

August 2023



Pitt State

MAGAZINE

**A NEW ERA
OF NURSING**



From the editor

It's wonderful to be reminded of the role that Pitt State plays in milestone moments for our graduates — the connection begins as students and lasts for the rest of their lives.

That connection is evident in these photos we received:



Two Gorillas, Nancy (BSED '73) and John Heidrick (BA '74, MA '78, MS '96) celebrated their Half Century Reunion on the same day that their granddaughter, Amber Heidrick, a graphic design major, graduated! The couple also got to walk with her at Commencement. What a memorable occasion for all three!



And, some 5,200 miles from Pittsburg, Jennifer Schultz Fey (BST '96) and Brandon Fey (BA '96) felt compelled to represent the Gorillas at The Colosseum in Rome — the largest amphitheater ever built and one that dates to 80 AD.

More milestone moments are sprinkled throughout this magazine, as well as in stories at pittstate.edu/gorillaconnection.

We welcome yours — please send them to psumag@pittstate.edu.

We'll try our best to share as many as possible in the next edition, and at facebook.com/pittstatealumni.

— Andra Stefanoni, *Editor*



The PittState Magazine is the official magazine of Pittsburg State University. Circulation: 65,500.

The PittState Magazine is produced by the Office of Creative & Strategic Communications for alumni and friends of the university.

For extra copies or information:

PSU Office of Creative & Strategic Communications
106 Russ Hall
1701 S. Broadway
Pittsburg, KS 66762-7575
620-235-4124
psumag@pittstate.edu



Pitt State

MAGAZINE

In this issue

6 GORILLA RISING
The university is launching a bold new initiative: Gorilla Rising, which will expand student opportunity and educational reach downtown.

8 DAN BIKES KANSAS
When President Dan Shipp left Gorilla Village on May 15, he had three goals, including raising \$8 million for student scholarships. Mission accomplished.

10 MAKING HISTORY
His stint as a Gorilla was short, but impactful. It was here at Pitt State that Cordell Tinch became the second-fastest athlete in collegiate history in the 110-meter hurdles and went on to sign as a pro.

16 FAMILY OF DOCTORS
If all goes well, by the end of this decade three brothers will be doctors, following in the footsteps of their dad, also a doctor — and all four began their education at Pitt State.

20 NEW NURSING ERA
Another milestone has been reached with the completion of the simulation hospital at Pitt State, ushering in a new era for the Irene Ransom Bradley School of Nursing.

16



President
Dan Shipp

Vice President for University Advancement
Kathleen M. Flannery

Executive Director of Creative & Strategic Communications
Abigail Fern (BA '98, MA '22)

20



Creative & Strategic Communications
Sam Clausen (BS '14)
Gregor Kalan (BS '01, MBA '19)
Paulina Scholes (BST '95, MS '21)
Andra Stefanoni (BA '91, MA '94)
Aaron Thompson (BS '09)
Erin Warner

Editor
Andra Stefanoni
Content
Bethanne Elliott (BS '18)
Andra Stefanoni
Design
Paulina Scholes
McKenna Ring (student)

Photography
Sam Clausen

More photos and stories at:
pittstate.edu/gorillaconnection

Podcasts at:

CONNECT WITH US!

GORILLA CONNECTION

Subscribe to the weekly Gorilla Connection digital newsletter, a snapshot of the inspiring people, innovative projects, and milestone moments that make Pitt State unique. Listen to the Gorilla Connection podcast on Buzzsprout or Spotify.

pittstate.edu/gorillaconnection

Miss a performance by any of the outstanding PSU music ensembles? You can watch them anytime through our archived livestreams:

bicknellcenter.com

We're convinced we have the prettiest small campus in the land, and photographer Sam Clausen has captured it in every season. Download your favorite view to use as your desktop background:

pittstate.edu/backgrounds

Many of you have gone on to become published authors, prompting one of our librarians to start an alumni book club! Learn more:

pittstate.edu/alumnibookclub

Need a good, old-fashioned Pitt State pick-me-up? Download the fight song to use as your ringtone, played by the PSU Pride of the Plains Marching Band!

pittstate.edu/info/fightsong

Loved this issue and feeling nostalgic? Find past magazines in our digital archive at:

pittstate.edu/magazine

Check out what campus looks like these days: take a virtual tour!

pittstate.edu/tour

Finding Gus



Anna (Deplue) Muir (BS '99) is a barn quilt artist in Stockton, Kansas, and showed off her Gorilla pride this summer by painting one with a splitface — it took her about six hours. "I have painted a few other designs over the years and wanted to make sure Pitt State was represented on the wall by the park in Stockton," she said.

And the winner is...

Once again, we received many correct entries, and we wish we could give a prize to each person who sent one! This time, our random drawing picked Greg Fitts (BSBA '72), who spied it on Page 11, in the top right-hand corner on the roof of the Kansas Technology Center.

Can you find it?

Search this issue and email your guess to psumag@pittstate.edu to be entered in our drawing. Include your first and last name, the year you graduated, and the page number and location you found Gus! One entry per person. Entries must be received by **Oct. 1**. We'll mail one lucky winner a hardbound copy of "Pittsburg State University: A Photographic History of The First 100 Years."





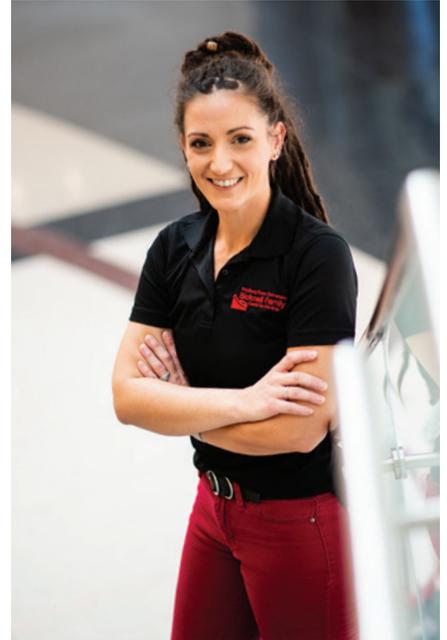
Driskill named new alumni director

Danielle Driskill (BS '12, MA '14) has been named director of the Alumni and Constituent Relations Office and executive director of the Pittsburg State University Alumni Association.

She replaces Jon Bartlow, who this summer was named interim associate vice president and dean of students.

Driskill previously served as assistant director of Alumni & Constituent Relations, and since 2022 has been the director of Development for the College of Technology.

"I am humbled and excited to take on this new role at PSU. With my experience in alumni relations and development, as well as my love and passion for my alma mater, I cannot wait to serve our alumni and friends in Gorilla Nation," Driskill said.



Witherspoon to direct Bicknell Center

Shawna Witherspoon (BA '19) has been named interim director of Pitt State's Bicknell Family Center for the Arts, where as a student she worked as a gallery assistant. Soon after graduating, she was named client services coordinator.

"In each of my roles, I've enjoyed being able to share my love of the arts with the campus and community. I hope to help others realize there is so much more to the arts than being a performer or a musician — like lighting design, audio/video editing, and even event design! It's exciting to see our team of student employees hone their skills and find their passions doing those things as they help student performers and professional performers make magic on stage," she said.



A "second home"

Aswini Mudireddy (MBA '05) clearly remembers being with her family at the grand opening of the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts in 2015; she was awestruck.

When the opportunity presented itself to bring her daughter, Thasya, to the Bicknell Center in March for the International Food & Culture Fair, she jumped at it — and they came all the way from Los Angeles, California, to do so.

Thasya was featured in the event performing a traditional Indian dance called Bharatanatyam.

"We loved experiencing the rich diversity of Pitt State and being part of it by performing at the extraordinary Bicknell Center," she said. "As an international student visiting a foreign country for the first time, Pitt State was my second home."

Leadership changes

COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

Judy Smetana, associate professor and graduate program coordinator of Human Resources Development, has been named interim dean of the College of Technology after the retirement of Bob Frisbee in June. Smetana joined the faculty at Pitt State in 2016.

HONORS COLLEGE

Brian Moots, an associate

professor in English & Modern Languages, has been chosen as the new director of the Honors College. Moots replaces Professor Craig Fuchs, who retired earlier this year.

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Tatum Ahring (BS '23) has been appointed assistant director of University Affairs in the President's Office. As a student, she was named an Outstanding Senior finalist and worked as a President's Fellow.

SCHOOL OF CONSTRUCTION

Don Colegrove assumed the role of director of the School of Construction in August, replacing longtime director Professor Jim Otter, who will continue to teach. Colegrove taught in the School of Construction Management and the College of Business and Social Sciences at the University of Louisiana, Monroe, and was the owner and licensed contractor of a design and building company.

Bartlow named interim AVP

Jon Bartlow, who for nearly a decade has served as the director of the Alumni and Constituent Relations Office and executive director of the Alumni Association, has been appointed as the interim associate vice president and dean of students — a new



position created as part of an organizational restructuring.

Bartlow now oversees nearly all aspects of campus life, and will be part of the team reporting to the new vice president for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management Karl Stumo.

His oversight includes Campus Activities, Greek Life, Student Government, Student Wellness Programming and Counseling, Campus Food

Services, Barnes and Noble Gorilla Bookstore, University Housing, the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts, and the Overman Student Center.

Bartlow is a two-time graduate of Pitt State, having earned a bachelor's in Communication in 1999 and a master's in Communication in 2003. He earned a Ph.D. in higher education administration from Saint Louis University in 2019.

New band director

Joseph "Jobey" Wilson has been hired as the director of athletic bands, including the Pride of the Plains Marching Band, and assistant professor of music. He fills a vacancy left by



Professor Doug Whitten, who served in that role for 20 years and died last June.

Wilson is a native of Oklahoma who marched with the Cavaliers Drum and Bugle Corps as a youth.

He graduated in 1999 from the University of Oklahoma, earned a master's from the New England Conservatory, and a doctorate from Boston University.

He has served as director of athletic bands at Bentley University, and taught at Boston College, the University of Southern Maine, and UMASS-Boston, and taught lessons in the Lexington and Hopkinton public schools.

He developed "Camp Jobey" Summer Brass Institutes at Boston College, has been principal tuba of the New Bedford, Lexington, and Atlantic Symphony Orchestras, and the Portland Brass Quintet, and is a solo recording artist for PARMA Recordings.



Back to back

The Pittsburg State University men's outdoor track & field team brought home the program's second straight NCAA Division II Outdoor National Championship in May after compiling 66 points in a three-day championship meet in Colorado.

The Gorillas, under second-year head coach Kyle Rutledge, associate head coach/meet director Brian Mantooth, assistant coaches Ben Barrows, Jesse-Lee Miller, Jason Crow, and Louis Rollins, and graduate assistant Caden Gustafson, completed the season sweep after also claiming the 2023 NCAA Division II Indoor National Championship in March.

The Gorillas have now captured four national championships, winning indoor titles in 2018 and 2023 as well as back-to-back outdoor titles in 2022 and 2023.

Associate of Arts degrees

At the urging of President Dan Shipp, the Kansas Board of Regents authorized Pitt State to automatically award Associate of Arts degrees in General Studies to students once they've met the requirements of the degree. Pitt State will be the first university in Kansas to do so.

The initiative will start this fall.

"Students come first at Pitt State — full stop. Our faculty and staff are designing a new model that will encourage students to stack their achievements as they pursue future personal and professional goals," said Shipp.

This is especially meaningful to those working toward a Bachelor's degree but who must stop out for a variety of reasons. Having

an Associate's will increase their opportunity in the workforce and their lifetime earning potential. Should they return, it gives them a solid starting point.

In the past four years, Pitt State has had nearly 600 students with hours for such a degree, and those degrees will be retroactively awarded in the coming year.

The move is endorsed by the National Institute of Student Success; at a time when retention is challenging at universities across the nation, it's thought to be a strategy that will improve persistence.

"Our intent is for our students at Pitt State to have the most valuable higher education experience in the country," Shipp said.

