

August 2024



Pitt State

MAGAZINE



**WE ARE THE
CHAMPIONS**



Pitt State
POLE VAULT

From the editor

History and traditions are cherished on campus, but at the same time, the university has evolved as needs change.

As we were putting the finishing touches on this magazine from historic Russ Hall and Whitesitt Halls, work was getting underway on:

- the university's first soccer pitch (see details on pg. 24)
- a new team of academic advisors were settling into a new suite of offices in Axe Library (see details on pg. 3)
- new academic and residential space downtown (see details on pg. 9)

And architectural plans for a Southeast Kansas Regional Crime Center and Laboratory to be built in 2025 in partnership with the Kansas Bureau of Investigation

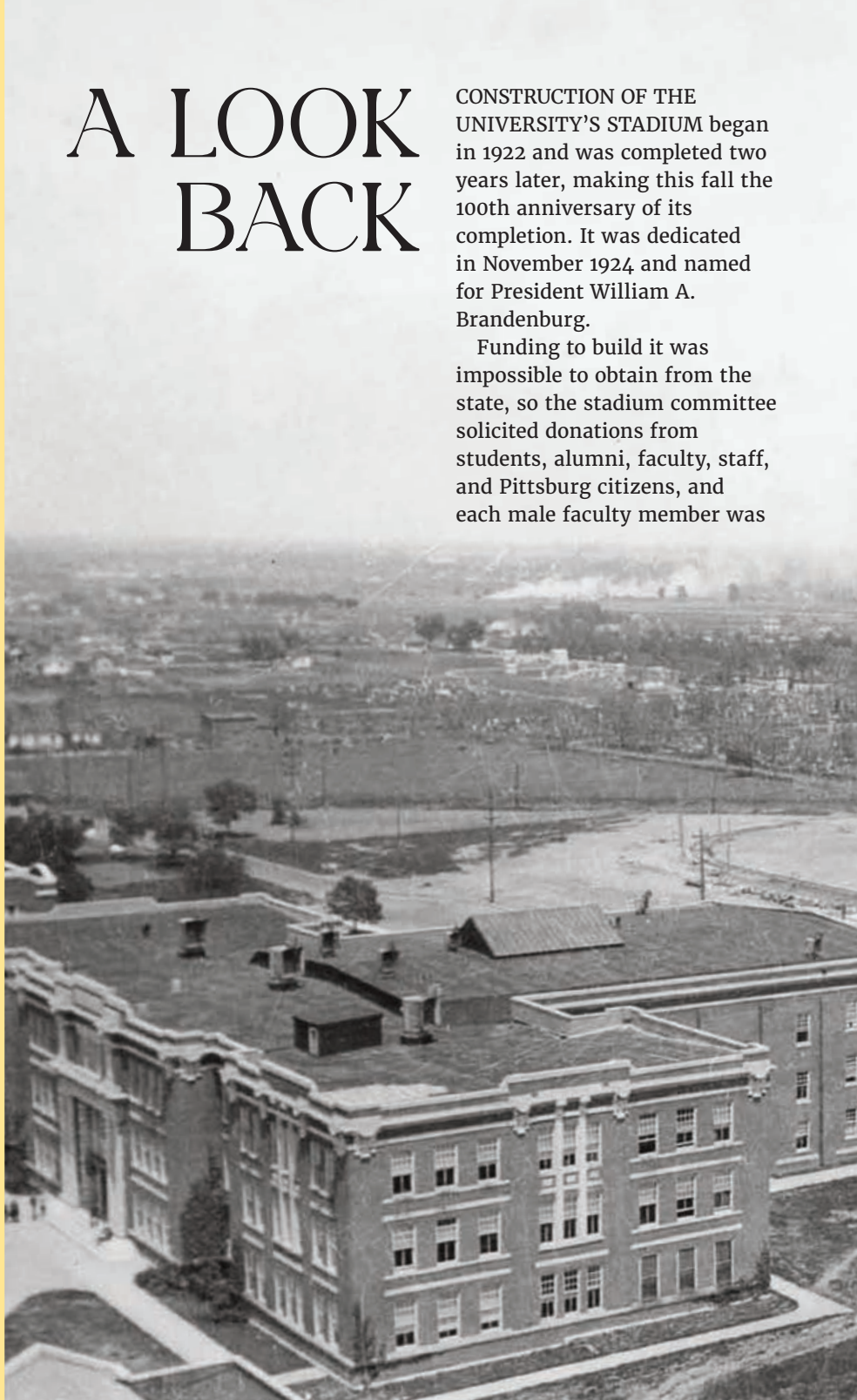
If you haven't been back in awhile to see how things have changed and how they've remained the same, consider attending an event like Homecoming, a Broadway show, or, if you're close enough, take a day trip to enjoy a picnic by the University Lake, a walk across the Oval, and a photo by the Champions Gorilla!

— Andra Stefanoni, Editor

A LOOK BACK

CONSTRUCTION OF THE UNIVERSITY'S STADIUM began in 1922 and was completed two years later, making this fall the 100th anniversary of its completion. It was dedicated in November 1924 and named for President William A. Brandenburg.

Funding to build it was impossible to obtain from the state, so the stadium committee solicited donations from students, alumni, faculty, staff, and Pittsburg citizens, and each male faculty member was



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Pitt State

MAGAZINE

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His passion led him to Pitt State. Today, he's a successful freelance cinematographer for the Kansas City Chiefs.

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Three generations of Gorillas were so impacted by Pitt State that the family created scholarships.

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A gallery of amazing moments on the playing field that might be missed by spectators.

required to contribute several hours per week to work on it.

This photo was taken during construction from atop a concrete smokestack at the Kansas State Teachers College Heating Plant.

At left: Carney Hall, which looked much like Russ Hall and was directly across the Oval. Carney Hall was named after the second governor of Kansas, Thomas Carney, and featured a large auditorium that hosted notable lectures and musical and theatre events.

When Carney Hall was built in

1919, it displaced the university's original athletic field and wooden bleachers. Carney Hall was demolished in 1980; that spot is now occupied by Heckert-Wells, home to Biology and Chemistry.

Brandenburg Stadium was rededicated as Carnie Smith Stadium in September 1989 in honor of the longtime coach, and the field was named William A. Brandenburg Field as a nod to the former president.

Oh, the memories that have been made in that stadium!



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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.

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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



Will Dowty (Psychology '18) and **Courtney Dowty** (Early Childhood Unified '22) show their Pitt State pride at Santa Claus Village in Rovaniemi, Finland. Will is studying an Erasmus Mundus masters program in higher education across Europe and Asia for the next two years and then the couple will return to Pittsburg.

See more photos of alumni wearing their Gorilla Gear around the world on Page 29.

And the winner is...

We continue to be amazed at the number of you who enter our popular "Finding Gus" contest! We wish we could give a prize to each and every one of you for having such Gorilla spirit! This time, the winner is **Gay Lynn (Gregg) Hughes** (Vocational Home Economics Education '78), who spied it on Page 8 in the construction photo.

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 it. One entry per person. Entries must be received by **November 1**. We'll mail one lucky winner a hardbound copy of "Pittsburg State University: A Photographic History of The First 100 Years."

Great Gorilla Scholarship Program starts this fall

To further remove hurdles for students, Pitt State is beginning the Great Gorilla Scholarship Program this fall.

“We understand the fragility of what’s happening at the federal level, and we are doubling down on our commitment to students to find an affordable college option and sustain it over a full four years so that they finish with their degree,” said Karl Stumo, vice president for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management.

Pitt State has made three important changes to the current academic achievement awards — scholarships that are given at varying levels based on a student’s high school performance.

An ACT test score is no longer required. The awards are based only on GPA. Second, the award levels are adjusted to reflect the current realities of the cost of college.

Pitt State also will expand the academic

achievement awards that are awarded to freshmen so that they are renewable for four years, rather than two. In the past, students have transitioned from admissions scholarships for the first two years to departmental scholarships in their last two years. Renewal is based on their college GPA.



Students make history as recipients of first automatic AA degrees

“You’re making history,” Dean of Students Jon Bartlow (Communication '99, '03) told a room full of students at Pittsburg State’s first celebration to mark the automatic awarding of Associate of Arts degrees last semester.

The celebration, attended by more than 250 students at the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts, also was a milestone for the state: Pitt State is the first university in Kansas to automatically award

the degree as it is earned while a student progresses toward their bachelor’s degree.

More than 1,000 current PSU students received their AA degree.

“It’s a history that is good for you, good for Pitt State, and good for Kansas,” Bartlow said. “You’re well on your way to a four-year degree. Though you’re not done with your time in college, this is an important milestone and it’s important that we mark this occasion.”



THE H.W. SMITH STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER opened this summer in Axe Library, named for recently retired provost and vice president Howard Smith. His association with Pitt State spanned 50 years; in 1974, he was the Student Body President, then went on to become a faculty member, department chair, and dean of the College of Education. He also served as interim superintendent for the Pittsburg school district and has been in leadership positions at other school districts and universities.

New leadership

A number of retirements and transitions have led to new academic leadership.

PROVOST/EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Susan Bon was chosen as the university's next executive vice president and provost following a national search. Bon is a professor, scholar, and national leader who has been focused on law and policy, disability law, civic engagement, workplace civility, and ethical leadership during her 25 years in academics.

She has served in leadership roles across the University of South Carolina, including the President's Office, Provost's Office, Student Affairs, and most recently as an interim associate dean in the College of Education.

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES INTERIM DEAN

Chris Childers, director of the School of History, Philosophy, and Social Sciences, has been chosen as the interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

That role is being vacated by Dean Mary Carol Pomatto, who is returning to teaching in the Irene Ransom Bradley School of Nursing to finish out her career.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION INTERIM DEAN

John Oppliger (HHPR MS '85), who has served as director of the Health, Human Performance, and Recreation department for 20 years, will move to the role of interim dean of the College of Education while a national search is underway for that position, which is being vacated by James Truelove.

COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY INTERIM DEAN

President Dan Shipp continues to serve as interim dean. A national search for a permanent dean will begin this fall.

University installs AEDs, NARCAN boxes

Students, employees, and visitors will have access to 25 NARCAN® boxes and 62 Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in the event of an emergency.

Assistant Director of Police Steve Rosebrough (Communication '89) took on the project as part of an ongoing effort to ensure the campus is as safe as possible.

The NARCAN® boxes have been installed in residence halls and other areas with large concentrations of students. Each one provides access to a dose of NARCAN®, a brand of naloxone nasal spray that can rapidly reverse an opioid overdose.

The AEDs have been installed in each building on campus and at Block22 downtown. The medical device is used to help people experiencing sudden cardiac arrest. The American Heart Association has found that the survival rate of a victim nearly doubles when an AED is utilized along with CPR.



CHAIRS/DIRECTORS

Nursing

Amy Hite (Nursing '96, MSN '00, EdS '19), a longtime faculty member in the Irene Ransom Bradley School of Nursing, is replacing longtime director Cheryl Giefer, who is returning to teaching to finish out her career.

Biology/Chemistry

Associate Professor Christine Brodsky is replacing Bobby Winters, who has chaired the departments since the retirement of Virginia

Ryder in May 2023.

Winters is returning to teaching to finish out his career.

Health, Human Performance, and Recreation

Associate Professor Cole Shewmake (Education '04) assumed the role of interim chair Oppliger departs to serve as interim dean of the College of Education.

Teaching & Leadership

Jason Clemensen (Education '05, MSED '08, EdS '12), an

assistant professor, assumed the role of interim chair when current chair Cherona Hicklin returns to teaching this summer.

History, Philosophy, and Social Sciences

Associate Professor Kyle Thompson assumed the role of interim chair when current chair Chris Childers moves into the role of interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.



New Executive in Residence

Students in the Kelce College of Business have been learning valuable lessons from someone who has worked for nearly 30 years as a corporate executive, thanks to the Executive in Residence Program.

Lisa Paterni (Accounting '86, MBA '96, MSED '11) served for 14 years as president of Pitsco Education, a global STEM products company based in Pittsburgh.

She was named the Pittsburgh Area Chamber's Kaye Lynne Webb Influential Woman in Business (2018) and Woman of Distinction (2010), the National Future Business Leaders of America Business Person

of the Year (2023), and received the Kenneth K. Bateman Outstanding Alumni Award (2011).

