## MOUNT VERNON COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

# A NEWS

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Col. Derek Oakley '92 speaks with Mount Vernon students during the Hall of Fame reception. Look for more Hall of Fame coverage on page 6.

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The Mount Vernon Community School District Alumni Association is pleased to announce the following alums were selected as 2025 Alumni Hall of Fame winners. Pictured above left to right:

Achievement – Derek Oakley '92 Fine Arts – Renee Meyer Vande Wege '96 Service – Dennis Jordan '87 MV Community Impact – Dave Ryan '85

2026. Turn to page page 6 for recipient bios and photos.

Athletic- Nikki Nelson Pauli '98

They received their awards during Homecoming weekend on Friday, October 3,

2026 Alumni-Friend Events

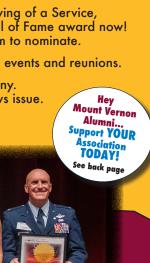
**January 1-December 31** – A reminder that we have changed our calendar year for donations to January 1 through December 31. So, now is a great time to think about supporting one of your favorite organizations – the MV Alumni Association! See back page or visit mvalumni.org to log in and donate online. The Association is funded entirely by a yearly donation request.

May 1 - DON'T DELAY - Nominate an alum you think is deserving of a Service, Achievement, MV Community Impact, Fine Arts, or Athletic Hall of Fame award now! Who can nominate? ANYONE - you do not have to be an alum to nominate.

July 10-11, 2026 - Heritage Days in Mount Vernon with alumni events and reunions.

**Fall 2026 tha** – Homecoming and Alumni Hall of Fame Ceremony. More information about events in the Spring 2026 Alumni News issue.







# 



Jack Cochrane '17 returned to Mount Vernon to coach at his football camp. Read more on page 19

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ALUMNI NEWSLETTER is published twice yearly for alumni and friends of the Association. Views are those of the authors. Articles and advertisements (preferably digital) may be submitted by email to alumni@mvcsd.org or by mail to 525 Palisades Road SW, Mount Vernon, IA 52314. All materials submitted are subject to review by the Alumni Association Communications Committee. For advertising rates write or call 319-895-8845.

### **MV Community Events**

www.visitmvl.com 2026

May - Chalk the Walk
July - Antique Extravaganza
July - Heritage Days
September – Lincoln Highway Arts Festival
Oct - Chili Cookoff
Dec - Magical Mount Vernon

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings,

As we wind down in 2025, and I reflect on the year, I am reminded how much Mount Vernon has changed yet has also stayed the same. The 1974 state championship football was honored and the legacy left by this team



Cathy Hufford '83 Alumni Association President

has been followed for more than 50 years. The same winning attitude, hard work and results but now in the Martha Parson Activities Complex. From the marching band, choir and theatre to all the athletic activities, the dedication, hard work and camaraderie has always been present but now in much nicer and larger facilities.

Every year Mount Vernon schools are staffed with talented and devoted educators. We are all in some way a product of these dedicated individuals who poured themselves into our development, lives and educations. Listening to the speeches of this year's Hall of Fame inductees, each of them highlighted the importance of the teachers and staff who guided them through their school years and helped lay the foundation for their future success.

We are sorry to lose Julia Andrews as our Alumni Director but take comfort in knowing that she is still in Mount Vernon. A huge thank you to John Pospisil for 20 years of service on the Alumni Board. We welcome Bill Thomsen '72 and Ann Lehman Currie '77 to the Board. Finally, as an alumni board we are so grateful for all of you. We are blessed to have alumni that are supportive, not only of this association, but the many other groups and associations in Mount Vernon.

Wishing you the best in 2026. Go Mustangs! Cathy Hufford, President

## HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THE MV ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

In 2022 The Alumni Association's Board decided to change from a dues/support and donation system to simply a donation.

Please consider an annual donation of your choice to support the activities and publications of the Alumni Association. Either visit the

back page of this publication
 or online at mvalumni.org
 Online, just select 'Donate'

NOTE: do not be alarmed that the page you are directed to is a Foundation page. For donation reporting purposes, the MV Alumni Association operates under the MVCSD Foundation, a tax-exempt organization. Select 'Alumni Association' for your donation and the total amount is directed to the Alumni Association.

## 2026 REUNIONS

### You are a student once, but an alum for a lifetime.

Because the Newsletter was published early this year, most reunions have not considered their plans. Below are the class representatives for classes scheduled to have a reunion this year. Look for more information to come!

### 2021 5 years - tba

Contact: Keean Kamerling

Email: keeankamerling@gmail.com

Contact: Lauren Ryan

Email: lauren.ryan1234@gmail.com

### 2016 10 years - tba

Contact: Jenna Brannaman Kannegieter Email: jenna.brannaman@gmail.com

Phone: 319-558-6811 Contact: David Taylor Phone: 319-855-2822

### 2011 15 years - tba

Contact: Micah Wieditz

Email: micahwieditz@gmail.com

Phone: 319-654-6126

### 2006- 20 years - tba

Contact: Jessica Corcoran Fitzpatric Email: jessicamcorcoran@gmail.com

Phone: 319-551-2171 Contact: Kim Smyth Phone: 319-482-2541

### 2001 - 25 years - tba

Contact: Jessie Bigley Gallagher Email: jessiehgallagher@gmail.com

Phone: 469-544-7858

### 1996 - 30 years - tba

Contact: Maggie Lessmeier Willems Email: maggiewillems@gmail.com

Phone: 319-929-4542 Contact: Ben Pospisil

Email: bennyp1984@yahoo.com

Phone: 319-330-9493

### 1991 - 35 years - tba

Contact: Deanna Parish Gray Email: goldiegray@gmail.com

Phone: 515-321-2051

### 1986 - 40 years - tba

Contact: Deb Winchip Douglass Email: debbilld@netins.net Phone: 641-755-3055

### 1981 - 45 years - tba

Contact: Rhondi Ewing

Email: rhondi@ewingdesign.com

Phone: 805-499-1415

### 1976 - 50 years - tba

Contact: Glori Holtz Roman Email: glor17@msn.com Phone: 319-396-2991

### 1971 - 55 years - tba

Contact: Wendy Kaplan Johnson 1971 Email: johnsonwendy725@gmail.com

Phone: 319-551-1428

### 1966 - 60 years - HERITAGE DAYS WEEKEND

Contact: Cindy Buresh Prewitt Email: cynannprew@gmail.com

Phone: 612-940-0287

Contact: Margaret Ellison Duffy Email: Margaret917@me.com

Phone: 319-930-0917

### 1961 - 65 years - tba

Contact: Dick Miner

Email: dickminer@gmail.com

Phone: 775-833-2747

#### Other classes

Meet at Saturday morning Alumni-Community Breakfast

Your class may not be having a reunion, but come Heritage Days weekend to enjoy seeing classmates, other alums, teachers, and your friends from the community.

The Heritage Days Committee is looking for volunteers to help serve on the Heritage Days Committee. The Committee is responsible for organizing Heritage Days weekend.

If you're interested in serving on the committee, or volunteering for Heritage Days, please reach out to CDG Director

> Jessie Thurn '02 (319) 210 - 9935 director@visitmvl.com













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## Thank you to our outgoing board members...

eilder Spider Thank you to outgoing board members John Pospisil '66 and Grant Freeman '06. John served on the board since 2008 and served as Vice President since 2014. Many alumni members met John during his tours of the First Street Building (the Old High School) during Heritage Days. Grant Freeman joined the board in 2023 and assisted us during the Mount Vernon High School Theatre Centennial Celebration. Thank you for your service!

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**Tom Kortemeyer** 

## Goodbye to Julia....

In August, Julia Andrews, Alumni Director, announced that she was leaving the position. In her letter, Andrews stated, "It is with gratitude and sadness that I need to announce my resignation from the Alumni Coordinator/ Communication Specialist Position. I have decided to put my focus on music

and direct student impact by accompanying at MVCSD, teaching in Mount Vernon, and teaching/playing at Kirkwood College....I am profoundly grateful for the Alumni position, my wonderful colleagues, and this incredible district for the opportunity to work in it.

Interviews were conducted in November, 2025. A formal announcement with the new Alumni Director will be made soon - possibly before this newsletter makes its way to mailboxes!

Andrews concluded, "I'm leaving with profound gratitude for the alumni that built Mount Vernon."



Julia racing down the 10th Avenue Hill in Karen Martin's golf cart.

### ....and welcome new board members

The alumni board welcomed three new board members in the Fall 2025.

Ann Lehman Currie 1977



### Tell us about growing up in Mount Vernon?

We moved from West Liberty to Mount Vernon during my kindergarten year and lived right across from the elementary school. In 6th grade we moved out to the farm now known as The Big Apple Orchard. I have many happy memories of playing with the kids in the neighborhood until supper time. With a whistle from my dad, I would go right home, (Parents didn't have to be quite as cautious back then). Others include riding the bus with lots of friends, playing outside back when we didn't have video games, and using our imagination, participating in extra-curricular activities, Volleyball (my freshman year was the first year that MV had a team, led by the illustrious Shirley Ryan), softball, powder puff football at Homecoming, band, chorus, and whatever else there was to stay busy. Every Friday evening many of the high school students would hang out at the bowling alley, eventually called Don Mar Lanes, which sadly burnt down in 2015.

