



WAYNE

STATE COLLEGE

Magazine for Alumni and Friends • WINTER 2026



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President's Message

DR. MARYSZ RAMES



Dr. Marysz Rames President of Wayne State College

"As I close my 10th year as President of Wayne State College, my appreciation for the talents and generosity of our alumni and friends continues to grow. Each graduate I meet, each story that is shared, reinforces for me that Wayne State College is truly a critically important component of higher education in Nebraska and beyond. Your love and support of the College fuels our growth and ambition as we continue to deliver a high quality education at a manageable price for our students. Thank you and Go Cats!"

Read more about Dr. Marysz Rames' 10 years at Wayne State on page 10 of the magazine.

Opening Messages

WSC FOUNDATION



Dr. Bob Machovsky Chief Executive Officer Wayne State Foundation

"The past nine months have been filled with meeting so many wonderful people and learning what makes Wayne State College truly special. As the Foundation's new CEO, I would like to thank everyone for the warm welcome and I look forward to continuing to meet more Wildcats down the road. I would also like to thank all our supporters who continue to step up and help move Wayne State College forward. Your ongoing generosity is truly appreciated.

2026 will undoubtedly be an exciting year, and the Foundation staff looks forward to engaging with our Wildcat family. Go Cats!"



Mike Varley, President of the Wayne State Foundation Board of Trustees

Meet Mike Varley, the new President of the Wayne State Foundation Board of Trustees.

Wayne native and 2005 Wayne State College graduate Mike Varley has stepped into the role of President of the Wayne State Foundation Board of Trustees, bringing with him a lifelong connection to the community and a deep commitment to the College's mission. Having grown up in Wayne and attended Wayne Public Schools and Wayne State College, Mike's roots run deep, and so does his passion for supporting current and future Wildcats. His leadership reflects the values of service, stewardship, and pride that define the Wayne State family, making him a natural fit to guide the Foundation's efforts in strengthening opportunities for students and advancing the College for years to come.

“It is an honor to serve as the Wayne State College Foundation Board President. I am inspired by the generosity and commitment of our community, and I look forward to working with our board, staff, and supporters to keep the Foundation strong and connected to Wayne State College.”
- Mike Varley '05



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1. NSR Representatives flashing a 'Wc' Wildcats spirit sign
2. WSC cheerleaders at the 2025 homecoming game
3. Wide Receiver Elijah Hudson with his family at Family Day 2025
4. The WSC Girls Soccer team walking in the Homecoming parade
5. Dawson Forgy, BSU @ WSC
6. French Horn player at the Homecoming bonfire
7. First day of classes 2025
8. Willy the Wildcat poses for New student Registration



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People Like You!

Theophilus Family Establishes Endowed Scholarship

Giving to Wayne State College via the Wayne State Foundation is the perfect way to honor a loved one whose life has been profoundly impacted by Wayne State College.

It was an easy decision for the Theophilus family when their father, David, a Wayne State alumnus, passed away unexpectedly.

“Our dad was a lifelong learner who valued his time and education at Wayne State College, as well as his continued relationship with Wayne State,” said the Theophilus family in a statement. **“After discussions with mom after our dad passed away, it was a quick and easy decision to honor both of our parents with a family scholarship named for them. We hope this scholarship will support Wayne State students for many years to come!”**

The Theophilus family worked with the Wayne State Foundation to establish criteria to support the kind of student they are interested in helping. Criteria for their scholarship is that preference shall be given to a student who is a Nebraska resident, who is majoring in Education, and who demonstrates financial need.

After working with the Wayne State Foundation, they established the Karol and David Theophilus Endowed Scholarship.

Theophilus, who majored in Physics, graduated from Wayne State in 1964 with a bachelor's degree in Education. He would go on to become the meteorologist in charge of the State of Nebraska and spend a total of 26 years with the National Weather Service – a career that he truly loved.

Theophilus passed away Feb. 16, 2025, in Fremont, Neb.



For more information about the Nana Peterson Endowed Scholarship, or to learn how you can support Wayne State College students, contact the Wayne State Foundation at 402-375-7510 or wscfoundation@wsc.edu.

Carter “Cap” Peterson, Family and Friends Establish Nana Peterson Endowed Scholarship

Carter “Cap” Peterson, along with his family and friends, has established the Nana Peterson Endowed Scholarship at Wayne State College. This scholarship honors the memory of his late wife, Nana Peterson, and celebrates her deep love for the Wayne community and Wayne State.

Cap Peterson, a 1972 graduate of Wayne State, recently honored Nana’s legacy by creating a community garden in her name. Nana’s passion for the Wayne community and the people who call it home inspired Cap, his family, and colleagues from the antique shop where Nana worked to establish this scholarship.

The Nana Peterson Endowed Scholarship will be awarded to incoming freshmen pursuing majors in Music, Art, or Applied Science, continuing Nana’s commitment to supporting students who contribute to making the Wayne community what it is today.

Cap Peterson serves as a Wayne State College Trustee, sits on the Foundation’s Executive Board, and is a member of the

Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees. He is also president of Northeast Nebraska Insurance Agency and was honored as the 2005 National Professional Insurance Agent of the Year.

“Nana truly loved the Wayne community and Wayne State College,” said Cap Peterson. **“Through this scholarship, our hope is to honor her memory by supporting students who share her passion for creativity and community. It’s a way to give back in the manner that Nana felt was most important – helping those who are dedicated to enriching the Wayne community.”**

“We are deeply grateful to Cap Peterson, his family, and friends for their generous support,” said Dr. Bob Machovsky, CEO of the Wayne State Foundation. **“The Nana Peterson Endowed Scholarship not only honors Nana’s remarkable legacy but also provides invaluable opportunities for future students to thrive and contribute to our vibrant community.”**

Additional supporters of the newly established Nana Peterson Endowed Scholarship include Cap Peterson’s children, colleagues who worked alongside Nana at Nana’s This & That antique shop, and faculty and staff members from Wayne State College.

The Petersons Named Recipient of Inaugural Family Of The Year Award

Wayne State College and the Wayne State Foundation are proud to announce the Carter “Cap” Peterson Family of Wayne, Neb., as the recipients of the inaugural 2025 Family of the Year Award. This honor celebrates a family who embodies the true spirit of the “Wildcat Family” through active student involvement, engagement with the College and community, and a legacy of multi-generational connections to Wayne State.

The Peterson family’s story at Wayne State began with siblings Cap Peterson ’72 and Marcia (Peterson) Gray, ’67. Marcia married the late Jim Gray, also a ’67 graduate. Jim played football for the Wildcats. Together, they embodied a tradition of Wildcat pride.

Cap and his late wife, Nana, also treasured their Wayne State experiences and encouraged their children to follow in their footsteps. Their daughter, Sara (Peterson) Hinsley, has continued the family tradition through her daughter, Ruby Hinsley, a current freshman majoring in Counseling and a member of the Aristocats dance team.

“I have made so many new friends, and I am just enjoying college life so much,” said Ruby Hinsley. **“My grandparents always talked about how wonderful it was for Wayne to have a college, and I agree. I have always loved Wayne, and I am enjoying being a part of WSC.”**

Cap and Nana’s son, Matthew Peterson ’97, graduated with a degree in Sports Broadcasting and remains a proud Wildcat alumnus. Today, his son Calvin Peterson, a sophomore majoring in Sports Management, continues the family’s legacy as a member of the Wildcat baseball team.

Beyond these family ties, Cap Peterson remains a dedicated leader and advocate for the College. He currently serves as a Wayne State College Trustee, sits on the Foundation’s Executive Board, and is a member of the Nebraska State College System Board of Trustees. His leadership reflects the Petersons’ deep-rooted commitment to WSC’s success. Cap is also a proud leader and advocate within the community of Wayne, serving on various community boards. He is the president of

Northeast Nebraska Insurance Agency and was named the 2005 National Professional Insurance Agent of the Year. Cap has made the city of Wayne and Wayne State College his top priority in promoting progress.

“Receiving this award is humbling for my family, and we are proud to continue to support such a special place,” said Cap Peterson.

The Family of the Year recipient is selected from a pool of nominated families and announced during Family Weekend. To be eligible, at least one family member must be a currently enrolled student. Additional criteria include active student involvement in at least one student organization, family engagement with the College and community, and a demonstrated legacy of multi-generational involvement with Wayne State.

“We’re honored to celebrate the Peterson Family, and we thank them for their remarkable and lasting contributions to the Wayne State community,” said Dr. Bob Machovsky, CEO of the Wayne State Foundation.

Below: The Carter “Cap” Peterson Family of Wayne, Neb., pictured in the back row are (L-R) Dr. Marysz Rames, president of Wayne State; Cap Peterson, Dave Hinsley, Sarah Hinsley, Matthew Peterson, Erica Peterson, Calvin Peterson, Cash Peterson, and Dr. Bob Machovsky, CEO of the Wayne State Foundation. In the front row are (L-R) Harper Hinsley, Ruby Hinsley, and Cruz Peterson.



Wildcat Dome's Track and Field Named for Dr. Ron Holt

Wayne State College recently celebrated a student-athlete alumnus by naming the Wildcat Dome's indoor track and field after Dr. Ron Holt, a 1989 graduate of Wayne State, in honor of his generous legacy gift to the Wayne State Foundation.

