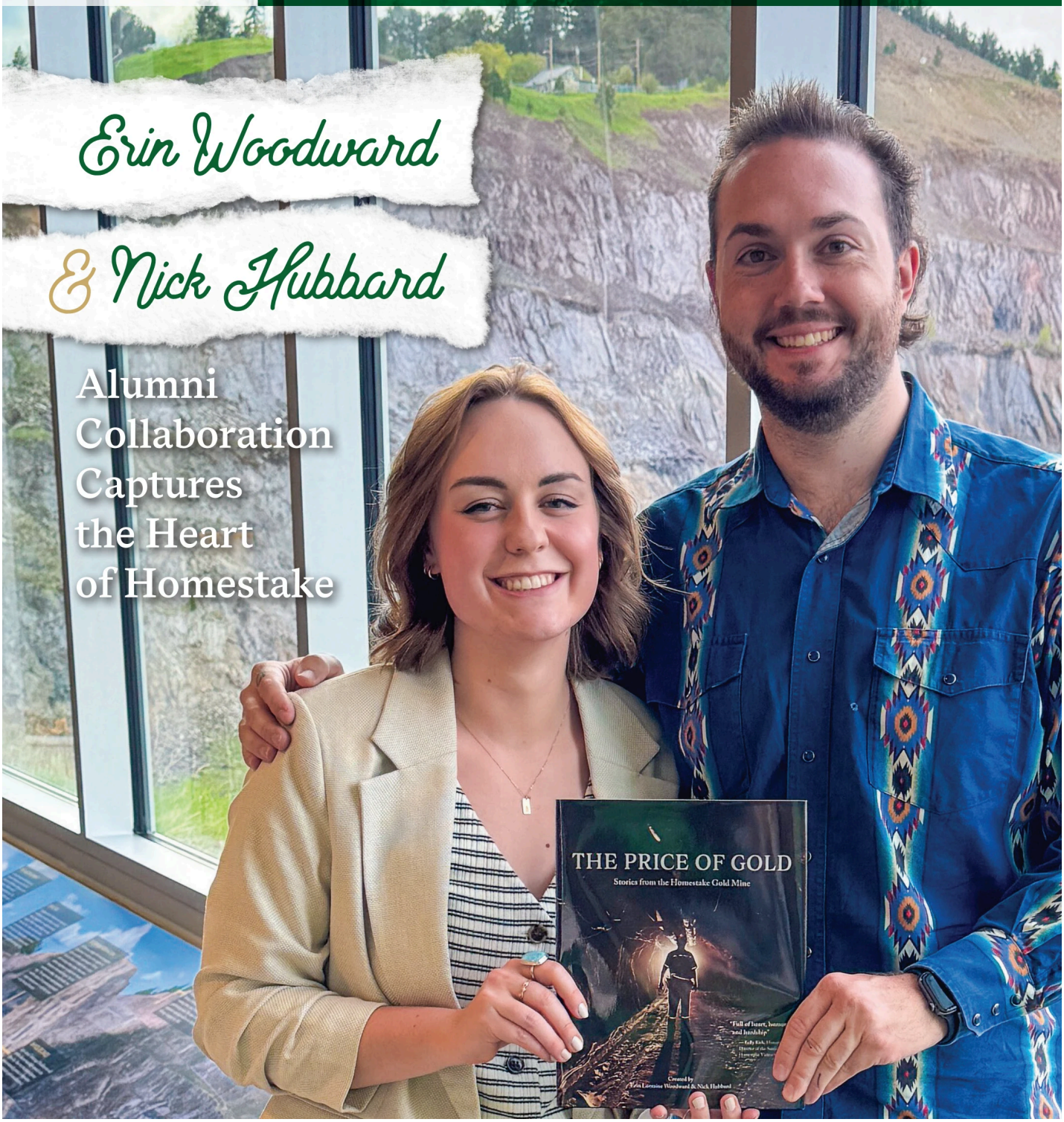
BLACK HILLS STATE UNIVERSITY

ALUMNI MAGAZINE

FALL 2025

Erin Woodward & Nick Hubbard

Alumni Collaboration Captures the Heart of Homestake



BLACK HILLS STATE UNIVERSITY

ALUMNI MAGAZINE | FALL 2025

The Alumni Magazine is published twice a year (the spring issue in a digital format only and the fall issue in a printed format) by the Black Hills State University Alumni Association for alumni and friends of BHSU. To ensure that you receive both formats in the future please update your home and email addresses.

