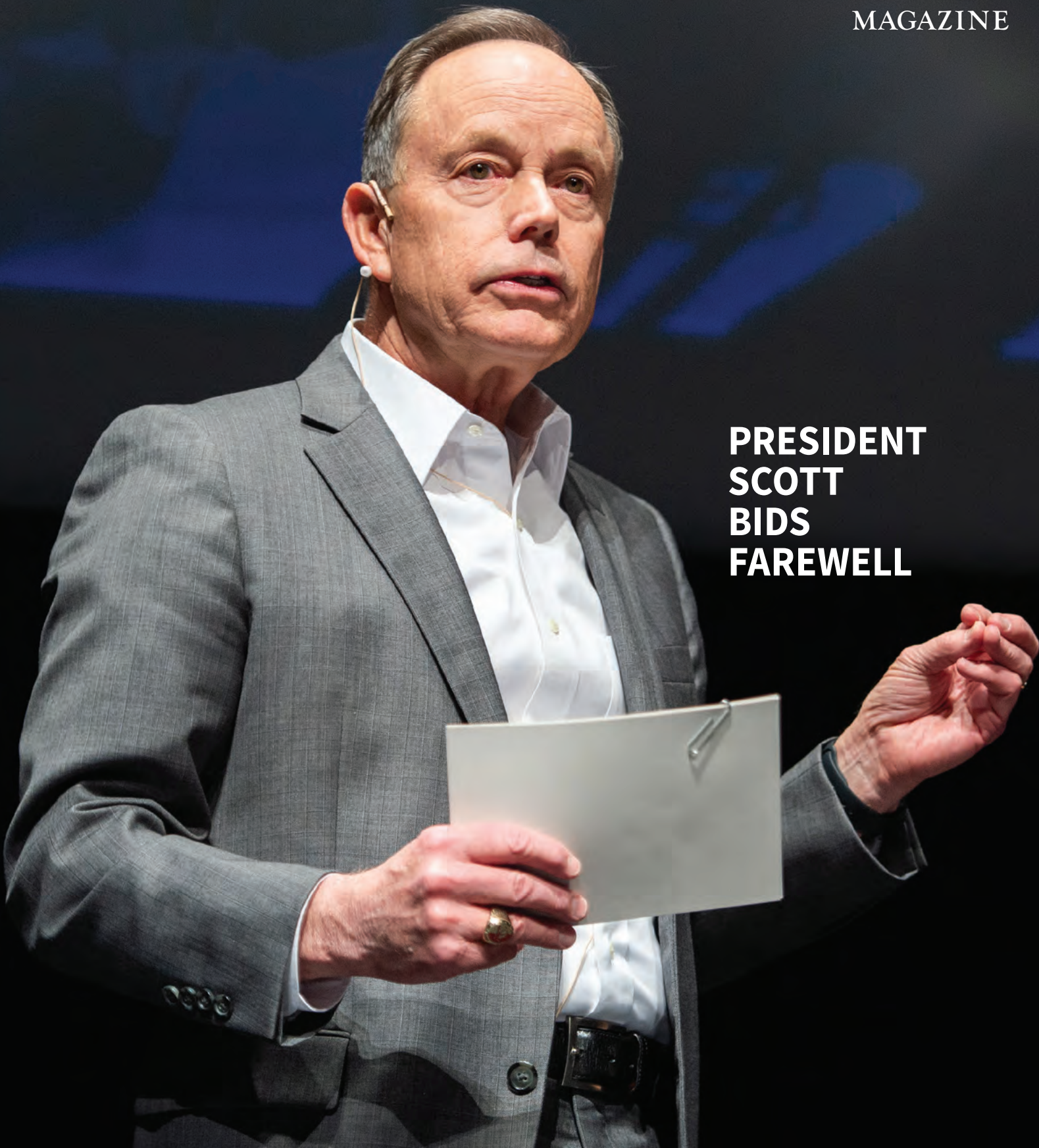


Summer 2022



# PittState

MAGAZINE



**PRESIDENT  
SCOTT  
BIDS  
FAREWELL**



# Farewell, welcome

In this issue, we bid farewell to President Steve Scott, the ninth president of Pittsburg State University, who has been at the helm since July 2009. In this edition's cover story (p. 30), you can read more about his accomplishments and the legacy he leaves.

We also welcome our next president, Dr. Daniel Shipp, whose first week on the job began June 6.

Shipp comes to us from the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, where he has served as vice chancellor for strategic initiatives and associate to the chancellor. In the January 2023 edition, he will be featured as the cover story so that you can learn more about him, his family, and what he hopes to achieve.

He said he was drawn to Pittsburg State's "learning through action" approach to education and is motivated when connections are made between what students are learning in the classroom and applying it in the larger community.

"I think some campuses will say it's a priority, but it lives in the DNA here," he said.

He also was attracted by the pride that alumni and the community have for Pittsburg State, and by the achievements of students and faculty.

"Community engagement, the high academic standards of Pittsburg — I think it stands out to you, when you read the news feed of all the things that students are doing and faculty are doing here. It wasn't a hard tough sell at all...it was 'Oh my gosh, how quick could we get here?'" he said.

— THE EDITOR

Dear Reader: You're likely receiving this magazine later than anticipated. We apologize for your wait, but paper supply chain issues were beyond our control.



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4



16



Vol. 30 No. 1 Summer 2022

# PittState

MAGAZINE

## In this issue

### 4 A NEW ERA OF NURSING

Construction has begun on a privately-funded addition to McPherson Hall that will revolutionize teaching and learning.

### 16 GET INVOLVED

Once alumnus Eric Wilkinson learned the value of "campus community," he never looked back.

### 18 DIVING IN

A former Pitt State swimmer, now in his 70s, is racking up medals and dreaming of a virtual university swim team.

### 24 CHAMPION GORILLA

It's impossible to say how many athletic events Phil Scott has attended. For him, "Every day is an awesome day to be a Gorilla!"

### 28 AWARD-WINNING

Meet this year's Meritorious, Good Apple, and Distinguished Service Award winners.

28



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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:

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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](http://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](http://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](http://pittstate.edu/info/fightsong)

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

[pittstate.edu/magazine](http://pittstate.edu/magazine)

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

[pittstate.edu/tour](http://pittstate.edu/tour)

## Finding Gus

I read the "Finding Gus" article in the Spring 2021 magazine about Larry Wooster. Larry was a dear friend of coworker Alex Barde, my father, who taught his whole career in the Art Department at Pittsburg State University.

As a child I remember going to Larry Wooster's home where nature was prevalent all around. He had the largest indoor fireplace I had ever seen and was amazed by it.

My dad and my mom, Judy, now live in Douglas, Michigan, on the shores of Lake Michigan and are very much enjoying their retirement years.

This summer I took them to an outdoor art exhibition in Grand Rapids, Michigan called "Art Prize," which is an amazing art show that showcases artists indoors and out.

I snapped this photo (on pg. 35) of my dad at Art Prize as we remembered our history with Pittsburg, Pittsburg State, and the famous Gorilla.

**Ethan Barde**, Class of '92

What are *your* special memories or photos of Larry Wooster and/or the Wooster Gorilla? Share them with us and they might just appear in our fall edition!

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**Postal mail:** Pitt State Magazine,  
c/o PSU, 1701 S. Broadway,  
Pittsburg, KS 66762

## And the winner is...

The winner of our popular "Finding Gus" contest for the January 2022 edition is Suzanne Rader Carney (MS '99), of Joplin, Mo., who spied it on Page 4. Thanks to each and every Gorilla who entered — we received many entries and we enjoy reading the comments sometimes included with them.

## Can you find it?

Search this issue and email your guess to [psumag@pittstate.edu](mailto: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 **September 30**. We'll mail one lucky winner a hardbound copy of "Pittsburg State University: A Photographic History of The First 100 Years."





## PSU Entrance

THE ORIGINAL BROADWAY ENTRANCE to Pittsburg State University in front of Russ Hall has been completely renovated and was officially re-dedicated with a ribbon cutting on Apple Day in March.

Funded by a gift from the senior classes of 1936, 1937, 1938, and 1940, it was built in 1940 by the Work Projects Administration and Kansas State Teachers College, as the university was known then. Senior class gifts from the classes of 2000 and 2003–2008 helped fund the renovation.

## Dear Editor ...

*A lot has changed since I graduated, both structurally and with faculty, but the Gorilla pride has only grown through the years. I am very proud to be an alumna! I enjoy your magazine and it's nice to keep up with such an amazing university and people. Thanks so much!*

– **Pamela Dehdashti** (BSN '94)

*I enjoy reading Pitt State Magazine. It is good to see what is going on at the University. I really enjoyed my time at PSU, Spring 1973 to Fall 1974 (KSTC back then).*

– **Tim Harries** (BS '75) Topeka, Kan.

*I remember gathering around Gus (the Wooster Gorilla) in November 1963 discussing what the world had come to after the news of JFK's assassination.*

– **Art Tice** (BA '68)

*It sure is fun to keep up with all the developments at PSU. Keep up the great magazine and articles. I recently retired from Boeing. I started a LinkedIn account to consider alternate work. I connected with an old friend who is also a PSU graduate!*

– **David Browne** (BSMET '86)

*I really enjoy the Pitt State Magazine and particularly the "Where in the World is Gus?" pages. It's fun to see where Pitt State people travel.*

– **Edith Ramage** (BA '73, MA '96, MA '03)

*I love seeing expansions on campus in the magazine! I'm celebrating 40 years as a nurse 1982-2022!*

– **Dr. Sarah Plunkett** (BSN '82)

*Thank you so much for sending out these great magazines! I was a part of the Graphic Design Department that made them once upon a time. I'm now a 6th and 7th grade teacher and am proud to be a Gorilla!*

– **Andy Runer** (BST '04)

*I remember taking classes in art history and art appreciation from Professor Wooster. I also passed the statue he designed on my daily trips from Shirk Hall to Russ Hall and the old Porter Library.*

– **Tom Glinstra** (BS '70)

*I always love reading the Pitt State Magazine and keeping up with things on campus!*

– **Galen Atkinson** (BS '82)

*I enjoyed the article 'Famous faces at PSU' in the January 2022 edition!*

*Pitt State has certainly had its share of hosting celebrity entertainers! I want to add to the list a few celebrities that I had the pleasure of bringing to campus as president of the Black Student Union in 1981:*

- Ramsey Lewis Jr. – American jazz composer, pianist and radio personality.
- Tom Browne – American jazz trumpeter with major hits in 1980 and 1981.
- Albert "The Ice Man" Collins – American electric blues guitarist and singer.
- Alvin Poussaint, MD – an American psychiatrist well known for his research on the effects of racism in the Black community, and former dean at Harvard Medical School.

*Thank you! Keep up the good work with the magazine!*

– **Lee Carrell** (BS '82)



## A new era of nursing

After a groundbreaking in April, work is now underway on a building that will help usher in a new era of nursing education in the Irene Ransom Bradley School of Nursing.

The project will include new construction of an approximately 10,000-square foot simulation hospital being built as an addition to McPherson Hall, plus targeted renovations to the existing nursing building that will accommodate cohorts of 120 students; currently, there are 90.

Highlights will include associated control rooms, a debriefing room, a waiting area, a study area, storage, and restrooms. Combined, the project will involve approximately 24,000 square feet.

The almost \$7 million project is being funded by private gifts initiated by donors after learning of the need to expand access to more students.

“It will change the student

experience,” said Dean Mary Carol Pomatto, who noted that demand for qualified nurses has increased as a result of the pandemic. “This

will provide an amazing hands-on learning environment and allow instructors to stage real-life scenarios.”



## New basketball coach

Jeff Boschee started this spring as the new head basketball coach. He had served as head coach at MIAA rival Missouri Southern State University the past eight seasons, and prior to that for four seasons as an assistant and associate head coach for the Lions.

