elite Eight round of the NCAA Division I Tournament for the first time since 1987 and finished with a 24-13 record.

After 15 seasons as the head coach at Northwest and four NCAA Division II national championships with the Bearcats, McCollum spent the 2024-25 season as the head coach at Drake University, where he guided that program to a school-record 31 wins with Missouri Valley Conference regular season and tournament titles.

Steve Lydick '09 completed his Juris Doctor degree in 2024 from the University of Nebraska College of Law. He is employed with Valentine O'Toole, LLP in Omaha, where he practices civil, personal injury, transportation law and wrongful death litigation.

2010s

Dylan Rosier '11 was elected last August to the U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council Board of Directors and serves as vice chairman of the Missouri Corn Merchandising Council. He is a founder and owner of R/Farm Distilling Co. in Mound City.

Kelsey Cox Beschoner '12 was appointed last fall to executive director of the Atlantic (Iowa) Area Chamber of Commerce, for which she had served as program director since 2020.

Nick Crouse '13, '20, was named the National High School Strength Coaches Association 2025 Mid-America Regional Coach of the Year. He is a physical education instructor and director of strength and conditioning at Platteview High School in Springfield, Nebraska.

Luke Lancaster '13 completed his first season with the New Orleans Saints' strength and conditioning staff. He spent the previous seven seasons at Abilene Christian University in Texas, most recently as the associate athletic director for sports performance. He also has served with the strength and conditioning staffs of the Miami Dolphins, Harvard University and the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Dustin Pearson '14 completed a doctorate degree from Saint Louis University. He teaches special education and coaches baseball at Smithville (Missouri) High School.

Brent Trout '14 was recognized by Library Journal as one of its 2025 "Movers & Shakers." He is employed at the St. Louis County Library as the manager of its history and genealogy department, which also received an MLA Excellence in Genealogy and Local History Award and a Certificate of Appreciation from the Missouri State Genealogical Association last year for its work under his leadership.

Brandon Keller '17 was honored in October by the Association of Community College Trustees with its William H. Mearly Faculty Member Award. He is an agriculture instructor at Northeast Community College in Norfolk, Nebraska.

Brianne Schultz Goeckel '18 began teaching kindergarten last fall in Hanover (Kansas) Schools.

2020s

Leon Douglas '20 is director of player development at Iowa State University. After spending 13 seasons as a high school coach in Kansas City, he transitioned to the collegiate level in 2024 as assistant director for high school relations at the University of Kansas and spent 2025 at Arkansas State University as a defensive analyst and in player development.

Erin Ellis '20, '24, began last fall as the vocal music teacher for grades four through 12 in Minden (Nebraska) Public Schools. She is in her eighth year of teaching.

Austin Stuhr '21 joined Cornerstone Investments last year as an LPL financial advisor in York, Nebraska. He also is a high school track and field coach at Heartland Community Schools and Hampton Public Schools

and a volunteer firefighter for the Bradshaw Fire Department.

Maddie Holtman Griffith '22 joined Reign Physical Therapy in Maryville last year as a physical therapist after completing a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Carter Bornemeier '23, '25, began work last August as director of athletic communications at Wartburg College in Iowa.

Andrea Michelson Kachuba '23 completed training with the Missouri Department of Conservation last fall and joined the Missouri Department of Conservation's Northeast Region as its Sullivan County agent. She was previously employed in law enforcement with the Montgomery County Jail and the Nodaway County Jail.

Lisa Anderson '24 is in her first year as assistant principal at Ozark (Missouri) Middle School. She previously served as an instructional coach and math teacher.

Angela LeGrand '25 is employed as a registered nurse with the Center for Behavioral Medicine in Kansas City, Missouri, and attending the University of Missouri-Kansas City in pursuit of a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree in Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner. She resides in Raytown with her two children.

Noah Newland '25 joined Troop H of the Missouri State Highway Patrol in St. Joseph, Missouri, after graduating in December from the law enforcement academy.

