Holiday Reflections
A look back in time during the season that glows
We’ve been having some fun while you’ve been away.

As part of my inauguration festivities in October, I wanted to find a way to engage our students. Too often they feel disengaged from formal ceremonies; I’ve been to many inaugurations, and student participation is often low.

I asked myself: What would engage my own college-age kids? The answer was clear: video games. So we created a large-scale video game tournament in which 48 students would vie for the chance to play against me in the popular video game Madden NFL. I promised that if the student champion could beat me, I’d personally buy his or her textbooks for the entire academic year. We even offered to fly in two students from our Nationwide Campuses, just to make sure everyone had a chance.

We created a short video and uploaded it to YouTube, figuring maybe a few hundred people would see it. (Type the URL http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xs3SLvBGG_E into your browser, or search for “Columbia College Missouri Trash Talk” on YouTube.) The response was overwhelming. The video received tens of thousands of hits and officially went viral on the web. The story was picked up by Sports Illustrated, Fox News, Yahoo! News, USA Today, Bleacher Report, The Huffington Post, ABC, CBS and NBC, among many others. It was by far the most press the college has ever received, and it was all positive.

Madden NFL’s manufacturer, EA Games, found out about the tournament and sent us free games to use during the tournament. MaMa Rosa’s, a pizza company, offered a year’s worth of free pizza — actually a pizza every day for a year — to the winner.*

Alas, despite my best efforts (and trash talking), I was defeated by nursing major Eric Dailey, 32 to 13, in front of a large crowd in Bixby Lecture Hall. I didn’t mind, though. I’ll gladly buy those textbooks — the energy in that room was truly priceless.

Now please excuse me as I attempt to snag a slice of that pizza.

*My wife, Tina, a nurse, added the caveat that we don’t actually condone individual students eating a pizza every day for a year! 

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Winter is always a festive time at Columbia College. Let us help ring in the holidays as we reflect on the spirit of the season on page 40.

Inside the Gate
President Dr. Scott Dalrymple is inaugurated as the 17th president of Columbia College, and a new endowment fund gives opportunity to Christian students.

My CCAA
From presidential tour events across the country to honoring Christian College alumnae in 2015, see what the CCAA has in store for next year.

Alumni Profile
The Reagans, a 1980s cover band made up of Columbia College students, reunite as alumni for a night of old friends, music and memories.

Faculty Profiles
Crystal Lake campus faculty member Tracey Connor gets creative to make math more accessible, and Dr. Miranda E. Wilkerson invigorates English language acquisition for foreign students.

Fearless Creators
Six alumni share the secrets of their creativity and celebrate the same ideal: that by jumping into creativity, daring to fail, we all can achieve more than we ever imagined.

Holiday Reflections
A pictorial journey through main campus during the most wonderful time of year.

Cougar Sports Zone
New members are inducted at the 12th annual Athletic Hall of Fame, and explore AMC towns that are closer to main campus than you might think.

CC Notes
News and updates from people who matter: our alumni.

On the Web
Check out Scooter’s new travels.

On the Cover:
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Affinity Magazine is published in cooperation with Alumni Relations and Inside Columbia magazine.

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Inside the Gate
President Dr. Scott Dalrymple is inaugurated as the 17th president of Columbia College, and a new endowment fund gives opportunity to Christian students.
The Day We’ve Waited for

Dr. Scott Dalrymple was officially inaugurated as the 17th president of the college

BY CELIA DARROUGH  ■ PHOTOS BY KACI SMART ’09, LG PATTERSON AND CASEY BUCKMAN

Nearing the end of the ceremony on a very important day, Dr. Scott Dalrymple sat on stage and listened to the words of a song that seemed particularly apt when directed toward the new president, dressed in college blue and silver regalia.

“Hey there, Mr. Blue, we’re so pleased to be with you. Look around see what you do / Everybody smiles at you.”

The song, “Mr. Blue Sky” by Electric Light Orchestra, was specifically requested by Dalrymple and sung by the Jane Froman Singers. It punctuated the day, the week, the year that all of the college has looked forward to. On Oct. 17, 2014, the college was able to officially welcome Dalrymple as he was inaugurated as the 17th president of Columbia College. Daisy Willis Grossnickle ’66, chair of the board of trustees, presented him with the symbols of the president’s office: the Columbia College mace, charter and medallion. In return, Dalrymple declared during his speech that the official flower of the college would be the daisy.

The ceremony was just one event in a series. In the weeks prior, Dalrymple and his wife, Tina, competed in a sand volleyball tournament. His team, Scare Force One, was eliminated in a late round and received fifth place overall. An art reception kicked off the inaugural week and was followed by a movie showing of Red Tails, the championship match of the volleyball tournament, a lecture by alumnus Col. Charles E. McGee ’78, a video game challenge and an inaugural ball for the students.

The President’s Inauguration Video Game Challenge was one of the highlights of the week. After Dalrymple’s official ceremony, he changed from his regalia into something a little more casual: a
Buffalo Bills jersey. In a move that garnered national attention, Dalrymple had challenged students to play *Madden 15* and vowed that if the final student defeated him, he would personally buy his or her textbooks. After a rousing game of digital football, James “Eric” Dailey, a nursing student, beat Dalrymple 32-13, earning himself free books.

“Since it’s going toward textbooks, it’s hard to feel bad about it,” Dalrymple says about losing money from his own wallet.

Dalrymple’s generosity shone in other ways that day, too. In his speech during the ceremony, he mentioned that oftentimes at inaugurations, attendees receive a takeaway souvenir such as a commemorative coin. But, he wondered to himself, instead of doing something like that, why not take the money that would cost and give it to students who need it?

Two inaugural scholarships went to Jackie Monroe and Kayla Dunnavant, both seniors who Dalrymple
Inside the Gate

said are doing well in their studies. The scholarships are meant to help them push toward degree completion.

“I’m very excited,” says Monroe, who attends Columbia College-Orlando. “I’m a parent of three, and any type of funding to help me complete my degree is more overwhelming than words can address.” In the rest of his speech, Dalrymple outlined historic moments of the college, and they all shared a theme: bold endeavors that improved access to education. Throughout time, he said, Columbia College has actively worked to provide educational access to women, to servicemembers, to people across the country and to people for whom traditional daytime education is difficult or impossible.

“As we have since 1851, we will work tirelessly to improve students’ lives and enrich the communities we serve,” Dalrymple said. “We will continue to be bold and creative, clearing the path for those who succeed us. May they someday honor us for the choices we make.”
It’s been nearly two years since the national search for the 17th president began. Dalrymple was selected about a year ago. With this week of events and the official inauguration, Columbia College was finally able to sit back and honor our new president. Again, maybe Electric Light Orchestra said it best:

“A celebration, Mr. Blue Sky’s up there waitin’ / And today is the day we’ve waited for.”
Carol Connery Murdock ’69 remembers the water-filled road she took to attend a Christian retreat at the Laity Lodge in the Texas Hill Country. “There’s a sign that says, ‘Yes, you have to drive in the river,’” she says with a laugh. “There’s no other way to get there.”

Driving into that shallow section of the river was like entering another world, she says. But what she remembers most about the retreat was listening to speakers from all over the country talk about their faith and having a personal relationship with Christ. That’s when she understood the importance of talking with peers, not just church leaders, about how Christianity informs their daily lives. “When you witness someone else shar-
ing their faith story, it really makes an impact,” she says.

It’s a lesson she hopes to share with other Columbia College students as well. In 2011, she implemented the Lamplighter Christian Seekers Fund at Columbia College to support nondenominational Christian learning and outreach programs for students. Named for Psalm 119:105 (“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path”), the fund will benefit campus organizations such as Chi Alpha Christian Fellowship, Fellowship of Christian Athletes and THE OUTLET. Murdock says it will cover the cost of bringing in speakers, providing Bibles and other resources for students who need them, as well as hosting events “as a catalyst to engage students in discussing their walk with Christ.”

In establishing the fund, Murdock hopes to help students share their faith and reach out to other students — a tradition of Christian leadership that’s been a part of the school since the early days of Christian College. “My vision was to help Christian organizations on campus to attract nonbelievers to Christ,” she says. “Anyone can donate to the fund. We want people to know it’s available to nurture students and bring them along in their Christian faith.”

This past spring, the fund’s kick-off meeting was an outing to take students from Christian campus organizations to see the movies “Heaven is for Real” and “God’s Not Dead.” Students had pizza afterward to discuss the movies and were encouraged to bring a friend in order to reach out to others on campus.