Boschee directed MSSU to four 20-win seasons and three consecutive trips to the NCAA Division II National Tournament between the 2017-18 and the 2019-20 campaigns. He was selected the 2017-18 MIAA Coach of the Year and his 2018-19 squad reached the NCAA Sweet 16 while posting a 25-8 record.

As a collegiate player, he was a four-year starter at the University of Kansas under former KU coach Roy Williams; while at KU, he helped the Jayhawks win a Big 12 Conference Championship and a Big 12



Conference Tournament title, and he played in the 2002 NCAA Final Four.

Jeff and his wife, Jamie, have two daughters, Mary Rose and Julia Rae.

# Axe Library renovations

After being under construction from May 2016 to May 2022, the multi-phase \$6 million renovation of Leonard H. Axe Library is complete and has transformed the space to meet the needs of today's library users.

From planning to focus groups to construction, every stakeholder has been involved, and every floor of the building has been impacted.

Axe Library was built in 1979 as a modern replacement to Porter Library, which was housed in a building now home to the PSU Department of Art. The function and operations of libraries have dramatically changed since that time.

Some of the biggest changes are that Special Collections and University Archives moved from third floor to the basement, many periodicals have moved to electronic only, and new study rooms and flexible meeting spaces were added.

The renovations reconfigured the space and added energy-efficient lighting, a new roof, a new east entrance, new bathrooms; increased space between the shelving for ADA compliance; and completely updated the interiors.

These changes, and more, were funded by state and university dollars.



Nearly \$6 million in renovations and remodeling are now complete in Leonard H. Axe Library. The final phase included a complete update of the second floor, the addition of a new study room, new lighting and flooring in the basement, and improvements to the stairwells. These renovations will meet the needs of 21st Century students and faculty.

## Gorillas give back

On this year's Gorilla Giving Day, 152 alumni, faculty, staff, and friends from 26 states and five countries — Brazil, India, Kazakhstan, Spain, and the U.S. — helped raise \$17,834.23 to support programs at Pittsburg State.

Among the various giving challenges were the Alumni Legacy Scholarship Challenge, in which Director of Alumni & Constituent Relations Jon Bartlow promised to get a Gorilla tattoo if his goal of \$5,000 was met. It was, and this summer Bartlow will be getting one designed by Jeremy Hildebrand (BST '97 Commercial Graphics), who currently serves as 2nd Vice President of the PSU Alumni Association.

The next Gorilla Giving Day will be held on March 6, 2023! **Learn more:** [pittstate.edu/gorillagiving](http://pittstate.edu/gorillagiving).





## New equipment

The human performance lab in the Department of Health, Human Performance, and Recreation, got an upgrade this spring: it was outfitted with strength training and aerobic equipment from Rogue that students use daily in class. The lab also has technology to measure jump height (Jumpmat), velocity and power during strength training and ballistic training (Tendo), body composition (BodPod, Tanita) and aerobic capacity (Echo bikes).

Starting in August, the department will offer a new emphasis designed to help prepare students to work with athletes as strength and conditioning coaches at the secondary, collegiate, and professional levels.



## New emphasis

Pittsburg State University is offering a new emphasis in the Bachelor of Integrated Studies that will prepare graduates to lead innovation in healthcare systems, and to coordinate and

manage delivery of healthcare in a variety of settings.

The emphasis, called Healthcare Innovation, is open to anyone with 60 or more hours of college credit or those who already have an

associate's degree.

"With this emphasis, you'll gain theoretical and practical experiences in critical thinking, creative problem solving, change management, leadership, communication, inclusivity, strategic decision-making, technology, ethics, quality improvement, and entrepreneurial skills," said Dean of College of Arts & Sciences Mary Carol Pomatto.

Students will work one-on-one with an advisor to design a program of study that will match their career goals.

"This is a great program for those interested in healthcare, but not in a clinical program," Pomatto said. "It comes at an important time, too, given the current needs of the ever-evolving healthcare industry."





## New certification

In May, 11 students in the Department of Communication became the first graduating class to earn professional certifications in digital advertising, content marketing, and social media marketing, along with their degree in communication.

The department offered course credit to students interested in pursuing the professional certifications; feedback from students and prospective employers has been positive.

Students completed certifications in social digital media practice, as well as digital media ethics and digital analytics.

"This was essentially a beta test," said Professor Alicia Mason. "We wanted to encourage the

initiative because we understand how important post-graduate marketability is to our students."

The professional certifications can provide an edge in competitive hiring environments, she said. The department will continue offering the opportunity to future seniors in coming semesters.



**From left:**  
Gracie Krokroskia,  
Alexis McCollum,  
Brooklyn Peterson,  
Shakota Woolsey,  
and Ashley Stuteville.

## New chair

An associate professor of history who this spring was given the Outstanding Faculty Award by students has been named the new chair of the



Department of History, Philosophy, and Social Sciences.

Christopher Childers assumes the new role on June 1, taking over for interim Jamie Oliver, chair of the Art Department, who stepped in to lead the department last year after the departure of the previous chair.

"I am honored to become the next chair," Childers said. "It's exciting to be part of such a large, vibrant, multidisciplinary department. Through the Pitt State Pathway courses, our undergraduate majors, professional programs, and graduate study, HPSS plays a role in the lives of so many PSU students. I'm excited to lead our department as we continue to serve students and the PSU community."

He brings to the position innovative ideas for approaching recruitment and retention of students, said Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences Mary Carol Pomatto.

Childers has served as an associate professor of history since August 2016.

## New partnership

A new partnership program with universities in France and Taiwan allowed four students to earn dual MBA degrees this spring.

Students complete one year at their home institution and one year at PSU, to earn two degrees — one from each institution.

PSU sends and receives students for the program.

"A program like this is beneficial in many ways. It allows you to first develop your English skills, get an international degree, or even the opportunity to work in the United States," said Maxime Gelly, from Montpellier, France. "And, international students benefit PSU by bringing their own experiences and perspectives that are sometimes different from the American culture."

### INTENSIVE ENGLISH PROGRAM

Frida Herrera, a student in the Intensive English Program, visited Pittsburg High School to share the culture of her native Mexico City with students in Spanish classes, and to share two styles of salsa. "I had a wonderful time at the high school," she said. "All the students were so interesting, and they asked me questions about Mexico. I loved it."



### IRENE RANSOM BRADLEY SCHOOL OF NURSING

As part of community health nursing clinicals, students in the Irene Ransom Bradley



School of Nursing strengthened their health promotion skills by teaching a health behavior of their choice to youth throughout Crawford County. "My group got to present hand-washing skills to the first and second graders at St. Mary's Elementary and Pittsburg Community Schools," said Nakia Palmer, nursing major.

### GLOBAL UNDERGRADUATE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Pittsburg State students Hamad and Khadija of Pakistan attended a City



of Pittsburg Commission meeting and presented Mayor Cheryl Brooks an Ajrak, a shawl that symbolizes culture, tradition, and respect. Hamad and Khadija are studying through the Global Undergraduate Exchange Program in Pakistan, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. One component of the program is to learn about local government as well as local traditions, community service, and American culture.

## Kiddieland upgrades

Kiddieland amusement park, a longtime icon of Pittsburg, will get a \$20,000 carousel with historic roots this year thanks to a donation by Riggs Chiropractic, owned by Dr. Tyler Riggs (BS '11) and his wife, Dr. Kayla Riggs.

The "galloping horse" style carousel was built in the amusement capital of the nation, Coney Island, New York, and is one of only two carousels of its kind.

The Riggs' have made it a priority to give back to the community, they said, and do so each year with funding from new patient fees. Last year's donation was to a local fund to help juvenile diabetes.



## New Fed Ex facility

Construction of a new, 250,000-square foot FedEx Ground distribution center is underway just south of Pittsburg near the intersection of U.S. Highway 400 and U.S. Highway 69 and is expected to open in October.

It will be the largest job-creator since 2016, officials said, although numbers are being kept confidential at this time.

The site was chosen because of its ease of access to major highways, proximity to customers' distribution centers, and a strong local community workforce for recruiting employees.

Gov. Laura Kelly called it a "tremendous development for Pittsburg, the region and the state."

The Kansas Department of Transportation is expected to finish the four-lane expansion of U.S. Highway 69 from Kansas City to just north of Pittsburg later this year.

## Industrial Park acquisition

The City of Pittsburg acquired Montee Industrial Park — a prime industrial park with rail access — at the north edge of town that the city will be able to market globally to prospective businesses seeking to relocate or open up new locations.





## New degree to help with demand

A new degree option starting this fall, Computer Science, will help a local boutique marketing and e-commerce agency, along with similar agencies across the nation, meet the demand for developers.

LimeLight Marketing, started and owned by Brandee Johnson (BBA '01), has grown from one employee to now 25 since opening in 2016, outgrowing space available at The Foundry in Block22 — Pittsburg State's innovative business incubator in downtown Pittsburg.

This spring, the agency began a major renovation project of an historic building in downtown Pittsburg. It will provide space for not just employees, but also the many interns the agency hires from Pittsburg State.

Those interns often go on to become full-time employees when they graduate and put down roots in Pittsburg — exactly those involved in the Block22 initiative imagined when they developed it.

The degree option will enable graduates to excel in three main career areas:

- computer programmers write and test code. Median pay: \$89,100 per year
- software developers, quality assurance analysts, and testers, design computer applications or programs and identify problems within them. Median pay: \$110,100 per year
- computer systems analysts study an organization's current computer systems and find solutions that are more efficient and effective. Median pay: \$93,700 per year

"We are seeing a huge demand for developers, and so are our peers in the industry," Johnson said.

The agency also employs graduates with degrees in graphic communications, web/interactive media, and computer information systems.

## Sales growth

Pittsburg experienced an unprecedented sales tax revenue increase in the past year, up 11.5 percent, which city leaders say is a direct result of having more amenities, shopping, and dining opportunities for not just residents, but visitors.

### INTERNATIONAL FOOD FAIR

The 2022 International Food and Culture Fair was a huge success with more than 700 people from the community and campus in attendance and more than 4,200 individual food samples sold! The event was held at the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts and coordinated by the International Student Association, along with community volunteers. Mark your calendar: The 2023 Food and Culture Fair is set for March 4! Music and cultural performances held in the Linda and Lee Scott Performance Hall were recorded and can be viewed at [pittstate.tv](http://pittstate.tv).



### BADGE WORK

Professor of Engineering Technology Phil McNew invited scouts from Troop 81 to his lab in the Kansas Technology Center to work on their welding merit badge. Each scout used skills taught by McNew to create a fleur-de-lis — the main element in the logo of most Scouting organizations — to take home.



### GYMNASTICS

Students in the Department of Health, Human Performance, and Recreation in the College of Education got some first-hand work with young students in schools: they taught gymnastics to all of the kindergarteners and first graders in the Pittsburg Community Schools this spring — a win-win for the "olders" and the "youngsters."



## Alumni give students an edge

An innovative product design created by seniors in the Plastics Engineering Technology program for a seminar course is the latest example of how donations by alumni working in industry make a big impact.

Seniors Connor Adams, Tabitha Claeys, Autumn England, Tucker Haynes, and Kaedra Brenner conceptualized and 3D-printed a plastic clothes hanger that can accommodate both an adult-sized and child-sized clothing item. Their ultimate goal: to create an object using injection molding.

Nick Holman (BST, '15), who now works for DME Company, the premier global supplier of mold bases, mold components, molding supplies, and other technologies, advocated for the company to donate a mold.

"I know how important it is for students to have access to something like this," he said, "because I was a student here myself, and learning with industry-level equipment is what helped prepare me for the workforce."

Holman is one of many alumni to have arranged for a way to give back to the PET program.

"We are fortunate to have many graduates that remember their PSU roots," said Department Chair Greg Murray. "They are now in positions that allow them to give back in the form of corporate donations of equipment, material, and software. Thanks to these generous donors, our students are able to train on the latest technology, which fully prepares them for successful careers."