"Our students will learn valuable lessons from someone who has successfully managed and navigated the difficult decisions that corporate leaders face every day," said Dean Paul Grimes. "We are extraordinarily fortunate that she will now be sharing her talents with our business students full-time."

She also serves as a mentor to students in the Women@Work organization and serves as a resource to other faculty.

New Master's degree in Social Work

A new degree option will help fill a gap for social workers with advanced degrees.

The program will have two courses of study: a one-year program for students who have a Bachelor's and a two-year program for students who have a degree in another content area. For students in the two-year program, the first will be considered their generalist year and the second their clinical year. Students in the one-year program will proceed directly to their clinical year.

Students will complete practicum placements during their generalist and clinical years thanks to partnerships with numerous area agencies.



FARMERS ACROSS THE U.S. can't farm without equipment, and that equipment must be serviced, diagnosed, and repaired by qualified technicians. Students in the Diesel and Heavy Equipment program who one day will do that now have a brand new \$150,000 piece of equipment on which to learn.

A New Holland Speedrower 220 was donated by Kelly Burgess (Automotive '01) on behalf of Case New Holland — a global company that manufactures agricultural equipment.



Rainn Wilson visits campus

Best known for playing Dwight Schrute on the hit TV series “The Office” and now an author, podcaster, and humanitarian, Rainn Wilson spoke about his career, his journey to it, and spiritual tools for personal and social transformation during the H. Lee Scott Speaker Series in April.

Wilson visited with a panel of student leaders before sitting down for a conversation with Director of Media Relations and Pitt State Magazine Editor Andra Stefanoni (Communication '91, '94) at the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts.

They discussed “The Office” and his new book, “Soul Boom: Why We Need a Spiritual Revolution,” before moving on to topics Wilson is passionate about: mental health and access to education for girls and women in Haiti.

New accelerated medical and dental school program

A new accelerated med school and dental school program will save students money and time on their path to becoming healthcare professionals.

“This will get them into the field more quickly at a time of demand in rural areas like Southeast Kansas and Southwest Missouri,” said Professor Mandy Peak-Bryan (Biology '00), who directs AMP-UP (Accelerated Medical Path Undergraduate Program).

Those eligible will apply for acceptance in their freshman year at Pitt State. Upon completion of 90 hours and all prerequisites, students accepted into KCU will have the opportunity to then transition seamlessly to the Joplin campus in their senior year.

After successfully completing their first year of medical or dental school, they will be granted a Bachelor’s degree by Pitt State.

They’ll then be on track to complete medical or dental school in the remaining three years.

It’s a game-changer for students, said KCU-Joplin Vice President Dr. Richard Schooler (Biology '76), who worked with Peak and Professor Phil Harries to develop the program.

“This partnership will save students a full year of time and tuition,” Dr. Schooler said. “It is a very important collaborative effort to offer students a unique opportunity to complete college and their medical or dental education with a condensed pathway close to home.”



Taking it to the next level

During the Spring pinning ceremony for the Irene Ransom Bradley School of Nursing, graduating senior Dylan Pape was pinned by his daughter, Kylie. Pape started his healthcare career as a CNA at 17, by 18 was serving as a combat medic in the U.S. Army, then worked as an EMT and a phlebotomist before returning to school to earn a Nursing degree. He’s now an ER nurse.



A milestone: the 50th Annual Jazz Festival

For the 50th year, high school musicians from across the region filled the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts and Memorial Auditorium in March for the university's annual Jazz Fest.

It was started in 1974 by Professor Russell Jones with just 14 bands. In 1978, he passed the baton to Professor Robert Kehle,

who directed it until his retirement in 2023. Now directed by a committee, it routinely attracts 1,500 people.

Many of the high school bands are directed by music educators who got their start in the Music Department and performed in the Jazz Festival as students.

"I've had the privilege of being

part of the festival for 27 years and it's become a landmark cultural event for our area, the university, and the state of Kansas," said Professor Todd Hastings. He directed the PSU Jazz Ensemble as the opening act for the evening concert, which this year featured the acclaimed Matt Catingub Big Band.



THE OLDEST TRADITION ON CAMPUS, Apple Day, continued this year with a slight change: it was celebrated on the lawn of Russ Hall, the building at the heart of the tradition, with students, faculty, staff, community members — including the Pittsburg Fire Department! — gathering for games, a group photo, and treats.



Old becomes new

Four seniors in Plastics Engineering Technology figured out a way to convert surplus plastics — old soap dispensers from across campus — into new clothes hangers using injection molding. The project explored how feasible it is to manufacture new products from a small batch of waste products. Connor Ramsey, Nicholas Clark, Joe Murphy, and Taygen Bantz saved 121 pounds of material from going into a landfill. But most importantly, they agreed, they gained valuable hands-on experience.

Gorillas & Gearheads

Tarah Wilson Kent (Management/Marketing '02, MBA Management/Marketing '05) combined her love for cars — something she shares with her husband Andrew and her father James Wilson (General Studies '74) — and her love for Pitt State by creating an alumni car show! With the help of Alumni & Constituent Relations, James, Tarah and Andrew generously hosted the Gorilla Motor Classic at their home in Bucyrus. With more than 70 cars on display and 200 alumni and friends participating and spectating, the event was a hit! In addition to Southeast Kansas fried chicken, guests enjoyed complimentary drinks from Eagle Beverage in Frontenac, live music, networking, and more.



Advanced manufacturing



A new facility to be built at the southeast edge of campus in the university's research park will provide the region with the ability to produce and test materials and products locally. Construction should begin this fall and be complete in late 2025.



When finished, the National Institute for Materials Advancement's Prove-Out Facility ultimately will help local and regional entrepreneurs and businesses move from concept to reality with their ideas.

It will dovetail with research already being done on emerging technologies in the Tyler Research Center by world-class scientists and students. And, it will play a role in the recruitment and development of a more skilled workforce.

Funding is coming from state and federal grants.

Making life better

COMMUNITY SUPPORT



Meadowlark Elementary students awarded Pitt State Football players with the Community Support award for spending time this spring reading with students at the elementary school as part of the Dr. Seuss Read Across America program.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Members of the Pre-Dental (Biology) Club, including Kelsey Boucek, Silas Rosiere, Brock Marquardt, and Mattie Flanagan, visited Nevada Elementary School in Nevada, Missouri, and applied fluoride to the students' teeth as part of the club's outreach activities.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE



Students Konya Halle, Josh Holloway, Gabe Jones, Alesha Lawson, Belle Pfeifer, and Khloey Stringer (Biology/Field) volunteered over spring break with Sea Turtle, Inc. on South Padre Island to prepare nesting corrals to protect eggs and hatchlings for endangered turtles during the upcoming nesting seasons.

Gorilla Rising

Work began this summer in downtown Pittsburg to prepare two sites for Gorilla Rising, a bold plan to move the Kelce College of Business to a facility to be built at 216 N. Broadway. In addition to serving upper-level business students, it will house the university's Business and Economic Research Center and the Professional Sales Center.

The project also will transform the historic Besse Hotel, vacant for many years, into student apartments on the upper floors and a mix of public and office space, including the university's Center for Reading, on the first floor.

The project is being overseen by Mat Burton (Marketing '98) of the Vecino Group. Funding comes from a combination of private and public donors and partnerships, as well as a grant from the Kansas Department of Commerce.

The move will allow upper-level business students to be embedded in the surrounding Pittsburg business community.

The City of Pittsburg is

investing \$10 million in the project over 10 years, including \$1 million from the Revolving Loan Fund — the only taxpayer dollars committed to the project. Other sources include revenue from gaming, interest payments on investments, and civil engineering work such as sidewalks and driveways that accompany new construction.

City Manager Daron Hall said it “will have a tremendous impact on our downtown.”

President Dan Shipp noted the importance of partnerships that work to benefit the entire community.

“We have excellent public and private partners who believe what we believe: that it's in our shared interest to build our futures together,” said Shipp. “The more we can connect our main campus to sites around Pittsburg and the region, the more opportunities we can create for families, students, and local businesses.”

The construction phase will ramp up this fall. University leaders anticipate classes starting there in 2026.



Sweet victory

Pitt State Football welcomed 60 athletes from Special Olympics Kansas to Carnie Smith Stadium in May for Victory Day.

Now in its third year, it's become a new tradition for the Gorilla program — many athletes choose to stay on campus after final exams to participate.

Each Special Olympics athlete is paired with a member of the Gorilla Football team.

They began with Gorilla Walk, with many delighting in copying the Game Day tradition of touching the Champions Gorilla before entering the stadium.

A football game, fun, and drills rounded out their day.

Pitt State Cheer and Dance teams also attended and interacted with the youth.

CANINE TRAINING

Seventeen graduate students in the Behavioral Analysis program (Psychology) are working



to train dogs at the Southeast Kansas Humane Society. Their goal: to improve their chances of being adopted sooner. They've already had one success story.

DANCE

PERFORMANCE

Students in Dance Appreciation (HHPR), taught by Professor Janice Jewett, were recognized by Pittsburg Community Schools for the time they spent teaching first graders dances like the Virginia Reel folk dance and the Chicken Dance during physical education classes at George Nettels and Lakeside elementary schools. Last semester, they performed for



residents at Ascension Via Christi Village and taught dance to students at The Family Resource Center.

“Where my passion



led me”

As a child, basketball was a way for Adrian Herrera and his friends to steer clear of drugs, gangs, and guns. It became his first love. His second: film.



HE CAME TO PITT STATE TO PURSUE BOTH.

Today, Herrera (Communication BS '12, MA '14) is a successful freelance cinematographer, with credits including features highlighting the Kansas City Chiefs and players Travis Kelce and Patrick Mahomes.

“This is where my passion led me,” he said. “I take pictures from our shoots and show my parents and my brothers, and it’s pretty unbelievable.”

He has always loved creating: He made his first film at age 13 — a Michael Jordan highlight edited with downloaded free software.

In high school, he was part of the Highland Park Scots team under legendary Coach Ken Darting, helping them get to the State Championship not once, but twice.

As a first-generation college student, he majored in Communication and was a two-year letterwinner in basketball.

He took all the broadcasting classes he could, including ones that would change his life: TV Producing

and Directing and Documentary Filmmaking with Professor Troy Comeau. He and a friend also produced a weekly campus skit comedy show inspired by Key and Peele.

“That was for me like my mini film school — the campus TV station played it, people started recognizing it, it taught me so much. A highlight reel helped me land my first job.”

After graduation, Herrera worked on a Master’s degree while his wife Sharynna finished her Education degree. For his thesis, Herrera created a documentary about what he knew best: Coach Darting and Highland Park basketball, who in 12 seasons made seven state appearances and won four championships.

When Herrera won a national filmmaking award, his future path became even more clear.

He worked as an in-house filmmaker for a small ad agency before taking the plunge to start a freelance cinematography company. He sometimes has to pinch himself: He’s doing work for a production company that has relationships with the NFL Network, ESPN, the Big 10 Network, and more.

“I’ve become the go-to cinematographer for them,” he said, “and I’m loving it. They fly me to wherever they need me.”

He has directed a commercial for the Chiefs at their training facility, photography for a Patrick Mahomes feature on ESPN, and a Travis Kelce feature on Fox Sports. For “24 Hours to Countdown with the Chiefs” for NFL Films, he got to spend time in the locker room, equipment room, in the tunnel, and on the field.

He also makes time for passion projects that are meaningful and impactful, like award-winning short films and mentoring up-and-coming cinematographers.

“I never take it for granted, this job,” he said. “This is a cool thing I’m going to be able to tell my grandkids about.”





AUTOMOTIVE GRAD NOW EXECUTIVE FOR TOYOTA MOTORSPORTS

IN HIGH SCHOOL, PAUL DOLESHAL WASN'T A GREAT STUDENT and was uncertain about which direction to go. In junior college, he struggled a bit with motivation.

A friend introduced him to the Automotive program at Pitt State.

"Growing up as a car person, I said 'Sure, let's go!,'" he said.

Today, Doleshal (Automotive '95) is an executive for Toyota Motorsports North America.

On a return trip to campus, he spent time talking shop with students, including career advice and what life is like in the automotive business, and giving them an up-close look at a branded racecar.

