



January 2023

# Pitt State

MAGAZINE

**PSU's 10th  
President:  
Dr. Dan Shipp**





# Strategic planning

As you'll read in these pages, we have a Gorilla working north of North Pole, Alaska, AND a Gorilla working at the South Pole. We have tens of thousands doing amazing things in between, like Ryan Bartlett (BS '03), who sent us this photo



from Qatar while he was there with FOX Sports during the World Cup.

The work to get them there was done years before by faculty and staff who provided education and experiences to get them to the finish line — graduation — and beyond.

Last fall, the university began a renewed effort toward the goal. A Transition Advisory Committee met weekly to take a deep dive into academics, athletics, budget, communication, diversity, enrollment, facilities, IT, programming, safety, and more.

Seventy people representing the university and the community listened to presentations, then analyzed, discussed, questioned, and made recommendations as to what the top priorities for the new strategic plan should be.

That plan will be finalized early next semester, when a new strategic planning cycle will begin. Efforts already are underway to address some of the low-hanging fruit — like a move to a coordinated advising center that will give students a comprehensive network of support from enrollment through graduation.

The thread running through every decision will continue to be students: what do they need to get to the South Pole, the North Pole, and anywhere they dream of going in between?

It's an exciting time, and we're thankful you're opening the pages of this magazine to read about it and stay connected to Pittsburg State University. More to come!

— Andra Stefanoni, *Editor*



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# PittState

MAGAZINE

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## GORILLA CONNECTION

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

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

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

[bicknellcenter.com](http://bicknellcenter.com)

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

[pittstate.edu/backgrounds](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



*Another outstanding issue! When I read about the Larry Wooster gorilla, I thought of this picture of my daughter, Sue Zan Foster (Heckert), BS '95, MS '04 (it was her idea!). Love it. Keep up the good job!*

**Nikki Irvin Foster**

Mindenmines, Missouri  
BS '60, MS '84, Ed.S '86

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,  
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Pittsburg, KS 66762

## And the winner is...

We continue to be amazed at the number of you who enter our popular "Finding Gus" contest! We wish we could give a prize to each and every one of you for having such Gorilla spirit! This time, the winner is Deborah (Debald) Roths, who spied it on Page 15 tucked in front of some tree trunks at the water's edge. She graduated in December 1973.

## 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 **April 1** (no fooling!).

We'll mail one lucky winner a hardbound copy of "Pittsburg State University: A Photographic History of The First 100 Years."





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## Pittsburg State University Walking Tour

Looking for a place to walk that will take you past lovely landscaping, works of art, a scenic lake, and a beautiful blend of historic and modern buildings? This is it!

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### Pittsburg State University Walking Tour

Pittsburg, Kansas 66762, United States

Created By: Pittsburg State University

#### Tour Information

Whether you're an employee, community member, visitor, a graduate who has returned to campus to see what's changed, or are a current or future parent or student, we welcome you to take a walk on campus to enjoy the landscaping, the artwork, the blend of beautifully preserved historic buildings with state-of-the-art new ones, and the Gorilla statues!

Pittsburg State University Walking Tour  
Photo By: Russ Hall 2021

A NEW SELF-GUIDED CAMPUS WALKING TOUR is available online and via the free phone app called "PocketSights." The tour begins and ends at Russ Hall and has 28 points of interest; the app includes photos of and bits of history about each. Audio and video recordings will be added in the future, and the app allows users to submit their own photos. Other tours developed for this area include "Art Work of Crawford County Driving Tour" with 39 stops and "Murals of Crawford County Driving Tour" with 24 stops. Several points of interest at PSU are featured in both of those tours.

## Dear Editor ...

I read with great interest the OAGAAG article in the Spring 2021 Pitt State Magazine. I would like to add a unique preface to this story. In the fall of 1964, 16 freshmen entered the classrooms of Zenda, Kansas, High School. The school's mascot, ironically: a Gorilla. Eight years later, four of the 16 ZHS freshmen crossed the stage and received their bachelor's degree from Kansas State College (now PSU) of Pittsburg, collegiate home of the Gorillas. Incidentally, three of the graduating Gorillas started first grade together in 1956. For four of us, it can truly be said that "Once a Gorilla, Always a Gorilla."



**Leland Borgelt** (BST '72, MST '73)  
Spring Hill, Kansas

Thanks for the article about the age-defying Chuck Cooper in the June 2022 edition of the magazine. Many do not realize that the old swimming pool had the lowest ceiling. One hit the top of the skull when diving. If that wasn't enough, a diver could crunch the cranium at the bottom of the pool.

I was a PE major and we females had to compete amongst ourselves in the Women's Recreation Association. However, we 1972 grads were fortunate to swim in the new Weede Gymnasium and to see the implementation of Title IX.

**Kay German Bunn**  
Purcell, Oklahoma  
Class of 1972





## Sim hospital progress

The roughly \$8 million, 10,000-square foot simulation hospital being built by McCown Gordon Construction at the Irene Ransom Bradley School of Nursing took shape last fall after some rainy spring and site condition delays.

Less visible, but perhaps most noteworthy, is that geothermal wells were installed and are part of the system that heats and cools the building. It will be the only academic building on campus that is entirely heated and cooled with geothermal — a renewable resource because it harnesses the earth's heat.

The sim hospital is being funded by private gifts initiated by donors and is planned for substantial completion in Spring 2023 and full occupancy ahead of the fall semester.

The project also includes targeted renovations of approximately 14,000 square feet in the existing building and leaves the building with full fire sprinkler coverage. It will accommodate cohorts of 120 students; currently, there are 90.



Simulation hospital rooms, associated control and preparation rooms, debriefing rooms, a waiting area, and a study spaces outfitted with state-of-the-art simulation equipment will enrich student learning and allow them to take that valuable experience to clinical sites and places of employment after graduation.



## Just for veterans

The second Veterans Resource Center is now open and in use at PSU — this time on the east side of campus in the Kansas Technology Center.

The first one opened in Whitesitt Hall in August 2018.

It's the latest effort by the university to make student veterans feel welcome and supported on campus.

"I use it every day," said Joshua Vanetta, a veteran of the U.S. Marines majoring in electrical engineering technology. "It's nice because others who use it are people I relate to. It's our own space, and it makes me feel good that it's here."

## Grant helps fund new center for commercialization

The region's economy took a significant step forward last fall with the announcement of a \$3 million federal grant by U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) at the university's Tyler Research Center, home to the National Institute for Materials Advancement (NIMA).

There, internationally recognized scientists work with faculty and students to find ways to use sustainable materials to create products that can be commercialized. The funds will launch the Center for Commercialization, which will take the research being done by NIMA to the next level.

It will lead to a "prove-out center," which will create and re-shore manufacturing jobs for products currently purchased overseas.

City leaders say the new center will have a significant impact on not just the local economy, but the entire region.



## Solar powered

Using hand tools powered by a noisy generator in an outdoor classroom made it challenging to hear instruction.

Now, students in the College of Technology don't have that challenge: their tools are being powered by a new noiseless solar panel made possible in partnership with Evergy.

The panels, which generate about 25,000 watts of power, form a canopy over a large concrete pad, which in turn gives the look and feel of a multi-purpose park shelter.

The solar panel structure is located along the hike-bike path that runs north of the Kansas Technology Center, where the College of



Technology is based. It is adjacent to an outdoor classroom used by the School of Construction and the Diesel and Heavy Equipment program.

Solar panels on the roof of the shelter harness the sun and convert photons into DC power, which is stored in the 25kW lithium-ion battery. DC power is converted into AC power, which is what electrical circuits in homes and businesses use.



STUDENTS FROM 21 COUNTRIES planned and pulled off a massive night market called Global Fest last fall, held outdoors in Lindburg Plaza between McCray Hall and Willard Hall.

Open to the campus and community, it was attended by hundreds seeking food samples, crafts, games, and music.

The event was directed by the International Student Association.

## Grants boost nursing, plastics engineering, wood tech

Grants awarded to three programs for which PSU is known will help better serve students.

### Nursing

A \$1 million grant will provide a total of 20 scholarships per year for the next three years in the Irene Ransom Bradley School of Nursing.

Each year, the grant will fund 10 pre-licensure BSN scholarships and 10 RN to BSN scholarships, covering tuition and fees. PSU is a pipeline for nurses heading to the regional hospitals and medical centers.

PSU is one of 14 schools in the nation to receive this federal grant.

### Plastics Engineering Technology

A \$500,000 grant from the National Institute of Standards and Technology will allow the program to purchase equipment and implement lecture-based and hands-on laboratory learning modules.

The funding also will provide summer stipends for faculty and students to develop a curriculum around sustainability.

PSU is one of five universities nationwide to receive the grant.

### Wood Technology

Architectural Manufacturing and Management Technology received a \$36,000 grant and matched funds for a total of \$72,000 from the Architectural Woodwork Institute Education Foundation.

The funding will upgrade the design and engineering lab with new computers, monitors, and components.

The program is unique among higher education institutions nationwide. PSU AMMT is one of only six accredited programs to receive the grant.





A GROUP OF BUSINESS STUDENTS known as Enactus set out to help those with food insecurity in Crawford County by planting a community garden behind the First Christian Church. The group was advised by Chelsey Decker. They planted cabbage, broccoli, and tomatoes; watered and weeded throughout the fall under record-breaking temperatures and drought; then donated the 60 pounds of produce they grew to The Lord's Diner.

## Natural Ties



Honors College students play games, do crafts, and facilitate friendships with adults with learning disabilities in a group called Natural Ties that meets weekly in the Student Recreation Center.