The air-supported Wildcat Dome is part of the \$30-million Athletic and Recreation Complex renovation and addition that was completed earlier this year, and it will be incredibly impactful on Wayne State's intercollegiate athletics, student recreation, student-wide wellness programs, and overall community and regional use. The project also included renovations to Rice Auditorium and the Recreation Center.

"Having Dr. Ron Holt's name on the track and field serves as an inspiration for our current and future students," said Dr. Marysz Rames, president of Wayne State College. **"His impressive academic credentials and the impact he has had through his professional experiences should be celebrated. More importantly, his kind and caring nature, along with his passion for helping others be successful and feel good about who they are as individuals, are personal traits we should all aspire to emulate. The naming of our track and field will serve as a legacy gift for future generations and will serve as a testimony to the impact one individual can have on others by giving of both his time and treasures. Thank you, Ron, for your commitment to Wayne State and our students."**

The project's historic improvements are critical for Wayne State's ability to continue



"I'm truly humbled to see my name on this track and field, a reminder of the incredible impact Coach (LeRoy) Simpson had on my life and the lessons I've carried with me. My heart goes out to every student who steps onto this track. I encourage each of you to chase your dreams and make the world a better place."

to recruit and retain students by providing an exceptional overall student engagement experience.

"It's truly an honor to recognize Dr. Ron Holt, not only as a student-athlete alumnus who ran track for the Cats from 1986 to 1989, but also as a major contributor to this transformational project," said Mike Powicki, director of Wayne State's Athletic Department. **"Ron is someone who has made nearly a life-long commitment of giving back to Wayne State College through his financial support of projects and**

scholarships, his skills and expertise as a doctor, and his passion and support for students. On behalf of Wayne State College and Wildcat Athletics, we thank Ron for his generosity and for being a wonderful ambassador for Wayne State College!"

Dr. Ron Holt currently practices as a student health psychiatrist at San Francisco State University. His community service began at Wayne State in 2000 when he began returning to campus each homecoming week as a volunteer to educate students on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ+) issues and civil rights.

Throughout his educational and professional career, Holt has exhibited outstanding accomplishments as a strong advocate and champion of civic engagement and community service.

Holt began the Dr. Ron Holt Civic Engagement Award in 2014, which recognizes a graduating Wayne State senior who has served as an exemplary role model and contributed to the service ethos of the college campus and community. He returns to campus each spring to personally present the award to a student.

Holt has received several awards for his community service across the country and at Wayne State. He received Wayne State's 2004 Alumni Service Award, Wayne State's 2012 Alumni Achievement Award, the Wayne State 2017 President's Diversity Award, and the Wayne State 2019 School of Natural and Social Sciences Outstanding Alumni Award.

In 2022, Holt was elevated to Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association and graduated from San Francisco State University with a master of arts degree in Human Sexuality Studies.

In addition to his work as a trustee of the Wayne State Foundation, Holt has created numerous endowed and annual scholarships at Wayne State College. He began his first annual scholarship in 1989 when he was a senior at Wayne State.

To view a video of the Dr. Ron Holt naming ceremony scan the code here:





Graduation speakers included (L-R): Quentin Dreyer, Gary Richards, and Ellie Patera

Winter Commencement 2025

Wayne State College held its Winter Commencement ceremony for graduate and undergraduate students on Dec. 12 in Rice Auditorium. A total of 245 degrees were conferred. Those students receiving their diplomas included 172 undergraduates and 73 graduate students from the college's Master of Science in Education, Master of Science in Organizational Management, Master of Business Administration, and Education Specialist programs.

Ellie Patera, Invocation Speaker

Ellie Patera of Springfield, Neb., delivered the invocation. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education with Reading and Writing PK-6 endorsements. She is the daughter of Erin Patera of Springfield, Neb., and Michael Patera of Guthrie Center, Iowa. Patera was on the Dean's List in Spring 2024, Fall 2024, and Spring 2025. Patera's father, Michael, is also a Wayne State graduate. Patera plans to continue her work in the field of education in the Omaha area now that she has her Wayne State degree.

Quentin Dreyer, Undergraduate Commencement Address

Quentin Dreyer of Manning, Iowa, delivered the undergraduate commencement address. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in Skilled and Technical Sciences Education. Dreyer is the son of Jay Dreyer of Longmont, Colo., and Kristin Dreyer, recently deceased. Dreyer's activities at Wayne State included cross country, track and field, Student Athletic Advisory Committee, Student Senate, SkillsUSA, and membership in Epsilon Pi Tau, the international honor society for the computing and information disciplines. Dreyer was on the 2022-23, 2023-24, and Fall 2024 WSC Dean's List. As a member of the WSC track and field team, Dreyer received the 2023 Cross Country Elite 18 Award, the 2025 Track and Field Elite 18 Award, and the Myles Brand All-Academic with Distinction Award. Dreyer plans to begin teaching and coaching in the Midwest now that he has earned his Wayne State degree.

Gary Richards, Graduate Commencement Address

Gary Richards of York, Neb., delivered the graduate commencement address. He graduated with a master's degree in School Administration 6-12. Richards' professional experience includes nine years as a 7-12 grade science teacher in San Perlita, Texas, where he was head girls basketball coach and head girls volleyball coach; secondary science teacher, Sutton High School, in Sutton, Neb., where he was head girls volleyball coach; and his current position as secondary science teacher, Hampton High School, in Hampton, Neb., where he serves as assistant boys basketball coach, head girls basketball coach, quiz bowl sponsor, robotics sponsor, and various other leadership and advisory roles. Richards has one daughter and three sons: Rayvn (27), Ketch (25), Branick (22), and Pitch (13).



Wayne State President Notches 10 Years as Successful Leader

With the average tenure for a college president now less than six years, President Marysz Rames has distinguished herself for 10 years at the helm of Wayne State College.

Volatility in higher education, political and social pressures, and financial instability have ended many presidencies in just a few years, according to the American Council on Education.

President Rames has succeeded through a combination of strategic planning, strong relationships, a focus on positive outcomes for our students, growth of academic programs, a commitment to building and renovating campus facilities, and leaning on a strong community of faculty and staff, who bring passion and commitment to our programs and services.

While looking back provides a clear look at where we have been, Rames is already looking ahead to the next 10 years for the College.

“As we move into the next decade, managing these changing times in education will be the focus of our work,” Rames said. **“The campus community will be called upon to continue to be innovative and creative in providing students with exceptional educational experiences. This will include our efforts to continue to serve traditional-aged students and assist them in connecting their education to professional careers and improving the pathway for transfer students so that it is seamless and timely.”**

Rames added that it will also be imperative to enhance our ability to serve adult learners at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

“When you look at future predictions, there will be a large number of adult learners that will want to either complete a degree they started or begin a program with both groups motivated by a need to improve their skills,” Rames said. **“Broadening our educational impact in these spaces will help us to continue to meet our mission and vision of inspiring students, strengthening communities, and serving the region.”**

Rames attributed the success of WSC over the past decade to the passion and commitment displayed by the administrative team, faculty, and staff.

“It will be important moving forward to continue to focus our efforts on being innovative and creative in meeting our goals as delineated in the Strategic Plan. My role will be to ensure we remain true to our mission and vision while motivating and encouraging the campus community to ‘think out loud’ with each other. Together we need to build on our

strong foundation and stretch ourselves to ‘think outside the box’ in our efforts to educate the various groups of students, traditional-aged undergraduates, graduate students, and adult learners. Creating structures and approaches that allow the campus community to embrace continuous improvement has been the recipe for success and will continue to serve us well.”

As president, Rames says she been focused on creating a culture that supports and embraces Strategic Planning. The current plan was developed through a campus-wide, transparent process.

“The plan has created an environment in which faculty and staff are inspired and supported to be innovative and creative with their programs and services, all designed to inspire students, strengthen communities, and serve our region,” she said.

Ten years at one job can certainly change a person. Rames says her decade at Wayne State has taught her the values of grace and poise, which serve as a reminder of the importance of displaying a high level of empathy and emotional intelligence in her leadership.

“In an era marked by rapid technological advancements and shifting societal norms, I have gained an understanding on how incredibly important it is to connect with constituents on a human level, demonstrating compassion and understanding in my interactions,” Rames said. **“I focus on cultivating strong relationships built on trust and mutual respect, which helps inspire loyalty and commitment among the team, and fosters a sense of unity and purpose.”**

Building a strong team around shared goals has paid dividends at the College through a 26% growth in enrollment during the past decade. And as Rames is fond of saying, increased enrollment has been the financial key to ensuring Wayne State could embark on projects that greatly improved the College’s living and learning environment.

What have the past 10 years brought?

The building of the Center for Applied Technology to support Wayne State’s business, industrial technology, and computer science programs; the complete renovation of Bowen Residence Hall; the renovation of Benthack Hall to upgrade the home of our education, counseling, and family and consumer sciences programs; numerous Kanter Student Center updates; the complete renovation of Peterson Fine Arts to support our music programs; the construction of Stearns Hall, our newest residence hall; and the renovation of the Recreation Center and construction of the Wildcat Dome.