"What I wanted to share with the students is that you don't know what you don't know. When you get into a career or a company, keep an open mind. Look for the doorways that present themselves and don't be afraid to walk through them," he said.

Literal doorways he'd never been through were at the Kansas Technology Center, being built just as he was graduating.

"I got to take a tour and see the things students have to learn with today, and that was pretty impressive," said Doleshal, whose instruction had been in Hartman Hall.

After graduating, Doleshal started as a management trainee with Toyota, worked his way through the New York regional office doing "rep roles" before moving to management roles in California.

In 2019, he was promoted to group manager for Toyota Motorsports and is based in Plano, Texas. He manages three distinct groups and deals with everything from sanctioning bodies, teams, and drivers, to commercial spots, the media pool, social media, prototype vehicles, historic vehicles, and a Motorsports garage.

"The real fun of the job is how do we engage and leverage various parts of the company — manufacturing, parts and accessories sales, technician recruitment — to promote not only the brand, but racing within the enterprise," he said. "There are a lot of channels and avenues, and you can touch any and all parts of the business."

It wasn't a career opportunity he ever imagined as a student, but for someone with an Automotive degree "it makes sense," he said.

"We're car people — we enjoy it as a hobby, but also the manufacturing side, the dealer rep side, the promotional side. Any of the elements we appreciate and like."

He credits educators like Roger Adams, George Brooker, and Ken Gordon for helping to shape him as a student, and experiences like the Society for Automotive Engineers and the Baja racing team as impactful.

"Those were things you can get some skills from, like learning to weld, but even more importantly that's where you'll find your leadership voice," he said.





Iranian chooses Pittsburg to pursue passion in graphic design

HOW DID A PERSON LIVING IN IRAN wind up at Pitt State?

Simple.

“I searched online for ‘the best university for graphic design in the U.S.’ and Pitt State popped up,” said Mahsa Dehghan.

That search paid off.

She enrolled as a graduate student in Graphic Communication, played a key role in changing the department’s branding, earning numerous awards for her work, and immediately landed a job with a reputable Pittsburg-based marketing agency.

Dehghan had worked for several years as a graphic designer in Iran but wanted to “take it to the next level,” she said.

She was the first from Iran to attend Pitt State in the past 20 years, and it wasn’t easy to get here: Iran doesn’t have a U.S. embassy, so she had to travel to Armenia to get a VISA.

It was well worth it, she said.

“When I got here, people were very nice, very welcoming, and I had a good experience.”

She taught a motion graphic class for a year as a graduate assistant, inspiring younger students and helping them to find their path in the field.

The work she created herself soon paid off with awards: nine total, including an elite MOSAIC Award from the American Advertising Federation — the first time someone from Pittsburg has won it! — as well as gold and silver ADDY awards, gold and silver Crimson Creative awards, and teaching and scholarship activity awards from the university.

The MOSAIC Award, given for projects focused on diversity, was especially meaningful.

“My project was a motion graphic short animation called ‘People are Different,’” she said. “It shows that we think

differently and have different likes and different opinions.”

The bulk of her other awards were given for her collaboration with Pitt State faculty on new departmental brand designs.

“I changed everything they had — all the posters, all the designs, the brochures, each of the hand-outs for the different emphases, the signage in the hallways — and created a logo motion graphic for each emphasis,” she said.

She designed a few versions, planned meetings with the department’s marketing team, asked for suggestions, and implemented changes. Now, her designs are everywhere, including notebooks, stickers, and calendars.

“I was looking for a modern look with modern shapes so high school students would be inspired and it would get their attention,” she said. “We had a call to action at the end of the motion graphics that would encourage them to click and know more, learn more about the university’s flat rate tuition, and apply.”

She accepted an internship offer at ADsmith Marketing & Advertising in Springfield, Missouri, designing logos and videos for their clients, and after graduation quickly got hired as a graphic designer for LimeLight Marketing in Pittsburg.

“Anything that’s related to visuals and advertising is my passion,” she said. “It’s like a puzzle, every project, and when I get to solve it, it’s just so satisfying.”

CHECK OUT HER WORK:

“People Are Different”

youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=W3I2svqK7q8

Motion graphics for Pitt State

youtube.com/watch?v=iPB15EPgR-0

Portfolio

behance.net/mahsadehghan?locale=en_US&

As Women's Soccer gets underway at Pitt State, it's already on fire in Kansas City, home to the KC Current. Three alumni are all connected to the team!

Pitt State grad DePrice Taylor and KC Current owner Chris Long.



DePrice Taylor

Social Work '10;
Health, Human
Performance,
and Recreation
(Sports Management) '12

DEPRICE TAYLOR BELIEVES WHOLEHEARTEDLY IN THE POWER OF SPORTS and the incredible doors that they have opened for her. But as a first-generation college graduate, she also believes in the power of education.

Today, she's combining both in her role as the executive director of community relations for the KC Current, a professional women's soccer league in Kansas City.

"Education is the vehicle for everything," she said. "For people who look like me, it's so important they understand that education can take you so many different places."

A native of Detroit, she was recruited to play basketball at Pitt State where she was coached by Lane Lord. She was hired at the Student Recreation Center and soon was promoted to be fitness supervisor.

When she graduated, she was asked by the director to stay, work on her graduate degree, and become a graduate assistant for the facility and its programming.

Throughout her time at Pitt State, she said, her interactions with staff, faculty, coaches, other students, and members of the community made a profound impact on her.

She then focused on paying that forward.

She began by developing youth programming for the Boys and Girls Club in Kansas City. A chance encounter with an executive from the KC Current led to her "dream job" with the KC Current.

Now, she is responsible for deepening the impact of the organization by building relationships with the community, fans, and partners. She connects

athletes with young adults and children with disabilities through a partnership with the YMCA and the United Way. She connects resources of the team and its corporate partners to make an impact in the community with projects like a new STEM lab in an inner-city school. And she played a role in the construction of three mini pitches for children.

“I’m able to work with an organization that is dedicated and committed to being a catalyst for change,” she said. “When the league started in 2013, one of our players had to change into her uniform in her car. A professional athlete. There’s been tremendous inequity in women’s sports, and now we’re making history. Now players get off of a bus, go past

cheering fans into their own locker room, and I get chills.”

“I’m still trying to grasp it all. I’ve done a lot of reflection on my journey and where I am and all that has led me to this point. The challenges, obstacles, being able to persevere. This job was made for me, and I’m grateful for it.”

“I cried three times at the home opener,” she said. “You see little kids — boys and girls — here and you think about what they’re seeing, about the significance of this moment in history, and it’s so powerful.”



Taylor feels like CPKC Stadium is her home away from home. Gorilla grad Ashley Harvey-Essman played a role in its construction.



At Pitt State, Richard Harper also was known as being a superfan.

Richard Harper

MUSIC '14

IT WOULD BE ACCURATE TO CALL RICHARD HARPER A SUPERFAN.

The photos, dating back to his years at Pitt State, tell the story. “In college I was known for my painted face and rah-rah-rah at the games,” said Harper, who was a loud and proud member of the Pride of the Plains Marching Band.

These days, he’s traded in his iconic crimson and gold face paint for a look that has become equally

iconic: a teal blue face and head and a bold red beard.

Although still very much a Gorilla fan, he’s also now known far and wide as a fan of the KC Current Women’s Soccer Team – a women’s professional soccer team founded in 2021 that now plays in the first purpose-built stadium built exclusively for women’s professional soccer.

He’s been featured in the

continued on next page

Kansas City Star, on social media channels, and in TV segments, referred to as “Teal Man.”

After college, Harper directed band for several years at Independence High School, married former Pitt State student Jocelyn Donegar in a McCray Hall ceremony, and a few years ago moved to Kansas City just as the KC Current were getting underway.

Supporting women’s soccer comes naturally to him: He played soccer as a child, but more importantly, he said, he does it to honor his mother, now 74, who played sports way before Title IX.

“Every time I go to a game, I think about her. I’m sentimental to think about what it would have been like if there were more women’s sports available to her when she was growing up? So, I want to support women’s sports today — they deserve world-class

facilities and die-hard fans who do in-your-face cheering just as much as male athletes do,” he said.

For his superfan look, he starts with a layer of blue paint on his head — careful around the eyes! — and allows it to dry. He applies red wax to his beard, then cheap hair gel, then a sprinkle of biodegradable glitter. When finished, he touches up anything he may have missed, then covers everything with a couple of coats of hair spray.

Kids, families, fans, even Justin Reid, safety for the KC Chiefs, have posed with him for photos.

“It’s been really fun, and my goal is to be welcoming, approachable, and to interact with other fans,” he said.

With soccer on the horizon at Pitt State, Harper said he plans to dig out the crimson and gold paint and head south.

“And I gotta find a scarf!” he said.



Kansas City Chiefs safety Justin Reid greeted Harper at a recent KC Current game.



Ashley Harvey-Essman

WOOD TECHNOLOGY '11

ASHLEY HARVEY-ESSMAN COULDN'T HAVE IMAGINED IT AS A STUDENT, but her experiences as one of few women in her classes at Pitt State would pave the way for a job that helped create the first stadium built for a women’s professional sports team.

Always fascinated by woodworking and the art of turning raw materials into beautiful and functional pieces, she was drawn to Pitt State’s Wood Manufacturing program by its reputation for a great curriculum and state-of-the-art facilities.

“I believe that skills and interests are not bound by gender. While Wood Technology is often seen as a ‘man’s field,’ the industry benefits from diverse perspectives and talents,” she said.

Harvey-Essman aimed to challenge stereotypes, encourage inclusivity, and inspire others who share similar interests.

“The supportive community at Pitt State, along with its emphasis on hands-on experience, made it the perfect place for me to develop my skills and pursue my career goals in woodworking and beyond,” she said.

A Wood Science class gave her the chance to attend the International Woodworking Fair — the largest woodworking trade show in North America — where she was able to connect with experts and gain inspiration.

An internship with Jefferson Millwork & Design in Washington, D.C., led to her first job as a project engineer. An internship with Dimensional Innovations (DI) in Kansas City would lay the



Ashley Harvey-Essman played a role in the creation of a landmark construction project.

foundation for a job she’s been at for 12 years — one that combines her passion for sports and fabrication.

And in October 2022, the \$117-million stadium for the KC Current broke ground at Berkley Riverfront Park, opening in time for the start of the 2024 season of the National Women’s Soccer League. Its capacity: 11,500 people.

“DI’s role was to create and enhance the overall aesthetic and branding elements, including creating unique signage and wayfinding that reflect their identity and that enhances the visual appeal of the stadium,” she said.

“From the stadium roof letters and player locker rooms, to the digital

kiosks and wall graphics, we helped ensure that the venue not only meets the functional requirements of a top-tier sports facility, but also stands out as a cutting-edge, fan-friendly environment that embodies the spirit and brand of the KC Current.”

Harvey-Essman worked closely with her team to ensure target dates were met; managed resource allocation, equipment, and materials; and ensured processes were efficient, cost-effective, high quality, and safe.

She spent considerable time onsite, assisting with the installation of elements and overseeing the work of partners to ensure the stadium was game-day ready for the historic season opener.

“It’s really gratifying to contribute to a landmark project that not only sets a precedent in the sports industry, but also promotes gender equality and provides a dedicated space for female athletes to showcase their talents,” she said.

It’s empowering, she said, to know that her team’s skills and efforts helped create a venue that will inspire future generations of women in sports and design/build disciplines.

“This project represents a significant step forward in recognizing and valuing women’s sports, and being part of it feels like contributing to a historic movement,” she said. “The pride and fulfillment I feel are profound, knowing that this stadium will stand as a testament to progress and equality in the sports world.”



Harvey-Essman and her team ensured CPKC Stadium was ready for its team.

WOW, WHAT A YEAR!

*We hate to jinx future seasons,
but what a year it was
for Pitt State Athletics!*



The good news just kept rolling in, headline after headline, photo after photo. Here's a look back:

Distance Coach
Ben Barrows



OCTOBER

- Men's Cross Country swept the MIAA Cross Country Championships in Columbia, Missouri, with two runners placing in the Top 10.
- Women's Cross Country captured the team title for the second consecutive season, with three runners placing in the Top 10.
- Distance Coach Ben Barrows was named the MIAA Coach of the Year for both the 2023 Men's and Women's Cross Country seasons.



