



NORTHWEST MAGAZINE

FALL 2025

CHLOE'S
FORMULA
FOR
SUCCESS

CONTENTS

NORTHWEST MAGAZINE

Vol. 59 | Issue 1 2025

IN EVERY ISSUE

Northwest News	/ 06
Alumni Gatherings	/ 20
Bearcat Sports	/ 22
Class Notes	/ 28
Memoriam	/ 32



President Tatum lists 10 things that excite him about the academic year.

NORTHWEST NEWS

Finance Trading Room opened	/ 06
Images of "Pride and Prejudice"	/ 06
Library of Congress grant helping teachers	/ 07
Students producing topographic maps	/ 07
Nine faculty retire	/ 07
Infrastructure project improving campus	/ 08
Esports nets championships	/ 09
Student media awards count	/ 09



CHLOE'S FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

What is it like to be a student at Northwest today? Look no further than Chloe DeVries, a recent graduate who took advantage of all it offers and has the skills, confidence and memories to prove it.

FEATURED

Long-time donors establish endowed professorship in chemistry	/ 13
Three degrees, research opportunities paving path for graduate	/ 18
Catch up with three chemistry graduates who have helped advance science and technology in the global marketplace.	/ 19



Q&A with John McMenamin

BEARCAT SPORTS

Highlight reel	/ 22
Bearcat Steppers win championship	/ 24
Baseball team reunites	/ 25



Courtney Rowe is Miss Missouri.

CLASS NOTES

Outstanding teachers recognized	/ 31
Northwest celebrates Dean Hubbard	/ 32



TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Scan the QR code to send us your feedback on this issue of the Northwest Magazine and offer ways we can improve future issues.



Dr. Mark Hornickel '01, '13
Editor-in-chief
mhorn@nwmissouri.edu



Kim Surprise '16
Creative Editor
kimz@nwmissouri.edu



Todd Weddle '96
Visual Editor
tweddle@nwmissouri.edu

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS

Sydney Bentz
Colin McDonough '98

PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANTS

Lilly Cook '24
Maria Nino-Elliott
Kelsey Tallman

NORTHWEST MAGAZINE is published by the Office of University Marketing and Communication, the Office of University Advancement, Northwest Missouri State University and the Northwest Foundation Inc., 800 University Dr., Maryville, MO 64468-6001.

The mission of Northwest Magazine is to foster connections among the Northwest Missouri State University community – including its students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends. The magazine strives to inform readers of Northwest achievements and the people who positively position the University in the hearts of its stakeholders.

CONNECT

- /Northwest Missouri State University
- /hwmostate
- /hwmostate
- /NorthwestVideo
- /hwmostate
- /hwmostate
- /hwmostate



TOP 10 THINGS

I'm looking forward to this school year

As we gear up for another year at Northwest, I wanted to share a few things I'm especially excited about.



1

MOVE-IN DAY

There's nothing quite like the excitement of move-in day. Every year, we enjoy welcoming new and returning Bearcats as they arrive to campus — cars packed, families in tow and the spirit of Northwest ready to come alive.

2

FIRST DAY OF CLASSES = CHICK-FIL-A

There's no better way to kick off the fall semester than handing out Chick-fil-A sandwiches. Giving away chicken always helps ease first-day jitters.

3

FOOTBALL SEASON = HOT DOGS AND BEARCAT NATION

I'm ready to cheer on the Bearcats and our new head coach — but I'm also here for the all-beef hot dog. It's tradition, and it pairs perfectly with Bearcat football.

4

THE SIDEWALKS ARE BACK

As Phase II of the infrastructure project wraps up, I'm eager to resume walking across our beautiful campus with First Lady Jill and, of course, our dogs, Piper and Murphee.

5

WALKOUT DAY AND HOMECOMING

From the blaring of the Bearcat Marching Band at the Gaunt House at 3 a.m. to start Walkout Day and our Homecoming weekend, we look forward to beloved Northwest traditions that bring everyone together.

6

BUFFALO WILD WINGS

We all have our comfort food, and mine involves a basket of wings and possibly an order of fries. If you haven't yet, head to The Station and check it out. We are proud to be the first-ever college campus with a Buffalo Wild Wings Go.

7

THE ALUMNI BARN PARTY

Connecting with alumni is one of my top priorities, and the fall barn party at Vic '70, '71, and Denise '71 Kretzschmar's home is a highlight on my calendar. It's a chance to celebrate Bearcat bonds that last long after graduation.

8

NEW ACADEMIC STRUCTURE

This year brings a refreshed academic structure, and I look forward to getting to know the deans and school chairs who will help lead Northwest's continued academic excellence.

9

ENTERTAINING AT THE GAUNT HOUSE

Whether it's hosting student groups, community members or guests, Jill and I look forward to welcoming all to the house.

10

CONTINUING THE BEARCAT MISSION

Above all, I'm looking forward to another year of supporting our employees and our mission of focusing on student success — every student, every day.

Let's make this year another great one.

Go Bearcats!

DR. LANCE TATUM

President

Academic units reorganized

Northwest restructured its academic units this summer, returning to a more traditional university structure led by deans, which the institution had in place until 2016.

The reorganized academic units are listed below with their leaders. The changes became effective July 1.

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL SCIENCES

Dr. Rod Barr '87, '95, '09, dean

School of Agricultural Sciences

Jacqueline Lacy, chair

School of Natural Sciences

Dr. Jeffry Thornsberry, chair

COLLEGE OF ARTS, COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Dr. Elise Gutshall Hepworth '00, dean

School of Communication and Mass Media

Dr. Matt Walker, chair

School of Fine and Performing Arts

Dr. Adam Zrust, chair

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Dr. Jessica Gracey, chair

School of Language, Literature and Writing

Dr. Robin Gallaher, chair

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS, MATHEMATICS AND TECHNOLOGY

Dr. Ben Blackford '99, '01, dean

Melvin D. and Valorie G. Booth School of Business

Dr. Steve Ludwig, chair

School of Computer Science and Information Systems

Dr. Joni Hull Adkins '95, '01, chair

School of Mathematics and Statistics

Dr. Brian Haile, chair

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Dr. Tim Wall '01, '22, dean

School of Education

Dr. Nissa Ingraham, chair

School of Health Science and Wellness

Dr. Rhonda Beemer, chair

Booth School of Business celebrates opening of Finance Trading Room

Northwest's Melvin D. and Valorie G. Booth School of Business added a significant space to its toolbox last spring by opening a Finance Trading Room in Colden Hall.

"It is a space that I know is going to support that which we consider to be the bedrock of our educational mission at the University, and that is profession-based learning," Northwest President Dr. Lance Tatum said during an April ribbon-cutting. "I can't think of any better example of what profession-based learning looks like than to be able to walk into that trading room and participate in those activities."

With funding support from the Perry

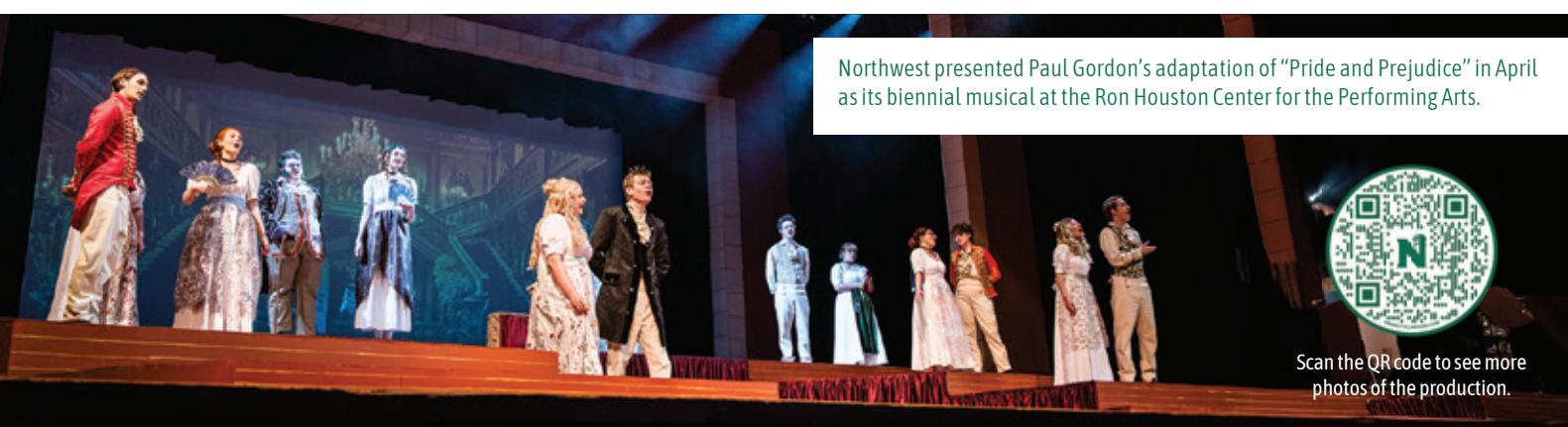
Business Education Foundation and the Melvin D. and Valorie G. Booth Endowment Fund, the converted classroom is now equipped with a series of computers, television monitors and a ticker display that enable students to track financial markets.

The collaborative room also is equipped with Bloomberg software that provides students with access to the industry leader's finance databases for services such as company filings, government securities, money markets, commodities and economic calendars as well as events and certification programs.



Business students got a first look at Northwest's new Finance Trading Room in April.

Northwest presented Paul Gordon's adaptation of "Pride and Prejudice" in April as its biennial musical at the Ron Houston Center for the Performing Arts.



Scan the QR code to see more photos of the production.

Northwest awarded Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources grant

Northwest is helping educators better understand how to teach with primary sources with support from a first-ever Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources grant.

The grant, totaling nearly \$100,000, was awarded to Northwest by the Library of Congress's Professional Learning and Outreach Initiatives Office last fall and enables Northwest to provide opportunities for PK-16 educators to learn how to teach with primary sources. The grant provides one year of funding, with the possibility of two additional years, for Teaching with Primary Sources educational projects based on Library of Congress digitized materials.