Coaching legend

Gorilla graduate Larry Garman was recognized at the Robert W. Plaster Center in

February for his storied 60-year football coaching career.



Garman served 34 seasons at Pittsburg High School as head coach where he led the Purple Dragons to a stunning 255-84-5 record with three Class 5A state titles in 1983, 1988 and 1990, and had 21 playoff appearances and 31 winning seasons — a state record. He then spent 24 seasons as an assistant coach at Pitt State. At the event, Garman was inducted into the Kansas Shrine Bowl Hall of Fame.



Gorilla Rising

Bold new initiative planned for downtown

Pittsburg State University is launching a bold new initiative in Downtown Pittsburg: Gorilla Rising, which will expand the university's educational reach in the Block22 neighborhood that opened in 2018 at Fourth and Broadway.

A new building for the Kelce College of Business will become the keystone anchor. New programs that are critical to growing the business community will include specializations in supply chain management and entrepreneurship.

"We are embracing our micropolitan mission, which will provide us with new opportunities to engage with the business community on a more intimate level," said Dean Paul Grimes. "It will mean creative new avenues for expanding programs, including internship options with local businesses and living-learning communities."

The building also will house the university's Business and Economic Research Center and the Professional Sales Center. A partnership with the Colonial Fox Theatre also will allow for shared space.

The historic Besse Hotel will be redeveloped for student apartments and Pitt State's Center for READing.

The project was approved by the Kansas Board of Regents and endorsed by faculty and Grimes.

The estimated cost is approximately \$50 million, of which the PSU Foundation has in hand \$7 million contributed by donors for the Kelce College of Business portion, which is estimated to cost approximately \$34 million. The Besse Hotel portion is estimated to cost approximately \$16 million.

The project was awarded a grant of \$12.5 million from the Kansas Department of Commerce through its competitive University Challenge Grant program. Private-public partnerships are being sought to fill the gap.

Design development is underway, with the construction phase targeted to start in 2024 and classes beginning there in 2026.

Structural challenges

The current home to the KCOB, built in 1950 as a laboratory high school and converted for the

"By moving downtown, we are embracing our micropolitan mission, which will provide us with new opportunities to engage with the Pittsburg business community on a more intimate level. It will provide us with creative new avenues for expanding our programs, including internship options with local businesses and living-learning communities."

Paul Grimes, dean,
Kelce College of Business

college's use in the mid-1970s, is one of the most heavily utilized buildings on campus; more than 1,000 students are enrolled in business courses each year.

In 2015, a campaign began to raise funds to provide students with an academic home that inspires innovation and nurtures entrepreneurial talents, but it became apparent that due to structural issues, renovating the current building would not be an option, and it was reimagined into the downtown project.

Athletics to honor Hall of Fame Class

Pitt State's Intercollegiate Athletics Hall of Fame Class of 2023 will be inducted at 6 p.m. Oct. 6 in the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts and will be recognized at halftime of the 2 p.m. game on Oct. 7 against Emporia State at Carnie Smith Stadium.

The induction ceremony is open to the public.



Nate Dreiling
(2010–13), a four-time NCAA Division II All-American linebacker in football.



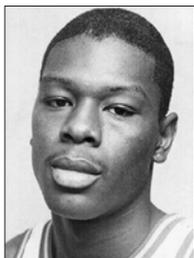
Duke Palmer
(1989–92), an All-America cornerback who set the school single season record for interceptions.



Russ Jewett, the Gorillas legendary cross country/track & field coach from 1986–2021.



Larissa Richards
(2008–13), a six-time NCAA-II All-America thrower in women's track & field.



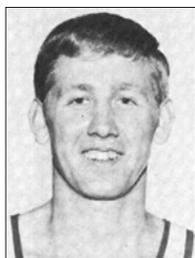
Tony McCoy
(1984–85), a standout men's basketball player who set the school's highest scoring total for two-year players.



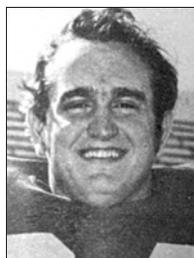
Ibraheem Suberu, the longest-tenured (1999–2013) and winningest volleyball coach in school history.

Legacy

Mike Jones (1970–71), an NAIA All-America men's basketball performer who was selected by the Phoenix Suns in the 1971 NBA Draft, and **Jim Manley** (1968–71), an Associated Press Little All-America selection as an offensive lineman in football for the Gorillas, will be inducted in the Hall of Fame's "Legacy" category. It honors those who completed their athletic eligibility 50 years or more ago.



Jones



Manley

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

HOMECOMING

Activities are planned for the week of October 23–28, with the Homecoming parade, tailgating, and game against Sioux Falls, South Dakota, set for Oct. 28. The Taste of Pittsburg will be held Oct. 27 from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Overman Student Center. pittstate.edu/tasteofpittsburg

FAMILY DAY

Activities — including several just for kids — are planned for Sept. 23. Attendees receive a gift and a meal voucher to use at GorillaFest. pittstate.edu/alumni

OPERATION GAME DAY (Military Appreciation)

Activities are being planned by ROTC, Campus Activities, and Alumni & Constituent Relations for Nov. 11 before and during the 2 p.m. game against Central Oklahoma. pittstate.edu/operationgameday

BICKNELL FAMILY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

The national Broadway tour of "Annie" is coming to Pitt State on Nov. 17, and the national Broadway tour of the innovative percussion group Stomp is coming on Feb. 14, 2024! Ticket sales will begin in August at bicknellcenter.org.



MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

When President Dan Shipp left Gorilla Village on May 15, he had three goals:

1. to get to know his new home state.
2. to connect with alumni and other stakeholders.
3. to raise \$8 million for student scholarships.

WITH THE HELP OF GRAD AND AVID CYCLIST DARRELL PULLIAM (BST '90) and a team of campus personnel, Shipp logged 800 miles in 12 days, met more than 1,500 Gorillas, and brought in just shy of \$8 million in pledges, with gifts still being made in the weeks that followed.

“Our goal was to help make the cost of coming to Pitt State affordable for our students and their families,” he said. “And, as a transplant from Nebraska, I wanted to get to know the state and its people up close and personal, see what’s happening in communities where our students and alumni live, and make these kinds of important connections.”

In each community, he saw that Gorilla spirit is alive and well.

“With each person I’ve met on this trip, I’m continually reminded how connected we truly all are. It’s been very gratifying, very inspiring,” Shipp said.

Among them was Bob McNellis

(BBA '87), a member of the Gorilla football team from 1982–84 who now works for Oracle Health and who rode with Shipp from Iola to Lawrence wearing a football jersey.

“As soon as I heard about it, I said,



‘Count me in!’” he said. “I have really fond memories of being at Pitt State and felt it was important to draw attention to this cause.”

Joining Shipp from Ottawa to Lawrence was Cynthia Lane (BSED '82, MSED '86), a two-time graduate who went on to become a highly recognized leader in education, spending 30 years in the public school system in Kansas City,

Kansas. In 2016, she earned the Kansas Superintendent of the Year award.

Today she is the chair of the Kansas Governor’s Council on Education and serves on the Kansas Board of Regents.

“I wanted to pay it forward,” she said. “I think about all the opportunities that I had because I had the chance to go to Pitt State, and I want others to have the same opportunities.”

Topeka was on the route, so Shipp





“With each person I’ve met on this trip, I’m continually reminded how connected we truly all are — from alumni who have shared their memories of being here 50 years ago, to community college presidents whose graduates are heading our way for the next part of their education, to a couple of recent grads who wanted to hop on their bikes and get to know the new guy and support this idea of raising money for future students. It’s been very gratifying, very inspiring.”

— President Dan Shipp



rode to the monthly Kansas Board of Regents meeting, visited the Brown vs. Board of Education National Historic Site on the 50th anniversary of the landmark case, and met with Lt. Gov. David Toland, who also serves as the Secretary of Commerce.

“With Dan making this trip, it’s really good he’s able to get out into the community and see alumni that may not have been back to school in a while to talk about what he’s doing,” Alcalá said. “With state cuts, and inflation where it’s going, these funds will really help students coming in.”

Product Manufacturing program, have put on the map in tiny Colby, Kansas. Called Advantage Architectural Woodwork, it is the only company in the U.S. that manufactures high performance European windows from wood.



“We’re just a couple of alumni out here giving it everything we’ve got, and we’re very proud to have graduated from Pitt State,” MacMillan said. “It’s really meaningful for us to have him [Dan] come this far out to see us. We’re proud to show him what we’re doing out here.”

“He’s a big supporter of everything we’re doing in Southeast Kansas, certainly at Pitt State University,” Shipp said.

Alcalá, once a member of the PSU Cheer Team, wore a Pitt State Gorilla costume for the ride out of town.

Shipp credits the student leaders and staff who planned and implemented the initiative, and who provided support and gear along the way, with its success.

Toland said the scholarship dollars, along with the research being done at the university’s National Institute for Materials Advancement, has economic ripple effects across the state, and he considers Pitt State “the engine that’s driving Southeast Kansas.”

Two very recent graduates showed up to meet Shipp: Colin Potluri and Clayton Crellin (2021) who biked with him on the stretch from Wichita to Hutchinson.

“This is incredible. I went to Pitt State to become a teacher, and I just want to pay that forward,” said Potluri. “Raising money for this cause is awesome. Educating for the future is what I’m all about.”

“They took this idea and went with it, and I’m so thankful they shared the vision and quickly worked to make it happen,” he said.

Dan Alcalá (BST ‘73) showed up to meet Shipp in Wichita.

At Dodge City, Regent Diana Mendoza joined Shipp for a ride and more community service; they picked up trash along the Santa Fe Trail historic site. She described it as a privilege to support his mission, a mission that “significantly highlights what matters the most in higher education: our students.”

He is grateful, he said, for donor support and alumni participation.

At one of his last stops, Shipp toured a unique company that Gorillas Bob Holloway (BST ‘04) and Kyle MacMillan (BST ‘05), both graduates of the university’s Wood

“We had gifts of all sizes to support the student experience. We’re grateful for every dollar given and humbled by every person who supported the cause through donations, by attending a gathering, or by cheering us along the way,” he said. “It’s amazing to see such enthusiasm for Gorilla Nation across the state.”



“My mind set is always the same, train at a high level and compete at an even higher level.”

MAKING HISTORY

LAST YEAR, CORDELL TINCH WAS SELLING CELL PHONES. This year, he's been making history. By the time you read this, it's anyone's guess.

His stint as a Gorilla was short, but impactful. This spring, Tinch, a sophomore, became the second-fastest athlete in collegiate history — not just at Pitt State, but anywhere — in the 110-meter hurdles under all conditions with a time of 12.97 (+3.0).

He set a record in the MIAA Outdoor Track & Field Championships by becoming the first male athlete to win three individual titles — twice in the hurdles, once in the long jump.

By late June, he was on record as the fastest man in the world in the 110m hurdles. By the end of the month, he'd signed with a pro agent.

In July, he raced at the U.S. championships in Oregon and qualified for the world championship in Budapest as a member of Team USA.

And next? Who knows.

Tinch grew up in Chicago and Green Bay and first tried track in middle school. He found success in high school, but figured

he'd be a football player, making it to the NFL one day.

But the hurdles pulled at him, and he found his calling.

He enrolled at a university in Minnesota, then competed for the University of Kansas and did well, but issues with his transfer made him ineligible for Nationals. When the pandemic hit, he was struggling with mental health. He went to Coffeyville Community College for a semester, but ultimately returned home and traded in his track shoes for the cell phone store.

And then, last summer, a former roommate and a few friends who had transferred to Pitt State suggested he become a Gorilla.

It had been awhile since he'd pushed his body, but Tinch felt healthy and well, and with his mom's encouragement, he was ready to give it another try.

By January he was in Pittsburg, training under award-winning Coach Kyle

Rutledge and his staff.

They started slowly, but time was of the essence: the season would start in February. Finch was uncertain what he could accomplish. But after his first meet, one in which he had two wins and three personal bests, any remaining anxiety about his abilities lifted and he was off and running — literally. He began setting records.