I graduated in 1977. I got my Registered Nursing degree at Kirkwood Community College in 1981 and began working at St. Luke's Hospital in OB (Actually starting in 1980 while I finished school). I was married in 1980 to my husband, Jay from Schaller, Iowa. We moved into a house in Cedar Rapids. We have two kids, Kit and Lexi (Formerly Clint).

### What did you do when you returned to Mount Vernon?

In 1990 when it was time for Kit to start kindergarten we moved to Mt. Vernon. We wanted our kids to have the same kind of small town environment that we did. My kids and I had many of the same junior high and high school teachers, including Mr. Oliphant, Mr. Ferreter, Mr.

Wumpkes, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Meeker, and possibly others. (You know, the memory is the first to go!) They were new for us, and getting ready to retire when the kids went through.

When my daughter Kit, pitched in high school, we hosted the second round of regionals. Mike Loan and I decided that we needed to have music and an announcer. So he brought his computer, speakers and a table. I brought a mic and we set up next to the fence on the visiting team's side. The next year a press box was built by parents. I announced softball games for about 12 years and loved it!!

### Now that you're retired, what are you doing?

Jay and I both retired in 2024. We are loving having no schedule and are putting an addition on our house. Very exciting!

### Why did you want to be on the Alumni Board?

I have been active in planning Class of 77 Reunions, and thought it would be great to get involved with the Alumni Board. I treasure my years in Mt. Vernon, and we plan to live out our days here.

### Bill Thomsen 1972

### Tell us about growing up in Mount Vernon?

I was born in MV, in a house that sat where the Bijou Theater is today. We lived there until I was four when my family moved to Calgary, Canada. We lived there for four years. We returned Home, as I saw it, with me starting third grade. School had its challenges for me, but I worked through them, as my future career supports. Athletics were my first love. Football, wrestling, baseball, and golf kept me busy in high school. Chorus was also very important to me. I loved to sing and had great music teachers. My last two years I found a passion for acting which I continued into adulthood. Mount Vernon was and is a town of opportunities. I felt supported in everything I participated in.

My Dad was a Cornell grad, so I wanted to follow his footsteps. Again, I had a wonderful experience while still being in MV. I wanted to be a physical education teacher and coach like my teacher and coach, Larry Straw. I graduated with that major but I couldn't find any jobs, so I went back to Cornell for an extra year and got an elementary education degree. I was hired by New Hampton to be a fifth grade teacher, assistant wrestling coach, middle school football and track coach, and assistant baseball. After five years, Mount Vernon had an opening in P.E. and head wrestling. I would shift to elementary fifth grade teaching, later. I coached anything MV needed me to do. Over the years, I coached middle school wrestling, football, track, and volleyball. I was head coach in wrestling for nine years and head girls track for sixteen years. Teaching and coaching were dream jobs that I was blessed to have some success in.

## Why did you want to return to Mount Vernon?

The why,
I stayed is
simple, Family!
My Dad died
when I was in
college. My
Mom and



sisters all lived in Mount Vernon and my brother wasn't too far away in Mason City. My wife also graduated from MV. We both wanted to raise our family near family. We had four kids and have eight grandkids. I loved teaching and coaching in Mount Vernon. I am a Mustang! I retired but was rehired as a long term sub for two years and then became a para serving in each building at different times. Covid finally ended that run. I also worked construction for years with Jim Engelbrecht and Dave Rega throughout my career and beyond.

### Now that you're retired, what are you doing?

I'd say I'm now retired. I was briefly on the MV school board but felt I couldn't continue. I love being a grandpa and husband to Lori for over 45 years. I read to elementary classroom that my grandkids are in, perform in the Middle School Teacher Christmas show, try to keep in shape walking and doing pushups, and just can't get enough of family. My sister was on the Alumni Board and I felt I'd like to continue to show my support for MV.



## 2025 ALUMNI HALL OF FAMF

















ACHIEVEMENT -Derek Oakley '92, FINE ARTS - Renee Meyer Vande Wege '96 SERVICE - Dennis Jordan '87 COMMUNITY IMPACT - Dave Ryan '85, ATHLETIC - Nikki Nelson Pauli '98

Pictured below, Front row, left to right are recipients Nikki Nelson Pauli '98, Dennis Jordan '87, Dave Ryan '85, Renee Meyer Vande Wege '96, and Col. Derek Oakley '92.

Behind recipients: Student Council President Norah Weber, Foundation Director Dr. Amie Roberts, Bill Thomson '72, Bob Penn '81, Stephanie Timm, Andrew Morf '94, Superintendent Matt Leeman, Master of Ceremonies John Rife '60, Dr. Greg Batenhorst, Barbara Beckhelm Moore 53, Lavonne Meyer '94, Teresa Britt Patterson '02, MVHS Principal Steve Brand, and Hall of Fame Chair Sarah Rife Patten '93.

The Hall of Fame award ceremony took place Friday morning, October 3, in the High School Performing Arts Center (PAC) auditorium, followed by a public reception in the lobby. The audience, filled with high school students and staff, alumni, family and friends, cheered the five recipients as they received their awards.

Friday evening was the Homecoming Game and presentation of Alumni Hall of Fame recipients during halftime at the Martha Pearson Activities Complex. The Mustangs beat Center Point-Urbana 34-14.

On Thursday evening recipients enjoyed riding in Corvettes during the Homecoming parade. On Friday after the Awards Ceremony, Hall of Fame recipients enjoyed building tours and lunch. In the afternoon they visited with classes in the PAC and attended the Homecoming pep rally.









John Rife '60 was master of ceremony at the 2025 awards. Sarah Rife Patten '93 was the Hall of Fame Chair.

Sept 27 Hall of Fame ceremony <a href="https://youtu.be/">https://youtu.be/</a>
i5Ua7iUniSE?si=9vC4caMv2yRqfCmV

Hall of Fame links https://mvalumni.org/hall-of-fame/



When Derek Oakley ran JV track in 1989, Coach Dave Thumm said of his team "They face a dilemma and deal with it... Derek Oakley just took over." That early instinct to lead never left him, **The 2025 Achievement Hall of Fame Recipient is Col. Derek Oakley '92.** He was nominated by his sister in law, Teresa Britt Patterson 2002.

Mount Vernon High School provided Oakley with the training to be a leader in his field. "Mount Vernon High School is a unique place where students can pursue a top-tier education while finding their talents through participating in nearly any activity that piques their interests." Oakley was a National Honor Society student and participated in the chorus and school musicals. He excelled in Cross Country, Wrestling, and Track. He was a team captain and state qualifier as both a team and individual in Cross Country, state qualifier as a team in Wrestling, and state event qualifier in Track. As a high school junior, Derek Oakley was named KCRG's "Athlete of the Week," after winning 3 events at the triangular track meet against Lisbon and West Liberty.

After graduating from MVHS, Oakley earned a teaching degree from Judson College. "After I graduated from college, a fellow Mount Vernon classmate spoke with me about military service," said Oakley. "Through this conversation, I decided to join the Air Force and have enjoyed 28 years of service to our country." He received his commission from the United States Air Force Officer Training School in 2000 and graduated from pilot training at Columbus AFB, Mississippi.

Oakley went on to be a command pilot with more than 3,400 flight hours in the B-1B, T-38, T-6, and T-37, including 991 combat hours in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Before becoming Commander, he led the 28th Operations Group at Ellsworth, the largest operational B-1B group in the U.S. Air Force. He spent half his career flying the B-1 and the other half teaching new pilots.

Col. Derek Oakley became the commander of the 28th Bomb Wing, Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota, the largest B-1 combat wing in the United States Air Force, with more than 12,000 active- duty military, civilian employees, and family members. He provided combat-ready aircraft, crews and associated combat support for global engagement taskings.

As a Colonel, Oakley had many duties but continued to train new airmen, despite his many responsibilities as a commander. It aligned with a long-term vision to be the best, and to train from the ground up. Col. Derek Oakley, known affectionately as "Shades" by his fellow airmen, retired after decades in the Air Force in August 2025.

Derek Oakley and his wife Kelly Britt Oakley 1993 are MVHS high school sweethearts. Their lives together include almost 30 years of marriage, two kids, and 14 military moves.

Looking back, Oakley reflects warmly on MVHS friendships and the chance to inspire others. Recently, he spent time talking with a classmate about her son considering Air Force Service – later seeing him graduate from Basic Training. "The greater joy," Oakley said, "was knowing he'd uphold a piece of the legacy I have been a part of."

From her earliest days in Carolyn Palmer's elementary music class

to her current role as a music educator and choir director, this year's Fine Arts Recipient has lived a musical life full of service to others.

The 2025 Fine Arts Hall of Fame Recipient is Renee Meyer Vande Wege '96. She was nominated by Barbara (Babs) Beckhelm Moore ('52) and LaVonne Meyer ('94).