Events like these will help provide opportunities for students from these organizations to discuss issues and share their stories. “The fund will help all of our Christian organizations on campus to work together and connect with each other,” says Faye Burchard, dean for student affairs. “Our goal is to be good stewards of Carol’s generosity and see her vision come to fruition.”

“Anyone can donate to the fund. We want people to know it’s available to nurture students and bring them along in their Christian faith.”

–Carol Connery Murdock ’69

If you are interested in making a donation to the Lamplighter Christian Seekers Fund, please visit http://www.choosecc.org/Categories/Programs/Lamplighter-Christian-Seekers-Fund.aspx.
Strolling through Rogers Gate, one immediately notices the college’s well-maintained grounds and its historic buildings, which sit alongside innovative new structures. This unique juxtaposition speaks to the college’s rich history and its bright future.

For more than 18 years, Bob Hutton, executive director for Administrative Services, played a large role in shaping the look of the campus, guiding the college’s construction projects and acquiring property. Hutton also provided oversight to the college’s human resources; events, protocol and design; facilities; and campus safety departments. After a successful career, Hutton retired this past September. His retirement provides the Columbia College family an opportunity to reflect on his many accomplishments.

During his tenure, Hutton managed a multimillion dollar budget, as the college added or acquired 12 new structures. Major building projects completed included Southwell Gymnasium, Atkins-Holman Student Commons and the Gerald T. and Bonnie M. Brouder Science Center.

“I’m very proud of the progress (the college) has made,” Hutton says. “Our grounds and facilities are noted in the community — that gives me a lot of pride.”

In addition to his work on main campus, Hutton also helped increase the college’s physical footprint nationwide, overseeing the acquisition of the Rolla, St. Louis and Jefferson City campus buildings and the construction of the Lake of the Ozarks campus. Thanks to Hutton’s guidance, the college has no deferred maintenance.

Prior to his time at Columbia College, Hutton was the director of facilities at Stephens College, and he served on the Columbia City Council for more than 12 years. A search for a new executive director of Plant and Facilities Operations is underway.
Do you have a child or grandchild that could use an automatic grant to the Day Campus in Columbia, Mo?

The good news is that they could qualify for the following award because of your status as a Columbia (Christian) College alumnus!

Alumni Legacy Grant
$1,000 per year

As a Columbia (Christian) College graduate, your children and grandchildren are automatically eligible for this $1,000 tuition discount, applicable to the Day Campus only. This grant is renewable for up to four years.

To refer a family member that could benefit from this award, simply complete the online form at: www.ccis.edu/ReferAStudent
Greetings Fellow Alums,

On Friday, October 17, 2014, I was able to visit the main campus and attend the inauguration of Columbia College’s 17th president, Dr. Scott Dalrymple. What a great event it was. The pomp and circumstance that surrounded the festivities really showcased Columbia College and what the school has to offer. Everyone was included in the activities from students, faculty, alumni and staff. President Dalrymple is a very energetic leader who will move Columbia College to a new level in higher education.

I also had the opportunity to meet Col. Charles E. McGee, who was the guest speaker at Columbia College’s very first Alumni Scholar Lecture Series event held at the Bixby Lecture Hall in the Brouder Science Center. Col. McGee discussed his experiences as a Tuskegee Airman and career Air Force officer. The Tuskegee Airmen were the first African-American military aviators in the United States armed forces during World War II. Col. McGee still holds a US Air Force record of 409 fighter combat missions flown in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. He is also a proud 1978 graduate of Columbia College. After the lecture, it was an honor for me to present him with a framed poster commemorating his talk.

In this issue of Affinity magazine you can read about a few of the many talented and creative alumni who do great things within their communities. Please let us know of others who make a difference so we can recognize them as well. They all make me proud to be a Columbia College alumnus!

We are CC!

Bill Leeper ’04
President, CCAA

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- Suzanne Pomeroy Ready ’81
- Dale Coe Simmons ’65
- Lisa Kowalewski Sweeney ’05
- Norris Tanner ’10
- Carol Winkler ’93
Career Corner
Another Reason to Give Your Time

BY DAN GOMEZ-PALACIO, DIRECTOR OF CAREER SERVICES

There are many reasons to volunteer: It makes your community a better place, and it can be a fun way to give back. Beyond these reasons, if you are looking to break into a new industry, network or develop meaningful skills in a profession, a volunteer position may be just the way to do it.

Oftentimes we talk to students and alumni who are at a loss on how to gain experience in a new field. Many jobs look for people with experience in the field — even for entry level roles. Without access to those first jobs, it can be difficult to break into an industry. One way to jump that hurdle is through volunteering. In every community, nonprofits will offer wide variety of roles where you can make an impact — all while gaining valuable experience and an ability to prove your capability in your field.

Volunteering can be valuable to those looking to join the human services, psychology, education, history, criminal justice and sociology fields. What better way to break into those fields and get a foot in the door of those organizations? But what about other fields? No worries, many organizations would love to have volunteers interested in business, technology or English — just to name a few. You could help write grants, assist elderly with their tax returns, design a website or plan an event.

These experiences look great on a resume and can showcase skills that are otherwise hard to demonstrate. To get started, check with your local United Way or city’s website — they will list out organizations in need of assistance. Either way, it can be a win-win — the organization gets a shot of energy, while you get a valuable “in” to your profession.

Director of Career Services, Don Malson, retired this summer after 25 years of service to Columbia College. Don was initially hired as the Director of Residential Life and for several years simultaneously served as the Director of Career Services. He then focused his talents exclusively as Director of Career Services, and he was instrumental to the growth and expansion of Career Services, which will continue to flourish under Dan’s leadership.

Dan Gomez-Palacio has been hired as director of career services, where he began working as assistant director in 2010. Prior to joining the Columbia College family, Dan worked at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, as the assistant director/internship coordinator. He holds a bachelor’s degree in history from Macalester College and a master’s degree in community agency educational administration from Boston University.
The crimson and gold-leafed trees on main campus glistened a little brighter when more than 400 alumni and friends came home for Family Day & Homecoming this fall, held Oct. 3-4. The weekend featured games and activities, an art show reception, the 12th Annual Athletic Hall of Fame and various socials and activities for alumni and their families.
Alumni and friends snap photos in the photo booth

Columbia College's Homecoming King and Queen

Friends enjoy time with Scooter and painting pumpkins
**CC for a Cure**

Golf tournament raises money for great causes

BY SAM FLEURY

The 2nd Annual CC for a Cure Golf Classic on Sept. 12, 2014, raised $2,000 for the Miller County Relay for Life and the Columbia College-Lake of the Ozarks Phil Davis Scholarship! The event, which is put on by the Columbia College-Lake of the Ozarks Alumni Affinity Council, featured golfers from around the Lake community teaming up for these great causes and having a good time despite light rain and chilly temperatures the entire day. Thank you to Eldon Golf Course for putting on another fantastic tournament and to all of our sponsors, teams and players!
Pre-Law Mentoring Program

The Columbia College Pre-Law Mentoring program helps connect current Columbia College students with Columbia College alumni to help the students gain valuable insights into the field of law. The program utilizes Columbia College alumni who are jurists and attorneys. They volunteer to share their advice with interested Columbia College students via LinkedIn. This allows input from Columbia College alumni from anywhere in the world.

In her words

Avery Bourne ’14

J.D. Candidate 2017,
Washington University School of Law

“A good mentor can be a great cheerleader! In applying to law school it was very helpful to hear from people who had gone through the same process. They were able to answer my questions with their personal experiences, and they also anticipated areas where I would need some advice.

None of my close family members are attorneys, and I was fairly unfamiliar with law school or the legal profession. Therefore, I had a lot of questions. It was really helpful that I was able to reach out to mentors, who were former or current law students, when I had questions about how to approach the LSAT, applications, what to consider when choosing a school, and how to prepare the summer before law school. I continue to reach out to these people, and others whom I have met, to talk about law school, the legal profession, extracurriculars and summer employment in law school. I have found that having mentors, or people that you look to for advice and wisdom, is important in all areas of life, but I particularly think that it is important and super beneficial to find a mentor or two before and during law school.”

For more information on the Pre-Law Mentoring Program, please contact Dan Kruse at djkruse@ccis.edu or by visiting Columbia College alumni.org/prelawmentoring and filling out the Pre-Law Mentoring program volunteer form under Get Involved!
Presidential Tour Update

Columbia College president Dr. Scott Dalrymple and first lady Dr. Tina Dalrymple have hit the road on their nationwide presidential tour, and they’re meeting the entire Columbia College family in the process. Check out their latest travels, and see where they’ll be next!