Adams said the donations and industry connections set Pittsburg State apart.

"Everywhere you look in industry, there are Pitt State alumni, and they're willing to help us out."



## Women @ Work initiative brings together students and community leaders

A cross-generational collaboration between Kelce College of Business and community partners is helping young women get a leg up.

Called Women @ Work, the initiative brings together college and businesswomen for workshops, mentoring, and role modeling to help young women meet both the opportunities and the challenges they face as they forge career paths.

Pitsco Education President Lisa Paterni was happy to serve as one of the mentors, having wished for such an initiative when she was in school.

"I believe it is important for students to have the opportunity to interact with women who have been where they are and to be able to hear about our experiences and also to be able to ask questions," she said. "Every woman has a story and lessons learned that we can share and help the next generation."

"Women in business have come a long way since my graduation and if I can play a small part in continuing the improvement, I am all in," she added.

Mindy Cloninger, coordinator of the Pittsburg High School Launch program, said it has helped one of her students, who has gotten to interact with local business leaders.

"It's a great way for students and professional women to share experiences and thoughts about unique challenges women face in the workplace, and a way for us to all learn from each other," she said.



## Real-world design to help kids with special needs

For the past year, five students in mechanical engineering technology have been working on a project that could change the lives of children with movement disabilities: a prototype chassis for a customizable powered toy car.

The team – Zachary Stotler, Matt Hendren, Christian Schultz, Jesus Corral, and Justin Duvall – supported the work of the non-profit LEARN's Geeks for Kids program, a STEM enrichment program that pairs student engineers with professional technologists to design and build meaningful technology.

The Geeks for Kids program supplies children who have movement limitations with an alternative to a wheelchair that is affordable, safe, and customizable.

This project is the latest of numerous real-world projects directed by Professor of Engineering Technology David Miller. Past teams have created a pedicab for Live Well Crawford County to accommodate riders who use

wheelchairs, and they have designed and fabricated Baja vehicles and moon rover projects for national competitions.

Geeks for Kids will refine and expand upon the PSU team's product to make it reproducible, polished, affordable, and commercial grade so it lasts and lives up to the rigors of children's play. The organization also will add electronics, programming, specialized seating, and support devices such as an IV or a breathing pump, customized to each child.



## Bankers work with business students

To prepare an entry for a national community banking competition, a student team from the Kelce College of Business turned to the most logical mentors: local community bankers.

For the competition, facilitated by the Conference of State Bank Supervisors, the team conducted an original case study that highlighted why community banks are vital to the American economy, as well as their unique business model that boosts



economic growth in local communities.

The team was asked to analyze the banking environment over the past

decade and identify the most significant developments for community banks, and to attempt to predict the most significant changes that will impact the industry over the next 10 years.

The competition required an official local community bank partner, which GNBank signed on to do. Bankers from Commerce Bank and Community National Bank also agreed to meet with students to provide their perspective and insight.

Winners will be announced July 14.

## A winning time capsule

A time capsule designed and built by two manufacturing majors was showcased at a national conference where it was admired by thousands before being sealed up for 25 years.

Manufacturing Engineering Technology major Bryce Scholze, a junior from Spring Hill, Kansas, won the right to design the time capsule in a competition held by the Foundry Educational Foundation in celebration of its 75th anniversary; they will open it on their 100th.

Wood Products Manufacturing major Nathan Minuth, a senior from Custer Park, Illinois, manufactured and built the cherry wood time capsule using his CNC



programming and finishing skills.

Pittsburg State is one of about 30 schools supported by the FEF; the organization has provided student scholarships and program support to encourage study in the field of metal casting.

## Saving a landmark

Zachary Bures, a senior in construction management, took on a capstone community-based project larger and longer than most: his spanned two semesters rather than one, and involved serving as the project manager for a top-to-bottom renovation of an historic building a few blocks north of campus.

The Carver League Building, built in 1951 as a place for social activities for Black students and residents of Pittsburg when they were still segregated, was once the go-to spot for picnics, game nights, lectures, movie screenings, and charity work.

After closing and becoming dilapidated after a few decades of non-use, Carver League volunteer Donna Jackson Campbell Brice (BS '68) began a campaign to save it. Donors stepped up, and the School of Construction signed on.

Bures took on the task of overseeing subcontractors as they overhauled the roof, floor, electrical, plumbing, concrete work, dry wall, and more.



"I liked the challenge; it's a good learning opportunity," he said. "The more experience you can get, the more it's going to help you when you graduate, get to the real world, and take on real projects."

Months before graduating, his education and experience had resulted in a job offer to be a project manager at Icon Structures in Manhattan, Kansas.

## Research center searches for sustainable plastics solutions

Improvements brought to our world by plastics have also brought a few challenges, like how to more sustainably create them and more efficiently recycle them. A team of researchers in the Kansas Polymer Research Center at Pittsburg State University have joined forces with researchers at the University of Delaware and the University of Kansas to find a solution.

The project is being funded by a \$4 million grant from the National Science Foundation. KPRC Director Tim Dawsey will lead senior research personnel. Associate Professor of Chemistry Ram Gupta will mentor a master's level student each year in the synthesis, characterization, and performance of biobased polymers and develop research projects for undergraduates and high school students that create experiential learning opportunities and generate interest in STEM careers.

Their focus: PET, which is a versatile and broadly used polymer used in commodity packaging films, engineering resins, fibers, and softdrink bottles.





The mural movement in Pittsburg continued this year with the latest one to be installed on a business: a 12-foot by 29-foot tigress designed by student Hannah Kinsey and created by Jamie Oliver's mural class. Funded by a grant from the Community Foundation of Southeast Kansas, students painted it in Porter Hall, then installed it on the exterior wall of Main Street Axe Company, 216 S. Broadway.





# IN SEARCH OF FROGS, BATS, & BIRDS



IT'S NOT OFTEN A SCIENTIST discovers a previously undocumented species. It's even rarer for a student scientist to discover one.

For Emma Buckardt, it happened as part of her graduate studies in the Biology Department, and it's earning her acclaim.

"I actually found the first county record for Crawford County for the Eastern Newt, which is a state threatened amphibian species," she said.

Buckardt, who came here from Illinois, has spent much of the past year wearing rubber boots, carrying a dip net, and spending time listening at 65 sites throughout Southeast Kansas. Her holy grail: amphibians.

She and several classmates were drawn to Pittsburg State by four things: the chance to do hands-on research in areas in which they're passionate, an abundance of mined land areas, grant funding from Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, and two faculty with noted expertise: professors Andy George and Christine Brodsky.





Her roommate, Haley Price, from Tennessee, is spending time with acoustic monitoring equipment in hopes of documenting the presence of bats — especially the gray bat, a state and federally endangered species that's been hit hard by white-nose syndrome.

The bats prefer woody stream corridors like nearby Cow Creek, as well as tree corridors and foraging areas over bodies of water. Price detected calls of seven bat species at 32 sites and is creating statistical models to show links between bat occupancy, habitat structure, and food availability.

Their classmate, Luke Headings, from Ohio, is studying the conservation value of strip-mined land for bird communities. During his pilot season, he conducted counts at 67 locations in Crawford and Cherokee counties and found 74 bird species, including 14 of greatest conservation need.

In addition to her newt discovery, Buckhart has found plenty of aquatic insects, mussels, snails, damselfly larvae, crayfish, whirligigs, and

backswimmers, along with eight species of frogs.

"The most important discovery, besides the newt, was spring peepers," she said. "It's a tiny frog added to the threatened list in Kansas in 1987, and since 2015 has been on the Kansas Species in Need of Conservation list."

It was found at one of her frequent study sites — a wetland created by biology graduate Brad Stefanoni (BS '96), who used what he learned in classes from professors Steven and Cindy Ford to build and manage it.

"It's great to be able to look at how successful this one is and use it as a model," she said. "This is one of the best, if not the best," she said.

The results of the students' studies to date have been shared in scientific publications, research colloquiums, and in a presentation to the local Audubon chapter. Their studies will continue until they graduate in December 2022.

# “Do it. Get involved.”

IT TOOK A WHILE for Eric Wilkinson to completely lean into the value of “campus community.”

“But once I did, I never looked back,” he said.

Wilkinson went on to a successful professional career; he became an engaged graduate, and this month completes a term as the president of the Alumni Association Board of Directors.

As he did, he reflected on how PSU impacted him as a student and why he wanted to give back.

“She may not know this, but I give a mountain’s worth of credit to Dr. Christine Fogliasso for helping me get where I am today,” he said. “When I was a student, she was the chair of the department and not even my advisor, but her assistance was critical to me reaching graduation and walking across the stage.”

After graduation, Wilkinson (BBA ’04), immediately began a five-year stint working for Pittsburg State in the Office of Admission and the Office of Student Diversity.

In 2009, he accepted a job with Kauffman Scholars, Inc. (KSI) — an access, persistence, and completion scholarship program funded by the Kauffman Foundation in Kansas City. Today, he serves as the director of operations, overseeing administrative support for all KSI programs and provides day-to-day management and facilitation of the KSI scholarship.

“It’s a true joy to go to work every day at a place that perfectly syncs with both my personal and professional values,” he said.

But Wilkinson said his engagement with the Alumni Association has been an equally positive experience.

“I think the saying goes, ‘It only takes a spark to get a fire going,’ and my goal when joining the Alumni Association Board was, and remains, to increase the overall engagement of my generation of Pitt State alumni,” he said. “I am proud to say that during the same period we have diversified our alumni board representation, including geographic representation.”

As president, Wilkinson has gotten to meet other alumni from across the U.S., announce award

recipients at campus ceremonies, and attend Gorilla Gatherings.

“Being actively involved in the Alumni Association shifted thoughts I think we all have of, ‘I need to get back to campus someday,’ into me actively getting back to campus a few times every year,” he said.

Returning is a “mix of nostalgia, remembering the good times invoked by all the old haunts, excitement, and being impressed by all the new and innovative things happening in and around campus,” he said.

He encourages other alumni to get involved.

“Do it. Regardless of your geographic location, there are always opportunities to plug in and get involved,” he said. “The Office of Alumni and Constituent Relations is 100 percent willing to engage our alumni, and maybe, just maybe, the Pitt State caravan will be coming to a city near you!”

Up next:

Wilkinson’s term ends in June, and Angie (Castagno) Saporito (BA ’04), who has served on the Alumni Association Board of Directors since 2017, will step into the role of president in July. Saporito is administrator of Mercy Hospital Columbus in Columbus, Kansas.

During her year as president, she will be directly involved with multiple dinners and award ceremonies honoring outstanding alumni, as well as the annual Half-Century Reunion event.

“Her positive attitude, bright smile, and warm personality will represent PSU exceptionally well,” said Alumni Association Executive Director Jon Bartlow.

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The Alumni Association keeps a running list of individuals who are nominated by other alumni, faculty, and staff as potential board members. Individuals stay on the list for up to seven years. Each summer, a committee meets to decide on new appointees, looking for variety in majors, careers, location, and age. The common denominator: that they are great cheerleaders for the university.

“They are our best advocates, recruiters, and our eyes and ears in their communities,” Bartlow said.

**Learn more:** [pittstate.edu/alumni](http://pittstate.edu/alumni)











# “Diving in”

CHUCK COOPER (BA '72, BSEd '76) first jumped into a swimming pool at age 4 — it was at the YMCA.

Today, the former member of the Pittsburg State University Swim Team is age 71 and he's still jumping into swimming pools. He hopes by doing so to inspire others, including former teammates.

“When I went out for the swim team at Pitt State, I wasn't great by any means, but I found out that I was a natural when it came to diving,” he said. “Coach Murphy used to have me swim the 50-yard freestyle and relays, but diving was my passion.”

By the end of his collegiate career, he held five school records, had placed 2nd on both the 1-meter and 3-meter board at conference, and had earned high board and low board finishes at NAIA Nationals.

After nationals, he was done. Or so he thought.