As a student in Mount Vernon, Renee immersed herself with every opportunity to perform. She studied violin at the Preucil School of Music, played flute in the school band, sang in her Mount Vernon Methodist Church Choirs, and took piano lessons and that was before she went to High School. By the time she arrived at MVHS, she was already a musical leader. Renee was a four-year All-State Choir member. She received "excellent" ratings in solo and ensemble festivals during all four years. In addition to vocal music, Renee took part in small and large group speech contests. She was inducted into the MVHS chapter of the International Thespian Society. Outside of school, Renee performed in Mount Vernon Community Theater productions of Cinderella. The Wizard of Oz, and Anything Goes.

Renee credits her numerous teachers including Carolyn Palmer, Janet Ault, Judy Stine, Donna Jacob, Maggie Quinn Ellison '62, and Joleen Nelson Woods for shaping her as a performer and as a teacher. She regularly draws on their influence in her work as a conductor and music educator.



Following graduation, Renee attended Hope College in Holland, Michigan where she was awarded multiple scholarships, including the Distinguished Artist Award. She graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance in 2000. She went on to earn her Music Education certification at Aquinas College and Master's Degree in Music Education from Michigan State University. She also received her certification in Music Learning Theory from the Gordon Institute.

Renee has taught students from kindergarten through ninth grade in public and private schools across western Michigan. Currently she directs choirs at North Rockford Middle School and serves as Prelude Chorus Director of the Grand Rapids Symphony Youth Choruses. She also conducts the Rockford Community Choir, directs other children and youth choirs, and maintains a private vocal studio. As a former member of the Opera Grand Rapids chorus, the Grand Rapids Symphony Chorus and the Camerata Singers, Renee thoroughly enjoys performing. She has served as both Soprano Soloist and Vocal Director for

Grand Rapids Children's Opera Workshop and sings with VOX GR, a professional choir in Grand Rapids. She serves as director of the Middle School Choir for Knollcrest Music Camp at Calvin University. She is also a parent to teenagers, Emily and Levi.

Through her teaching, conducting, and performing Renee serves her community through her artistry and service. Her achievements exemplify the best of Mount Vernon Alumni: talent, leadership, and a passion for inspiring others.



Renee encouraged current MVHS students to "find and use their voice"



This year's Service Award Hall of Fame recipient is no



stranger to service – or to the Hall of Fame. The 2025 Service Award goes to Dennis Jordan '87. He was nominated for the award by Andrew Morf '94.

As a student in Mount Vernon Dennis participated in band and jazz band. Some of his fondest memories include

attending football and basketball games as well as school dances. "My favorite teachers were Ruth Michaud and Richard Scearce who taught me to believe in myself through their words of encouragement." Following high school Dennis graduated from Kirkwood Community College, received a Bachelor of Arts in Marketing from the University of Northern Iowa and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Iowa.

Today, Dennis serves as the Director of Customer, Community and Economic Development for Alliant Energy. Dennis leads the strategy and team for economic and community development activities as well as key account managers for both Iowa and Wisconsin. His career includes leadership roles with the M.A. Mortenson Company, the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance, US Bank, Terry, Lockridge & Dunn, and Amana Appliances, which is now a part of the Whirlpool Corporation. Additionally, he serves as Adjunct Lecturer for the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (JPEC) at the University of Iowa where he teaches Entrepreneurial Marketing and serves as a faculty mentor for JPEC Business Consulting.

Jordan's service extends beyond his profession. He has held key leadership roles with Rotary International, Junior Achievement, the Kirkwood Foundation, the United Way of East Central Iowa, and numerous other organizations across the Corridor and state. His impact

has been recognized with honors including Kirk-wood's Distinguished Alumni Award, United Way's John B. Northcott Award, Cedar Rapids Rotary's Community Service Award. He was one of the inaugural recipients of the Corridor Business Journal's Forty Under 40 in 2005 and was a Leadership Iowa graduate in 2019.

In Mount Vernon, Jordan currently serves as a Vice President for Mount Vernon-Lisbon Community Development Group. He was on the Mount Vernon Alumni Board for fifteen years serving as the Alumni Board President from 2014-2016 and the Hall of Fame Chair from 2010-2023. Former Alumni Board Association Board President Andrew Morf said, "I can't think of a better recipient - especially given his commitment and dedication to the MVAA and Hall of Fame Selection process over so many years."

Doug Neumann, former Executive Director of the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance said, "Unbeknownst to many, Dennis' contributions to the community go way beyond what he does professionally...Most of that is done well outside the limelight but nonetheless has a significant impact on many people."

Dennis credits his Mount Vernon roots for shaping his path, "Mount Vernon provided me with a well-rounded education that encouraged me to be a lifelong learner. Additionally, Mount Vernon exposed me to students and teachers from many walks of life that have since served me well." Dennis is married to Angela Jordan and they have four grown children. They are returning to Mount Vernon and building a home on an acreage north of town -bringing his journey full circle back to the community that launched it.



One of the first questions the committee asked when Dave Ryan received his Hall of Fame Nomination was "who will announce the recipients on the field at homecoming?" Dave Ryan is the "voice of Mount Vernon" over the PA system, within the school district, and throughout the community. The 2025 Mount Vernon Community Impact Award goes to Dave Ryan '85. Ryan was nominated by John Rife '60 and former MVCSD Superintendent Dr. Greg Batenhorst.

As a Mount Vernon High School student, Ryan graduated with academic honors. He earned varsity letters in four sports - football, wrestling, golf, and baseball and was a four-time conference wrestling champion.

Outside of his services to Mount Vernon Schools, Ryan is also a volunteer within Mount Vernon. He is a lone time member of the Mount Vernon-Lisbon Lions Club, and an active member at St. John's Catholic Church.

After earning a BA in Business Management from the University of Northern Iowa he continued his education at the Iowa School of Banking and the Graduate School of Banking from University of Colorado, Boulder. He worked for both Norwest Financial and Waterloo Savings Bank/Mercantile Bank (now part of the US Bank system) before returning home to Mount Vernon at Mount Vernon Bank and Trust Company. Since 2005, Ryan has served as the bank's President and CEO guiding growth of more than \$125 million.

Ryan's volunteer record is extensive. In the Mount Vernon Community School District, he has been a regular classroom speaker, and fundraiser. He coached the Mount Vernon Wrestling Club and the Mount Vernon Heat Softball Team. He has maintained all-time sports record books for wrestling, football, and softball, and played a key

role in planning and fundraising for the new Martha Parsons and Family Activities Complex. He currently serves as President of the Mount Vernon School District Foundation.

Most recognizably he is the "Voice of Mount Vernon" serving as the PA announcer for wrestling, football, baseball, track and marching band. Said nominator Greg Batenhorst, "Dave is always impeccably prepared and professional, supporting Mount Vernon kids while also honoring its opponents."

Outside of his services to Mount Vernon Schools, Ryan is also a volunteer within Mount Vernon. He is a lone time member of the Mount Vernon-Lisbon Lions Club, and an active member at St. John's Catholic Church, a supporter of Cornell College athletics, and the past president of the Mount Vernon Development Corporation (now the Mount Vernon CDG). He has a philosophy of "local first" which is seen in his life and business.

Family is the heart of Ryan's Mount Vernon pride. He and his wife Heidi have raised nine children - eight MVHS graduates and one set to graduate in 2026 - and eight grandchildren, six of whom live locally. "Family life is probably my greatest source of Mount Vernon pride ... this, and knowing and rooting for the citizenry of our community." said Ryan.

Nominator John Rife praised Ryan's tremendous impact in this community as a father, grandfather, and volunteer while Greg Batenhorst summed up his nomination with "Simply put, Dave Ryan IS Mount Vernon.



The 2025 Athletic Hall of Fame recipient is Nikole (Nikki) Nelson Pauli '98. She was nominated by Bill Thomsen, Stephanie Timm, and Bob Penn.

Nikki is the daughter of Gary and Karen Nelson. Her father was the Washington Elementary School Principal. She grew up in a house that valued education, leadership, and service. At the High School, she played softball, volleyball, and basketball, but

she was most known for her excellence in track and field. Her name is synonymous with excellence on the track, where she established herself as the most decorated athlete - male or female - in Mount Vernon's track and field history.

By graduation, Nikki held school records in the 100, 200, 400, and 800 meters as well as the sprint medley relay, shuttle hurdle relay, and 4x400 relay. In her sophomore through senior years, she captured 12 conference titles and only lost three races in total. Nikki's dominance extended to the state level where she claimed eight state championships – seven individual and one relay. In 1997, as the only athlete scoring points for Mount Vernon - Lisbon, Nikki individually scored enough points that the TEAM placed 4th. The following year, she became just the eighth girl in lowa history to win four events at a single state meet. Nikki's senior year was crowned with a Drake Relays title in the 800 meters and eventual induction into the lowa Girls High School Athletic Hall of Fame.