“It means a lot – not only for me, but for Division II as a whole and even more for Pitt State. To know that in track and field, you can go wherever and be successful wherever as long as you're determined enough and buy into what you're training for,” he said. “My mind set is always the same, train at a high level and compete at an even higher level.”

The decision to forego the remainder of his NCAA eligibility wasn't easy. Tinch is leaving Pitt State as the first male athlete in NCAA Division II history to win three individual titles at the same NCAA Outdoor Championship meet.

Through it all, Rutledge said the way Tinch handled his success is what impressed him most.

“He's always got a great attitude, a great personality, and always has a smile on his face.”



“When you’re able to put together all you’ve learned and make a business model that’s great for everyone and do it in a way that promotes the sustainability of the planet — talk about the ultimate reward.”



Saving the planet one car at a time

IN 2021, KELLY BURGESS (BSET '01) FIGURED OUT HOW TO TAKE WHAT HE'D LEARNED IN COLLEGE and start a business aimed at saving the planet one electric vehicle at a time.

Burgess began his journey in middle school by making a pirate radio station, then in high school by learning to install and repair car stereos. When he got to Pittsburg State University as an automotive technology major, the first hybrid electrical vehicles appeared on the market.

He was intrigued.

"While classmates were interested in dual overhead cam 32 valve performance V8s, I was fascinated with blending electrons and petrol," he said.

As a student, he got a job at Eagle Picher, a leading producer of batteries and energetic devices. Tinkering with a V8 Chevy Nova at Mo-Kan Dragway fueled his love for the way machines work.

As a graduate, he was snapped up by CNH Industrial and learned about the business side of bringing a product to market.

In 2021, he purchased his first electric car.

"I thought, 'I can take industrial power and turn it into a fast charger. I know how to do that. I know how to do it in a mobile way.' So, I put all of the pieces of my experiences together, and I turned it into a business," he said.

Action Charging and Energy was born.

"When you're able to put together all you've learned and make a business model that's great for everyone and do it in a way that promotes the sustainability of the planet — talk about the ultimate reward," he said.

In the past year, Burgess installed EV charging stations at the grocery store in the small community in which they live, and he built a roadside EV service unit.

He never forgot his roots.

"When I was in class my professor, Bob Frisbee, pulled us aside and said when we leave here and get settled in, we need to remember our roots. The program stays vibrant because of the support of its alumni. I took that to heart," said Burgess.

Burgess has served 13 years on the College of Technology advisory board and has arranged for the donation of a number of training aids, engines, and transmissions to the program to help the next generation of students.

Last spring, he found a unique way to give back: by donating and installing a new EV charging station in Downtown Pittsburg in partnership with the City of Pittsburg, local sustainability advocates, and the Colonial Fox Theatre, where the charging station was installed on the north exterior wall.

"It's the only one of its kind in Pittsburg and it's the first fast charging station in southeast Kansas," Burgess said. "This new charger puts the city on the map for EV drivers and hopefully will give them a reason to visit for a few hours."



BREAKING BARRIERS

on a shared journey

In a mirrored journey, first-generation students Tyleen (Winterbower II) Caffrey and Carol (Meza) Bakke became part of the fewer than 2 percent in the world to earn a Ph.D. — a number even smaller for youth growing up in the foster care system as they did.

ONLY 46 PERCENT IN THE FOSTER SYSTEM WILL FINISH HIGH SCHOOL.

Just 2 to 10 percent will earn a bachelor's degree.

And then there are Caffrey and Bakke, who learned to break system barriers to earn the highest level of academic achievement.

A Kansas City native, Caffrey grew up in poverty, in an abusive home, and in a family surrounded by addictions and mental health issues.

As a teen, she entered foster care, and as a ward of the court, enrolled at Pitt State on a music scholarship.

In 1997, she graduated with a degree in social work and began working in child welfare as a case manager to youth in foster

care. Enter Meza-Bakke.

Meza-Bakke was placed in foster care at age 13 after experiencing domestic violence, physical abuse, and rejection. Her young social worker, who had experienced the foster care system herself, changed her life.

Caffrey worked with Meza-Bakke's family, and within four months, was able to reunite them and continue aftercare services for successful reintegration.

That wasn't the end of their mirrored journey.

In 2004, Caffrey married, and her husband's military career moved her from Kansas.

In 2005, Meza-Bakke graduated from high school, earned her associate degree at Fort

Scott Community College, and served in the U.S. Army National Guard.

Caffrey called Meza-Bakke while she was deployed overseas, continuing to maintain a connection.

While Caffrey's husband was stationed in Mississippi, she began her master's in social work at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Meza-Bakke returned from deployment as a purple heart recipient in 2011 and followed her mentor's steps to become a social worker by beginning her bachelor's degree at Pitt State.

Both women continued their education and earned their master's in social work degrees, and Meza-Bakke began her

social work career at the same agency where it all started — the nonprofit child welfare agency where Caffrey was her case manager.

Both found ways to empower others: Caffrey initiated a student-led prom dress drive that led to her now 15-year-old nonprofit, Monarch Formals, and Meza-Bakke established the Brad Cameron Scholarship at Pitt State in memory of a beloved professor.

And, they both were accepted by Our Lady of the Lake University (San Antonio, Texas) for a new doctoral program, where their dissertation focused on military issues, graduating in 2022 (Caffrey) and 2023 (Meza-Bakke).

Meza-Bakke (left)
and Caffrey (right).



FAMILY OF DOCTORS

If all goes well, by the end of this decade three Pittsburg brothers will be doctors, following in the footsteps of their dad, also a doctor — and all four began their education at Pitt State.

THE YOUNGEST, AARON, GRADUATED FROM PITT STATE IN MAY with a degree in Biology and Spanish, and this fall will be a first-year medical student at the University of Kansas Medical Center. He is the recipient of a Golden Gorilla Award and was an Outstanding Senior finalist.

The other two, Ryan and Simon, will be entering their third year at KUMC.

The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

"Our dad, Dennis Higginbotham (BS '75, BS '87) is an OB-GYN for the Pittsburg area, and our mother is a labor and delivery nurse, so we definitely had that as a source of guidance growing up, our family being in the medical field," said Simon.

The three grew up in an environment of community service.

"It's fulfilling to be able to help someone," Aaron said. "We learned that early on."

Aaron began thinking of a potential career in health care in high school when he was encouraged to take Anatomy & Physiology, and he was further guided in college by his advisor, Professor Virginia Rider. Hearing from grads who are now health professionals when they return to campus to speak to Pre-Health Orientation class was valuable, he added.

Aaron, who is interested in radiology

and anesthesiology, went through the early decision program at Pitt State and knew last October he had a spot secured in medical school.

Simon, who is interested in cardiothoracic surgery and the use of the da Vinci robotic system, can't remember wanting to do anything else.

"When you think about what you want from a career, to have it benefit others is nice. But with medicine you can benefit others and also be constantly challenging yourself, especially in surgery," Simon said. "It becomes mastery of a process, but in order to master it you also have to understand everything that underlies the process. It's an academically stimulating environment and that drew me to it."

Ryan, leaning toward a specialty in plastic surgery, knew at age four or five he wanted to go into medicine, first thinking he might become a veterinarian.

"Starting out, going through college, I knew I wanted to be able to make a significant difference, and I realized that's a difficult thing to do on a large scale. But if I can make a significant difference for a single person, and they can go out and make a difference to someone else, I can be the source of the ripple. That's my goal, going into medicine."

Left to right:
Simon, Ryan,
and Aaron.





A GLOBAL GORILLA

Angela Martino Lewis may have grown up and lived in Pittsburgh her entire life, but she's global: she attends campus cultural events, takes educational trips abroad, has served as a host to international students, and since 2018 has participated in Pitt State's Friendship Family program. This year, she was recognized for her efforts with the Global Gorilla Friendship Award.





“They bring joy to my life and it’s always hard to say goodbye!”



Lewis earned her bachelor’s in Education in 1994 and her master’s in Education in 2002, and for 27 years has taught at Pittsburg Community Middle School, where she’s strived to help her students become more well-rounded.

Eight years ago, she was inspired to begin writing international travel grants with colleague and fellow Gorilla Lynette Wescott (BSED ’94, MS ’96).

“I told her: ‘We’re going to travel the world!’ and we’ve done that for seven years,” she said.

Their travels have taken them to

landmarks in Brussels, Canada, Greece, Italy, and Paris, and Lewis has ventured to Belgium, Belize, Honduras, Mexico, and Poland on her own. They’ve learned about everything from the Holocaust to the origins of the Olympic Games.

At home in Pittsburg, Lewis has continued to “travel” the world by hosting students who live with her each semester; she includes Wescott in activities whenever possible.

“Several years ago, I joined the Friendship Family Program,” Lewis said. “I’ve had students from Brazil, France, South Korea, Taiwan, France, China, and we’ve become good friends. They bring joy to my life and it’s always hard to say goodbye!”

The students have shared their culture, and she’s shared hers, taking them to American line dances, local concerts, a thrift shop, and to play pool and eat pizza.

They have carved pumpkins at Halloween, experienced

Thanksgiving dinner, have gone to see Santa at Meadowbrook Mall at Christmas, and created scavenger hunts across campus on Easter.

In between, they have shared slices of American daily life, like baking cookies — something the Korean students were excited about, because many Koreans don’t have ovens.

The more they visited, the more at ease they were in asking questions about cultural differences and stereotypes.

Students like Cherin Kang, an English and Business major from South Korea, said it made a big difference in the Pitt State experience.

“When we first came to America, everything was new and unfamiliar. Through Friendship Families, we learned new things and a new culture. They are important to international students. It was like having an ‘American mother’ who could help us adjust,” Kang said.



A new



“It’s going to help us feel a lot more confident by the time we graduate. It gets me really excited for senior year, and for all those who come after us.”

— Junior Olivia Chase,
Louisburg, Kansas

era of nursing

Simulation hospital provides students a realistic setting in which to learn



ANOTHER MILESTONE HAS BEEN REACHED with the completion of the simulation hospital at Pittsburg State University, ushering in a new era for the Irene Ransom Bradley School of Nursing.

“We’ve all had tears when we walked in that door and we think about what our students will have to learn in, and our faculty will have to teach in,” said Ashleigh Heter (BSN ’09, MSN ’12), who coordinates the BSN program for juniors and seniors.

The nearly \$8 million project was built by McCownGordon and funded by private gifts initiated by donors. A formal ribbon cutting is planned for Aug. 31.

The project includes a 10,000-square foot addition to McPherson Hall, home to the

nursing school since it was built in 1977, and renovations of approximately 14,000 square feet in McPherson Hall.

“The project is absolutely amazing and is much more than we expected,” said Cheryl Giefer (BSN ’78, FNP ’96), director of the nursing school. “All of us are very appreciative and we cannot wait to begin using our new space.”

Giefer was a junior nursing student when McPherson Hall was built and recalls taking classes in several buildings on campus.

The same is true of last year’s nursing students, who were scattered between Grubbs Hall, Axe Library, the Garfield Weede Building, and the

Kansas Technology Center, since construction began in April 2022.

It was worth it, they say.

“I’m looking forward to August,” said Junior Alyssa O’Hare, of Kansas City. “It will be a great home — we can study here, practice here, do simulations here.”

Junior Zackary Goswick, of Webb City, Missouri, is excited to use it during his senior year.

“It has a hospital feel, so it gives us as close to the real environment as we can get,” he said.

Junior Olivia Chase, of Louisburg, Kansas, said she believes it will take their skills to the next level.

“It’s going to help us feel a lot more confident by the time we graduate,” she said. “It gets me really excited for senior year, and for all those who come after us.”



PURPOSE

McPherson Hall was built to accommodate 60 students; in recent years, the nursing school has had cohorts of 90 students. The addition will allow for 120 students, and nursing graduates are in high demand.