Crystal Lake Alumni Social
Aug. 6, 2014

Denver Alumni Social
Sept. 9, 2014

Salt Lake City Alumni Social
Sept. 11, 2014
Rolla Alumni Networking Social
Oct. 30, 2014

Dallas/Fort Worth Alumni Networking Social
Nov. 6, 2014

Kansas City Chiefs Watch Party
Nov. 9, 2014

Lake of the Ozarks Holiday Party
Dec. 4, 2014

For more Presidential Tour stops and to RSVP, visit http://www.columbiacollegealumni.org/EventsRecognition/presidentialtour.aspx

Upcoming Stops

San Diego Alumni Networking Social
Jan. 8, 2015
San Diego, California

Los Alamitos Alumni Networking Social
Jan. 9, 2015
Los Alamitos, California

Coast Guard Island Alumni Networking Social
Feb. 3, 2015
Alameda, California

San Luis Obispo Alumni Networking Social
Feb. 4, 2015
San Luis Obispo, California

Lemoore Alumni Networking Social
Feb. 5, 2015
Lemoore, California

Charleston Alumni Networking Social
Feb. 24, 2015
Charleston, South Carolina

Hunter Air Force Alumni Networking Social
Feb. 25, 2015
Savannah, Georgia

Ft. Stewart Alumni Networking Social
Feb. 26, 2015
Ft. Stewart, Georgia
Amid the Presidential inauguration festivities on main campus this October, the CCAA Board of Directors met to catch up on college happenings, discuss the CCAA Strategic Plan, get acquainted with new board members and enjoy each other’s company. The group met all day Thursday so they could take part in the Inauguration ceremony and all the fun the following day.
Volunteer Spotlight
Stacey Goodale ’93

Why do you volunteer for the college?
For a couple of different reasons. To give back to the college that gave a lot to my personal development, to serve others and it’s a benefit to your physical and mental health. Being around a college campus makes you feel young again.

What types of volunteer work do you do for the college?
Any opportunities that arise in my area or I get a call to help out. This summer, I volunteered at the Alumni Night at the Ballpark for the Springfield Cardinals.

What would you say to someone who’s interested in volunteering for the college but not sure how to begin?
I would encourage them to reach out to a campus near them, an alumni or a current student that might know and ask how they can volunteer. There are always areas that would love your help.

What does Columbia College mean to you?
Very fond memories for sure! The experiences throughout my time at Columbia College whether that was in volleyball, student activities, residential life, friendships, or the real reason I was there, education, are irreplaceable. Thus the reason for volunteering: to give back to the college that gave so much to me.

Check out the all new CC alumni volunteer program page at columbiacollegealumni.org/volunteer to learn how to get involved and be featured in the next Affinity magazine!
Call for Alumni Awards Nominations

Columbia College alumni are special people who do amazing things, and we can’t help but celebrate them. Whether they demonstrate outstanding service to Columbia College, contribute to their community or excel in their profession, all CCAA members are eligible to be nominated for alumni awards. Fill out the nomination form at www.columbiacollegealumni.org/nomination.

To be considered for the 2015 Alumni Awards, nominations must be received by Wednesday, December 31, 2014. Awards are to be presented at a special banquet held on April 24, 2015.

Reunion Weekend 2015

In honor of our Christian College alumnae, we are pleased to announce Reunion Weekend will now be named Christian College Reunion Weekend. Held Friday, April 24 and Saturday, April 25, 2015, the weekend will feature many of the same activities and traditions of past Reunion Weekends, but will be tailored to highlight our Christian College heritage. Special recognition will be given to the 1935, 1945, 1955 and 1965 honor class years. For event details, visit www.columbiacollegealumni.org/reunionweekend. Homecoming weekend will be held in the fall of 2015 and will continue to honor all Columbia College alumni.
Columbia College Alumni Association
YEAR IN REVIEW
July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014

ALUMNUS
[uh-luhm-nuh s]
Describes one male.

ALUMNA
[uh-luhm-nuh]
Describes one female.

ALUMNI
[uh-luhm-nil]
Describes two or more males.
Alumni also describes a group of men AND women.

ALUMNAE
[uh-luhm-nahy]
Describes two or more females.

Achieved and exceeded $150,000 GOAL for the CCAA SCHOLARS PROGRAM.
Received 225 GIFTS from 190 DONORS.
Chosen from more than 200 APPLICANTS, 3 students were awarded a $1,000 SCHOLARSHIP.

HOSTED 36 ALUMNI EVENTS
across the country
with more than 4,800 ALUMNI AND GUESTS
in attendance.

2,127,744 total touches
through print, email, events, social media and personal contact.

1,400 alumni expressed an interest in VOLUNTEERING, including 140 military veterans.

ALUMNI POPULATION
BY STATE

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More than 84,000 TOTAL ALUMNI

affinity magazine
6 international publication awards.
The show was a little different from their last.

The songs were the same. There was still the dancing, the jumping, the loud music and the cheering. The faces were familiar — ones they’ve seen time and time again. But it was different. This time, everyone was 12 years older. Band members’ daughters were in attendance. But some notable regulars were missing.

The Reagans, a 1980s cover band once made up mostly of Columbia College students, came home to Columbia, Missouri — this time as alumni — to reunite for a night of old friends, music and memories.

“We had a great following,” says Tyler Huffman ’01, lead singer of The Reagans. “Every time we played, we had a full house.”

The band began in 1998. Huffman knew Anthony Claypool ’00 and Tim Brown ’02 from Residential Life, where they all worked as students. They, along with three others, created The Reagans. The band isn’t named for any political affiliation; it was just a 1980s cover band, and Ronald Reagan was president for the majority of that time. When they play 90s music, they call themselves The Clintons.

Playing in a band together made the tight-knit group even tighter. The four who played at the show — Huffman, Claypool, Brown and Evan Grimes — stayed at Brown’s house in Boonville, Missouri, act-
ing like they hadn’t been apart for 12 years. “The Reagans was the beginning of a longstanding friendship between us,” Claypool says.

The band brought other people together, too, especially one night in August 2002. Going to The Reagans concerts was a regular event for Erin Strodtman ’03. Her then-boyfriend of six years, Kent Strodtman, now an assistant professor of biology at Columbia College, was living three hours away. During a weekend when he was in town, he secretly picked up a ring he had ordered. Then they headed to see The Reagans.

“I knew we would have a great time at the concert, and it might be a good time to propose, but I didn’t want her to say no in front of a hundred of our fellow Honest John’s patrons,” Kent says.

They headed home after the show. Erin says she suspected what was coming. And at 1 a.m., tired and hoarse from the concert, Kent proposed. More than 10 years later, they relived the past with a night out away from their four children to watch The Reagans play once again.

With Huffman on vocals, Brown on guitar, Claypool on bass and Grimes on drums, The Reagans played a two-hour set of pure 1980s music. They played everything from Tommy Tutone’s “Jenny” and Violent Femmes’ “Blister in the Sun” to Young MC’s “Bust a Move” and John Cougar Mellencamp’s “Jack and Diane.”

Two former bandmates couldn’t make it for the concert. But the heaviest absence in the crowd was that of Brad Divelbiss ’03, who passed away from complications from a bone marrow transplant while fighting leukemia in 2012.

“This song is for someone notably missing tonight,” Huffman said as glasses were raised and the band jumped into a rendition of “Jump” by Van Halen. “He loved Van Halen more than anyone.”

Though the band reunited to reconnect with old friends and enjoy old memories, they had another important reason to get back together: honoring Divelbiss and raising awareness.

As the set wound down, two small stars of the show who had been rockin’ it on the dance floor got on stage to be near their rock-star heroes. Both decked out in Hello Kitty dresses, Huffman’s daughter, Eleanor, and Brown’s daughter, Sofia, jumped along to the music as their dads played.

Eleanor reached to strum Huffman’s guitar, striking a chord with the crowd of nearly 200 people as they cheered one of the loudest of the night.

“Moments like this, it is so great,” Huffman said. “I am speechless. Life doesn’t get much better than this.”
To hear her speak, you’d never know Dr. Miranda Wilkerson grew up in the panhandle of Florida. After years of studying linguistics and teaching English to speakers of other languages, this assistant professor and coordinator of the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) program at Columbia College’s main campus now has a neutral inflection untraceable to a particular region.