Her success continued at the University of Northern lowa where she earned a full scholarship. Nikki wasted no time leaving her mark, setting collegiate records in the 600 meters and 400 meter hurdles the first time she ran them. She became a three-time conference champion in the 400 hurdles, earned All-

Conference honors eight times, and won a Drake Relays title in the 400 hurdles. She held three individual and five relay records at UNI, qualified for nationals twice, and was named Senior athlete of the year.

Nikki also competed at the highest levels beyond college, qualifying for the U.S. Nationals multiple times, advancing to the semi-finals twice, and competing in the U.S.Olympic Trials. She also represented the United States in the U.S. vs Russia Challenge.

Nikki's proudest accomplishment is marrying her college teammate Jacob Pauli. Jacob was a national champion in the pole vault and alternate in the 2008 Olympics. Today Nikki lives in Cedar Falls with her husband Jacob and their four children. Nikki and Jacob are the owners of Ninja U Gyms in Cedar Falls and Ankeny. She serves as the Youth Director at Orchard Hill Church, and runs a successful practice as a mental health counselor. At UNI, she oversees the Advanced Studies Certificate in Mental Health Program. Nikki also trains professionals worldwide in Adlerian Play Therapy. Said Nikki, "Parenting and mental health are very important and if I can help anyone feel a bit better or encouraged, I am honored to do so"

Never far from the track, Nikki coaches hurdlers at Cedar Falls High School, passing on the lessons she learned as a Mustang - hard work, resilience, and caring for others.

Reflecting on her journey, Nikki says, "Athletics has brought some amazing people and experiences into my life and I wouldn't trade that for anything. I love that I get to take what I have learned and pour into others and students. That's the coolest legacy."

## CEREMONY & RECEPTION



Left: Hall of Fame Recipient Dave Ryan '85 with Shirley Ryan. Right: Hall of Fame recipient Dennis Jordan '87 speaks with Mount Vernon students during the reception.





Above: Col. Derek Oakley '92 speaks with members of the football team before the Homecoming Game. Below: Hall of Famers attend the Pep Assembly.



Above: Nikki Nelson Pauli '98 walks with her former track coach and nominator Bill Thomsen '72. Below, board members Cathy Hufford '83, Susan Mounts Fisher '65, and Ann Currie Lehman '77 are all smiles at the Hall of Fame reception.

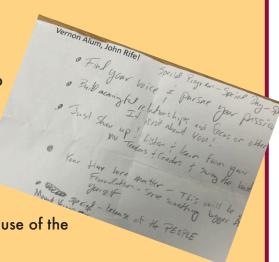


Renee Meyer Vande Wege '96 listens to the MVHS choir in rehearsal.



Principal Steve Brand summed up the ceremony speeches with five takeaways:

- Find your voice and pursue your passion
- Build meaningful relationships
- Just show up!
- Your time here matters.
- Mount Vernon is special because of the people!



# THE PARADE, STUDENTS, and FOOTBALL FIFLD











Hall of Fame recipients on a Corvette ride to the MAC. From left to right: Fine Arts Recipient, Renee Meyer Vande Wege '96 and LaVonne Meyer '94, MV Community Impact Recipient Dave Ryan '85 and Heidi Ryan, Service Recipient Dennis Jordan '87 and Angela Jordan, Athletics Recipient Nikki Nelson Pauli '98 and Kat Wikner, and Achievement Recipient Col. Derek Oakley '92.



Homecoming King Landon Wilson '26 and Homecoming Queen Grace Hale '26.











Recipients were honored in front of the Homecoming Crowd. Nominator and former superintendent Dr. Greg Batenhorst assumed PA duties while Dave Ryan received his award.



## MAIL BY MAY 1

How will we ever choose just five people out of the many deserving alums of Mount Vernon Schools? We'll let the **Selection Committee sweat** about that - just get in your nominations!

Hall of Fame winners will be announced in July and presented during Homecoming weekend, but please don't wait! We encourage you to fill out this nomination form and mail it in.

If you don't know all the qualifications for the person you are nominating, fill in as best as you can or work with your nominee. We will also mail a questionaire to each nominee.

**DEADLINE IS A MAY 1, 2025 POSTMARK - GET YOURS IN THE** MAIL NOW!

'The Spirit Lives On In You'



All nominees must be an aluma of Mount Vernon High School at least 28 years of age.

NOTE: If you have already submitted a nomination, you do not need to resubmit, and your nominee will be considered for an award this year.

### MVCSD Alumni Achievement Hall of Fame

Given to alumni who have earned recognition for their achievements antributions in their professional life. Criteria:

### Criteria:

- Demonstrates a high level of achievement in his/her civilian or military field and makes significant contributions to that
- Exhibits high moral character.

### MVCSD Alumni Service Hall of Fame

Given to alumni for specific and meritorious service to the MVCSD Alumni Association, or any other not-for-profit organization. Criteria:

- Service must be for a not-for-profit organization in a non-compensated capacity.
- Exhibits high moral character.

### MVCSD Community Impact Hall of Fame

Awarded to alumni who should be rewarded for their service impact on the Mount Vernon Community. Criteria:

- Significant service contributions either while in school and/or post-high-school to the Mount Vernon Community.
- Service may be for any purpose.
- Service may be in a non-compensated or a compensated capacity. Other considerations:
- Outstanding character and leadership.Exhibits high moral character.

#### MVCSD Fine Arts Hall of Fame

Awarded to alumni with exceptional accomplishment in the arts while attending Mount Vernon High School and/or post high school.

#### Criteria:

- Significant contributions in his/her fine arts area.
- Conference honors and/or All-State recognition, or equivalent.
- Superior ratings earned in competition.
- Major roles in theater productions, solos, etc.

#### Other considerations:

- Outstanding character and leadership.
- Successful participation in college and/or post-college.
- Major roles in theater productions, solos, etc. after high school.
- College scholarships in the fine arts disciplines.

### MVCSD Athletic Hall of Fame

Awarded to alumni with exceptional accomplishment in athletics while attending Mount Vernon High School and/or post high school.

#### Criteria:

- Statistical records and/or awards received.
- All-Conference All-State and/or state championships earned.

#### Other considerations:

- Outstanding character and leadership.
  Successful participation in college and/or professional athletics

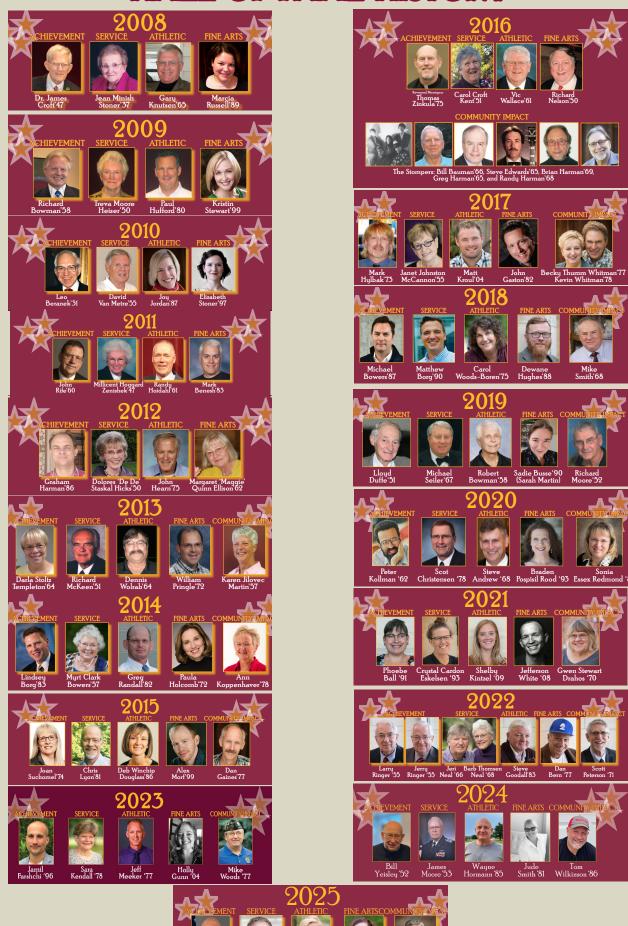
## 2026 MOUNT VERNON ALUMNI HALL OF FAME NOMINATION FORM Name of person I would like considered for an award(s): \_\_\_\_\_ His/Her address (if known) His/Her phone (if known) Select Desired MVCSD Alumni Hall of Fame Award(s): ☐ Achievement ☐ Service ☐ Mount Vernon Community Impact (service) ☐ Fine Arts ☐ Athletics Description of Qualifications (Attach additional pages as necessary): (Note: a questionaire will be sent to your nominee) Name of Person Submitting the Nomination: Address \_\_\_ City, State, Zip\_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Telephone (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Home Telephone (\_\_\_\_\_ All awards will be granted based on nominations, which can be submitted by mail using this form, or online at

www.mvalumni.org. Nominations will be reviewed and selected by the Selection Committee, and approved by the Alumni Association Board. Nominations are held. Questions - 319-895-8845 or alumni@mvcsd.org

Send this form postmarked by May 1 to: Alumni Association, 525 Palisades Rd SW, Mount Vernon, IA 52314.

