

# CougarCORNERNews

Western Nebraska Community College Alumni Newsletter

Winter 2021



■  
HOMECOMING  
2020

■  
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT  
COUPLES ON CAMPUS

■  
A LEGACY OF  
REGISTRY

**W**  
ALUMNI

# A NOTE FROM THE ALUMNI DIRECTOR



As we have been working together to socially distance, we've needed to be creative with the ways that we connect and communicate. This creativity opened new avenues, such as this year's Homecoming going virtual, making it easier for more of our WNCC alumni to attend. Our 7th annual Alumni Awards Ceremony had virtual visitors from Alabama, Alaska, Illinois,

Kansas, Minnesota, Ohio, Wyoming, and all over Nebraska. Check out the award winners on the last page. Thank you to everyone that attended and especially those that helped make these events possible!

Western Nebraska Community College continues to amaze me in the way that it has touched and changed people's lives. Stories from other WNCC employees, like recently retired WNCC registrar Roger Hovey (see below), have taught me what kind of lasting friendships have been made here. I've learned more about the ways in which moments spent on campus, pulling practical jokes, has created lasting memories (see page 5). Hearing from couples that found love here at WNCC and seeing the lives they've built for themselves and their families since leaving our doors (see pages 3-4) has been rewarding. And perhaps most importantly, I've seen the ways in which experiences at WNCC can reveal new loves and passions that push people forward to a brighter future, like they did for alumnus Damon Hunter (see page 5).

Even as we push through these difficult times, the ways in which this school and this community provide so many opportunities for connection and growth makes me excited to see what we'll find in the year to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Sheffield".

Mary Sheffield  
WNCC Foundation Alumni Relations & Stewardship Director

# A LEGACY OF REGISTRY



Graduation at WNCC is always chaotic behind the scenes as there is much to do before the President steps up to the podium to announce the names of the graduates. In his 30 years of service to WNCC, first as Admissions Director then 20 years as Registrar, Roger always made sure all the little things were in order. Former Interim Executive Vice President John Marrin said of Roger, "[Roger] did a phenomenal job; always with a sense of humor and with great professionalism... [he] always had the best interest of the College and students in mind."

When asked about his time at WNCC, Roger said, "What I miss most and the best part about WNCC are the friendships and camaraderie of working with the staff, faculty, administration, and the students, of course! You all made it fun to go to work at WNCC."

The students, alumni, and staff at WNCC will not soon forget the diligence that Roger brought to his work, the kindness he brought every day, and the bright future that lies ahead for the alumni and students' lives that he touched during his time at our school. Thank you Roger! Enjoy your retirement, time with your family, and don't forget to come visit us all soon!

# COUGARS IN PARADISE

Virtual Homecoming 2020.

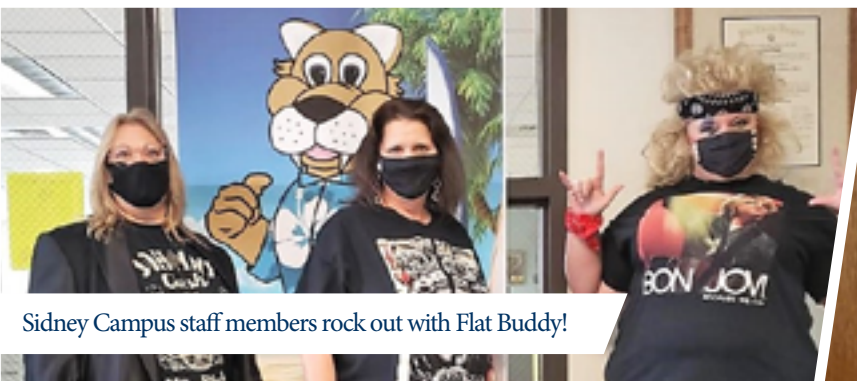
While very different, WNCC hosted a successful Homecoming in October. Enjoy a few of the special moments.