## Introducing Gorilla Ale

The word “Gorilla” pops up everywhere in Pittsburg: on license plates, on banners, on apparel worn by all ages, and on menu items ranging from burritos to coffee beans to crepes. Starting in August, it also is on beer.



Joel Stewart, an award-winning brew master who opened The Jolly Fox Brewery downtown in 2019, launched Golden Gorilla Ale in partnership with PSU as the university's first licensed beer. The seasonal ale was available August through November and had great success; plans are to make it available again in Fall 2023.

Stewart described the beer as “a light-bodied easy drinking golden ale that has great tropical fruit notes that make it a perfect companion for summer drinks or fall football.”

The beer was available at football games last fall; kegged, bottled, and available through The Jolly Fox's distribution network; on tap at The Jolly Fox; and sold at Brick + Mortar Social House and Pairott Head Liquor — both owned by PSU graduates.



## New ownership at Block22

The flagship restaurant at Block22 at Fourth and Broadway downtown is under the new ownership of graduate Darrell Pulliam (BST '90). He also is part of the University Strategic Initiatives team as facilities manager for the National Institute for Materials Advancement.

Last fall, Brick + Mortar was the host site for the Coach Brian Wright Radio Show on Mondays throughout the 2022 football season.

"Pippi Mae's Curated Home," the newest business to open in Block22, is a home décor boutique owned by alumna Melissia Lewis (BSEd '93).

Lewis, who was a teacher for many years, also owned a small boutique at her farm and wanted to join in the resurgence of business in Pittsburg.

Block22 is a collaborative project by Pittsburg State, the City of Pittsburg, and Vecino Group.



STUDENTS IN RECREATION, NURSING, AND PSYCHOLOGY spent a morning each week last fall leading groups of senior citizens at the Pittsburg YMCA through physical games and activities under the direction of Associate Professor Laura Covert-Miller in Health, Human Performance, and Recreation. It's a win-win for the students and the senior citizens.



## Downtown renovations continue

DVLP, a hometown development group composed of four graduates — Pat Crossland (BST '00), Ian Youvan (BA '17), Bart Arnett (BGS '99), and Quentin Holmes (BSET '07) — has set its sights on renovating three historic Broadway properties into housing for moderate income tenants.

Two are in the 100 block of North Broadway: The Glick, where they're planning 10 apartments and 5,000 square feet of commercial space, and Town Talk Studios, where they're planning 15 apartments and 7,500 square feet of commercial space. The third is at 9th and Broadway, where they're planning 20 apartments.

The entire project, already underway, will cost between \$4.8 and \$5 million and is aimed at middle and upper-income professionals.



## Legal partnership

A new partnership between PSU and Washburn School of Law will have a significant impact on the region and the state.

The announcement comes at a time when demand for attorneys is high and supply is low.

"We have inked a partnership that will allow students to complete a bachelor's degree as well as a law degree in six years total — three years here at Pittsburg State, and three years at Washburn School of Law," said Chris Childers, director of PSU's School of History, Philosophy, and Social Sciences.

The partnership means a year less in tuition and fees at PSU, and students who are accepted into the program are guaranteed a minimum tuition scholarship of \$5,000 per year at Washburn School of Law.

## Making music together



Community members who want an opportunity to perform with a group now have the opportunity to do so, thanks to a new band started by PSU Director of Bands Andrew Chybowski, and Pittsburg High School Band Director Cooper Neil (BS '10, MS '22).

"We wanted to provide an opportunity for music hobbyists, music students, and adults who haven't picked up their instrument

in awhile," Neil said. "We also wanted to open up the podium to anyone wishing to work their conducting/rehearsal chops. It's a great chance to make music, meet new band nerds, and have fun together!"

Rehearsals are held in the Pittsburg High School Auditorium and the concerts are held in the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts at PSU.



## New 55+ development opens

Pittsburg's first 55+ active retirement community opened last fall: The Villas at Creekside, a gated community set on 40 acres just off of East Fourth Street.

When under construction, the development was endorsed by then-President Steve Scott, who billed it as "perfect for alumni who want to return to Pittsburg."

Models include pet-friendly, energy-efficient two- and three-bedroom options, including front and rear entry garages with patios, stainless appliances, quartz

countertops, 10-foot ceilings, and safe rooms.

Amenities include outdoor fitness equipment, walking trails, a dog park, bocce and pickle ball, and more to come. The development is just around the corner from a championship tennis court complex at Pittsburg High School and less than five minutes from the newly revitalized downtown area.

For details or to request tours and lease information, visit [creeksidepittsburg.com](http://creeksidepittsburg.com)



## Wrap artist

Pittsburg-based CDL Sign Division partnered with PSU's Graphics and Imaging Technologies and Automotive Technology programs to transform an ordinary Chevy Volt into a branded car that screams Gorilla Nation.

Renato Pinto (BST '16) and Chad Johnston (BST '09) organized the demonstration in front of students as a learning exercise.



Pinto is responsible for graphics on a fleet of commercial vehicles, storefronts, and billboards, while Johnston heads up the sign division.

"We want to show students majoring in graphic communications the kinds of services we provide, because we offer internships and eventually jobs to Pitt State grads," Pinto said. "They have the skills we want."

## 3 Degrees Limited

Sandra Cobos, assistant instructional professor of psychology and counseling and the new director of the PSU school psychology program, is a first-generation PSU graduate. After becoming a single mom as a student, went on to earn three degrees from PSU (BA '15, MS '16, Ed.S '17). She found a way to give back by opening a new downtown boutique, 3 Degrees Limited, aimed at helping women and children by giving a portion of proceeds to those in need.





THEN AND NOW

# Kansas Technology Center *25th Birthday*





DEDICATED ON OCT. 24, 1997, with support from state legislators and \$10 million in federal funding thanks to U.S. Sen. Bob Dole, it quickly became a model for universities across the nation.

Today, the sprawling, state-of-the-art facility at the east edge of campus is home to the College of Technology. Here, you'll find Automotive Technology, Engineering Technology, Graphics and Imaging Technologies, Technology and Workforce Learning, and the School of Construction.

Many of the programs within those departments are unique in the nation, including Wood

Manufacturing Technology, Caterpillar ThinkBIGGER, and Plastics Engineering Technology.

It's a facility that has impacted tens of thousands of lives directly, and hundreds of thousands indirectly, through the graduates who have learned in it and gone into the workforce.

"This southeast Kansas resource is a vital addition to our state's educational network," Dole said at the time final funding was secured. "When you talk about jobs, you are

talking about the future of Kansas, and it will look a little brighter knowing that the latest hands-on training will be available at this Pittsburg State center. I am pleased this quality project continues to win congressional approval."

**Are you a grad who majored in a program housed in the KTC? We'd love to hear what you're doing now! Email us at [psumag@pittstate.edu](mailto:psumag@pittstate.edu). Bonus points for including a photograph of you in the workplace! We'll collect them and use them in an online display and printed display in the KTC, and a few will wind up in the next magazine!**





GREAT GORILLAS





# THE CALENDAR YEAR

# Triple Crown

On Feb. 3, before the sun rose over Georgia, a former member of the Pittsburg State University track and field and cross country teams began his most physically demanding and daunting challenge yet. On Nov. 15, before the sun set at the Mexican border, he finished it.

CHARLIE JANSSEN (BSEd '12) WANTED TO BECOME the 13th person — and the first PSU graduate — to complete the Appalachian Trail, the Pacific Crest Trail, and the Continental Divide Trail, consecutively, in a calendar year.

It would require hiking 2,190 miles across 14 states traversed by the AT, 2,650 miles across three states on the PCT, and 3,100 miles across five states on the CDT. He did it in 285 days.

Janssen spent a couple of years poring over maps and blogs and coming up with a strategy, but there was not a lot of first-hand data.

"But I believe I can do it," he said back in February. "I learned grit and tenacity running at Pitt State."

That belief was what mattered most.

Janssen, who described himself "as an average athlete at Pitt State," was coached by legendary coach Russ Jewett, who retired in 2021. Janssen went on to become a cross country and track coach himself, as well as a history teacher for nine years in Girard and Russell, Kansas, and Gypsum, Colorado, before taking a sabbatical for this undertaking.

Logistics were challenging, from cell phones to permits. Illness and injuries also were challenging, from hip flexor issues to borderline hypothermia.

"There isn't much room for error," said

Janssen, who chose the trail name "Kansas Express."

With the help of his wife, Allie, he took about 500 fans along on his journey through daily posts and reports on his

personal Facebook page and on a group page called "Where is Charlie Hiking Now?"

Those fans saw wondrous sunrises and sunsets, wildlife, and weather. They went from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Mojave Desert. They watched as he

discovered fossils and artifacts, like a piece of pre-Colombian pottery and a woman's shoe circa 1885.

They worried as they saw him cross unrelenting terrain, struggle with food poisoning, and encounter tarantulas and rattlesnakes.

And then, on Nov. 15, they began an outpouring of congratulations from across the U.S. and around the world.

What was the key to his success?

"Determination, tenacity, stubbornness, stupidity," he said. "Some days sucked. So cold, so uncomfortable. But it never crossed my mind that it wasn't going to happen. I was so invested, had so much at stake. My wife went back to travel nursing for this. I quit my job teaching for this. Quitting was never an option. I was not going to throw in the towel. It was either finish or death."

*"Quitting was never an option. I was not going to throw in the towel. It was either finish or death."*







# FROM MCCRAY TO L.A.

QUENTIN GILKEY RECALLS VIVIDLY THE DAY HIS PATH WAS ALTERED to take him from a small town in Oklahoma to Dr.

Dre's recording studio in Los Angeles via McCray Hall.

It was when PSU music professor Bob Kehle arrived at his high school as a guest clinician.