\*\*Elected or appointed members of the Alumni Association Board are not eligible during their term of service.

## HALL OF FAME HISTORY













### **Greetings, Alumni!**

We had a wonderful time celebrating our alumni during the Hall of Fame in October. Do you know someone who deserves to be recognized? We encourage you to submit a nomination form on page 14.

The Hall of Fame Committee has made a change in the requirements. Athletic and Fine Arts Nominees will be considered on their exceptional accomplishment in the arts or athletics while attending Mount Vernon High

School and/or post high school.



Hall of Fame Chair Sarah Rife Patten '93 cheers on Hall of Fame recipient Dave Ryan '85 on the field at the football game.

Alumni, MV Staff, Community members and friends are encouraged to submit nominations.

We love celebrating the incredible accomplishments of our alumni and look forward to receiving your nominations!

Sarah Rife Patten '93 Hall of Fame Chair

### UPDATE TO NEWSLETTER MAILING

Due to rising postage costs, The Alumni Association Board has decided to update our newsletter mailing procedures.

- 1. For five years after graduating, classes will receive a DIGITAL copy of the newsletter. At each 5-Year reunion, alumni can choose to opt into a print copy.
- 2. For the fall/winter newsletter, District teachers will receive the newsletter in their District mailbox instead of USPS.
- 3. Families with multiple alums will receive one copy of the newsletter when requested by the family or alum.

If you want a hard copy of the newsletter, we will make sure that you receive a hard copy. The Board wants to ensure that we maintain a vital communication to our alumni while practicing financial responsibility with donations.

## 1974 Football Reunion

51 years ago, the 1974 MVHS team completed an undefeated season enroute to the school's first state football championship. The memories of the 1974 team left a lasting legacy on Mustang Football.

On September 19, 2025, in conjunction with the Class of 1975 50th reunion, the Mount Vernon Alumni Association honored the 1974 Football Team, coaches, and cheerleaders.

The team met for a presention from MVHS Head Football Coach Brad Meester and a dinner catered by Hall of Fame Member Gwen Drahos '70. The 1974 team went on to meet the current football team during the team huddle before walking out with the team to start the game. At halftime, the team was greeted to thunderous applause from a crowd of Mustang fans!



Above: The 1974 State Championship Football team. Below left: Gwen Drahos provided food and hospitality for the event. Below center: Every current football team member shook hands with the 1974 team. Below right, Alumni players, coaches, and cheerleaders marched onto the field with the current team.







### 1974 Mustang Roster

Russ Baker Dan Blinks Steve Brokel Ray Butterbaugh Márk Clark Dave Fall John Hearn John Henik Larry Hess Joe Hufford Dave Jensen Scott Jorgensen Dave Kaplan Dan Kinney Ivan Kuntz Ken Landis **Bob Lynott** 

Phil McConaughy Dan Moore Greg Morrissey Dennis Murphy Jerry Neiderhauser Mark Nichols Dave Ohlfest Terry Pisarik Randy Post Rick Post Steve Scott Aaron Van Dyke Dave Vislisel Mark Whitley Kevin Whitman Tom Zinkula

Head Team Manager
Dan Boggs
Asst. Team Manager
Mike Burk
Head Coach
Jim Bellamy
Asst. Coach Larry Straw
Asst. Coach Bob Landis

Cheerleaders:
Cheryl Becicka Dake
Mary Conrad Engstrom
Mary Thomsen
Deb Strother Hoffmann
Sandy Zinkula
Jan Thomas

Asst. Coach Dick Peters



## CONNECT WITH THE SCHOOL

WEBSITES www.mvcsd.org themustangmoon.com

SOCIAL MEDIA https://www.facebook.com/MVCSDMustangs/ www.facebook.com/TheMustangMoon/

'MUSTANG VISION' https://www.youtube.com/c/gomvstangs



## Follow us on social media







## Join Us At Heritage Days 2026

Best time all year to see many people you know at our traditional Alumni-Community breakfast from 8-10 am at the High School or uptown at Heritage Days. Watch for more information to come about alumnicommunity events during Heritage Days

SATURDAY, JULY 11, 2025

## Coach Ringgenberg Returns for a 1967-69 Team Reunion

Coach Don Ringgenberg returned to Mount Vernon for a mini-reunion with some of his former players. The group met at Baxa's Store and Tavern before returning to cheer on the Mount Vernon Football on Friday night, October 17. It was a fun way to honor a coach, teacher, and friend!



### American Legion Donates to Armed Forces Display

The American Legion presented the Foundation with a \$5,000 donation towards the Mustang Hub - a new interactive screen and associated online archive. The donation is a large gift towards the entire Mustang Hub project, with the intent to create an alumni armed forces display. A legion member also plans to donate time to help the Foundation gather all the information for the veteran alumni including pictures and biographies.

If you have biographical information about alumni with military service, please send it to Amie Roberts, Foundation Director at aroberts@mvcsd.org.



Mount Vernon Alumni Hall of Fame Member Mike Woods '77 and Kevin Woods '73 present the MVCSD Foundation Board with a gift from the American Legion. The Mustang Hub will have pictures and biographies of Alumni that served in the armed services. The display will be visable on the wall in the MVHS commons and online at https://mvcsdfoundation.touchpros.com/Home2

## Alumni in the Schools

### ■ JACK COCHRANE '17

Jack Cochrane '17 returned to Mount Vernon this June 14 to host the Jack Cochrane Youth Camp at the Martha Parsons Activties Complex. The event was free to all partipants and was designed for 2nd-6th graders to develop their football skills. Cochrane coached, inspried, and played football with the future leaders of Mount Vernon football.

Jack Cochrane at the Jack Cochrane Youth Camp in June. Below, Jack poses by his Super Bowl jersey hanging in the MVHS Commons











The Alumni Association continued their tradition of hosting the National Honor Society reception held November 11, 2025. To the left, Alumni Association board members Chris Kinley Osborn '80 and Kim Zangger Tucker '94 set up treats and serve students following the induction ceremony.

### -

### Mustangs...what are they doing now?

### ■ MITCHELL LOUWAGUE '19 AND RYAN CLARK '19

Editor's note: This article was written by Alumni Association President Cathy Hufford '82

From the time they met in kindergarten, Mitchell Louwagie '19 and Ryan Clark '19 had been nearly inseparable. The participated in football, wrestling and track together, as well a 4-H. After high school graduation, they continued their education at Iowa State University where they shared the same major. After graduating from Iowa State, they chose different career paths, but only for 1 year.

During Mitchell's senior year, and after he had already accepted post-graduation employment, he answered the call to set aside his career aspirations and serve as a Catholic missionary on college campuses for FOCUS. Ryan went to work for Pioneer and after a year, he too answered the call to serve as a Catholic missionary. FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) is an organization in which its missionaries have spread the gospel message to hundreds of thousands of college students through on-campus outreach, Bible studies, discipleship, mission trips, national conferences, and more. College students seek meaning and purpose at this critical point in their lives. FOCUS Catholic missionaries bring them the light of truth and lead them on the path to a strong adult faith.

After serving his first two years at the University of Tampa, Mitchell is now in his third year serving at Florida International University. Ryan is serving his second year at Southern Illinois at Edwardsville. Ryan's his position has allowed him to see students come alive and find a purpose in life. Mitchell finds the relationships he has made with the college students to be especially rewarding. They share the same goal of being a light and friend to college students while helping them find true joy in living out their Catholic faith.

Mitchell can be reached at Mitchell. Louwagie@focus.org and Ryan can be reached at Ryan.Clark@focus.org



Ryan Clark '19 and Mitchell Louwagie '19

### ■ MIRANDA ROUDABUSH MOORE 2013

Editor's note. This article was written by Ashley Craig of the Navy Office of Community Outreach. Read the entire article at https://navyoutreach. blogspot.com/2024/09/mt-vernonnative-builds-on-seabees-82.html

Since 1942, sailors assigned to the U.S. Navy's Construction Force have been building and fighting around the world. Petty Officer 2nd Class Miranda Roudabush Moore, is one of those sailors.

Eighty-two years ago, members of Navy Construction Battalions were fittingly nicknamed, "Seabees," a play on the C and B initials. They are responsible for building military bases and airfields, supporting humanitarian efforts and conducting underwater construction projects. The Seabees' motto is "We Build, We Fight." Moore is a builder currently serving with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133 at the headquarters for naval construction forces in Gulfport, Mississippi, which serves as a home base for the Atlantic Fleet Seabees.

Moore graduated from Mt. Vernon High School in 2013. Additionally, Moore earned a bachelor's degree in healthcare administration from National University in 2024.

Moore joined the Navy 11 years ago.

"I joined the Navy to learn leadership skills and to see and experience cultures other than my own," said Moore. "My brother was in the Navy at the time and my uncle is a retired senior chief. Their experiences brought me to the Navy. My recruiter was a builder



Miranda Roudabush Moore '13. Photo Credit: Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Andrew Waters

first class and she ultimately led me to the Seabees with her experiences and stories. I'm the first woman in my family to join the military."