NOVEMBER

- The Men's and Women's Cross Country teams both qualified for the NCAA DII National Championships.
- The Men's team would go on to an 11th place finish — the highest NCAA finish in program history.
- The Football team won its second straight MIAA Championship and advanced to the second round of the NCAA DII playoffs before dropping a hard-fought 24-21 decision to No. 2 Grand Valley State at Allendale, Mich.

DECEMBER

- Football ushered in a new era with the hiring of former associate head coach Tom Anthony as Pitt State's 16th all-time head coach. Anthony replaced Brian Wright, who left after four seasons to become head coach at DI Northern Arizona University. Anthony served as defensive coordinator under Wright from 2020-22.

FEBRUARY

- The university announced a commitment to restart Men's Golf in 2024-25 and to launch Women's Golf in 2025-26. Nick Long (Business '09), who played golf at Pitt State from 2000-03, was hired as the coach.

MARCH

- Women's Basketball beat Fort Hays State 63-53 to claim the MIAA Tournament title in Kansas City. The team earned the No. 4 seed for the Central Region in the National Championship — the seventh time in 11 years they've earned a spot. Grace Pyle became the 26th player in program history to reach 1,000 points.
- Men's Basketball finished the MIAA Tournament as runner-up. The team earned No. 5 seed in the national championship — their seventh time to compete.

continued on next page

- Erica Schamel claimed the high jump national champion title at the DII Indoor Track and Field Championships.
- Blakelee Winn was named a national champion in the pentathlon.
- Daylin Williams became a national champion in the 60m hurdles.
- Tre Betts was named a national champion in the triple jump.
- Men's Track and Field were named national champions, their third overall championship and second back-to-back.
- Women's Track and Field were named national champion runner-up with the best finish in program history.
- Kyle Rutledge was chosen as the DII Indoor Track and Field Coach of the Year by the United States Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA), and Jason Crow was chosen as Assistant Coach of the Year.



Coach Kyle Rutledge

“It’s been an incredible year for all of our teams, our athletes, our coaches . . . and we’re so appreciative of the fans and friends who continue to support Pittsburg State University; that support plays a huge role in our success.”

– Jim Johnson, director of Intercollegiate Athletics

APRIL

- Softball Coach Jenny Fuller reached 100 career wins, becoming the coach to most quickly reach 100 wins in program history.
- The Softball team was named No. 2 seed for the MIAA Championship.
- Fuller and her coaching staff were named MIAA Softball Coaching Staff of the Year. This group led the Gorillas to the most wins in program history (53) and their first MIAA title since 1994.
- Former Gorilla cornerback Rico Payton signed a free agent deal with the New Orleans Saints.

MAY

- The Men's Outdoor Track & Field team claimed its fourth straight MIAA outdoor championship title and the program's ninth MIAA outdoor title in the last 13 seasons.
- Pitt State became the first MIAA member school to claim MIAA championship titles in both Cross Country and Indoor Track & Field in one academic year since 1988–89.
- The Track & Field coaching staff were voted the MIAA's Men's and Women's Coaching Staff of the Year.
- Pitt State captured both the Men's and Women's titles at the MIAA Outdoor Track & Field Championships — the fourth consecutive title for the men and the seventh in the last nine seasons for the women.

- The Softball team had a historic season with a 53–8 record — the most victories in school history. They became MIAA regular season co-champions and were named No. 1 seed in the NCAA DII National Tournament.
- The Baseball team enjoyed a 34–18 season — the program's fifth consecutive 30-win season (2019, 2021–24) under head coach Bob Fornelli (the 2020 campaign was cut short due to the pandemic). The Gorillas advanced to the semifinals of the MIAA Postseason Tournament, which Pitt State hosted at Al Ortolani Field.

JUNE

- Work began on construction of the Pitt State Soccer Pitch for the newly-formed women's team. (*See story on pg. 24*)
- Pitt State won the MIAA Commissioner's Cup, based on a point system that reflects the finish of each team in conference play. The number of points awarded per sport is based on the number of schools that participate in that particular sport. Each institution's grand point total is then divided by the athletic programs it sponsors, giving an overall average finish for the school. “This is a fantastic honor for Pittsburg State to win the MIAA Commissioner's Cup for a third consecutive year and fourth time overall,” said Jim

STUDENT-ATHLETE SUCCESS

234 student-athletes were named to the MIAA Academic Honor Roll, which requires a GPA of 3.00 or above.

30 student-athletes also were named MIAA Scholar Athletes with a GPA of 3.50 or above and All-MIAA honors in their sport.

32 student-athletes earned the prestigious MIAA Academic Excellence Award recognition with a GPA of at least 4.0 or above.

26 student-athletes earned Academic All-District recognition from the College Sports Communicators. Three members of the softball team — Heather Arnett, Hannah Burnett and Hannah Martin — were chosen for the elite CSC Academic All-America team.

Johnson, director of Intercollegiate Athletics. “This award is a testament to the hard work our student-athletes, coaches and staff put in to be successful at the conference level and beyond.”

- Kyle Rutledge, in his third year as head coach at Pitt State, was named the D2 Men’s & Women’s Coach of the Year by the USTFCCCA after leading the Gorillas to a sweep of the men’s and women’s team titles at the 2024 NCAA Division II Outdoor Track & Field Championships.
- Jesse Miller, in his second year as assistant coach, was named Assistant Coach of the Year for Women’s Outdoor Track & Field by the USTFCCCA.
- Hunter Jones, Men’s Outdoor Track & Field, was named the D2 Central Region Men’s Field Athlete of the Year. Jones won the heptathlon at the 2024 NCAA DII Outdoor Track & Field Championships with 7,898 points, which made him the third best performer in NCAA DII history. Jones cleared 2.19m in the high jump, which tied the highest jump ever in a decathlon in collegiate history.
- Cross Country/Track & Field standout Mason Strader was named the MIAA Ken B. Jones Award winner as the conference’s Male Student-Athlete of the Year.
- Five current Pitt State Track & Field athletes qualified for the Olympic Trials held in Oregon this summer: Tre Betts (triple jump), Auna Childress (triple jump), Kyla Davis (pole vault), Hunter Jones (decathlon), and Daylin Williams (110m hurdles). Three former athletes — Louis Rollins and Cordell Tinch (110m hurdles) and Brett Thompson (javelin) also qualified.

- For the first time ever, Pitt State Athletics finished in the Top 10 in the NCAA Division II Learfield Directors’ Cup standings. The university’s previous high finish was 15th place in 2022-23.



Points are awarded based on each institution’s finish in up to 14 sports — seven women’s

and seven men’s. The Gorillas, who field 12 intercollegiate sports, compiled 665 points overall — 175 points during the fall, 240 points during the winter, and 250 points during the spring.

Assistant Coach Jesse Miller and student-athlete Taylor Nelloms.



WOMEN'S SOCCER

“This is another milestone moment in Pitt State Athletics,” said Athletics Director Jim Johnson.

“We are incredibly excited about it and about the opportunity this will provide to the women who have signed to be our first soccer student-athletes.”



CONSTRUCTION GOT UNDERWAY this summer on Pitt State’s first soccer pitch. It should be finished in time for the university to host its first regular season soccer game this fall.

The new Pitt State women’s soccer team will open the season by hosting Missouri University of Science & Technology on Sept. 5 with Coach Wes Branstetter at the helm.

The all-turf pitch is being built by Mammoth Sports Construction in the field between the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts and the Crossland University House (the president’s residence), oriented east and west along Ford Street.

The area was occupied for many years as a rehearsal space by the Pitt

State Pride of the Plains Marching Band, but Director Jobey Wilson accommodated construction by moving south toward the hike-bike trail known as Gorilla Walk.

Construction will be phased.

Phase 1 includes turf and equipment for the game. The Weede will serve teams via existing locker rooms and sports medicine areas.

Future phases will add a press box, lighting, fencing, seating, and

other amenities depending on funding and donor priorities.

Parking will be available in parking lots at the Weede Gymnasium and the Bicknell Center, with space also available in the nearby Brown lot adjacent to the stadium.



2024 WOMEN'S SOCCER HOME GAMES

- 9-5 Missouri S&T3 p.m.
- 9-8 Northwestern Oklahoma State.....1 p.m.
- 9-12 East Central3 p.m.
- 9-27 Nebraska-Kearney3 p.m.
- 9-29 Ft. Hays State1 p.m.
- 10-18 Newman2 p.m.
- 11-1 Central Oklahoma2 p.m.
- 11-3 Central Missouri2 p.m.
- 11-6 Missouri Southern2 p.m.



Three generations

With three generations of Gorillas, the Sode family was so impacted by Pitt State that they created scholarships.

“They honor my family’s history, and at the same time will help make a difference in student lives,” said Jimi Sode (Biology/Pre-Physical Therapy ’11).

Jimi’s grandparents attended Pitt State, as did his aunt and uncle. His mother, Nonetta, an Education major (’78), and his father, Olaseni, an Automotive major (’80), met on campus.

They funded the John W. Thomas, Jr. Scholarship for many years in memory of Nonetta’s father. Olaseni and his sons, including Jimi, now maintain two endowments: The Thomas-Sode Family Legacy Scholarship and the Nonetta Irene Sode Memorial Scholarship.

“My mom had always been a proponent of education, achieving higher levels — she wanted to provide opportunities for students to continue their education, to remove barriers,” Jimi said. “After my mom passed away in December 2020, we wanted to honor her and her legacy, her commitment to education.”

Jimi said he’s proud of his family’s continued tie to Pitt State through those scholarships.

“I grew up in St. Louis, but we would often visit as children,” Jimi said. “There’s a photo of me as a child by a Pitt State sign on campus. The connection to my family — it was a rich history and I loved hearing about it. It was



because of it that I attended PSU.”

Like his other family members, Jimi loved his experience at Pitt State. He worked at the Student Diversity Office and was active in organizations.

“I think back to my senior year, the friends

I made, the experiences I had, and that was really instrumental in how I went into adulthood. I cherish those memories.”

Jimi now works at the UMKC School of Dentistry in higher education administration, but he has returned for special events like the induction of a friend in the Athletics Hall of Fame.

“Things are definitely growing and expanding, but some things still the same feel, the same look, and I love that the university is holding on to some of those foundational pieces of the institution,” he said. “It’s a special place.”

“My mom had always been a proponent of education, achieving higher levels – she wanted to provide opportunities for students to continue their education, to remove barriers . . . we wanted to honor her and her legacy, her commitment to education.”

OUT OF 46 TEAMS FROM AROUND THE WORLD, Pitt State's team took 1st Place overall and 1st Place in performance testing for their Halligan bar in the annual International Cast in Steel competition in Milwaukee. The team was directed by Engineering Technology Professor Russ Rosmait. Students collaborated with the Pittsburg Fire Department on design elements of this tool designed to aid firefighters.



Three chosen for Outstanding Faculty Award

Professor Lynn Murray (Business), Professor Phil Harries (Biology), and Professor Christine Brodsky (Biology) were chosen by students for the 2024 Outstanding Faculty Award, given by the Student Government Association.

Murray (BBA '88, MBA '01) is both the associate dean and an associate professor of marketing, teaching courses like Personal Selling and Sales Management, Sports Marketing, and Marketing Strategy, and serving as the advisor for an organization she founded, Women@Work.

Students say she fosters meaningful relationships with her students, creating a shared trust and respect that leads to better learning and personal growth.

Brodsky, an associate professor, teaches Ecology, Field Biology Orientation, Urban Ecology, Mammalogy, and Animal Behavior, and she serves as a faculty mentor in the K-INBRE program — the Kansas Idea Network of Biomedical Research Excellence, a federally-funded effort to enhance biomedical research and training.

Students say she has a contagious energy



Murray



Brodsky



Harries

that motivates all of her students to learn in a fun and innovative way, finding methods for them to retain information that doesn't always involve standardized tests.

Phil Harries, a professor, teaches Principles of Biology, Cell Biology, General Biology, Advanced Cellular and Molecular Biology, and was a course developer for Biology of Cancer. He advises Pre-Med students and was one of the two developers of the newly launched AMP-Up program in partnership with Kansas City University Medical and Dental school.

Students say he is positive, makes students feel welcome in his classroom, and makes them feel that they will be able to succeed.