He focused on coaching, landing a job at Pittsburg State as an assistant swim coach and then as a diving coach at the University of Kansas with both the men's and women's teams from 1976 to 1979.

“I had the pleasure of coaching five Big 8 champions,” he said. “I was lucky to have had some really great, talented men and women to work with.”

Then, the real world happened.

“You'll never get rich being a diving coach and I really needed to land a job that paid real money,” he said.

He put the pool behind him and went to work in the corporate world. But, after a 32-year career with ADP Dealer Services where he held a number of different positions throughout the years ending as a senior product marketing manager, it was time to retire.

Swimming beckoned. And now, 50 years after graduating from Pittsburg State, he is back in the water.

“I had been playing pickleball pretty seriously and was looking for tournaments in 2019 when I came across information for a Senior Games

swim meet,” he said. “For whatever reason, I decided to sign up and started training.”

It was challenging.

“Back in the day, swimming 4,000 to 5,000 yards was normal. Now, I was lucky to finish 600 yards,” he said.

Things have gotten better, and he's found his form again.

“Swimming at the U.S. Masters and Senior Games level, you're competing against people in your own age group — age 50 and up in 5-year increments. For me, it's the 70-74 age group and I will tell you, there are some very serious, very fast seniors out there,” he said.

On the starting block, people have their game faces on and are deadly serious, but after the event it's all about the camaraderie.

“It's great to meet and talk with people from all walks of life with one common passion: swimming,” he said.

In 2020, he swam in the Florida State Games. The highlight since restarting his swimming career: winning first place in the 200 IM; he also took 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 6th place finishes. In 2021, at the Kansas Sunflower Meet, he took five first places and set two pool records.

“I like the competition and more importantly, it gives me a reason to get off the couch. I self-train, but there are others at the pool doing their own thing — training for triathlons and so on — pushing me and becoming good friends,” he said.

“It's especially rewarding and amazing when you see swimmers in their 90s still competing. At nationals this year there are 15 people in their 90s competing,” he said. “How long will I continue? Who knows, but I sure would like to be that 100-year-old guy putting those youngsters to shame.”

He hopes to reconnect and energize his former teammates from Pittsburg State.

“There are swimming clubs out there and I could envision a virtual Pitt State Swim Team scattered across the U.S.,” he said. “As they say, we're older but we're not dead. It's time to get off the couch.”



# “A game changer”

## Dr. Steven A. Scott

### HOMETOWN

Baxter Springs, Kansas

### EDUCATION

1973 – BSEd, Pittsburg State University

1977 – MS, Oklahoma State University

1984 – EdS, Pittsburg State University

2990 – EdD, Oklahoma State University

### ACADEMIC FIELD OF STUDY

Mathematics

STEVE SCOTT’S PRESIDENCY, which began in July 2009 and will end this month, has been nothing short of challenging: it was bookended by the Great Recession and a global pandemic.

It also marked a time during which Kansas universities saw a decline in state financial support, and universities across the nation saw a decline in enrollment.

But under his leadership, and against so many odds, Pittsburg State weathered the storm.

Renovations and expansions were completed.

Championships were won.

Academic programs were recognized nationally.

Buildings were built.

Initiatives were launched.

On Oct. 23, 2009, when Scott stood at the podium in front of Russ Hall at his inauguration ceremony, he shared his goal and vision:

“...we will build an even richer and more effective environment for student learning and student success. With you, we will excel, recognizing that what we do brings great value to the citizens of Kansas, to the region, to this very special community, and most importantly, to our students.”

In the years that followed, he succeeded, say alumni and donors.

“Dr. Scott guided us through a financial crisis, got us through a pandemic, and he and his family are to be commended for their



commitment not just to Pittsburg State, but the whole region,” said Rick Webb, president of Watco Companies and a university supporter.

Webb also noted Scott’s sense of humor, which made him likeable and approachable.

Longtime coach Russ Jewett described Scott as “a game changer.”

Dick Coleman, vice president of Miller’s Professional Imaging, said the university had “done more under his leadership than any other president that I’ve known.”

And former President Tom Bryant (MS ’63), whom Scott succeeded, agreed.

“No one has done a better job as a university president of bringing in outside funds to help us have this campus we’re looking at today,” Bryant said. “I’m personally proud of him and his many accomplishments.”

## “A life of purpose”

Scott has been connected to Pittsburg State in one form or another since childhood; his parents earned their degrees from PSU and were teachers, and both he and his wife, Cathy, also a teacher, earned two degrees from the College of Education.



For the past three decades he has served the university in every leadership capacity possible: as a faculty member in the College of Education, chair of the Department of Special Services and Leadership Studies, dean of the College of Education, vice president for Academic Affairs, and most recently, provost in 2008.

On walks across campus, he and Cathy often reminisced about their college days at PSU in the early 1970s, driving in from their native Baxter Springs in a clunker of a car.

Their family includes a son, Phil, a diehard Gorilla fan (see Page 26); a daughter, Kylie Stewart, PhD, who teaches as an assistant professor in the College of Education; and grandchildren, Josie, Hank, and Beau, who have become ardent and active Gorilla fans. His brother, H. Lee Scott, former CEO of Walmart, is also a graduate, and was key in acquiring funds for the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts



in 2014 and funding a speaker series named for him.

The couple will stay in Pittsburg in a home south of the hospital, and plan to remain active participants at university events and within the community.

“I’ve strived to lead a life of purpose serving others, and plan to do so even in the years ahead,” he said.

Former Commissioner of Education Andy Tompkins, who served as emcee at Scott’s retirement celebration, praised Scott’s steady guidance and described him as a “dedicated and visionary servant leader” with a

**2009**



- Construction of Lindburg Plaza
- Bryant Student Health Center opens

**2010**



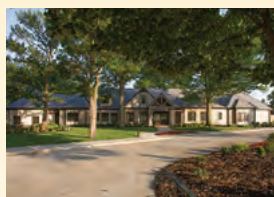
- Record enrollment
- Crimson Commons completed
- Articulation agreements signed with community colleges

**2011**



- PSU hosts first Baja competition
- Gorillas win D-II National Football Championship
- New degree program begins in exercise science
- “Pathways to PSU” scholarship campaign begins

**2012**



- Crossland Family University House is built
- Signs American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment

**2013**



- Tobacco-free initiative
- John Lance Arena renovation complete
- Nursing Department renamed Irene Ransom Bradley School of Nursing

passion for higher education.

“One quality that has been at the heart of his success is an unrelenting commitment to continually improve his leadership so that he can be worthy of the opportunities and responsibilities that his position has afforded him,” Tompkins said. “The care he takes in working through difficult decisions, the focus that he places on growing leaders at the university, and the risks that he has taken to help Pittsburg State evolve in its service to students, faculty, alumni, donors, colleagues, and the state are prime examples of this commitment.”



## Milestones

During Scott's tenure, the campus has seen some of the most ambitious building, renovation, and expansion projects in its history: the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts, Block22 in Downtown Pittsburg, the Robert W. Plaster Center, the Overman Student Center, athletic facilities, the Leonard H. Axe Library, Garfield Weede Building, nearly every residence hall unit, and now underway, a simulation hospital at the Irene Ransom Bradley School of Nursing.

Under his leadership, the university completed many academic milestones, including the addition of a Doctor of Nursing Practice — the first doctoral program in university history — and the addition of the region's first undergraduate polymer chemistry degree, as well as the expansion of the Gorilla Advantage program to 31 states.

Under his guidance, the university developed a comprehensive, six-year strategic plan

which defines academic excellence, student success, partnerships, and innovation as top priorities, and became the first Regents institution to have a tobacco-free campus.

Scott has held seats on numerous regional and national councils and boards, including the NCAA Division II Presidents Council, the highest governing body in Division II; the MIAA CEO Council; and the University of Kansas Cancer Center Community Advisory Board.

He has been a leader in fostering a deeper and more productive relationship between the university and the region, including a strengthened bond with the community of Pittsburg and the city's leaders.

One of the highlights of his time in office was leading a conversation on



**2014**



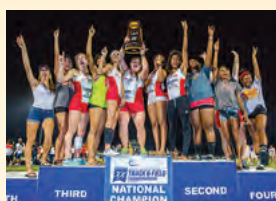
- Bicknell Family Center for the Arts opens
- Best of Broadway and H. Lee Scott Speaker Series begin
- Champions Plaza dedicated

**2015**



- Robert W. Plaster Center opens
- Overman Student Center expansion completed

**2016**



- Gorillas win first D-II Outdoor Track & Field National Championship
- Six-year “Pathway to Prominence” strategic plan announced
- University and City of Pittsburg honored by International Town & Gown Association
- The first cohort in the DNP program graduates

**2017**



- University Strategic Initiatives unit is created

**2018**



- Veterans Center opens





stage with former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and with legendary NFL player Peyton Manning, as well as welcoming former President Bill Clinton and former first lady Laura Bush to campus.

In 2016, Pittsburg State and the City of Pittsburg were honored for their partnership by the International Town & Gown Association.

But for Scott, he said, some of the most rewarding moments have come when reconnecting with graduates about the ways in which the university changed their lives. Sometimes it's by email, but often it occurs by chance in their place of employment when they recognize him or he's wearing Gorilla gear. That includes nurses who have

treated Scott or family members in a clinical setting.

"It's a reminder that our graduates are everywhere, that they're making a difference in the workforce and in their communities, and it's always a goosebump moment to see them and know we played a role in getting them there," Scott said.

## Relationships

Equally rewarding, he said, have been the relationships he has developed with donors — something deeply meaningful to him, he said, because of the lasting friendships forged, and to the university, which counts on their support.

"One of the best and most fulfilling parts of my time in this

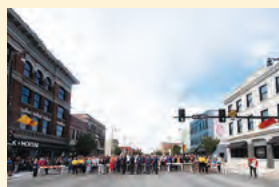
role has been those relationships, which have become so personal. I've attended birthday celebrations, open houses, funerals, visitations, and just all kinds of events that are meaningful to our donors and their families," he said.

Under Scott's tenure, and at a time when state funding failed to keep up with inflation, \$126 million from philanthropic gifts was raised.

"Our donors believe so much in this place. What you see around campus is the result of private money; without them what we do here just wouldn't be possible," he said. "They will continue to be friends of mine for life, and I'm confident their support of the university will endure as well."

One significant capital project remains on Scott's mind and on the university's horizon: Kelce College of Business renovation.

### 2019



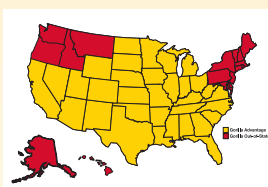
- Block22 ribbon cutting
- Gorilla Promise Scholarship begins for Crawford County students

### 2020



- COVID pandemic begins
- Carnie Smith stadium gets new turf, seating

### 2021



- Gorilla Advantage Program expands

### 2022



- Axe Library renovations completed
- Construction of Simulation Hospital at McPherson Hall begins



- Final Commencement, with 1,177 graduates earning degrees

# The world's most dedicated Gorilla fan

*"Every day is an awesome day to be a Gorilla"*

WHEN HE WAS A KID, Phil Scott lived south of the Weede Gymnasium and hopped the fence to hang out at Gorilla football practice, watching the players and the coaches.

"Mom said 'Don't get in their way,'" Phil said, "but Coach Broyles took me into the locker room, gave me a football jersey, and they welcomed me. When I went home, Mom and Dad heard me screaming and thought something was going on, and I held up that jersey. It was so cool."

That was over two decades ago, when his dad was dean of the College of Education.

This month, Phil's dad, Steve Scott, is retiring as the ninth president of Pittsburg State, and his mom, Cathy, is retiring as "First Lady." But Phil says he doesn't plan to retire from anything: he has a reputation for being the world's most dedicated Gorilla fan, according to pretty much anyone you ask, and that's a big job.

"The Gorillas need me," he said.

As a kid, he sat in the dugout at PSU baseball games on a bucket right next to legendary coach and trainer Al Ortolani.