Current data shows a nursing workforce crisis in Kansas and nationally: 275,000 more nurses will be needed nationally by 2030, and in Kansas, it's projected there will be more than 53,000 nurse openings through 2026 (CNA, RN, and Home Health Aid).

Heter said the purpose of the addition is to give graduates a realistic setting in which to practice skills — and make mistakes — before they begin their careers.

“When they actually do get out into a hospital, they’ll have had experiences that they can draw from,” Heter said.

Part of that experience is with highly technological simulated patients, including a pediatric mannequin that can cough, move, and present symptoms, and a birthing simulator complete with mixed reality goggles to see what’s happening inside the patient — including uterine contractions.

“We’re in a rural community, so some of our graduates will go on to work in small medical centers where there may not be a doctor, and they need to be somewhat knowledgeable about precipitous delivery,” Heter said.

The building includes simulated hospital rooms, associated

control and preparation rooms, debriefing rooms, a waiting area, a nurse’s station, and a study space outfitted with state-of-the-art simulation equipment.

The classrooms are flexible spaces outfitted with large monitors so students can see presentations no matter where they’re seated.

Carpeting throughout, and into McPherson Hall, lessens noise.

Large glass windows allow for natural light.

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

Geothermal wells are part of the system that heats and cools the building — the only academic building on campus that is entirely heated and cooled with geothermal. Geothermal energy is considered a renewable resource because it harnesses the earth’s heat.

The white roof on the addition was an intentional decision to reduce heat gain and save on future energy costs.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF NURSING

Today’s students can select programs such as the BSN (Pre-licensure), RN to BSN, MSN (Education Emphasis), MSN to DNP, and the BSN to DNP.

The baccalaureate degree program in Nursing, master’s degree program in Nursing, and Doctor of Nursing Practice are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

The bachelor’s of science in Nursing and Doctor of Nursing Practice programs are approved by the Kansas State Board of Nursing.

VIDEO:



SPECIAL CONNECTION

A baby born at the hospital in Pittsburg and cared for by a nurse would grow up to become a student in the Irene Ransom Bradley School of Nursing. The student: Kacey Pitts, graduated with her BSN in May '23.

Her teacher and advisor? That nurse, Professor Barbara McClaskey, who had nursing students on rotation with her that day. Kacey’s mom, Kim (BSED '98, MS '08), told the students they were welcome to practice patient care on her. McClaskey gave Kacey a bottle and rocked her, never dreaming she’d one day become Kacey’s teacher and advisor.

The Pitts family has a special connection to Pitt State: Kacey will be the third of three sisters to graduate from the School of Nursing. One of her sisters — either Haley (BSN '19) or Katy (BSN '20) — took that photo through the window.

LOOKING BACK...



The Irene Ransom Bradley School of Nursing dates to the 1940s when the Mount Carmel School of Nursing first opened its doors, overseen by administrators at Mount Carmel Hospital before transitioning to Pitt State in 1970. The first BSN students graduated in 1973, the first RN students in 1974, and the first MSN students in 1993. It became a school in 2013, and in 2015 began offering a doctoral program (DNP).

Meritorious Achievement Award

A director at a world leader in plastic optics and the chief operations officer of a digital dermatopathology company have been chosen for the Meritorious Achievement Award, the highest award based on career achievement presented by the Alumni Association.



John E. Duncan

BS '98

John E. Duncan serves as the director of Manufacturing Engineering and Quality Assurance at Greenlight Optics, a world leader in plastic optics based in Ohio.

He is the son of John (BSBA '72) and Rebecca Duncan (BSEd '90 and MS '98) of Pittsburg.

Greenlight offers design and engineering services and the manufacturing of optical systems. It specializes in projection engines, LED and laser illumination, imaging modules, plastic optics, and integration with electrical and mechanical systems.

Duncan is responsible for managing a team that develops the manufacturing processes and for managing the entire quality system for Greenlight.

Earning a degree in plastics engineering was the first step toward that achievement. He also earned a master's in Business Administration from Xavier University.

Starting as a process engineer for Corning Precision Lens/3M Precision Optics, he advanced to product engineer, then to manufacturing tech development specialist and supervisor — a role in which he helped invent and commercialize the world's first micro projector small enough to fit inside a cell phone. That invention earned Popular Science Magazine's "Best Invention of the Year" award in 2008.

He became senior product integrity engineer for Evenflo before taking on his current role for Greenlight in 2011.

Duncan and his wife, Valerie, and their four children, Broderic, Zachary, Matthew, and Eli, live in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he is an active volunteer in youth sports.



Scott J. Mattivi

BS '85

Scott J. Mattivi is COO of PathologyWatch with labs in Phoenix, Salt Lake City, and Port Charlotte, Florida, where he provides leadership and operational oversight. He has been with the company since May 2022 and prior to that was president of Eurofins Viracor BioPharma Services.

He is the son of Yvonne Robertson of South Radley, Kansas, and Clifford J. Mattivi, of Pittsburg, and the brother of Brad J. Mattivi of Pittsburg and the late Greg A. Mattivi.

PathologyWatch has developed a digitized approach to dermatopathology as well as an artificial intelligence result interpretation tool. All three labs are under construction for expansion projects.

He earned a degree in biology at Pittsburg State, followed by a degree in medical technology from the University of Kansas in 1987.

First working as a lab supervisor and manager with Quest Diagnostics, he advanced to director of lab operations with Viracor Laboratories before being named vice president of operations for Eurofins Viracor in 2016 and president of Eurofins Viracor in 2020.

He has served on the board of the University of Kansas School of Health Professions/School of Laboratory Sciences, the board of advocates for the School of Health Professionals, and the board of directors for Gift of Life.

He started programs with the University of Kansas and Wichita State University clinical lab students to perform molecular science rotations at Viracor, and has spoken at regional educational institutions about the virtues of seeking a career in clinical laboratory sciences.

He and his wife, Brenda, have two children, Michael Mattivi of Colorado Springs, Colorado, and Gina Bodenhausen of Monument, Colorado.

Good Apple Award



Tadd Lucian

BS '14, MS '18

Tadd Lucian, a human resources professional in the construction and engineering industry, was chosen as the winner of the 2023 Good Apple Award.

The award was created in 2018 to recognize an outstanding recent graduate who has made an impact in his or her career field or community while showcasing Gorilla pride.

Lucian, a first-generation graduate who earned degrees in Communication and Marketing and in Human Resource Development, was active as a leader on campus in numerous organizations and in just five years has advanced in his career.

As a senior, he was chosen for the Golden Gorilla Award, was an Order of Omega Inductee, was the Lambda Chi Alpha Senior of the Year in 2015, and was inducted into the PSU Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi in 2018.

Today, Lucian works as the talent acquisition manager for Black & Veatch in Overland Park, where he manages an award-winning early careers recruitment team focused on the new generation of diverse talent helping Black & Veatch address some of the world's most pressing infrastructure challenges.

He joined the company in 2016 as an HR coordinator, then rose through the ranks to HR business partner in 2018 and to his current position in 2021.

In addition to serving in leadership roles for organizations in the Kansas City area, Lucian has stayed connected to Pitt State, going the extra mile by serving on the HRD Advisory Council, supporting the HRD Four State Conference, and representing the HRD program as an ambassador.

Lucian is the son of Nick and Denise Lucian of Columbus, Kansas — both longtime supporters of Pitt State.

Distinguished Service Award



Lindsay Young

BBA '05, MBA '09

Lindsay Young has played an instrumental role as a volunteer, mentor, and member of the Alumni Association Board of Directors.

Her husband, Aaron, is a graduate of the School of Construction, and since 2006 she has helped to grow the annual Construction Alumni Golf Tournament in Wichita by finding teams, identifying sponsorships, securing prizes, handling registration and check-in, and managing other details.

Since 2010, the event has raised more than \$320,000 for student scholarships.

She and Aaron regularly attend Gorilla Gatherings in Northwest Arkansas, and she volunteers as a mentor for Women@Work in the Kelce College of Business.

As the founder and owner of NU Marketing, LLC, she develops strategic marketing plans for architectural, engineering, construction, manufacturing, and medical businesses.

"Receiving this is extremely humbling," Young said. "I have enjoyed serving my alma mater in many ways over the years and look forward to continuing. Giving back is important to me and staying engaged keeps me connected to Pitt State!"

Young is the daughter of Marlin Carson (BBA '78) of Frontenac and the sister of Grant Carson (BST '07) of Girard. Her late mother, Ellen Shipman Carson (BSN '78) was a nursing professor for many years.

Pitt State earns top technology awards

Pittsburg State University was named a STEM School of Excellence Award winner at the International Technology & Engineering Educator’s Association annual conference in Minneapolis.

The award recognizes the university’s collaborative commitment to STEM education in events across campus, from innovative summer camps in the College of Technology, to math relays in the College of Arts and Sciences, to a partnership with the College of Education.

Also receiving a national award was Professor of Technology Education Byron McKay (BSEd ’13, MS ’16), who was named Leader of



the Year from The Council for STEM Leadership.

He has been the Kansas State Technology Student Association Advisor, on national ITEEA committees that serve thousands of teachers and administrators, and is a co-advisor for Pitt State’s Technology & Engineering

Education Collegiate Association.

Nine students in Pitt State’s Technology & Engineering Education Collegiate Association competed in five national competitions and took third place in Robotics, Manufacturing, and Communication, and fifth in the Problem-Solving competition.

Outstanding in his field

The football field at Webb City (Missouri) High School’s Cardinal Stadium will be named for John Roderique (BSED ’90, MS ’94), who holds the record for the most state football championships in Missouri.

Recently retired, he finished his career with a 315–35 win/loss record, won 13 state championships, made the finals 15 times, and posted 10 undefeated seasons.

He has been inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame, the Missouri Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame, the Joplin (Missouri) Sports Authority Sports Hall of Fame, and the Pitt State Athletics Hall of Fame.

At Pitt State, Roderique was a two-time All-America linebacker, 1988 (NAIA) and 1989 (NCAA). He finished his career with 365 career tackles. At Webb City High School, he was on the football



team that made the state playoffs for the first time in the high school’s history.

National accounting award

May 2023 graduate Colin Webber achieved excellence as an athlete as an All-MIAA distance runner and as the Pitt State record holder in the indoor 800m. But he also achieved academically and was one of 50 students in the nation to earn a prestigious national award for his outstanding performance on the CPA exam — an exam taken by 67,000 people.

The Elijah Watt Sells Award is granted to CPA candidates who earn a cumulative average score above 95.50 across all four sections of the exam, and who pass all four sections on their first attempt.

“I certainly owe a great deal of gratitude for several excellent teachers and coaches at Pitt State that have prepared me for success,” said Webber, who transferred in Fall 2017 to major in Accounting and to join the Cross Country and Track & Field teams.

Extended NCAA eligibility after the pandemic prompted him to return for another year after graduating to complete the new Master of Professional Accountancy program, and then an MBA.

Webber, also an MIAA Academic Excellence Award recipient, an MIAA Scholar Athlete, and a member of the MIAA Academic Honor Roll, quickly landed a job at Ernst & Young in Kansas City.



Hall of Famers

Craig Fuchs, longtime music educator, former music department chair, and former director of the Honors College, was chosen for induction into the Kansas Music Educators Association Hall of Fame’s Class of 2023.

Fuchs was diagnosed last year with ALS and stepped down as the conductor for Four State Symphonic Winds and as Honors College Director.

He was a longtime conductor and clinician for regional and district honor bands, and has directed international ensembles in England, France, The Netherlands, Paraguay, and Brazil.

Two alumni will be inducted into the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame on Oct. 1.

Russ Jewett (BS '83, MS '93), was a champion in hurdles and the decathlon as a student-athlete. He was a head coach in cross country and track from 1986 to 2021, led the Gorillas to numerous MIAA and CSIC titles and several national championships, and was named MIAA Coach of the Year 44 times.