Shelby Singleton '25 joined television station WMBB in Panama City, Florida, last year as a news producer.

SUBMISSIONS POLICY

Northwest Magazine compiles its Class Notes and Memoriam sections with information provided through direct submissions and published materials, while giving preference to submissions. To submit alumni updates, death notifications or story ideas for future editions, scan the QR code or provide the information via email to alumni@nwmissouri.edu. Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.



In Memoriam

Northwest extends its condolences to the families and friends of these individuals.

Barbara Bosch Alexander '82, '86, age 80, of Lake Saint Louis, Missouri, died Nov. 28, 2025. She was an educator and librarian, including roles at Texas A&M University and Illinois State University.

Albert Atkins '58, age 93, of Oregon, Missouri, died Sept. 11, 2025. He taught and coached for 37 years and worked in building and grounds at the Holt County Courthouse for 18 years.



Cindy Baker '71, age 76, of Clearfield, Iowa, died Aug. 13, 2025. She taught high school family consumer sciences for 38 years.

Candace Barnes '76, age 70, of Winterset, Iowa, died Dec. 29, 2024. She practiced family law for more than 30 years.

David Batson '69, age 78, of Vine Grove, Kentucky, died July 15, 2025. He worked in agricultural sales and real estate in addition to operating a farm.

★ **Donald Beggs '75**, age 76, of Kansas City, Missouri, died May 13, 2025. He was employed with the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City and the Livers Bronze Company.

Melissa Franklin Biermann '02, age 44, of Excelsior Springs, Missouri, died March 19, 2024. She was a teacher in Savannah and Excelsior Springs.

Larry Blake '59, age 89, of Aurora, Colorado, died Oct. 8, 2025. He was a teacher and coach in Denver public

schools, advancing to the roles of middle school principal and high school athletic director.



Dr. Bob Bohlken, age 90, of Maryville, died Aug. 22, 2025. He was a professor and chair of Northwest's communication and theatre arts department from 1970 until his retirement in 2000.



Melvin Booth '67, age 80, of Scottsdale, Arizona, died April 8. After beginning his career in accounting and finance, he advanced to lead multi-million-dollar companies in the pharmaceutical and life sciences fields and later served in multiple board positions, receiving the honor of ringing the New York Stock Exchange opening bell with two different companies as they went public. Among numerous contributions to Northwest, he and his wife established the Melvin D. and Valorie G. Booth School of Business at

Northwest in 2001, and he served as a co-chair of the University's Forever Green fundraising campaign from 2014 to 2021.

Paul Brandt '83, age 65, of Wabash, Indiana, died June 19, 2025. He co-owned Brandt's Harley-Davidson in Wabash.

Janice Peterson Christensen '64, age 83, of Anita, Iowa, died Oct. 2, 2025. She taught at Anita Elementary School for 38 years.

Lonnie Clair '72, age 74, of Madison, Missouri, died July 8, 2024. He was employed for more than 30 years in public schools, including 18 years as a school superintendent.

★ **Larry Clark '61**, age 89, of Carroll, Iowa, died July 7, 2025. He was employed for 31 years with the Social Security Administration, retiring in 1992. He also was a high school golf coach for 24 years, taking his team to 13 state championships and winning four. In 2017, he was inducted into the Iowa High School Golf Coaches Association Hall of Fame.



John Cline '75, age 71, of Lake Lotawana, Missouri, died Oct. 28, 2025. In 1984, he co-founded Cline-Wood Agency, specializing in providing casualty insurance and risk management services for commercial transportation and agricultural businesses; he worked for the business for 40 years as its office in Kansas City grew to employ 70 people with offices in Arlington, Texas, and St. Louis. He served as a member of the Northwest Foundation Board of Directors from 2014 through 2022 and played an

active role in the development of the University's Agricultural Learning Center and the Carl and Cheryl Hughes Fieldhouse.

★ **Jerry Cole '57**, age 93, of Blue Springs, Missouri, died July 18, 2025. He taught high school industrial arts and coached in Richmond, retiring after 30 years in 1986. He was inducted into the Richmond Sports Hall of Fame in 2012.