Add the facilities projects to the numerous new academic programs, the creation of the Rural Law Opportunities Program (RLOP), and our newest marquee opportunity for students, the Career Scholars Cooperative Education program, and you have the makings of a good day for President Rames.

“The days I leave the office feeling energized and excited are almost always linked to outcomes that have a positive impact on our students,” Rames said.

“The implementation of a new academic program, enhancing support services for students, solid enrollment numbers, and solidifying funding for a capital project, are all examples of how Wayne State impacts our students and our service region. These accomplishments constitute a ‘Good Day.’”

Rames points with pride at what she considers to be one of her signature accomplishments: The creation and growth of the Career Scholars Cooperative Education program.

“In 2018, Wayne State joined a group of innovative, forward-thinking leaders to develop a transformational plan to support population growth and economic development in Northeast Nebraska. To address this challenge, I collaborated with the faculty, staff, regional stakeholders, and state leadership to create the Cooperative Education Program,” Rames said. **“This program provides incoming freshmen in high-wage, high-demand, and high-skill majors with the opportunity to participate in an accelerated academic program over three years that includes meaningful and impactful interactions with members from our partnering communities, Norfolk and Grand Island.”**

The Career Scholars program uses a combination of classroom work and hands-on learning, which culminates during the student’s senior year as they earn up to 18 credit hours by working for a business applying the concepts and knowledge learned in the classroom.

“Creating and implementing this innovative, impactful educational experience for students that is unique to Wayne State and distinguishes us amongst our peers, is the hallmark of the type of work we embark upon at our institution,” Rames said. **“The support from the faculty and staff to launch this innovative educational program speaks to Wayne State’s commitment to embarking on bold new ideas that have a significant impact on students and our region. It is truly an honor and privilege to be a member of this community that is so committed to teaching and learning.”**



Dr. Matthew Armstrong, professor of music and director of choirs, and Shelly Armstrong, staff accompanist, had two new works for choir published by ECS Publishing Group. ECS is a respected name in choral music publishing known for high-quality works featuring a range of classic composers from Ralph Vaughan Williams to Randall Thompson and top contemporary voices such as Libby Larsen and Gwyneth Walker. Matthew and Shelly Armstrong’s “The Gift to Sing” is a setting of a James Weldon Johnson poem for unaccompanied Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass (SATB) chorus with divisi. It was commissioned by Kennedy High School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Shelly’s composition, *Servabis pacem* (keep peace), for unaccompanied SATB chorus is a setting of Isaiah 26:3 written in the Palestrina counterpoint style. Perusal scores and sample recordings by Wayne State College choirs can be heard on the EC Schirmer website. The Wayne State College Concert Choir was selected by audition to perform for the Nebraska Music Education Association conference Nov. 21, 2025. Choirs and bands submit recordings of three pieces from the previous year, which are scored by a blind panel of adjudicators. Top ensembles are selected to perform. The choir is led by Dr. Matthew Armstrong, conductor, with Shelly Armstrong, collaborative pianist. Dr. Karl Kolbeck, professor of music, was featured on clarinet playing *Hava Nagila* with the choir. Professor of Music and department chair Dr. Angela Miller-Niles and Shelly Armstrong were featured playing selected movements from Johannes Brahms’ *Liebeslieder Waltzes Op. 52*. In preparation for the performance, the choir benefitted greatly from workshops with alumni Dr. Vance and Peggy Wolverton and Dr. David Bohnert, Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities. The choir performed for an audience of high school all-state musicians, music teachers, and many WSC alumni, parents, and friends. Additionally, Chancellor Paul Turman was present to support the choir and WSC President Marysz Rames wrote a warm note of congratulations to the choir to promote the WSC music department.



Dr. Randy Bertolas, professor of geography, was recently honored by the Geographic Educators of Nebraska (GEON) board of directors who added his name to the organization’s prestigious annual service award. The “Bertolas, Gildersleeve, Stoddard, Stone Award” recognizes individuals who have made exceptional contributions to advancing geography education across the state. Bertolas served as GEON coordinator from 2004 to 2018.

Francine Fox, professor of art and design, was awarded a Creative Arts Fund grant with Pardicolor, a United Kingdom-based initiative of the Australian wildlife conservation organization, Wildlife Asia. Fox will be creating oil paintings of aquatic species that may be impacted by deep sea mining in the Papua New Guinea region, specifically the Bismarck Sea. She will be incorporating copper, silver, and gold synthetic mica powders into her paintings to allude to the metals that are actively being mined on the seafloor.

To learn more, visit <https://www.francinefox.net/fortunes-of-the-bismarck-sea.html> or <https://www.pardicolor.org/creativeartsfund>, <https://www.pardicolor.org/francine>



Dr. Phillip Fox, professor of history, was on sabbatical during the spring 2025 semester. He worked on archival material from Spain that he had collected the previous summer on church and state relations in the eighteenth-century for his book project tentatively titled “Negotiating the Borders of Church and State in Bourbon Spain, 1700-1759”, which resulted in two conference presentations. He delivered a paper titled “Enlightened Reform of Ecclesiastical Privileges in the Spanish Empire: The Concordat of 1753 and its Legacy,” at the 55th Annual Meeting of the Consortium on the Revolutionary Era, which was hosted by Auburn University and Columbus State University. Fox also presented a paper titled “The Priests Who Led a Prison Break: The Case of the Prisoner Andres Capdevila and its impact on Ecclesiastical Privilege in Catalonia in the 1720s,” at the 54th Annual

Conference of the Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies, which was hosted by the University of Maryland at College Park. Finally, Fox prepared the manuscript of his other book project for publication, which is forthcoming for Fall 2026 with Louisiana State University Press under the tentative title “Forging Faithful Subjects: Dynastic State Formation in Early Modern Spain.”



Dan Mitchell,

Wayne State College 1984 graduate and instructor in the Center for Applied Technology, has been inducted into the South Dakota Technology Education Association Hall of Fame class of 2025. Before he began teaching at WSC in 2019, Mitchell spent his entire 34-year high school teaching career at Yankton High School, Yankton, South Dakota. Mitchell also coached football and wrestling while at Yankton and then served as a volunteer football coach at Beresford High School, Beresford, South Dakota. Mitchell was the recipient of the 2024 National High School Athletic Coaches Association Assistant Coach of the Year Boys’ Sports award at the annual convention in Bismark, North Dakota. The National High School Athletic Coaches Association Coach of the Year Awards are the most prestigious awards given to high school coaches in America. Mitchell served as the association’s president in 2024–2025. He will receive the South Dakota Football Coaches Association State Friend of Football award and will be inducted into the South Dakota High School Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2026. Mitchell is dedicated to helping students succeed in the industrial technology and teacher education areas as well as supporting high school athletics and the development of young athletes.



Dr. Jeryl Nelson and Dr. Lindsay McLaughlin were selected to present at the Mountain Plains Business Conference this fall at the University of Nebraska-Omaha, where they shared a paper in pedagogy and using active learning in the classroom. The paper focused on integrating a flipped classroom approach and exploring how AI can be used efficiently and effectively as a learning tool. The session attendees participated in an extended discussion on how to engage students more valuably.

Dr. Jason R. Price,

associate professor of Earth science, led a field expedition during mid-term break in March 2025 to collect lake-bottom sediment from Nymph Lake in Rocky Mountain National Park (picture provided). He also presented a poster at the Geological Society of America Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas titled, “A Modified Lightweight, Inexpensive, Percussion Coring System for Shallow (< ~4 m-depth) Ice-Covered Lakes”. Price also had a paper accepted for publication in the journal *Chemical Geology* titled, “Decoupling between silicate and phosphate mineral weathering in the granitic periglacial weathering-limited landscape of the Loch Vale watershed, Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado, USA”. This paper is co-authored by Wayne State College undergraduate Earth science majors Emerson Andelt (’20) and James Kinnison (’25). Price also ended a five-year tenure on the management board of the Limnogeology Division of the Geological Society of America, which included three years as division chair.



Dr. Lesli Rawlings, professor of geography, gave a presentation at the National Council for Geographic Education Conference on Oct. 18 in Omaha, Neb. In her session titled, Nebraska Law Restricts Mercator Map Projection Usage in Public Schools, Rawlings discussed how the law prohibits Nebraska public school classrooms from using the Mercator map projection, in favor of Gall-Peters and AuthaGraph. Although there are exceptions described in this statute when it is permissible to use projections outside of Gall-Peters and AuthaGraph, it has led to confusion among public school educators. This session provided a critique of the law and highlighted literature examining whether students’ mental maps of the world could be shaped by map projections. The presentation gave educators access to activities to explore mental maps and compare the distortion properties of different map projections.