Christie Allen Logue (BSED '93), racked up several national championships in track, earned 14 conference titles, and was named NCAA DII Woman Athlete of the Year in 2003. She was inducted to the Pitt State Athletics Hall of Fame in 2003 and the MIAA Athletic Hall of Fame in 2012.



Fuchs



Jewett



Logue



Scott earns alumni award

Former President Steve Scott was recognized for his distinguished career and his contributions to education by his other alma mater — the Oklahoma State University College of Education and Human Sciences — in April as the recipient of the OSU Outstanding Alumni Award.

Scott invested nearly 50 years in public education as a teacher, coach, administrator, leader and board member. He earned a Bachelor’s from Pitt State in 1973, a Master’s from Oklahoma State University in 1977, an Education

Specialist degree from Pitt State in 1984, and a Doctorate from OSU in 1990.

His career included teaching middle school math and upper-level math in public schools and at Northeastern Oklahoma A & M College. He returned to Pitt State as a faculty member in the College of Education, advancing to chair, dean, and provost.

In 2009, he was selected by the Kansas Board of Regents to become Pitt State’s ninth president.

After retiring in May 2022, Scott has maintained an active role in community and statewide affairs.

Construction champions

A team from the School of Construction emerged as champions in the “Final Four” MCAA Student Chapter Competition in Phoenix, hosted by the Mechanical Contractors Association of America.

The chapter’s \$10,000 prize was matched by MCA of Kansas City.

The team included Graham Hudelson, Zach Hutchings, Michael Marinakis, Hunter Helmer, Aiden Wolownik, and Gianni Piccini and was advised by Professor Shannon Nicklaus.

The team was one of 22 chapters out of the 48 across the nation to submit a proposal.

The challenge: install three 1000-ton cooling towers, six 6000-mbh boilers, a sewer heat recovery system, heat exchangers, pumps,



and supporting infrastructure as part of a new energy facility that would heat and cool buildings on the National Western Center campus.

Modeled after an actual facility to be built in Denver, Colorado, it is a

huge step forward in de-carbonizing commercial buildings and will be the largest sewer heat recovery system in North America.

In Phoenix, they presented their proposal in front of 600 to 800 people.

Dr. Robert K. Ratzlaff Outstanding Faculty

Three teachers were chosen by students for the 2023 Outstanding Faculty Award for their impact in and out of the classroom:

Professor Barbara “Bardie” McClaskey (Nursing), who students described as taking away their fear, makes material understandable, works one on one with students who need it, and helps retain students who are at risk of dropping out.



McClaskey

Professor Joe Levens (Construction), a two-time graduate (BST '77, MET '02) who students described as having an open-door policy, being interested and engaged in their pursuit of jobs, and being inclusive in industry events to help



Levens

them gain experience in networking before graduating.

Associate Professor Laura Covert-Miller (Health, Human Performance, & Recreation), who students described as providing



Covert-Miller

them with valuable hands-on experiences, at ensuring they understand the material, and at changing their thought process about older adults and people with disabilities.

Steve Sikorski

HELPING TO EDUCATE THE NEXT GENERATION

GROWING UP ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF CHICAGO, Steve Sikorski (BSET '96, MSET '13) knew very little about Pittsburg State University when he arrived here to pursue a degree in Manufacturing Engineering Technology.

Today, he's a tireless advocate and generous donor who has made a lasting impact.

Sikorski is president of MAGMA Foundry Technologies and SIGMA Plastic Services, which offer comprehensive solutions to the metal casting and plastic industries, buyers, designers, and process engineers worldwide.

Through his leadership, the university received a donation of the licensing of industry "gold standard" casting process simulation and Autonomous Engineering software, MAGMASOFT®, now a major course component in the College of Technology's Manufacturing Engineering Technology program, and SIGMASOFT®, used in the Plastics Engineering Technology program. Licensing for this software is renewed every two years and is used in labs in the Kansas Technology Center. The value of the software over the last several years exceeds \$3 million.

He is a member of the Foundry Education Foundation, serving as president in 2022-23, and is a member of AFS Future Leaders of



Metalcasting and the American Foundry Society, which has honored him with several awards. In 2018, he was chosen for the Dr. Kenneth K. Bateman Outstanding Alumni Award.

"Our company strives to give back and help educate the next generation," he said.

"I want to teach young people about the industry, about engineering – and hopefully inspire some young men and women. Maybe they'll wind up as Gorillas."

"I really believe in that, in mentorship and sharing resources with students in grade school, high school, and college. I want to teach young people about the industry, about engineering – and hopefully inspire some young men and women. Maybe

they'll wind up as Gorillas."

He was molded, he said, by professors like Vern Goold, Phil McNew, and Tim Thomas, and his advisor, Russ Rosmait.

"And the program itself is an incredible program," he said. "What Pitt State offers is very unique and something everyone should be proud of."

Sikorski and his wife have two daughters and live in Illinois.

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS GUS?

Where have you traveled with Gus or wearing your Gorilla gear? Email your photo, a caption, and your degree and graduation year to psumag@pittstate.edu.



Patsy Lucas Allenbrand (BSED '72) and Jayma (Beadle) Zook (BSED '00, MSET '08) went on a family trip to New York to see their grandson/nephew play at Carnegie Hall with the Kansas City Youth Symphony. They spent a week taking in all the sights and made sure to snap a picture wearing Pitt State shirts while at Times Square.



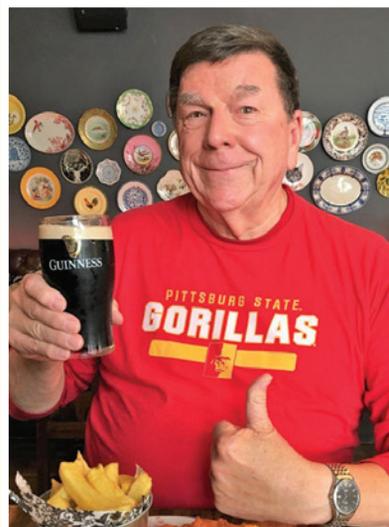
Randy Cook (BSED '74 MSED '76) showed his Gorilla spirit on a cruise in the Bahamas.



The Tri-Sigmas have been on vacation again! Left to right: Tracy Morris ('81), Janie Hughes Smith ('79), Cathy Duffin Albright ('81), and Cathy Stareck Linaweaver ('81).



Patrick Cardullo (BBA '83) was working-out at his local gym in Los Angeles when he spotted someone wearing a PSU t-shirt. Chase Dalton (BBA '21) was visiting friends in LA and decided to go to the gym. It's a small world!



Guzzling Guinness in Galway: Michael "O'Kelting" (BSED '68), a globe-trotting Gorilla, grabs a gleaming glass of Gaelic goodness.



Students, faculty, and alumni on the Study Abroad trip to Spain in May discovered a giant gorilla outside of the Royal Palace on the Plaza de la Armeria in Madrid — what a perfect photo opp!



Three sibling graduates Marlin Klotz (BST '00), Mitchell Hall (BST '92) and Marci Sally (BA '01) traveled through Europe last fall showing their Pitt State pride.



An entire family of Gorillas represented Pitt State when visiting Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Denise Grasso, (BSED '77, MS '82, SpEd '85) center, has served on the board of the Alumni Association. From left: Ross Fry (BSED '23), Lynn Grant (BA '70), John Staton (BBA '83), Kevin Fry (BS '96), Megan Fry (BBA '96), and Katie Fry.



Sally Herrell (BSED '97) just finished Year 25 in Education and found a way to show her Gorilla spirit at Kalahari Resort at a Texas Elementary School Principal Association conference.



Pitt State rising juniors and Tri Sigma sisters Olivia Tavernaro and Blair Wilson took a road trip to Memphis and showed their Gorilla pride in front of Graceland.

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS GUS?



These Gorillas took a trip to the north side of St. Lucia sporting their crimson and gold: Aaron Young (BST '05) Lindsay Carson Young (MBA '09, BBA '05), Tosha Gier Carson (BBA '11), Grant Carson (BST '07), adjunct instructor in Automotive Technology.



Peggy Smith Myers (BSED '89) represented PSU in the lobby of the Hale Koa Hotel on Waikiki Beach in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Chris Lusker (BA in Political Science '88) and Travis Fields (BS with an emphasis in Sustainability, Society and Natural Resource Management '14) captured this shot during Initial Entry Rotary Wing flight training at Fort Rucker, Alabama.



Clint Miller (BBA '91) repped Pitt State at Pura Vida, Playa Flamingo, Costa Rica.



Julie Page (BSN '89, MSN '11) and Mike Page (BBA in Finance '89) celebrate their Gorilla spirit at Ryman Auditorium — the mother church of country music — in Nashville, Tennessee.

1958

John LeBar (BSED) and co-author Allen Paul recently published a revised version of their book, “Marching Toward Madness: How to Save the Games You Always Loved,” titled, “College Sports on the Brink of Disaster: The Rise of Pay-For-Play and the Fall of the Scholar-Athlete.” The new version has an additional focus on the effects of Name, Image, and Likeness policies in college athletics.

1972

Don Blazek (MS) is now a textbook author for Goodheart-Willcox Co., a leader in the development of career and technical education textbooks and resource material. Blazek recently completed the second major edition of “Exploring Woodworking” for middle and high school programs throughout the U.S. and Canada.

1973

Brenda (Wedner) Gustafson (BSBA) was chosen by the Greater Kansas City Alumnae Panhellenic as a 2023 Woman of the Year. Gustafson is a member of Alpha Sigma Alpha and recently retired from FEMA as an intergovernmental affairs and public relations specialist. She worked with federal, state, and county officials during disasters, and won an award for producing the Department of Homeland Security national podcasts. She is also a three-time cancer survivor.

1976

Dr. Richard Schooler (BA), was named by Kansas City University as vice president of the Farber-McIntire Campus in Joplin, Missouri. His career spans nearly 40 years as a physician, health care executive, dean, and community leader in the region. He operated a successful obstetrics and gynecology practice in Joplin for nearly 20 years before beginning his career in health care administration. He has served as dean of the School of Health Sciences at Missouri Southern State University and as executive vice president and chief operating officer of Freeman Health System from 2013-2016, capping off a 12-year tenure that included positions as chief medical officer, medical director, and director of medical education. In recognition of his leadership and action as Freeman Health System’s chief medical officer in the aftermath of the 2011 Joplin tornado, he received a commendation from the Missouri House of Representatives.

Olive Sullivan, playwrite

When people are going through trauma like a serious illness, they find various ways of coping. For Olive Sullivan (BA '82), a graduate of the Communication Department, it was only natural to write a play.

Sullivan, who is the daughter of former dean Victor Sullivan and the widow of former history professor Steve Harmon, battled a particularly deadly and fast-acting cancer and spent five months in an isolation ward in 2017, then spent several years regaining her health.

“The Pocket Guide to Desert Survival” was born of that experience as a way to encourage and inspire cancer patients and caregivers with a story aimed at leavening their sorrow and fear with a bit of humor and hope.

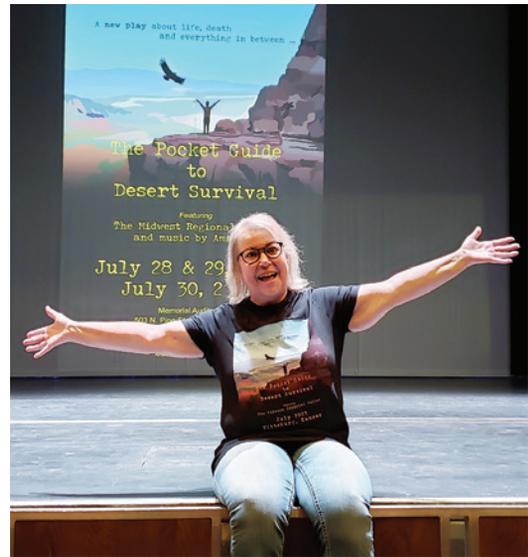
The summer premier of the hybrid ballet/poetry/theater production featured the dancers of The Midwest Regional Ballet, directed by Kaye Lewis, at Memorial Auditorium in Pittsburg.