Garrie Crider '58, age 86, of Saddlebrooke, Arizona, died July 10, 2025. He began his career as a high school business teacher before 35 years with American Family Insurance, advancing to the role of regional claims manager and overseeing operations in several states.

Dwayne Cross '72, '88, age 76, of Denver, Missouri, died Aug. 19, 2025. He taught and coached in Grundy Center, Iowa, before taking principal roles in South Page, Monroe and Norwalk. He later served as a superintendent of schools in Rockwell City, Iowa, and Albany, Missouri.

★ **Delman Davidson '56**, age 90, of Merriam, Kansas, died Aug. 26, 2025. He taught industrial arts for 20 years and operated a carpentry business.

★ **Vern "Tom" Dolph '60, '68, '82**, age 88, of Maryville, died Sept. 8, 2025. He spent 26 years as a coach, guidance counselor and instructor at Nodaway County schools and later was employed at the Maryville Treatment Center.

Mark Dougherty '94, age 54, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, died Dec. 11, 2024. He

★ Denotes military service

was a purchasing manager at Erb's Technology Solutions.

Larry Duke '65, age 82, of Platte City, Missouri, died July 15, 2025. He was an accountant and operated Larry G. Duke Accounting for more than 25 years.

★ **Jerry Fish '80**, age 73, of St. Joseph, Missouri, died July 12, 2025. He worked as a chef at the Ritz-Carlton in Kansas City, Missouri, among other places, for 30 years.

Dr. Richard Fitzpatrick '69, age 78, of Green Valley, Arizona, died Oct. 20, 2025. He was an educator.

Helen Groteluschen Frenette '74, age 74, of Atlanta, died Oct. 18, 2025. She began her career with Halls department store in Kansas City, Missouri, and then worked in creative services for McCann Erickson and Simmons Bedding Company in Atlanta before becoming a full-time mother.



★ **Dr. Carrol Fry '57**, age 93, of Maryville, died Dec. 9, 2025. He began his career as a teacher at Maysville High School before moving to work in the insurance industry. He returned to teaching as a member of the English faculty at Minnesota State University, Mankato for nine years and then at Northwest from 1972 to 2003.

Gary Funkhouser '58, of Treynor, Iowa, died July 21, 2025. He was a music teacher in Gravity, College Springs and Oakland before serving as a superintendent for Klemme, Carson-Macedonia, Whiting and Treynor community schools, retiring in 2003.

Peggy Humphreys Hadden '61, age 85, of Tipp City, Ohio, died Aug. 11, 2025. She taught at Tipp City schools and maintained an extensive costume collection that dressed high school plays for 28 years.

Mary Tebow Hall '46, age 101, of Kansas City, Missouri, died May 25, 2025. She was a musician and played in orchestras in Des Moines and Pella in Iowa; Baltimore; Ann Arbor, Michigan; and in the Kansas City area.

Robert Harr '77, age 70, of Maryville, died June 5, 2025. He worked in banking for more than 40 years.

★ **Clell Hemphill '70**, age 91, of New Ulm, Minnesota, died Aug. 28, 2025. He began his career with General Electric and then worked in human resources and later became director of the Iowa Council on Disabilities in Des Moines, Iowa. After moving to Madison Lake, Minnesota, he was director of Rasmussen College in Mankato and director of the Minnesota Council on Disabilities. He also served multiple terms as mayor of Madison Lake.

Marilynn Thompson Henry '77, '80, age 94, of Nacogdoches, Texas, died Dec. 12, 2025. She was a teacher in Maryville and Nacogdoches and retired as a supervisor of student teachers at Stephen F. Austin State University.

Frank Hermsen '72, age 80, of Dubuque, Iowa, died June 21, 2025. He worked as a teacher, coach and counselor in Carroll and Breda before becoming executive director for a nonprofit disability support service in Carroll for 35 years, retiring in 2011.