Milken Educator Award



Alex Lahasky (MA History '16) and Matt Mayeske (MS Education '20) were awarded the elite national Milken Educator Award, often hailed as the “Oscar of Teaching,” in surprise ceremonies at their schools.

The award came with a \$25,000 cash prize that the teachers can use for any purpose.

Lahasky teaches history to juniors at Blue Valley West High School in Overland Park, and Mayeske teaches history to freshmen and sophomores at Gardner Edgerton High School in Gardner.

Kansas Commissioner of Education Randy Watson praised them for their creativity, engagement, innovation, and dynamic approach.

Lahasky (above) and Mayeske (below) at surprise award ceremonies at their schools.

“I am inspired daily by the teachers that I work with. For every teacher that does get recognized, there are 10 or 20 or 50 behind the scenes that work so hard, and are so talented, that don’t get the recognition,” said Lahasky. “I’m so humbled, and I wish we could recognize more.”

“I had really good teachers when I was in high school — some still work here — and when I got to college, I decided I wanted to work with people,” said Mayeske. “I thought what better way to give back and be able to provide the same thing that was given to me.”

Dr. Ralf J. Thomas Distinguished Service Award



Jeff Ney
Marketing '91

Jeff Ney is president of New Dynamic, LLC, in Overland Park, Kansas — a Gold Microsoft Partner dedicated to the Microsoft Dynamics 365 CE and Power platforms.

Ney also served as a partner in the PSC Group, LLC, for 18 years; was a sales manager for New Resources Corporation; and was an account manager for Bradford & Galt. Since 2014, Ney has served on the Kelce Board of Advisors.

He was the driving force behind the initiation of the annual Kelce College of Business Golf Tournament in Kansas City, now in its 14th year as a fundraiser for the college. The golf tournament endowment has grown to \$90,000 and has to date awarded \$27,000 in scholarships to students in the Kelce College of Business. As the primary organizer, Ney’s role extended beyond planning, from choosing a venue to securing corporate sponsors, recruiting teams, and executing the actual event.

Ney also served on the Pitt State Alumni Association Board of Directors.

Meritorious Achievement Award

Three alumni were honored with this year's Meritorious Achievement Award, the highest award based on career achievement presented by the Alumni Association. The event was held in April at the Wilkinson Alumni Center.



Dr. Gary Doolittle

Biology '80

Dr. Gary Doolittle grew up in Pittsburg and after graduating from Pitt State, earned his medical degree from the University of Kansas. He joined the KU faculty as a medical oncologist with an interest in bone marrow transplantation and has continued to teach for 30 years.

Early in his career, both parents were diagnosed with cancer, sparking his interest in oncology care, especially in rural areas. In 2000, he was named medical director of the University of Kansas Medical Center's Center for Telemedicine. He also was instrumental in KU Cancer Center's partnership with Pitt State and Ascension Via Christi Hospital.

Today, he is the Capitol Federal Masonic professor of medicine in the Division of Oncology at KU, where he also is the medical director of the Masonic Cancer Alliance, vice chair of education in the Department of Internal Medicine, and assistant dean for the Office of Medical Education. He and his wife, Ro, live in Prairie Village, Kansas, and have three children.



Jo Ann (Goodwin) Gilford

Elementary Education '55

Jo Ann (Goodwin) Gilford had a very long teaching and consulting career, but she also was a trailblazer beyond the classrooms. She taught in Iowa, Washington, D.C., and Germany, and was the first Black teacher hired at Burroughs Elementary in Tulsa, Oklahoma, kickstarting her advocacy for school desegregation, the abolishment of corporal punishment, and an emphasis on childhood literacy.

She went on to serve on numerous boards including Tulsa Public Schools Board of Education in 1976, winning by six votes, as well as the Urban League, the Greenwood Cultural Center, Tulsa Mental Health Association, Tulsa Arts & Humanities Council, the National Education Association, and many more. She volunteered with many children's groups. She was awarded the National Teacher of the Year in 1965.

Now in her 90s, she never really retired; she continues to be a mentor for young teachers and volunteers daily at a local elementary school. She was inducted into the Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame in 2016.



Carole (McAlpine) Watson

Language & Literature '62

Carole (McAlpine) Watson is the retired deputy chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities in Washington, D.C. She earned a master's degree from Saint Louis University and a doctorate at George Washington University.

She has twice served as acting chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities, first in 2009 and again in 2013-14. She studied African American literature and authored "Her Prologue," a scholarly bibliography of novels by African American women published between 1859 and 1965. She was the founding chair of the English Department at the Abraham Lincoln Opportunity School in St. Louis and directed Inter-Cultural Programs at Lindenwood Colleges at nearby St. Charles.

She helped guide the NEH through the National Digital Newspaper Program, a humanities equivalent of the Human Genome Project. In collaboration with the Library of Congress, the agency is digitizing a hundred years of reportage published by American newspapers.

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.



Richard (Chard) Overton (General Studies '81), a two-time first team All American member of the Hall of Fame, and a running back on the 100th Anniversary Football Team, showed Gorilla spirit on his 65th Birthday in Labadee, Haiti with his wife and grandson.



When Jonathan Amborn (Sociology '98) and his family took a trip to Aruba for Christmas vacation, his wife Megan reminded him to pack his Gorilla gear! "It's amazing that people around the world say hello after recognizing you're a fellow Gorilla," he said.



Brenda Schulz Thornton (Education '84, MS Education '03) and Beverly Schulz (Management '93, MBA General Administration '95) braved the elements to represent Pitt State at 7,000 feet on Mount Pilatus in Switzerland!



Stephen Taylor (Communication '73) posed in his Gorilla shirt at Nuremberg Castle in Germany while touring sites of World War II with his grandson.



Paul Hays (Construction '79) and wife Gretchen traveled to Israel for a Holy Land tour, then a side trip to Greece where they saw the Temple of Apollo ruins in Corinth. While at a restaurant in Israel, a woman from California recognized the Gorilla on Paul's hat and asked if he had attended Pitt State. She grew up in a city north of Pittsburg.



Robin (Communication '87) and David (Business Administration '86) Stricklin wore their crimson and gold in a hot air balloon ride over Vermont.



Some adventurous Gorillas went ziplining in Belize! From left: Valerie Smith-Weaver (Nursing '05), Shelia Bontrager, Amy Bartlow (Education '07, MS '14), Ashlei Bockover (Biology '02, MA Teaching '17).

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS GUS?



Brent Crandon (Biology '85) showed his Pitt State pride on a beautiful day at Lake Atitlan in Guatemala.

A Gorilla was spotted at Roca Blanca Mission Base in Oaxaca, Mexico! Tim Pistole (AAS '81) and Nancy had a day of leisure after serving for a week with Mercy & Truth Medical Missions.



Two Gorilla brothers and their Gorilla wives represented Pitt State while celebrating in Las Vegas. From left: Barbara Homer (Education '92), Jim Homer (Physical Education '76), Jane Homer (Physical Education '73) and Bob Homer (Physical Education '71, MS Physical Education '74, Hall of Fame '21).



At Kipu Ranch in Kauai, Hawaii, Gorillas represented! From left: Guide, Eddie Bright (Electronic Engineering Technology '82), Anita (Rhea) De La Torre (Education '71), Julie (De La Torre) Bright (Education '80), Michael De La Torre (Social Work '71), Vera (McClay) Rhea (Education '80), Larry Rhea (Vo-Tech '81), and Guide.



Frontenac high school friends and Pitt State supporters display their Gorilla pride during a trip to Marco Island, Florida: Kim Spritzer Wilson (Nursing '92), Paula Uttley Potts (Education '91), Rhonda Zafuta McFarland (Communication '91), Sarajo Grilz Pyle, and Angela Lee Siebuhr (Education '91 MSED '93).



Gus made an appearance in the Dominican Republic thanks to Aaron Young (Engineering Technology '05), Lindsay (Carson) Young (Management & Marketing '05, MBA '09), Tosha (Gier) Carson (Management & Marketing '11), and Grant Carson (Automotive Technology '07).



William (Math Education '60) and Ida May Willhaus with their nephew, Nathan Purdome, showed school spirit at the Mermaid Shack at Columbus Landing, St Croix, Virgin Islands.



Donna Benson Klasing (Psychology '76), Elaine Rouse Castagno (Accounting '79), Dorothy Webb Stice (Computer Programming '76) and Debra Alvarez Kovac (English Education '78) remembered to take their Pitt State gear to Rome, Florence, and the Tuscany region of Italy.



Gus rode (secretly) on the Spider Man float in the Krewe of Carrollton parade during Mardi Gras in New Orleans for Carrollton's 100th anniversary, thanks to Brian Clarkson (Plastics Engineering '96)!



Gorillas with a view pose near the Memphis Pyramid in Memphis, Tennessee: Dalton McCord (Education '13, MS Educational Leadership '21) and his dad, Dennis (BSA '72).



Frankie Scoggin Barker (Nursing '73) and Becky Bishop Waitkoss (Nursing '73), along with Frankie's husband, George, represented Pitt State down under in New Zealand!

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS GUS?



Bill Simms (Physical Education '60) wore his Pitt State apparel on a camel ride with his daughter, Cathy Stephenson, on Lanzarote in the Canary Islands on Christmas Eve 2023.



Clinton Miller (Marketing '90) took a trip to Costa Rica and, as always, traveled with his Pitt State Huggie!



In June, Larry (MS Education '78) and Vicki O'Neal (MS Education '79) traveled to South Africa with a Freeman Advantage tour. They visited Victoria Falls, had safaris in Chobe and Pilanesberg National Parks, and ended their tour in Cape Town. They showed their Gorilla pride at the Cape of Good Hope!



A group of Pitt State grads and fans visited NYC with Sunflower Travelers in May 2024 and proudly displayed Gorilla gear. Alumni included: Mavis Benner (Nursing '96, MS Nursing '00), Valorie (Pyle) Gardner (Education '72, MS '86), Craig Null ('90), Dacia White ('98), Malory White ('18), Phillip Ysusi ('75), Ruth Dianne (Pyle) Mitchell ('78), and Jim Mitchell ('76).



Can you spy the fourth gorilla in this photo? While Jerod Stanton's (Information Systems '99) daughter Katie was studying abroad in Africa, he and his wife Carissa visited Rwanda and made a stop at Volcanoes National Park for a mountain gorilla trek! Look closely and you'll see a silverback named Agashya.



Professor Mark Johnson (Business '83, MS '87, EdS '89) and Jacki Johnson (BS '79) celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on a trip to Alaska. This picture is from their visit to Denali National Park.

1977

Bob Biles (Accounting) is celebrating the publication of his book, “Business and Personal Wisdom – A Wise King’s Advice.” The book examines the wisdom Solomon offers his son in Proverbs chapters 1-9 and translates that wisdom to business and personal development for today.

1984

Willie Fritz (Education) was named head football coach at the University of Houston. Willie most recently served as coach at Tulane University in New Orleans. During his time at Pitt State, Willie played on two conference title teams and was a four-year starter at defensive back.

1997

Chris Hall (Sociology) graduated from the FBI National Academy. With the title of detective sergeant, he is the third officer in the history of the Crawford County Sheriff’s Office to complete this prestigious program.

Angela Moriconi

(Communication) won seven Gold Mike awards in Division A at the 75th Gold Mike Awards in Los Angeles, where she works for KCAL/KCBS TV. Her dad, Chuck Moriconi, also is a graduate of Pitt State (1968).

1998

Matthew D. Morris (Management) was named to the list of 2024 Men of the Year by the Springfield Business Journal. He is the vice president for administration and finance at Missouri State University.

1999

Jennifer Ternes (Psychology, Human Resource Development ’00) was named director of corporate allocations, planning, and analytics at PetSmart.

2004

Eva Sager (English, MS Educational Leadership ’10), was named this summer as the new director of the Overman Student Center. Sager also is the director of Campus Activities and as such oversees student programming by the Gorilla Activities Board

New Gorilla in charge



A Gorilla has been named the superintendent of the newest national historic site, New Philadelphia National Historic Site near Barry, Illinois.

Christopher Collins (French Language, Literature, and History ’99, Information Systems ’03) has more than 20 years of National Park Service experience including Glacier National Park in Montana, Nez Perce National Historic Park in Idaho, Indiana Dunes National Park, and Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park in Missouri.