"Baseball is really what got me started in athletics," Phil said. "A bunch of local kids I knew were playing and it was fun watching and cheering them on."

It made him feel a part of things, he added.

Today, he is 40, and it's impossible to say how many hundreds of PSU baseball, softball, basketball, and football games, track and field events, and volleyball matches he has attended.

His favorite sport? If he had to pick one, football.

"I like the crowd, the atmosphere. They're just so much fun. So many friends I know at football games," he said. "I like to run into former players, their parents, coaches. Catching up with everyone. The marching band is great, too."

Phil is also an unofficial ambassador to new athletic recruits.

"I welcome them to Pitt State before they come. I see it on Twitter and I welcome them. I just like reaching out," he said. "Like a new baseball player we just got. I welcomed him."

His mom says those players know Phil before they arrive on campus — and in most cases, the players' parents know him, too.

"It's cool. I love it. We've gone to a lot of neat sporting events while Dad's been president," he said. "We went to the Final Four in Houston in

2016. And me and Mom went to the National Championship in 2011," he said. "Dad was at Commencement that day."

For home games at Carnie Smith Stadium, Phil could watch from the skybox in climate-controlled comfort, but he declines.

"I actually like to sit out in the crowd," he said.

Phil is an athlete, too.

A big part of his daily routine is working out Monday through Friday.

"I run 5k, 10k, 15k, across the area. It took just one race for me to get hooked on it."

And many times, PSU athletes return the favor to Phil for his support and show up at his events.

"A big part of my support system is the Gorillas," he said. "The Track & Field teams come to my races and cheer for me."

So, what will happen when Dad retires?

"I'll still be the biggest fan," he said. "That's never going to change."

"He has a saying he always uses," his mom said.

"That's right," Phil chimed in. "I say 'Every day is an awesome day to be a Gorilla!'"

Phil is one of 437 Gorillas to have had a paver installed in Champions Plaza east of Carnie Smith Stadium. A limited number still are available. Order yours, or one for someone else, today at [pittstate.edu/championsplaza](http://pittstate.edu/championsplaza).





the Jungle





## Making connections

From Wichita, Kansas, to Tulsa, Oklahoma, to Northwest Arkansas, Gorillas throughout the Midwest enjoy the camaraderie of being with other alumni, and other than on campus, there's no better place than at Gorilla Gatherings put on by the Office of Alumni and Constituent Relations throughout the year, they say.

"I try to attend every Wichita area Gorilla Gathering throughout the year, and I usually travel every year up to the Kansas City gathering at Boulevard Brewing Company," said Jeremy Hildebrand (BST '97).

He's also road-tripped with friends to Oklahoma to attend a pre-game Gorilla Gathering.

"The camaraderie is the best part," he said. "We all share the same love for our alma mater. We love being able to catch up with old classmates and meet new ones. They are a great time to network, and sometimes you even get spoiled with chicken from Southeast Kansas or food from Palluccas!"

Hildebrand said he also gets excited to sometimes put on the mascot costume and play the role of Gus.

"It is always a fun time to have Jon and his crew put on a great presentation and get to spend a few hours with your college friends/family," he said.

Sydney Brandecker (BBA '16) and her husband George (BST '15) agree.

"I attend Gorilla Gatherings as much as I can in Northwest Arkansas," she said. "My husband and I met at Pitt State in 2014, got married in 2018, and now call Bentonville home. It's an amazing area with so much going on!"

They enjoy being able to reconnect with friends that are also Gorillas of her generation.

"But we also like to meet alumni that graduated before us and learn about their careers, businesses, and families," she said. "My husband and I have made great connections that have strengthened our overall network."

"I also love hearing about all of the latest and greatest news, events, and updates — including the updates on the new Kelce College of Business building project — going on at Pittsburg State," she added. "That was my home away from home for four years and I love hearing about the amazing growth and alumni opportunities! #OAGAAG"

**Make plans to attend the next Gorilla Gathering:**  
[pittstate.edu/gorillagathering](http://pittstate.edu/gorillagathering).





STEVEN WESTFALL

## Helping students navigate the world of business

When Steven Westfall (BBA '89, MBA '90) entered the professional world after graduating from the Kelce College of Business (KCOB), he remembers going to dinner with senior executives for the first time.

He was nervous.

"I remember wondering, 'Should I talk? Should I not talk? What about eating — what are the rules?'," he said. "I was young, just starting out, and it was a bit scary."

He also recalls thinking that having an opportunity to learn etiquette prior to that dinner would have been a game changer: it would have given him more confidence, self-esteem, and skills to navigate different settings.

That memory inspired him to help today's students.

"Being in those settings is when you build relationships, and body language, persona, knowing what to do, can make a big impact either way for you professionally," he said.

Today, Westfall is president and CEO of Tuthill — a large manufacturer of industrial goods with numerous locations. He is the recipient of the Outstanding Young Alumni Award ('07), has served on the Foundation Board as a trustee ('09–12), and is a lifetime member of the PSU Foundation's Presidents Society.

He's also now the underwriter of a valuable new program at Pittsburg State:

This spring, he gave students in all sections of the Business Professionalism class the opportunity to have lunch in an elegant setting at Crestwood Country Club with professionals from the business community to gain skills like he wished he'd had. Last fall, he came to campus as an Executive in Residence, sharing his expertise and experience with students and faculty.

Lynn Murray, director of outreach and business engagement in KCOB, described him as generous with both his time and financial support.

"He's a great example of an alumnus who not only went on to a successful career, but one who is giving back and making a difference," she said.

Westfall, who has many family members who are Gorillas — his wife, their sons, his sister, and

his nieces and nephews — said he was thrilled to be able to give back.

"I consider Pittsburg State a second home, it's part of me," he said. "When people in the professional world ask where I went to college, I'm always proud to tell them Pittsburg State."



*"He's a great example of an alumnus who not only went on to a successful career, but one who is giving back and making a difference."*



## Meritorious Achievement Award

Three alumni — a regional home builder, an environmental safety and compliance expert, and a superintendent of one of the largest school districts in the U.S. — were presented with the Meritorious Achievement Award in an April ceremony held at the Wilkinson Alumni Center.



**Scott Bailey**

BSEd '88, MSED '90

Scott Bailey has become an award-winning superintendent of one of the largest school districts in the nation, Desert Sands Unified School District, overseeing a \$400 million budget, 27,000 students, 2,800 employees, and 34 schools.

He has dedicated a new, \$31 million elementary school, and recently facilitated bond sales of more than \$150 million to support school modernization. His district earned the District of Distinction Award by District Administration Magazine.

He oversaw an LTE network build project that created equity and access to students regardless of their socioeconomic status, resulting in all 28,000 students now having broadband connectivity through district-issued devices.

The district earned three California State School Board Association Golden Bell Awards in the past three years, and the 2021 CoSN Community Leadership Award for Digital Equity.

Bailey is a member of numerous national organizations, associations, and boards, including the PSU Foundation Board. He annually funds two student scholarships at PSU, and one scholarship for a high school FFA officer in his school district in honor of his late father, a former high school FFA president in Kansas.



**Joe Harris**

BBA '95, MBA '96

Joe Harris planned to become a doctor and started in the pre-med program, but after graduating with degrees in business went on to lead one of the top 100 home builders in the U.S.

After graduating from the Kelce College of Business, he spent time at Koch Industries in Wichita, Sprint in Kansas City, and Leggett & Platt in Carthage, Missouri. Today, he's the CEO of Schuber Mitchell Homes in Southwest Missouri.

In 2005, he and his wife, Danica, also a Pittsburg State graduate, formed Harris Homes to provide quality and affordable single-family homes to families in Carl Junction, Joplin, and Webb City. In 2015, he purchased a third of Schuber Mitchell Homes and became a member of the company's leadership team.

The company has grown to have a presence in 17 cities in Southwest Missouri and Northwest Arkansas and employs 150 people, with another 1,500 trade partners who work on Schuber Mitchell homes.

Harris' family are almost all PSU alumni, as well. Knowing what PSU did for each of them, he makes it a priority to find ways to give back: he serves on the Kelce College of Business Advisory Board and is a supporter of Campus Christians.



**Michael Robinson**

BS '78, MS '83

When Michael Robinson graduated with degrees in environmental studies and biology, he rose to the top of his profession with achievements in environmental and safety compliance.

He propelled himself into a career working with major manufacturing companies in aerospace and defense industries. For more than 25 years, he worked for Hercules Aerospace and later Alliant Techsystems Inc. where he rose to become corporate vice president of Health, Safety, and Environment. He also worked for Honeywell Aerospace, a division of Honeywell International, as vice president of Environment, Safety, Health and Facilities.

He spent the final eight years of his career with Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL), a \$16 billion global facilities management and commercial real estate company with 88,000 employees, as vice president of Safety, Health & Environment for the Americas.

Robbinson has been a leader in numerous professional societies and organizations and has been a sought-after speaker, and in retirement makes time to return to campus to volunteer in the Sperry Herbarium. He is a member of the PSU Foundation's Heritage Society.



## Good Apple Award

Two alumnae were chosen as the winners of this year's Gold Apple Award, given at Apple Day to recent graduates who embody what it means to be a Gorilla.



**Lynzee Flores**

BS '16

Lynzee Flores was a double major in communication studies with an emphasis in public relations, and in Spanish language and literature.

She was encouraged by her advisor to pursue a master's degree — the first in her family to do so. Today, she's an instructor in communication at KU, and at Rockhurst University in Kansas City, while she works on her dissertation to complete her doctoral degree in political communication and begins steps to achieve her dream job: becoming a diplomat and working with the State Department.

She has assisted with the Kansas Women's Leadership Institute through the State Department at KU, which has brought together women from developing nations around the world.

Flores has volunteered as a mentor at Ascension Via Christi Hospital, where she coached staff in how to speak basic Spanish so they could better communicate with patients and their families, and at Mission Adelante in Kansas City, a multicultural ministry community where she teaches English to Spanish speaking individuals.



**Savannah Schwab Self**

BS '17

Every day, what Savannah Schwab Self learned at Pittsburg State is making a difference.

Self graduated with a degree in child development through the Department of Family & Consumer Sciences. She went on to earn a master's in child life and a graduate certificate in play therapy, and now works as a certified child life specialist at Children's Hospital of Illinois in Peoria.

She is the founder of the Military Child Life Collective, leading a network of more than 95 military-connected professionals who advocate for increased child life support in military community- and hospital-based programs.

Self also has provided child life programming at camps, has been a crisis responder for disaster relief, has trained teachers, and volunteered for Catholic Charities.

She has provided Afghan resettlement support in Indiana and Wisconsin, was a strike team leader for Team Rubicon, and the deployment lead with Child Life Disaster Relief during Operation Allies Welcome.

## Distinguished Service Award



**Kevin Griner**

BSET '88

The connections Kevin Griner made as a student in Plastics Engineering Technology (PET) helped him build a foundation and prepare for life.

A few years after graduating and starting his career, he began attending Plastics Engineering Technology Advisory Council meetings, where he interacted with students and learned what the program needed.

When he started his own company in 1996 and had more resources, he began supporting the program even more, motivated by memories of professors.

Soon, he was coordinating an annual golf tournament to raise funds for scholarships, including a virtual one during the pandemic. Last year, it raised more than \$40,000.

To date, he's helped raise well over \$200,000, including building an endowed scholarship through the PSU Foundation of more than \$100,000. From it, \$108,000 in scholarships have been awarded to students, and \$20,000 has supported the PET program.

Griner also has served on the PSU Alumni Association Board, and at Homecoming each year helps to arrange PET tailgating.



## Award-winning construction professor

Professor Joe Levens (BST '77, MET '02), has been chosen by the Associated General Contractors Board of Directors for the 2022 Outstanding Educator award.

His work as an educator, a mentor, and as a colleague in the construction industry set him apart as an outstanding leader and role model for this award.