"I was so thrilled that it put Northwest on the national map when it comes to teaching with primary sources," said Dr. Tina Ellsworth, an assistant professor of education who is managing the project. "It's great exposure for the University and great exposure for the good work that the teachers in this area are doing."

In collaboration with rural school districts, individual schools and educators, and state and national organizations, the workshops familiarize teachers with sources from the Library of Congress that highlight rural America. Teachers learn inquiry-based practices for using primary sources to amplify their own histories and incorporate primary sources into their curriculum.



Workshops last spring familiarized teachers with sources from the Library of Congress that highlight rural America while helping them learn inquiry-based practices for using primary sources to amplify their own histories and enhance their curriculum.

Participating teachers are learning how to use primary sources in new ways that are engaging for students. The model helps build students' abilities to think critically and use their research while making them curious about the past and how it has shaped the present.

"When you teach kids how to critically analyze and evaluate evidence from the past, they can also transfer that skill to evidence that they're seeing now," Ellsworth said. "It's really integral to protecting our democracy that we have a very skilled citizenry who can critically analyze sources that are in front of them."



Dr. Brett Chloupek (center) looks over a pair of maps with Northwest students Nikki Welch and Joseph Sullivan, who actively edit and update topographic maps through a partnership with the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency.

NGA partnership giving students real-world experience with topographic map production

Without traveling the globe, Northwest geography students are furthering their knowledge of 1:50,000 scale topographic maps through a partnership with the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA).

Begin in 2022, the partnership provides students with profession-based experience in Geographic Information Science (GIS) while increasing NGA map production capability to meet national security challenges. Using computer software, Northwest students edit and update maps based on changes to the geologic and cultural landscape.

Northwest is one of two universities, with Southern Illinois University, on the NGA academia partnership, which also provides internship and student employment opportunities for students studying GIScience.

"It is the exact same work role and the exact same thing that newly hired employees at National Geospatial Intelligence would be doing," Dr. Brett Chloupek, a Northwest associate professor of geography, said. "It's impressive to see these students level up to the point where you can really say these are professional cartographers."

Since the partnership began, Northwest and NGA have hired and trained 15 student cartographers to produce several hundred topographic maps for the intelligence community. Each map takes between 40 and 100 hours to complete.

Northwest celebrates service of 9 retiring faculty

Nine faculty members retired from Northwest this year with a combined 213 years of service to the University.

DR. BOB BERGLAND

Associate professor of mass media, six years

JEFF BRADLEY

Senior instructor of geology, 35 years

DR. LOREN BUTLER

Associate professor of health and physical recreation, 25 years

DR. KURT HABERYAN

Professor of biology, 31 years

MATT JOHNSON

Senior instructor of history, 25 years

ARMIN MÜHSAM

Professor of art, 25 years

PAT IMMEL

Professor of theatre, 27 years

DR. LETICIA CABRERA

Assistant professor of biology, seven years

DR. MICHAEL HOBBS

Professor of English, 32 years

Infrastructure project improving campus for future Bearcats

Northwest entered the second phase this summer of its infrastructure modernization project, which will enable the University to deliver more reliable, sustainable and cost-effective utility services to campus facilities.

The Board of Regents approved the estimated \$105 million project in 2023, making it the largest capital project request in the University's history. The three-phase project began last summer and Northwest expects it to continue through the summer of 2026.



Scan the QR code to learn more about the project.



Opened in 2020, Northwest boasts an esports Lab in its J.W. Jones Student Union furnished with high-end computers and consoles to help students engage and thrive in a competitive environment while building long-lasting connections.

Esports program captures two championships, continued growth

With two championships last spring and a level of student engagement that places it among the campus's most popular activities, Northwest's esports program is thriving. In April, Northwest's "Valorant" team, playing a tactical shooter game, earned its second consecutive National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE) Plus Division Championship. Northwest's "Rocket League" team, which involves players piloting cars in a soccer match, also earned a NACE Plus Division Championship.

Northwest competes as an affiliate of NACE, which supports about 200 varsity esports programs at colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. Similar to traditional sports, members of Northwest's esports varsity teams fill positions – there's an "A team" and "B team" – to compete on specific video games.

Andrew Murphy, Northwest's esports director, focuses on ensuring the esports club offers something for all Northwest students. He emphasizes academics and graduation as much as building individual skills, values and community.

"I'm trying to grow them as a person but trying to get them to hit their peak performance as an athlete," said Murphy, who also serves as executive director of the Midwest Collegiate Esports Conference and as a member of NACE's Eligibility Enforcement Committee. "All those things that you see in traditional sports are very much taught through the esports structure."

With as many as 500 students engaging with the esports program at Northwest during the past year, about 150 students are active in its club, making it one of the largest student organizations at the University. Additionally, 20 students competed during the 2024-25 academic year as esports scholarship recipients.

Honors stack up for student media

136

Regional and national awards collected by Northwest student media members during this year's conventions and contests.

14

Pacemaker awards given to Tower yearbook, which received its first in 1987 and claimed its fourth consecutive in March for the 2024 edition.

Given annually by the Associated Collegiate Press, the Pacemaker is considered the most prestigious honor in collegiate media.

12

Photojournalist of the Year awards presented to Northwest students in the last 13 years at the annual Missouri College Media Association convention. Aaron Hare, photo editor of the Northwest Missourian, received the latest prize in April.

"Our faculty are among the best at teaching and preparing our students to be 'career ready, day one,' and the recognition our student media capture proves that, year after year."

STEVEN CHAPPELL
Director of Student Media
at Northwest



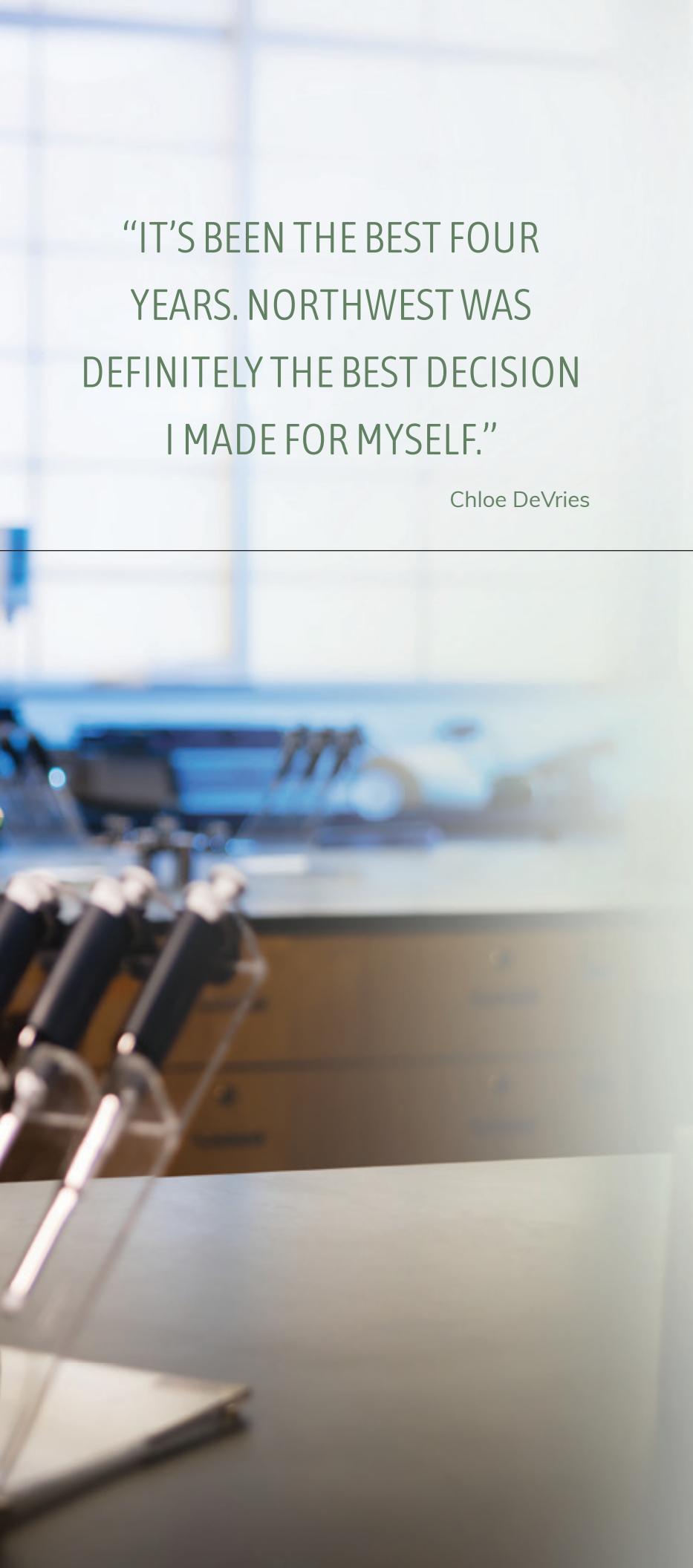
Get more Northwest news

Read more of these stories and stay updated with Northwest news throughout the year.

Scan the QR code and save nwmissouri.edu/media/ to your bookmarks.

CHLOE'S FORMULA FOR SUCCESS





“IT’S BEEN THE BEST FOUR
YEARS. NORTHWEST WAS
DEFINITELY THE BEST DECISION
I MADE FOR MYSELF.”

Chloe DeVries

Days before she graduated from Northwest last May, Chloe DeVries looked around a laboratory in the Dean L. Hubbard Center for Innovation with a mix of emotions. Sadness that a transformational chapter of her life was ending and she was leaving the people and places that had become so much a part of her routines. And happiness as she thought about all she had accomplished and the confidence she gained in herself, eager to take her knowledge and skills to a new challenge.