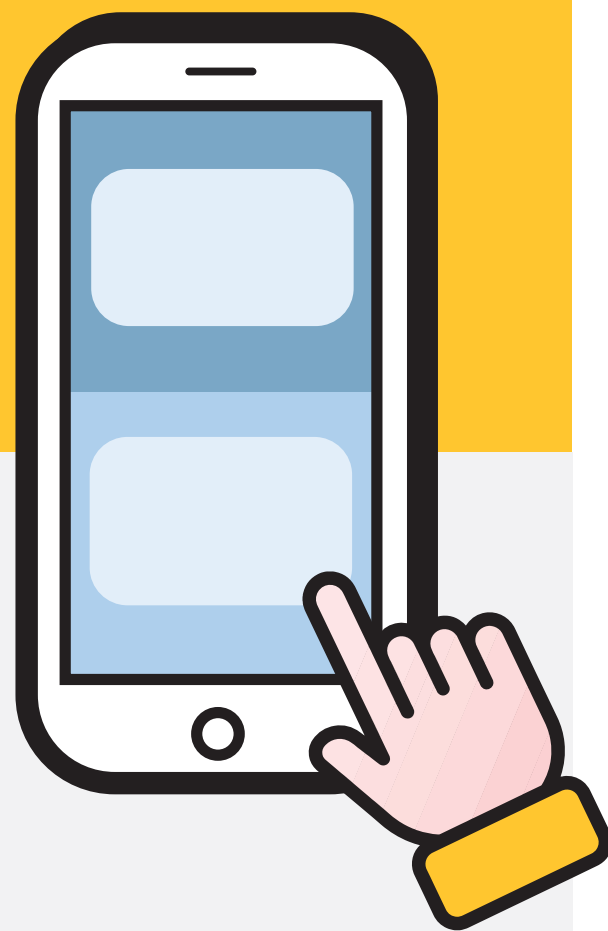


Tobin Streff was announced as the 2025 Nebraska Counseling Association's (NCA) Counselor of the Year. Streff is an Instructor in the Human Services and Counseling Department. He has been with Wayne State College for the past six years. Streff is also employed at COR therapeutic, where he continues to provide counseling services to individuals with mental health and substance abuse symptoms. Streff has been providing counseling for the past 17 years in residential and outpatient settings. Streff is the District 3 Chair in the NCA.

Dr. Michael White, associate professor of communication arts and film advisor, completed the UCLA Professional Program in Screenwriting in June. The program took place over three academic quarters in the School of Film and Television and requires completion of two feature length screenplays. His enrollment was funded in part by an Iowa Arts Council Screenwriters Grant in 2024. During the summer, White presented a four-part series on Feature Filmmaking with adjunct professor of Mass Communication Shelby Hagerdon for the Iowa Motion Picture Association. The lectures were held for audiences in Des Moines and streamed internationally via NEEM (Nebraska Entertainment Media). White's fifth feature film "The Painter" debuted in September at the Majestic Theater. The film is currently on its festival and theatrical tour. The project was winner of a 2025 Iowa Greenlight Grant for filmmaking. The film has won the Iowa Motion Picture Award of Excellence for Best Screenplay and Star City Film Festival Best Screenplay. The film is expected to be available via streaming fall of 2026.



Did you recently get recognized for a professional milestone? Get married? Have a baby? Relocate? Get promoted? Retire? We'd love to share your story with the rest of the WSC community!



SUBMIT YOUR NEWS!

Visit www.wsc.edu/alumni to submit photos and news about weddings, babies, or other special events, or to notify us of changes in your name or address.



Wayne State Enjoys Continued Success with Nebraska SMART

Wayne State College students are benefitting from the Nebraska State College System's (NSCS) recent expansion of Nebraska SMART (Success Made Accessible through Rural Tutoring), its free virtual tutoring program. The program expanded statewide, giving every K-12 student in Nebraska access to one-on-one academic support from trained college tutors.

Since launching as a pilot in February 2024, Nebraska SMART has provided more than 1,660 tutoring sessions to students in rural school districts across Nebraska. Initially serving Educational Service Units (ESUs) 1, 4, and 13, the program strategically expanded to include Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association (NRCSA) member districts. With the addition of mid-sized districts earlier this year, Nebraska SMART is now positioned to serve all Nebraska school districts statewide.

Wayne State senior Bre Matzen has been a Nebraska SMART tutor since the program's inception in February 2024, and she has tutored subjects for K-5 math, science, social studies, and reading. However, the program offers all of those subjects for K-12.

"I've tutored more than 10 different students so far," said Matzen, who is from Blair, Neb. **"A lot of them tend to be reoccurring students so I see them week to week. Tutors gain the experience of how to think on their feet while teaching. Often, students show up to sessions without much notice of what they want to work on, so we must learn how to adapt and think quickly about how to best help each student achieve their goals."**



Bre Matzen (above) said the learning is a two-way street.

"The tutors learn a lot, but students get the opportunity to learn from a tutor in a way that may be different than how they were expected to learn it in school," said Matzen, who is majoring in PK-12 Music Education (Vocal and Instrumental) and Vocal Music Performance at Wayne State. **"I've seen several students strive by both getting one-on-one assistance and learning a subject in a new light. Students get the opportunity to grow while getting constant encouragement from the tutors."**

Funded through a Nebraska Department of Education Improvement Grant, Nebraska SMART pairs K-12 students with teacher education candidates from Chadron State, Peru State, and Wayne State Colleges for personalized, online tutoring in core subjects such as English, math, science, and social studies. Tutors are full-time

students admitted to their college's teacher education program, have completed background checks, and receive specialized training through their coursework. Each State College campus has a Nebraska SMART coordinator who provides faculty oversight and ensures instructional quality.

"This is a perfect example of how the Nebraska Department of Education can partner with the Nebraska State College System to provide both student support and workforce development at the same time," said commissioner Brian Maher. **"This program has been successful in rural districts, and it is exciting to offer the service to all Nebraska schools."**

"Nebraska SMART has proven that when we connect future teachers directly with K-12 learners, everyone benefits," said Dr. Paul Turman, chancellor of the Nebraska State College System. **"Our students gain invaluable classroom experience while helping children across Nebraska build skills and confidence. Expanding statewide allows us to extend this powerful partnership to every Nebraska community."**

Tutoring sessions are available Monday through Friday from 3:30 to 8:30 p.m. in English, math, science, and social studies. Parents can register and schedule sessions for their students, or access on-demand tutoring with qualified tutors through <https://www.nscs.edu/nebraskasmart>.

The expansion marks a major milestone in NSCS's continued effort to support student learning and educator preparation across Nebraska.

Wayne State's Retention Efforts

As Wayne State College enters the spring semester, its student success data highlights the value of College efforts to ensure students have the best experience possible—especially for those continuing after their first year. With a 77% freshman-to-sophomore retention rate for the 2024 cohort, the College's retention rate surpasses the typical 59–62% range for regional public colleges, underscoring its effectiveness in supporting students with a strong commitment to scholarships, academic advising and career coaching, and student engagement.

Retention matters because many students leave college after their first year due to finances, life changes, or finding the right fit. Wayne State's retention rate exceeds the Nebraska state average of 73% (data from 2022-23), the national average of public, four-year colleges of 61%, and the national average of all four-year colleges of 70.6%. But how do we do it?

Scholarships Get Students Across the Finish Line

Scholarships play a vital role in keeping students enrolled, and the Wayne State Foundation has made securing and providing these critically important funds a top priority. Foundation leaders connect with alumni and friends who want to give back to the institution that helped shape their success.

"Our donors understand that providing scholarships does more than ease the financial burden on students," said Dr. Bob Machovsky, CEO of the Wayne State Foundation. **"It builds a community of support—a message to every recipient that the Wildcats around you are here, and we believe in you."**

Nearly half of Wayne State students are the first in their families to attend college.

"For these students, the encouragement and support of alumni who have benefited from a WSC degree creates a powerful partnership," Machovsky added. **"It's what makes supporting scholarships especially meaningful—not just for the recipients, but for the donors who see their gift changing lives in real time."**

Academic and Career Success

Financial support is only part of the equation. Academic advising helps students navigate challenges and plan for success. Advisors build relationships with students to understand their needs and guide them effectively.

Wayne State College will launch a new center, the Academic and Career Success Center, in July 2026 to merge the Holland Academic Success Center and Career



"The affordability at Wayne is nice because it helps to save money when going to college. One scholarship was given to me right at the start when I came to Wayne State, and it gave me a sense of satisfaction because I knew that Wayne State would be willing to provide scholarships to make college more affordable and stress-free. Being on an athletic scholarship is nice, too, because I get my school to be more affordable while competing in the sport that I love."

**ANDREW MARTIN,
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**



Ensure Student Success

Services into a single, collaborative unit. This integrated center is designed to strengthen student success by aligning academic planning, career exploration, and post-graduation outcomes. By providing a more seamless, student-centered experience, the center will help students connect their educational choices with long-term career goals beginning at New Student Registration.

The center will deliver coordinated advising that integrates course selection, degree pathways, experiential learning opportunities, internships, and career preparation. Students will benefit from streamlined advising relationships, with advisors collaborating closely with faculty to provide consistent, discipline-specific guidance, reduce duplication of services, and clarify pathways to employment or graduate study.

The Academic and Career Success Center will continue to offer all existing services—including freshmen academic advising, peer tutoring, supplemental instruction, career coaching, internship support, career fairs, and resume and interview preparation—while introducing new collaborative programming, including career-infused advising appointments and earlier, more intentional career exploration opportunities.

Retention By the Numbers

73% Nebraska State Average
(2022-2023)

61% National Average
(public four-year)

70.6% National Average
(all four-year)

Supporting Students Supports Their Success

Student engagement is another key to persistence. The Residence Life and Student Activities offices help new students connect through floor meetings, social events, and more than 100 clubs and organizations. Research shows that the first six weeks on campus are critical, so early programs focus on helping students find community.