Now in her fourth year of teaching at the college, one thing is certain: There is nothing neutral about her dedication to her students and the program, or her continued fascination with the unbreakable link between culture and language.

“I can’t remember a time when I wasn’t fascinated by how people sounded,” Wilkerson says.

This fascination led her to study French in high school. She also lived with a host family in Germany when she was 16. Immersing herself in the language and culture, she was hooked. Not speaking fluent German, however, she quickly realized that she understood her interactions with those around her more than she could reciprocate in words. This revelation spurred her linguistics studies and desire to help others with language acquisition.

With a grant from the Fulbright Commission, she taught English in Austria, and trained teachers in Ukraine as part of the Peace Corps prior to coming to Columbia College.

“I know how hard it is to adjust culturally, academically and linguistically, particularly given the academic language required for our students to succeed in college-level study.”

Wilkerson incorporates first-hand experience as she connects with her students.

“Getting to know my students, understanding their wants and needs as college students studying English, and helping them set goals to advance and reflect on their language development is what I enjoy most as a teacher,” she says.

As the EAP coordinator, teaching isn’t her only responsibility. Wilkerson’s administrative revision on the curriculum transformed the former English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program into the EAP program this year. The program began offering a class designed not only to aid in English language learning, but also to help students manage their academic expectations, deal with cultural differences and maintain their immigration status.

“For example, in Bosnia you would never communicate with a professor by email, but in Korea it’s OK to text your professor.”

Helping students to navigate these cultural differences in the U.S. is a key goal of the EAP program.

She also actively researches and publishes on linguistics and language acquisition. With research published in several journals to date, her next publication will be about the socio-historical context of English language acquisition among German immigrants in early 20th century Wisconsin. For Wilkerson, teaching and research are not mutually exclusive, with each shaping and informing the other.

Columbia College provides her with the opportunity to teach, administer a program, and research — a triad of academic pursuits that allows her to get better results both for and from her students. She’s also quick to point out how she enjoys working with her colleagues on campus.

“I like the smaller campus, the connections here, the dedicated team I work with. That makes all the difference,” Wilkerson says. “Working at Columbia College is a privilege, and I take great pride in the quality of my work and commitment to the success of the EAP program and the students in it.”
“I like the smaller campus, the connections here, the dedicated team I work with. That makes all the difference.”
A Formula for Success

Crystal Lake campus faculty member Tracey Connor gets creative to make math more accessible

When it comes to mathematics, there is usually one correct answer to a given question. The challenge lies in “showing your work” to demonstrate how you arrived at the answer. Columbia College-Crystal Lake faculty member Tracey Connor embraces the showing-your-work-process and empowers her students to excel in math through unique methods and technology.

With the eight-week sessions the college employs at its Nationwide Campuses, speed, accuracy and creative teaching techniques are key to ensuring the students grasp each theory.
“Advances in technology have provided instructors with more tools to teach our students math,” Connor says. “I am still amazed at how much the technology we use in our classrooms has changed over the years. Using technology to do computations is new to students, but they are appreciative of how it enhances what they can learn by the time the course ends.”

While her background is in mathematics and actuarial science, Connor’s other interests are varied and include snorkeling (she was a volunteer diver at the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago in the Caribbean reef tank), cooking and playing piano. She and her husband, Henry, live in Woodstock, Illinois, and have two daughters, Reece (7) and Rainn (5) and a pet chinchilla named Chuck.

Connor, who has a Master of Science in applied mathematics and a Master of Arts in mathematics education from DePaul University, has taught for more than 17 years, including in-seat and online classes for Columbia College since 2007. Her enthusiasm and innovative spirit have paid big dividends for both her students and the Crystal Lake campus.

“Tracey came to me almost two years ago with an interest in and a plan for taking her math courses to the hybrid format (utilizing both in-seat and online components in her classes),” Columbia College-Crystal Lake campus director Debra Hartman says. “Since then, she has successfully used a variety of technology solutions to enhance student learning. Our students really benefit from her ability to use a range of approaches to meet the learning styles of all students she encounters.”

After launching the math classes successfully in the hybrid format, Connor routinely creates her own YouTube videos that explain math concepts. She uses calculator software that emulates the graphing calculators students are required to use in class, and also employs an electronic whiteboard to write out solutions to problems. She records videos demonstrating how to work out problems using the whiteboard and/or how to solve them using the calculator software. The videos are always less than 15 minutes long, so they easily can be uploaded to YouTube and also so students don’t lose interest. Her student-centered focus and enthusiasm have made her one of the most popular faculty members at the Crystal Lake campus.

“I know that math can be intimidating, and I reassure my students that they can do it,” Connor says. “I do my best to have patience and explain concepts until students understand them. I think my students see that I love what I’m teaching and they decide to give math a chance. I believe in my students and sometimes that is just enough for them to put their apprehension aside and give it a try.”

“I know that math can be intimidating, and I reassure my students that they can do it.”
FEARLESS
CREATORS

Whether they’re writing their first book or painting their 30th canvas, the alumni you’ll meet in the following pages share the secrets of their creativity and celebrate the same ideal: that by jumping into creativity, daring to fail, we all can achieve more than we ever imagined.

By Laura Daugherty
What drives you to write your books?
It seems to be in my nature to have to write. I have always loved to write ever since I was a little girl. An idea will jump into my thoughts and stay there until I decide to sit down and write it down on paper. I have many ideas written down in journals and notebooks from years past, as early as kindergarten. But it has now become a point where I am pushing myself to put those ideas together into the wonderful stories that I know they can be. Sometimes when I am writing a story, I come up with another story idea, and I can have more than one idea working out on paper at one time. It is finding the focus to finish one story at a time that can become a task.

I’ve had many struggles throughout my life, but I did not let those struggles stop me from achieving my goal to be a children’s book author. I raised my son Robbie as a single parent for 15 years, I am a breast cancer survivor of seven years, and I proudly served 15 years in the military.

I believe that the time I have spent in the military, the people I have met and the struggles that I have overcome have helped me become a better writer. I enjoy writing for children and I believe in inspiring them to be the best that they can be. I always include a moral or an inspiration to each story that I write. I want to encourage my readers to believe in who they are and not to give up on their dreams, for that is what makes them special!

When you sit down to write, do you allow yourself to surprise yourself as you go, or is everything mapped out clearly before you begin?
It is actually a little bit of both. I get an idea, and I either write it down on a piece of paper, or I mull it over in my mind for a day or two before I start to
make some notes in a notebook. I must know the end of the story before I can sit down and start writing the actual story. That is a must for me! It’s like a goal to work toward. But it’s when I actually sit down and write the story where the creation of the story can surprise me. I will come up with different twist and turns to take in the story while writing it, and then I decide at that time in the story of which way I want to go into the plot to achieve the ending goal.

**Does the “gray area” of creating ever scare you? If so, how do you push past that fear?**

There are times where I come to a “gray area” and don’t know where to go with the story. That is where the frustration may come in. I will sit there and stare at the page and read the prior page over several times and then try to force the story to come to me, but that never seems to work out well. So I have learned to stop forcing the story. When I force a story, I get frustrated. But if I just take a breather and walk away for a while, the story will find its way back to me. Now I am past the “gray area.” This also works with the “gray area” of creating an idea for a story. “Relax, look at your surroundings, observe what is going on around you and the people involved in the community, then eventually an idea for a story will come to you.”

**Do you have words of wisdom for anyone who’s afraid of that blank page (literally)?**

Get up and walk away for a while. And know that you are going to encounter that blank page sometime throughout your writing process, but don’t be afraid and don’t force it. The path will come to you when you least expect it! And yes it just may be while you are in the shower or sound asleep!

Deborah Crews ‘12 lives in Columbia, Missouri. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice from the evening campus. Broken Slippers is available in hardcopy and e-book formats at www.amazon.com and www.barnesandnoble.com. The book also is available at Well Read Books in Fulton, Missouri.
What initially drove you to become a singer/songwriter?
I’ve been playing guitar since 1975, my sophomore year at Columbia College. I tried many times over the years to write my own songs, with no success. When my wife got lung cancer eight years ago, I was inspired by her fight and selflessness and came up with a phrase, smile on the inside, and very quickly wrote my first song. I’ve been writing ever since. My wife is cancer-free.

When you sit down to write or compose, can you describe your creative process? Do you write lyrics first or compose the melody?
I never sit down to write a song. Inspiration usually hits while doing something else and I’ll jot down words or hum melodies into my phone.