“I came in as this small-town girl who didn’t really know where she fit in, didn’t really know what she wanted to do, didn’t know anybody,” she said. “I’m most proud of the self-confidence that I’ve gained, the leadership abilities that I’ve grown into and how I’ve grown well-rounded as a person.”

When the spring semester ended, DeVries completed a bachelor’s degree in chemistry with a biochemistry emphasis and earned summa cum laude honors. She also graduated as the reigning Homecoming queen and the outgoing Student Senate president.

“It’s been the best four years,” she said. “Northwest was definitely the best decision I made for myself.”

CHOOSING NORTHWEST

DeVries comes from Red Oak, Iowa, a town of about 5,500 people just more than an hour's drive north of Maryville across the state border. In high school, she was a four-sport athlete, competing in cross country and volleyball during the fall, basketball in the winter and track in the spring. Plus, she managed baseball during summers.

Organizations, including the student council and National Honor Society, were part of her high school involvement, too. She worked as a bank teller and thrived on her busy schedule as she explored different interests.

"I don't like being known as the girl who does one thing," she said. "I love all of my involvement because I get to see and interact with many different amazing people."

As she thought about attending college, DeVries visited schools of all sizes in the Midwest. Northwest rose to contention since her father, Ron, was a Bearcat track athlete and graduated from Northwest in 1997.

"He is one of the big reasons why I scheduled a tour to Northwest," DeVries said. "It hadn't really been something on my radar."

A driving tour and then a follow-up visit sealed the deal. She felt at home on the campus.

"I knew with my interests and the things that I wanted to try, there were tons of opportunities for me, but I wasn't going to be lost and overwhelmed," DeVries said. "I felt very connected, and the campus had a really good support system for students in academics, extracurriculars and on-campus jobs."

THE AFFORDABILITY PIECE

DeVries's parents – her father is a farmer and her mother is the chief sales officer for a national home health care company – instilled in her an academics-first mindset, which paid off as she applied for scholarships.

At Northwest, 96 percent of freshmen receive some financial assistance, while the average undergraduate award totals \$5,719. DeVries qualified for the Bearcat Advantage, which offers in-state tuition rates to out-of-state students and saves them more than \$8,000. Northwest's textbook and laptop rental program is a differentiator also and saves students



Above, Chloe DeVries secured employment at Northwest as a student ambassador, which allowed her to lead campus tours with prospective students. Below on the opposite page, in a molecular lab last spring, she successfully cloned a gene with a blood sample from a cow on her dad's farm.

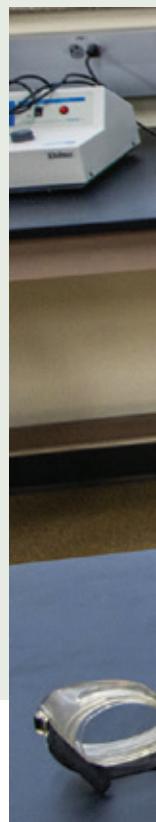
an estimated \$6,900 throughout their four years at the University.

Also, through an application and interview process, DeVries received Northwest's President's Scholarship, a prestigious, renewable financial award for first-year students who exemplify outstanding academic effort.

"Scholarships played a big role in my ability to come to Northwest more affordably, and that was a big factor for me, as it is for the majority of students," DeVries said.

That financial support – which also included a few local scholarships and eventually a scholarship she received as Student Senate president – set her up well to graduate from Northwest with no tuition debt.

"I needed to go to a school that I could see myself thriving and feel comfortable, of course; that is an essential part of every college decision," DeVries said. "But for me, affordability was a huge, huge thing. Once I decided I didn't want to play a sport in college, I looked at my three options, and Northwest, by far, offered me the most scholarships and gave me the most affordable package."



PROFESSION-BASED LEARNING

When DeVries arrived as a first-year student at Northwest, she was nervous – mostly about the academic rigor of college coursework. She leaned into the University's pre-professional programs, thinking a medical school or pharmacy might be in her future. DeVries succeeded by proactively attending supplemental instruction sessions, meeting with a tutor and spending ample time on the second floor of the B.D. Owens Library, a popular study space for students. She was named to the honor roll at the end of all of her semesters at Northwest.

"My very first semester, I was using a spectrophotometer that's thousands and thousands of dollars and all this really cool equipment that at other schools you would just get to watch, or you would just get to hear about," DeVries said. "But at Northwest, you're in it, and you're doing it right away,

and I feel like the faculty and the staff all across campus – but especially in the natural sciences department – really sat down with me and said, 'This is what you want to do, and we're going to support you.'

Inside the Hubbard Center, she learned gel electrophoresis and titration techniques. She analyzed how cells respond to altered plasmids. Last spring, for her molecular lab course, she used a blood sample from a cow on her dad's farm to successfully clone a gene.

"Northwest really emphasizes hands-on learning and 'career-ready day one,' and a lot of that happens in this wing for science majors," she said, recalling a half-dozen lab courses she had in the Hubbard Center to supplement traditional classroom lectures.

"When you can come into a lab and do an experiment that shows you how X, Y and Z work together or how X influences Y, which gets you Z, it really helps you learn the material and learn how it can be applied," DeVries said.



Long-time donors establish endowed professorship in chemistry



A Northwest alumnus, whose chemistry education put him on a path to develop a multi-million dollar business creating infection control products, is maintaining his generous support of the University with a gift that will now assist its faculty.

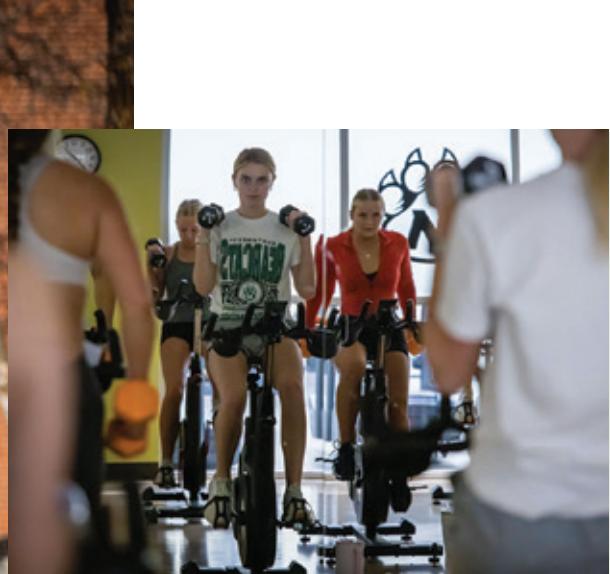
Cal Goeders '53 recently created the Calvin and Marilyn Goeders Endowed Professorship in Chemistry, which will provide \$20,000 annually. An endowed professorship gives special recognition to a faculty member for continued exemplary service to their field while providing funding support for professional development and enhanced instruction.

After Cal served in the U.S. Navy and a teaching stint in Iowa, the Goeders moved to Midland, Michigan, in 1961. There, Cal began an 18-year career with Dow Chemical Company, where he worked as a chemist, research manager and marketing executive. In 1980, he founded Caltech Industries to invent and develop products for infection control at health care facilities. He served as Caltech's president until retiring in 1996.

In 1997, he established a program through which retired scientists and engineers volunteered their time at a low-income elementary school in Midland. It substantially raised state test scores and encouraged students to develop an interest in science.

Simultaneous to Cal's career, Marilyn focused on homemaking and raising their four children. She completed a registered nursing certification in 1974 and was employed as a nurse into the mid-1990s. The couple were high school sweethearts whose marriage in 1952 continued for 72 years until Marilyn passed in March at the age of 94.

A native of Algona, Iowa, Cal graduated from Northwest with a bachelor's degree in chemistry. He also was a member of the Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity.



Chloe DeVries took advantage of an array of activities at Northwest, including jumping into Colden Pond in 2022 to raise awareness for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, fitness classes at the Robert and Virginia Foster Fitness Center and helping new students move into residence halls as a member of the 'Cat Crew last year – all while staying dedicated to her studies and maintaining a strong focus on her academics. She was also honored last fall as Northwest's Homecoming queen.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

All the while, DeVries knew she had to make some friends. For many new Northwest students, the Student Organization Fair at the beginning of each semester is a good place to start.

"I remember going to the org fair for University Seminar and writing my name down for several different things," DeVries recalled. "I was like, 'I don't know if I'd actually join this, but it sounds cool.'"

First, DeVries signed up for sorority recruitment. Though her mother was active in a sorority at a Nebraska college, Chloe went in unsure, curious to see if she was a fit without feeling pressure to join if it didn't suit her. When the recruitment process concluded, she joined Phi Mu.

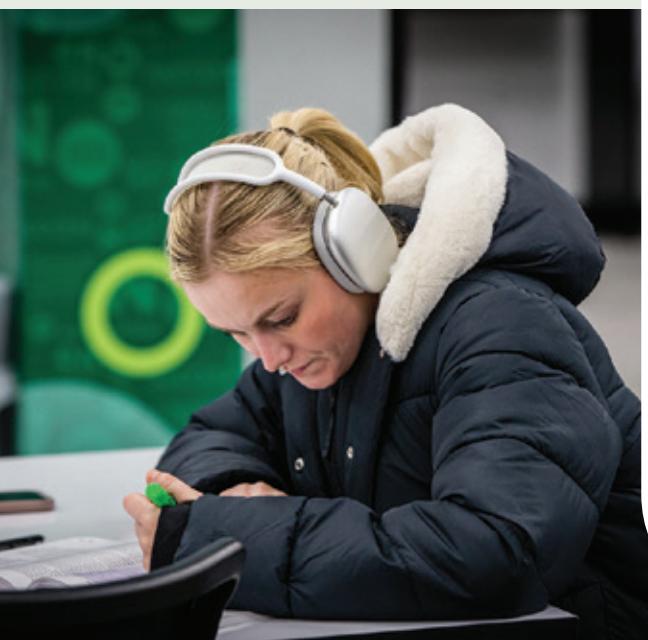
Then, toward the end of her first semester, DeVries knew she needed a job to help with her expenses and applied to be a



student ambassador, one of some 1,200 student employment opportunities available on the campus. She held the role, giving campus tours to prospective students, for the remainder of her time at Northwest. As years passed and her affinity for the University grew, it proved to be easy work.