"He demonstrated trombone techniques, and at that moment I just had to know what he did, what was happening. I wanted to understand it," Gilkey recalled. "It's those little things that can set you on a journey."

Gilkey's journey took him to PSU, where he decided to major in music performance. But in a few years, his path veered again: although he grew up playing classical piano and transitioned to jazz in college, he decided he wasn't cut out to be a performer.

"I didn't want to be in the spotlight; I'm an introvert and being on the front lines was not for me," he said.

He didn't know it, but he was on his way to becoming an engineer.

"When my friends and I got bored, I'd make beats, we'd have rap battles," Gilkey said. "I got Pro Tools and taught myself how to use it so I could record my friends. That became my thing."

He went to the person he knew and was comfortable with, Kehle, who helped steer him toward what would become his true passion.

"He told me about The Conservatory of Recording Arts in Phoenix," Gilkey said.

After graduating from PSU with a degree in music and business administration in 2008, Gilkey completed the program in Phoenix, got his foot in the door at Paramount Recording Studios in Los Angeles, worked hard, absorbed all he could, and became a runner at the studio used by Dr. Dre.

He soon clicked with Dre's production manager and began working and learning his way up the ladder as part of the Aftermath Entertainment Studio team.

Today, "Q" has credits as a music producer, sound engineer, composer, and mixer, having worked alongside Dr. Dre and collaborating with performers such as Kendrick Lamar, Eminem, Earl Sweatshirt, and others. He's known for his work on the 2017 Grammy Award winning and Emmy nominated HBO documentary series "The Defiant Ones" and the 2019 Grammy Award winning album Ventura by Anderson .Paak.

Through it all, he said, his experiences in McCray Hall were invaluable.

"My music degree transformed and made me stand out from every other engineer I was working with, because I understood how to talk to musicians — I could speak the music language," he said.

Now, after a decade of 16-hour days in the studio, and with two young children, he's spreading his wings in a new direction: the world of mix engineering, or "making music sound like what you hear on the radio," he said. "Never stop learning."





# North Pole

THE TEMPERATURES ARE COLD. THE ELECTRICITY CAN BE UNDEPENDABLE.

But the beauty is unparalleled, and the culture is rich in traditions dating back thousands of years.

And, says Terri Mynatt (BSEd '89), being an educator to the Athabascan people of Alaska is the most rewarding experience she could have found. Now, she's on a quest to find other graduates of the PSU College of Education to join her.

"I would love to have other grads from PSU join me," she said. "Our housing is provided, and teachers are highly respected here and are well paid."

For nine years, she has taught in Venetie — an isolated village of 150 people about 100 miles north of the Arctic Circle, near the Brooks Range.

"We are commonly known as bush teachers," she said. "We have no roads, no cars, no stores. We get in and out by plane."

As a child, she watched the weekly wildlife show, "Mutual of Omaha," which occasionally featured how Alaskans lived, video of whales and bears, and she wondered how people would live there. She yearned to go.

"The year my youngest son was a senior, I watched Alaska shows again and I thought, 'If they could do it, I could do it.'"

After spending years teaching in cities throughout the Midwest, she headed north in 2013, picking an area that would challenge her skills and where children needed a teacher.

She teaches at and is principal of John Fredson School, with an enrollment of just 45 students in K-12 who are divided among four multi-grade classes.

Every day, she uses the education and training she got at PSU, she said. She combines that with the outdoor survival skills taught to her by the Athabascan people, whom she loves — like how to make a fire in the snow, how to use plants for medicinal purposes, how to snare and skin a rabbit, and how to shop for and ship groceries from Fairbanks once a year.

The curriculum is highly integrated: students go skiing and snowshoeing for PE, apply science and writing to ice fishing, and make fish prints for art out of the salmon that are abundant there.

They also have a front row seat to climate change, and in 2019, her class video won first place in a NASA Explorers CRYO Kids project involving collecting data from a frost tube. They have been part of many GLOBE Science projects, are sponsored by ARCUS Arctic Research Consortium that unites teachers and scientists in actual research, and have traveled to Space Center Houston to attend Space University.

"I am growing my own scientists," she said. "And my next goal is to get more teachers to join me."









# South Pole

AS A CHILD GROWING UP IN KANSAS, John-Michael Watson (BA '09) was surrounded by books and magazines that inspired him to make a list of places he hoped to one day travel.

"I particularly remember a National Geographic article that highlighted Emperor Penguins and research that the National Science Foundation was doing in Antarctica," he said. "I had no idea at the time how someone would get to go to Antarctica but thought it would be a fascinating place to visit."

Watson now can check that place off his bucket list: for the past year, he has served as the physician for the NSF's U.S. Antarctic Program at the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station.

Laying the foundation for that trip was his experience as a student both in and out of the classroom.

"Originally, I had planned to be an archaeologist and as a kid I was fixated on the idea of traveling to far flung places and having adventures," he said. "During college, I spent some time studying ecology in Africa and archaeology in the Middle East."

He had the chance to visit medical clinics in some remote places and was inspired by the people with whom he worked.

"Ultimately, I realized that medicine offered this really unique opportunity to serve other people and that a medical education could be applied to some incredibly diverse environments," he said. "When I decided that I wanted to go into medicine, it was with the clear intention of gaining a set of skills that could be utilized in very remote settings."

He enrolled in biology/pre-med at PSU, where his connection was strong: his paternal grandfather, Richard Watson, was a professor in education from 1964 to 1971, and his paternal grandmother, Jo "Joey" Watson, was a professor in nursing.

His maternal grandfather, Franklin "Dave" Fowler, was captain of the football team under coach Carnie Smith, was an early graduate of the ROTC program, and earned a degree in business in 1955. His maternal grandmother, Bette Jean Hay Fowler, was a graduate of what was known as the Mount Carmel Nursing School and became the Irene Ransom Bradley School of Nursing at PSU.

His father, Dr. Richard Lee Watson, earned his degree in biology/pre-med in 1981, and his mother, Jean Ann Fowler Watson, was the 1978

Homecoming queen, played basketball, and earned a degree in physical education in 1979.

As a child, he owned a full Gorilla costume that he wore with pride to football games. He followed in his dad's footsteps to become a doctor.

He was a member of Pre-Meds With Promise, directed by Dr. Mindi Garner (BS '94, MBA '17), worked at the Wesley House Free Health Clinic, and formed relationships that today guide him in the practice of medicine.

"The lessons that I learned at PSU definitely laid the foundation for the rest of my medical education and helped me to understand what it means to take really good care of patients."

After finishing medical school and residency at the University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita, he spent four years working at Labette Health Hospital in Parsons, Kansas, where he was chief hospital officer, medical director of the ICU, a full-time hospitalist, and physician leader on numerous projects including designing and implementing a full telemedicine ICU program.





During the pandemic, he worked with a private physician group and the KU School of Medicine–Wichita staffing hospitals in Kansas.

And then, he began his trip south, which required a month-long process with weeks of isolation and quarantine. On Jan. 4, 2022, he flew to New Zealand, then to McMurdo Station on the coast of Antarctica — their main base of operations — then to the South Pole Station

*“It is arguably  
the most remote  
human outpost  
on Earth.”*

in February. No flights are able to go in or out from February through October.

“It is arguably the most remote human outpost on Earth,” said Watson in a phone interview from Antarctica last August that relied on satellites passing overhead at just the right time. “The sun goes down in March and doesn’t come up again until late September. Average temperatures in the winter are -75F with wind chills routinely less than -115F.”

“It’s a beautiful day today,” he

said on that day in August. “Our temperature is -67.4F.”

Due to the harsh conditions, he and his colleagues often noted that it’s easier to get someone back from the International Space Station than it is to transport someone out of the South Pole in winter.

Watson and one physician assistant were the only medical providers at the South Pole Station and spent a lot of time training the crew of 44 scientists and support staff to respond to trauma and emergency situations.

“We also focus a lot of time and energy on helping folks maintain their health and performance in this harsh environment,” he said.

“Sleep, exercise, and nutrition are cornerstones of staying healthy while at the South Pole.”

If the weather allowed and they had the desire, they could walk around the geographic South Pole and be in every time zone on earth.

In November, plans were to depart for New Zealand when planes finally could get in and out.

“I have several projects that I am very excited for when I get home,” he said. “I’ve been offered a position with the Indian Health Service and the Havasupai Nation to serve as the physician for the Supai Village at the base of the Grand Canyon. I will also be helping to guide a few trips climbing Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, as well as Mount Everest



Base Camp Treks in Nepal.”

As for the South Pole?

“I have absolutely loved my time in Antarctica and am very excited to continue supporting the work of the National Science Foundation,” he said. “I’m planning to return for another deployment later in 2023 and will be stationed at a station located on the coast of Antarctica, south of Chile.”





# Getting to know **Dan**





From meeting Gus for the first time, to firing the cannon at a home football game, to speaking with students at the Presidents Society Celebration, Shipp was introduced to traditions that resonate with Gorillas of all ages.



THE 10TH PRESIDENT of Pittsburg State University grew up dyslexic.

Still is.

“Reading was tough, story problems in math were very difficult,” he recalled. “I worked several hours each day at home during the summer to catch up.”

A teacher — a Mrs. Bartunek, in about second or third grade — made a difference.

“She helped me learn how to approach my challenge differently,” he said.

Today, Dan Shipp is focused on approaching challenges of a different sort: recruitment, retention, and balancing a budget after years of nationally declining enrollment and funding in higher education.

His ultimate goal: to remove barriers for students seeking a college education.

