



CENTRAL  
CHRISTIAN  
SCHOOL

# ALUMNI TIMES

April 2023

Volume 6

Issue 1

## ***CENTRAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL IS CELEBRATING 75 YEARS!***

“. . . Thus far the LORD has helped us.” 1 Samuel 7:12 NKJV. We thought it would be good to consider the past even as we look forward to the future. We need to reflect on God’s faithfulness to us for so many years, to remember, be thankful, and worship. We want to remember the volunteers, the teaching and learning, prayer and ministry groups, as well as growing in our walk with the Lord. There were also class parties, music, friends, sports, and so much more! After remembering our roots, an alum from each decade has given us a written a testimony of their recollections and their gratitude. We will hear from four alumni in this newsletter and four more in the next issue.

### **IN THE BEGINNING**

In 1948, a corporation was formed for the purpose of launching a school with the name of Central Kansas Bible Academy. Many others were involved, but the first board of trustees to bring this seed to germination consisted of seven men. President Ervin Adrian, Vice-President Rev. D. C. Pauls, Secretary Dr. P. W. Hiebert, and Treasurer Herbert Krehbiel. Other members were Waldo Schrag, John H. Neufeld, Rev. Victor Sawatzky, and Pete Kroeker. According to an excerpt from the 1951 Open Door yearbook, recognizing that a



“Christian philosophy of education and secularism did not mix, it was necessary to begin a new school based on the Word of God, with the intent of Christianizing every bit of the educational program.”

A vacant building on the corner of 8th Avenue and Chemical was purchased for use as a school building. Additional buildings were planned and constructed to complete a campus for the needs of a new school. There

were 41 students to begin the 1950-1951 school year with a faculty of six. A dedication service was held in a large tent on the campus on September 3, 1951. Rev. J. W. Vogt, superintendent of Corn Bible Academy in Corn, Oklahoma, gave the dedicatory message. Music was presented by Berean Academy with quartets from Bethel Mennonite Church and Pretty Prairie Mennonite Church.

In the next few years, staff and student enrollment continued to grow. By 1955, the faculty and staff had grown to 11, and student enrollment was 120. Thirty-two seniors graduated that year.

By 1965, 323 seniors had graduated from CKBA, now Central Christian High School. But it was late that year when a great disaster occurred. According

to the yearbook, December 15, 1965 was the beginning of a new era at Central. An early morning fire



destroyed the gymnasium and did damage to the rest of the connected facilities. Christmas vacation had begun, but the word quickly got out that the gym had been completely destroyed. The board was meeting in the principal's office the next day, praying and trying to determine a way forward, when there was a knock on the door. Mrs. Kauffman was at the door and asked for Mr. Adrian and Mr. Nickel. She went on to show them where they had been scrubbing the stairs and soot could come off.



As the men came back into the room where the others were still on their knees, Mr. Adrian said, "There is a time for praying and a time for action. There is a time to be on our knees praying and a time to be on our knees scrubbing and cleaning. Men, let's start to work!"

In the next weeks, an army of parents and volunteers spent many hours cleaning and shining the attached building of classrooms, library, and girls dormitory. Classes began again after the Christmas break. All the way through to the end of even the 1967-1968 school

year, Paul Willems ('69) said you could still smell smoke in various places in the old building.

The goodness and faithfulness of God continues. This seemingly tragic incident in the life of Central brought to us a more visible new location and more land to complete an expanded campus for the growing school. Land was purchased at 1910 E. 30th Avenue in Hutchinson, and plans for a new building were underway. The main building, with a gym and cafeteria, was nearly completed for the 1968-1969 school year.



The classrooms were not completed, so most classes were held in the Union Valley Church nearby. As

the need arose, and with God's gracious provision, other buildings were added to the campus in the following years. Junior high school began in 1971, and elementary school was added in 1975. In 1980, a preschool and child care center was added.

In 1983, a man came to the school and was asking about the long-range plans for the school. Ultimately, this donor gave \$300,000 for the construction of the elementary building. Not only did the Lord provide for the building, but the furnishings for



the building were given by another generous servant of the Lord.