The story follows Thea, a cancer patient, as she embarks on a

mystical journey through the mythic space of the desert. She encounters gods and guides who lead her through the darkness of the underground and to the top of the mesa to help her come to acceptance with her diagnosis.

Several other Pitt State graduates shared their talents to bring the story to life: Professor Emeritus Joey Pogue performed in a lead role and wrote original music for the accompanying band Amanita, which includes several musicians who are graduates or who have connections to Pitt State. Olive’s brother, also a graduate, created an animated background for the set.

Learn more: www.bone-deep.com.

**1981**

Becky Cleland (BSED, MSED '90) retired from public education after 41 years. She taught in school districts in Missouri and Kansas and was an adjunct instructor for Labette Community College, Ft. Scott Community College, and Newman University.

Mark Ogle (BS) has authored 40 theatrical scripts that have helped raise funds for college scholarships, foster children, American Red Cross, school foundations, disabled veterans’ organizations, historical societies, and other charitable causes. He

recently celebrated the 25th anniversary of his first play, “The Guatney Sisters of Neosho Falls,” as a fundraiser at the historic Belvidere Mansion in Claremore, Oklahoma.

1988

Max McCoy (BA), a former instructor in the Department of Communication and longtime noted journalist and author, has been appointed executive director of the Western Writers of America. He is a three-time winner of the organization’s Spur Awards. McCoy’s books include *The Sixth*

Rider, which was published by Doubleday and won a Spur for best first novel; the novelization of Steven Spielberg's epic miniseries Into the West; four original Indiana Jones adventures licensed by Lucasfilm and published by Bantam; and the nonfiction book Elevations: A Personal Exploration of the Arkansas River, which won a National Outdoor Book Award in history/biography. His most recent title is American Odyssey, a novel of the fur trade published by Kensington Books.

1989

Shellaine Kiblinger (BSED, MS '97) was chosen by Independence Community College as the 2023 Distinguished Alum and was recognized at the spring graduation ceremony. She earned her degree there in 1987 before attending Pitt State. She went on to complete a doctorate in educational leadership from Kansas State University and has held a number of leadership roles in education throughout her career. She also served on the Kansas Board of Regents, Greenbush Leadership Academy Advisory Board, and is a Kansas Educational School Accreditation Team member.

1992

Brett Lyerla (BS) is the new communications and marketing coordinator for the KU Med Area Health Education Center housed in Shirk Hall at PSU.

1993

Travis Laver (BME, MM '07), retired from public education after having served the Pleasanton, Kansas School District his entire career. He began as an instrumental/vocal music teacher in 1993 and transitioned to technology director, transportation director, high school principal, and served the last 12 years as superintendent. He continues to be a volunteer firefighter as he has for 15 years, and to play trumpet in the Crossroads Jazz Orchestra directed by Pitt State Professor of Music Todd Hastings.

1994

Todd Hafner (BSED) was named the head high school football coach and athletic director at Carl Junction Junior High School after having coached at William Penn University in Oskaloosa, Iowa, for 19 years. Hafner is from Frontenac, Kansas and played football for the Gorillas from 1989 to 1993.

1996

Travis Shaw (BSED) has been hired as the Springfield (Missouri) Public School District's deputy superintendent of operations. He was executive director of operations for six years, having previously served as superintendent of the Aurora and Crane school district, a principal, teacher, and coach.

1997

Kevin Walker (BS, MBA '01), Ashley Walker (BS '98, MBA '01), and Interim Provost Matt Seimears (BS) of Eastern Oregon University recently worked together on a grant proposal that led to an award of \$1.6 million in funding from the Higher Education Coordinating Commission's Credit for Prior Learning Investment grant. With the grant, the university can enhance its credit for prior learning program to assist more individuals in earning college degrees from lived experiences. Kevin Walker was the lead on the project, which was sponsored by the Office of the Provost.

1998

Katie Ervin (BS) is the founder of The Catalyst Development, which focuses on leadership development and workforce skill-building. Previously the associate vice president of strategic alliances at Park University, she authored a book that was ranked a top seller in the human resources category.

2000

April Wilkes (BBA) joined the Pittsburg location of GNBANK as a vice president. Wilkes has 27 years of regional banking experience. She has served in various roles at the bank for 14 years, including real estate lender and commercial lender, branch manager, and credit analyst. She lives in Pittsburg with her husband Dan and their two children.

2003

Bryce Anderson (BBA) has been appointed by GNBANK as the new Community Bank President for the Pittsburg, Arma, and Galena, Kansas, locations, where he will oversee all levels of operations. Anderson has been in the banking industry since 2004 and is active in civic organizations. He lives in Frontenac, Kansas, with his wife Lori and their children, Brady and Brendan.

Greg Hough, attorney

Greg Hough (BBA '83) received the Honorable Matt J. Whitworth Trial Excellence Award, given annually to a member of the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association who exemplifies the highest level of competence, ethics, and civility as a trial lawyer in the Federal Bar in the Western District of Missouri and the District of Kansas. Hough is an Assistant United State Attorney.

As a student-athlete at Pittsburg High School, he was an All-Conference running back and All-State tailback who went on to play football for the Gorillas.

After graduating from Washburn University with a law degree, he went on to become a highly successful Assistant District Attorney in Wyandotte, Kansas, then joined the Kansas Attorney General's Office, and then the U.S. Attorney's Office.

He has tried well over 100 jury trials to verdict, including some of the leading cases of his time, with remarkable success. Hough also has mentored many younger trial attorneys, and in receiving the award was praised for his dedication, civility, and integrity.



2005

Missy Floyd (BS) was honored with the Emporia Area Chamber 2022 Volunteer of the Year award for her service to Emporia and local organizations. Floyd is currently a Supervisor with Foster Care Homes at Saint Francis Ministries, where she has worked for 10 years.

Rebecca Bales (BSED), a longtime teacher, is in her sixth year of coaching competitive robotics at Howard Norman Elementary School in Hutto, Texas, where she also teaches gifted and talented students in grades K-5. Her fourth and fifth grade robotics team members earned a bid to the World's Robotics Competition in Dallas, Texas, in May.

2007

Lauren Hucke (BSED) is now teaching fifth grade in language arts at Carl Junction (Missouri) Intermediate School. Matt Shannon (BS) began a new position as the vice president of development at Highside Companies in Denver, Colorado.

2008

Samantha Pinkal (BST) was named President of AZCREW in the Phoenix Metro Area. The organization exists to transform the commercial real estate industry by advancing women globally. She also serves as vice president of business development for the Greater Phoenix Economic Council.

2012

Jennifer Weston (BSW) successfully defended her doctoral dissertation at Oklahoma State University within days of her daughter, Whitney Veri (BSN '20), graduating with her MBA at Pittsburg State. Weston is a first-generation high school graduate on one side of her family, and a first-generation college graduate on the other.

2015

Elizabeth Spencer (MA) is leading a project focused on dementia at the University of Kentucky, where she is an assistant professor. This summer, she brought a traveling photo exhibit to Pittsburg State University to highlight perspectives and insights of individuals and families impacted by dementia, and collaborated with the Alzheimer's Association and former faculty member Mike Gullet on a photo walk fundraiser.

Timothy Puetz, veteran and chief financial officer

Timothy Puetz (BSED '01, MS '03) was named Chief Financial Officer for the Office of Information and Technology at the Department of Veterans Affairs as part of the Senior Executive Service.

Members of the SES serve in key positions just below the top presidential appointees who operate and oversee nearly every government activity in approximately 75 government agencies. In a workforce of about 2 million, the federal government has only about 8,000 members in the SES – fewer than 0.5 percent of federal workers.

Puetz, a 2015 Outstanding Alumni Award recipient, was a track & field

and cross country student-athlete at Pitt State while majoring in

Physical Education and minoring in English.

He also earned a master's degree from the Health, Human Performance, and Recreation Department.

As a combat veteran, he achieved the rank of Captain in the U.S. Army, and he worked at the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health.

With a thirst for knowledge and personal challenges, he also earned a master's in Public Health, a master's in Business, and a Ph.D. in Biopsychology from other universities.

His GPA? A perfect 4.0 throughout all degrees.



2016

Andrea Hucke (BS) is living in Spain for the third time. This time she's working for a school teaching English to children and as an interpreter. She has visited over 15 countries in Europe, including Italy, Morocco, England, Ireland, Switzerland, Slovakia, Belgium, Turkey, and France.

2021

Lucas Kelley (BS) was named recreation director at Buck Run Community Center in Fort Scott, Kansas. Kelley attended Fort Scott Community College on a basketball scholarship, where he earned an associate of science degree, before coming to Pitt State to major in exercise science. His is married to Makayla Kelley.

Lexington Peterson (BS, BSET '21) was selected one of the Top 35 Rising Stars by Plastics News in 2023. This program recognizes the next generation of plastics industry workers, including educators, engineers, designers, operators, scientists, marketing professionals and sustainability directors.

2023

Matthew Buck (BS) began work as the marketing and communications coordinator for the Community Foundation of Southeast Kansas immediately after graduating in May. Buck also has been active at directing communications for Pittsburg Community Theatre.

Maddy Robison (BS) began work as the public information officer for Pittsburg Community Schools immediately after graduating in May. Robison also has assisted area businesses in developing their social media accounts and is a freelance photographer.

1938

Blendena Evans, San Diego, Calif.

1943

Betty L. Nelson, Chanute, Kan.
Mary C. Tarry, Independence, Kan.

1944

Darlene Burrows, Decatur, Ga.
Helen M. Hayward, Tustin, Calif.

1945

Myra A. Behmer, St Louis, Mo.

1949

Mason W. Atkins, Prescott Valley, Ariz.
Gwendolyn L. Ray, Kansas City, Mo.
Colleen J. Ridenour, Oviedo, Fla.

1950

Jerry A. Freeman, Bartlesville, Okla.
George D. Houghton, Kansas City, Kan.
Jerry O. Lawrence, Wichita, Kan.
John E. Smith, Humboldt, Kan.

1951

Ted N Gould, Vancouver, Wash.
Loraine Warren, Houston, Texas

1952

William R Endicott, Conway, S.C.

1953

Loyle D. Vanhorn, Ashland, Mo.

1954

Charles W. Johnson, Overland Park, Kan.
Mabel Lee, Kansas City, Kan.
Walter L. Wilson, Mountain View, Ark.

1955

Quentin L. West, Weldon Spring, Mo.

1956

Marian E. Donart, Wichita Falls, Texas
Jim B. Kirkendoll, Broken Arrow, Okla.

1957

Charles A. Long, Stevens Point, Wis.
James H. Lyons, Redmond, Wash.
Walter H. Wood, Amarillo, Texas

1958

Ralph O. David, Pittsburg, Kan.
Howard L. Quaintance, Lake Elsinore, Calif.
Edward K. Ricketts, Fort Washington, Md.
Maurice L. Weaver, Kansas City, Mo.

1959

Carol K. Banks, Houston, Texas
George F. Campbell, Little Rock, Ark.
Dale L. Cantrell, Shawnee, Kan.
Charles J. Carver, Joplin, Mo.
Ron W. Mailes, Sherman, Texas
Carl E. Martin, McCune, Kan.
Charles L. Norris, Wichita, Kan.
Donald D. Riggs, Flagstaff, Ariz.

1960

Charles J. Dunivan, Linwood, Kan.
Charles L. Garde, Springfield, Mo.
Clayton O. Hall, Wichita, Kan.
Pat R. Heady, Crystal Lake, Ill.

Rufus W. Hogard, East Moline, Ill.
Richard D. Holzrichter, Lenexa, Kan.
John O. Kecec, Bonne Terre, Mo.
Wayne A. Lawson, Joplin, Mo.
Dale I. Reece, O'Fallon, Mo.

1961

Mansoor A. Ahmadi, San Diego, Calif.
Louis E. Bartholomew, Springfield, Mo.
Barbara Ann Bateman, Pittsburg, Kan.
Paul B. Boecker, Chesterfield, Mo.
Judith A. Dellinger, Valley Center, Kan.
Kathleen C. Longan, Kemmerer, Wyo.
Maurice F. Reiter, Overland Park, Kan.