“In all the work our Student Affairs team does, our goal is to support students,” said Cody Westerhold, Dean of Students. **“We are intentional about creating programs that provide opportunities for students to make connections... Students continue to share that one of their favorite things about WSC is all of the friendships they have developed along their journey.”**

“Affordability and scholarships were major factors in my decision to attend Wayne State. Having an affordable education has allowed me to focus more on academics and less on financial stress. My scholarships have been a tremendous help, giving me peace of mind and the ability to dedicate my time to learning, volunteering, and getting involved on campus without worrying about expenses.”

**RYLIN HALL,
CHEMISTRY AND HEALTH
SCIENCES**



“I knew I wanted to go to college, but I also didn’t want to put a huge financial burden on myself or my family. Wayne offered an amazing education and environment without a heavy price tag. To me, an affordable education means having the chance to focus on learning instead of being constantly stressed about how I’m going to pay for the next semester. I’ve been lucky enough to receive a scholarship through the school, and honestly, it’s meant so much to me. It’s something that I’ve never taken for granted because I know that not everyone gets that opportunity.”

**ASHLY VILLEDA-GUILLEN,
CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

2025 Athletic Hall of Fame Inductees





Above (L-R): Linda Carr, Lori Anderson, Carol North, and Mary Gerken of the WSC Wildkittens.

Wayne State College honors athletes, contributors, coaches, and athletic teams annually at the Hall of Fame banquet. Hall of Fame inductees include athletes, coaches, and supporters of Wildcat Athletics.

1972 Softball Team (Team): The 1972 Wayne State softball team had an unbeaten regular season, captured the Nebraska State Women’s Championship and ended their season playing in the Women’s College Softball World Series in Omaha against numerous Division I teams finishing seventh out of 16 teams.

The Wildkittens won the Nebraska College Women’s Tournament in Wayne beating Chadron State 7-1, Kearney State 4-2 in the semi-finals and beating Nebraska-Omaha 5-4 in the finals to finish the regular season with a 9-0 record. Pitcher Mary Gerken, shortstop Jan Nyquist, third baseman Sherri Harpoole and centerfielder Ann Fulkerson were named to the All-Tournament Team.

At the Women’s College World Series in Omaha, Wayne State posted a 2-2 record in the 16-team field to place seventh overall. The ‘Cats lost to Western Illinois in the opener 12-4 but bounced back with wins over Minot State 10-6 and Keene (New Hampshire) 15-0 before being eliminated by Central Illinois (Illinois State) by a score of 10-0. The 16-team field included national champion Arizona State, runner-up Tokyo, Japan, third place Western Illinois and fourth place Illinois State.

Wayne State finished the season with an 11-2 record under head coach G.I. Willoughby.



Melissa Benson (Athlete): Melissa Benson was a 3 ½ year starter for the Wildcat women's soccer team from 2003 to 2006. The Maple Grove, Minn. native was a three-time All-NSIC First Team selection and is the only player in school history to earn All-Region honors twice – All-Central Region First Team in 2005 as a junior and All-Central Region Second Team as a senior in 2006.

Benson recorded 10 goals and 22 points in her sophomore season and produced nine goals and 19 points in her junior campaign. As a junior and senior, she played on teams that were 11-9-3 and 10-10-1, the fourth and fifth-most wins in a single season in school history.

Benson ranks fifth in career goals (24) and is sixth in career points scored (54). She played on four NSIC Tournament teams with two of those teams (2003 and 2005) placing third. Benson is also the last Wildcat soccer player named to the NSIC All-Tournament Team in 2005.

Benson graduated from Wayne State in 2007 with a degree in computer information systems and currently resides in Plymouth, Minn. where she is a senior education consultant at CDW Amplified.

Mike Barry (Coach/Administrator): Mike Barry worked 35 years at Wayne State College, starting his tenure at WSC as women's basketball coach and ending with a vision as associate athletic director that saw Wildcat athletics complete the largest construction project in WSC history with the recent completion of the \$30 million Wildcat Dome/Athletic and Recreation Complex project.

Barry served as women's basketball coach at Wayne State for seven years from 1989 to 1996 where he compiled a record of 96-91. His 1993-94 team was 22-5 and still holds the school record for points in a game averaging 82.4 points a contest. Barry then transitioned to director of the sport and recreation center and was later promoted to associate athletic director and served as interim athletic director several times while at WSC.

Barry oversaw game management and facilities as associate athletic director and under his tenure Wayne State had a reputation in the Northern Sun Conference as being the most professional and organized venue in the league. He was instrumental in his last five-six years at WSC with plans that led to the Athletic and Recreation Complex.

A native of Grant, Barry was a four-sport athlete at Chadron State where he was a three-time NAIA National Track Meet qualifier in the triple jump. He also lettered in basketball, football and cross country. Barry earned his bachelor's degree from Chadron State in physical education in 1983 and obtained a master's degree in secondary education in 1988 also from Chadron State.

While at WSC, Barry received the Lynette Lentz Professional Staff Recognition Award in 2015 and received a service and dedication award from the Northern Sun Conference upon his retirement in June, 2025.



Jim Brown (Athlete): Omaha Benson graduate Jim Brown was a decorated swimmer at Wayne State from 1964 to 1968. He was a two-time Most Valuable Swimmer and four-year letter winner helping the Wildcats win the Nebraska College Conference and NAIA District 11 team titles all four years in the pool.

Individually, Brown captured 11 NCC titles and swam on five championship relay teams and collected another 10 NAIA District 11 titles with six more relay championships specializing in the breaststroke and butterfly. He was a NAIA National qualifier all four years, but missed the national meet his freshman season in Eau Claire, Wis. because he was stranded in Worthington, Minn., due to a snowstorm.

Brown closed his Wildcat swimming career holding six school records – five in individual events.

Following his days at WSC, Brown was a teacher, administrator/athletic director and coach at Elkhorn High School for 33 years. He was head coach of the three-time Girls Class B State Track and Field Championship teams in 1998, 1999 and 2000 where he coached two-time Olympian Alice Schmidt and was named Nebraska Coaches Association Coach of the Year.

During retirement, Brown stayed active in swimming and currently holds four Nebraska (US Masters) state records in the freestyle and butterfly events for ages 75-79. He also served as a series manager for a number of professional sports car racing series from 2001 to 2015 until he retired.

Jim Brown currently resides in Omaha with his wife Vicki.

John Kern (Athlete): John Kern was a standout cross country and track and field runner at WSC from 2008 to 2011. A graduate of Cedar Bluffs High School, Kern ended his Wildcat career as a three-time NSIC champion, eight-time All-NSIC honoree and was an NCAA national qualifier as a senior in the 3,000-meter steeplechase.

Kern was named the NSIC Outdoor Track Athlete of the Year as a senior after winning the 3,000-meter steeplechase and the 10,000-meter run while placing second in the 5,000-meter run. During the same outdoor season, he placed 12th in the 3,000-meter steeplechase at the 2011 NCAA Division II Outdoor Championships.

During Kern's senior indoor season, he was the NSIC champion in the 5,000-meter run and was All-NSIC placing second in the 3,000-meters and third in the one-mile run. Kern's name is still on five school records at WSC that include the indoor 3,000-meter run (8:31.51) and three events in outdoor track and field – the 1,500-meter run (3:51.90), 3,000-meter steeplechase (9:03.14) and the 5,000-meter run (14:42.15).

In cross country, Kern was an All-NSIC First Team selection in his senior season after placing seventh at the conference championships and is the last Wildcat runner to receive All-NSIC First Team honors.

Kern currently resides near Cedar Bluffs and is employed by Lincoln Tool and Design as a molding maintenance specialist.

FOOTBALL

7-4 overall, 5-1 NSIC South (NSIC South Champions)



NSIC All-Conference Honors

- Dawson Forgy / RB / Junior / First Team Offense
- Dane Petersen / TE / Junior / First Team Offense
- Tierel Tompkins / OL / Senior / First Team Offense
- Will Washenberger / OL / Senior / First Team Offense
- Kahmel Johnson / DB / Freshman / First Team Defense
- Alex Kowalczyk / LB / Senior / First Team Defense
- Jes Krcil / LB / Sophomore / First Team Defense
- / NSIC Defensive Player of the Year
- Carter Sitzman / DL / Junior / First Team Defense
- Kaden Sutton / DL / Senior / First Team Defense
- Brayden Chaney / DB / Junior / Second Team Defense
- Clyde Hinton / LB / Junior / Second Team Defense

D2CCA All Super Region 3 Football Team

- Dawson Forgy – First Team
- Jes Krcil – First Team

NSIC All-Academic Team of Excellence

(3.60 GPA or higher)

- Alex Kowalczyk - Graduate
- Dawson Forgy – Junior
- Kaden Johnson – Junior
- Luke Lambert – Junior
- Jackson Bos – Sophomore
- Brennan Hayes – Sophomore
- Tanner Houck – Sophomore
- Jes Krcil – Sophomore
- Curtis Witte – Sophomore

NSIC All-Academic Team (3.20 – 3.59 GPA)

- Will Washenberger – Graduate
- Colton Andrews – 5th year
- Isaac Robinson – 5th year
- James Frank – Junior
- Clyde Hinton – Junior
- Carter Sitzman – Junior
- Bennett Dannenbring – Sophomore
- Akeem Knox – Sophomore
- Austin McNulty – Sophomore