His office at the top of the stairs in Russ Hall is sparse, save for a few LEGO creations he and his three sons assembled, a display of vintage comic books, and colorful collections of sticky notes on the walls with short phrases written in Sharpie by people he has met across campus and the community.

He’s not there much — he’s been out and about on campus and in the community since Day 1 asking questions of everyone

he meets: alumni, community members, city leaders, elected leaders, faculty, staff, and about 1,000 students of diverse backgrounds, at last count.

Shipp also has spent time getting to know K-12 teachers, counselors, and administrators from Southeast Kansas counties, members of the Kansas Board of Regents, and the state’s federal delegation to Washington, D.C.

“I’ve been listening. Meeting. And listening some more. Asking questions — sometimes difficult ones — about our pride points and our pain points,” he said.

Shipp (who prefers to be addressed as Dan) is the first president since 1999 to have not grown up in Pittsburg nor attend Pittsburg State University.

“I considered myself a Gorilla from the start, but I have a lot to learn,” he said.

### **No spotlight, please**

Shipp prefers to be out of the spotlight, instead asking that it be placed on



students. By the time this magazine hits mailboxes, he will have created a Presidential Fellows program of students who will contribute their talents to his office, and to the university, in impactful ways.

But he realizes people

want to know who the new guy is at the top of the marble stairs. So, with much arm twisting, he shared the following:

1. I’m most comfortable in casual clothes and running shoes.
2. I’m an avid hiker





and count naturalist and environmental philosopher John Muir as one of my heroes.

3. My favorite musicians are the Grateful Dead, Kenny Chesney, and Jimmy Buffett.
4. My favorite authors are David Brooks and Paulo Coelho (If you haven't yet read the Alchemist, you should.)
5. My favorite drink: a honey latte.

His guiding mantra is a quote attributed to Methodist leader John Wesley.

"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."

### A leader and an innovator

Shipp grew up in Nebraska and earned a bachelor of arts in education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, a master of arts

in education from the University of Nebraska Omaha, and a doctorate in educational leadership and administration from the University of the Pacific in California. He is a graduate of Stanford's design thinking

executive education program.

He spent two decades in the classroom, served as the vice chancellor for student success at both the University of Nebraska at Omaha and Medical Center, served as the associate vice president of student life at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, was a founding member

of the Center for Social and Emotional Competence, and was a senior student affairs leader at the University of Missouri.

And, perhaps most important to his three young sons — Oliver (12),

*"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."*

Finnegan (10), and Samuel (7), who are the first children to grow up in the president's house since President Don Wilson was president from 1983 to 1995 — he is an expert breakfast maker.

His wife, Vanessa, who has a degree in marketing with minors in Spanish and international business,





Shipp had a full calendar his first six months. Among the more visible activities: riding in the Homecoming Parade, presenting awards like the Honorary Family, and meeting with donors, stakeholders, and alumni.

Behind the scenes he dove into the budget, enrollment, and facilities maintenance, and helped the Transition Advisory Council and the University Leadership Team chart a new strategic plan.

Family is a priority, and Shipp made time to toss the football with his sons and attend their soccer games.

is the “Uber Driver” for the boys; between the two of them they tag-team the boys’ soccer practices and weekend matches across the region.

“Our priority is work-life balance,” he said. “We are focused on remaining a family that is connected and cares.”

He thinks like a parent, he said, so his sincere wish is that students feel at home and comfortable on campus.

“If something gets in the way of that — anything — I want them to come see me,” he said.

He also thinks like a doctor and is encouraging everyone on campus to do so.

“Think about the university as a patient, and you try to figure out if we have pain points: are those joints bothering you? Does your heart skip a beat once in awhile?” he said. “You think about the whole of the organism, and you really try to get an understanding of what’s working great, what students love, and maybe some things that we need to work on getting better at.”

## TRANSITION

A Transition Advisory Council comprised of 70 individuals met weekly throughout the fall semester in the Wilkinson Alumni Center to offer in-depth presentations on key topics to Shipp and each other.

Co-chaired by Howard Smith, provost and vice president for academic affairs, and Kathleen Flannery, vice president for university advancement, the goal was to build a shared intelligence.

Presentations have focused on academics; budget planning; history and traditions; the City of Pittsburg; enrollment planning and management; student life; access, diversity, and inclusion; government relations; human resources; facilities; advancement, strategic communications; IT; public safety; and athletics.

Those in attendance worked in groups to prioritize the most significant findings that will now serve as guideposts to build a strategic plan.



Smith



Flannery

## SENIOR ASSOCIATES

Jaime Dalton (BS ’03, MBA ’05) has rejoined the President’s Office as the senior associate of operations, having spent 2020-21 in the Office of Career Services. She’s spearheading the Transition Advisory Council process.

Katie George (BST ’15) is the senior associate of external relations, coming to the President’s Office from the Office of Development where she was director of development for the College of Technology.



Dalton



George



# The Pritchett Trust

The Pritchett Trust has had a lasting and valuable impact on PSU since 1995, when the trust began awarding grants.

“The trust has awarded more than \$11 million to organizations in Pittsburg and Crawford County, and of that, approximately \$2 million has gone to Pittsburg State University,” said Frances Mitchelson, a member of the Pritchett Trust Advisory Committee.

Since the university is a significant part of our city and county, the grant awards have provided funding for scholarships to hundreds of students and have provided support to various initiatives that fulfill the Pritchett mission.

“It has always been heartwarming to read the thank you notes from Crawford County students who received Pritchett scholarships and know that those scholarships made a difference in the lives of those students,” Mitchelson said.

Among the initiatives funded for fiscal year 2023:

- Health, Human Performance, and Recreation, which is using the award to expand its archery program — one that has grown in popularity, thanks to the addition of archery programs at regional high schools
- Military Science, which is using the award to expand its scholarship program to incoming cadets
- Kelce College of Business facility renovation



## ABOUT THE TRUST

William B. Pritchett was born in 1891 in Kentucky and came to Kansas in 1900 with his family. Athlyn Pritchett was born in 1896 in Osawatomie, Kansas. They were married in 1920 and for many years operated the Pritchett Insurance Agency in Pittsburg.

They were very frugal during the depression years and during the 1930s and 1940s, they invested in many oil and gas leases in Kansas and Oklahoma, which proved quite successful.

The fund was established in 1994 after the couple's death and is

administered by BMO Harris Bank Trust & Custody Service Department based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, but with grant review and recommendations coming from the local committee made up entirely of Pittsburg residents.

The mission of the Pritchett Trust is “to improve the quality of life in Pittsburg and Crawford County, Kansas, by strengthening children, youth and families and by supporting projects that serve this population.”

In addition to Mitchelson, the committee includes Rick Baden, Ron

Marrone (BGS '10), Raymond Ryan, Ronald Seglie (BA '65), and Vince VanBecelaere (BBA '09).

“Each time I am on campus, I can't help but remember the impact of Pritchett funds on various building projects, or direct student programs, and believe Mr. and Mrs. Pritchett would be proud of the legacy left in our community,” Mitchelson said. “It is an honor and privilege to play a small part in the Pritchett Trust grant process and eagerly anticipate future funding.”



# The Great Gorilla Tour



## ***The Great Gorilla Tour will return in 2023!***

Launched in 2017, and repeated in 2019, the tour is a way for alumni who live at a distance from campus to connect with staff from the Office of Alumni & Constituent Relations and each other.

"We're heading to areas we know have a large concentration of Gorillas. Planning a strategic road trip route between those areas allows our office to stretch our budget to engage more of the Gorilla faithful we love," said Director Jon Bartlow.

This year, he'll be accompanied by Assistant Director Bethanne Elliott and, of course, Gus.

"It creates an exciting buzz not only for our alumni, but also

for the university," Bartlow said. "We can't wait to gather with new alumni and those who haven't had the chance to meet with us in many years."

The tour is planned from May 30 to June 12 and will hold Gorilla Gatherings in St. Louis, Peoria, Chicago, Holland/Grand Rapids, Detroit, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C. and Nashville.

They'll be taking along plenty of PSU swag, and each gathering will feature food, PSU updates, prizes, and the chance for alumni to discover and form bonds with other Gorillas who live in their area.

***For locations, dates, and times, visit:***

***[pittstate.edu/greatgorillatour](http://pittstate.edu/greatgorillatour)***



## Top in the world

Associate Professor Ram Gupta has been named to the list of the top 2 percent of scientists in the world, a list released by Stanford University last fall.

While he's flattered by the honor and loves being in a research lab, what makes him most proud, he said, is the success of his students.

"I thought small universities are very good for that — teach them, mentor them in research activities," he said. "That's what I wanted to do, and I thought this was a good opportunity."

Gupta earned a doctorate in chemistry and developed expertise in conducting polymers for use in electronic devices. In 2013, he was



invited to join the faculty at PSU for the new Polymer Chemistry Initiative after having worked as a senior research scientist at North Carolina A&T State University, in Greensboro.

necessary to assume leadership positions in polymer-related industries, as well as increased chances of qualifying for acceptance into PhD programs in leading institutions and universities.

Here, he's been finding eco-friendly uses for biowaste that could create jobs and revolutionize the polymer industry. And graduates are leaving with skills

## Statewide appointment

Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly appointed Delia Lister to the statewide Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission.

Lister (BS '04, MS '06), has been an instructor in the Biology Department and director of Nature Reach, a wildlife education program that is part of the Biology Department, since 2007.

She coordinates outreach programs, spearheads fundraising efforts, manages animal care, supervises paid and volunteer staff, facilitates summer camps and teacher workshops, and manages a 78-acre university property that includes a lab and classroom, trails, garden, and raptors under the care of Nature Reach.



## Kansas Sports Hall of Famer

Kendall Gammon (BSEd '94) has been inducted into the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame as one of 10 members of the Class of 2022.