1962

Howard B. Davis, Noel, Mo.
Sandra K. Dierks, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Terry R. Dixon, Owasso, Okla.
James E. Rowe, Kent, Wash.
Ned E. Smith, Jr., Broken Arrow, Okla.
Theora A. Webber, Apache Junction, Ariz.

1963

Ron Anderson, Anchorage, Alaska
Joy A. Day, Mount Vernon, Mo.
William R. Livingston, Joplin, Mo.
Richard E. Meyer, San Antonio, Texas
Esther M. Quaintance, Lake Elsinore, Calif.
Lyle D. Rutter, Rock Island, Ill.
James E. Stewart, Edmond, Okla.

1964

William G. Forrest, El Dorado, Kan.
Dorothy E. Haage, Nevada, Mo.
Wilma M. James, Arcadia, Kan.
Richard A. Jarom, Morganton, Ga.
Donald E. Jerome, Wylie, Texas
Martha L. Jones, Leavenworth, Kan.
George M. Lauppe, Lawrence, Kan.
W. Leon Leiker, Syracuse, N.Y.
Carl H. Parker, Olathe, Kan.
Keith J. Porter, Wichita, Kan.
Gary Smart, Joplin, Mo.
Charles R. Stuart, Topeka, Kan.
James C. Thompson, Colleyville, Texas
Alfred J. White, Shoshoni, Wyo.

1965

Robert E. Bracey, Saint Louis, Mo.
Bob Comstock, Oceanside, Calif.
Harold D. Dunning, Oklahoma City, Okla.
Stanley C. Kirk, Fayetteville, Ark.
Judith A. Leftwich, Pittsburg, Kan.
Sal Marquez, Frontenac, Kan.
Jim O. Moriarty, Kansas City, Mo.
Shirley J. Palmer, Fort Scott, Kan.
Helen M. Troutman, Pasadena, Texas

1966

Ken J. Henry, Wichita, Kan.
George A. Pellman, Leavenworth, Kan.
Dub Rakestraw, El Dorado, Kan.

1967

Ronald L. Brower, Girard, Kan.
Dorothy L. Chaney, Ottawa, Kan.
David E. Foster, Fairfield Bay, Ark.
Velma R. Harding, Coffeyville, Kan.
Gladys E. Harper, Van Nuys, Calif.
Marilyn J. Jenney, Joplin, Mo.

Darrell J. Lincoln, Kansas City, Mo.
Ruth McKenney, Kansas City, Mo.
Donna L. Miller, Garnett, Kan.
Leanna J. Mustain, Commerce, Okla.

1968

Fred B. Angwin, Springfield, Mo.
Gene M. Bailey, Neodesha, Kan.
Mel L. Barnett, Hutchinson, Kan.
Nancy I. Brandon, Bonner Springs, Kan.
Judy C. Davis, Miami, Okla.
Anita J. Henson, Joplin, Mo.
Richard L. Honton, North Highlands, Calif.
Jack T. Kornfeld, Jr., Lincoln, Neb.
Ron M. Lemon, Manhattan, Kan.
Albert L. Ralston, Oakland, Calif.
Richard W. Scott, Shawnee, Kan.
Maurice L. White, Nashville, Tenn.

1969

Steven P. Bass, Manhattan, Kan.
Mary J. Butler, Liberty, Mo.
Bernard W. Devoy, Topeka, Kan.
Betty A. Gordon, Wichita, Kan.
Terry Hatfield, Independence, Kan.
Lorella M. Jackson, Elsmore, Kan.
Jim McCoy, Eureka Springs, Ark.
David E. Middleton, Salina, Kan.
Jack A. O'Dell, Excelsior Springs, Mo.
Glenna J. Parks, Augusta, Kan.
Robert L. Saving, Lawrence, Kan.
Gretchen A. Tiberghien, Joplin, Mo.
Catherine A. Wood, Bluffton, S.C.

1970

Carolyn S. Farris, Broken Arrow, Okla.
Suzanne Hall, Chester, Ill.
Frank S. Pistotnik, Arden Hills, Minn.
Juanita S. Thiessen, De Soto, Kan.

1971

Tom L. Fincham, Fayetteville, Ark.
Fred M. Griffith, Cumming, Ga.
Daniel Huntsinger, Pittsburg, Kan.
Fred L. Lips, The Colony, Texas
Bill F. McNamar, Belton, Texas
Jerome D. Michaelis, Wichita, Kan.
Ronald K. Mitts, Ballwin, Mo.
John R. Morley, Jr., Lenexa, Kan.
Dennis C. Person, Kansas City, Mo.
Hassan Yektafar, Upland, Calif.

1972

Frances Casey, Saint Paul, Kan.
Joseph L. Cox, Fairland, Okla.
Vithal D. Gondha, Charlotte, N.C.
Gerald L. Jenkins, Sedalia, Mo.
Allen A. Lehtinen, Frederick, Md.
Rodney R. Moore, Wheaton, Ill.

1973

Bonnie R. Bradbury, Pomona, Kan.
Gary L. Cassidy, Scammon, Kan.
Larry R. Drummond, Hutchinson, Kan.
Billie J. Gore, Wellington, Kan.
Thomas C. Kirkwood, Kansas City, Mo.
June Neis, Osage Beach, Mo.
Wanda L. Rush, Independence, Kan.
Clara J. Simkin, Columbus, Kan.
Joe Woywod, De Soto, Kan.

1974

Jacque L. Aikman, Topeka, Kan.
Charles W. Ambler, Kansas City, Kan.
Phillip E. Gallagher, Glenwood Springs, Colo.
Michael R. Hedrick, Shell Knob, Mo.
Dan A. Kerley, Travelers Rest, SC

1975

Darwin J. Buschert, Woodburn, Ore.
Craig W. Hart, Fort Scott, Kan.
Gary T. Larson, Baxter Springs, Kan.
Steven J. Overman, Shawnee, Kan.
Sandy R. Polley, Platte City, Mo.
Ken W. Smith, Parsons, Kan.
Jack P. Tharp, Holton, Kan.
Joyce E. Woods, Pittsburg, Kan.

1976

Michael C. Allison, Parsons, Kan.
Barbara S. Netzer, Kansas City, Kan.
Brent A. Popp, Lubbock, Texas

1977

Lue E. Barndollar, Coffeyville, Kan.
Linda C. Tweedy, Fredonia, Kan.

1978

William R. Brady, Lawrence, Kan.
John M. Burns, Jr., Wichita, Kan.
Gaye P. Hank, New Braunfels, Texas
Robert K. May, Garden City, Kan.
Lilly M. French, Coffeyville, Kan.
Marcia K. Snyder, Olathe, Kan.

1980

Linda K. Heatherly, Joplin, Mo.
Ruth M. Koch, Reno, Nev.
Mary A. Reed, Los Alamos, N.M.

1983

Shirley J. Lynch, Hannibal, Mo.

1984

Steven G. Powers, Antlers, Okla.

1986

Jerome A. Hudson, Las Vegas, Nev.
Robert E. Wilson, Yates Center, Kan.

1987

Bret Alexander, Shawnee, Kan.
Allene D. Knedlik, Gamaliel, Ark.
Helen V. Normand, Pittsburg, Kan.
Barbara J. Philo, Lake Havasu City, Ariz.
Kathryn L. Williams, Brawley, Calif.
Rex A. Willis, Eureka Springs, Ark.

1988

Doris A. Johnston, Rudy, Ark.
Curt D. Lynch, Sarcoxie, Mo.

1990

Scott R. Farrell, Mount Pleasant, Texas
Brad D. Markley, Pittsburg, Kan.
Susan L. McCarty, Corpus Christi, Texas

1994

Eddie D. Howard, South Coffeyville, Okla.
Charles J. Maiserouille, Pittsburg, Kan.

1995

Glen S. Hart, Kansas City, Mo.
April D. Semrad, Galesburg, Kan.
Tysha S. Van Becelaere, Pittsburg, Kan.
Stuart D. Jones, Topeka, Kan.

1997

James A. O'Shields, Louisburg, Kan.

1999

Stacey L. Trumbly, Dublin, Calif.
Daniel W. Mitchell, Topeka, Kan.

2003

Brandon S. Redmond, Parsons, Kan.

2008

Todd Driskill, Webb City, Mo.

2011

Andy Hoffman, Overland Park, Kan.

2020

Era'shae Nicole Johnson, Kansas City, Mo.



Bill Brady
ADVOCATE

William Robert “Bill” Brady (BA ’78, MS ’81) who served in the Kansas Legislature from 1980 to 1990 and was a member of the search committee that chose Dan Shipp as Pitt State’s 10th president, died March 19, 2023. He was 66.



A native of Parsons, he was one of six siblings who each earned at least one college degree, thanks to parents who were education advocates. As an elected official, Brady helped to pass the 2010 clean indoor air act and served as the lead advocate for a coalition of school districts that successfully sued the state twice to achieve a more equitable school finance system.

He was the owner of Capitol Strategies, LLC, one of the most successful government relations firms in the state, and had served as executive director of the Minnesota Library Association, the business administrator of Parsons State Hospital & Training Center, and as the regional director of the American Lung Association of Kansas.

He is survived by his wife, their children and their families, and siblings.

Memorial services were held March 25 in Lawrence.

Ralph David
SOCIOLOGY

Ralph David, a longtime sociology professor, died on June 4, 2023. He was 90.



He attended a one-room schoolhouse near Fort Scott, served in the Army during the Korean War, and after earning both his bachelor’s and master’s at Pittsburg State University, began teaching at Chanute High School and Junior College.

David would go on to spend 34 years on the faculty in the Social Sciences department at Pitt State, teaching from 1965 until 1999. During that time, he earned his doctorate. In his retirement, he remained in touch with many former students and colleagues.

He also was an avid supporter of concerts at the university’s Bicknell Family Center of the Arts, where his grandsons both performed in music ensembles, and of Pitt State Athletics; he attended every home football game and rarely missed a women’s basketball game.

He is survived by two daughters and their families, which include many Pitt State grads.

Services were June 9 in Pittsburg.

Memorials may be made to the PSU Foundation.

Shirley Palmer
EDUCATION ADVOCATE

Former Kansas Teacher of the Year, Kansas Regent, Kansas legislator, and member of the Kansas Teachers Hall of Fame Shirley Jean (Hoggatt) Palmer died March 28, 2023. She was 80.



A native of Fort Scott, Palmer (BSED ’65, MSED ’71, EDS ’79) attended a one-room school through 8th grade with her mother as her teacher.

She served as president of both the Fort Scott and the Pittsburg State Alumni Association and earned awards from each.

Palmer taught nearly 40 years as a second-grade teacher in Leavenworth and Fort Scott and was appointed by Kansas Gov. Mike Hayden to the Advisory Council of Community Colleges. She served on the Kansas Board of Regents from 1987 to 1993.

In 2006, she was elected to the Kansas Legislature and served until 2010.

She is survived by her husband, and by their sons and their families.

Services were held April 7 in Fort Scott.

Diana Kerle
NURSING

Diana Kerle, a longtime professor in the Irene Ransom Bradley School of Nursing, died June 3. She was 92.



She earned a degree in 1958 from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and in 1972, she and her husband, Don, and their two sons relocated to Pittsburg and she dedicated herself to work at what was then Mt. Carmel Hospital.

She was recruited to join the Pitt State nursing faculty, where she would rise to the rank of Professor Emeritus. In 1977, she earned her master’s in nursing from Wichita State. Throughout her career she achieved significant milestones, including serving as the president of the Faculty Senate on two separate occasions and was the first woman to hold that position.

In retirement, she was a member of the Retired Teachers Association, the PSU Retired Faculty, and Rotary International. She is survived by her sons.

Services were held on June 9 in Pittsburg.