College Sports Communicators Academic All-District

(3.50 GPA and above)

- Alex Kowalczyk - Graduate
- Dawson Forgy – Junior
- Kaden Johnson - Junior
- Luke Lambert – Junior
- Jackson Bos – Sophomore
- Brennan Hayes – Sophomore
- Tanner Houck – Sophomore
- Jes Krcil – Sophomore

VOLLEYBALL

27-5 overall, 19-1 NSIC / Third time in last four years NSIC regular season champions

**Finished season tied for 10th
in AVCA Division II Top 25
Coaches Poll**

All-NSIC Volleyball Team

Channatee Robles – First Team

Chloe Hanel – First Team

Delaney Miller – First Team and NSIC Freshman of the Year

Molly Romano – First Team

Kim DePew – Assistant Coach of the Year

AVCA All-Central Region Team

Channatee Robles – First Team

Chloe Hanel – First Team

Delaney Miller – First Team and AVCA Central Region Freshman of the Year

Molly Romano – Honorable Mention

AVCA All-American

Chloe Hanel - Third Team

Delaney Miller – Third Team

Channatee Robles – Honorable Mention

Molly Romano – Honorable Mention

NSIC All-Academic Team of Excellence (3.60 GPA or higher)

Gracen Evans – Junior

Anna Borner - Sophomore

NSIC All-Academic Team (3.20 – 3.59 GPA)

Taylor Bunjer – Junior

Laney Kathol – Junior

Ella Myler – Junior

Channatee Robles – Junior

Kaelyn Andersen – Sophomore

Chloe Hanel – Sophomore

Molly Romano – Sophomore

JoLee Ryan - Sophomore

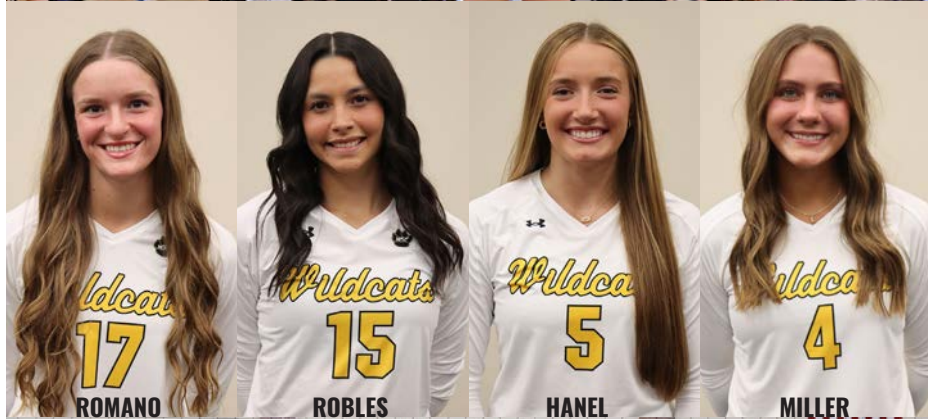
College Sports Communicators Academic All-District

Laney Kathol – Junior

Anna Borner – Sophomore

Chloe Hanel – Sophomore

Molly Romano - Sophomore



WOMEN'S SOCCER

6-8-4 overall, 5-8-2 NSIC (11th place)

All-NSIC Team

Nevaeh James / Senior Midfielder / Second Team

Morgan Mancuso / Sophomore forward / Second Team

Alexa Hofstetter NSIC Goalkeeper of the Week (9/22/25)

NSIC All-Academic Team of Excellence (3.60 GPA or higher)

Reagan Allen – Senior

Alyssa Ferrin – Senior

Christina Marlow – Senior

Tatum Berry – Junior

Tyler Donaldson – Junior

Rachel Davis – Sophomore

Madilyn Schmeling – Sophomore

NSIC All-Academic Team (3.20 – 3.59 GPA)

Kaylee Herall – Senior

Paige Pemberton – Senior

Alaina Sorenson – Senior

Alexa Hofstetter – Sophomore

Sarah Pritchard – Sophomore

Addison Walker – Sophomore

College Sports Communicators Academic All-District Team

Reagan Allen – Senior

Kaylee Herall – Senior

Tyler Donaldson – Junior

Rachel Davis – Sophomore



SUPPORT THE CATS

Donors like you help strengthen our students, faculty, and campus. We are incredibly grateful to the generous alumni, organizations, and individuals who are making a difference for Wayne State College.

 www.wsc.edu/donate

WANT TO SUPPORT THE TEAM?

FOLLOW THE CATS

- Sports schedules
- Scores
- News releases
- Team information
- Watch Wildcat athletics



JOIN CAT CLUB

All Cat Club proceeds go to support the Wayne State Student Athlete Scholarship Fund. Cat Club membership comes with various giving levels and benefits.

For more information, visit www.wscwildcats.com



CROSS COUNTRY

Six meets – Wildcat Classic Men Champions (9/26/25)

Women’s Team Runner-up

NSIC Conference Championship Results

Men – 11th place – 280 points

Women – 12th place – 325 points

Top Wildcat Finishers

Brody Lucas – Senior (Top WSC runner at three of six events)

Brady Franzen – Junior (Top WSC runner at two events)

Allie Czaplá – Sophomore (Top WSC runner at all six events)

NSIC All-Academic Team of Excellence (3.60 GPA or higher)

William Keller – Sophomore

Maelee Beacom – Senior

Sydney Escritt – Senior

Meghan Cunningham – Junior

Madi McKie – Sophomore

NSIC All-Academic Team (3.20 – 3.59 GPA)

Brady Franzen – Junior

Akron Jostand – Sophomore

Kaitlyn Bloomenrader – Sophomore

Allie Czaplá – Sophomore



WOMEN’S GOLF

Fall portion of schedule – won two tournaments in five events

1st place at Nebraska Intercollegiate Invite (622)

1st place at Sioux Falls Invite repeat champions with a 36-hole

score of 628

Junior Hailey Kenkel, medalist at Nebraska Intercollegiate Invite

Sophomore Gaia Stancikova, 2nd place at Nebraska

Intercollegiate Invite

Junior Hailey Kenkel, 3rd place at Sioux Falls Invite

LEFT TO RIGHT:

Morgan Mancuso (Women’s Soccer)

Nevaeh James (Women’s Soccer)

Brody Lucas (Cross Country)

Allie Czaplá (Cross Country)





1959 Lloyd Maskell was recently inducted in the Nebraska City High School Athletic Hall of Fame. He played quarterback for Wayne State College. Coach Maskell was a social studies teacher at Nebraska City High School and head football coach for 11 years. He was also an assistant track coach. He moved to Greeley, Colo., where he became principal. He is retired and currently resides in Omaha with his wife, Charlotte.

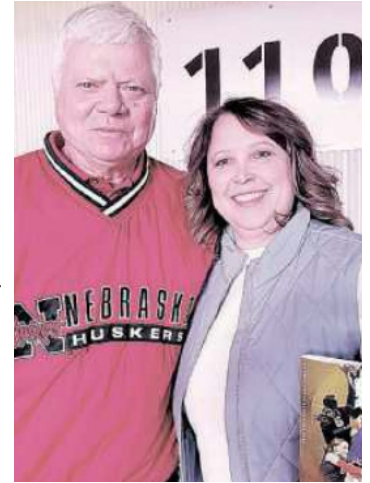
1960 Shirley (Banister) Torres taught elementary education for 20+ years in Nebraska, Wyoming, and New Mexico.



1968 Edwin Kelly, age 79, of Okaloosa, Iowa, was sworn in as the new Assistant Jefferson County Attorney in Fairfield, Iowa. Kelly originally served as the Jefferson County Attorney for 11 years. He earned his bachelor's degree in History from Wayne State College in 1968 before going to the University of Iowa College of Law, where he earned a Juris Doctorate in Law. Kelly has been a private trial lawyer, previously in a partnership with John A. Morrissey of Fairfield and founded Kelly & Morrissey Law firm in Fairfield. He also later served on the Fairfield School Board. Kelly served as President of his Judicial Bar Association and was listed in 1980 through his 1991 appointment to a position with the U.S. Department of Justice in "Who's Who in American Law." In 1991, Kelly was appointed to serve as Senior Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of Iowa, in Des Moines. He later was detailed to the United States Senate in Washington, D.C. After serving 15-1/2 years as a federal prosecutor, Kelly and his wife, Sue, took a "midlife sabbatical," sailing a catamaran owned by them to 49 countries on five continents for 14 years.

1971 Kenneth Gill from Bloomfield has spent nearly five decades as a Hunter Education instructor, and was recently recognized as the Nebraska Game and Parks Instructor of the Year. Gill spent 34 years as a teacher at Bloomfield Community Schools. Originally from Oakland, Gill graduated from Wayne State College in 1971 and spent his entire career in Bloomfield.