"It certainly was humbling and something I never even imagined would happen," Gammon said. "It's made even sweeter by the fact that both my former coaches are members, and when it's a Hall of Fame in your home state, that's a really cool thing. I'd say it's also very much a direct reflection of my time at Pitt State."

Coached his first two years by Dennis Franchione and his final two seasons by Chuck Broyles — both Kansas Sports Hall of Fame inductees — Gammon helped the Gorillas win four straight conference titles, including three straight MIAA crowns from 1989–91, and was part of the 1991 D-II National Championship team.

He was drafted in 1992 and spent 15 years in the NFL on the Pittsburgh Steelers, the New Orleans Saints, and the Kansas City Chiefs, and appeared in Super Bowl XXX.

For 12 years, he was the field reporter and pre-game host for the Kansas City Chief's radio broadcasts.

He was inducted to the Pittsburg State Athletic Hall of Fame in 2007 and the MIAA Hall of Fame in 2014. In 2015, he was named special assistant to the president by then-President Steve Scott.





# Honorary Family

Chloe Hildebrand, a senior marketing and management major from Wichita, can't remember a time her family wasn't actively involved with PSU.

It makes them a perfect choice, said Lance Moser, director of annual giving in University Development, as the 2022 Honorary Family — an award given annually since 1993 and sponsored by the PSU Foundation and the Advancement Ambassadors.

Chloe's father, Jeremy, graduated in 1997 with a bachelor's in commercial graphics, and as a student he worked in the Office of Admission helping to recruit prospective students.

He held many positions with the Alumni Association since graduating, and now serves as the 1st Vice President on the Board of Directors. He spends time planning and promoting the Wichita Area Gorilla Gatherings to help keep other alumni connected and involved. Chloe's mom, Pam, supports that involvement.



Throughout high school and college, Chloe's brother Jacob, now 26, dressed up as Gus Gorilla on multiple occasions for special events. He met his future wife, Morgan, while working in the Alumni office; they celebrated their one-year wedding anniversary on Family Day.

Chloe's connection to PSU began early; as a child, she rode with her family from Wichita to watch home football games. Today, she is a campus leader and is involved with Alpha Gamma Delta, Yell Like Hell, Gorilla Food Pantry, and The Big Event.

And the family still caravans to Pittsburg to watch home football games.

The 2022 Honorary Family: Chloe Hildebrand (BBA December '22), her dad Jeremy (BST '97) and mom Pam, niece Everleigh, sister-in-law Morgan Ventling (a current nursing major), and brother Jacob Ventling (who attended PSU and is within 28 hours of graduating). The PSU Honorary Family Award dates to 1993 and is sponsored by the PSU Foundation and Advancement Ambassadors. The family has been actively involved in the PSU Alumni Association, athletic events, and Gorilla Gatherings for many years.

# International graphics award

When graphic communications major Kaylea Robertson graduated in December, she left with four things: an international award, internship experience, a diverse portfolio, and a job in Kansas City — all made possible, she said, because of her choice to attend PSU.

Since her freshman year in 2019, she's won six ADDY Awards — American Advertising Awards that recognize and reward creative excellence in the art of advertising in the industry's largest and most respected competition.

The icing on the cake was international recognition from the Printing United Alliance Premier Print Awards for a project done in a capstone class: a unique resumé packet using skills and knowledge she gained as a student.



# Winning art project

A coloring book that features Gus the Gorilla exploring tourist attractions throughout Southeast Kansas, designed by students in ART 210-Visual Thinking: Digital Studio and produced by Explore Crawford County, has won a statewide award.

The "Gus the Gorilla Explores Southeast Kansas" coloring book earned first place in the Travel Industry Association of Kansas Marketing Awards contest's Small Budget Print category.

The award was presented at the annual Kansas Tourism Conference in Wichita.





## Outstanding Alumni Award Winners

Two alumni — one who has had an impact on education and one who founded two businesses — were given the 2022 Dr. Kenneth K. Bateman Outstanding Alumni Award, given annually by PSU's Office of Alumni & Constituent Relations.



**Trinity (Staten) Davis**

BSEd '97

When Trinity Davis was young, she realized that the history she was learning in school was largely through a white lens, and she wanted to see herself better reflected.

She began working toward her degree in education with dreams of becoming a teacher, and as a student at PSU was the only Black soon-to-be graduate present at Teacher Interview Day.

"It dawned on me then: there needs to be more like me," she said.

After graduation, she landed a job teaching and working as a literacy coach at an elementary school but saw a need for the existing system to change.

She joined the faculty in the PSU College of Education to help better prepare teachers before they entered the classroom, but yearned for colleagues with more diversity, so she took a job as an administrator in the Kansas City School District.

She earned a master's from Emporia State University in 2002 and a PhD from Kansas State University in 2009.

Fast forward to today: She's the founder and president of Teachers Like Me — an organization dedicated to recruiting, developing, and retaining Black teachers in public education in the Kansas City area. It aims to increase the number of Black teachers by removing barriers to entry, and by providing the support needed to be effective and responsive to the academic and social needs of all students, especially those of color.



**Jack "JL" Johnson**

BST '99

One of the things Jack "JL" Johnson remembers most clearly from his time as a student at PSU, where he majored in mechanical engineering technology and automotive technology concurrently, is working with classmates to design and build a moon buggy for the annual NASA competition.

"Our professor made the project like the real world, with our team having to communicate, work together, problem solve," he said.

That experience is one he carried with him into the business world, where he became founder and CTO of Volta Power Systems, and the co-founder and chief engineer for Jolt-Energy Storage Technologies.

Volta was founded in 2014 to provide small and medium original equipment manufacturers in the RV, Marine, Specialty Vehicles and Ground Storage markets with access to high-quality automotive-based energy storage technology not accessible due to their market sizes.

Jolt was also started in 2014 concentrating on the development of advanced organic compounds that could enhance traditional lithium-ion technology and next-generation flow batteries.

A minor in business was valuable, he said.

"My favorite class was business law — I still have the textbook on my desk, and still pull from it when I have questions," he said. "I learned the ability to adapt, manage people, marketing — all of it. I'm honored that I got to come back to campus to accept this award. This is where it all began."



## MILESTONE MOMENTS

We love seeing Gorillas of all ages mark milestones! Have a milestone moment to share? Tag us on social media or email it, along with information or a caption, your degree, and graduation year to [psumag@pittstate.edu](mailto:psumag@pittstate.edu).



Retired Professor of Geography (1959-95) Bill Powell, 90; Professor of Printing (1964-98) Robert Roberts, 90; Registrar (1968-07) Lee Christensen, 81; Professor of Automotive Technology (1964-93) Richard Weathers, 90; and Professor of Engineering Technology (1962-95) Vern Goold, 90; gather at Daylight Donuts for a weekly chat about the old days.

They still attend football and basketball games, and are keenly interested in the success of the university. Best of all is when they hear from former students.

"I had a student from China who has kept in touch with me for 40 years," Goold said. "He showed up for my birthday with cake and flowers, all the way from Los Angeles. It makes me feel great — guys like us, all we have to show for our life's work is our students."



PSU Football Coach Brian Wright was selected as the 2022 MIAA Coach of the Year in his third season with the Gorillas. He led PSU to a flawless 11-0 regular season and secured the program's 13th MIAA Championship — the first title since the Gorillas shared the honor with Northwest in 2014. The Gorilla offense led the league in scoring with 33.5 points per game, and concluded their season by making it to the playoffs.



Coach Bob Fornelli invited his Uncle Tony Fornelli (BS '65, MS '70) to throw the first pitch at the baseball game on Tony's 80th birthday, March 26, 2022. Many family members, former students, and fans came to watch the game and celebrate. Tony Fornelli taught biology and physiology in high school and to nursing students for 31 years, and coached basketball and other sports for 21 years.



The Women's Cross Country team brought home the 2022 Conference Championship last fall after compiling 51 points to claim the program's 12th all-time MIAA crown! The Gorillas have won four of the last five MIAA titles (2017-19, '22).



Ryan Bartlett (BS '03) poses with the World Series Trophy after successfully leading FOX Sports Digital's MLB coverage through the playoffs. Bartlett wrote and produced every pre- and post-game show during the National League Championship Series and World Series!



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).



Fifteen Tri-Sigma alumnae traveled to Jamaica last spring for a getaway at Golden Clouds villa. Back row, left to right: Cathy Duffin Albright, Cindy Lowe Bradshaw, Carol Maddox Waggoner, Nancy Meads, Kathy Recker Robbins, Brenda Robinson Roberts, Bette Walker Lessen, Lori Boyajian O'Neill, Cathy Stareck Linaweaver, Janie Hughes Smith. Front row, left to right: Tracy Morris, Diane Blessant Letner, Karla Taylor Herrin, Joy Welsh, Cathy Walker Hess.



Daniel Craig (BS '04), who ran cross country, indoor track, and outdoor track, helped to start the Salina Crossroads Marathon last year and was co-director of the first race. The marathon was USATF Certified and was a Boston Marathon Qualifier. Craig wore his PSU cross country shirt for the photo shoot to promote the event. He also arranged for (5-10) free entries for PSU alumni and (5-10) for current students.



Dwayne Taylor (BA '00, BSEd '03, MSED '09) and Crystal Taylor (BSN '02, MSN '10) traveled to beautiful Maui, Hawaii, with their daughters Alyssa and Paige, both of whom aspire to be future Gorillas!



Cory Adams (BSET Plastics '03), Valerie Adams (BSEd '03), Lauren Widner (BSEd '03), and Dustin Widner (BS Finance '03) showed their Gorilla pride while visiting the Leaning Tower of Pisa. This was one stop on their tour of Italy in June 2022.