The new site was established to commemorate the history of early 19th Century Black pioneers in Illinois. It was the first township known to be officially registered by an African American.

The National Park Service described Collins as “a great community steward who is seasoned in developing new units into successful operations.”

and the Student Government Association, and works closely with campus wellness representatives and Greek Life.

2008

Kara Mishmash (Interior Design) was named program coordinator for The Community Foundation of Southeast Kansas. She will be leading CFSEK’s programming efforts, which include the annual awarding of more than \$500,000 in grants and more than \$100,000 in scholarships.

2010

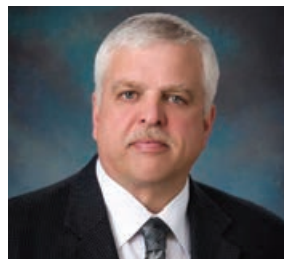
Bret Ingle (MS Education) was named principal of Williams Elementary in the Springfield (Missouri) Public School District. He most recently served as principal at Reed Academy, and prior to that in the Joplin School District, where he had 13 years of administrative experience as an elementary principal and a middle school assistant principal.

Andy Nail (Accounting, MBA ’11) started as the director of FP&A at Trisura Insurance Company.

Hall of Fame

Rick Webb (Physics ’83) was selected to join the Short Line Railroad Hall of Fame by the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association. The honor recognizes short line railroad visionaries who best exemplify the qualities of innovation, entrepreneurialism, perseverance, and service that advance the short line railroad industry.

Webb was a Pitt State student who cleaned box cars part time for Watco transportation company when it began in July 1983. In 1987, Watco purchased its first short line railroad.



By 1998, Webb had become CEO.

It has since grown to 190 operations in four countries and now serves more than 3,500 customers. Today, Webb serves as the company’s executive chair and has been recognized as one of Railway Age Magazine’s 10 most influential leaders. Watco was chosen as one of Newsweek Magazine’s Top

100 Global Most Loved Workplaces.

Webb advocates for his alma mater and many local schools and community organizations, and serves as an Emeritus Trustee of the PSU Foundation Board.

“Guiding Watco’s growth required a constant focus on listening to and learning from the customer and from the Watco team,” the ASLRRRA said. “Webb always believed that if you want to learn how to grow the top line, listen to your customer and if you want to learn how to grow the bottom line, listen to your team.”

Alan Youngers (Construction Engineering Technology '10) was named as one of the Wichita Business Journal's 40 Under 40 Honorees. Youngers works for McCownGordon Construction as a preconstruction manager.

2012

Anthony Crespino (BS '12) was named director of football operations at the University of Nebraska. He has held several roles throughout his career with stops at TCU, SMU, Northwestern, Penn State, Texas State, and Western Michigan.

Nadia Marji

(Communication) was named vice president of marketing and communications at Backcountry Hunters & Anglers. She most recently served as chief of public affairs and engagement officer for Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and was the first female executive editor of Kansas Wildlife and Parks Magazine.

2014

Taylor Counts (Physical Education) was hired as head football coach at Newton High School. Taylor played football for the Gorillas from 2009-2013 and most recently taught and coached at Andover High School.

2015

Tyler Conklin (Political Science and International Studies), a former in-house counsel at Atlas Air, Inc., joined Adams and Reese Aviation and Aerospace Team as an associate and is working out of the national law firm's Washington, D.C., office. After earning a degree at Pitt State, she earned her J.D. and an Energy and Environmental Law certificate from University of Connecticut School of Law. Conklin's

experience includes advising on a variety of legal and regulatory regimes, handling global investigations and whistleblower claims, and leading settlement discussions and high-stakes negotiations.

Taylor Elliott

(Communication) was hired as CRO Strategy Manager at Simplistic, a digital commerce and optimization agency.

Darryl Holland (Family and Consumer Sciences) was promoted to manager of product testing at Adidas.

2016

Austin Bogina (Education) competed in the 2024 Olympic Trials Marathon in February with his sister, Kaylee, in Orlando, Florida. He was a state cross country champion in high school before a running career at Pitt State. He earned a doctorate in Sports Management from KU, where he is a professor.

Kendal Schmidt

(Communication) was selected to Ingram's 20 in Their 20s Class of 2023. She serves as director of employee engagement and communications at Spring Venture Group in Kansas City.

2017

Christopher "CJ" Budy (History) was named director of the Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center in Enid, Oklahoma. He has worked at historic sites across Kansas and Missouri. Most recently, he was a historical interpreter at Fort Osage National Historic Landmark in Sibley, Missouri.

Mark Hager (MS Educational Leadership, MS Technical Teacher Education '22) was announced as agriculture education program director for Enid Public Schools beginning July 1.

Business is blooming

Lily Williams (General Studies '12) got her start in the floral industry as a student employee at the Little Shop of Flowers in downtown Pittsburg. That was 2010.

By 2016, Lily — who really does have the perfect name for the industry! — was using what she learned in Pittsburg to develop her own business in her Kansas City studio apartment.

Today, that business, Lily Floral Designs, has grown into a 3,000 square foot shop in a revitalized and thriving neighborhood on Fifth Street in downtown Kansas City.

With the addition of business partner Betsy Ford, Lily Floral Designs is producing arrangements for some 250 events per year, delivering flowers for birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, and funerals throughout the metro area.

Perhaps the most unusual job to date? Being chosen by the NFL to provide floral displays at Union Station for the NFL Draft.

Her business was voted Best Wedding Florist in Kansas City in 2020 and 2023, Best Florist in Kansas City in 2018, and has been featured in Bride Magazine and several other publications.

Among her many customers: dozens of Pitt State alumni!



2018

Marissa Buzzard (Education) was named Lamar R-1 Teacher of the Year in Lamar, Missouri. She taught high school English for the school district and now serves as the library media specialist.

2020

Ashley Spears (Nursing), a nurse for Advent Health, was awarded the Employee

of The Year for Advent Hospital from a pool of approximately 3,000 Advent Health employees across the Kansas City metro area.

2022

Chloe Hildebrand (Marketing) was hired as an inside sales agent at Spring Venture Group.

The following deaths are ones we've learned about since the last magazine, including some prior to 2024:

1928

Perdue B. Graves, Topeka, Kan.

1943

Mary J. Katter, Wellington, Ky.

1945

Faye Teegarden, Augusta, Kan.

1947

John P. Johnson, Monmouth, Ill.
Dorothy J. Thompson, Lincoln, Neb.

1950

Arthur L. Delmez, Saint Louis, Mo.
Betty J. Erikson, Great Bend, Kan.
Thelma M. Speller, Hazel Crest, Ill.

1951

Ervin W. Brant, Green Valley, Ariz.
Martha L. Hoefling, Broken Arrow, Okla.
William A. Long, Coffeyville, Kan.
Opal L. Norris, Altamont, Kan.
Welby G. Parson, Frisco, Texas
Niles F. Stockinger, Arma, Kan.
Paul M. Willis, Salina, Kan.

1952

Glen W. Clugston, New York, N.Y.
Eva L. Copenbarger, Taylors, S.C.
Betty A. Grisham, Frontenac, Kan.
Russell Henderson, Minneapolis, Minn.
Theodore M. Nairn, Munster, Ind.
Helen M. Nimmo, Rancho Santa Margarita, Calif.
Sue S. Reece, Joplin, Mo.

1953

Carole J. Bowman, Frontenac, Kan.
Jo Ann Brinkman, Santa Fe, N.M.
Kenneth L. Callaway, Monument, Colo.
Roger D. Copenbarger, Taylors, S.C.
Howard M. McKee, Santa Fe, N.M.
George C. Meese, Jr., Bartlesville, Okla.
Margaret Sample, Overland Park, Kan.
Arden W. Sanderson, Claremore, Okla.
William A. Strumillo, Kansas City, Kan.
Kenneth R. Wood, Easton, Kan.

1954

Sue C. Albers, Lakewood, Colo.
George A. Breneman, Owasso, Okla.
Arthur D. Corpolongo, Lebanon, Mo.
Mary C. Ester, Conifer, Colo.
William A. Hornbaker, Salt Lake City, Utah

1955

Florence A. Bramble, Algonquin, Ill.
Thomas I. Garland, Wichita, Kan.
Elaine Hust, Wichita, Kan.
Verna M. Kohler, Kansas City, Kan.

Hugh C. Palmer, Mechanicsville, Va.
Myra J. Thomas, Fort Walton Beach, Fla.

1956

Jesse R. Davis, Lancaster, Calif.
Sally M. Edmiston, Fairfax, Va.
Rena J. Flaharty, Westminster, Colo.
Michael N. Skahan, Columbus, Kan.

1957

Jose H. Abella, Girard, Kan.
Ray E. Darlington, Wichita, Kan.
Doris J. Moore, Milton, W.V.
William M. Roehling, Joplin, Mo.
Paul R. Shipman, Joplin, Mo.

1958

Delbert R. Fluty, Overland Park, Kan.
Sally M. Hart, Pittsburg, Kan.
Melvin N. Hayward, Galena, Kan.
Leonard L. Mansfield, Licking, Mo.
Charles J. Matous, Wichita, Kan.
Donald L. Paddock, Oracle, Ariz.
Arthur C. Scavezze, Ponca City, Okla.
John E. Schifferdecker, Girard, Kan.
William W. Wheat, Parsons, Kan.

1959

Jack D. Ball, Rogersville, Mo.
George L. Chaney, Ottawa, Kan.
Jerry W. Ellis, Charleston, Ill.
Jerry L. Hamm, Coffeyville, Kan.
Patricia E. Kazmierski, Colorado Springs, Colo.
William J. Lombrano, Great Bend, Kan.
Gary M. Munsinger, Tucson, Ariz.
Patricia A. Seckman, Hillsboro, Mo.
Larry D. White, Topeka, Kan.

1960

Jill D. Cott, San Antonio, Texas
Dwane K. Johnson, Fredonia, Kan.
Lyman G. Lane, Lexington, N.C.
Dan D. Mosier, Leavenworth, Kan.
Jane A. Nelson, Camarillo, Calif.
Leseley J. Simpson, Independence, Kan.
Edward O. Tilford, Santa Fe, N.M.

1961

Chester R. Bilke, Kingman, Ariz.
Lelland L. Gallup, Castle Rock, Colo.
Donna L. Hargis, Carl Junction, Mo.
Ronald J. Maupin, Overland Park, Kan.
Carol M. Maxham, Windsor, Vt.
Barbara A. McCord, Edna, Kan.
Phillip H. O'Malley, Pittsburg, Kan.
John W. Thornberry, Lee's Summit, Mo.
Warren L. Wicker, Prairie Village, Kan.

1962

Leslie W. Alexander, Leesburg, Fla.
Robert O. Blunk, Denver, Colo.
James R. Clark, Bradenton, Fla.
Bessie A. Dewelt, Joplin, Mo.
Dale A. Howerton, Hutchinson, Kan.
Arthur W. Moore, Colorado Springs, Colo.
Nancy J. Rogers, Columbus, Kan.

Richard J. Wiencek, Frisco, Texas
Donald R. Wilson, Sterling, Kan.

1963

Nana J. Cassatt, Oronogo, Mo.
LeRoy C. Detwiler, Paola, Kan.
Beverly K. Dewater, Jonesboro, Ark.
Donna J. Erisman, Joplin, Mo.
James A. Gerdes, Altamont, Kan.
Delphine R. Jackson, Wagoner, Okla.
Joe F. Say, Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.
Edward N. Seela, Fountain Valley, Calif.
James A. Sutherland, Council Bluffs, Ia.
Jerry D. Wheeler, Saint Paul, Minn.
William D. White, Independence, Kan.

1964

Charlotte L. Cable, Joplin, Mo.
Dennis L. Cross, Castle Rock, Colo.
Nelda K. Cuppy, Moran, Kan.
Beverly A. Eddings, Gravois Mills, Mo.
Bob L. Fulton, Fort Collins, Colo.
Ed R. Gill, Kenosha, Wis.
Jeannine M. Hepner, Broken Arrow, Okla.
Douglas L. Hollis, Joplin, Mo.
Larry P. Lee, Carl Junction, Mo.
Carl R. McEntire, College Station, Texas
Melvin L. Riggs, Topeka, Kan.
Alma A. Ross, El Dorado Springs, Mo.
Glen I. Schrock, Hutchinson, Kan.
James R. Shepherd, Topeka, Kan.
Dolores C. Smith, Galena, Kan.
Margaret V. Sprinkle, Miami, Okla.
Dale W. Sullens, Branson, Mo.
Leroy W. Tiberghien, Joplin, Mo.
Billy J. Weaver, Carthage, Mo.