Your comments are welcome. Email us at Alumni@BHSU.edu.

BHSU PRESIDENT
» Steve Elliott

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT
» Megan Reder-Schopp, '10

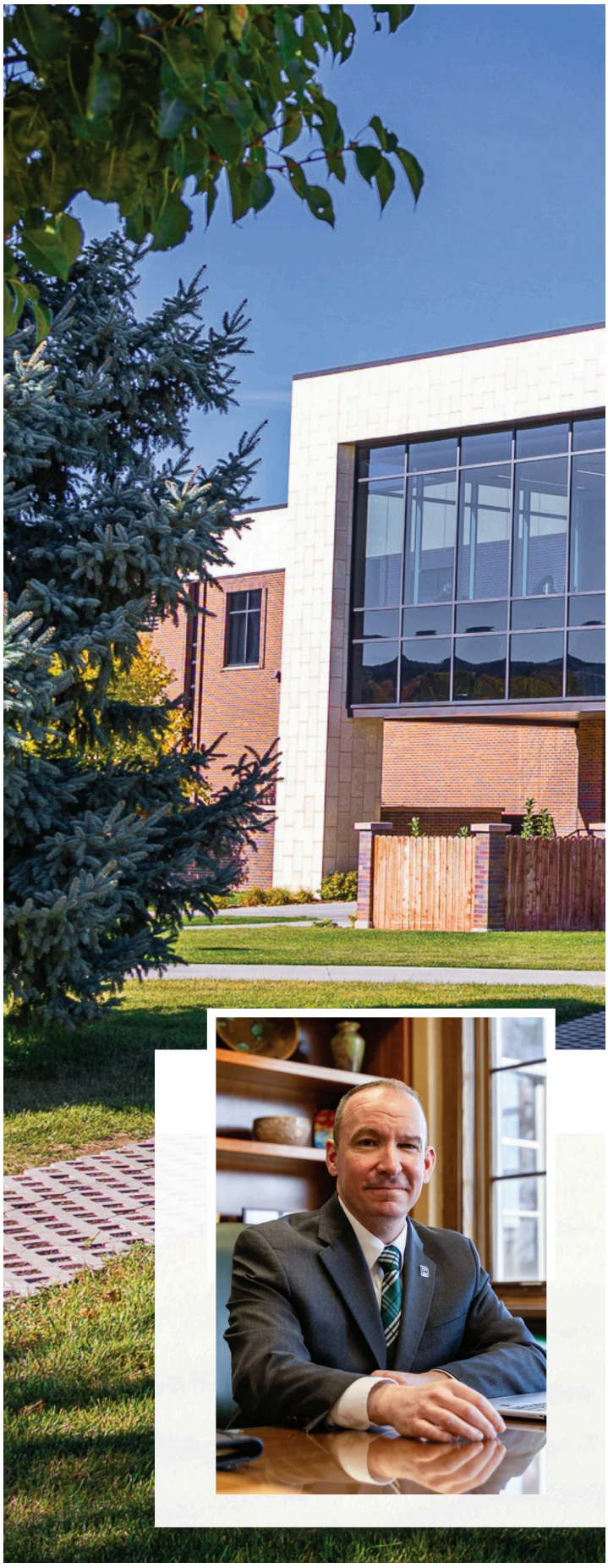
UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT
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» Tom Wheaton, '87
» Rylan Bruns, '24

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS
» Becca Walters, '06
» Laurel Boss
» Maegan Detlefs
» Lori DuBry, '10
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» Sierra Hopp, photographer
» Ava Elliott, photographer

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Although my official inauguration as BHSU's 12th president took place this past April, I have been honored to serve in this role for over a year and a half now. Every day, I am reminded of what makes this university so special: our incredible students, dedicated faculty and staff, and the passionate community of alumni who continue to support BHSU.