How do you push past the fear of creating a new song?
Nothing really scares me about the process of creating a song. It is a challenge to say what you mean and make it fun to play. “I love having a creative outlet and let it take me anywhere.”

Do you have words of wisdom for anyone who’s nervous about composing their own music?
If you’re scared of writing your own music, find what really moves you and start there. You’ve got to care about what you’re writing; that’s why so many of my songs are about family and growing up. Keep it simple.

Do you have a CD for sale?
I don’t have a CD for sale, but many of my songs are available on Reverbnation (reverbnation.com), and I have a YouTube channel called Jim Parker Originals. If I never make a dime doing this, the satisfaction is the process. I’ll always be working on a song.

Jim Parker ’78 lives in Taylor Mill, Kentucky. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Individual Studies from the main campus.

There is no innovation and creativity without failure. Period.

-Brene Brown, American scholar, author and public speaker
What drove you to write your book?
What drove me to write this novel is that I suddenly lost my mom about five and a half years ago. It was a shock to my family and the events that followed were straight out of a Jerry Springer show. But after speaking with others who have experienced loss and have had to make tough decisions on a loved one’s behalf, I realized I was not alone in my experience. Eventually, it was time to share my story. I am fortunate to have the love and support of my amazing husband, William, and our son Cameron. Without these two in my life I am not sure I would have survived the loss of my mother. And their encouragement has allowed me to pursue things I never imagined for my life.

When you sit down to write, can you describe your creative process? Do you allow yourself to surprise yourself as you go, or is everything mapped out clearly before you begin?
My creative process flows on its own. I do make time to sit down on Monday mornings (my day off from dental hygiene clinical practice) and write. It is a long process to go through the feelings again, but this gives me time to read and reread my work during the week. I make changes and edit all the time, and I find that writing in the morning works well for me.

Does the “gray area” of creativity ever scare you? If so, how do you push past that fear?
The “gray area” of creativity scares me to my core! I am a dental hygienist, and so my job is based on scientific evidence decision-making. There is not a lot of “creativity” in my dental hygiene career, although I do love it! I am a lifelong learner, and the thought of sharing my story was scary because it is my experience and mine alone. The writing of this novel has been very healing to me.

Do you have any words of wisdom for anyone who’s afraid of that blank page (literally)?
When a blank page is looking at you, it is begging to be filled. It doesn’t matter what your subject matter is. When you’re moved to do so you must pick up your pen. When you are feeling something profound, pick up your pen. When you feel it in your heart to share something — pick up your pen.

Andrea Grammatica ’10 & ’14 lives in Placentia, California. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts from the Online Campus and her Master of Arts from Columbia College-Los Alamitos.
What drove you to pursue fine art as a career?
After many years studying art, I married, had a child and didn't return to my original goal of becoming a fine artist and teacher until I was almost 40 years old and remarried. At that time I had a great epiphany that my life was at least half over and I hadn't yet become the artist and teacher I had envisioned many years before. So I jumped into the watercolor world, took workshops with internationally known master painters, and began teaching local noncredit classes in California's Junior College system. I was determined to live out my life pursuing my dream of being an artist!

When you’re starting a new painting, can you describe your creative process? Do you allow yourself to surprise yourself as you go, or is everything mapped out clearly before you begin?
My creative process is the opposite from all I was taught. Instead of planning a composition and completing it, over the years I have developed my process of first creating chaos, then making a painting from it. Using colors applied directly on the canvas or paper without mixing, I often “paint” by pouring colors next to each other and allowing them to mix or guiding them with a credit card or palette knife and sometimes a blow dryer. Currently I texture the canvas or paper beforehand using acrylic gel mediums and gessoes. What I produce with this method is a flowing, colorful, movement and energy-filled abstract. When dry, this abstract is placed across the room and turned all four directions to ascertain shapes, forms or images contained that jump out at me, begging to be developed. These days I usually see horses. I then determine the most exciting or interesting composition to develop and start drawing the horse(s) images with a stick and India ink. I purposely use this very sketchy, crude method to draw what I see quickly and emotionally as it strikes me, to avoid being overly descriptive and losing my initial excitement and ideas.

Next, I paint out parts of the background surrounding the drawn images using contrasting and interesting colors. Usually at this point I “see” other horses emerging and paint around them. This layering process continues for days in the studio where I work for short
stints so I can allow the new images found to fit into the idea and scheme of the painting. It’s a very intuitive process and not to be rushed!

**Does the “gray area” of creating ever scare you? If so, how do you push past that fear?**

Am I afraid of messing up the painting? You bet! I have repainted (including the pouring process) three times on some paintings before I get a painting I like! But, like I explain to my students — once you’ve ruined the initial painting, you have nothing to lose by painting it out and restarting! In fact, I teach a workshop where we take “failed paintings” and “rescue” them using some of the mixed media methods I’ve devised over the years to take the fear out of the creative process.

After painting more than 900 paintings in the past 30 plus years, I know I can make something I like if I keep trying, so that gives me lots of confidence and takes away the fear of failure.

I have been honored to be invited to exhibit both locally and internationally in museums and galleries, which makes me feel very blessed in my work and my life. I am living my dream of being an artist and teacher!

**Nancy Christy-Moore ’61 lives in Surprise, Arizona. She graduated from the main campus.** For more information on Nancy’s paintings, visit her website at nchristy.com.
What drives you to write your books?
I’m driven by the same motivation I had when attending Columbia College — I am a writer. It’s not just something I do; it’s who I am. Before computers, I used to have a large basket that I called “The Basket of Ideas.” Whenever an idea popped into my head, I would write it on a piece of paper and throw it in the basket. Today, that “Basket of Ideas” is a virtual one on my computer. I know an idea is perfect to explore simply because if it interests me, I pursue it.

When you sit down to write, do you allow yourself to surprise yourself as you go, or is every-thing mapped out clearly before you begin?
I usually follow an outline. If it’s something I’m blogging about, I might just jot down ideas for a post. But if it’s for a book or screenplay, I do a detailed outline — it’s a map! Sometimes I deviate from the map and yes, there are some surprises. But an outline is a guide that gets me from A to Z. Without that map, I find it impossible to get past the first page or sometimes the first paragraph.

Does the “gray area” of creating ever scare you? If so, how do you push past that fear?
I am never afraid of actually writing. It’s not so much fear as it is in conjuring up the desire or motivation to delve into the creative process. Writing can be emotionally exhausting. I have to push myself to want to go there. I often fool around on my computer for a while or delay the process by taking “notes.” I sit there and sometimes think, “No, I can’t do it. I can’t
go there.” But once I finally get serious and start writing, there’s no stopping the words. Deadlines help. I can be a procrastinator without a deadline.

Do you have words of wisdom for anyone who’s afraid of that blank page (literally)?

I’ve never stared at a blank page and felt I had nothing to say. Having said that, I do get stuck, where the words aren’t flowing or I’m not sure of the direction I want to go in. When that happens, I get up from my computer and take a break. Usually, that does the trick. Sometimes you just have to walk away. That’s also the same process that’s involved in rewriting. I always wait a day to rewrite something because when I am in the thick of things, I don’t always see the mistakes or how I can improve the writing.

Kim O. Morgan ’78 & ’81 lives in Hampton, Virginia. She earned her Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts from the main campus. Learn more about Kim at www.kimomorgan.com and www.dyslexiaREADS.com.

WAYS TO BE MORE CREATIVE

Forget being perfect: learn to embrace mistakes

Take walks

Carry a notebook

Travel somewhere new, even if it’s taking a new route to work

Turn off the smartphone and TV

Give yourself the time and space to be creative: you can’t force it

Try something new

Read a book

Be empathetic and see the world in a new light

Never give up

Creativity requires the courage to let go of certainties.

-Erich Fromm, German social psychologist
What inspired you to tell your story through this book?
I was driven to tell my story because I wanted to be an inspiration. I was an A student all throughout high school, and because I chose the wrong major, I began to earn grades in college that I had never seen before. I lost interest in my career choice because I thought that I had to have it all figured out in my first year in college. My grade point average began to suffer. After transferring to another school, I had to drop out to help my mom. Several years went by and then I became a mom. I had to be a role model, so I returned to school. I was so busy and focused on my goals along the journey that once I accomplished them, I wanted to share my joy. I wanted to shout about it. I had so many challenges along the way, and I was proud of how far I had come.
When you sit down to write, can you describe your creative process?