Many of our alumni might remember the roof collapse of the front of the building due to extremely heavy snow on Sunday, March 29, 2009. It happened during the wee hours of Sunday morning while no one was in the building. It was another demonstration of God's protection. Had people been in the building when it happened, there could have been many seriously injured or killed. There was temporary relocation of the cafeteria, kitchen, and offices along with holding the high school commencement and eight grade promotion offsite in 2009 and 2010 while waiting for insurance decisions and reconstruction to be completed.

A good Christian school not only needs facilities but must also have talented and qualified teachers who love the Lord and exemplify Him in their lives. Our alumni remember many teachers who gave themselves to the work of the ministry and who had a mighty effect in their lives.

Good things continue happening at Central Christian School. There have been a total of 1,335 graduates. Today, we are so blessed to have a godly board of trustees to guide us into the future. We are blessed with administration and faculty who are highly qualified to teach our growing student body in a way that is "based on the Word of God, with the intent of Christianizing every bit of the educational program."

*"Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is none other; I am God and there is none like Me." Isaiah 46:9 NKJV*

## Family News

*Please keep us updated on you and your family's marriages, births, and deaths.  
Email Jim Doerksen at [jdoerksen@cougarsccs.com](mailto:jdoerksen@cougarsccs.com).*

### **Congratulations**

There have been no weddings that we know about.

### **Welcome**

Christopher and Cynthia (Morris '13) Cornett welcomed baby boy Mylo Joseph on October 14, 2022.  
Alex and Elise (Taylor '13) Krebaum welcomed their baby girl Esther Larén on November 30, 2022.  
Kyle ('10) and Mallory Thompson welcomed their baby girl Nora Jane on March 3, 2023.  
Ethan ('12) and Ardynn Hershberger welcomed their baby girl Aberdeen Eleanor on March 8, 2023.  
Zachary and Nicole (Crouse '07) Odell welcomed their baby boy Parker Grey on March 8, 2023.

### **Deaths**

Bonnie (Bristol '60) Forseen of Cortez, Colorado, died on April 9, 2021.  
Lloyd Jensen ('95) of Hutchinson, Kansas, died on December 16, 2022.  
Lovella (Thiessen '54) Thiessen of Canadian, Texas, died on December 16, 2022.  
Dean Graber ('54) of Tulsa, Oklahoma, died on December 28, 2022.  
Melanie Hawthorne, CCS staff, of Hutchinson, Kansas, died on January 2, 2023.  
Jim Jackson ('84) of Hutchinson, Kansas, died on January 14, 2023.  
Emma (Kauffman '62) Swartz of Kansas City, Missouri, died on March 4, 2023.

### **Positions and Promotions**

Matt Rich ('14) received his Doctor of Chiropractic degree from Cleveland Chiropractic on December 16, 2022 and his Kansas license and is now practicing at Cohoon Kinesiology in Hutchinson.  
Del ('66) and Nancy Kroeker have recently retired from Camp Forest Springs in Westboro, WI, after 53 years of service. Not many people have one job as their entire career.

## TRIBUTES TO CENTRAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL . . . 75 YEARS OLD!

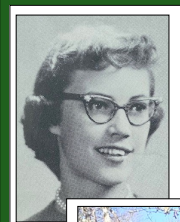
Christian education was an important part of our family. My mother attended the Zoar Academy which was the inspiration for Central Christian. My dad attended Grace Bible Institute and later became part of Central's board of directors. His goal for Central was for young people to have a firm Christian foundation which would act as a filter for future decisions. Personally, I know that my education at Central did influence my future decisions, and I am so grateful for that.

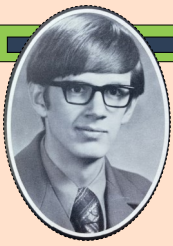
One aspect of my years at Central Christian was the music program under Mr. Schmidt and Mr. Gerbrandt. I learned how to conduct music and realized I loved it. I put that to good use in my 30 years of teaching music. Singing in the choir and trio with Rosalie Thiessen (Flickinger) and Marge Schmidt was a wonderful experience! We had the opportunity to minister at a summer youth camp and then make a recording. Our goal was always to honor our Lord.