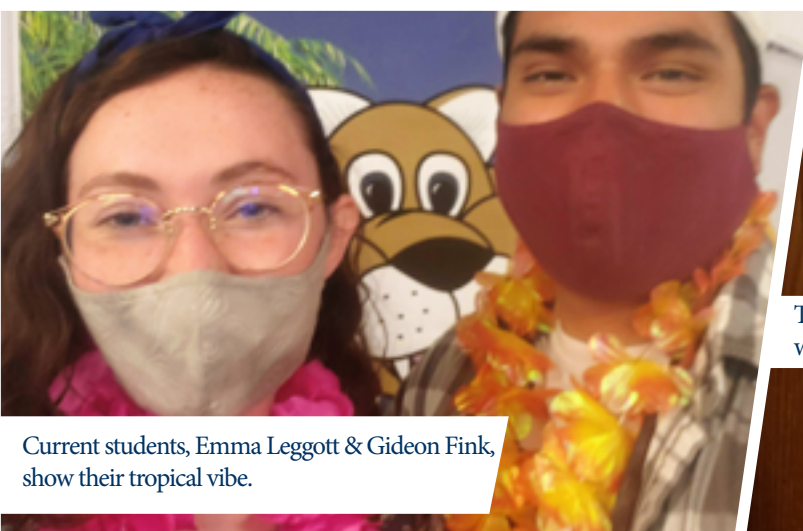
Current Alliance Campus student, Jennifer Acosta, poses with Flat Buddy.



Jennifer Seiler (far right front), alumna & current Nursing Instructor, shares a tropical moment with one of her classes.



Sidney Campus staff members rock out with Flat Buddy!



Current students, Emma Leggott & Gideon Fink, show their tropical vibe.



Tabetha Hayes, Class of 2019, goes the extra mile with her Flat Buddy selfie by dressing up!

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT COUPLES ON CAMPUS

**Eric & Kelly (Gallagher)Reimers**  
“Our relationship is best described as  
country boy meets city girl.”  
Class of 1998

**James & Nancy (Mayborn) Peterson**  
James loved walking home to her house  
at lunch for sandwiches and to study.  
Class of 1954

**Gianno & Kuulei (Kabalis) Bianconi**  
Gianno was the assistant men’s  
basketball coach when they met at his  
dorm parents’ house.  
Class of 2008 & 2011



Bob Pile and Elaine Hopkins grew up in the same county, only 35 miles apart. They later learned that they'd often been in the same places at the same time, just strangers passing each other in the halls. They both enrolled in what was then Nebraska Western College, going about their days in parallel. They didn't share any classes, but Elaine still caught glimpses of Bob in the hallways. She knew Bob's roommate and bugged him for more information about the handsome young man. Not usually the type to make the first move, Elaine came out of her speech class and saw Bob in the Pit. Something in her that day gave Elaine the courage to cross the room and introduce herself. It worked, and in

August 2020, Bob and Elaine celebrated their 47th anniversary. Facebook's Data Science Unit reports over a quarter of married college graduates met during their time at college. A fair share of WNCC (Scottsbluff Junior College and Nebraska Western College) students like Bob and Elaine have found their soulmate in the Pit, or during a college mixer after a football game like Nancy Mayborn and James Peterson, or maybe by chance while spending time with their dorm parents, like Gianno and Kuulei Kabalis. For many alumni, and most certainly for many students to come, WNCC has been the perfect catalyst to help them find lasting love and partnership.

#### **Byron & Deb (Holloway) Jensen**

Byron and Deb met while performing in Nebraska Western College's 20 Plus Show Choir. Class of 1976 & 1977

#### **Kalu & Fabiano (Borsari) Guasco**

Friends from Brazil, they started dating while student athletes on WNCC campus. Class of 2005 & 2004

#### **Robert & Elaine (Hopkins) Pile**

She introduced herself to him in the Pit after Speech class and the rest is history. Class of 1971



## LOOK WHAT WE FOUND



During the spring semester of 1992, Business Instructor Jeannette Johnson and student assistant Janet Soule began hoarding shredded paper. On April 1 they found their target, The Booger Mobile, a snot-green colored 1973 Ford station wagon belonging to Bob Vooge. They filled it with the paper and left a note in red lipstick on the windows. Bob, another Business Instructor who taught here for 42 years, never found out who pulled this prank.