The skills and values needed to succeed in the Navy are similar to those found in Mt. Vernon.

"My first job at HyVee taught me to have a strong work ethic and how to interact with a variety of different people," said Moore. "The Navy is a smaller example of the U.S. where we're just a melting pot. We have sailors from other countries. Having those skills, I'm able to work with everybody."

With 90% of global commerce traveling by sea and access to the internet relying on the security of undersea fiber optic cables, Navy officials continue to emphasize that the prosperity of the United States is directly linked to recruiting and retaining talented people from across the rich fabric of America.

Moore serves a Navy that operates far forward, around the world and around the clock, promoting the nation's prosperity and security.

"We will earn and reinforce the trust and confidence of the American people every day," said Adm. Lisa Franchetti, chief of naval operations. "Together we will deliver the Navy the nation needs."

Moore has many opportunities to achieve accomplishments during military service.

"Of all my accomplishments, I am most proud of earning my first Navy and

Marine Corps Achievement Award," said Moore. "It was for my time working at Naval Construction Group 1, from 2017 to 2019. I was working out of my rate as a yeoman, doing awards and other administrative duties for the triad. It was one of my favorite times in the Navy."

Moore can take pride in serving America through military service.

"Serving in the Navy means everything to me because of what it's given me," said Moore. "It has taught me to find my voice, stand up for what I believe in, how to lead those under me, and has given me amazing friends, as well as my husband and kids."

Moore is grateful to others for helping make a Navy career possible.

"I want to thank my parents, Eric and Virginia Roudabush, for their love and support throughout these past 11 years and for their continued support for the next 10 years or so," added Moore. "I also want to thank my husband, Construction Mechanic 1st Class Brady Moore, for being my anchor, my moral support and my voice of reason as well as my laugh at the end of the day. I want to thank my kids for being good for their dad, for their amazing conversations during video calls during deployments and for their love and kisses that bring me happiness."

## ALUMNI MERCHANDISE FOR SALE

The Mount Vernon Alumni
Association, in partnership with local
business Causeteam, will continue to
offer alumni merchandise for sale this
The project will serve as a fundraiser
for the alumni association while
providing comfortable and quality
T-shirts and sweatshirts to alumni and
friends. T-Shirts can even be branded
with your class year on the back!
Great for reunions and graduation
gifts.

Local friends: If you use the code "pickup" in the coupon field you will be given the free shipping option to pick up your order in person.

NOTE! Any purchase that you make from CauseTeam can support the Alumni Association. Hit "Support" on our page and any other purchases that you make from CauseTeam site will include a donation to the Alumni Association. There's lots of fun gift items in addition to the Alumni T-Shirts

Interested in purchasing yours?
Check out our Causeteam page at:

https://www.causeteam.com/causepages/detail/mount-vernon-alumni-association





## In Memory of classmates we have lost

John Schick 1966 April 16, 2025 Cedar Rapids, IA **Maxine Nation Havill 1945** June 12, 2025 Mount Vernon, IA **Gretchen Beckhelm 1956** June 15, 2025 Cedar Rapids, IA Marcia Reyhons Lehr 1961 June 15, 2025 Lisbon, IA Jerome Krejci 1963 June 16, 2025 Mount Vernon, IA **Joy Litts Gaarde 1948** June 29, 2025 Mount Vernon, IA **Jane Johnston Perry 1955** July 12, 2025 Bloomington, MN **Stephen Ludley 1957** July 13, 2025 Anamosa, IA Norma Reyhons Abbot August 22, 2025 Iowa City, IA **Nancy Gaston Moore** September 7, 2025 Paw Paw, MI Diana Petrick Price 1968 September 10, 2025 Parker, CO **Ann McCutcheon Niehaus 1959** September 11, 2025 Lisbon, IA

David Wolfe 1950
September 11, 2025 Hollywood, CA
Jerry Kroeger '59
September 17, 2025 Grand Rapids, MN
Elaine Mulherin 1957
October 11, 2025 Upland, CA
Karen Clark Fiala 1957
November 16, 2025 Ely, IA
Paul Kent 1957
November 17, 2025 lowa City, IA

### ~ FRIENDS ~

John Krumbholz, former MS Principal
June 19, 2025 Cedar Rapids, IA

Tom Klaver, former HS Band Director
June 24, 2025 Clarion, IA

Darrel Morf
July 10, 2025 Mount Vernon, IA

Don Koppenhaver,
July 11, 2025 Mount Vernon, IA

(Please excuse us if your classmate or loved one is not listed here for their recent death, but let us know for inclusion in the next newsletter.)

of supporting Alumni in Mount Vernon! Happy Birthday, Mount Vernon Alumni Association!



Morf - Friedl wedding

Paul Morf '90 and Amy Friedl '01 were married September 1, 2024. Their attendants were Nellie Morf '21. Abbie Morf '23, Betsy Morf '25 and Weston Stoner '31.

### **EDUCATION & MILITARY SERVICE**

**Derek Jordan-Ouverson '20** received a BA in Music, Wartburg College, Spring 2025

**Lily Meester '20** received a BA in Graphic Design and Art, Wartburg College, Spring 2025.

Kode Banwart '20 graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Science, Iowa State University, Spring 2025.

Benjamin Moss '21 graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Science from Iowa State University, Spring 2025.

Emma Rodman '21 received her nurse's pin from Mount Mercy University, Spring 2025.

**Trevor Weber '21** received a BA in kinesiology from Coe College Spring 2025.

Megan Baumler '21 received a BA in Social Studies Education from St. Olaf College, Spring 2025.

**Wren Meier-Gast '21** received a BA in Chemistry from St. Olaf College, Spring 2025.

**Cooper Beethold '20** received a BS in Psychology from Iowa State, Spring 2025.



At Gabriel's Light, we are dedicated to preventing youth suicide and providing tools for youth, parents, and educators to make a life-saving difference.

Carol Hufford Deely President & Founder MVHS Class of 1982

www.gabrielslight.org info@gabrielslight.org

Together, we can be the light that saves a life.

## BAUMAN'S

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## Alumni News...

Send us your information... alumni@mvcsd.org or call the office at 319-895-8845

### ANNIVERSARIES/SPECIAL DAYS

The Alumni Association celebrated 20 years in 2025. In a July letter to the Mount Vernon Lisbon Sun, Sharon Hill writes "The Alumni Association over the past 20 years has had amazing growth and most certainly [is] one of the best in Iowa." Kathy Staskal, integral in starting the Association, sent flowers to help us celebrate. (pictured below) A reception was held during Heritage Days to celebrate twenty years



### AND MORE...



Battalion Chief N Goodlove '99

### **Nate Goodlove**

'99 was promoted to Battalion Chief of the Cedar Rapids Fire Department. BC Goodlove has been a member of CRFD since 2005 and was promoted to Captain in 2015. During his career with CRFD, Battalion Chief Goodlove was the C-Shift Rescue 1 officer after serving in the training division as Fire Training Captain. Chief Goodlove is also the Fire Chief for the Mount Vernon Fire Department a member of the Iowa Task Force

Taylor Dicus Connor '11 and Kylea
Weber Brautigam '11 were
inducted into the Cornell College
Athletics Hall of Fame in October
2025.

Whitney Schreder '04 was awarded awarded Corridor Business Journal's 40 Under 40! Whitney is the VP of Finance at Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa.



Whitney Schreder '04 and Jessie Thurn '02 at the 2025 Alumni Hall of Fame Ceremony,

Cathy Hufford '83 donated a kidney this spring. Hufford saw the post from Lisa Christiansen on Facebook in February, even though she didn't know Christiansen directly. "I was compelled at that time to see if I could help Lisa" said Hufford in an interview with Nathan Countryman of the MVI. Sun.

"There is a lot of need for donors in the world," Hufford said. "I know that one of my kidneys is out there now helping someone else live their life."



Linda Christiansen and Cathy Hufford '83 in May following their surgeries.



### Supporting Art in our community

Chalk the Walk
Lincoln Highway Arts Festival
The Sculpture Park
Local Murals
Poet Laureate
Artist-in-Residence
and Grants to local art initiatives

Donate today! www.mvaac.org



### DID YOU MOVE? HAVE A NEW EMAIL ADDRESS? Get Married?

Don't forget to send your updated contact information, email addresses, and news items to the Alumni Association at alumni@mvcsd.org or call 319-895-8845.

A special thank you to everyone that helped in the making of this newsletter. Contributors include Lisa Lewis '83, Amie Roberts, Amy Weber, Cathy Hufford '83, Lydia Marshall a member of the Mustang Moon Staff under the guidance of JoAnn Gage. Special thanks to Annamae Baker '60 for assisting with Alumni News.





### Joe Klein, B.A., EP-C, ACSM-CPT, PN-1 Traci Smith. PTA. CPT

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## THANK YOU

for your Support of the **ALUMNI ASSOCIATION** 

The Following are names of alums who have supported us for the 2024 year with either 'Support' or donations. Your financial support is greatly appreciated.