Denise Grasso (BSEd '77, MS '82, SpEd '85) and her family represented Pittsburg State when visiting Jackson Hole, Wyoming, last year.





Ryan Sorell (BS '10 and Megan Sorell (BSEd '09) showed their Gorilla pride while visiting Disney's Magic Kingdom last summer with three children Neely, Nolan and Marlee K!



Harlan Hess and Carol Billington Hess celebrating their 25th anniversary at Denali National Park, Alaska, on July 6, 2022. Harlan graduated in 1963, BS in Education, MS in Educational Administration in 1966. He was also a member of the 1961 National Championship football team. Carol graduated in 1964 with a BS in Education. She completed her master's degree in Educational Administration in Texas in 1976.



Two Gorilla grads travelled to Western Kenya last summer to serve at Mercy Ministries, a home and school for underprivileged children. Maya (Otero) White (BS '02, MS '04, is at the far left, and Christine (Hildebrandt) Case (BSN '09) is in the yellow shirt, holding Gus.



Ashlei Bockover (BS '02) and her son, Logan, a current student, backpacked through Europe last summer on a trip to see Griffin Cooper, a PSU student studying abroad in Malta and the son of PSU professors Gil Cooper and Casie Hermansson. They made sure to pack their PSU shirts!

Mark (BBA '04) and Juliana (BBA '04) Hudson and their future Gorillas, Greer (9) and Luke (5) took a cross-country road trip last summer that included a stop at Niagara Falls. While walking through Niagara State Park, they heard a "Go Gorillas" when someone spotted their shirts!





## WHERE IN THE WORLD IS GUS?



In June, Carol Lichtenstein Freeman (BA '81) and Wayne Freeman (BST '82) traveled with Gus to the edge of the polar ice cap north of Svalbard, Norway!



Jessica Brungardt Fagan (BBA '04, MBA '05) visited NYC, where she saw the World Trade Center Museum, and wanted to represent Pittsburg State.

Nicki Gossett (BS '01) joined with children Kenleigh Westhoff (left) and Marlee Westhoff (right) in showing off their Gorilla apparel at Walt Disney World Animal Kingdom in Florida.



A recent trip to Franklin, Tennessee, included the following Gorilla grads: Verna Lou Pearson Fincher Smith (BSBA '76), Lydia Huffman Zager (BSN '76), and Sharon Buzard Henderson (BSN '76).



Dale (BS '82) and Linda (BS '81, MS '82) Flanakin celebrated their 38th wedding anniversary in Paris, France. Says Dale: "Back in 1980, my parents dropped me off in Pittsburg to attend Pittsburg State University. That Saturday evening, I was walking across the mall parking lot and from a distance I saw and fell in love with a young lady. It was love at first sight. On our trip to France, we wanted to show how proud we are to be part of the PSU family."



## 1966

**Gary Pepin** (BSEd) announced his retirement from the University of Nebraska where he served as the Head Coach of Track & Field for 42 years. During that time, Pepin led the Huskers to three NCAA championships and 73 conference titles, and produced 59 individual NCAA champions, 639 All-Americans, 597 individual conference champions, and 68 CoSIDA Academic All-Americans.

## 1972

**Brenda Rua Chappell** (BS) was presented with the national award for Outstanding Advisor of the Alpha Sigman Alpha sorority, an award which was renamed in her honor as the “Brenda Rua Chappell Outstanding Advisor Award” during the convention.

## 1983

**Dann Brown** ('83, MS '85) has been appointed Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas. He is responsible for the Division of Academic Affairs and the colleges and programs that serve faculty and staff.

**Kerry Sachetta** (BSEd, MS '90; EdS '97) who received his EdD from St. Louis University, was named superintendent of Joplin School District. He has served in a number of administrative roles in Joplin for many years.

## 1990

**Janet Fairbanks** (BSEd) began teaching sixth grade history at Fort Scott Middle School. She spent 26 years teaching various grades and subjects at the elementary school in Osawatomie and was retired for two years before returning to the classroom full-time.

## 1991

**Mike Krull** (BSEd) is the new physical education teacher and head boys basketball coach at Fort Scott (Kansas) High School. Krull previously taught in the Louisburg, Frankfort, Yates Center, and Parsons (Kansas) school districts and is originally from Girard, Kansas.

## Jacob LaTurner – U.S. Representative

As a political science major, Jacob LaTurner (BA '11) set out to follow in the footsteps of his father, who served as the mayor of Galena, and his grandfather, who served as the elected county judge.

He wound up doing so on a national scale as the second PSU graduate, according to university records, who has been elected to Congress (Rep. Joe Skubitz is believed to have been the first).

“I spent a lot of time going up and down the marble stairs of Russ Hall to my classes,” said LaTurner. “Now, it’s surreal and humbling that I’m climbing the stairs of the Capitol building in D.C. It’s a tremendous responsibility and honor.”

In 2006, he founded the Pitt State Republicans group, and a year after graduating was elected state senator for the 13th District. In 2016, he was elected Kansas State Treasurer, and in 2020 was elected U.S. Representative for the 2nd Congressional District. He was re-elected last fall.

He also worked for four years in customer service at Watco — a “tremendous training ground,” he



said, for understanding how to listen to and serve constituents.

When he’s not in Washington, he and his wife and their four children call Topeka, Kansas, home, but he said PSU always will have a special place in his heart.

LaTurner has become an advocate for the National Institute for Materials Advancement and research at the Tyler Research Center.

“I love Pitt State and am very proud to have been able to give back and make a difference when it comes to federal funding,” he said.

**Kevin Muff** (MSED) has been hired as USD 333’s dean of student improvement as well as a teacher of criminal justice at Concordia High School. Previously, he worked as the head men’s basketball coach at Cloud County Community College and spent seven seasons as a head coach for PSU, where he was named 2015 MIAA Co-Coach of the Year.



Muff

## 1992

**David Diver** (BSEd) has been chosen as the new director of agronomy at The Club at ArrowCreek, a golf club that offers dual championship private golf courses, the Legend & Challenge, in Reno, Nevada. A native of Coffeyville, Kansas, Diver started as a summer laborer at Four Oaks Golf Course in Pittsburg. He completed the Professional Turf Management program at Rutgers University.



**1994**

**Samantha Short** (BSEd, MS '01, SpEd '10) is the new Spanish and remedial English teacher at Fort Scott (Kansas) Middle School. Prior to her new position, she taught Spanish for 28 years at the school district in Nevada, Missouri where she recently retired.

**1999**

**Scott Tarnowieckyi** (MA) was named as assistant vice president of student services at Weatherford College in Weatherford, Texas. He has been at the college for 12 years, previously serving as a professor of history and then as the chair of the social sciences department.

**2003**

**Meryl Carver-Allmond** (BA) was one of three candidates nominated to fill a vacancy on the Kansas Court of Appeals in Topeka, Kansas. She serves on the Kansas Bar Association's Access to Justice Committee, co-chairs the Women and Minorities Subcommittee of the Kansas Supreme Court Task Force for Attorney Well-Being, and is the Secretary and Treasurer of the Douglas Co. Bar Association. She also is the training director for the Kansas public defender system, where she develops and oversees

training for 550 public defenders, staff and assigned counsel in the state.

**2005**

**Melissa Briggs** (BA, MS '07, EdS '08) was promoted to chief administration officer of TFI, a child welfare agency that serves Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. She has served the organization for eight years in various positions; prior to serving as the CAO, Briggs served as the senior vice president for clinical and assessment services, and as executive director and vice president of residential and clinical services over Pathway Family Services, an agency of TFI.

**Amber Shaverdi Huston** (BA) was elected as the national president of Alpha Sigma Alpha sorority. She also became the first female to hold the role of executive director and CEO of the National Association of Campus Activities and the NACA Foundation in 2019. She is a member of PSU's Eta Eta Chapter.

**Lindsay Young** (BBA, MBA '09), founder and owner of Nu Marketing, was named as one of the 2022 40 Under 40 by the Northwest Arkansas Business Journal. Young began her career working in marketing for construction and design firms before branching out on her own.

**2006**

**David Heidrick** (BGS, BSEd '11, MS '14) was hired as the new seventh grade special education teacher at Fort Scott (Kansas) Middle School. Heidrick has worked in education for 11 years and spent the last eight at Prairie View middle school.

**2007**

**Quentin Holmes** (BSET) started a new position as market president at Equity Bank. He was previously the director of community development and housing for the City of Pittsburgh.



Holmes

**2009**

**Nick Johnson** (BSEd) is the new principal at Fort Scott (Kansas) Preschool Center after having worked in the district for the last 13 years. He taught second grade at the two elementary schools for 10 years before teaching English language arts and social studies at the middle school.

**Clint Rider** (BSEd) was chosen as the East Head Coach for the 2023 Kansas Shrine Bowl. Rider is in his 16th season coaching football and his sixth as head coach at Blue Valley Northwest, where he led the Huskies to a 12-1 record and the 2021 6A State Championship. Following the 2021 season, he earned numerous Coach of the Year honors including the Kansas City Chiefs Eric Driskell Award, given to the top coach in the state of Kansas.

**2010**

**DePrice Taylor** (BS, MS '12) landed a job with KC Current (the new women's soccer team in Kansas City, Missouri) as director of community relations. Since graduating she also has been director of community engagement for Kanbe's Market, a nonprofit that supports making fresh and affordable foods available in underserved communities; area director for Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City; and a unit director for Boys & Girls Clubs of Dundee Township in Illinois. She was a member of the PSU women's basketball team.