There is never a time that I actually dedicate to write. I have learned that inspiration is a gift that operates on its own schedule! I have to have a pen and paper or laptop ready at all times to record what needs to be expressed. I will take the time to outline chapters, research and build additional time into my schedule so that I can write when I need to. I have maybe nine titles in my head right now that are waiting to be born. When the inspiration hits me, I get into a zone of creative energy and I can write for hours nonstop. I am careful to express exactly what I want to convey, while considering my readers in the process. I ask myself why I am writing a particular chapter and how it will serve the reader. I ask myself if I need to add or take away anything and once the chapters are populated, I spend weeks, even months editing for the best content.

Does the “gray area” of creating ever scare you? If so, how do you push past that fear?

Yes, the “gray area” is definitely a challenge. Producing a product in general is scary because your success lies in the hands of the masses. Public opinion has weight and value when it comes to an author’s work, so it’s very hard to handle. I remember experiencing a huge amount of fear when the time came to release my book online. Fearful thoughts began to creep in, such as “What if people hate it?” You have to ask yourself, “What’s the worst that could happen?” and then decide if you can handle the worst. I pushed past the fear with the Nike “Just do it” slogan. The risk-takers are the ones that meet success, so I felt that my work was worth the risk.

Do you have words of wisdom for anyone who’s afraid of that blank page (literally)?

Let’s say the writer wanted to write about flowers. He or she could generate 30 to 45 questions about what a reader would want to know about flowers. How many types are there? Which ones can last through a tough winter? What types should be avoided in the woods like poison ivy? As you answer the questions, in depth, you fill up the page. Then it’s just a matter of organizing the questions and editing for content.

Tara Smith ‘12 lives in Savannah, Georgia, and she earned her Bachelor of Arts from Columbia College-Hunter Army Airfield. Tara’s book is available in hardcopy and e-book formats on Amazon.com.

Creativity is a habit, and the best creativity is the result of good work habits.

Twyla Tharp, American dancer and choreographer
As winter layers in its first twinkling snow, journey with us to holidays past. Where CC students and presidents of bygone eras reflect on long-ago seasons troubled by war and lifted by peace, but where the spirit of the season never changes.
"A dull grey sky hung lowering over the melancholy brown earth. The wind howled as it caught and shook the dead leaves in spasmodic whirlwinds; then it sank into a plaintive wail, and in the lull, one great snowflake trembled and fell. Another and another! Then they came tumbling and flurrying through the air, playing their wild game of fairy snow-ball; and the brown earth began to disappear beneath a filmy veil. Faster and faster they came; the air was thick now, and scarcely a brown twig or weed could be seen. Very soon the earth was wrapped in a robe as soft and wavering as a moonbeam. One feared to speak, lest the white silence be broken.

The wind whispered low at nightfall, and when the cold moon rose, it shone on a transformed world. All the crudities—the rude, bare spots and the sharp places—were softened and beautified by the magic of moonlight and the pure white snow." — E.C.

Student excerpt from the 1912 College Widow yearbook
It was the year 1917, and students at the College were as loyal and patriotic then as they are now. The siege of influenza fell heavily upon college students, and at one time the hospitals had to appeal to citizens of Columbia for blankets and other needed supplies.

Many packages began to arrive. Eager eyes from the kitchen followed the opening and closing of doors. For a happy interim, the War was forgotten. A college tradition was being honored, and from a radiant Christmas tree came gifts for every employee of the college.

Despite the shadow of War, the group on campus made the hours as merry as possible — for, fortunately, youth will have its own! Big log fires were kept burning on the hearths of the two fireplaces. The homelike dining room was cleared for dancing, and young friends appeared at almost any hour.

— Luella St. Clair Moss, president of Christian College from 1893-1897 and 1909-1920

Excerpt from *Christian College Microphone*
You ask me what Christmas means to me, I will tell you.

It means boarding the train for home, and recognizing all the old familiar landmarks, the flat rolling plains, the tall, slender trees, all covered with a fine powder of snow which is typical of that section of the country.

It means my mother running up to meet me, and putting her arm around me and with affectionate tears, exclaiming, “But darling, how grown up you are,” while father hovers in the background, his eagerness revealed by the glow in his eyes and the pat he gives my hand.

It means feeling the Christmas spirit, and remembering the miracles that took place that Christmas Eve so long ago.

It means New Year’s Eve, with the gang singing, Auld Lang Syne, and tears coming into my eyes, and I wonder if old acquaintances could ever be forgotten in a land whose very principle and foundation is based on the love held for each other.

And finally it means saying goodbye, but we raise our head bravely, for we know deep in our hearts, that there will be other Christmases, and someday we will all be together again.
Shall we say Merry Christmas on December 25, 1943?

Is the veil of gloom which casts its shadow over all the earth too dark for merriment? The Christmas season this year might have been darker than it is. A world that came near crashing still stands. Courage, determination and hope have transcended doubt and fear. We know we shall win.

The grim specter has left its trace in the form of vacancies in almost every family circle. So hilarious and selfish manifestations of joy will be in poor taste. Those who are absent this year will be thinking of home and loved ones. We shall not keep faith with them if we fail to preserve the things they cherish. Surely a Merry Christmas is a treasured memory of each of them. They would not wish Christmas to be otherwise, even this year. You, the students of Christian College, will be returning to your homes. Your parents have been denied companionship with you during the past months. They need and deserve the cheer you can bring into the home. You must radiate the Yuletide cheer and hope.

The good season of the year must ever mean good will, kindness, hope and love. Christmas is the time for rekindling the finest sentiments in our minds and hearts. It is a time to re-envoice our valued possessions and our good fortunes. It is a time to be thankful for life with its many blessings. This year it is a time when every one of us should be filled with gratitude that we are Americans. It is a time to reflect upon the beautiful and limitless influences of Him whose birth we commemorate at Christmas.

A Merry Christmas,

J.C. Miller, president of Christian College from 1938-1956
“...the first snowfall thrilled and excited the girls from the deep south, and Amelia, Ann and Audrey also found much fun and frolic in building snowmen, having snowball fights, and in eating their homemade snow ice cream...foremost, they were awed by the artistic splendor of God’s beautiful out-of-doors, and by the white fluffy blanket with which He had covered their campus...”

Student excerpt from the 1958 College Widow yearbook

From left: Santa visits with children at the Children’s Faculty Christmas Party; one of the most anticipated events of the year, the Christmas formal (or ‘Snow Ball’) was a chance for Christian College girls to dress up in their holiday best and dance with dates from the University of Missouri
Clockwise from left: A Christian College girl hangs the final trimmings on the tree; “It all started with a handful of packed snow!” exclaims the caption of this photo in the 1964 College Widow; girls in elegant dresses dine at the annual Christian College Christmas Dinner hours before boarding their midnight trains for home; from 1965, The Creche Scene, or Nativity Scene, was an annual tradition during the holiday season at Christian College.
Christmas Cards \{ Through the Ages \}
“May the sentimental riches found in 150 years of college memories serve as a wellspring of peace and joy during this holiday season.”
Donald B. Ruthenberg

Donald B. Ruthenberg ably served the college as president from 1984 to 1995, moving Columbia College Athletics into a realm far beyond its previous stature. Ruthenberg was an avid fan of all sports, attending most home contests and remaining a friend to our student athletes.

During Ruthenberg's tenure at Columbia College, he added several sports, including men's soccer (reinstated), softball and golf. In addition, he oversaw the construction of Southwell Gym, the Cougar Softball Field and R. Marvin Owens Soccer Field. Ruthenberg also saw to the purchase of the Southy building for use by Athletics, approved the hiring of full-time coaches in all sports and provided the resources to move the department into national levels of competition.

It is interesting to note that the Columbia College mascot was changed from centaur to cougar, and an Athletic Review Committee was formed in 1985 to help improve sports at the college. To oversee Athletics, Ruthenberg hired Bob Burchard in 1988, who had spent the previous seven years at Missouri Western State College.

As the 15th president, Ruthenberg made sure the college was seen as a leader in NAIA athletics by hosting a national softball tournament for three years. In 1990, the college had its first appearance in a national tournament for men's basketball. In addition, the volleyball team toured Taiwan, Japan and Puerto Rico in the late 1980s.
The 2001 Columbia College women's volleyball team

The 2001 Columbia College women’s volleyball team was the third in Cougar Athletics history to win an NAIA National Championship. The team finished the season with a perfect 38-0 record while avenging their second place finish at the national contest the previous year. In the national championship match, they defeated National American University 30-25, 30-17 and 30-14.