Right now we are focused on enrollment, which is the number one challenge facing higher education. I am proud to share that we are seeing encouraging signs, especially with our incoming freshmen class. By placing priority on our marketing efforts, a restructured academic framework, new leadership in key areas, and bolstering BHSU-Rapid City, I believe we are on the right path.

Long term, our success will come from staying innovative: developing new programs, adapting to the needs of our students, and always looking forward.

My vision is to ensure BHSU continues to thrive well into the future—not only growing in numbers, but leading with new ideas and always being focused on providing an outstanding educational experience for generations to come.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to Black Hills State University.

Steve Elliott
President, Black Hills State University



Bendt running an ultramarathon.



Harms and Bendt.



Harms at the finish line of the Black Hills 100.

MILES OF FRIENDSHIP

BHSU Alumni Turn Ultramarathoners

Ultramarathon runners Brian Harms, attended, and Mike Bendt, '85, may not have attended Black Hills State University at the same time, but their paths crossed in a way that would spark a lifelong friendship and hundreds of miles of shared running.

It all started in the summer of 1980. Harms was taking a break from college, and Bendt was gearing up for his senior year at Spearfish High School. With no teammates who could match his pace, Bendt began training alongside Harms, and some other BHSU cross country athletes, under the guidance of Spearfish cross country coach Forrest Flagann. That summer of running and racing with BHSU athletes helped Bendt earn a fifth place finish at the South Dakota State Meet. When Coach Dave Little later offered Bendt a spot on the BHSU team, the decision felt easy.

"It just felt like the right place to be, just because of the way those guys were," Bendt said. "My love for running comes from Brian and a couple of the other guys we ran with that summer. They just—you know—they hooked me."

Both men credit Coach Little's philosophy for shaping their approach to running and life: make the hard days hard, and the easy days easy. "He instilled in us that on easy days, it's easy. But on hard days, you're gonna go out, you're gonna go get it. We pushed hard on the hard days," Bendt said.

After college, both Harms and Bendt started their careers and settled down with their families. Harms married Jean (Visser) in 1983, and they raised three boys in Belle Fourche. Bendt graduated in 1985 and married fellow BHSU runner Shellie (Sellers) in 1986; they raised three daughters. The men lost touch for several years until the first BHSU Alumni Mile event in 1993, which was started by former teammate Jim Glazer, '83. The event brings former runners together to reminisce, raise scholarship funds, and reconnect through a shared mile at the Young Center.

"We had never had a chance to run at the Young Center," Harms explained. "It was always a dream to have an indoor facility."

When Bendt moved back to the Black Hills area in 2013, he reached out to Harms to see if he wanted to try trail running. Harms agreed and was hooked.

"You get on trails, and you come over these canyons, and depending on the sunlight, sunrise or sunset, you just see some incredible things," Harms said.

"The trails are just so therapeutic, just to be out there in the woods or wilderness or mountains," Bendt added.

Together, they began training more seriously, focusing on nutrition, hydration, and mental toughness. In 2018, Bendt attempted his first ultramarathon, the Leona Divide 50K in California, while visiting his daughter and son-in-law for the birth of his first two grandkids. Two years later, Harms completed his first ultra, the Glacier Hills 50K in Newton Hills State Park.

"I swore to the race director when I got done with that first 50K, it was one and done. Never again," Harms laughed. "Two weeks later, I signed up for the Black Hills 100 50-mile event."

Since then, ultramarathons have become a shared passion. Bendt has completed more than 21 ultras, and Harms has four finishes under his belt. While these races push runners to their physical and mental limits, both men say that's exactly what keeps them coming back.