During the years 1973-1983, my husband, Ron Funk, and I taught music and Bible, and we were dorm parents for out-of-town students. (As a side note, the son of one of our dorm girls is now the superintendent of Central!) Our daughters, Jenelle and Julie, were students in the newly formed elementary school. Ron and I loved producing programs, with the help of dedicated Don Nies and several mothers, which involved lots of students, giving them opportunities to use their talents and attracting the community to our school and to our Lord.

Returning to Central on several occasions, I found it heartwarming to see alumni sending their children to Central and being involved in the activities, those of us living at a distance supporting the school's projects with monetary gifts, and then seeing the many new families involved in this excellent Christian school. I'm looking forward to future celebrations!

Doris (Balzer '57) Funk Pierce





## Greg Bartsch ('72)

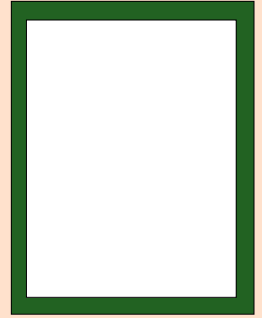
Since my older siblings had attended a Christian high school, my desire was always to attend one as well. After finishing a public junior high school of 900 some students, I attended

three years at Central Christian. There were obvious differences between the two schools! I enjoyed a much smaller setting at Central where I felt I belonged to a family. I enjoyed the chapel services and Bible classes as well. I participated in more activities at Central than I had in my previous public schools. I never felt lost like I did in the public school.

Music was my forte. I enjoyed being in the choir and especially the smaller ensemble called the Blue Echoes. It gave me the opportunity to come out of my shell and to proclaim, through songs, my love for my Savior. I was encouraged to participate in the Blue Echoes by a few older people who were already in the group. These people were such an encouragement to me, and I looked up to them: people like RJ Tippin, Gloria Graber Popp, Cindy Schmucker Blasdel, and others. I had a good relationship with all those who participated in those groups.

One event occurred that I'll never forget. During my final year at Central, we had a revival among my fellow students in the senior class. I knew that Satan worked overtime at Central because most of us were believers and followers of Jesus Christ. At times I was surprised at some of the things that occurred by some students at Central, but I never let it discourage me. I have always tried to be an encouragement to people and have never tried to point my finger at someone in a negative way when they were not walking with the Lord the way they should. There had to be many prayers offered up for my class because God was definitely moving in a powerful way, bringing people to the place where they needed to be with Him.

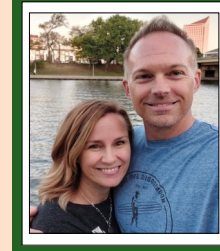
My time at Central was very special for me. I am thankful that God allowed me to attend. I am also very grateful that Central is doing much better financially. It is encouraging to have the parking lot paved and to see the work being done on the new classrooms. A big Happy 75th Birthday to Central Christian High! May God continue to bless and to use this school to train students to become better equipped for His service!



## Stacy (Tatro '93) and Justin Unruh

I was blessed to attend Central Christian from kindergarten through my senior year of high school. I am thankful for the opportunity to have been able to learn in a safe environment, surrounded by adults who loved the Lord.

As I look back, especially on my high school years, I am struck by how much fun we had! There was a lot of laughter in our lives, and the peer pressure I experienced was towards the positive. We also had many opportunities in which to be involved, and we learned valuable life skills and lessons along the way. I remember calling radio stations and asking them to advertise the donkey basketball game we were planning for a fundraiser; walking into local businesses and asking them to sponsor yearbook ads; we even developed our own film in the darkroom for yearbook class. And we were able to shine in so many ways—there were musicals to participate in, choirs, sports, fundraising, decorating, leadership opportunities in the classroom, and of course in academics as well. I love that when you're attending a small school, you don't have to be exemplary in order to participate in an activity.