The unbeatable team was composed of five juniors, six sophomores and two freshmen. Team members were Crystal Abel (Ellifrits), Sugglys Chinchilla, Olga Correa-Henao, Jamie Diestelkamp (Nelson), Annie Farris, Tracie Ford (Thompson), Nino Gonzalez, Ashley Hale, Kenny Moreno-Pino, Yesmina Moreno-Pino, Katie Skibiski, Endrinha Sosa and Tricia Weisenborn (Crist-Schmitt).

At the helm was Coach Melinda Wrye-Washington, who was named Conference, Region and National Coach of the Year. The team’s outstanding performance also earned them numerous conference, regional and national awards that year, culminating in seven AMC Academic All-Conference members; four AMC All-Conference, Region V and NAIA All-Americans; three NAIA All-Tournament selections; and the National Tournament MVP.

Katie McMahon Smith

Katie McMahon Smith graduated one semester early from Knox County High School in Edina, Missouri, to join the Columbia College softball team in January 2005. She graduated in 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts in marketing and international business. In 2010, she completed her Master in Business Administration.

During her career at Columbia College, the Cougar softball team made national tournament appearances in three of her four seasons, finishing in a seventh-place tie in 2005, and a ninth-place tie in both 2007 and 2008.

Katie was named All-Conference and Academic All-Conference for the 2006, 2007 and 2008 seasons. She was named First Team All-Region and selected for the Honorable Mention All-American Team in 2007 and 2008. In those two seasons she also was Conference Pitcher of the Year and Region Pitcher of the Year. In 2008 she also was the Collegiate Sportswoman of the Year for the Women’s Intersport Network of Columbia, Missouri. In 2007 she was voted MVP by her team and was team captain in 2008.

After graduating in 2008, Katie became the graduate assistant softball coach for the Cougars’ 2009 and 2010 seasons, and was the pitching coach in 2011. She currently resides in Columbia, Missouri, and has worked for Veterans United Home Loans for the past three years. In her spare time, Katie enjoys providing pitching lessons to young athletes in the area.

She married Mike Smith in July 2013, and they welcomed their first son in November 2014.

1999 Columbia College women’s volleyball team

The Columbia College women’s volleyball team claimed the college’s first national championship in 1998, but they weren’t done yet. Just as they had the year before, they took the 1999 season by storm, going on to capture the NAIA National Championship yet again. The Cougars completed the back-to-back national championships with an undefeated 40-0 record.

In the championship match, they defeated Fresno Pacific University, a perennial power of the NAIA, in four games (8-15, 16-14, 15-12 and 15-7). With an overall game record of 120-1, they overwhelmed their opponents throughout the season, losing only the first game of the national championship match.

The talented team was composed of four seniors, three sophomores and three freshmen. The members were Jenni Ford, Quanna Speake (Hafer), Mariuska Hamilton (Buckner), Dominique Savage, Endrinha Sosa, Tricia Weisenborn (Crist-Schmitt), Juliana Godoi (Evens), Deng Yang, Wang Jiang.
Leading the way were Coaches Wayne and Susan Kreklow, who were named Conference, Region and National Tournament Coaches of the Year. The team’s tremendous season garnered several individual awards, including five AMC Academic All-Conference members; four AMC All-Conference and All-Region V members; two NAIA-All-Americans and NAIA All-Tournament selections; National Tournament MVP; and National Player of the Year.

J.P. Irrera

J.P. Irrera, a native of Buenos Aires, Argentina, has always had a ball at his feet. At the age of just 8 months, his family recognized his soccer skills when he stood up to kick a balloon. From that moment forward, soccer always was a part of his life. After a few years on local teams, J.P. developed his soccer skills while playing for more prestigious youth teams such as the Boca Juniors and Vélez Sarsfield. In 2000, he accepted Coach Klein’s invitation to play at Columbia College. Following his freshman campaign in 2001, his mother became ill, and he left the program to be with his family. He returned to Columbia College the next fall and continued his stellar playing career. J.P. graduated from Columbia College in May 2006 with a degree in international business.

During his outstanding Columbia College career, Irrera was named American Midwest Conference and Region V First Team for each of the four seasons he played. Irrera received the honor of American Midwest Conference Player of the Year in 2003, and Region V Player of the Year in 2004, when he helped his team qualify for the NAIA National Tournament for the first time in the college’s history. He was a two-time NAIA Honorable Mention, as well as a two-time NAIA Second Team All-American.

Following his collegiate career, Irrera played midfield for the Puerto Rico Islanders, a professional team based in Puerto Rico. While there, he played 14 games, scoring four goals and six assists. He decided to step away from the game he loved after the birth of his daughter, Giuliana, in 2006. Later that year, he returned to Columbia, Missouri, and began working at Boone County National Bank. With his wife, Luciana, and daughter, J.P. returned to Buenos Aires in 2007, where they have resided since. Today he works as a purchasing manager for Coto Cicsa.

Cougar Athletics Expands to 15 Varsity Sports

Brand-new reasons to cheer on the Cougars are coming your way. By the academic year 2016-17, the Cougars will offer 15 varsity NAIA Championship sports with the addition of baseball and full indoor and outdoor men’s and women’s track and field. Currently, the Cougar athletic department consists of 140 student-athletes competing in 10 varsity sports. The new sports will likely bring the department around 100 new student athletes over the next two years and will give Columbia College the chance to fully compete in all sports sponsored by the American Midwest Conference.
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To learn more about what our partnership can do for you, call 1-866-238-1426 or visit nationwide.com/ColumbiaCollege.
Traveling with the Cougars has its perks, and you won’t have to travel far from main campus to find them. In the fall issue of Affinity, we introduced you to five AMC conference towns outside of Missouri. The following pages will explore in-state stops for the Cougars and all the attractions that make these towns destinations in their own right.

Hannibal-LaGrange University

Location: Hannibal, Missouri
Enrollment: 1,200
Athletics website: www.hlgtrojans.com
Mascot: Trojans
City population: 17,814

Hannibal, the boyhood home to Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens), and the setting for The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. The town even hosts National Tom Sawyer Days, which include a parade and a run/walk event, as well as a frog-jumping and fence-painting competition.

Harris-Stowe State University

Location: St. Louis, Missouri
Enrollment: 1,900
Athletics website: http://www.hornetsathletics.com/
City population: 318,416
Mascot: Hornets

St. Louis is a hub for AMC components and a top tourist destination in Missouri. Whether you’re taking in a St. Louis Cardinals game, visiting the St. Louis Science Center, or touring the Budweiser Brewery, St. Louis has it all.
William Woods University

**Location:** Fulton, Missouri  
**Enrollment:** 2,300  
**Athletics website:** http://www.wwuowls.com/  
**Mascot:** Owls  
**City population:** 12,728

Most notably home to the National Churchill Museum — the place of Churchill’s famous “Iron Curtain” speech. Yes, it took place in the small town of Fulton, Missouri.

And if you catch a game and you’re in the mood for a beer, stop by the Post Office Bar & Grill, which has been operated since 1996 in a building that was previously a federal post office. When the weather’s nice, and even when it’s not, the outdoor patio is open for business.

Stephens College

**Location:** Columbia, Missouri  
**Enrollment:** 754  
**Athletics website:** www.stephens.edu/student-life/athletics/  
**Mascot:** Stars  
**City population:** 115,276

Located just across College Avenue from Columbia College, Stephens College is a “cross avenue” rival with the Cougars in all women’s sports.

Missouri Baptist University

**Location:** Creve Coeur, Missouri  
**Enrollment:** 2,800  
**Athletics website:** www.mbuspartans.com/  
**Mascot:** Spartans  
**City population:** 17,855

Take in the beauty of Creve Coeur Lake, the largest natural lake in Missouri. Take some time for a picnic or work on your backhand at a local tennis court. There’s even an archery course and Crystal Springs Quarry Golf Course, an 18-hole course that opened in 2001. In addition, as a suburb of St. Louis, the town offers an insane number of restaurants just minutes away.

Park University

**Location:** Parkville, Missouri  
**Enrollment:** 1,600  
**Athletics website:** http://www.parkathletics.com/  
**Mascot:** Pirates  
**City population:** 5,928

A historic river town nestled against limestone bluffs, Parkville is just 10 miles north of Kansas City, making it a great place to escape the city bustle. Trendy shopping and dining districts are housed in mid-1800s through 1900s architecture, and breathtaking bluffs and numerous parks delight visitors year-round.
Sally Jane Hawkins ’76 and her husband opened Sugar Beach Resorts, an RV campground in Robertsdale, Alabama. She and her husband reside in Daphne, Alabama.