This fun picture was captured for The Spectator, the student newspaper. What do you think Bob is thinking? His daughter Natalee Vooge Schmidt, class of 1980, said of the event, "I talked to my brother Jay (Class of 1990), and we both think this was the time that retaliation took place. Dad had filled another instructor's car full of packaging peanuts."

While it must have taken Bob most of the afternoon to clean out paper, he didn't get it all. Later, the Booger Mobile was involved in a fender bender and shredded paper flew out of the air vents.

Recently, Jeannette finished recounting the story by saying, "Oh my! Vooge was a prankster. We loved that guy and miss him terribly!"

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW



### Damon Hunter

Played basketball under Coach Terry Layton in the 1980s

Damon returned to Scottsbluff to visit in July 2020. While the name of the school has changed and some of the walls have moved, memories came back as he walked through the Pit, Cougar Palace, and Pioneer Hall. He remembers not being focused on classes while attending college here and yet, "This is where my love for teaching sparked." Damon spoke fondly of campus faculty and staff, and especially his dorm parents. Professionally, Damon has worked as a teacher, principal, and is now an assistant superintendent in a large public-school district in Washington. He has a greater respect and understanding for the process of education and how it molds a student's future. Looking back through the lens of experience, Damon appreciates his time in Scottsbluff more than when he was here as a student. Most of the time we never know what piece of Scottsbluff people take with them when they move away. It is nice to know that for Damon, the feelings of community and family he felt while he was here stayed with him and fostered a desire for him to return physically and not just in his memories. It was well worth the trip.

# SAVE THE DATE!

Homecoming 2021  
October 18-23

## 2021 EVENT SCHEDULE

To see a full list of events visit [wncc.edu/events](http://wncc.edu/events)

### January 21

Episode 3 of *Framing your Future* Podcast

### February 18

Episode 4 of *Framing your Future* Podcast

### February 26-28

Theatre Arts | *Night Witches*

### March 2

Virtual Job & Internship Fair

### March 5

All Performing Arts Programs | Faculty Recital

### March 18

Episode 5 of *Framing your Future* Podcast

### March 26-27

Vocal Music | Gala

### April 16-18

Theatre Arts | *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

### April 30

Instrumental & Vocal Music | Honors Recital

### May 7

Instrumental Music | *Jump, Jive & Swing*

### May 8

Graduation



Western Nebraska Community College  
**FOUNDATION**

Jennifer Reisig, *Foundation Executive Director*

Through collaboration with local industry experts, the Western Nebraska Community College Foundation is helping WNCC respond to the need for a Diesel, Truck, & Heavy Equipment program. "We currently do not have the workforce we need," says Jake Aulick of Aulick Industries when talking about the market demands for Diesel Technicians that cannot be met. Currently, local talent is going elsewhere instead of being trained in and retained by our communities. This causes an applicant pool that is too small and open positions that sit vacant for too long.

Professionals in agricultural, transport, equipment, and construction industries in Western Nebraska are eager to hire qualified Diesel Technicians, and they are lending a hand to WNCC to help make this program a reality. Dr. Charlie Gregory, Dean of Workforce Development at WNCC said, "With local business partners, we can build a solid program based on community need. The Diesel, Truck, & Heavy Equipment program represents a significant step forward in supporting regional employers. The Program will help to ensure educational opportunities for students in this high demand, well-paying field."

The WNCC Foundation is helping to secure monetary, equipment, scholarship, and instructional donations for this program, which is on track for approval in time for a Fall 2021 start. To learn more about how you or your business can support this program, contact the WNCC Foundation at [foundation@wncc.edu](mailto:foundation@wncc.edu).



# 2020 ALUMNI AWARDS WINNERS

## **Cara Perkins Meritorious Service**

David, Class of 1971, & Colleen Dietrich



## **Lifetime Achievement**

Helen McDonald, Class of 1942



## **Family Pride**

Edward & Betty Wiedeman Family  
received by Susan Wiedeman, Class of 1980



## **Outstanding Alumnus**

Dr. Robert C. Byrd, Class of 1969



## **Friend of the College**

Stewart & Sharon (Sowerwine) Rusch, Class of 1970



## **Outstanding Young Alumnus**

Dr. Sean Whipple, Class of 2004