1972 Monty Miller & 2000 Dawn Oswald Monty Miller of Ponca and Dawn Oswald of Allen were recognized at the Nebraska State Volleyball Tournament in Lincoln for officiating high school volleyball for 25 years. Oswald is in her fourth year as a Pre-K-12 library media specialist at Emerson-Hubbard Community Schools. She previously taught second grade for 21 years at Cardinal Elementary School in South Sioux City. She and her husband, Curtis, have three children and two grandchildren with a third on the way. Miller is a retired principal and superintendent at Allen Community Schools. He and his late wife, Pauline, have two adult daughters, three grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Oswald played volleyball in high school at Allen and intramural volleyball at Wayne State College, where she graduated. She was assistant volleyball coach at Allen and started officiating junior high volleyball matches in 1998 and high school matches in 1999. Miller, who has a bachelor's and master's degree from Wayne State College, has coached or refereed since 1972. He has coached football, basketball, and track and has been a teacher and a school administrator at Allen and at Pender Public Schools. He has refereed football and basketball for 50 years. Miller also previously worked for the Bank of Dixon County at Ponca and Newcastle.



1975 Dan Baddorf celebrated 50 years at KTCH/KCTY Radio in Wayne.



1976 Rich Rethwisch was honored during the annual Northeast Nebraska All-Star Football Classic in Norfolk with the Outstanding Lifetime Achievement Award. Rethwisch was vital in the development of the annual classic, which began in 2013. Rethwisch attended college at Doane and Wayne State before receiving a master's degree in counseling from Wayne State. He currently resides in Wayne with his wife of 43 years, Kathi. They have three children, Cali and husband, Cody Guffey of Omaha; Gage and wife, Jaci (Weidner), and three sons, Knox, Easton, and Miles of rural Norfolk; and Luke and wife, Savannah (Bush) of Omaha.

1984 Corinne Morris, retired dean of Agriculture, Math, and Science, received the Award of Merit for the impact she has made on women in agriculture at this year's Northeast Community College's AgCeptional Conference. Her legacy began 17 years ago with the idea for a conference where women could connect and learn and that passion has shaped AgCeptional into what it is today.



to lead with distinction. Ostermeyer earned his bachelor's degree in Mathematics Education from Wayne State College, his master's degree in School Administration 7-12 from Wayne State College, and his Specialist in Education degree from Wayne State College.

2004 Nicole (Schaefer) Everingham, Development Director at Collective for Youth, will serve as a 2025 Afterschool Ambassador – one of only 15 leaders in the country chosen for the honor this year, the Afterschool Alliance announced. Afterschool Ambassadors continue working with local afterschool programs while serving a one-year Afterschool Ambassador term, during which they engage with community leaders and policy makers to organize events and in other ways grow support for the afterschool and summer learning programs that students and families rely on.



1989 Tabetha Chance is married to Brian McKinney, 1988 graduate of WSC, and they have lived in Sioux Falls, S.D., for the last 23 years. She retired from the state of South Dakota after 35 years and currently works a couple of days a week at the Sanford Occupational Medical Clinic. McKinney does quality

assurance at a label company in Sioux Falls. They love to keep busy spending time with family and friends, doing yard work in the spring and summer, and going for walks. Their son, Trent, his wife, Jeni, and granddaughter, Kendall, live in Fargo, N.D., and get together as much as possible. Chance says "I loved my days at WSC and appreciate the education I received."

2005 Becky Schueth is a high school math teacher at Shelby-Rising City School. She is one of four state finalists for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST). Schueth is in her 11th year at S-RC and teaches geometry, technical math, algebra, pre-calculus, and calculus. She has 20 years of experience teaching, beginning her career at Columbus High. She graduated from Wayne State College with her bachelor's and master's degrees. She is also active in Shelby, helping with 4-H, as well as student council sponsor and sometimes playing corn hole at the farmers' market.

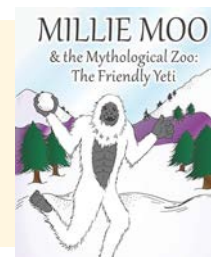
2009 Travis Moore decided to go back to school after 12 years of working in state and local government. Moore returned to college to become a teacher through Nebraska Wesleyan University's Post-Bachelor's Teacher Certification Program. He completed his program in May 2025, earning a 7-12 history endorsement. He began teaching U.S. History and World History at Waverly High School for the 2025-26 school year.

1990 Dr. Neal Schnoor was appointed the new chancellor of the University of Nebraska at Kearney by the University of Nebraska Board of Regents. He is a Nebraska native and former longtime faculty member and administrator at UNK. A first-generation college graduate, Schnoor was born in Norfolk and raised in Pierce. He earned his doctorate and master's degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and his undergraduate degree from Wayne State College. He and his wife, Teresa, a retired elementary principal, have two grown children.



2011 Katie (Goetzinger) Voth, former Wayne State All-American softball pitcher, was inducted into the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference (NSIC) Hall of Fame. Voth becomes the ninth individual from Wayne State College to be inducted into the NSIC Hall of Fame.

2011 Laci (Maskell) Kramer, who writes under her maiden name – Laci Maskell – has published a total of nine books. The most recent release is *Millie Moo & the Mythological Zoo: The Friendly Yeti*.



2003 Johnnie Ostermeyer, Crofton Schools' secondary principal, has been chosen as the Nebraska State Association of Secondary School Principals' Region III High School Principal of the Year. Ostermeyer has served in education since 2003. He began his career teaching math at Woodbury Central School District in Iowa and later at South Sioux City Community Schools in Nebraska. In 2013, he transitioned into administration as the assistant principal and activities director at Pierce High School. In 2015, he became the secondary principal at Crofton High School, where he continues



2012 Kaitlin (Effe) Nathan recently self-published her first book, called "Baking Kolaches with Kinzley Kate." Nathan, who has two children, Kinzley and Keegan, with husband, Zach, was born and raised in Verdigre. She studied journalism at Northeast Community College and went on to Wayne State College. (CONTINUED on 28)

Kaitlin (Effe) Nathan (CONT.) In 2015, she started working on her teaching certification at University of Nebraska-Kearney. She teaches English at Stanton Community Schools. In the fall of 2023, she took a class through UNL on place-based writing, which is about how a place inspires you and your emotions. That class inspired “Baking Kolaches with Kinzley Kate.” “It took a while to decide what I wanted to write about,” she said. “I decided on Verdigre, the atmosphere, Bohemian Alps, and the Czech heritage.”

2012 Maddy (Moser) Toepfer and her husband, Travis, of Omaha, Neb., welcomed a daughter, Callen, in January 2025.



2012 Bethany (Kleinschmit) and Chad Schock of Grand Island announce the birth of their second child, Ethan Gerard, on July 22.

2015 Megan Pippitt, Marketing Coordinator at Security Bank in Laurel, has been recognized as a promising young professional in community banking by The Institute for Extraordinary Banking. This national recognition places Megan as one of only three finalists selected for the Rising Star in Banking™ Award, which honors leaders who demonstrate exceptional vision, innovation, and commitment to strengthening their communities. One of Megan’s most outstanding accomplishments is her role in the creation of the Building Block Early Childhood Center, a vital new childcare facility that opened its doors earlier this year.

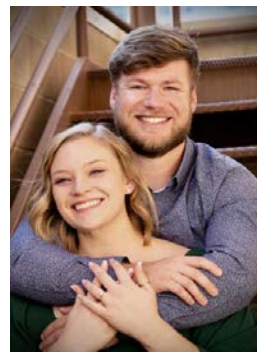


2015 Lauren (Cantrell) Schenck obtained a Master of Social Work through the University of Nebraska-Omaha after graduating from Wayne State. Since then, she has obtained her independent licensure and provides mental health services as a licensed independent clinical social worker and mental health practitioner. In 2025, she opened her first clinic in Fremont, where she employs three providers. Strengthen Mental Health Therapy serves Fremont and surrounding rural areas with collaborative and comprehensive mental health care, trauma treatment, and talk-therapy services.



2016 Camron Groenke was awarded the Region 2 Girls Wrestling Coach of the Year, the National Wrestling Coaches Association South Dakota Girls Coach of the Year, and South Dakota Association for Middle Level Education Outstanding Mid-Level Educator of the Year this past spring/summer.

2019 Cienna (Stegemann) Langer and her husband have been married two years and have a 16-month-old boy named Lane Arthur Langer.



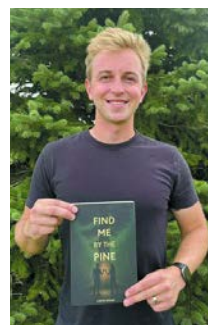
2019 Joe Giesselmann and Abby Coday were married June 21, 2025, at Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Howells, Neb. Giesselmann is a 2015 graduate of Fremont High School and a 2019 graduate of Wayne State College. He was named to the dean’s list at Wayne State and was a member of the rugby, wrestling, and track and field teams. Giesselmann also earned a master’s degree in education administration from Wayne State College. He is a skilled and technical science teacher at Fremont Middle School. After a honeymoon in Idaho and Jackson Hole, Wyoming, the couple reside in Fremont.

2021 Carter Scott, Plainview alumnus and lawyer, has taken over as lead attorney at the Curtiss & Scott Law Office. Scott graduated from Plainview High School in 2017 and earned his bachelor’s degree at Wayne State College before attending the University of South Dakota’s law school, graduating in 2024.

2021 MSE Erin Burling and Zach Uttecht were married on June 7, 2025, in the Black Hills. Burling earned her master’s degree at Wayne State College. She is a sociology teacher at Fremont High School.