Taylor

## Dr. Steven Starr, cardiologist

Ingram's Magazine has named Dr. Steven Starr (BS '84), a Kansas City cardiologist with local ties, to its prestigious Top Doctors list for 2022.

Dr. Starr, who works at Meritas Health Cardiology in the Kansas City area, is one of 15 physicians chosen for the list. Members of the Kansas City medical community nominated outstanding doctors across the city.

A Girard native, Dr. Starr went on to attend medical school at the University of Kansas, completing his residency, internship, and fellowship at KU. Through it all, it was his mother's work in healthcare that inspired him to become a doctor.

"My mother worked for one of the local physicians," Dr. Starr said. "At an early age, I was exposed to general medicine. I saw how the community was dependent on the two physicians in town. They lived to serve their community, and I was impressed by their commitment."

Dr. Starr is an American College of Cardiology Fellow. He holds certification in cardiovascular disease from the American Board of Internal Medicine. He has been in practice for almost 30 years.





## 2011

**Jon Bingesser** (BSEd) was hired as the new head volleyball coach at Northwestern Oklahoma State. He previously coached at Highland Community College, where in seven seasons he amassed a record of 165-59, including a 28-8 record in 2021. In 2018, he was named coach of the year in the KJCC and set the single season record for most wins at Highland with 34.

## 2012

**Nick Baldetti** (MBA, MS) was named chief quality officer for Hutchinson Regional Healthcare System. Baldetti will coordinate with internal and executive team members to set and monitor system-wide goals for all quality initiatives. In 2020, he earned a doctorate in business administration from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska.

## 2013

**Ernesto Estigarribia** (BA) was named the music director of the Sheboygan Symphony Orchestra, chosen from a pool of 107 applicants from 14 countries after a three-year search. Founded in 1918, it's the longest continually active orchestra in Wisconsin. He has been the associate conductor of the Quad City Symphony, music director of the Quad City Symphony Youth Ensembles, and director of orchestral activities at Augustana College. After graduating from PSU, he earned master's and doctoral music degrees from the University of Minnesota.

## 2014

**Dustin Bonzo** (BS) completed residency training at the University of Kansas School of Medicine – Wichita Family Medicine Residency Program at Smoky Hill-Salina. Dr. Bonzo will be practicing at Girard Medical Center in Girard, Kansas.

## 2017

**Skye Conley** (BA) began a position as the digital archivist/curator at the Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum.

## Jeremiah Davis, entrepreneur

Experiences at PSU helped lay a solid foundation for a graduate who went on to start a global pet food company now shipping to 22 countries.

Jeremiah Davis (BA '98), who served as co-president of the PSU Marketing Club, vice president of the PSU Finance Club, and was an active member of Students in Free Enterprise, earned his degree in marketing and finance through the Kelce College of Business.

He landed a job with Natural Life Pet Products in Frontenac, Kansas, as their international sales representative and export director, where he was able to learn about nutrition, production, formulation, and the process of making pet food.

Branching out on his own, he used that knowledge and what he learned as a student to start First Class Exports, handling pet food, litter, supplements, and shampoos.

"Dr. Rogers, who taught marketing, was influential and a great teacher. I learned a lot from Mary Kay Wachter about statistics, and from Dr. Kevin Bracker about finance. I still return to



those lessons, sometimes get my notes back out, and reflect on them as I am making decisions," he said.

"The leadership roles I got to be in also gave me really good experience. So did internships with local banks and activities I got to do with SIFE (now Enactus)," he said.

In 2017, he started Pureluxe Pet Food and after seeing pet ownership double during the pandemic, now sells to companies across the U.S., Asia, the Caribbean, Africa, Central and South America, and the Middle East, as well as in several stores in Pittsburgh.

## 2020

**Jessica Helt** (MBA) was promoted by Labette Health to human resources director. She began her career at Labette Health in 2014 as the office manager at the hospital's rehabilitation center. She transitioned to the role of benefits manager in 2017.

**Ally Lucas** (BBA) was recently promoted to sales & marketing coordinator at Canopy Management. She previously held the position of HubSpot marketing expert.



**2021**

**Zak Brown** (BS) began a new position as the director of creative content and video production for Griffon Sports Insider at Missouri Western State University. He previously worked as the video projects coordinator at Northeastern State in Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

**2022**

**Jon Barnes** (BSEd) began teaching American government and history at Fort Scott (Kansas) High School.

**Kaedra Brenner** (BSET) was hired as part of the Textron Leadership Development Program and is currently working on her first rotation in Maryland.

**Breanna Taylor** (BSEd) has started a new position as an English teacher at Uniontown (Kansas) High School — her hometown.

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

## Angie Saporito – hospital administrator and volunteer

Angie Saporito (BS '04) is giving back by giving her time as the president of the Alumni Association Board of Directors.

Saporito, administrator of Mercy Hospital Columbus, just completed her 16th year with the health system, where she has worn

many hats and helped the medical team serve thousands of patients.

She's been involved with a variety of university functions and award ceremonies honoring alumni, the annual Half-Century Reunion, and other special events, and represents PSU alumni around the world.

"I've always been really proud to be a Gorilla — I have a splitface hanging on the wall in my office," she said.

"This is a way to give back to the university. I want other people to be aware of just how great it is. I want to help people discover what's right under their



nose, if they don't already know. There is so much right here."

Her husband, Clint, is a 2002 graduate of PSU's College of Technology. The couple met on campus. Their eldest son, Cade, is a rising senior in Columbus and soon will be exploring college options.