Memorials may be made to the Irene Ransom Bradley School of Nursing and can be mailed to the PSU Foundation, PO Box 4005, Pittsburg, KS 66762.

Wesley James Sandness

RETIRED DEAN, COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Retired longtime administrator Wesley James Sandness died on May 27, 2023. He was 87.

He and his wife, Carol, moved to Pittsburg in 1966 where Sandness took the position of director of Institutional Research at Pitt State. He later became dean of students, then dean of the College of Education, retiring in 2000.

During his tenure, he was a founding organizer of the Kansas Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, and he chaired accreditation teams to assess the fitness of university teacher education programs across the U.S.

He was an avid supporter of music and theatre, performing in Pitt State's Tent by the Lake in the 1970s, and in later years was a benefactor of the annual Midwest Trumpet Festival and Jazz Festival.

Sandness was also a cattle rancher, equestrian, member of saddle clubs and hunt clubs, and sailboat racer.

He is survived by two sons and their families, and a sister.

Memorials may be made to the Department of Music in his name.



Richard Raymond Carr

PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR

Richard Raymond Carr, the university's first full-time public relations director, died June 18 at his home in Warrensburg, Missouri. He was 89.

Carr, a journalism graduate of Kansas State University, became news editor of the Pittsburg Morning Sun from 1956 to 1958, then news editor of the afternoon paper, the Pittsburg Headlight, from 1958 to 1960. He

worked at Pitt State from 1960 to 1985. During his tenure, he worked for five presidents, promoted three university name changes, and saw two national football championships as well as the crowning of 1968 Miss America Debra Dene Barnes, a music major.

Other highlights of his tenure included PSU's 75th Anniversary Diamond Jubilee in 1978 as well as extensive faculty and student unrest in the '60s and '70s. He founded and named the annual Homecoming run, the Gorilla Grind.

Richard's wife of 53 years, Kathryn Carr, a professor and internationally known scholar, died in 2006. He is survived by their two children, three grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.



Planned Giving

The PSU Foundation would like to recognize the following individuals for making a planned gift through their will or estate.

Their contributions will make a positive impact on the success of PSU students through scholarship, program, facility, and faculty support.

Niles Stockinger (BSED '51, MS '58)
September 23, 2022

Samuel L. Hubbard, Jr. (BS '86, MA '90)
May 5, 2022

Fred Lips (BSBA '71)
Sept. 28, 2022

Era'Shae Johnson (BS '20)
October 17, 2022

Donald Bosseau
March 23, 2023

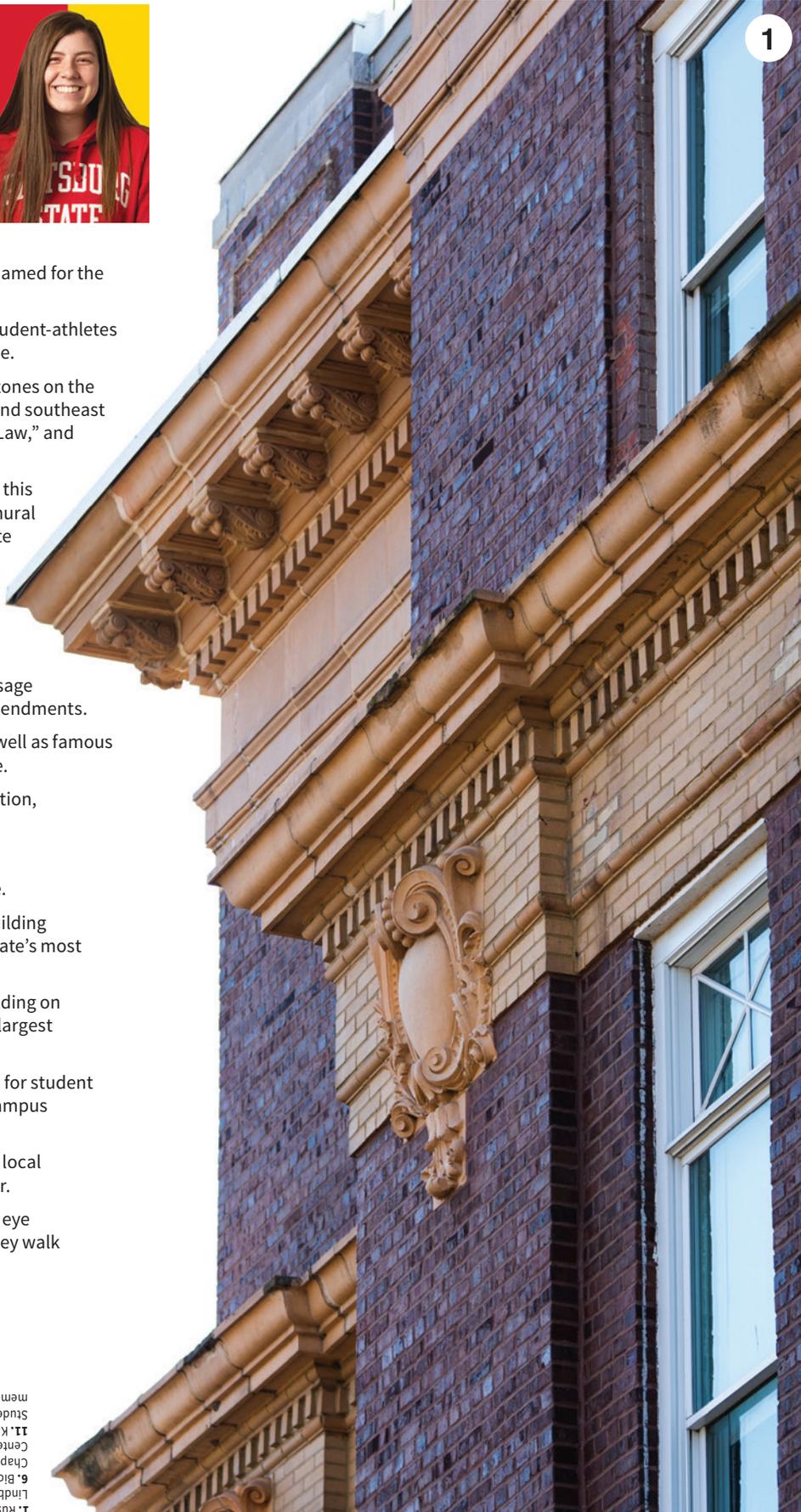
Barbara Bateman (BSED '61, MS '65)
April 8, 2023

For more information on the Heritage Society and leaving a legacy, visit pittstate.giftlegacy.com.

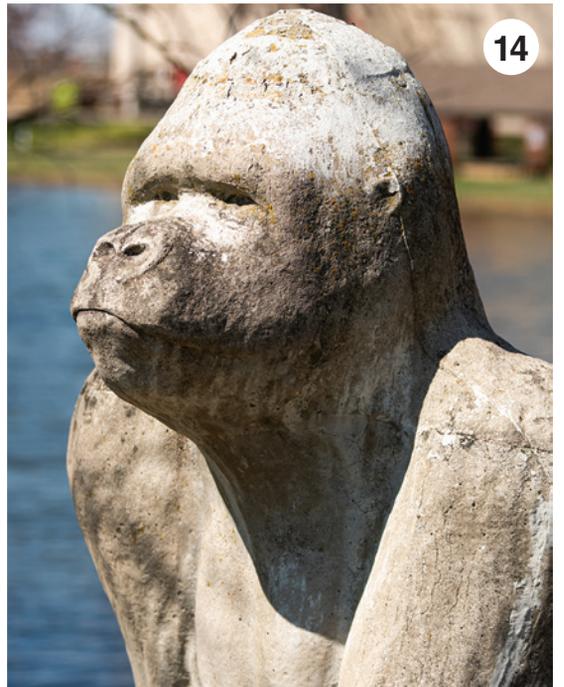
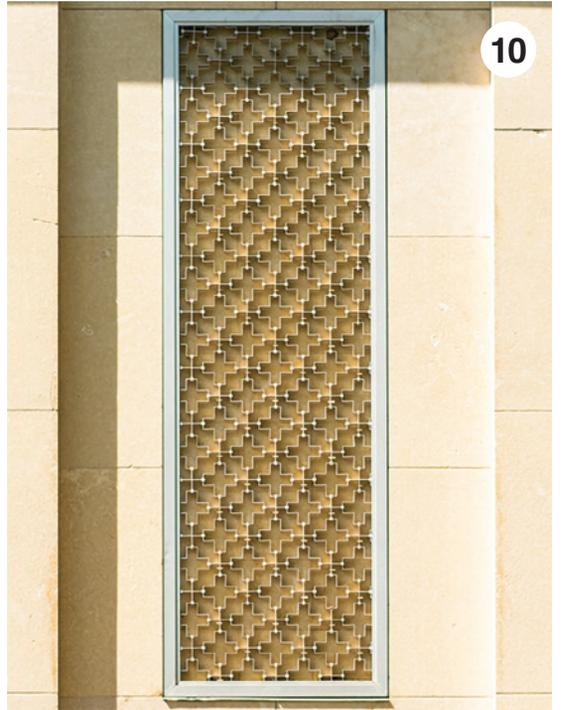
Graphic Design major Laura Landers created an architectural photographic scavenger hunt to test just how well you know the Pitt State campus.



1. Rebuilt after a fire and named for the university's first leader.
2. Where record-setting student-athletes spend much of their time.
3. Three other engraved stones on the northwest, northeast, and southeast corners say "History," "Law," and "Philosophy."
4. Dedicated at the turn of this century not far from a mural that celebrated Pitt State turning a century old.
5. This building just turned 100 and was named for a famous women's suffragist instrumental in the passage of the 18th and 19th Amendments.
6. Student performers as well as famous figures can be seen here.
7. A quiet place for meditation, solitude, and worship.
8. Welcome to the Jungle.
9. Rest a spell in the shade.
10. You'll find this on the building named for one of Pitt State's most spirited cheerleaders.
11. Not only the largest building on campus, but one of the largest in the region.
12. Once an elementary lab for student teachers, it's now the campus welcome center.
13. Named after a longtime local watchmaker and jeweler.
14. He's keeping a watchful eye for human Gorillas as they walk toward "The Jungle."



1. Russ Hall; 2. Weede Building; 3. Porter Hall; 4. Lindburg Plaza Cadence Sculpture; 5. Willard Hall; 6. Bicknell Family Center for the Arts; 7. Timmons Chapel; 8. Carnie Smith Stadium; 9. Wilkinson Alumni Center bench; 10. Jack H. Overman Student Center; 11. Kansas Technology Center; 12. Horace Mann - Student Welcoming Center; 13. Lindburg Plaza Benelli memorial clock; 14. Gorilla statue in Gorilla Village.





Pittsburg State University
1701 S. Broadway
Pittsburg, KS 66762-7500

NONPROFIT
U.S. Postage
PAID
Pittsburg State
University

ONCE A GORILLA. ALWAYS A GORILLA.

RIDE WITH GORILLA PRIDE

Invest in a custom Pittsburg State University license plate and support future Gorillas at the same time.

They're now available in Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma, and the fee supports student scholarships.

Learn more at:
pittstate.edu/alumni



GATHER AND CELEBRATE

Alumni & Constituent Relations is once again holding in-person Gorilla Gatherings across the Midwest and Taste of Pittsburg events featuring Chicken Annie's Original in cities in Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma.

The team is also excitedly planning Half-Century Reunions; Family Day activities; Homecoming; and Distinguished Service, Meritorious Achievement, and Outstanding Alumni awards ceremonies for 2023-24!

For a complete list of upcoming events, visit pittstate.edu/alumni

STAY CONNECTED

Alumni & Constituent Relations sends a digital newsletter on the first day of each month, 12 months a year.

It's filled with features from campus, recognitions of alumni accomplishments, and announcements about what's coming up.

Subscribe by visiting pittstate.edu/alumni and get it delivered right to your inbox.

Alumni & Constituent Relations also is active on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter at: [@pittstatealumni](https://twitter.com/pittstatealumni)