In addition to a cash award of \$5,000, Levens was recognized at the AGC's Annual Convention. He has been active in the AGC of Kansas and served as president in 2006.

He began his construction career with Martin K. Eby Construction Co., Inc., shortly after graduation, holding key leadership positions in engineering, field management, project management, estimating and vice president of construction operations.

He is a graduate of the 2003 Leadership Kansas program, is actively involved in numerous civic, professional, and university programs, and serves as the director of the Kansas Center for Construction Advancement. He is a recipient of the Dr. Kenneth K. Bateman Outstanding Alumni Award.

Listen as Levens shares what drew him to teaching, what he brings to the classroom, and what his students are learning in the Gorilla Connection podcast on Buzzsprout or Spotify at [pittstate.edu/gorillaconnection](http://pittstate.edu/gorillaconnection).

## Dr. Robert K. Ratzlaff Outstanding Faculty

Three Outstanding Faculty Award winners were chosen this year for making lasting impressions on students, who nominated them:

Goldie Prelogar, an associate instructional professor in consumer education and personal finance in the Department of Family & Consumer Sciences, whom students described as being positive, taking time to learn each student's name, and truly caring about their mental health and well-being.



Prelogar

Christopher Childers, an associate professor of history in the Department of History, Philosophy, and Social Sciences, whom students described as being an excellent, encouraging, and engaged teacher who is not only an expert in his subject matter, but is kind and compassionate.



Childers

Grant Moss, a professor of Spanish in the Department of Modern Languages, whom students described as having an enthusiastic and positive attitude that is contagious and being a teacher who pushes them to grow in their abilities and reach their potential.



Moss

## Top in media production

Media production students claimed nine Kansas Association of Broadcasters Awards — three first place, three second place, and three honorable mentions — in this year's state competition, including the categories of radio production (PSA and documentary) and television

production (sports play-by-play, entertainment, promotional video, and news anchor reel).

One of the honorable mentions was given to the Spring 2021 Broadcast Journalism class for their complete newscast, "CAPS 13 News." "Our students have the

opportunity to be creative and produce a variety of creative productions at Pittsburg State," said Professor Troy Comeau, director of the program, part of the Department of Communication. "It's wonderful to see their work recognized at the state level."



# Partners in Progress

## US Awards

A company founded by three brothers in 1953 that has grown from a small shop to a unique nationally-recognized employer was chosen as this year's recipient of the Rex Crowley Outstanding Partner in Progress Award.

The award is named in honor of a longtime business and civic leader and fundraising volunteer.

The recipient, US Awards, is owned and managed by one of the company founder's sons, Joe Dellasega (BBA, '83), and his sons Nick (BBA '07) and Daniel.

It plays a significant role in the town's economy. The company and family also have contributed to the success of the university as donors, by hiring interns and graduates, and by serving on advisory boards.



Daniel, Joe, and Nick Dellasega at US Awards.

## Steve and Kathy Scott

Steve and Kathy Scott share the same names as Pittsburg State's president and his wife and jokingly call themselves "the other Steve and Kathy Scott." In 2013, the couple opened Gorilla Country in downtown Pittsburg — a store stocked



from floor to ceiling with Pittsburg State-themed apparel, accessories, home décor, and gift items. They've been paying forward the love and support they found in Pittsburg by donating revenue from a special Gorilla-themed t-shirt to the Gorilla Food Pantry. This spring, they continued their support by co-chairing the Partners in Progress campaign. "We moved here from Southern Illinois in 2000, and we're so glad we made the move. Pittsburg is a great community, and the university helps make it so. Pitt State people, whether they be students, fans, employees, or alumni, are all a great group of people, and we just love doing what we do," he said.



## Tyler and his trumpet

Music education major Tyler Fries of Olathe, Kansas, was selected to compete in the live rounds of the National Trumpet Competition at the University of Delaware this spring — a competition that pitted him against the best collegiate musicians in the U.S.

"Needless to say, it was a huge honor for Tyler, the Music Department, and Pittsburg State University as a whole," said Professor Todd Hastings.

Fries, who served as drum major for the PSU Pride of the Plains Marching Band last fall, is part of numerous other music ensembles at Pittsburg State: He is the principal trumpet with the PSU Jazz Band, the lead trumpet with the Southeast Kansas Symphony, the principal trumpet with the PSU Wind Ensemble, and a member of Faculty Brass Quintet.

Listen to what Fries has to say about what it's like to be a music education student at Pittsburg State, including being able to rehearse in a "\$1 million room," in the Gorilla Connection podcast on Buzzsprout or Spotify at [pittstate.edu/gorillaconnection](http://pittstate.edu/gorillaconnection).

## Business awards

Eleven students in the Kelce College of Business qualified for nationals with 21 first-place awards, six second-place awards, and six third-place awards in a state competition this spring as part of the Kansas PBL State Leadership Conference.

As members of PSU's Phi Beta Lambda Chapter — the college version of Future Business Leaders of America, an organization that prepares members for careers in business and business-related fields — they competed in a total of 48 events.

Students were required to submit prejudged work, take categorized tests, and/or present projects to a panel of judges. All 11 advanced to the national conference that will be held in Chicago in June.

David Hogard, director of Academic Advising & Career Readiness, was named 2022 PBL Advisor of the Year for the State of Kansas.



## Elite advertising

Students in the Graphics and Imaging Technologies Department and Communication Department brought home 49 awards from an elite advertising competition, the "ADDYs."

Of the GIT awards, 19 were gold and 25 were silver, including a best of show and two judge's choice awards. One student, Abraham Guerra, went on to earn a national ADDY for his project, "Cold War."

Winning entries included projects in a range of areas, including packaging, direct marketing, photography, campaigns, brand identity, logo design, outdoor advertising, app development, website design, animation or special effects, among other categories.

Faculty involvement also played an important role, from financial sponsorship of entries, to print production of awards booklets, to coordinating the ceremony.

## Outstanding Seniors

Biology major Sam Eddington (Columbus) and plastics engineering technology major Kaedra Brenner (Wichita) have both amassed numerous honors, top academic marks, and hours and hours of community service, and both were chosen to represent the Class of 2023 as Outstanding Senior award winners. They are also both children of Gorillas: Eddington is the son of two Gorilla graduates: Mindi (BSN '95) and David (BSEd '95, MS '02). Brenner is the

daughter of Brandi, who attended in 1996, and Justin, who attended from Fall '95 to Spring '97.

Eddington dreams of becoming a pediatrician and plans to attend medical school armed with what he learned in the Department of Biology. First, he'll take a gap year to be a scribe in the oncology unit at Freeman Hospital in Joplin, Missouri. Armed with what she's learned in



Brenner



Eddington

the plastics engineering technology program, Brenner has accepted a job with Textron in their Leadership Development Program in Integrated Supply Chain.



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](mailto:psumag@pittstate.edu).



Ashton Jantz (BS in Plastics '92, MS Technology '93) and Jill Jantz took a trip to the majestic Grand Canyon in the crisp November weather in their Gorilla Gear.



Retired longtime art professor Alex Barde (BS '62) at an art festival in Michigan.



Terry Tyree is a "double Gorilla," having graduated in 1972 from high school in Picher, Oklahoma — the only high school in the U.S. with a gorilla as a mascot. The school and town are no longer in existence. His wife, Margie (Mustain) Tyree, was his high school sweetheart, and was the gorilla mascot their junior and senior years. The couple took these photos with the statue in Picher, which now stands at the Picher Memorial Site. Terry went on to become a Gorilla at Pittsburg State, where he earned a BSEd in 1986 and an MEd in 1998 — the first in his family to attend college. He recently retired as the principal at Quapaw High School. The couple celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary and now live on — where else? — Monkey Island in Oklahoma! Their elder son, Terry Jr. (BSEd '95) is also a Gorilla.



While walking on the beach in Barcelona, Spain, Bob Backes (Physics Professor '74 – '08) and Cory Backes (BS '91) discovered graffiti that reminded them of home. Bob and Cory, along with Hayden Bauer and Kate Backes, spent 10 days in Spain in October 2021 sightseeing and enjoying the beautiful weather.

A group of Gorilla grads from the late 1960s to early 1970s holds periodic reunions in Grove, Oklahoma. Front, from left: Terry Tullis (BS '74), Rich Davis (BSEd '69, MS '71) & Dick Kelly (BBA '71). Back, from left: Tom Kazmierski (BST '71, MST '74), Greg Sharpe (BST '69), Dennis Stokes (BBA '71), Fred Schmidt (BST '71), Gary Kees (BA '70), Warren Wells (BS '71, MS '82), Chris Kirkwood (BS '71), Mike Palmer (BBA '71) & J.L. Regan.



## MILESTONE MOMENTS

We're proud to play a role in life's milestone moments for Gorillas of all ages, from riding your bike across campus as a child to returning to campus for a Half Century Reunion. Have a milestone moment to share? Email your photo, a caption, and your degree and graduation year to [psumag@pittstate.edu](mailto:psumag@pittstate.edu).



What Kelsey Schmidt (BBA '17, MBA '18) thought was a "Pitt" stop to look at tulips with boyfriend Graham Godfrey (BBA '18) on their way to Tulsa, Oklahoma, turned into a memorable moment.



Taylor (BSEd '14) and Aubrey Counts (BS '15) announced their growing family in Pitt State style! Future Gorillas Eleanor and Casheous are excited to add a third sibling to the crew.



Steve (BA '71, MA '72) and Sue (BBA '72) Pierce recently celebrated 50 years of marriage! They were married on May 29, 1971, in PSU's Timmons Chapel, then lived in a house located where the Wilkinson Alumni Center is today.



Bo Farrow (BSEd '18, MEd '20) and Skylar Ossian Farrow (BST '18) had a surprise guest at their wedding this past summer – none other than Gus the Gorilla! Back row left to right: Thomas LePage (BSEd '18, MBA '20), Dexton Robertson (BST '18), Bo Farrow, Ryan Cipriani (BST '18), Ramsey Hamilton (BSEd '18), and Levi Copelin (BGS '21). Front row left to right: Anna Farrow (BS '20), Tandi Cox (BST '19, MS '21), Skylar Farrow, Hannah Jones (BSN '18), and Michael Rose (BBA '17).



A visit to the University Lake by Larry Thornburg, a retired professor from Graphics & Imaging Technologies, and Max, the son of Layne (BS '05, MA '07) and Abby Rainey (BS '06).



## 1969

**Jerry D. Weast**, PhD, (BS, MS '72, Ed.S. '74), was the recipient of The Malcolm Baldrige Foundation 2022 Leadership Award for Excellence in education. His leadership of Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland, the nation's 16th largest district, brought the district to unprecedented levels of excellence. Weast grew up on the family farm in Moran, Kan., going on to become superintendent of schools in districts across Kansas and subsequently in four other states. He has continued his work to improve public education as a respected consultant and mentor to district leaders across the United States.

## 1977

**Darla Hedrick** (BS) published "Letters from Sadie: Letters Written by Sadie Clair (Marcum) Montgomery from the Norton, Kansas, Tuberculosis Sanatorium (1932-1933)" as a tribute to her grandmother and mother. The book is a true story told through a collection of letters written during the Great Depression and provides a historical glimpse into the lives of a poor farm family living in Southeast Kansas.

## 1983

**Rick Webb** (BS), former CEO and current executive chairman of Watco, was named Progressive Railroad and RailTrends 2022 recipient of the Railroad Innovator Award, which recognizes an individual's outstanding achievement in the rail industry. Webb will receive the award during RailTrends 2022 Conference held in New York City later this year.

## 1984

**Willie Fritz** (BSEd), head football coach at Tulane, is brother to Ed Fritz who coached University of Kansas men's basketball player Christian Braun when he attended high school at Blue Valley Northwest. Willie and his family hosted Ed and his wife, Ann, during the Jayhawks' National Championship run at the 2022 NCAA Men's March Madness Tournament.