Loretta Farmer Hornecker, age 85, of Surprise, Arizona, died Dec. 24, 2024. She taught business in Hamburg, Iowa, and Hickman Mills, Missouri.

Diane Hilyard Houston '79, age 78, of Maryville, died Oct. 14, 2025. She served as director of the Maryville Public Library from 1979 to 2009.

Eric Johnson, age 82, of Atlantic, Iowa, died Aug. 3, 2025. He had a 54-year teaching career in Ord, Oakland and Ainsworth in Nebraska; in Atlantic and Avoca in Iowa; as well as at Northwest and Iowa Western Community College.

Jennie Naylor Johnson '69, age 78, of Des Moines, Iowa, died July 26, 2025. She taught English in Owatonna, Minnesota, and then in Ankeny, Iowa, for 30 years before moving into an administration role.

Glenn Jonagan Jr. '87, age 83, of Kansas City, Missouri, died Aug. 28, 2025. He served as a school principal in Albany and Maryville and later worked in the TESS office at Northwest. He also served on the Maryville City Council and was its mayor.

Bill Kennebeck '72, age 77, of Trenton, Missouri, died July 3, 2025. He had a career spanning nearly 40 years in the popcorn industry, beginning as operations manager at Vogel Popcorn in Hamburg, Iowa. In 1991, he founded K&W Popcorn LLC in Trenton and operated the business until selling it in 2015.

Jane Mobley LeMonnier '71, '77, age 77, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, died Oct. 23, 2025. She was a first-grade teacher at schools in Missouri and Kansas.

Debbie Palaska Levitch '72, age 73, of Kyle, Texas, died July 16, 2025. She started her career in banking and then was a full-time mother.

Bob Lillie '59, age 90, of Prairie Village, Kansas, died June 24, 2025. He worked in the insurance industry for 30 years and operated a home-based upholstery business.

John Lovell '74, age 73, of Ellsworth, Iowa, died June 22, 2025. He was a high school art teacher and coach for 33 years, retiring in 2009.



Mary Ann Lowary, age 83, of Waukee, Iowa, died Oct. 18, 2025. She was an editor, photographer and owner of various small-town newspapers in Missouri and Montana before working in communication

at Graceland University in Lamoni, Iowa, and as the vice president of university relations at Northwest from 2004 until 2009.

Doug McMullen '75, age 72, of Spencer, Iowa, died Nov. 22, 2024. He had a 28-year career with UPS, retiring in 2014.



★ **Jim Meyer '72**, age 76, of Ankeny, Iowa, died Oct. 9, 2025. He had a 42-year career in agriculture business, banking and insurance.

Dave McGinness '72, age 75, of Trenton, Missouri, died July 3, 2025. He was employed with the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad and then Union Pacific Railroad, retiring after 42 years in 2015.

John Mobley '63, age 86, of Antelope, California, died Feb. 23, 2025. He was employed as a registrar at the University of California, Davis, and then at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Beverly McCowen Moe '49, age 97, of Des Moines, Iowa, died Dec. 15, 2025. She taught in Glidden, Greenfield and Des Moines area schools before working in various roles at the American Institute of Business and then as a court reporter supervisor, retiring in 2008.

Shirley Moses '57, age 90, of Topeka, Kansas, died Nov. 26, 2025. She was employed with the Kansas House of Representatives' clerk's office for 20 years.

Lisa Gates Mothersead '80, '84, age 67, of Springfield, Missouri, died June 2, 2025. She taught elementary school throughout northwest Missouri and then in Springfield.



Sue Wright Owens '57, age 90, of West Des Moines, Iowa, died April 4. She served as Northwest's first lady from 1977 to 1984 and was a prolific writer and painter. She wrote more than 600 poems, and her work was published in books, including "My Thoughts and More," three volumes of "The Art of Growing Older," and a children's book, "The Wild Animal Alphabet."

Ronald O'Dell '57, age 90, of Chillicothe, Missouri, died Dec. 25, 2025. He was employed with the Chillicothe R-II School District as a principal, teacher and coach.