In addition to the fun and laughter with friends and the opportunities for involvement, I also fondly remember the impact of my teachers on my life. Here are a few memories, from many more I could write about: Mr. Isaac would stand by his door and tell us every day as we left his classroom, "Have a good and godly day." It was a phrase I would try my best to repeat to my own children as they left for school each day. I remember long talks with Mr. and Mrs. Johnson—they were there whenever we needed them—and we needed them often! Mr. Valdois sparked our curiosity in science class; Mrs. Morris had the best reading voice; and Mrs. Walter tried her best to teach us how to sew and cook—though I'm sorry to say those lessons didn't always hit fertile ground in my case! When I thought that I might want to pursue music education, Mr. Carr allowed me to practice leading the choir (even though I had no idea what I was doing); and Mr. Nies allowed us to create and build.

I will always be grateful that my parents chose Central Christian for me. Central provided me with a firm foundation of truth, fun experiences with friends, valuable life skills, and adults who loved the Lord and encouraged me to love Him as well.

## Joshua Ruhlmann ('14)

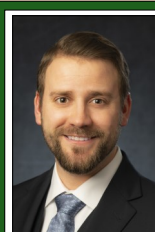
As a former student of Central Christian, I am honored to offer a tribute to this school on its

75th anniversary. High school presented me with opportunities to develop and mature as an individual. One such instance was when I suffered a knee injury that prevented me from taking part in most sports. Despite this, the school allowed me to establish a swim team, which gave me the chance to participate in athletics once more. This experience taught me valuable lessons in adaptability and resourcefulness—lessons I would not have learned were it not for the flexibility and kindness of the school and its staff.

I would like to express my gratitude to three teachers at Central Christian who had a significant impact on my education. Dawn Willcox, Brenda Moore, and James Devries are dedicated educators who went above and beyond in their roles. Their commitment to their students and their passion for teaching was inspiring. Mr. Devries' book recommendations were particularly enjoyable and educational, expanding my understanding of the world.

Central Christian's emphasis on Christian education was a valuable experience that helped shape my character and spirituality. School instilled in me a sense of morality and faith that continues to guide me today. I am proud to have received a Christian education and thankful for the positive impact it has had on my life.

Congratulations to Central Christian High School on its 75th anniversary, and may it continue to inspire and support students for years to come.



Jim Doerksen ('67),  
Alumni Director

## THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

**Alumni & Reunion Weekend - September 22-23, 2023** This year is Central's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary! Save these dates and mark your calendars for this special event in the life of our school. We would like to consider Alumni & Reunion Weekend as a kick-off for our celebration. A variety of events will be planned for you to enjoy. Keep an eye open in your mail and email for some of the details as we celebrate the Lord's faithfulness in 75 years of education at Central Christian School. We want to especially welcome the classes whose graduation year ends in a **three** to the Alumni & Reunion Weekend for their own reunions. Join us at 6:00 p.m., on Friday, September 22, to enjoy great food, the company of fellow alumni, and then to cheer on the Cougars football team.

The final event of our celebration will be the Stewardship Dinner on November 11, 2023. All alumni are invited to be a part of this special banquet—celebrating 75 years, eating great food, enjoying fellowship, listening to music, and hearing from a guest speaker. This will be an inspiring event that you will not want to miss!

**Graduation** - is just around the corner again! This year the school will be graduating 18 seniors. Commencement will be on Saturday afternoon, May 6, at 2:00 p.m.

**Reminder to pray for the school** - One of the most potent weapons we have is our access to the God of the universe. He hears and answers our prayers. "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much," James 5:16. We also want to thank the Lord for the progress being made on the FORWARD Campaign. Good things are happening at Central!

**Regarding the FORWARD Campaign**, here is an update from CCS Superintendent Dr. John Walker. "The Lord never ceases to amaze me. He is so kind, generous, and bountiful in His care for His own. We have been celebrating the Lord's goodness in meeting our \$208,000 match opportunity. The classroom match challenge encouraged others to give, ran from January 1 through March 31, and a raised \$416,000!