Because this newsletter is published early this year, December 2025 donations are not include in the list. They will be included in the Fall 2026 Newsletter.

The 2025 report will reflect only donations to the Association. See back page for the 2026 Donation form, or log in online at www.mvalumni.org and select "Donate."

Is your name missing? Call the alumni office at 319-895-8845 or email to alumni@mvcsd.org

## 2025 ANNUAL SUPPORT JANUARY THROUGH NOVEMBER 15, 2025

Ben Aalbers 1992 Kyle, TX Scott Akers 1970 Titusville, FL Annamae Baker 1960 Mount Vernon IA Ruth Bensmiller-Reed 1964 Marion, IA Richard Blew 1961 Raymore, MO Dan Blinks 1976

Center Point, IA Randy Borg 1976 San Antonio, TX Michael Bowers 1987 Albany, CA

Ben 2005 & Brittany Corkin 2004 Brannaman

Mount Vernon, IA Linda Brooks 1983 Lisbon, IA Christene Brown 1964

Springville, IA

George & Paula Brown 1953 Kearney, NE Keith Clark 1960

Mount Vernon, IA Mitch Corcoran 1983 Mount Vernon, IA

Patrick Cullen 1982 Cedar, MN

Jay & Ann Currie 1977 Mount Vernon, IA Rochelle Ferguson 1977 Mount Vernon, IA Varlyn & Jane Fink 1959

Anamosa, IA Susan Mounts Fisher 1965 Mount Vernon, IA

Louie & Carol Floden 1969 Pella, IA

Joy Gaarde 1948 Čedar Rapids, IA Dan & Linda Gaines 1977 Mount Vernon, IA

Christine Gochenover 1962 Mount Vernon, IA

Reid Goodrich 1973 Wooddale, IL Sandy Hanna 1967 Mount Vernon, IA David & Lana Hartl 1965 Iowa Falls, IA Susan Hodin 1960 Cedar Rapids, IA

Helen Holder 1961 Austin, MN

Peggy Neal & Garvin Howard 1967

Longmont, CO Elizabeth Hufford 1984 Laguna Niguel, CA Cathy Hufford 1983 Peoria, AZ Don & Carol Jilovec 1961

Mount Vernon, IA

Linda & Steve Joerger 1979 Ames, IA

Barry & Donna Johnson 1975 Washington, IA

LJ Jones 1959 Battleground, WA

Darrell & Donna Jordan 1961 Mount Vernon, IA

Dennis 1987 and Angela Jordan Marion, IA

Josh Jordan 2018 Mount Vernon, IA Sara Kendall 1977

Cedar Rapids, IA Bonnie Keith 1956 Mount Vernon, IA

JoAnne & Bob Kintzel 1983

Boulder, CO Kim Konkowski 1981 Mount Vernon IA

Larry Kramer 1958 Marion, IA

Gloria Herboldsheimer Krob 1963

Lisbon, IA Steve Kroeger 1963 Casey, IA David Kroeger 1958

Marion, IA Michael Langer 1985

Warrenton, VA Gregg & Jean Larsen 1971

Ankeny, IA Diana Lavoi 1964 Prior Lake, MN

Deanne Levan 1956 Marion, IA

Kay Lind 1955 Cedar Rapids, IA

Linda Luckritz 1981 Richkand, MO Chris Lyon 1981 Mount Vernon, IA

Jan Majors 1957 Mount Vernon, IA Karen Martin 1957

Mount Vernon, IA Joyce & George Maxwell 1964

Central City, IA Marsha McWhinney 2009

Seattle, WA

Terry Meeks 1967 Madison, MO Dick Miner 1961

Incline Village, NV Nancy Mulder 1959 Grand Rapids, MI

Bunny Mulligan 1961 Marion, IA

Michael Murphy 1970 Berthoud, CÓ

Jeri Neal 1966 Mount Vernon, IA Linda Nost 1963

Lisbon, IA Chris Osborn 1984

Mount Vernon, IA Terri Overman 1979 Cedar Rapids IA

Mary Palmer 1974 Mount Vernon, IA

Lisbon, IA Judith Penn 1960

Cedar Rapids IA

Sarah Rife Patten 1993 Mount Vernon, IA Teresa Patterson 2002

Bob & Tricia Penn 1981 Mount Vernon, IA Frank & Linda Peterson 1961

Aurora, MO Jeff & Royce Pitlik 1974

Anamosa, IA

David & Linda Royer Pitlik 1974 and 1975

Mount Vernon, IA

Matthew & Catherine Poduska 1994

Mount Vernon, IA John Pospisil 1966 Mount Vernon, IA Ken & Jane Pospisil 1968 Mount Vernon IA Cvnthia Prewitt 1966 Rio Verde, AZ

Doug & Connie Randall 1967

Cedar Rapids, IA Jerry & Anne Rehfuss 1968

Roswell, GA John Rife 1960 Mount Vernon IA

Jerry Ringer 1955 Bloomington, IL Kristen Robinson 2002

Mount Vernon, IA Aaron Rothmeyer 2000 Northfield, MN

Marcia Russell 1989 Platteville, WI

Dave Ryan 1985 Mount Vernon, IA Hilary A Schmidt 1995

Lisbon, IA Janet Sessions 1956

Kent, OH Patricia Sindt 1974 Story City, IA Marie Sippola 1959 Cedar Rapids, IA

Jude Smith and Greg Raup 1981 Scotsdale, AZ

Leona Smith 1956 Mount Vernon IA Jeffery Spencer 1978 **Grand Prairie TX** 

### 2025 ANNUAL SUPPORT continued

Dan Stoner 1969 & Cathy **Humphries Stoner 1970** Mount Vernon, IA Wendy Stryker 1969 Loudon, TN Bill Thomsen 1972 Mount Vernon, IA Kim Zangger Tucker 1994 Mount Vernon, IA Whitney Bennett Turner 2000 Mount Vernon, IA Sharon Urich 1959 Iowa City, IA Ann & Rodney Venditti 1967 Wheatland, IA Jenna Voss 2002 Jersey City, NJ Dorothy Wolfe Welsh 1960 Rockville, MD Greg West 1982 Mount Vernon, IA Lisa & Todd White 1988 Mount Vernon, IA Kevin Whitman 1976 & Becky Thumm Whitman 1977 Mount Vernon, IA Nancy Williams 1967 Flower Mound, TX Carol Woods-Boren 1975 Mount Vernon, IA Keith Woods 1973 Mount Vernon, IA David Wolfe 1950 Los Angeles, CA William Yeisley 1952 Cedar Rapids, IA

### **FRIENDS**

Dr. Greg and Mary Lou Batenhorst Elkhorn, NE Rebecca Bunting Lisbon, IA **Bob Campagna** Mount Vernon, IA Jannes DeCamp Lombard, IL Barbara Dolan Mount Vernon, IA Susan Gradwell Mount Vernon, IA Jane Hill Stacy Huber Cedar Rapids, IA Paul & Jacquelyn Kapke Ames, IA Paula & Richard Knauss Madrid, IA Brenda Langenberg Mount Vernon, IA Matt Leeman Mount Vernon, IA Thomas and Judy Ligouri Ames. IA Dyane Manternach Cascade, IA Marilyn Meyer Mount Vernon, IA

Patty Mote Mount Vernon, IA **Tommie Ouverson** Mount Vernon, IA **Sharon Peters** Cedar Rapids, IA Whitney Rasmussen Mount Vernon, IA Thelma Rife Mount Vernon, IA Eugene & C Jill Schlueter Roscoe Turner Mount Vernon, IA Reta Westercamp Cedar Rapids, IA Stephanie Whisner Lisbon, IA Jennie and Jessie Young Adolph and Mary Zabloudil Mount Vernon, IA

### **MEMORIALS**

IN MEMORY OF DENNIS AKERS '64 Scott Akers

### IN MEMORY OF GRETCHEN BECKHELM '56

Bonnie Keith Deanne Levan **Janet Sessions** Leona Smith

IN MEMORY OF ROSALIE BOWMAN '63 Dick Miner 1961

IN MEMORY OF LINDA SCHICK DRAHOS Nancy Mulder

IN MEMÓRY JOY LITTS GAARDE '48 Joy Gaarde

IN MEMORY OF ROSALIE BOWMAN GALLAGHER '63 and RUTH REYHONS HINZ '48

Linda Nost

IN MEMORY RANDY HOIDAHL '61 Dick Miner 1961

IN MEMORY JULY HOUSER Jane Hill

### IN MEMORY OF HELEN MEEKS '46

Dan Blinks Barbara Dolan Rochelle Ferguson Susan Fisher Dan & Linda Gaines Susan Gradwell Mary Palmer Sharon Peters Sharon Peters Reta Westercamp

IN MEMORY OF ALLEN B. MINER '63 Dick Miner 1961

IN MEMORY OF MARGHI MEUSEY '59 & **BENNY JAMISON** Jane Costello Fink 1959

IN MEMORY OF BARBARA THOMSEN NEAL Jeri Neal 1966

IN MEMORY OF FRANK PETERSON '61

Bunny Mulligan Frank & Linda Peterson

IN MEMORY OF EDDIE & SIS PITLIK David & Linda Pitlik

IN MEMORY OF DOROTHY RANDALL Adolph & Mary Zabloudil Jr.