"Halfway through the event, no matter what distance, you start questioning your intelligence and why the hell you're out here," Bendt said. "But when you finish that thing—no matter what your time was—it's a milestone."

It's not just about personal achievement. For Harms and Bendt, the ultrarunning community is a powerful motivator, especially witnessing the moment people accomplish their goals.

"They call it the golden hour, the last hour before the cut off at the end of the race," Harms explained. "Just seeing those people come in in the last 10 minutes...I saw one come in the last 10 seconds, and they're just in tears and happy and so joyful."

Now in their 60s, Harms and Bendt continue to push themselves—not just for their own goals, but to set an example for their kids and grandkids. Harms has 10 grandchildren, and Bendt has four. Currently, Bendt is training for the Wasatch 100 in early September, while Harms is preparing for the Cowboy 200 later that month.

Harms hopes to continue running ultramarathons into his 70s, while Bendt has his sights set on qualifying for the Western States 100, one of the oldest and most prestigious ultramarathons in the world, covering 100.2 miles through California's Sierra Nevada mountains. But no matter the race, one thing is clear: they don't plan to slow down anytime soon.

"Don't stop playing because you grow old, because you will grow old when you stop playing," Bendt said, quoting George Bernard Shaw. "I just want to keep doing it till I can't."

And with every mile, they prove that the finish line isn't the end, it's just another place to begin.



Artwork from S. A. Klopfenstein's fantasy series, The Shadow Watch.



Klopfenstein, '12 & '16.

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FROM BHSU TO BESTSELLER

S.A. Klopfenstein's Journey into Fantasy Fiction

BHSU grad Stephen Klopfenstein, '12 & '16, didn't necessarily set out to become a fantasy author. But somewhere between discovering his love of writing in college and early mornings spent writing before work, a story began to take shape, one that would eventually reach thousands of readers and launch his writing career.

Klopfenstein, who writes under the pen name S.A. Klopfenstein, grew up in Rapid City. Deciding to stay close to home for college, he enrolled at Black Hills State University where he majored in communication with a minor in English writing. He says it was during a freshman composition class with Professor Kent Meyers that he discovered his passion for storytelling. "That initial class was a big spark—just kind of finding a joy in writing," Klopfenstein said.

After graduating, Klopfenstein pursued a master's in education and earned his teaching certification through BHSU's Project Second, a program designed to help bachelor's degree holders transition into teaching. During his student teaching, he began writing what would become the first novel in his epic fantasy series, *The Shadow Watch*.



"I got up early for like a week and wrote the first few chapters at 4:30 a.m.," Klopfenstein explained. "I got the opening sequence done and needed to figure out where it was going."

Balancing his career as an English teacher with his writing ambitions, Klopfenstein began publishing chapters of the book on Wattpad, an online platform where authors share their work with readers. He quickly built a dedicated readership, and the book garnered nearly a million views. While the novel received some positive attention from contests and agents, getting his work in print wasn't happening as quickly as Klopfenstein would have liked, so he opted to self-publish the series.

"It was definitely motivating to have people from all over the world reading it," he said. "The feedback was instrumental in pursuing independent publishing. It gave me the confidence that I had something good."

Publishing regularly on Wattpad also helped Klopfenstein develop the discipline he believes is essential for any writer. "It was pretty instrumental in instilling that long-term habit of writing just about every day," he explained.

After the success of his first series, Klopfenstein soon turned his attention to a new genre gaining popularity: LitRPG, which blends traditional storytelling with role-playing game mechanics. "I think it appeals to a lot of people who really enjoyed playing D&D (Dungeons & Dragons) and video games, but maybe have a lot less time for it now," Klopfenstein explained. "It captures the nostalgia for people."

His love of games like *Skyrim* and *Assassin's Creed* inspired his next series, *Pantheon*, which follows a prisoner forced to beta test the first fully immersive online role-playing game, a perfect fit for the LitRPG genre. The series was picked up by Podium, an online publisher that developed it into an audiobook series.