"This was all made possible by very generous donors who care about our school and seek to ensure that our classroom addition wing is finished to completion. While the Lord is ultimately the One who draws a person to give, we ask for your help and support to get us to the finish line! We are now roughly \$50,000 away from meeting our financial goal for Step 1 of the new classroom project and roughly \$150,000 away from Step 2, which includes a remodel of the four existing classrooms along the east side of the gym.

"We would like to ask for your help toward this end. A gift of any amount assists us in meeting our goal. Would you consider giving toward classrooms completion and remodel? Having new classrooms with a focus on science, technology, and mathematics will continue to assist us as we seek to educate from a biblical worldview and grow our college class offerings.

"Thank you for your prayerful consideration!"

**Estate Planning** - for those who are working on their estate plans, we encourage you to remember Central Christian School in your will or trust documents.

CCS Alumni Association  
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Colorado Springs, CO 80918

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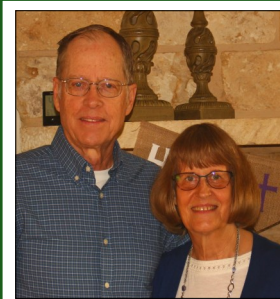
We want to keep in touch with our  
alumni and friends. If you have a  
change of email or mailing address,  
please contact the  
CCS Alumni Association at  
[jdoerksen@cougarsccs.com](mailto:jdoerksen@cougarsccs.com).



We encourage you to get in touch with your former classmates.  
Email [jdoerksen@cougarsccs.com](mailto:jdoerksen@cougarsccs.com) for their contact information if you need it.

I spent only my senior year at CCS graduating in 1967. I was in the dorm, my parents being overseas. I graduated from Calvary Bible College in 1971 and from Grace Theological Seminary in 1976. Shirley Young and I were married in 1975, and we were missionaries in Asia from 1979 to 2015. We have four children and ten grandchildren, and we presently live outside of Weatherford, Texas.

### **THE HIGH COST AND GREAT REWARD OF FOLLOWING JESUS BY Craig Preston ('67)**



Craig and Shirley Preston

While preparing a lesson on the last of the Beatitudes, “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:10), I came across this verse: “For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake” (Phil. 1:29). It set me back on my haunches. Do you know what this is saying? The word *granted* is from the same root as the word for *grace*. It means to grant as a favor or grant graciously. What is granted as a favor? To believe in Christ. I get that. Speaking of a woman named Lydia in Acts 16:14, we read “. . .whose heart the Lord opened.” To have a changed heart is indeed a wondrous favor—great grace. But Paul says that there is a second favor here—“to suffer for His sake.” I had to grapple with that in my heart. How can it be that I am being graced with suffering? Here is how I see it:

There are two things the world hates, righteousness and Christ. Jesus said, “The world . . . hates Me because I bear witness about it, that its deeds are evil” (John 7:7). Romans 1:30 calls the world haters of God. In the last Beatitude (Matt. 5:10), Jesus pronounces blessing on those persecuted for the sake of righteousness, and in verse 11 He extends the blessing to those persecuted “because of Me (Jesus)”. Christ is righteousness itself. We who believe in Christ have been chosen out of the world to be His. Therefore, we get what He got—persecution.

We’ve been granted the gift of Christ, but with Him comes the whole package—faith in Him and suffering for His sake. Why? Because the world hates Christ, and I am now His. It becomes clear that following Jesus is going to be costly business. All who propose to take up His name must also take up His Cross. That means be prepared to die. The cost of being His is high. But here is rest of the story. Jesus says you are blessed—you have God’s favor. Not only that, He says you get the kingdom; and not only that, He says, “Rejoice and be glad” (*glad means to leap exceedingly-Mounce; unrestrained exuberant gladness-Hendricksen*), “for your reward in heaven is great.” If Jesus says it is great, I’m sure it is beyond imagination. So, let us embrace Christ with all our heart, “. . . go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach” (Heb. 13:13), and be about the business He left us here to do (see John 15:26-27).