2022 Regan Ott graduated with her master’s in psychology of sport from University of Stirling, Scotland.



2023 Carter Ossian, speech and high school English teacher at West Point Public Schools, recently published his second book. Titled “Find Me by the Pine”, the young adult novel is a coming-of age story about a young boy’s journey of personal growth. This is Ossian’s second novel. Ossian’s first book, published in 2022, is a mystery titled Chaotic Reasoning he completed as his honors project while finishing his studies at WSC.

Giving Day

HANNAH LINDSAY

Director of Alumni Relations
and Annual Campaigns

halind01@wsc.edu | 402-375-7370

MEGAN FINN

Associate AD for External Affairs
mefinn1@wsc.edu | 402-369-0979

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For more information, please contact:

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HANNAH LINDSAY

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halind01@wsc.edu | 402-375-7370

IN MEMORY OF:

Clarice A. (Frevert) Gansbom `50, 94, Osmond; Aug. 21, 2025

Margaret J. (Fancher) Anderson, `51, 94, Burwell; Jan. 12, 2025

Marcine "Marci" (Rethwisch) Rohrberg `51, 95, Council Bluffs, Iowa; Apr. 2, 2025

Ardith L. (Kocina) Nienhuser `52, 92, Sidney; April 5, 2025

Janet (Ahrens) Goldfogle `52, 93, Potomac Falls, Va.; May 16, 2025

Virginia "Glee" (Van Buskirk) Gustafson `52, 94, Wayne; Nov. 12, 2025

Betty Jane (Bard) Fischer `53, 93, Lincoln, March 9, 2025

Robinette "Robbie" (Miller) Morrow `54, 91, Des Moines, Iowa; May 3, 2025

Carol A. (Kruger) Timm `56, 93, Columbus; Feb. 9, 2025

Shirley (Fryman) Nyberg `56, 87, Loomis; July 24, 2025

Sandra (Lackas) Dennis `56, 88, O'Neill; June 1, 2025

Helen (Thomas) Rager `57, 91, Gordon; Sept. 29, 2025

Carrol E. Miller `58, 86, Cloquet, Minn.; May 24, 2025

Vandle "Van" Phillips `59, 89, South Sioux City; April 13, 2025

Helmut John Koch `60, 89, South Sioux City; April 26, 2025

Jeanette Ann (Schumacher) Urwiler `60, 86, Mapleton, Iowa; June 19, 2025

Charlene (Chocholousek) Ondracek `61, 85, Clive, Iowa; Feb. 15, 2025

Leo A. Moschenross `61, 88, Norfolk; March 10, 2025

Kay M. Myers `61, 86, Stuart; April 22, 2025

Larry L. Knaak `61, 85, Plainview; Oct. 24, 2025

James "Jim" Hofmaier `62, 84, North Bend, Ore.; June 30, 2025

Darlene K. Prokop `62, 88, Fremont; April 23, 2025

Jerry Lee Malcom `63, 88, Fremont; Jan. 17, 2025

Derwin W. Hartman `63, 89, formerly of Wakefield; Aug. 10, 2025

Delbert Ridder `64, 86, Lincoln; Oct. 10, 2025

Alan A. Ott `65, 82, Hooper; April 24, 2025

Betty Mashino `65, 87, Spencer; Aug. 9, 2025

William "Bill" T. Wohlers `66, 80, Denison, Iowa; June 6, 2024

James "Jim" Mills `66, 80, Merced, Calif.; April 15, 2025

Ralph Looney `66, 80, Raulston, March 4, 2025

Larry Joseph Krause `66, 84, Springfield; Jan. 14, 2025

Lucille (Thramer) Knieval `67, 95, Norfolk; April 24, 2025

Connie L. (Schmuecker) Kaup, `68, 78, Snyder; July 2, 2025

Robert "Bob" Hupp `68, 79, Norfolk; Nov. 18, 2025

Eric "Ric" Joseph Ortmeier `68, 79, Fontanelle; Feb. 24, 2025

Karen B. (Bohnenkamp) Rodriguez `68, 78, Sioux Falls, S.D.; March 10, 2025

Jean R. Parsons `68, 78, Mount Vernon, Wash.; March 15, 2025

Ralph J. Tichota `68, 80, Clearwater; Sept. 7, 2025

Edward "Sam" Schroeder `69, 78, Wayne; March 8, 2025

Paul J. Hoelsing `68, 77, Ponca; March 1, 2025

Janice "Jan" K. (Redinbaugh) Kensler `69, 78, Omaha; June 4, 2025

Robert "Bob" Decker `70, 77, Tilden; Aug. 14, 2025

Roger D. Geiger `70, 78, Norfolk; Sept. 14, 2025

Dr. Ford M. Craig `70, 76, Seward; Feb. 6, 2025

Marvin R. Kohler `70, 80, Grand Island; Feb. 4, 2025

Vera (Ryan) Horn `71, 98, Newman Grove; July 30, 2025

Charles E. "Chuck" Prince `72, 75, Wayne; Feb. 10, 2025

Terry Schomberg `72, 75, Montgomery, Texas; May 30, 2025

James R. "Jim" Pryor `72, 79, Norfolk; Nov. 20, 2025

Rita J. Stanley `73, 98, Norfolk; Sept. 25, 2025

Arlen C. Leinart `74, 73, South Sioux City; March 14, 2025

Rita M. (Weddingfeld) Simpson `75, 71, Overton; Jan. 10, 2025

Mark S. Anderson `76, 71, Bluffton, S.C.; June 26, 2025

Michael Harnan `76, 71, Pleasant Hill, Iowa; June 22, 2025

Joseph G. Coble `77, 82, Omaha; Jan. 7, 2025

Roberta L. Engstedt `79, 82, Crofton; May 6, 2025

Duane Polodna, `80, 67, Omaha; March 26, 2025

Jean Ann Ernesti `81, 85, Yankton, S.D.; June 14, 2025

Marjorie "Marge" J. (Stewart) Holland `82, 97, Aurora; Feb. 2, 2025

Sherri L. Kuk `82, 64, Goodyear, Ariz.; July 10, 2025

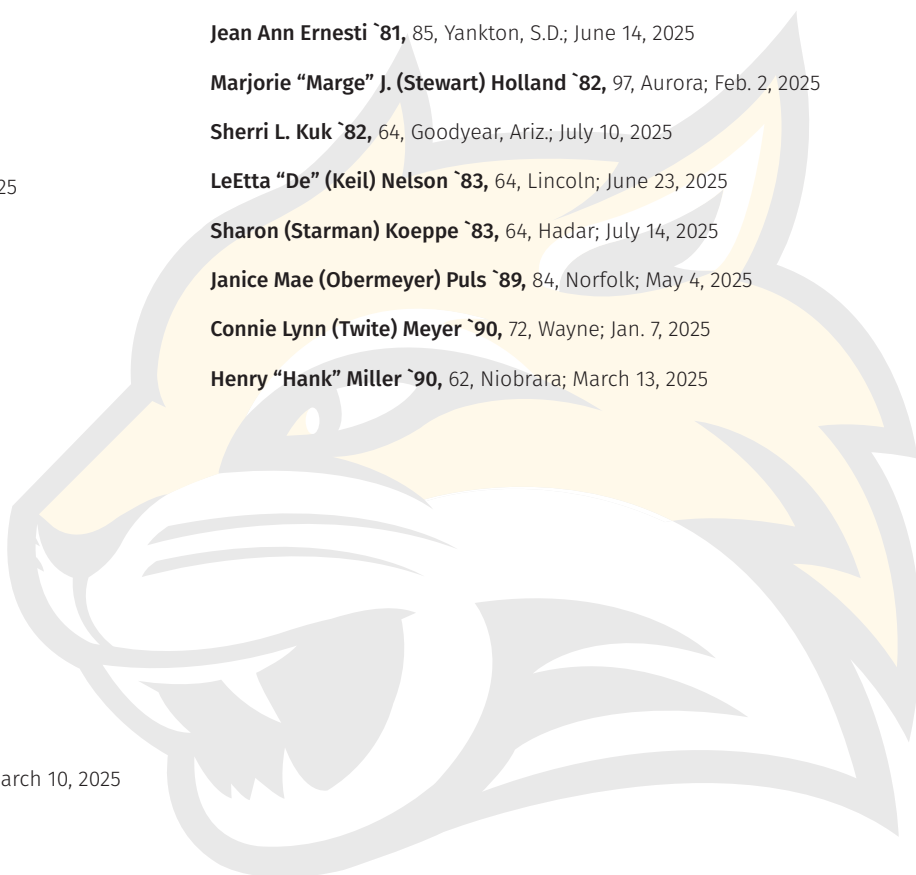
LeEtta "De" (Keil) Nelson `83, 64, Lincoln; June 23, 2025

Sharon (Starman) Koeppe `83, 64, Hadar; July 14, 2025

Janice Mae (Obermeyer) Puls `89, 84, Norfolk; May 4, 2025

Connie Lynn (Twite) Meyer `90, 72, Wayne; Jan. 7, 2025

Henry "Hank" Miller `90, 62, Niobrara; March 13, 2025



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Wildcat Days



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Questions? Please contact:
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