While he enjoyed aspects of working with a publisher, Klopfenstein also valued the creative control of independent publishing. After successfully using Kickstarter to fund leather-bound editions of *The Shadow Watch*, he returned to the platform for his latest project, *Children of the Gods*. Within minutes of launching the campaign, it hit its $5,000 goal and went on to raise over $50,000 from 699 backers.

"It was really humbling," he said. "I was blown away because it was a new book that nobody had read, and people were backing it." The novel is the first in his upcoming epic dragon fantasy series, *Age of Fire*, set to release later this year.

For aspiring writers, Klopfenstein says having the endurance to push through the tough times makes all the difference, "The biggest thing is just persistence. It's a really long game, and it takes a long time to start seeing the fruits of what you do."

And with thousands of readers, more than $120,000 raised in Kickstarter campaigns, and over 60,000 copies of his books sold world-wide, Klopfenstein is finally starting to see that persistence pay off.



Steve Elliott was inaugurated as Black Hills State University's 12th president on April 11, 2025 at the Donald E. Young Center.

BHSU HOLDS INAUGURATION CEREMONY FOR PRESIDENT STEVE ELLIOTT

Black Hills State University officially inaugurated Steve Elliott as its 12th president on April 11 at the Donald E. Young Center. Elliott, who began his role in December 2023 after Dr. Laurie Nichols' retirement, was celebrated by state and local leaders, including South Dakota Governor Larry Rhoden and SDBOR Executive Director and CEO Nathan Lukkes.

Governor Rhoden highlighted Elliott's leadership and dedication to retaining talent in South Dakota. During the ceremony, Elliott was presented with a traditional Lakota Star Quilt by the Center for American Indian Studies, symbolizing honor and service.

In his speech, Elliott outlined goals such as increasing enrollment, expanding scholarships, and building partnerships with organizations like Monument Health and the Sanford Underground Research Facility.

A Marine Corps veteran and accomplished artist, Elliott previously held leadership roles at Wayne State College and holds degrees from the University of Kansas and University of Maryland. He and his wife, Molly, have three children.



BHSU was designated South Dakota's second Purple Heart University during President Steve Elliott's inauguration on April 11, 2025.

BHSU DESIGNATED AS A PURPLE HEART UNIVERSITY

Black Hills State University has been designated South Dakota's second Purple Heart University, honoring its commitment to Veterans wounded or killed in combat. The designation was presented by Major John Lundeen during President Steve Elliott's inauguration on April 11.

BHSU's military ties date back to WWII, when it hosted the Army Air Forces 93rd College Training Detachment. Today, over 130 Veterans are enrolled. The university has reserved four parking spaces for Veterans, including two for Purple Heart recipients.

"As a retired veteran, I deeply respect the sacrifices these Purple Heart recipients have made and am proud to work at a university that supports our Veterans," said Deborah Liddick, assistant director of Facilities Services.

2025 SPIRIT OF BH AWARD

Megan Brozik has been awarded the 2025 Spirit of BH Award by the BHSU Alumni Association.

Brozik, who graduated in May with a Bachelor of Science in Education with a Math and Science composite major and a Theatre minor, has maintained a 3.9 GPA while balancing academics, service, and campus involvement.

She served as a tutor at the Math Assistance Center and as a TRIO Peer Mentor. Brozik has held leadership roles in Jacket Catholic, the Campus Activities Board, and the Activity Grants Committee, helping organize events and promote student engagement. She was also member of the homecoming royal court during Swarm Days 2024.

In 2023, she received a BRIN research fellowship to study fluorescent sensors for ethylene detection, presenting her work at conferences in South Dakota and Washington, D.C.

Her volunteer work includes Service Saturday to paint fences at the soccer field, Sanford Underground Lab's Neutrino Day, and time at the Hickory House. She has been named to the Dean's List seven times and was recognized with the Dean of Students Rising Star and Outstanding Student Leader awards.