## 1986

**Tim Conrad** (BSEd, MS '93), recently retired from public education after 33 years. He served as a teacher, coach, principal, and superintendent, most recently at USD 203 Kansas City-Piper. He is now in his second year as principal of St. Patrick Catholic School in Kansas City, Kan.

## 1995

**Matt Seimears** (BS), PhD, has been nominated as the next president-elect for the Oregon Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. He serves as the dean of the College of Education at Eastern Oregon University.

## 1996

**S. Charles Neill** (BA) has been appointed as a Veterans Law Judge for the Board of Veterans' Appeals in Washington, DC. Prior to this appointment, he was an active-duty Army officer for more than 20 years, including two tours as a military judge and two overseas deployments.

## 1998

**Aaron Hafner** (BSEd), a native of Frontenac, Kan., who earned a degree in mathematics

education, was hired by Branson High School in southwest Missouri as a football coach. He previously served as a coach at Webb City (Mo.) High School, Olathe (Kan.) Northwest High School, and Republic (Mo.) High School, where he won two district championships, and as offensive coordinator at William Penn University in Iowa.

## 1999

**Brandy (VandenBrink) Fox** (BFA) was elected as Board President of the Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health, a global organization that works to promote early relationships for infants, toddlers, and young children, prenatal to six.

## 2000

**Dallas Grothusen** (BST), who majored in automotive technology, has accepted a new role as green harvesting validation manager at AGCO, a large agricultural machinery manufacturer headquartered in Duluth, Ga., that designs, produces, and sells tractors, combines, balers, foragers, hay tools, sprayers, seeding and tillage equipment, and more.

## 2005

**Justin Remington** (BSEd) was named principal of Osawatomie High School and will begin in the 2022-2023 school year. Remington has 17 years of public education experience, both in Kansas and Missouri, and has held positions ranging from physical education teacher to athletic director and principal throughout his career.

## 2006

**Micha Johnson** (BS) has been named facilities planner for the Northern Arkansas Telephone Company engineering team. Johnson will plan and coordinate all outside plant construction activity within the company's service area, including aerial and buried cable route extensions, upgrades and replacement activities, and will ensure federal compliance.

## 2007

**Chelsey Evans** (BA) joined Etsy, Inc., as senior manager of sustainability, where she leads sustainable packaging, item sustainability, environmental advocacy and climate risk management.

## 2008

**Kim Carpenter** (BSEd), has started her own proofreading and copyediting business, Writer's Edge, LLC, based in Fort Scott, Kan., with the help of the Kansas Small Business Development Center, after a career of 14 years as an elementary school teacher. She is married to Jon Carpenter, has four children, and is active in the Chamber of Commerce.

## 2009

**Jordan Woods** (BSEd, MS '12), head coach of the boys' basketball team at Pittsburg High School, was named Southeast Kansas boys basketball Coach of the Year. Woods has won the SEK league championship in each of the two seasons since becoming the head coach.

## 2010

**DePrice Taylor** (BS '10, MS '12) joined the Kansas City Current Women's Soccer Team as the director of community relations.

## 2012

**Jordan E. Dickey** (BSEd, EdS '20) was named the new director of student services for the Joplin School District where she will oversee areas such as special education, English language learner programs, early childhood, and services for homeless and/or foster children. Dickey was formerly the superintendent of the Bronaugh R-VII School District.

## 2013

**Mattie Crossland** (BST), director of real estate at Crossland Construction Company, Inc., was one of the 40 people selected to the 2022 Leadership Kansas Class. Throughout the seven-month program, the class interacts with a variety of experts and community leaders to discuss topics including business, education, public policy, and more.

## 2015

**Ethan Lewis** (BSEd) was hired as the new head high school football coach in Monett, Mo. Prior to taking the position, Lewis worked as a co-offensive coordinator and head girls' basketball coach for Shadow Ridge High School in Las Vegas, Nev.

## 2017

**Dr. Charles Golden** (MS) was recently named the new principal at Blue Valley High School in Overland Park (Kan.). He previously served as an assistant principal of curriculum and instruction at Blue Valley West.

**Jordan Louis** (MS) started her company LINK x LOU from her kitchen during the pandemic and has now expanded the brand nationwide. The company focuses on sustainability in creating pieces that are meant to last.

## 2018

**Mattson Gromer** (BS) was hired as a digital media specialist for the Pittsburg Area Chamber of Commerce. She most recently served as communication manager for K-State Research and Extension Wildcat District. In her new role, she's responsible for management of external communications, including video, web, and social media.

**Kyle Chamberlin** (MS), who earned a degree in Health, Human Performance, and Recreation, has been promoted to assistant dean of student life at Kansas State University's Salina Aerospace and Technology campus. He'll oversee on-campus housing, the Student Life Center, the health and safety of K-State Salina students, career services, and will guide an emphasis on student mental health, diversity, and inclusion. He previously served as director of student life.

## 2021

**Nicole El-Chami** (MBA), has been named assistant vice president of deposit and support services at Credit Union of America. She is both an accredited ACH and payments/risk professional, and in her new role will oversee staff, programs, productivity, and quality for IRA and retirement services, deposit quality, member support, and teller assist professionals.

**Submit Class Notes information online to:** [psumag@pittstate.edu](mailto:psumag@pittstate.edu).

# 1943

**Pete D. Hughes**, Parsons, Kan.

# 1945

**Jean L. Tice**, Lee's Summit, Mo.

# 1948

**Ruth A. Heyburn**, Miami, Okla.

# 1950

**Clyde W. Morrison**, Joplin, Mo.

**James L. Neihart**, Overland Park, Kan.

**Marilyn L. Perry**, Mulberry, Kan.

# 1951

**Carol June Smith**, Iola, Kan.

# 1954

**Marcella C. Barlow**, Joplin, Mo.

**Charles L. Brown**, Ventura, Calif.

**John W. Emerson**, Broken Arrow, Okla.

**August J. Oberzan**, Overland Park, Kan.

# 1955

**Lurena F. Dunn**, Wichita, Kan.

**David L. Huffman**, Joplin, Mo.

**George W. Spruk**, Pittsburg, Kan.

# 1956

**William C. Kapler**, Olathe, Kan.

**Wanda L. Reed**, Edmond, Okla.

# 1957

**Betty L. Bethell**, Kearney, Neb.

**Mary L. Bresnick**, Pittsburg, Kan.

**Keith M. Kruse**, Helena, Mont.

**Thomas J. Lavery**, Frontenac, Kan.

**Robert B. Lewis**, Baxter, Minn.

**Wini Munson**, Paola, Kan.

**Patricia A. Stephenson**,

# 1958

**Norman L. Cross**, Overland Park, Kan.

**Kenneth G. Schlup**, Newton, Kan.

# 1959

**Charles W. Casebeer**, Chapin, S.C.

**Thomas E. Lavin**, Olathe, Kan.

**Beryl A. Mills**, Independence, Kan.

**Paul A. Troop**, Frontenac, Kan.

**Betty L. Weaver**, Carthage, Mo.

# 1960

**Gary N. Loveland**, Glendale, Ariz.

**Ralph A. Rowe**, Hominy, Okla.

# 1961

**Lily M. Ash**, Carl Junction, Mo.

**Orval L. Bradley**, Twin Falls, Idaho

**Garold L. Cole**, Normal, Ill.

**John L. Nepote**, Tulsa, Okla.

**Frank R. Ortolani**, Independence, Kan.

# 1962

**Henry N. Buscher**, La Grange, Texas

**Flossie M. Mathews**, Miami, Okla.

**Grace M. Sherer**, Columbus, Kan.

**Shirley J. Simoncic**, Frontenac, Kan.

**Dewayne Treece**, Pittsburg, Kan.

**Karolyn L. Yocum**, Joplin, Mo.

# 1963

**David D. Mullies**, Fort Scott, Kan.

# 1964

**David George**, Uniontown, Kan.

**John J. Westfall**, Tulsa, Okla.

# 1965

**Philip B. Blair**, Oswego, Kan.

**Darrell D. Brensing**, Manhattan, Kan.

**David L. Rhodes**, Welch, Okla.

**Ronald L. Thomas**, Spokane, Mo.

# 1966

**Rolen D. "Casey" Casebolt**, Shawnee, Kan.

**Marilyn F. Noble**, Pittsburg, Kan.

# 1967

**Myron L. Fahler**, Independence, Kan.

**Richard D. Hedges**, Fort Scott, Kan.

**Ron E. Thuma**, Emporia, Kan.

# 1968

**Bill L. Bardshar**, Mount Hope, Kan.

**Lorn J. Burdick**, Pittsburg, Kan.

**Ron E. Converse**, Montgomery, Texas

**Ron L. Oliver**, Wichita, Kan.

**Larry Pogue**, Washshington, Mo.

**Roger W. Willemsen**, Moscow, Idaho

# 1969

**Delbert D. Goertz**, Wichita, Kan.

**Delbert C. Knopp**, Edmond, Okla.

**James W. Pirnstill**, Racine, Wis.

**Gerald E. Snider**, Olathe, Kan.

**Thomas M. Williams**, Baxter Springs, Kan.

# 1970

**Wilma K. Adamson**, Pittsburg, Kan.

**Paula S. Andrews**, Columbus, Kan.

**Ronnie E. Ferneti**, Frontenac, Kan.

**Robert B. McCauley**, Pittsburg, Kan.

**Melvin D. Shoesmith**, Copan, Okla.

# 1971

**Sondra M. Diggs**, Overland Park, Kan.

**John L. Green**, Galena, Kan.

**Roger D. Orton**, Humboldt, Kan.

**Martin E. Pruitt**, Hesston, Kan.

# 1972

**Mary W. Atkinson**, Coffeyville, Kan.

**Randy M. Irwin**, Oswego, Kan.

**Violet M. Magee**, Baldwin City, Kan.

**Mary A. McMullen**, Chico, Calif.

**Steven L. Murray**, Overland Park, Kan.

# 1974

**Sharon K. Bowling**, Pittsburg, Kan.

**Gary L. Clemens**, Tomball, Texas

**Van L. Davidson**, Willis, Texas

**Ronald W. Neidigh**, Edna, Kan.

**Larry G. Spencer**, Independence, Kan.

# 1975

**Carol J. Battitori**, Girard, Kan.

**Carl D. Killion**, Coffeyville, Kan.

# 1976

**Michael A. Barnett**, Shawnee, Kan.

**Marie Estes**, Carthage, Mo.

**Lanny W. Eubanks**, Coffeyville, Kan.

# 1977

**Joyce L. Humble**, Columbus, Kan.

**Romney J. Saliba**, Douglass, Kan.

**Becky J. Walker**, Iola, Kan.

# 1978

**Jeffery D. Cook**, Ballwin, Mo.

# 1979

**Max Jaeger**, Summerfield, Fla.

# 1980

**Martha E. Allison**, Independence, Kan.

**Beverly E. Jones**, Webb City, Mo.

# 1981

**Marilyn L. Lively**, Olympia, Wash.

# 1982

**Bert W. Edwards**, Osawatome, Kan.

**Janet Gross**, Overland Park, Kan.

**Nancy G. Miller**, Pittsburg, Kan.

**Jerold W. Schnake**, Carthage, Mo.

# 1983

**Brad P. Cameron**, Carthage, Mo.

# 1984

**Janet L. Dutton**, Pittsburg, Kan.

**Wayne E. Keplinger**, Cherryvale, Kan.

**Betty J. Withrow**, Chetopa, Kan.

# 1985

**David W. Elbrader**, Wichita, Kan.

**Michael J. Marlier**, Frontenac, Kan.

# 1986

**Robyn R. Bowin**, Scammon, Kan.

**Ronda L. Lung**, Mesa, Ariz.

**Ronald R. Woody**, Webb City, Mo.

# 1987

**Shirley J. Giles**, Quapaw, Okla.

# 1988

**Michael L. Walden**, Mulberry, Kan.

# 1990

**Lyle E. Marvin**, Galena, Kan.

# 1991

**Brenda L. Agee**, McLouth, Kan.

# 1992

**Ted F. Anderson**, Andale, Kan.

**Karolyn K. Cleveland**, Carl Junction, Mo.

**Michael E. Cooper**, Pittsburg, Kan.

**Leesa L. Silvers**, Fort Scott, Kan.

# 1993

**Susan M. Jennings**, Wichita Falls, Texas

**Deborah M. Newby-Richardson**, Joplin, Mo.

# 1995

**Jill K. Mason**, Wichita, Kan.

**Marilyn S. Selvey**, Lamar, Mo.

# 1996

**Cybill K. Jackson**, Olathe, Kan.

# 1997

**Ginny A. Corey**, Chanute, Kan.

# 2000

**Daryl W. Cronk**, Raymore, Mo.

**Howard W. Hendryx**, Coffeyville, Kan.

**Troy M. Zoglman**, Garden Plain, Kan.

# 2001

**Michael D. Keyser**, Galena, Kan.

# 2002

**Sarah L. Smith**, Humboldt, Kan.

# 2003

**Joseph N. Wurtz**, Mound City, Kan.

# 2004

**Daniel T. Perricone**, Galena, Kan.

# 2008

**Lori K. Jaramillo**, Parsons, Kan.

# 2017

**Trent H. Morgan**, Liberal, Mo.



Because we lose hundreds of Gorillas each year and are limited by page count, we are unable to publish full obituaries for each and every one. In each edition, we highlight a few who had far-reaching impact and were well known on campus. Others are included by name and date of death in the section “In Memory,” organized by class year. To the family and friends of those no longer with us, you have our sincere condolences.