Walter Christenson ’80 is retired with the U.S. Air Force as chief, personnel systems management branch at Hancock Field, New York. He now volunteers at Banner Boswell Hospital in Sun City, Arizona, where he resides.

Michael Vigue ’81 retired as an aerospace engineering manager. He and his wife reside in Big Bear Lake, California.

Colin Comer ’03 is the new director of the Institute for Public Safety and Central Missouri Police Academy at the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg, Missouri. He and his wife reside in Fulton, Missouri.

For the past two years, Becky Cook ’03 has adopted four streets for litter control in Springfield, Missouri, in honor of her late son. She also is the “secret” gardener who tends the flowers at her church. She resides in Battlefield, Missouri.

Dr. Penny Rafferty Hamilton ’78 contributed a chapter on her “Teaching Women to Fly” research project in the book Absent Aviators: Gender Issues in Aviation. She and her husband reside in Granby, Colorado.

Clark Barnes ’78 retired as an EEO investigator for the U.S. Postal Service. He was also the EEO instructor at Coast Guard Training Center in Petaluma, California. He and his wife reside in Tampa, Florida.

Sherresse Buzard ’83 began teaching K-12 art at East Union Schools in Afton, Iowa in fall 2014. She resides in Afton.

Frank S. Moceri ’88 retired from the Internal Revenue Service after 31 years of government service. He is a U.S. Navy veteran, having served in the military from 1969 to 1974. Frank and his wife reside in St. Louis, Missouri.

Russell Podgorski ’03 graduated from Saint Joseph’s College with a master of health administration degree in May 2014. He and his wife reside in Kent, Washington.

Juliah Kendrick Ginos ’05 is self-publishing a children’s book, Oliver and the Tickle-Proof Pajamas, which will be available on Amazon.com. She and her husband reside in Quincy, Illinois.
Yvonne Charles Cusick ’08 expects to graduate from the University of Central Arkansas in 2015 with a degree in family and consumer science. She and her husband reside in Heber Springs, Arkansas.

Silas Koonse ’08 is the new owner of Koonse Glass in Columbia, Missouri. Silas is the third generation to run the company. He and his wife, Rebecca Muenks Koonse ’08, reside in Columbia.

S. Rebekah Prewitt ’08 published You Can Be a Happy Wife: A Look at the Wife’s Role, which culminates her research on the disparity between Biblical teachings and the practices of modern women. She and her husband reside in Lulu, Florida.

Markus Wesaw Jr. ’08 earned the certified safety professional credential from the Board of Certified Safety Professionals and practices industrial psychology as a safety management consultant. He and his wife reside in Southbury, Connecticut.
'10s

**Rebecca Dean ’10** is a master's candidate in gerontology at the University of Southern California and expects to graduate in 2015. She and her husband reside in Columbia, Missouri.

**Jenna Owens Vandel ’10** is now the criminal justice and sociology instructor at North Central Missouri College. She and her husband reside in Trenton, Missouri.

**Val Munchez-van der Wagt ’10** began studying at DePaul School of Law in August 2014. He and his wife reside in Libertyville, Illinois.

**Robert Paul Johnson ’12** currently is working toward his Ph.D. in clinical psychology. He resides in Nipomo, California.

**Nathan Charles Groom ’13** is a security boat team leader and patrol officer for the U.S. Navy at Kings Bay Submarine Base. He and his wife reside in Saint Marys, Georgia.

**Robert Kujawa ’12** has been hired as the 911 center director for the Northbrook Police Department in Northbrook, Illinois. He resides in Johnsburg, Illinois.

**Travis Knight ’14** has been hired as a key holder for Radio Shack in Watertown, New York, where he resides.

**Christopher Cappel ’14** has been accepted into Emporia State University for a master’s degree in history. He is also the new youth pastor at Faith and Victory Church in Greensboro, North Carolina, where he and his wife reside.

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## In Memoriam

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<tr>
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<td>Virginia Mutz Foster ’37</td>
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<td>Kenneth A. Sappington ’77</td>
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<td>Eva May Allan ’78</td>
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<td>Daniel Carrillo Jr ’05</td>
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<td>Michelle J. Coville Cottom ’12</td>
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<td>Melvin J. Rustemeyer ’13</td>
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Your donation to the Columbia College Fund supports scholarship funding and the best possible educational experience for bright, deserving students like these. You can help by sending in your gift in the enclosed envelope.

A secure online giving option is available at [www.ccis.edu/onlinegiving](http://www.ccis.edu/onlinegiving)
On the Web: Scootergraphs

Check out where CC alumni have taken Scooter this time:

From left: Danielle Kimmel ’14, WWII veteran Paul J. Andert and Jim Pasley ’87 at the Change Academy Lake of the Ozarks, where Paul spoke of his experience in the war. He is one of four surviving vets who fought in North Africa, Omaha Beach on D-Day and the Battle of the Bulge.

From left: Julia Montgomery ’15 and Jessica Montgomery ’15

Mickie Dietz-Eaton ’88 took Scooter scuba diving at “The Shipyards” near Nassau, Bahamas.
Post your selfies on Facebook and Twitter with the hashtag #selfieswithscooter.

To submit your photos or request a Scootergraph, email ccalum@ccis.edu.
Columbia College Calendar of Events

San Diego Alumni Networking Social
Jan. 8, 2015
San Diego, California

Los Alamitos Alumni Networking Social
Jan. 9, 2015
Los Alamitos, California

Coast Guard Island Alumni Networking Social
Feb. 3, 2015
Alameda, California

San Luis Obispo Alumni Networking Social
Feb. 4, 2015
San Luis Obispo, California

Lemoore Alumni Networking Social
Feb. 5, 2015
Lemoore, California

Charleston Alumni Luncheon
Feb. 24, 2015
Charleston, South Carolina

Savannah Alumni Networking Social
Feb. 25, 2015
Savannah, Georgia

Ft. Stewart Alumni Networking Social
Feb. 26, 2015
Ft. Stewart, Georgia

Moberly Alumni Networking Social
March 11, 2015
Moberly, Missouri

Redstone Arsenal Alumni Networking Social
March 17, 2015
Redstone Arsenal, Alabama

Reunion Weekend & Alumni Awards Banquet
April 24-25, 2015

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What’s New With You?

If you have a change of address, marriage or birth announcement, new job, awards, etc., we’d like to know about it! Use the form below or fill out the alumni update form online at www.columbiacollegealumni.org/alumniupdate. We’ll update your alumni records and share your good news in Affinity magazine. To submit a photo with your news, email it to ccalum@ccis.edu!

Name: ____________________________________________

First  Maiden  Last

Preferred name: ____________________________________________ □ Check if new

Address: ___________________________________________________ State: _______ Zip: ____________

City: ___________________________ State: _______ Zip: ____________

Home phone: ( ) ___________ Cell phone: ( ) ___________

E-mail: ___________________________ Date of birth: ___________________________

Campus attended: ___________________________ Class year: ___________________________

Employer: ____________________________________________

Job title: ____________________________________________ □ Check if new  Effective: __________

Business Address: ____________________________________________

Name of spouse: ____________________________________________

Spouse’s job title: ___________________________ Employer: ___________________________

Business address: ____________________________________________

Wedding announcement (within the last 12 months)

Married to: ____________________________________________ Date of marriage: __________

CC campus attended (if applicable): ___________________________ CC graduation year (if applicable): ___________________________

City: ___________________________ State: _______ Zip: ____________

Birth (Adoption) announcement (within the last 12 months)

Birth of a: □ Daughter  □ Son  Date of birth: ___________________________

Name: ____________________________________________  Spouse’s name: □ Check if CC  Grad year __________

Career Notes/Retirement Update/Community Service/Military (within the last 12 months)

Please attach additional information if necessary.

__________________________________________

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Mail this form to: Columbia College Alumni Relations Office • 1001 Rogers St. • Columbia, MO 65216
(800) 231-2391, ext. ALUM (2586) or (573) 875-ALUM (2586) • (573) 875-7733 Fax • www.ColumbiaCollegeAlumni.org
Wishing you a wonderful holiday season

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Susan, Jayme, Kim, Carolyn,
Laura, Dan and Sam
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