Dr. Vincent Paolillo '65, age 82, of St. Joseph, Missouri, died Sept. 8, 2025. He served the St. Joseph School District for more than 40 years as a teacher, principal and director of secondary education before finishing his career as director of graduate and adult studies at William Woods University in Fulton.

Kathleen Parsons Parrett '73, '74, age 74, of Denver, Colorado, died June 20, 2025. She taught elementary special education in Chillicothe, Ohio, and later worked as a reading recovery interventionist in Pennsylvania.

★Vincent Polito '13, age 35, of Kansas City, Missouri, died Jan. 4, 2025. He was an E2 RE5 submariner with the U.S. Navy in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

★Sam Ratcliffe '73, age 82, of Higginsville, Missouri, died Aug. 16, 2025. He served 10 years on active duty with the U.S. Army and 11 years with the reserves, in special forces, ranger and infantry units. He also was employed for 20 years by IBM Corporation in Coral Gables, Florida, as a marketing representative, systems engineer and project manager. In retirement, he taught

and coached at Wentworth Military Academy in Lexington.

Benjamin Rex '11, age 37, of Cheyenne, Wyoming, died June 30, 2025. He worked for the state of Wyoming as a nutritionist.

★Gordon Robertson '58, age 91, of Kansas City, Missouri, died June 18, 2025. After beginning his career as a high school band and orchestra director, he began a band instrument business, served as a community opera conductor and was employed with the U.S. Postal Service.

Marylyn LaMar Robertson '56, age 91, of Kansas City, Missouri, died June 12, 2025. She spent most of her 40-year career as a music educator in Kansas City, Kansas, and then in North Kansas City.

★David Ross '72, age 76, of Mission, Texas, died July 11, 2025. He was a high school teacher and coach in Maryville, Fort Osage and Lee's Summit in Missouri before entering the banking industry as a mortgage lender for more than 30 years, retiring in 2017.

Mary Miller Russell '68, age 79, of Kansas City, Missouri, died Nov. 2, 2025. She taught in North Kansas City and Rolla public schools, eventually opening the Rolla Middle School library and serving as a librarian until her retirement.

Wendy Sapp '94, age 53, of Carroll, Iowa, died Nov. 23, 2025. She operated an in-home day care for 30 years.

Bob Snell '61, age 88, of Ottumwa, Iowa, died Oct. 1, 2025. He worked in education for 36 years as a teacher, director of elementary education and principal.

Lore McManus Solo '79, age 68, of Urbandale, Iowa, died July 28, 2025. After beginning her career as a news anchor, reporter and producer at WHO Radio in Des Moines, she worked 13 years in communication and marketing roles at the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services and the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs. For 15 years, she was principal and vice president of public relations at Strategic America and then operated her own firm, The Solo Consultancy.

★David Stark '63, age 89, of Gallatin, Missouri, died Sept. 26, 2025. He worked in Washington, D.C., for the U.S. Dept. of State, became a certified public accountant and was a civilian comptroller before moving to Gallatin, where he worked in several roles, including as a deputy sheriff and newspaper writer.

Debra Kiefer Stockwell '80, age 67, of Zanesville, Ohio, died Sept. 27, 2025. She began her career with the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company in Minneapolis and then worked in higher education as a teacher and academic advisor at Zane State College in Zanesville, Franklin University in Columbus and Ohio University-Zanesville.

Golda Merriett Strohecker '76, age 81, of Oceanside, California, died March 16, 2025. She was a registered nurse in Manassas, Virginia, for 20 years and then worked at hospitals in St. Joseph and Fairfax in Missouri. She also owned a hardware store with her husband in Burlington Junction, Missouri.

Karl Sundell '62, age 87, of St. Joseph, Missouri, died Dec. 2, 2025. After working as an auditor for the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and Swift and Co., he had a 30-year career with Boehringer Ingelheim, retiring as director of finance.