1965

Iraj Broomand, Westlake Village, Calif.
Ronald G. Chilcott, Alexandria, Va.
Andrew N. Desetto, Boonville, N.Y.
Dennison Egbert, Shawnee, Kan.
George C. Frederick, Las Vegas, Nev.
Robert A. Mikel, Parsons, Kan.
John "Mike" M. Purdon, Perry, Kan.
William T. Waller, Denton, Texas

1966

Bob L. Bagby, Chesterfield, Mo.
Frank L. Felts, Wichita, Kan.
Larry L. Hardesty, Pittsburg, Kan.
Linda G. Holtzman, Altamont, Kan.
Gary P. Lindsly, Wichita, Kan.
William H. Scavezze, Salt Lake City, Utah
Darrel A. Thomas, Englewood, Colo.

1967

John M. Bumgarner, Lexington, S.C.
Jerry W. Cicero, Overland Park, Kan.
Teddy E. Creed, Coffeyville, Kan.
Donald G. Morey, Tulsa, Okla.
Vanetta C. Sabine, Pleasanton, Kan.
Albert L. Schmitz, Edwardsville, Kan.

1968

Bernard D. Behrends, Manhattan, Kan.
Mary L. Blair, Boulder, Colo.

Lynn W. Bousman, Lee's Summit, Mo.
 Jean A. Conboy, Scottsdale, Ariz.
 Ray E. Funk, Mound City, Kan.
 Richard G. Hurst, Houston, Texas
 Nancy I. Kelly, Dallas, Texas
 Pamela A. Musick, Pittsburg, Kan.
 Robert E. Newkirk, Wichita, Kan.
 Bonham W. Oney, Carthage, Mo.
 Sherwin E. Patton, Bartlesville, Okla.
 Roscoe Peterson, Frontenac, Kan.
 Johnny L. Vaughn, Overland Park, Kan.
 Lawrence E. Wunderly, Mound City, Kan.
 Forrest A. Young, Carthage, Mo.

1969

Anabel L. Campbell, Joplin, Mo.
 Carol A. Conn, Mound City, Kan.
 Mary E. Horner, Olathe, Kan.
 William H. Irby, Columbus, Neb.
 Jerry H. Lo, Carol Stream, Ill.
 Ronald L. Stang, Louisburg, Kan.

1970

Mary L. Beveridge, Olathe, Kan.
 Rodney L. Cook, Neodesha, Kan.
 Charles E. Hessert, Carl Junction, Mo.
 Ronald D. Johnson, Joplin, Mo.
 Jon R. Jones, Sun Lakes, Ariz.
 Janine M. Kelley, Bentonville, Ark.
 Jeannette Lehman, Joplin, Mo.
 James F. Pippin, Houston, Texas
 Paulette S. Sayers, Fort Scott, Kan.
 Jimmie D. Steen, Olathe, Kan.
 William L. Stephens, Winfield, Kan.
 Susan E. Thomas, Girard, Kan.
 Clara E. Wilson, Arkansas City, Kan.

1971

Melvin J. Anderson, Carthage, Mo.
 Monna L. Bulkley, Topeka, Kan.
 Leon M. Dawson, Prairie Village, Kan.
 Shirley M. Doty, Fort Scott, Kan.
 Joseph C. Ficklin, Austin, Texas
 Kay C. Gilmer, Pittsburg, Kan.
 Chester C. Johnston, Fort Scott, Kan.
 Chris E. Kirkwood, Topeka, Kan.
 Philip W. Martin, Pittsburg, Kan.
 Patricia A. Palmer, Lenexa, Kan.
 Ronald R. Patchin, Parsons, Kan.
 Michael J. Row, Pittsburg, Kan.
 Richard E. Saporito, Pittsburg, Kan.
 Michael K. Sawrie, Little Rock, Ark.
 Charles L. Scott, Lawrence, Kan.
 Janet N. Scovell, Richmond, Calif.
 Dennis B. Trelloggen, Chanute, Kan.
 Mary J. Walterscheid, Coffeyville, Kan.
 Rodney K. Wormington, Dodge City, Kan.

1972

Beverly J. Cook, Independence, Kan.
 Jerry W. Craig, Ballwin, Mo.
 Mark S. Fields, Girard, Kan.
 Patsy E. Franklin, Fort Scott, Kan.
 Collis R. Geren, Fayetteville, Ark.
 Jack H. Irvin, Port Saint Lucie, Fla.
 Melvin W. Jacobson, Centralia, Mo.

Carolyn F. Johnson, Fort Smith, Ark.
 Steven M. Klein, House Springs, Mo.
 Dennis K. Sutton, Webb City, Mo.
 Edwin E. Thomas, Baxter Springs, Kan.

1973

Garold R. Billionis, Fort Scott, Kan.
 Gaylen F. Brady, Fallbrook, Calif.
 Emma C. Cunningham, Omaha, Neb.
 David H. Dick, Hesston, Kan.
 Bruce R. Guy, Smithville, Mo.
 Leonard H. Lewis, Olympia, Wash.
 Rick E. McGuire, Kansas City, Kan.
 Richard D. McMichael, Hooker, Okla.
 Larry W. Pommier, Pittsburg, Kan.
 Michael A. Potchad, Overland Park, Kan.
 John A. Wade, Coralville, Ia.

1974

Winnie L. Aston, Flower Mound, Texas
 Patricia L. Giarrusso, Encinitas, Calif.
 Leonard Harris, Downers Grove, Ill.
 Pauline S. Hart, Fort Scott, Kan.
 Tony V. Malnar, Girard, Kan.
 Margarette A. McReynolds, Beloit, Kan.
 Mark L. Mitchelson, Baxter Springs, Kan.
 JoNita R. Otto, Pittsburg, Kan.
 William J. Pearson, Wichita, Kan.
 Warren R. Pease, San Marcos, Calif.
 Gale D. Pipkin, Aurora, Colo.
 Michael D. Powell, Arma, Kan.
 Charles M. Robinson, Independence, Kan.
 Janet M. Saunders, Lenexa, Kan.

1975

Rono G. Bowyer, Joplin, Mo.
 Lorene Higgins, Lamar, Mo.
 Sally J. Luderman, Wyoming, Mich.
 Mary A. Mabrey, Charlotte, N.C.
 Stephen A. Miller, Coffeyville, Kan.
 Robert J. Saunders, Independence, Kan.
 Arlen K. Wiens, Bartlesville, Okla.

1976

Harry S. Ain, Frontenac, Kan.
 Francis A. Buche, Pittsburg, Kan.
 Charles D. Kater, Topeka, Kan.
 Joye R. Russell, Joplin, Mo.
 Leonard K. Thompson, Independence, Mo.
 David E. Turnbull, Pittsburg, Kan.
 Deanna J. Wyckoff, Omaha, Neb.

1977

Garry O. Eckert, Parsons, Kan.
 Donald F. Garvin, Miami, Okla.
 Gary L. Keltner, Englewood, Colo.
 Cynthia J. Lopez, Independence, Kan.
 Orin F. Marshall, Holton, Kan.
 David W. O'Malley, Pittsburg, Kan.

1978

Fred R. Bolt, Weir, Kan.
 Clara L. Carlat, Cypress, Texas
 Donald L. Hrabik, Overland Park, Kan.
 Gary L. Johnson, Independence, Kan.
 Brenda L. Prothe, Humble, Texas
 Coetta P. Scoggins, Miami, Okla.

Mike L. Snead, Kansas City, Kan.
 Sandra S. Vinardi, Arma, Kan.
 William H. Westmoreland III, Atchison, Kan.

1979

John T. Carey, Baxter Springs, Kan.
 Mary J. Cook, Butler, Mo.
 Gary L. Dykman, Overland Park, Kan.
 John E. Heizer, Spring Hill, Kan.
 Edward H. Lenheim, Kansas City, Kan.
 John D. McKenna, Kingman, Kan.
 Barbara J. Reiff, Omaha, Ark.
 Robert J. Richards, Columbus, Kan.

1980

Joe G. Barker, Afton, Okla.
 Sandra F. Fox, McCune, Kan.
 Ollie G. Patterson, Carl Junction, Mo.

1981

Richard J. Bustos, Oklahoma City, Okla.
 Catherine J. Campbell, Oswego, Kan.
 Roy R. Hanna, Jasper, Mo.
 Judith A. Reese, Arma, Kan.
 Debra J. Steele, Lawrence, Kan.

1982

Galen F. Atkinson, Burleson, Texas
 Jeffrey A. Brooks, Asbury, Mo.
 Nedra S. Darnell, Miami, Okla.
 Gregory J. Roberts, Hutchinson, Kan.
 Rick D. Schoeling, Pittsburg, Kan.

1983

Peggy A. Eaton, Carl Junction, Mo.
 Larry L. Gilmore, Pittsburg, Kan.
 Stephen L. Jones, Webb City, Mo.
 John J. Manley, Mulberry, Kan.
 Nanette M. Martin, Springfield, Mo.
 Beverly A. Mashburn, Tulsa, Okla.
 Joe H. Maxwell, Carl Junction, Mo.
 Robert C. Oliva, Ely, Minn.

1984

Tinna M. Bendt, Wichita, Kan.
 Ladonna Buchman, Spring Hill, Kan.
 Hildegard E. Gimler, Parsons, Kan.

1985

Becki J. Fink, Kansas City, Mo.
 Walter S. McLean, Arma, Kan.
 Frank S. Russell, Pittsburg, Kan.
 Steven L. Siebuhr, Kansas City, Kan.
 Jimmie L. Thomason, Webb City, Mo.
 Kathleen J. Ward, Chanute, Kan.

1986

Kathy J. Glover, Joplin, Mo.
 Jeffrey L. Wilke, Van Buren, Ark.

1987

James L. Bates, Lakeville, Minn.
 Dennis R. Lumley, Owasso, Okla.
 Donna L. Lyerla, Pittsburg, Kan.
 Christina J. Mack, Fort Scott, Kan.
 Claude E. Roberts, Chanute, Kan.
 Scott A. Wilson, Orlando, Fla.

1988

Rick S. Bland, Girard, Kan.

1989

Helen I. Hines, Erie, Kan.

Steven L. Ray, Picher, Okla.

Marie T. Yagmour, Leawood, Kan.

1992

Belinda Fitzjohn, Altamont, Kan.

Jacquelyn S. Krueger, Sterling, Kan.

Elizabeth K. Svercl, Anoka, Minn.

1993

David W. Bolen, Le Roy, Kan.

Harvey P. Green, Fort Scott, Kan.

Charlene H. Tripp, Saint Joseph, Mo.

1994

Amy L. Goodknight, Oronogo, Mo.

Frances Lake, Parsons, Kan.

1995

Charles E. Levo, Miami, Okla.

Phyllis P. Talley, Carthage, Mo.

1996

Linda A. Hopkins, Lebo, Kan.

Nancy L. Johnson, Pittsburg, Kan.

1997

Julie B. West, Nevada, Mo.

1998

Jenifer L. McDonald, Pittsburg, Kan.

2000

Courtney A. French, Columbia, Mo.

Rhonda S. McDaniel, Pittsburg, Kan.

2001

Shawn R. Ames, Joplin, Mo.

2002

Monica R. McClure, Rose Hill, Kan.

Jozetta A. Riggs, Lee's Summit, Mo.

Vicki L. Smith, Columbus, Kan.

2003

Chris R. Davis, Wichita, Kan.

2004

Carolyn S. Rogers, Thayer, Kan.

2006

Bunk M. McCullough, Frontenac, Kan.

Connie L. Randall, Joplin, Mo.

2007

Marco A. Ibarra, Pittsburg, Kan.

2008

Jeremy J. Williford, Pittsburg, Kan.

2010

Katie F. Rodina, Tonganoxie, Kan.

2012

Charles C. Hamman, Pittsburg, Kan.

2013

Sean F. McCartney, Carl Junction, Mo.