IN MEMORY OF DALE AND EILEEN SARGENT Ruth Bensmiller-Reed

IN MEMORY OF MY PARENTS, DONALD & JOAN RHOADS SIGGINS

Marsha McWhinney

### IN MEMORY OF TIM TUBERTY

Paul & Jacquelyn Kapke Paula & Richard Knauss Thomas & Judy Ligouri Eugene & C Jill Schlueter Jesse & Jennie Young

IN MEMORY OF WILMA WOLFE David Wolfe '50

IN HONOR OF NATHAN BUNTING '92 & MATTHEW **BUNTING '94 Becky Bunting** 

IN HONOR OF CLASS OF 1964 Joyce & George Maxwell

**DONATIONS MADE** TO THE ALUMNI (listed here in this issue) ALUMNI ACTIVITIES **AND EVENTS** 

ONATIONS isted in the EXT issue)

## Thank Youl

please let us know.

### Don't See Your Name Listed Here?

THIS LIST IS FOR 2025 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION DONATIONS from January 1, 2025 - November 15, 2025. WATCH FOR 2025 FOUNDATION DONATIONS TO APPEAR IN THE 2026 SPRING ISSUE. If you have any questions, or need to report a change,

> With continued gratitude, Julia Andrews, Alumni Association alumni@mvcsd.ora 319-895-8845





# MUSTANG HUB

## THE MUSTANG NATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS



View class yearbooks, alumni achievements, and ways to stay involved



**Athletics** 

Check the schedule for upcoming game times and locations



### **Performing Arts**

Stay up to date on upcoming band, orchestra, choir, and theater performances



### **Academics**

Celebrate the academic achievements of students



### **Foundation**

Learn about upcoming projects and ways you can support MVCSD students

### **Current project status:**

We are proud to announce that **the Mustang Hub** has been installed!

You can check it out here:

https://mvcsdfoundation.touchpros.com/Home2

**Moving forward,** gifts are still needed to finish the monumental work of archiving 100+ years of alumni achievements.

### Your donation will allow us to:

- Fund the interactive screen.
- Update and maintain the Foundation Donor Wall and Mustang Hub screen
- Upload class yearbooks
- Add to the school timeline
- Create an Armed Forces tribute
- Create a National Honors Society section
- Add sports and activities records



## Ways to get involved:

### Partner with us.

Your financial contribution will help to fund the work and resources needed to complete and maintain this project. You can mail a check to:

Mount Vernon Community School District Foundation 525 Palisades Rd SW
Mount Vernon, IA 52314

OR donate online by scanning the QR code or typing this link into your internet browser:



https://mount-vernon-alumni-association.givecloud.co

### **Submit Archive Material.**

If you have photos or records that you think would be a great addition, email mvfoundation@mvcsd.org

### Donate your time.

If you would like to help with this or any other Foundation projects, send an email to: mvfoundation@mvcsd.org

### **GRATITUDE FOR MOUNT VERNON**

As we close out November and prepare to enter December, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the entire Mount Vernon community. This time of year naturally encourages reflection, and I am truly proud of the meaningful work happening across our schools. I'm often asked about Mount Vernon by others and what it means to work and serve here. I say the same thing over and over that it's hard to describe and you don't really understand it unless you've been someplace else what Mount Vernon has to offer our students. I think sometimes what becomes normal can be overlooked for what it is and I hope that we can continue to offer a wonderful place to raise a family and have your students attend school. So much of that is thanks to our staff, leaders, and the supportive families and community behind it all.



Mr Matt Leeman, Superintendent

Our district is strengthened by the partnership among our families, staff, students, and community members. Your support, engagement, and care for our schools make Mount Vernon a truly special place to learn and grow. Also, your continued feedback in providing input on how we can continue to improve what we are doing for our students is welcomed and appreciated!

In addition to extending gratitude to our community, I would also like to acknowledge and thank our Board of Education for their service and leadership. Following the recent elections, we are grateful for the continued commitment of returning members Rick Elliott and Tim Keegan, and we warmly welcome write-in candidate Maggie Hartzler. In addition, thanks to Jeremy Kunz, Suzette Kragenbrink, Kristi Meyer, and Jason Clark for their continued work. Their guidance, perspective, and belief in our work play an essential role in the success of our district, and I look forward to continuing our work together as a team. I'd also like to take the opportunity to thank outgoing Board member Lance Schoff and his many years of service to the District in his role!

I wish each of you a restorative and meaningful winter break and hope the season brings time for connection, reflection, and peace. Thank you for your continued support of Mount Vernon CSD.

Mr. Leeman



Dr. Amie Roberts Foundation Director

Greetings from the Foundation Director's Desk!

2025 has been a great year thanks to our Alumni supporters! I'm sure you'll read all about our two major projects elsewhere in this newsletter (The Mustang Hub and James W. Bellamy Team Room)- we truly could not bring these projects to fruition without you. I'd like to share some of the other amazing things your support is also doing.

At the high school, a tribute to some of our alumni NFL stars was made possible in part from donor support. We were also able to support some of our Thespians attending the International Thespian Festival.

The Booster Club also hosted a really The Middle School PTO raised the needed funds to update the middle school recess equipment and the students couldn't be happier. Renovations to the middle school gym were also accomplished through donations to our Booster Club.

Over at Washington Elementary school more finishing touches to the library were added, including an artistic tribute to donors. WETAP (the elementary school PTO) also raised almost \$20,000 this fall!

Our district continues to thrive, thanks to you all. We can't wait to see what unfolds over the next year! When you're in or around town, check out your old stomping grounds. Or, better yet, check it out on the Mustang Hub: mvcsdfoundation. touchpros.com In gratitude,

Amie Roberts Foundation Director



Above: Progress on the James W Bellamy Team Room. Below: The Middle School Playground has a new look



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
TAX-EXEMPT ORGANIZATION UNDER THE MOUNT VERNON
COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT FOUNDATION 525 PALISADES RD SW MOUNT VERNON, IA 52314

MOUNT VERNON COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

IS THIS THE RIGHT ADDRESS FOR THE PERSON ON THE AD-DRESS LABEL? If not, please let us know by calling the office at 319-895-8845 or emailing alumni@mvcsd.org

PARENTS, please help us update our contact information for your graduate(s). If you would also like to receive this publication, we can add your name to the list too.













### **ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD**

Cathy Hufford '83, President Kim Zangger Tucker '94, Secretary Susan Mounts Fisher '65, Treasurer Sarah Rife Patten '93, Director Kim Mortensen Konkowski '81, Director Cathy Humphries Stoner '69, Director Greg West '82, Director Chris Kinley Osborn '80, Director Ann Lehman Currie 1977, Director Bill Thomsen 1972, Director

### **FOUNDATION TRUSTEES**

David Ryan '85, President Carol Woods-Boren '75, Vice-President Rick Elliott, President Ann Koppenhaver '78, Treasurer Virginia Roudabush Rick Elliott **Brett Karkosh** Leigh Ann LaPointe Jordan '94 Thomas Wieseler Shawna Hutchins Rawson '85 Amie Roberts, Foundation Director

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### **MOUNT VERNON COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD**

Jeremy Kunz, Vice-President Jason Clark '97, Member Maggie Hartzler Member Tim Keegan, Member Suzette Kragenbrink, Member Kristi Meyer, Member Michael Marshall, Board Secretary-Treasurer Matthew Leeman, Superintendent

### **HERE'S HOW to support** the Alumni Association...

ONLINE at www.MVAlumni.org

Select 'DONATION' located in the top left corner.

NOTE: do not be alarmed that the page you are directed to is a Foundation page. Select 'Alumni Association' for your donation and the total amount does come directly to us. For donation reporting purposes the MV Alumni Association operates under the MVCSD Foundation, a tax-exempt organization.

OR BY MAIL return form & your check to: MV Alumni Assoc., 525 Palisades Rd, Mount Vernon, IA 52314

Alumni or friend first & last n	ame, including maiden name		
Class Year/Friend Spouse name (and class year if also an alumnus)			
Address			
City, State, Zip		Country if outside USA	
Email address			
Phone Home	Cell	Work	

For tax purposes, the MV Alumni Association operates under the Mount Vernon Community School District Foundation, which has been determined by the IRS to be a public charitable organization under code 501(c)3.

MOUNT VERNON COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

**VI** Association

Thank you!

YOUR SUPPORT AND DONATIONS PAY FOR THESE **ANNUAL EXPENSES:** 

Printing and mailing of twice yearly newsletter approximately \$10,000

Alumni Hall of Fame Events & Promotion approx \$2,000

Student support throughout the year including graduation and National Honor Society \$500

> Database Software \$2,800 and more

Your tax deductible support is very much appreciated and funds alumni organization publications & activities