**1944**

**Phoebe E. May**, Mission, Kan.

**1947**

**Mariam R. Mih**, Chanute, Kan.

**1951**

**E. R. Slapar**, Eudora, Kan.

**1953**

**Charles W. Bolton**, Downers Grove, Ill.

**Clara Jane Rubarth**, Thomasville, N.C.

**Darlene Slapar**, Eudora, Kan.

**1954**

**Robert E. Mosier, Jr.**, Pittsburg, Kan.

**1955**

**Donna M. Ward**, Belleville, Kan.

**1956**

**Charliss A. Kiser**, Tucson, Ariz.

**John R. Meacham**, Kansas City, Mo.

**Vicki S. Nulton**, Kansas City, Mo.

**1957**

**Bob R. Foster**, Joplin, Mo.

**Jimmie D. Skillen**, Cheney, Kan.

**Edwin B Strong, Jr.**, Saint Louis, Mo.

**1958**

**Nancy J. DeArmond**, Eudora, Kan.

**George E. Pitzer**, Portland, Ore.

**Melvin Kent Shellenberger**, Sequim, Wash.

**1959**

**Merle W. Bodine**, Sun City West, Ariz.

**Carolyn S. Morris**, Dekalb, Ill.

**Vernon L. Wills**, Paducah, Ky.

**1960**

**Margaret J. Deweese**, Joplin, Mo.

**Lloyd W. Sowers**, Bartlesville, Okla.

**1961**

**Wayne Dresker**, Malaga, Wash.

**Merrill L. Ellsworth**, Tulsa, Okla.

**Jack W. Martin**, Wamego, Kan.

**Norma L. Russell**, Caney, Kan.

**1962**

**James L Deich**, East Wenatchee, Wash.

**James L. Mount**, Locust, N.C.

**1963**

**Leland K. Larimore**, Overland Park, Kan.

**Phyllis J. Lee**, Friendswood, Texas

**Benjamin Steve Lewis**, Pittsburg, Kan.

**Richard L. Purdy**, Green Valley, Ariz.

**1964**

**Mel A. Blazer**, Omaha, Neb.

**Bryan L. Duncan**, Opelika, Ala.

**Thomas L. Horn**, Broken Arrow, Okla.

**Billye L. Odom**, El Dorado, Kan.

**Gary W. Pearman**, Neosho, Mo.

**1965**

**James D Clements**, Maize, Kan.

**Bill C. Jones**, Tulsa, Okla.

**Ronald L. Kuykendall**, Plains, Mont.

**Don Miller**, Fort Scott, Kan.

**1966**

**Theodore R. Bissell**, Boyceville, Wis.

**Brian J. Delaney**, Washington, D.C.

**William G. Fehrenbach**, Pittsburg, Kan.

**Vicki A. Olson**, La Canada Flintr, Calif.

**Howard C. Ragan**, Longview, Wash.

**Donald M. Spencer**, Kansas City Mo.

**1967**

**Galen C. Christiansen**, Columbus, Kan.

**Kathleen A. Owsley**, Pittsburg, Kan.

**Robert P. Pierce**, Wimberley, Texas

**William H. Staten, Jr.**, Cheyenne, Wy.

**1968**

**Jim B. Bowra**, Durango, Colo.

**Thomas E. Demier**, Joplin, Mo.

**Susan B. Fitz**, Topeka, Kan.

**Martha A. Landrith**, Coffeyville, Kan.

**Bruce C McReynolds**, Santa Fe, N.M.

**Gary W. Robinson**, Fort Myers, Fla.

**Judith R. Stancer**, Valley Center, Kan.

**Wesley L. Stotler**, Manhattan, Kan.

**Gilbert E. Swain**, North Port, Fla.

**1969**

**Bryan D. Biles**, Bonner Springs, Kan.

**Daniel L. Brewster**, Joplin, Mo.

**Myrna M. Chesnutt**, Chetopa, Kan.

**Calvin M. Cooper**, Florissant, Mo.

**Floyd E. Geasland**, Topeka, Kan.

**Steve C. Greenwood**, Olathe, Kan.

**Alvin L. Rittenhouse**, Pittsburg, Kan.

**1970**

**Garon G. Gardner**, McLouth, Kan.

**1971**

**Glen A Likins**, Rogers, Ark.

**Joe M. Carlson**, Cherokee, Kan.

**John J. Kotzman**, Frontenac, Kan.

**Joseph F. Strathe**, Parsons, Kan.

**George R. Wickware, Jr.**, Weatherford, Texas

**1972**

**Ellise Davis**, Chanute, Kan.

**Leonard L. Ewell**, Fort Collins, Colo.

**Connie K. Kline**, Pittsburg, Kan.

**Jackie Ross**, Joplin, Mo.

**Merlen R. Sandness**, Prague, Okla.

**1973**

**Sherwood L. Bryan**, Houston, Texas

**Dan L. Dunstan**, Farlington, Kan.

**Wilma J. McQuade**, Joplin, Mo.

**Steven W. Zimmerman**, Rogers, Ark.

**1974**

**Kerry L. Elkins**, Springfield, Mo.

**Gary L. Hataway**, Raymore, Mo.

**Bruce T. Johnson**, Aurora, Colo.

**Caroline K. Tubbs**, Joplin, Mo.

**Jennie L. Weyant**, Rose Hill, Kan.

**1975**

**John F. Turkington**, Miami, Okla.

**1976**

**Darrell D. Crown**, Hollister, Mo.

**Crissy J. Kyser**, Erie, Kan.

**1977**

**Peter M. Nelson**, Colorado Spring, Colo.

**1978**

**Karen R. Deboard**, Topeka, Kan.

**Mark F. Shiverdecker**, Neodesha, Kan.

**1979**

**Patricia L. Brauer**, Miami, Okla.

**Henry L. Stricklin**, Weir, Kan.

**1981**

**Vinnie S. Harmon**, Afton, Okla.

**Richard K. O'Brien**, Hepler, Kan.

**Lori G. Ruddick**, Nevada, Mo.

**1982**

**Donald W. Wimmer**, Marion, Ind.

**1985**

**Jeanie S. Kirk**, Saint Charles, Mo.

**1986**

**Sam L. Hubbard, Jr.**, Pittsburg, Kan.

**Craig W. Potter**, Pittsburg, Kan.

**1988**

**Michael A. Turner**, Leavenworth, Kan.

**1990**

**Kevin D. O'Neill**, Fredonia, Kan.

**1992**

**Karen R. Brown**, Paola, Kan.

**Susan H. Harmon**, Cherryvale, Kan.

**Jonna M. Hines**, Alva, Okla.

**1994**

**Machelle L. Fontenot**, Pittsburg, Kan.

**1995**

**Sara S. Davidson**, Joplin, Mo.

**1999**

**Ryan T. Painter**, Wichita, Kan.

**Matthew J. Viets**, Lawrence, Kan.

**2006**

**Helen Marie Friederich**, Chanute, Kan.



## Dennis Bounds

### UNIVERSITY POLICE OFFICER

Longtime Pittsburg State University police officer Dennis Bounds died suddenly of natural causes on Oct. 6 at his home. He was 63.

Bounds' career included having served as a patrolman, corporal, and detective for the Joplin, Missouri Police Department. After earning a master's degree in criminal justice administration from Central Missouri State University in 1992, he joined the PSU Police Department in 1993. He also served as a member of the Tri-State Major Case Squad.

When he retired from PSU in 2014, the call to serve never left him. He returned to campus as a part-time, overnight officer, working Monday through Friday from 10 p.m. until 2 a.m. He rode the UPD Segway around campus, through buildings, and assisted the evening and midnight shifts by checking all buildings.

Bounds also worked as a police sketch artist — but his artistic ability wasn't limited to identifying suspects. He loved sketching outdoor scenes.

Bounds attended Trinity Baptist Church in Pittsburg. He is survived by his parents; his wife, Lani Tabera; and his children, Connor and Sydney Bounds; three grandchildren; a sister; and a brother.



## John Kreissler

### ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

John Arthur Kreissler, an alumnus who served as the president of the PSU Alumni Association and supported alumni events and athletic events his entire life, died July 5, 2022, in Pittsburg. He was 87.

He earned his bachelor's of science in business administration in 1965. He traveled across the Midwest to cheer on PSU student-athletes in volleyball, basketball, softball, baseball, track, and football, and accompanied his wife, Barbara McClaskey, a professor in the Irene Ransom Bradley School of Nursing, and her students on nursing trips.

He participated in the Kansas Senior Olympics for several years, earning a gold medal for winning his age group up to his 80th year.

He served for most of his adult life in the Rotary organization, and in 2000 was awarded the Rotary Foundation Citation for Meritorious Service.

He is survived by his wife; four children: Mindy Kuplen, Marianne O'Neilo, Jon Kreissler, and Tom Kreissler; and a step-daughter, Katie McClaskey; two sisters; and six grandchildren.

The family suggests memorials to the John Kreissler Scholarship at Pittsburg State University. They may be mailed to the PSU Foundation, Inc., PO Box 4005, Pittsburg, KS 66762.



## David Sours

### GRAPHICS AND IMAGING TECHNOLOGIES

David S. Sours, a popular professor in Graphics and Imaging Technologies, died Oct. 29, 2022. He was 75.

Sours was a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, and after service attended Orange Coast College, Northwest Missouri State University, and Clemson University, and earned his master's degree in Graphic Arts.

After teaching in South Carolina and Olathe, Kansas, he worked in sales in the printing industry, then in 1995 brought his years of experience to PSU to teach graphic design.

He retired in 2012.

Having been diagnosed with Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis, he spent the past few years helping with research by participating in drug trials, hoping to find a cure.

He is survived by his wife, Glenda; daughter, Jennifer Rehwoldt (Larry); brother, Keith Sours (Katsuji); sister, Becky Palvisak (Mike); grandsons, Grant and Neil Rehwoldt; as well as nephews, great-nieces, great nephews, a great-great niece, and four sisters-in-law.



## Doug Whitten

### BAND DIRECTOR

Doug Whitten, a professor of music for nearly 19 years and director of the PSU Pride of the Plains Marching Band, died June 6 in Kansas City. He was 54.

A memorial gathering was held in the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts, where Whitten directed Symphonic Band concerts, summer band concerts, and led the annual Christmas gathering called The Holly Jolly Tubas. The archived recording can be viewed at [pittstate.tv](http://pittstate.tv).

A paver in his honor was installed under the gorilla statue in Champions Plaza, which the band paraded past each game day.

He earned a bachelor's in tuba performance from the University of Nevada, Reno, a master's in music from Boise State University, and a doctorate in education from Boise State University. Right out of high school, he served in the U.S. Army, and was in Berlin when the wall came down.

He performed worldwide as a member of U.S. Army bands, and as a musician with several professional orchestras in the U.S. and in Europe, in jazz ensembles, chamber groups, and with popular entertainers including Moody Blues and Captain and Tennille.

He was a member of the International Tuba and Euphonium Association (formerly T.U.B.A.), Kappa Kappa Psi Honorary Band Fraternity, College Music Society, College Band Directors National Association, Music Educator's National Conference, Kansas Bandmasters Association, and the Northwest Pageantry Judges Association.

Whitten is survived by his fiancé, Kristie Browns, and two children, Elliot and Catcher, of Boise, Idaho.





# 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.



## **Norma McCaslin**

Norma McCaslin was employed at Kansas State College (Pittsburg State University) as a secretary from 1958 through 1971. She felt a great deal of pride in the university and left the PSU Foundation a portion of her investment portfolio.

The funds will be used to support the College of Technology in the name of former dean F. Victor Sullivan and his wife Mary Kate Sullivan, and to create the Susan J. Marchant Organ Scholarship Fund in the Music Department.

McCaslin died Aug. 28, 2021, at age 95, in Pittsburg. She was a member and officer in the Treble Clef Club, and very musically active all of her life.



## **Jill Holmes**

In honor of her mother, who graduated in 1934 with a bachelor's degree in Family and Consumer Sciences, Jill Holmes established an endowed scholarship with preference given to American Indian and African-American undergraduate students at Pittsburg State University.

Jill knew the important role PSU served in Viola's life and wanted to continue to honor her legacy beyond her lifetime. The scholarship is called The Viola Lacher Roe Holmes Endowed Scholarship.

Jill Holmes, who worked as a librarian her entire life, died June 20, 2022, at age 81 in Stillwater, Oklahoma. She was a member of various organizations including American Library Association, National Education Association, National Organization of Women, Ocean Conservancy, Southern Poverty Law Center, and the 1801 Society at Oaks Indian Mission.

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



University photographer Sam Clausen (BS '14) sees the campus through a lens: he takes thousands of photos each year of moments ordinary and monumental — moments that define PSU.



1. In November, the Gorilla men's basketball team took on the KU Jayhawks in an exhibition game at Allen Fieldhouse, led by new Coach Jeff Bosch, who served as head coach at MIAA rival Missouri Southern State University for eight seasons.
2. International students and friends gathered in Gorilla Village this fall for an introduction to classic American autumn activities: pumpkin carving, hot dogs, and s'mores.
3. Biology students conducted a prairie vegetation survey at Prairie State Park in Southwest Missouri as part of their plant taxonomy lab.
4. The longtime tradition of Raft Races during Homecoming Week continued in spite of a sudden drop in temperature.
5. A new event, Global Fest, turned Lindburg Plaza between McCray Hall and Willard Hall into a night market one Friday evening in September. Members of the campus and community went "around the world" to try food samples and enjoy art and music from more than 20 countries.
6. Question: Is there any prettier campus than ours?
7. The Gorilla football team drew crowds to Carne Smith Stadium last fall as they played an undefeated regular season and secured the program's 13th MIAA Championship — the first outright conference crown since the 2011 NCAA Division II National Championship season and the first MIAA title overall since 2014.











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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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