2014

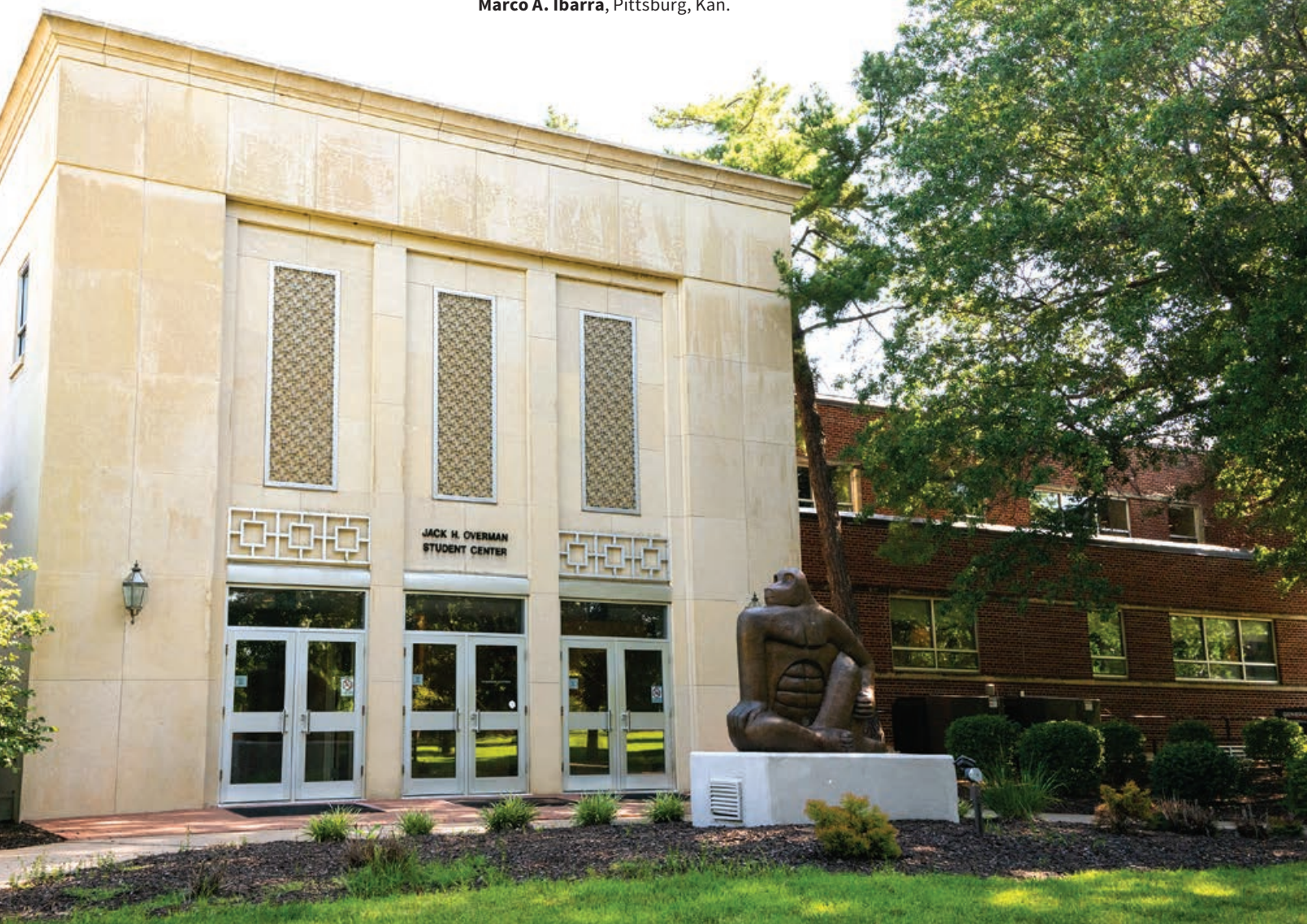
Carly A. Twarog, Girard, Kan.

2019

Mitchell B. Eck, Beloit, Kan.

2022

Nancy J. Shafer, Columbus, Kan.



Peter Hamlet

CHEMISTRY

Longtime chemistry professor Peter Hamlet died April 30, 2024. He was 80.

He graduated from the University of Chicago in 1964 and earned his Ph.D. from the University of California in 1968. He taught chemistry at the University of Rhode Island and Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo before joining the faculty at Pitt State, where he taught for more than 30 years.

He was known for his signature humor to help students understand that chemistry is all around them. While at Pitt State, he spearheaded the STARS program, a project designed to interest and encourage 7th and 8th graders in scientific research, and he often wowed young audiences with his chemistry magic shows.

He is survived by his wife, Devra Hamlet, two children, and their families. His wife of 40 years, Lucetta Zinni Hamlet, died in 2012.

In lieu of flowers, the family has suggested memorials to the Pittsburg State University Foundation, Inc. for the Dr. Peter and Lucetta Hamlet Scholarship. Memorials can be mailed to Pittsburg State University, PO Box 4005, Pittsburg, KS 66762 or gifts can be made online at pittstate.edu/givenow. Memorial services were held privately.



Craig Fuchs

HONORS COLLEGE, MUSIC

Longtime Professor Craig Fuchs died on June 8 from ALS. He was 62.

During his 24-year tenure at Pitt State, he served as director of bands, chair of the Music Department, director of the Honors College, and director of the Bachelor of General Studies Program.

He retired in 2023 after ALS made it difficult to continue working.

Under his leadership, the Pitt State Wind Ensemble performed at the 2006, 2009, 2011, and 2016 KMEA Music



Conventions, and at Lincoln Center in New York City in 2015. For 13 seasons, he performed as a member of the T.D. Pack Band, the official band of the Kansas City Chiefs.

He was a guest conductor in England, France, The Netherlands, Brazil, and Paraguay, and was in demand as a conductor/clinician for regional and district honor bands.

As part of his work with the Honors College, he led study abroad trips to Europe for 13 years.

In 2001 and 2012, he was honored with the Robert K. Ratzlaff Outstanding Faculty Award by the Student Government Association. In 2023 he was inducted into the Kansas Music Educators Association (KMEA) Hall of Fame.

Fuchs is survived by his wife Kelly, daughter Kelsey (Psychology '22), sons Andrew and Caleb (General Studies '22), and extended family and close friends.

Teresa Ramirez Massa

CHEMISTRY

A longtime Pitt State administrator, Teresa Massa, died on Jan. 31, 2024. She was 81.

In 1978, she joined Pitt State as director of the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action. She retired from that position in 2007.

She graduated from the University of Oklahoma and did graduate work at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Roosevelt University in Chicago, and at the University of Oklahoma.

Her career also included serving as a legislative assistant in the Oklahoma Senate, working in various federal and state programs, and serving on the faculty of the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma.

Massa was active in the American Association of University Women, several civic organizations in Pittsburg, and coordinated silent auctions and other fundraisers for scholarship funds to enable women to attend college.

Her husband Richard W. Massa preceded her in death in 2019.

She is survived by stepchildren and grandchildren, a brother, and extended family.



Dean Powell

GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION

Dean Powell, a longtime professor, died June 24 in Pittsburg. He was 89.

As a student at Pitt State, he put himself through college by working at Pittcraft, a local printing and design company. He earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in what was then called Graphic Arts/Printing and was one of the first to complete the ROTC program.

He was the commanding officer of the 1010th Army Reserve Service and Supply and served in the U.S. Army from 1954 to 1957, ending his service with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

After teaching in public schools, he became a professor at Pitt State in 1967 and taught Graphic Arts/Printing for more than 30 years until his retirement.

He is survived by his wife Susan, four children, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Burial was in the National Cemetery at Fort Scott with graveside military rites.



Gene Vollen

CHEMISTRY

Longtime music professor and department chair Gene Earl Vollen died on Feb. 11, at age 90.

He once served as a musician with the 423rd Army Band, and taught music for several years in public schools in Michigan and at universities in Tennessee and Ohio.

He joined the faculty at Pitt State in 1970, teaching low brass, music history, and music theory. He was named department chair in 1978, a position he held until his retirement in 1995. He returned to serve as Interim Chair in 1998-99 and remained active in music, including as a member of the SEK Symphony until 2020.

Survivors include his wife Linda, also a symphony member, their children, and many extended family members.

A celebration of life was held at McCray Hall on Feb. 17. Memorial donations may be made to the Music Department.



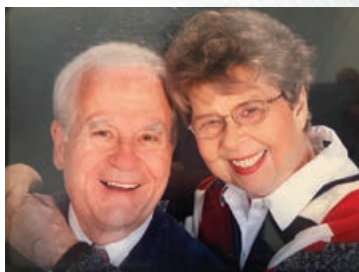
Planned Giving

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

Joe and Sally Hart

Contributions by Joe and Sally Hart to Pitt State through planned giving will make a lasting impact on the success of Pitt State students.

Sally died on Oct. 7, 2023, at age 87. Joe died on June 9, 2024, at age 90. They had recently celebrated 64 years of marriage.



Sally (Education '58) was known for always being willing to lend a hand in her church and the Pittsburg community. Born in Pittsburg, she attended the university when it was known as Kansas State Teacher's College and became a teacher at St. Agnes Catholic School in Roeland Park, Kansas, and at St. Mary's in Pittsburg.

She was active in numerous community civic groups and charitable causes.

Joe (English '59) was known to many as "Mr. Pittsburg." He attended a one-room schoolhouse, then served in the U.S. Army before attending Pittsburg State, where he met Sally. They were married in September 1959.

He worked for 65 years for Northwestern Mutual Life, retiring in May. Joe, like Sally, was very active in the community in a number of civic organizations and charitable causes. He volunteered to serve in numerous ways, including at Pitt State.

In 2022, he chaired the campaign to rebuild the Newman Center on campus where he and Sally had attended as students. He was a past president of the Pitt State Alumni Association and the Pitt State Athletic Drive. In 2019, he was awarded the university's Distinguished Service Award.

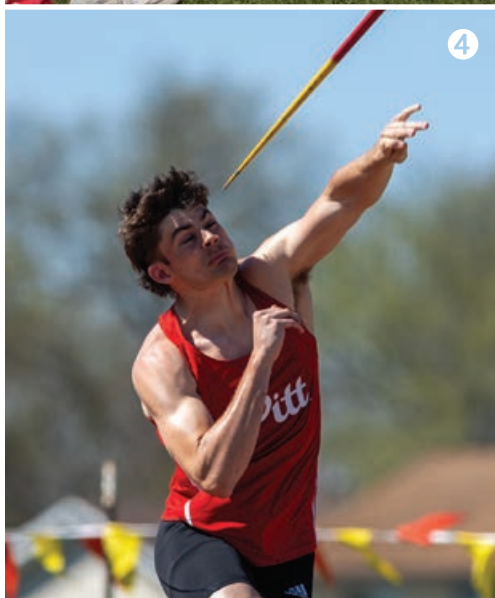
In addition to annual giving, their decision to establish a planned gift at their alma mater will ensure their legacy of helping others lives on.

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



Derek Livingston (Graphic Communications '17) is a multimedia production specialist at the City of Pittsburg who freelances for Pitt State Athletics. With a keen eye, a passion for sports photography, and the ability to catch incredible detail, in this edition of “Through the Lens,” he provides us with a look at moments typically missed by sideline spectators.

1. Softball — Kadyn Trochim hypes up the team before a double-header at home.
2. Dive — Shortstop Cade Clemmons dives for the catch at Al Ortolani Field.
3. Pole Vault — Pole vaulter Britton Gage attempts to clear at an outdoor track meet at Carnie Smith Stadium.
4. Jav — Javelin thrower Doug Brown throws at a home track meet.
5. High Jump — Cordell Tinch jumps in the high jump event at the 2023 MIAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships at Lincoln University in Lincoln, Missouri.
6. Volleyball — Seville Gates spikes the ball past a few defenders from Emporia State University at a home match in John Lance Arena.
7. Baseball — Ryan Koval and Sioux Falls’ David Swanson nearly miss each other as the ball goes flying by at a home game at Al Ortolani Field.
8. Catch — Tight end Devon Garrison goes up for the catch vs. Emporia State at a home game in Carnie Smith Stadium.
9. Huddle — Grace Pyle hypes up her basketball teammates during the pre-game player introductions in John Lance Arena.







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