★Michael Thompson '92, age 75, of Maryville, died Oct. 9, 2025. He worked as a shrimp boat captain in Florida and Oregon before beginning his career as a social worker and therapist. He worked in Maryville as a substance abuse counselor and served as mayor of the city.

★Jim Totten '53, age 99, of Chillicothe, Missouri, died Sept. 23, 2025. He was an elementary and middle school art teacher.

Tom Trullinger '72, age 75, of Grant City, Missouri, died Oct. 18, 2025. He served for 28 years as a patrolman with the Missouri State Highway Patrol in Troop H, working primarily in Nodaway and Worth counties and retiring in 2001.

Robert Turner '79, age 68, of Colorado Springs, Colorado, died Sept. 14, 2024. He worked as a sales and marketing accounts executive.



Connie Carver Ury '75, '93

age 72, of Maryville, died Dec. 21, 2025. She was an educator and was employed as a reference librarian at Northwest from 1997 until her retirement in 2011.



Rhonda Bandow Velez '74

age 73, of Vermilion, Ohio, died Aug. 23, 2025. She was a teacher in Iowa and Ohio for more than 35 years.

Jerry Wetzel '59, '70, age 88, of Kansas City, Missouri, died May 26, 2025. He had a 36-year career as a teacher and coach in Bedford, Wayne and Indianola, all in Iowa. He was inducted into the Bedford and Indianola halls of fame and received the Iowa Girls Athletic Union's Jack North Award in 1995.