Megan Reder-Schopp (right), President for the BHSU Alumni Association, presents the 2025 Spirit of BH Award to Megan Brozik (left).

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BHSU NAMED AMONG TOP IN THE NATION IN 2024 COLLEGIATE ADVERTISING AWARDS

Black Hills State University (BHSU) earned four Gold Awards in the 2024 Collegiate Advertising Awards (CAA), a national program recognizing outstanding marketing and communications in higher education.

BHSU's winning entries included the "Let the Path Find You" mailing series, the A2 Arena basketball court design, and a video and enrollment campaign created with Sioux Falls agency Fresh Produce.

"It's an honor for our team's work to be recognized," said Becca Walters, Senior Director of Marketing and Communications. "These awards reflect the creativity, collaboration, and passion behind our campaigns."

The CAA received entries from colleges and universities across the U.S. and Canada. Submissions were judged by a national panel of experts on creativity, design, message effectiveness, and overall appeal. Awards were given to entries ranking in the top 16% nationwide.

"This national recognition is a reflection of the outstanding talent and dedication of our Marketing and Communications team," said BHSU President Steve Elliott. "Their creative and strategic efforts continue to elevate the university's reputation and reach. Additionally, their work alongside Fresh Produce speaks volumes about the innovation and passion driving our message forward."

Winners are listed at www.CollegiateAdAwards.com.



BHSU earned four Gold Awards in the 2024 Collegiate Advertising Awards (CAA), a national program recognizing outstanding marketing and communications in higher education.

BHSU STUDENT MAGAZINE "PONDER" RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARDS

Since its Spring 2024 debut, Black Hills State University's student-run magazine *Ponder* has earned national recognition, including a prestigious National ADDY Award from the American Advertising Federation.

Produced by students in the BHSU Communications Department, *Ponder* features original stories, photography, and design. The editorial team includes Alec Butterfield, Noah Westergaard, Nathan Feller, and Taylor SanFilippo, supported by a talented group of student contributors and faculty advisors.