Her favorite things to highlight ranged from move-in day, when hordes of upperclassmen stand ready to unload vehicles arriving with new students and their belongings, to the willingness of peer advisors and faculty to help. She also talked up the opportunities for students to find their place in student organizations. She gushes about the traditions – like fireworks over the campus on the night before fall classes begin, the Homecoming parade traveling down Fourth Street and the President's Tree Lighting Ceremony at the Thomas Gaunt House to mark the start of the holiday season.

"For me, the most influential part of my tour wasn't, 'Here's the cost of tuition.' 'Here's a residence hall.' 'Here's the dining hall,'" DeVries said. "It was being able to say, 'Here's the fun experiences that I've had.'



CHLOE'S ADVICE TO NORTHWEST STUDENTS

"Everybody says, 'Get involved, get involved.' 'You gotta do something,' which is so true. I'll always tell students: Pick a hobby. Pick an interest. Pick something with your major. It doesn't matter what, but pick something because it really helps you get acclimated when you get to campus."

"I tell a lot of people who are nervous about move-in that everybody feels the same way that you do. I remember my first day, I was homesick and I was nervous. And for some reason, I had this thought that I was the only person who felt that way. I like to tell people everything that you're feeling is completely normal and every single person is feeling the same way, whether they will admit it to you or not."

"Be the friend that you want to have. Every person just wants somebody to talk to them, so go talk to somebody else. Everybody wants somebody to go eat in the dining hall with, so ask somebody to go eat in the dining hall or go to the org fair."

"College is one of the very few times in your life when you get a completely clean slate. You're in a brand-new place. Nobody knows anything about you besides what you tell them. Nobody expects anything from you except what you give people. It is your time to reinvent yourself. If you love all the things you've always been doing, that's great. If you want to completely redefine yourself and try new things, this is your time to do that."





Above, Chloe DeVries exhibited her leadership skills as a member of Northwest's Student Senate and served as president during the 2024-25 academic year. Right, DeVries shared the excitement of fellow graduates at commencement ceremonies last spring.

'Here's the growth that I have felt as a person and as a leader.' And 'Here are some of my favorite memories and the stuff I'm gonna miss the most.' Because that really helps you envision what your life would be like here. I think that's one of the best ways to sell students on a campus."

As her first year at Northwest was ending, DeVries was intrigued by the leadership and growth opportunities Student Senate offered. A class president at her high school, she was elected to be a sophomore representative at Northwest and then a junior class representative. Last year, as a senior at Northwest, she was Student Senate president.

"There's this moment where you're like, 'Holy moly. I'm student body president of the University,'" DeVries said. "I was a part of Dr. Tatum's

inauguration planning committee, and I got to walk in the platform party at the graduation ceremonies. And I remember having this moment where I was like, 'Oh, my God, who's letting me do this?'"

DeVries embraced the role and enjoyed making connections with other students with myriad backgrounds, majors and interests while serving as a liaison between them and University leadership. The experience also helped her learn how to better manage her time, handle adversity and conflict, and advocate for others, serving a purpose bigger than herself.

"Senate president has been the best leadership and growth opportunity for me," DeVries said. "It's really helped me expand my leadership skills, my communication skills and made me overall a more well-rounded human."



A graduation ceremony is taking place in a large, brightly lit auditorium. Many students in caps and gowns are holding up green diplomas with gold seals. In the foreground, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a striped sweater, holds a green diploma. In the background, a man in a cap and gown smiles, and a woman in a cap and gown claps. The background is filled with rows of students and bright stage lights.

“I AM LEAVING NORTHWEST WITH
ENDLESS MEMORIES, KNOWLEDGE, AND
CONNECTIONS THAT I KNOW HAVE PREPARED
ME TO SUCCEED IN MY NEXT CHAPTER.”

Chloe DeVries

AN ASPIRING DOCTOR

DeVries knew at an early age she wanted to go to medical school and become a doctor – an interest she attributes to growing up in Red Oak, where she saw local practitioners coaching sports, serving on the school board and volunteering in her community.

"I've always really been inspired by that and wanted to eventually go back and serve a rural community like the one that I grew up in," she said.

During her last year at Northwest, DeVries simultaneously participated in the University of Missouri-Kansas City's Rural Pathway Program, which provides mentorship and resources to students pursuing medical education. DeVries spent time shadowing rural physicians and other health care professionals in addition to gaining a few certifications.



Building on the foundational knowledge she gained at Northwest, Chloe DeVries aspires to pursue a medical degree and a career as a physician in a rural community.

In May, she took the Medical College Admissions Test, or MCAT, and she is anticipating acceptance to a medical school this fall. Until then, she is gaining experience as a patient care representative at Mosaic Medical Center in Maryville, a role she acquired through connections she cultivated at Northwest and in the community.

"I am leaving Northwest with endless memories, knowledge and connections that I know have prepared me to succeed in my next chapter," she said.

Three degrees, research opportunities paving path for graduate

Kiersten Buck, a classmate of Chloe DeVries, developed her unique passion for chemistry at Northwest and graduated last spring with summa cum laude honors while earning three Bachelor of Science degrees.

Read about Kiersten's Northwest experience and where she's taking her education next by scanning the QR code.



Chemistry alumni reflections

As Chloe DeVries begins her career journey with the knowledge, skills and experience she gained at Northwest, we caught up with three graduates who applied their chemistry degrees to advancing science and technology in the global marketplace.



Dr. Matt Becker '98

leads a multidisciplinary research team focused on developing bioactive polymers and medical devices to address unmet medical needs at the interface of chemistry, materials and medicine.

Currently, he is the Hugo L. Blomquist Distinguished Professor of Chemistry, Mechanical Engineering and Material Science, Biomedical Engineering and Orthopedic Surgery at Duke University. Before that, he spent a decade at the University of Akron and nearly six years as a research chemist with the National Institute of Standards and Technology. He is the author of more than 240 publications and has more than 100 patents issued or pending worldwide. He also consults for several medical device and tech companies.

"I didn't come from a family with any background in science or medicine," Becker said. "Northwest's small class sizes and highly engaged faculty provided a lot of mentoring and room to grow that might not have been available at a larger research-intensive institution. I am very mindful of that engaged approach as I am now mentoring the next generation of scientists and physicians."



Pat Pijanowski '84

likes to say he built a career at the intersection of science and digital technology.

After beginning as a research scientist at Monsanto in St. Louis, he transitioned into the business of science. He was employed with Applied Biosystems during the pioneering days of DNA sequencing technology and biotech in the 1990s and subsequently served as the chief operating officer of a scientific software company in the early 2000s. He finished his career in scientific consulting as the managing director and global practice lead of Accenture's Digital Laboratory Transformation practice.

Now living in the Kansas City area, he retired in 2023 and continues to consult as an industry expert and strategic advisor.

"My Northwest education gave me all the tools I needed to compete in the global science and business communities," Pijanowski said. "It prepared me to be a lifelong learner. I started out in the laboratory, moved into the business side of things and tackled the field of scientific software. My career also took me all around the world. Northwest gave me a solid foundation that was competitive on the world stage and really gave me the self-confidence to be willing to go do and try anything."



Tim Ely '82

spent his 33-year career in the oil industry and credits his chemistry instructors at Northwest for directing him on a path to succeed.

He began his career with Conoco and was a chemical research and development manager with West Central Cooperative, assisting with its research of biodiesel byproducts. He also had two stints totaling 23 years with Saudi Aramco while living in Saudi Arabia, retiring from the company in 2015 as a chemist.

His career spanned work in operations and research, including oil production research and environmental research, as well as problem-solving operations to meet quality standards. He also played a key role in mentoring younger researchers.

"We learned what we needed to know to start your first job, and my employer already had several chemists from Maryville, and they were pleased with them, so it got my foot in the door to be the next person hired," Ely said about earning his degree from Northwest. "A school develops a reputation for turning out good graduates who want to work, and they know what they're doing. It's an aptitude test for your ability to assimilate data or procedures and then use them or adapt to whatever the environment is at work."



1

ALUMNI GATHERINGS

1. Alumni gathered for a watch party in November at KC Bier Co.
2. St. Louis area alumni connected last fall at Topgolf.
3. The St. Louis Alumni and Friends Chapter gathered in May for an anniversary party at Brick House Tavern and Tap.



2



3



Get involved today! For more information about joining Northwest Alumni Association activities, call 660.562.1248, email alumni@nwmissouri.edu or or scan the QR code.

Tourin' Bearcats explore Switzerland, Northern Italy

The Tourin' Bearcats, Northwest's travel program for alumni and friends, headed to Switzerland and Northern Italy this summer, giving 55 travelers an opportunity to explore Zurich, Zermatt, St. Moritz and Lucerne with a scenic rail trip through the Bernina Pass and a cruise on Lake Maggiore.

Northwest is now accepting reservations for its next tour to Rome and the Amalfi Coast. The excursion, which is scheduled for May 25 through June 3 in 2026, will feature visits to the Spanish Steps, Trevi Fountain, Piazza Navona, Imperial Fora, Pompeii and Sorrento as well as a winery and farmhouse.

For more information, visit www.nwmissouri.edu/alumni/travel/ or contact the Office of University Advancement at 660.562.1248 or alumni@nwmissouri.edu.



2025-26 Northwest Events

Make plans to return to campus and connect with other Bearcats for these special events and traditions.

FAMILY WEEKEND

Sept. 26-27, 2025

HOMECOMING WEEKEND AND 50TH-YEAR REUNION

Oct. 24-25, 2025

POWERING DREAMS SCHOLARSHIP CELEBRATION

Nov. 7, 2025

WINTER COMMENCEMENT

Dec. 12, 2025

BEARCAT DAY OF GREEN

April 7-8, 2026

ALUMNI AWARDS BANQUET

April 24, 2026

SPRING COMMENCEMENT

May 2, 2026

TOURIN' BEARCATS: ROME & THE AMALFI COAST

May 25 through June 3, 2026



Numbers that stand out from the 2024-25 SEASON

HIGHLIGHT REEL



13
All-America honors during Tiffany Hughey's track and field career. She earned six indoor and seven outdoor All-America accolades – the most of any Bearcat track & field male or female competitor in school history.