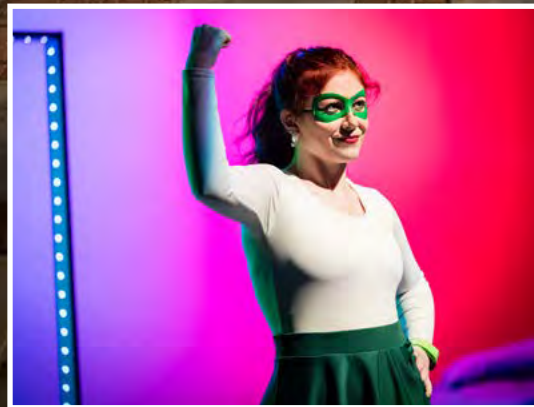
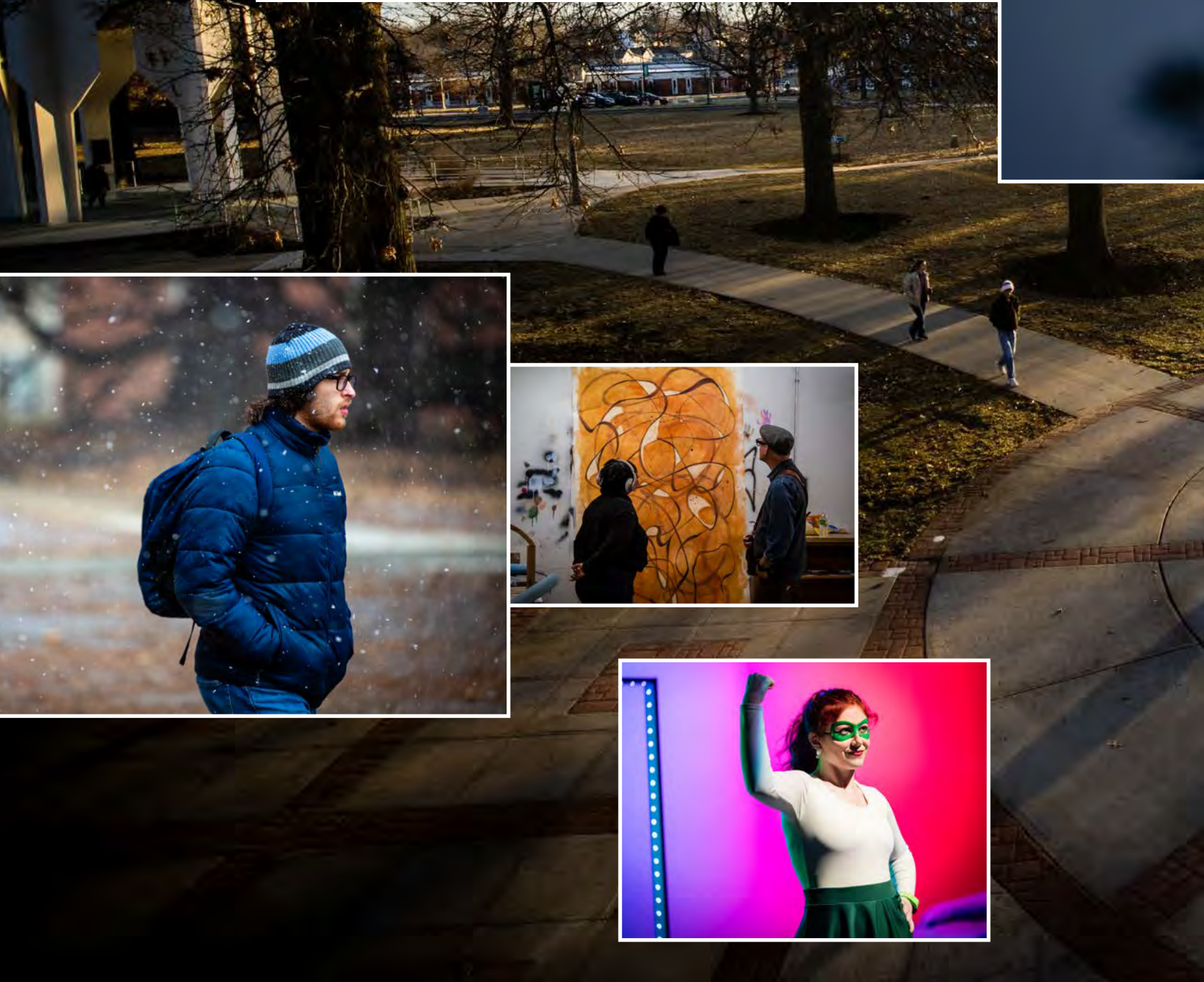
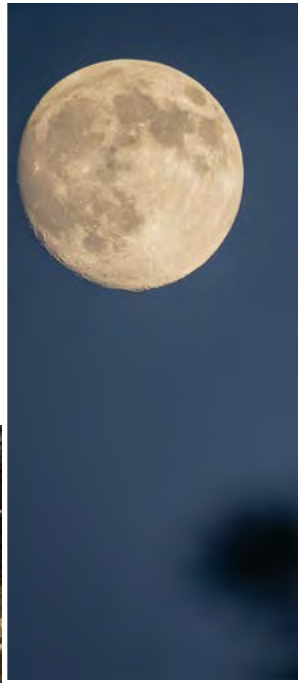
Dr. Wayne Woolsey '70, '71, age 77, of Excelsior Springs, Missouri, died Dec. 26, 2025. He had a 37-year career as a teacher, coach and administrator in Iowa, Missouri and at Northwest.