## Sharon Bengtsen

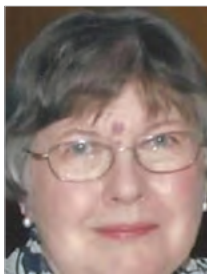
### ADMINISTRATIVE

Sharon Bengtsen, a longtime administrative assistant in several departments on campus, died Feb. 8 in Pittsburg.

She was married to longtime teacher Barry Bengtsen, who taught and directed theater in the Department of Communication.

She served in the departments of Physics, Technology, and Art, from 1974 to 2005, and enjoyed many friendships on campus with students, staff, and faculty.

Barry preceded her in death in January 2020. They are survived by a son, Colin, of Pittsburg, and a daughter, Dana Malis, M.D., of Overland Park, Kansas, and two grandchildren.



## Bradley “Brad” Cameron

### SOCIAL WORK

Bradley Cameron (MS ’83), a longtime professor of social work who cared about and inspired students, died Dec. 28, 2021. He was 78.

Never one to let age slow him down, he drew headlines when at 75 he had to retire as a municipal court judge, per requirement of state law. He had served on the bench since 1980; he was still teaching at Pittsburg State at the time of his death.

He joined the faculty in 1987 and was director of the program until 2014. He brought to the classroom years of experience practicing social work, primarily in substance abuse and mental health. He also taught in the university’s justice studies/criminal justice program and in the psychology and counseling program, of which he was a graduate.

A veteran, he served in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War.

Cameron’s wife, Dana, also was a graduate of PSU’s psychology program. She preceded him in death in 2012. He is survived by two sons, Bret Cameron and Blake Cameron, both of Carthage, a granddaughter, and extended family and friends.

The family asks that memorial gifts be directed to the Pittsburg State University Brad and Dana Cameron Scholarship — a scholarship started by a former student to honor Cameron’s wife after her death.



## Sharon Bowling

### NURSING

Sharon Bowling (BSN ’74), a trailblazing nursing instructor credited with helping Pittsburg State’s nursing program to become what it is today, died Jan. 13, 2022, at age 73.

She also held a master’s, a nurse practitioner license, an educational specialist degree, and a doctorate. Bowling had a passion for education and joined the faculty at PSU; during her tenure of 35 years, she taught thousands of students, including today’s Director of the School of Nursing, Cheryl Giefer.

She served on PSU’s master’s degree task force, helping to establish graduate level nursing education in 1994 with both a clinical nurse specialist track and a family nurse practitioner track. She earned the Dr. Kenneth K. Bateman Outstanding Alumni Award and retired with emeritus status in October 2010.

Bowling made numerous national and international presentations to the World Health Organization, in England, in China, and in Mexico. In the mid-1990s, she was instrumental in founding the AIDS Resource Network of Southeast Kansas.

Her husband, Roy Bowling, survives in Pittsburg. Other survivors include a daughter, Karla Mohtashemi, of Seattle, Washington; a stepdaughter, Jennifer Bowling Foster of Springfield, Missouri; a stepson, Ronnie Bowling of Springfield, Missouri; three grandchildren, two sisters, and numerous nieces and nephews.



## Clinton Carter

### AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Clinton Carter, a longtime professor in the Department of Automotive Technology, died in July 2021. He was 84.

Carter owned his own auto body shop for many years where he gained hands-on experience he could use in the classroom. Carter also served in the Oklahoma National Guard for eight years.

In 1978, he joined the faculty and was disappointed when he had to retire at age 70 after teaching nearly 30 years.

He earned three degrees from Pittsburg State: BSVTE ’84, MS ’87, EdS ’94.

He was proud that his family were all Gorillas, including wife Beverly (BS ’79, MS ’85), daughters Karen Foredyce (BS ’86, MS ’95) and Sharon Wisner (BS ’90), and son-in-law Brian Foredyce (BS ’96), who all survive him, along with son Clinton Carter Jr. and several grandchildren.



## Patricia “Patty” Cussimanio

### UNIVERSITY HOUSING

Patricia Cussimanio, a “dorm mom” to countless students in Tanner Annex and Trout Hall over the years, died Jan. 2, 2022, at her home in Frontenac, Kansas. She was 74.

She worked as a residence hall housekeeper for University Housing from 1993 to 2011. Over many years, she received hundreds of thank you cards and notes from students she served, and she saved every one of them.

Former students and co-workers say she had a positive influence, was the first to come in each day, and wouldn’t leave until the building was cleaned to her standards. She also was known for collecting pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House, recycling the cans and giving the proceeds back to the residence halls.

She is survived by her husband, Bob; a son, Jeff, of Montague, Michigan; a daughter, Laura Wood, of Pittsburg; a brother, Michael Simpson; and three grandchildren.



## Bill Dickey

### ATHLETICS

Bill Dickey, who worked as a professor, chair of the Physical Education Department, and athletic director at Pittsburg State from 1965 to 1988, died April 7, 2022, in Joplin, Missouri. He was 84.

Dickey attended Emporia State University, where he was a basketball, baseball, and track athlete, and signed a contract with Major League Baseball to pitch for the Brooklyn Dodgers. He was inducted into the ESU Sports Hall of Fame.

He also attended Oklahoma State University, where he coached under the legendary Coach Henry Iba, and the University of Arkansas, where he earned his doctorate in education.

Dickey also taught high school biology at Mulvane and Derby, Kansas; as a professor and athletic director at Adams State College in Alamosa, Colorado; and as principal of St. Mary’s-Colgan Junior High and High School in Pittsburg.

He is survived by his wife, Dee, two sons, Steve Dickey of Salt Lake City, Utah and Mike Dickey of Pittsburg; a daughter, Kathy Richardson of Kansas City, Missouri; and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren — several of whom are Gorillas.



## Bettie Duncan

### BIOLOGY

Bettie Duncan, a trailblazer in microbiology who taught at Pittsburg State for 30 years, died Feb. 21, 2022, in Florida. She was 88.

She was recognized for her many peer-reviewed scientific publications and expert training of more than 8,000 students in the Department of Biology while at PSU.

Duncan earned a bachelor’s degree from Judson College and went on to work in cancer research at Southern Research Institute in Birmingham, Alabama, while earning her master’s degree.

In 1966, she became the first woman to earn a doctorate in microbiology from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. She then joined the faculty at PSU, retiring as professor emeritus in 1996.

She chaired the Missouri Valley Branch of the American Society of Microbiology and was honored by the acceptance of two new microbes which she identified, isolated, and characterized, into the prestigious American Type Culture Collection.

She was the founder and principal of an industrial water and waste-testing laboratory that served Kansas and Missouri.

Duncan is survived by sisters-in-law, nieces, and a personal caregiver, Sandra Campbell of Florida. The family suggests gifts in Bettie’s memory be made to Pittsburg State University Biology Scholarships. Gifts can be made at [pittstate.edu/givenow](http://pittstate.edu/givenow).



## George E. Nettels Jr.

George Edward Nettels, an active civic and university supporter, died on March 5, 2022. He was 94.

A lifelong Pittsburg resident, he attended Pittsburg schools, and graduated from the University of Kansas with a degree in civil engineering. He also served in the U.S. Army from 1946-47.

Nettels owned and operated Midwest Minerals, Inc., and served as chairman, president, and CEO of McNally Manufacturing.

He was a member of the Board of Advisors for the Kelce College of Business, a past member of the PSU Center for Business and Economic Development Board, was an avid supporter of PSU Athletics and The Bicknell Family Center for the Arts, and was a Friend of Timmons Chapel.

He also was a founding member of Crestwood Country Club; was a member and past president of the USD 250 Board of Education; was president of the Pittsburg Area Chamber of Commerce; was past chair of the Mt. Carmel Hospital Board of Trustees; and was a founding member of the Community Foundation of Southeast Kansas, which has supported several university projects.

He was preceded in death by his wife Josie, and is survived by their four children, Chris, Meg, Kate, and Becky, as well as 11 grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

The family suggested memorials to the PSU Foundation.





# Planned Giving

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

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

**Jack Strukel** (BSEd '56, MEd '56)  
Sept. 16, 2021

**Emily Lu Stocker** (BSEd '45)  
Sept. 17, 2021

**Joseph Meuser Jr.** (MS '73)  
June 26, 2021

**Arno Ponder** (MS '63, ROTC)  
May 29, 2019

**Jack Stanton Doll** (BST '63)  
Oct. 25, 2021

**Betty Shanks**  
Sept. 29, 2021

For more information  
on the Heritage Society  
and leaving a legacy, visit  
**[pittstate.giftlegacy.com](http://pittstate.giftlegacy.com)**.

The Centennial Bell Tower, located between Axe Library and Carnie Smith Stadium, was a gift from the senior classes of 1993-1996.





Kyle Carr is a senior in the Department of Graphics and Imaging Technologies and has worked as a student intern with university photographer Sam Clausen this year. We asked him to give us his view of the campus.



1. For Hispanic Heritage Month, the student organization Hispanics of Today hosted La Celebración in the plaza between Horace Mann Hall and the Overman Student Center.
2. Cultural events are a big part of student life and this year included a performance by African Soul International at the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts.
3. The Indian Student Association invited students and the community to join them in one of the most colorful events on campus: the annual Holi Festival in Gorilla Village!
4. Gorilla statues across campus make some of the best photo ops, including this one at the northwest corner of Carrie Smith Stadium.
5. Kori Brown, a senior in communication, celebrates graduating with a photo in cap and gown near the splitface on the Oval.
6. Pitt State athletes continued to shine.
7. Carlos Palestino, a senior in plastics engineering technology, took part in the annual research colloquium as a member of a team focused on filament for 3D printers. He'll complete an internship this summer and will graduate in December.
8. Historic Willard Hall, named for temperance activist Frances Willard, was built in 1924 and underwent extensive renovation in 2000. Today, the hall houses about 107 upperclassmen.









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## GATHER AND CELEBRATE

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

The team is also excitedly planning Half-Century Reunions; Family Day activities; Homecoming; and Distinguished Service, Meritorious Achievement, and Outstanding Alumni awards ceremonies for 2022-23!

For a complete list of upcoming events, visit  
[pittstate.edu/alumni](http://pittstate.edu/alumni)

## STAY CONNECTED

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

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

Subscribe by visiting  
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