5

Placement of the men's indoor track and field team at the NCAA Division II indoor track and field championships – the second-highest team finish in program history.

20

All-America titles claimed by Bearcat indoor track and field athletes at the NCAA Division II indoor track and field championships in Indianapolis. The men had 13 All-America awards, and the women tallied seven.

9

Consecutive winning seasons for Bearcat volleyball.

.397

Career batting average for softball outfielder Lillie Filger, who finished as the program's all-time leader in the category.

60

Walks drawn by Ashton Neuman to lead NCAA Division II baseball.

57

Home runs by Bearcat baseball players, setting a single-season school record.

27

Wins collected by baseball head coach Tony Jandron, the most by a first-year coach in program history.





NORTHWEST

14

MIAA regular season championships claimed by women's tennis, which also qualified for its 22nd NCAA Division II Tournament under the leadership of head coach Mark Rosewell.

2

Placement at the MIAA Championship meet for the women's golf team, which also qualified for the NCAA Division II Central Regional for the first time in program history.



1,794

Career points by Molly Hartnett, who finished her women's basketball tenure ranked second among the program's all-time scoring leaders.



4

Consecutive winning seasons for the Bearcat women's soccer team, the longest streak in school history.



88

First-team all-MIAA honors for men's tennis players after sophomore Dominik Wijntjes became the latest while leading the team with an 18-6 singles record.



FOLLOW BEARCAT SPORTS THROUGH ALL SEASONS

Keep up with Bearcat teams and student-athletes throughout the year.

Scan the QR code and save bearcatsports.com to your bookmarks.



Bearcat Steppers take national championship at dance competition

A Northwest team has added another national championship trophy to its case.

The Bearcat Steppers dance team competed in April at the National Dance Association (NDA) College National Championships in Daytona Beach, Florida, and returned with a national championship in the Division II Pom category.

The Steppers also earned a second-

place finish in Division II Jazz.

“It was the best feeling in the world,” said Aleah Jakobe, who was captain of the Bearcat Steppers and graduated in the spring with a bachelor’s degree in applied health science with an exercise science emphasis. “All the hard work we put in all season, we came together as a team and went through all these hard practices just to put our best foot forward on stage.

Then it went our direction, and it was just the best feeling that it could have ever been.”

The Bearcat Steppers are led by Taylor Deen Merrill ’15, ’17, who is entering her second year as head spirit coach at the University. The Bearcat Steppers last earned a national championship in the Universal Dance Association’s Game Day competition in 2018.



M-CLUB HALL OF FAME

Northwest has announced its newest inductees to the M-Club Hall of Fame, which will host its annual banquet during the Homecoming weekend in October.

COLLIN BEVINS football (2013-16)
MARK CLEMENTS associate athletic director (2003-2018)
BOB GONSOULIN baseball (1978-1981)
BRANDY HAAN women’s track and field (1995-1998)
JAKE VOLLSTEDT football (2013-16)
KYLE ZIMMERMAN football (2013-16)
2015 FOOTBALL TEAM
2016 FOOTBALL TEAM

For more information or to purchase tickets, call 660.562.1493 or visit bearcatsports.com.

Baseball alumni reunite to mark 50th anniversary of baseball regional championship

Fifty years ago, Northwest witnessed one of its greatest seasons in Bearcat athletics history, and one that remains the best finish for its baseball program.

In 1975, the Bearcats improved under head coach Jim Wasem's leadership, rolling to a 10-2 record against MIAA opponents. The regular season featured a two-game sweep against the University of Missouri-Columbia and wins against Creighton University and the University of Kansas at a time when it was not uncommon for Division II schools to match up against more prominent non-conference foes.

Strong hitting and base running were keys to the team's success. The Bearcats stole 123 bases while holding their opponents to just 27. Outfielder Jim Smith led the offense in batting average (.386), hits (54), home runs (7) and triples (3), and he led the nation in RBIs, earning the MIAA MVP award and an All-America honorable mention.

On the pitcher's mound, Bill Aten, an All-America honorable mention, was a perfect 8-0, and Bob Peterson was 5-2 while freshmen Bob Downs, Mark Vansickle and David Hanson combined for an 8-1 record. Aten also led the team with 76.2 innings pitched and 55 strikeouts.

First regional championship

In mid-May, the Bearcats opened the Midwest Regional tournament, their second appearance in three seasons, in Brookings, South Dakota, with a 6-4 win against the University of Nebraska Omaha. Then, they beat the University of Missouri-St. Louis in back-to-back games by scores of 10-2 and 11-10 to win the regional championship.

In the Sunday finale, No. 14-ranked Northwest pulled off a miraculous comeback to defeat No. 2-ranked St. Louis, which had won the regional championship two of the previous three years. Trailing 10-2 after just one inning, Gus Curry took the pitcher's mound in relief and held St. Louis scoreless for the ensuing 6 1/3 innings. With home runs by Steve Wheat and Jim McBride, Northwest closed the scoring gap to 10-9 as the game entered the ninth inning.

In the last inning, catcher Randy Blake knocked a triple into the right-centerfield gap, scoring designated hitter Joe Pascuzzi for the go-ahead run. Pitcher Mike Miltenberger, who secured the last two outs of the eighth inning, shut down St. Louis in the bottom of the ninth.



Alumni of the Northwest baseball program who played under Coach Jim Wasem during the 1970s gathered for a reunion in April to commemorate the 50th anniversary of their regional championship season and were recognized at a Bearcat baseball game.

The Bearcats hit nine home runs and batted .379 in their regional games. It was the first regional championship for any Bearcat athletics team in the school's history.

First and only college World Series appearance

In the six-team national tournament, beginning Saturday, May 31, in Springfield, Illinois, Northwest won its first game, 6-2, against Southeastern Louisiana. The Bearcats then dropped two games on Monday, June 2 – first, a 2-1 loss against top-ranked Florida Southern, and then a 6-1 elimination game loss to Marietta. In the national championship game, Florida Southern defeated Marietta, 10-7.

Northwest's 33-9 record – with a .785 win percentage – remains the program's best in the NCAA Division II era. The regional championship that led to its appearance in the NCAA Division II baseball championship tournament has not been duplicated.

At the end of the season, Wasem was honored as the MIAA Coach of the Year. He coached the Bearcats for nine seasons, none of which ended with a losing record, and compiled a 221-119 record for a .650 winning percentage. He was inducted into Northwest's M-Club Hall of Fame in 2010 and passed away in 2022.

Read more of this story by visiting www.nwmissouri.edu/alumni/magazine/.



1975 regional championship trophy



The 1975 Bearcat baseball team possessed a potent offense that finished with a 33-9 record and drew boisterous crowds to their home games.

BECAT CORNER



Q&A with John McMenamin

John McMenamin '02 took the reins of the Bearcat football program last winter, making him the 21st head coach in school history. An Elkhorn, Nebraska, native with more than 15 years of coaching experience at multiple levels, McMenamin talks about returning to Northwest and what fans can expect.

NW **How special is it to be a part of Northwest, both the institution and the athletic program?**

JM It's truly an honor. Northwest is a special place that shaped me during my college years and gave me lifelong friendships and experiences. It's more than just a university — it's a community that means a great deal to me.

NW **What are your best memories of being a Northwest student and Bearcat football player from 1998 to 2002?**

JM There are so many lasting memories, but a few really stand out — winning two national championships, beating Pitt State in the Clash of Champions at Arrowhead Stadium and setting the Division II attendance record. But beyond the wins, it's the relationships that mean the most. I formed lifelong bonds with teammates, coaches and members of the Maryville community.

NW **What kind of impact did Coach Mel Tjeerdsma have on your playing and coaching career?**

JM Coach T laid out a blueprint for success that was clear, intentional and rooted in relationships. He brought in the right people, built trust year after year and cared deeply — not just about winning but about you as a person. Even after I graduated, he stayed in touch and was a consistent source of support. He had a gift for motivating people and helping them find the right path. I'm incredibly grateful for his guidance over the years.

NW **When did you realize coaching was your true calling?**

JM My dad was a great high school coach, but I initially didn't think it was for me. After college, I spent six years in the corporate world. Eventually, I walked away from a job at Wells Fargo to pursue my master's and become a graduate assistant at the University of Nebraska Omaha. After that first day on the practice field, I knew I was right where I was supposed to be.

NW **Did you ever imagine you'd become the head coach at Northwest?**

JM As a coach, I was always on the other side of the "paw," trying to beat it and usually not succeeding. With the incredible stability and success of the coaches who came before me, I figured it would remain a dream. Timing plays a big role in any opportunity, and when this position opened, I was lucky to be in the right place at the right time with the full support of my wife, Andrea, and our kids to pursue this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

NW **What can Bearcat fans expect to see from Northwest football this fall and in the years to come?**

JM We're going to play with passion and purpose. We're implementing a process rooted in many of the same principles Coach T instilled, with a few things I've picked up along the way from other incredible coaches. I can't promise wins and losses, but I can promise our players will compete harder than anyone.

Home is where the heart is. And ours is at Northwest.



The vibrant energy on campus. The lifelong friendships forged. The knowledge and experiences gained. Northwest Missouri State University is, was and always will be a place you call home.



The Office of University Advancement invites you to pass through campus for a quick visit, cheer on the Bearcats at a sporting event, spend a night attending a lecture or concert, or bring a future Bearcat for a tour. Whatever the reason, we'd love for you to stop by the Michael L. Faust Center for Alumni and Friends to say hello.

We also welcome and appreciate your generous financial support. Your gift ensures future generations of Bearcats experience the same transformative journey enjoyed by Bearcats since 1905. Help us continue to build our legacy of excellence.