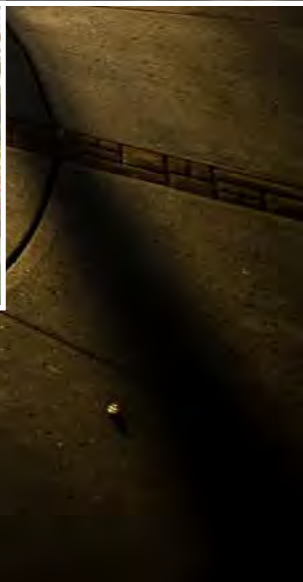
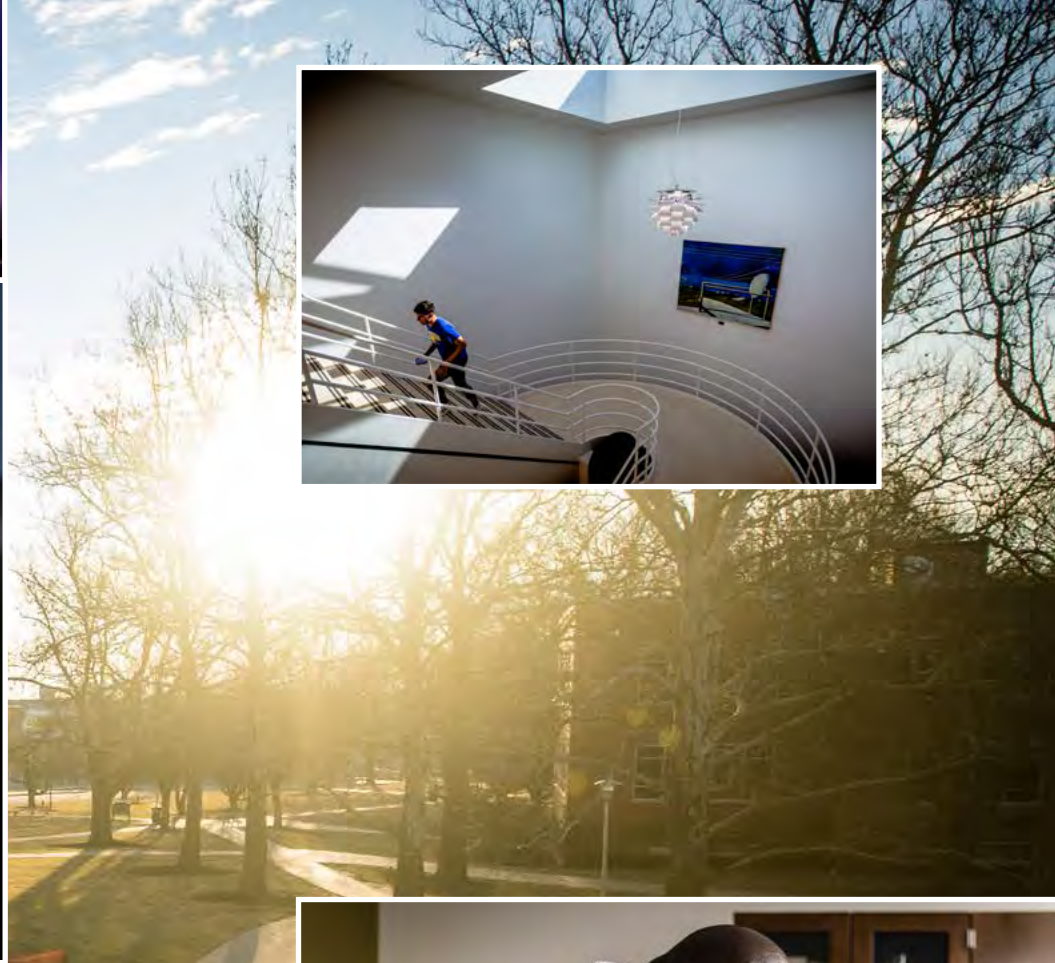
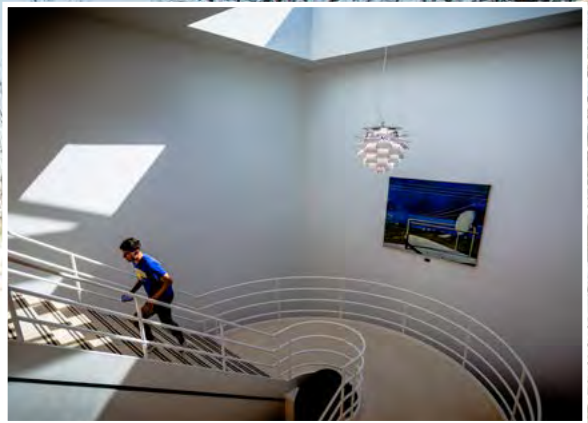
★Roland Wray '68, age 92, of Adams County, Iowa, died June 24, 2025. He taught and coached at colleges, high schools and junior high schools in Iowa, Colorado and Kansas.

LIGHT + LENS

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