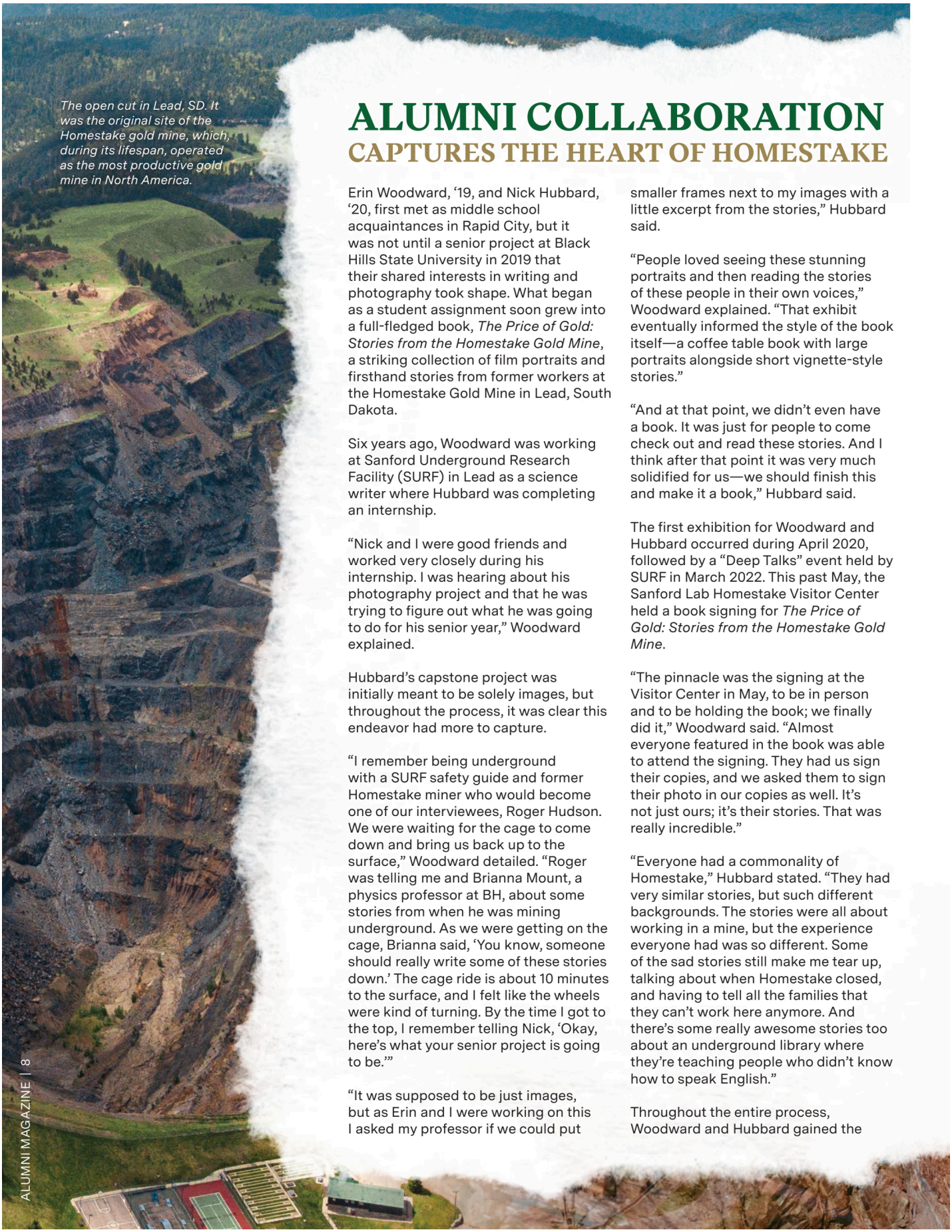
With its first publication, the magazine was named runner-up in the design category for the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication 2024 National Student Magazine Competition. Since then, *Ponder* has been awarded numerous accolades. In 2025, the magazine received 13 awards, including national recognition at the College Media Association David L. Adams Apple Awards. For the second issue, *Ponder* was awarded first place for Best Magazine and second place for Best Feature Photography in Division II.

At the 2025 AAF Black Hills Gala, *Ponder* earned "Best of Show" and multiple Gold ADDY Awards. The team advanced through District 8 and secured a Gold National ADDY Award—one of the most competitive honors in creative media.

The third issue launches this spring. Learn more at BHSUMedia.com/Ponder.



The Ponder creative team.



The open cut in Lead, SD. It was the original site of the Homestake gold mine, which, during its lifespan, operated as the most productive gold mine in North America.

ALUMNI COLLABORATION
CAPTURES THE HEART OF HOMESTAKE

Erin Woodward, '19, and Nick Hubbard, '20, first met as middle school acquaintances in Rapid City, but it was not until a senior project at Black Hills State University in 2019 that their shared interests in writing and photography took shape. What began as a student assignment soon grew into a full-fledged book, *The Price of Gold: Stories from the Homestake Gold Mine*, a striking collection of film portraits and firsthand stories from former workers at the Homestake Gold Mine in Lead, South Dakota.

Six years ago, Woodward was working at Sanford Underground Research Facility (SURF) in Lead as a science writer where Hubbard was completing an internship.

"Nick and I were good friends and worked very closely during his internship. I was hearing about his photography project and that he was trying to figure out what he was going to do for his senior year," Woodward explained.

Hubbard's capstone project was initially meant to be solely images, but throughout the process, it was clear this endeavor had more to capture.

"I remember being underground with a SURF safety guide and former Homestake miner who would become one of our interviewees, Roger Hudson. We were waiting for the cage to come down and bring us back up to the surface," Woodward detailed. "Roger was telling me and Brianna Mount, a physics professor at BH, about some stories from when he was mining underground. As we were getting on the cage, Brianna said, 'You know, someone should really write some of these stories down.' The cage ride is about 10 minutes to the surface, and I felt like the wheels were kind of turning. By the time I got to the top, I remember telling Nick, 'Okay, here's what your senior project is going to be.'"