Give back. Come home. Support Northwest.

ALUMNA CROWNED MISS MISSOURI, COMPETING FOR MISS AMERICA TITLE IN SEPTEMBER

Courtney Rowe '23

The new Miss Missouri is Courtney Rowe '23, and she'll compete with 51 other women who represent each of the United States, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico for the Miss America crown in September in Orlando, Florida.

As a Kansas City native, Rowe competed this year as Miss Kansas City and was awarded the Miss Missouri title in June at the state competition with 20 other women who won local pageants.

While Miss America emphasizes scholarship among its core pillars, Rowe received \$14,000 from Miss Missouri and has accumulated more than \$25,000 in scholarships from pageant competitions that



she will invest in furthering her education.

"It's made learning accessible for women," Rowe said. "All of these pillars, they really do bring out the best, because you're getting passionate young women who want to change the world and help each other out and uplift each other. I may be the one that's now wearing the crown, but I really do feel like every single girl that I competed

with would have been just as capable."

Rowe pursued a bachelor's degree in mass media with a broadcast production emphasis at Northwest after finding an interest in broadcasting as a high school student. She was attracted to the smaller class sizes at Northwest and the opportunities to gain hands-on, profession-based experience as soon as her first year at

the University. As a junior at Northwest, in 2022, she landed a job at KQTV in St. Joseph and has been employed there since as a reporter and morning news anchor.

She says the broadcasting, video production and public speaking skills she honed at Northwest have helped her be successful in not just her professional role but in pageantry, too.



"I 100 percent attribute my success in pageantry to what I learned as a communications major."

Courtney Rowe

"I 100 percent attribute my success in pageantry to what I learned as a communications major," Rowe said. "You learn how to communicate effectively and how to build relationships with people. I think my desire to serve my community stems a lot from what I do as a reporter, because as a communications person, you're a public servant."

1960s

Scott Flory '69 began work in February as the city administrator in Atkins, Iowa. He has worked for 32 years in city government in Shenandoah, Atlantic and Clear Lake as well as with the regional council of governments in southwest Iowa.

1970s

Phyllis Dible Jackson '71 was recognized by the Missouri Community College Association with the 2024 Distinguished Alumni Award for her commitment to Missouri community colleges. She is a long-time member of the North Central Missouri College Foundation Board.

1980s

Marlou Biermann Wegener '80 has served as director of community relations at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas for 35 years and as chief operating officer for the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas Foundation for more than 15 years.



Rebecca Johnson Wigal '82 retired in February after 11 years as a senior analyst in the Reconciliation Department of Retirement Operations at Nationwide.

Dr. John McGuire '83, '99, is the author of "Sportscasting in the Digital Age: More Than the Game," which was published in February by Rowman and Littlefield. He is a

professor and the Welch-Bridgewater Chair for Sports Media at Oklahoma State University.

Dr. Corley Dennison '84 was named in April as interim president of Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College. During a 29-year career at Marshall University, he held numerous roles, including assistant dean, associate vice president for academic affairs and vice chancellor for academic affairs.

Sandy Smith Haggard '86 began employment in April as a nutrition, food safety and health agent for Kansas State University's Southwind Research and Extension District. She had been the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program director with AmeriCorps Seniors at Neosho (Kansas) County Community College and previously taught at Northland Pioneer College in Winslow, Arizona, and in Taiwan.

Amy Louise Meng '87 makes custom fine art and resides in Columbia, Missouri.

Denise Grisamore Town '87 retired in July after more than 32 years as finance director for the city of Maryville.

1990s

Chris Johnson '92 was recognized with his family in January by the Wyoming Senate for 25 years of military service and his continued impact on community youth through his ROTC program. He retired as a lieutenant colonel with the Air Force in 2019.

Don Munsch '93 joined the Mexico (Missouri) Ledger in February as its general manager and editor. He has had a lengthy career working for publications, including several in Texas and Oklahoma. He was recognized by the Texas State Teachers Association for Outstanding Continuous Coverage in Local Education for three consecutive years and is a recipient of multiple Texas Press Association and Associated Press Managing Editors awards.

Nate Olson '96 joined the University of Arkansas at Little Rock last fall as its associate athletics director for communications. He has worked for 27 years at newspapers, magazines and websites in Arkansas.



Brandy Reasoner Brady '96, '21 was promoted last fall to director of library services and operations at Northwest's B.D. Owens Library.

Dr. Robert Hedgecorth '99 has begun serving as assistant superintendent for business and operations in the St. Joseph School District. He was employed previously as executive director of business services for the Ozark School District.

Ryan Heiland '99 was appointed in June as city manager for Maryville. He succeeds **Greg McDaniel '02**, who had served as Maryville's city manager for 13 years and relocated in March to begin work as city manager of Seaside, California. Heiland was the assistant city manager in Maryville for the past 13 years after serving communities in Arizona, Iowa and Missouri.

Brian Strider '99 was appointed by Gov. Mike Kehoe in April to the Missouri Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority. He is a fifth-generation farmer and business development manager for Holganix.

2000s

Angie Stopke Merriken '00 is an arborist at Haverford College in Pennsylvania.

Brandon Benitz '00, '08, is a commercial and investment realtor with Century 21 and recently received its Centurion Award, recognizing him as the No. 1-ranked Century 21 sales agent in Nebraska during 2024 and among the top 3 percent of all Century 21 agents in the United States. He resides in Kearney, Nebraska.

Shawna Smith Gilliland '02, '20, becomes the principal at Benton High School this fall in St. Joseph, Missouri. She has been employed with the district for 24 years, including 21 years as a high school math teacher.



Erica Erlbacher Buck '03 is a kindergarten teacher at Northwest's Horace Mann Laboratory School and was honored in March with the Missouri Association for the Education of Young Children's 2025 Early Childhood Professional K-3 Teacher Award. She joined the Northwest faculty in 2016.

Jennifer Keller '03 was appointed in February by Gov. Mike Kehoe to the Missouri State Committee of Psychologists. She is employed as senior director of behavioral health for counseling clinics and psychology at University Health, and she is the section chief of psychology and a clinical assistant professor

of psychiatry at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine.

Michael Tipton '03 completed an Education Specialist in Educational Leadership degree last spring and was named superintendent of the North Harrison R-III School District in Eagleville, Missouri. His wife, **Melanie Burris Tipton '03**, is program director at Preferred Family Healthcare in Trenton, Missouri. They have a daughter, Mady, and son, Maddox.



Dr. Adrian James '03, '05 was appointed in May as interim dean of Park University's College of Management, where she has been employed since 2018 as an assistant professor of management. Previously, she worked as an assistant professor of organizational behavior and leadership at Purdue University Northwest and was program coordinator in the academic success center at Texas A&M University's branch in Qatar.

Bryan Seiter '04 has been promoted to manager of product strategy at Acuity, which he joined last year as regional market director. He is pursuing a Ph.D. in industrial organizational psychology at Grand Canyon University.

Amanda Ann Byler Gregory '05 is a trauma psychotherapist and has authored her first book, "You Don't Need to Forgive: Trauma Recovery on Your Own Terms," which was published in February and explores the benefits of elective forgiveness

and dangers of required forgiveness. She has more than 18 years of experience in clinical practice and resides in Chicago.

Todd Shalz '07 began in July as the assistant superintendent of elementary education for the Jefferson City (Missouri) School District. He has been employed with the district since 2016, serving as an elementary school principal. Previously, he spent 13 years with the St. Joseph School District as a teacher, among other roles.

Jason Peters '08, '19, graduated in January from Mitchell Hamline School of Law in St. Paul, Minnesota, and began work in May as counsel for JE Dunn Construction Company. His wife, **Samantha Butler Peters '05**, is a substitute teacher, and the couple resides in Lathrop, Missouri, with their two sons, Andrew and Jordan.

Erin Roberson Tucker '08, '11, was promoted to president of employee benefits at The Miller Group, one of the largest independent, family-owned insurance broker companies in the Midwest.

Joel Lueken '09 began work in July as activities director for the Kearney (Missouri) School District. He was the deputy athletic director at William Jewell College and previously served for a decade as athletic director at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology.

Steve Lydick '09 joined the litigation practice group at Walentine O'Toole LLP in Omaha, Nebraska. He graduated last year from the University of Nebraska College of Law with a Juris Doctor degree.

2010s

Spencer Beagle '10 founded Sell My Canna Harvest, a sales agency representing farmers and makers in the cannabis industry. He resides in Northglenn, Colorado.

Sarah Geist Stephens '10 was honored in February as the Green Hills Regional Teacher of the Year in Iowa and one of nine finalists for the state's 2025 Teacher of the Year

award. She is a special education teacher at Creston Elementary School and a veteran educator with 14 years of experience working with students in grades one through five.

Angela Bright '12 is the new assistant principal at Graden Elementary in the Park Hill (Missouri) School District. She had been an elementary principal in Orrick and has 21 years of experience in education.

Beth Collins '13 was named in December as the park manager at Prairie Rose State Park in Harlan, Iowa. She began her career with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources as a seasonal water patrol officer at Lake Okoboji and Spirit Lake. She also was a seasonal employee at the Gull Point Complex in Okoboji for many years and a natural resource technician at Lake Anita for the last three years.

Jamie Cotton '14 was appointed in February as director of home base and early childhood at Green Hills Head Start, affiliated with North Central Missouri College in Trenton. She had worked with the program for the last 10 years as a professional development support specialist.

Paul Vaillancourt '14 began employment last fall as a special education teacher in the Platte County R-III School District. He resides in Kansas City, Missouri.

Colby Branstine '15 recently began employment as vice president and portfolio manager at The Central Trust Bank's Osage Beach, Missouri, location. He has worked more than a decade in financial planning and portfolio management.

Gina Haag Kutilek '15 received the James Madison Fellowship for the state of Iowa and attended the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation Summer Institute at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. She is pursuing a master's degree in history and government through the University of Nebraska Omaha and teaches at Xavier High School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where she resides with her husband, **Max Kutilek '14**.

**Erika Lees '15, '25**

graduated from Northwest in May with a Master of Business Administration degree and began work as the international student and scholar services coordinator at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. She had been employed in roles with Northwest's Office of International Affairs since 2015.

SUBMISSIONS POLICY

Northwest Magazine compiles its Class Notes and Memoriam sections with information provided through direct submissions and published materials, while giving preference to submissions. To submit alumni updates, death notifications or story ideas for future editions, scan the QR code or provide the information via email to alumni@nwmissouri.edu. Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.



NORTHWEST ALUMNI RECEIVE OUTSTANDING BEGINNING TEACHER AWARDS

Three Northwest alumni were named Outstanding Beginning Teachers for 2024-2025 by the Missouri Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (MACTE). The women were honored in February by MACTE at its spring conference in Columbia.

**Jenna King '24**

completed her first year of teaching special education for grades seven through 12 in the South Nodaway R-IV School District.

**Caylea Dill '23**

finished her first year of teaching art at Richardson Elementary School in Lee's Summit, Missouri.

Julian Andrade '23 was appointed executive director of Police Athletics for Community Engagement in Omaha, Nebraska. He began his career with the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands, working there from 2013 to 2021, and then served as recreational supervisor for the city of Papillion.

Natalie Madsen '23 is the new principal of Bryant Elementary School with Kearney (Nebraska) Public Schools. She had been a middle school social studies teacher since 2020 and worked at high schools from 2012 to 2019.

Samantha Blake '24 is a liability property damage adjuster with Great West Casualty Company. She resides in Sioux City, Iowa.

Lindsey Hammann '24 began in July as assistant principal of Southern Boone Middle School. She is entering her 16th year in education.

Joshua Schaefer '24 is the new assistant principal at Fort Dodge (Iowa) Middle School. He was an elementary school teacher in the North Polk Community School District.

2020s

**Eldaneka Rolle '20**

recently completed a master's degree in integrated marketing and management communication at Florida State University and remains there to begin pursuing a Ph.D. in communication theory and research this fall.

Max Giesken '21 graduated in May with a Doctor of Medicine degree from the Mayo Clinic Alix School of Medicine in Rochester, Minnesota, and began an emergency medicine residency at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in June.

NORTHWEST CELEBRATES LIFE, PRESIDENCY OF HUBBARD

Dr. Dean L. Hubbard, Northwest's longest-serving president from 1984 to 2009, died at the age of 85 on March 23 at his home in Kansas City, Missouri.

During his quarter-century leading Northwest, Hubbard oversaw unprecedented growth, success and recognition for the institution. Northwest gained national recognition for its "Culture of Quality" initiative to foster continuous improvement in all aspects of the University's operations. The University received the Missouri Quality Award four times – in 1997, 2001, 2005 and 2008 – making it the only educational institution to accomplish the feat.

Hubbard was instrumental in making Northwest's "electronic campus" a reality. With the flip of a ceremonial switch in the fall of 1987, Northwest became the first public institution in the nation with networked computers in each residence hall room and faculty office. That initiative remains a hallmark of Northwest, which now provides fully loaded notebook computers and technical support to all enrolled students.

A first-generation college graduate, Hubbard also dedicated himself to



Dr. Dean L. Hubbard addressing Northwest graduates and their families during a commencement ceremony in 2000.

making higher education affordable for individuals lacking the financial means to continue their education. He envisioned Northwest's American Dream Grant as a needs-based program that provided tuition, room and board, books and the use of a computer to lower-income students during their first two years. That innovative program to help eliminate financial barriers for students continues today as the Northwest Promise.

Other initiatives rooted during Hubbard's presidency included Northwest's Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The facility was renamed in Hubbard's honor in 2014 and today, as the Dean L. Hubbard Center for Innovation, serves as the home of the School of Agricultural Sciences while maintaining its

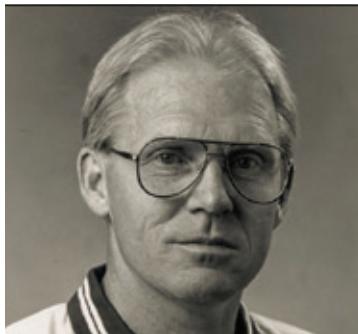
stake as a research center that also supports the School of Natural Sciences.

Significant renovations and expansions of University facilities also occurred during Hubbard's presidency, including Roberta Hall, Lamkin Activity Center, Colden Hall, the J.W. Jones Student Union, South Complex, Bearcat Stadium and the construction of Hudson and Perrin residence halls. The Northwest campus was designated by the state legislature as the Missouri Arboretum in 1993, and the Joyce and Harvey White International Plaza – a showcase of Northwest's global enrollment but also a vision seeded in Hubbard's affinity for multinational relationships – was dedicated during the fall of 1998.



Scan here to watch a Celebration of Life that Northwest hosted to honor Hubbard on April 4.

★Bob Alcorn '58, age 92, of St. Joseph, Missouri, died Jan. 17. He taught middle school before becoming the school district's athletics director.



★Richard Alsup '73, '77, age 76, of Maryville, died Jan. 13. He began

his career as a physical education teacher and coach in Farnam, Nebraska. He joined Northwest in 1977 as an assistant cross country and track coach and became head coach in 1986, remaining in those roles until 2008. Under his direction, the Bearcat track and field program produced five NCAA Division II national champions, 48 All-Americans, 47 individual and nine relay MIAA titles. His 1998 cross country team captured the Great Lakes Regional Championship.

Betty Underwood Baker '67, age 96, of Maryville, died May 3. She was a physical education teacher.

★Jerry Baker '58, age 87, of Albuquerque, New Mexico, died Dec. 17, 2024. He worked for the U.S. Forest Service.

Marcia Woodcock Barrett '56, age 90, of Des Moines, Iowa, died April 22. She was an elementary school teacher.

★Gary Beggs '68, age 81, of Surprise, Arizona, died Jan. 19. He began his career with Farmers Home Administration in Iowa and then worked in banking with Citizens State

Bank in Clarinda, Iowa, as a loan officer, vice president and president, before moving to Bank Iowa.

Dr. Gary Bell '64, age 82, of Columbia, Missouri, died April 12. He was a teacher and middle school principal in the St. Joseph School District and then served as superintendent of the Mid-Buchanan R-V School District and the Maryville R-II School District, retiring in 2001. He also was an adjunct professor at Northwest.

Jim Bennett '53, age 95, of Oak Park, Illinois, died Feb. 14. He taught Spanish and French at the University of Wyoming, Kansas State University

★ Denotes military service

and Missouri Western University. He also worked as a translator for the U.S. Army at Fort Leavenworth.



Kat Bilbo, age 51, of Maryville, died Dec. 21, 2024. She was an associate professor of theatre at Northwest, having joined the faculty in 2014. Previously, she worked as a professional actress in the Chicago area and southeast Wisconsin.

Vanessa Wormsley Brandon '77, age 69, of Liberty, Missouri, died Feb. 4. She was an English teacher for 33 years at North Kansas City High School and then was the office manager for the Ethnic Enrichment Commission of Kansas City for 10 years.

Carlene Buck '69, age 78, of Clarinda, Iowa, died Feb. 11. She taught in Pompano Beach, Florida, and Glenwood, Iowa, before transitioning to a 34-year career in insurance, working in Kansas City, Missouri, and Chicago, retiring in 2005. A talented quilter, she completed more than 400 quilts that she gifted to friends, family and for display; in 2007, she launched a quilting service, Black Squirrel Quilting, that she ran until 2024.

Mardy Ingels Buckridge '53, age 93, of Maryville, died Feb. 25. She taught elementary school in California, Iowa and Missouri, retiring in 1991.

Charlie Burri '58, age 94, of St. Joseph, Missouri, died April 15. He was a high school teacher and then joined Missouri Western State University in 1967 as its first athletics director until 1984. He is a member of multiple halls of fame, including the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics Hall of Fame and the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame.

Patricia Schulte Cook '54, age 92, of Carleton, Michigan, died Jan.

29. She was a teacher in Maryville and in Riverview, Michigan, before becoming center supervisor for Carleton Head Start.

Steve Christensen '65, age 82, of Kearney, Missouri, died March 21. He worked as an accountant at Farmland Industries for more than 30 years and later at Vocational Services Inc. He also owned and operated Holt Mini Storage for 25 years. He spent 25 years with the Ramblers Square Dance Club and served on the National Square Dance Convention Board.

Vivian Kowitz Cox '50, age 94, of Overland Park, Kansas, died Feb. 5. She taught home economics for 29 years, retiring in 1979. Later, she and her husband started and maintained an investigations business in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

★ Dr. Jerry Davis II '57, age 89, of Chillicothe, Missouri, died Dec. 4, 2024. He operated a private dentistry practice and then worked for the Chillicothe Correctional Center.

Greg Delzeit '83, age 73, of Highland, Kansas, died April 23. He taught and coached at high schools in Kansas and Missouri, before joining Highland Community College, where he taught, coached and was intramural director, eventually serving as athletic director until retiring in 2016.



Dan DeMott '60, age 87, of Maryville, died Dec. 2, 2024. He taught speech communication at Northwest in addition to acting in plays, movies and commercials.

Ramona Dickinson '56, age 96, of Longview, Texas, died May 20. She taught for 30 years in Fort Morgan, Colorado, retiring in 1986.

Diane Ewing '83, age 72, of St. Charles, Missouri, died Dec. 5, 2024. She had a career in interior design and home furnishings.



★ Charles Doran '58, age 91, of Tipton, Indiana, died Jan. 18, 2024. He had a 25-year finance career with the U.S. Forest Service in Texas, Michigan and Indiana.

★ Weldon Dowden '56, age 90, of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, died Feb. 4. He worked at Phillips Petroleum Co. in Texas, Nebraska and Illinois, retiring as head of corporate safety.



Rev. Dr. Don Ehlers, age 74, of Overland Park, Kansas, died April 21. From 1980 until retiring in 2015, he and his wife, Marjean Potter Ehlers '72, were co-directors of the Wesley Foundation at Northwest. He also taught psychology courses at Northwest between 2009 and 2017.

Berta Escura '54, age 101, of Manhattan, N.Y., died Feb. 7. She helped establish the Spanish International Network headquarters, was an executive assistant at PanAmSat Corporation and retired from Northway Management in 2014.

Diane Ewing '83, age 72, of St. Charles, Missouri, died Dec. 5, 2024. She had a career in interior design and home furnishings.

★ Paul Fisher '51, age 95, of Oceanside, California, died March 5.

He had a 26-year military career and then taught high school biology for 20 years.

★ Roger Florea '72, age 78, of Hopkins, Missouri, died Dec. 17, 2024. He was a tax practitioner before joining Bank Midwest, where he served as a vice president for 23 years.

★ John Foley '64, '71, age 85, of St. Joseph, Missouri, died Nov. 22, 2024. He had a 37-year career as a teacher and librarian.

Carol Copeland Geib '70, age 77, of Ottumwa, Iowa, died Feb. 7. She worked as a medical technologist in various labs in Missouri and Iowa.

Pat Goodman '75, age 73, of Des Moines, Iowa, died Feb. 12. He worked in hospitality at restaurants, first in Kansas City and later in New York City.

Connie McGinness Green '67, age 79, of Warrensburg, Missouri, died Nov. 24, 2024. She spent 44 years in education, teaching at Albany (Missouri) High School, Holmes Community College in Mississippi, and Wentworth Junior College in Missouri, retiring in 2012.

Ken Griggs '69, age 78, of Wichita, Kansas, died June 20. He was employed as an accountant with KPMG for 33 years, retiring as a partner.

Linda Martin Healy-Sienko '75, age 71, of Kansas City, Missouri, died April 13. She was a merchandise display planner for more than 30 years for Hallmark Cards.

Scott Helm '01, age 47, of Shawnee, Kansas, died Feb. 17. He was a senior park worker with the Johnson County Park and Recreation District.

Myrna Henry '62, age 85, of Greeley, Colorado, died April 28. She taught in Greenfield, Iowa, for 34 years.

★ Paul "Pete" Hayworth '72, age 79, of Marana, Arizona, died Nov. 19, 2024. He was employed with the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture.

Sharon Hilbert, age 69, of Maryville, died May 15. She was a secretary at Northwest from 1988 to 2012.

Chuck Hill '68, age 82, of Wichita, Kansas, died May 15. After beginning his career in tire sales, in 1989 he founded the Heartland Trailways charter bus company, which he sold and retired in 2014.

Graham Hoffman '17, age 29, of Kansas City, Missouri, died April 27. He was a firefighter and paramedic with the Kansas City Fire Department.

Kyle Hudson '02, age 45, of Grain Valley, Missouri, died Feb. 5. He worked as a sales and marketing account executive.

Dr. Jerry Johnson '62, age 84, of Ruston, Louisiana, died March 23. He taught for 41 years, including 30 years at Louisiana Tech University.

Phil Johnson '60, age 87, of Essex, Iowa, died May 4. He was an industrial arts teacher and assistant principal in Kansas City, Missouri, and assistant superintendent of the Clarinda (Iowa) School District. He then worked as a building designer at McNeilly Steel Buildings in Shenandoah, Iowa; owned Kerr McGee Gas Station in Clarinda and farmed.

Daniel Jones '66, age 82, of Vestavia Hills, Alabama, died Dec. 25, 2024. He was employed in sales with the Ford Motor Company in Michigan, Georgia and Alabama.

Tom Jones '76, age 70, of Denison, Iowa, died Dec. 19, 2024. He worked as a cost accountant and then an assistant controller at Farmland Industries, now Smithfield Foods, for 37 years.

Prasanan Kannan '93, age 56, of Malaysia, died March 10. He was a lecturer at multiple educational institutions and most recently was chief executive officer at Citypro Institute.



Dan Kelly '83, age 64, of Des Moines, Iowa, died Jan. 4. He taught business at Dickinson Business School in Kansas City, Kansas, and then worked at Amoco and ARC in

Des Moines. In 1986, he was involved in a head-on crash that left him disabled.

Pam Kemper Keith '73, age 71, of Trenton, Missouri, died Jan. 16. She was an executive secretary and hospital medical records director.

Madanelle Kirk '69, age 87, of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, died April 29. She taught elementary school for more than 30 years.

★ Leo Kloewer '72, '79, age 79, of York, Nebraska, died Feb. 25. He taught math and coached for more than 40 years.

Roger Laughlin '84, age 63, of Maryville, died Feb. 18. He worked in the technology industry with a focus on contact center operations.

Dr. Jack Longfellow '68, age 78, of Broken Bow, Nebraska, died Nov. 20, 2024. He practiced veterinary medicine for 45 years.

★ Ray Maher '69, age 82, of Independence, Missouri, died Feb. 24. He was a guidance counselor, coach and vice principal during a 30-year span.

Larry Markt '67, age 80, of St. Joseph, Missouri, died March 6. He taught industrial arts, coached and was a guidance counselor.

★ Allen Marsh '60, age 88, of Surprise, Arizona, died Feb. 19. He was a certified public accountant in Omaha, Nebraska, before joining Sapp Bros. Inc. as chief financial officer and then chief executive officer.

Rosalyn Pickard Milbrandt '73, age 73, of Corcoran, Minnesota, died Dec. 28, 2024. She began her career as a teacher before transitioning to a business career.

Velma Swartz Mitchell '58, age 89, of Yuma, Arizona, died April 8. She taught home economics at the University of Wyoming and Arizona Western College before pursuing a nursing career, retiring after 35 years.

Barbara Wise Nagel '62, '72, age 83, of St. Joseph, Missouri, died Nov. 23, 2024. She was a kindergarten teacher for 30 years.

Bill Needels '62, age 84, of Olathe, Kansas, died July 9. He was employed at Northwest from

1962 to 1967 and then worked as a regional administrator with the U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration and with the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Financial Management Service, retiring in 1997 as deputy regional director.

★ Dr. Douglas Nespor '82, age 64, of Liberty, Missouri, died Nov. 27, 2024. He was a general surgeon.

Craig Olsen '77, age 70, of Tucson, Arizona, died April 4. He began his career with Stewart Construction and then transitioned to Lennox Industries for 37 years, retiring as territory sales manager.

Roberta Walker Richey '51, '74, age 94, of Kansas City, Missouri, died April 7. She was active in the Maryville and Northwest communities as the wife of longtime faculty member Burton Richey '51 and later worked as a nutrition educator for the Missouri Department of Health.

Dennis Sharkey Jr. '06, age 50, of Liberty, Missouri, died Jan. 10. He worked as a reporter and photographer for news publications in Missouri and Kansas.

Stephen Sherard '69, age 79, of Plano, Texas, died Jan. 25. He had a manufacturing and engineering career in Florida and Texas.

Daniel Smith '66, age 81, of Prairie Village, Kansas, died May 24. He was a superintendent of construction and built more than 320 homes in Johnson County during a 40-year span.

Paul Sorensen '63, age 85, of Independence, Missouri, died Dec. 30, 2024. He taught in Missouri and Denver, Colorado, before becoming a registered nurse, working mostly with psychiatric patients in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and in Independence and Kansas City.

Kendall Uhland '73, age 81, of Pulaski, Wisconsin, died Feb. 18. He was an agriculture instructor at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College.

★ Dr. Gene Walker '77, age 77, of Pattonsburg, Missouri, died April 10, 2024. He was a high school teacher, principal and superintendent in addition to multiple terms as a city councilman and mayor.

Becky Willeford '79, age 69, of Independence, Missouri, died Nov. 29, 2024. She was a police officer and taught at the Kansas City Police Academy before becoming a speech therapist for the Kansas City School District.



Audra "Bud" Williams '54, '58, age 92, of Coralville, Iowa, died Feb. 12. He was an educator and coach in Iowa City, retiring from administrative duties in 1993. He was an assistant coach for Northwest women's cross country and track from 1997 to 1998. A member of multiple halls of fame, he was inducted into Northwest's M-Club Hall of Fame with the 1997-98 Bearcat women's track and field and cross country teams, which won MIAA championships.

Ed Wiskoski '69, age 80, of Goodyear, Arizona, died Jan. 22. He was a professional wrestler from 1972 until retiring in 2005 and was best known as Col. DeBeers in the American Wrestling Association.



Dian Zillner '79, age 92, of Palm Springs, California, died March 4. She taught at Mount Alverno Academy in Maryville and was a librarian at Maryville High School.

NORTHWEST POSTCARD

Northwest students took to the lawn beneath the Memorial Bell Tower on April 23 for "goat yoga" and iced coffees, an event sponsored by the Student Activities Council.

Better known on campus as SAC, the organization plans and administers activities for students to contribute to a more well-rounded social, recreational and cultural life for the campus and community. SAC offers entertaining alternatives to students by organizing late-night activities and other events throughout the year, including concerts, lectures, movies and comedians.



View more photos of students participating in goat yoga by scanning the QR code.



FALL 2025

NORTHWEST MAGAZINE

Northwest Missouri State University
Office of University Advancement
800 University Drive
Maryville, MO 64468-6001

Stay in touch with us:
www.nwmissouri.edu/alumni
660.562.1248
alumni@nwmissouri.edu

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Maryville, MO
Permit No. 215



BE EVERY YOU

22
average
class size

95%

PLACEMENT RATE

bachelor's degree earners entering the workforce or graduate school within six months of completing degree

**PROFESSION-BASED
LEARNING FOR ALL
STUDENTS**

**LAPTOP &
TEXTBOOKS
INCLUDED**
saves students more than
\$6,900 over four years

SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

receive encouragement and
mentorship, plus access to campus
resources that support your success