"It was supposed to be just images, but as Erin and I were working on this I asked my professor if we could put smaller frames next to my images with a little excerpt from the stories," Hubbard said.

"People loved seeing these stunning portraits and then reading the stories of these people in their own voices," Woodward explained. "That exhibit eventually informed the style of the book itself—a coffee table book with large portraits alongside short vignette-style stories."

"And at that point, we didn't even have a book. It was just for people to come check out and read these stories. And I think after that point it was very much solidified for us—we should finish this and make it a book," Hubbard said.

The first exhibition for Woodward and Hubbard occurred during April 2020, followed by a "Deep Talks" event held by SURF in March 2022. This past May, the Sanford Lab Homestake Visitor Center held a book signing for *The Price of Gold: Stories from the Homestake Gold Mine*.

"The pinnacle was the signing at the Visitor Center in May, to be in person and to be holding the book; we finally did it," Woodward said. "Almost everyone featured in the book was able to attend the signing. They had us sign their copies, and we asked them to sign their photo in our copies as well. It's not just ours; it's their stories. That was really incredible."

"Everyone had a commonality of Homestake," Hubbard stated. "They had very similar stories, but such different backgrounds. The stories were all about working in a mine, but the experience everyone had was so different. Some of the sad stories still make me tear up, talking about when Homestake closed, and having to tell all the families that they can't work here anymore. And there's some really awesome stories too about an underground library where they're teaching people who didn't know how to speak English."

Throughout the entire process, Woodward and Hubbard gained the



Woodward, '19, and Hubbard, '20, with a copy of their book, The Price of Gold: Stories from the Homestake Gold Mine.


Hubbard, '20, and Woodward, '19, meeting with guests and signing copies of their book, The Price of Gold: Stories from the Homestake Gold Mine.

trust of many former Homestake employees in the form of former miners, chemists, receptionists, and operators.

"A lot of the people wanted to tell their stories," Hubbard said. "This is their life, and they felt like there weren't a lot of people who were interested in it anymore. And there's people who feel that this is really important; they've always wanted to talk about it. Some of these people are older, don't have a lot of family, and want to tell someone about this—they want this to live on. We sat with them in their house for over an hour, just listening and asking them about their lives and what they've done."

"Initially, we spoke with people we had met through SURF," Woodward noted. "They already had that experience of sitting down with and telling us about their lives and their work. And then from there, they would recommend others. There was kind of that intrinsic trust. It was a constant refrain, 'I'm so glad you guys are doing this. I'm so glad someone is doing this,' because I think they feel that those stories are going to be lost otherwise.

"We had the privilege to speak with Jace DeCory, who was the Native American studies director for a long time at Black Hills State, who sadly passed away before the book came out. She shared her personal experience as a Native American, seeing some of the negative impacts of the mine—it's physical and environmental impact on land that many people consider sacred—while still showing a lot of compassion for those who worked there and later lost their jobs when it closed."

Woodward and Hubbard are eager to credit BHSU, SURF, and those who helped them along the way.

"It was because of BH that I got an internship and eventually a job at SURF," Woodward said. "The strong relationship between the lab and the university creates so many opportunities for students. For me specifically, I was working in the BH marketing office as a student writer when I was assigned a story about a BH robotics competition happening underground at SURF. That was my first trip underground. I met the communications director, Constance Walter, and she encouraged me to apply for their summer internship.

"From Black Hills State, a technical training point of view, I had these incredible writing and storytelling professors, as well as mentorship from the history side of things that really encouraged me to pursue new projects. Courtney Huse-Wika gave me so much confidence to pursue creative projects, Matthew Bauman helped me develop a strong non-fiction voice, and Kelly Kirk was an early reader and shared her expertise in South Dakota history. Without those relationships, I don't know that I would have had the confidence to pursue something like this."

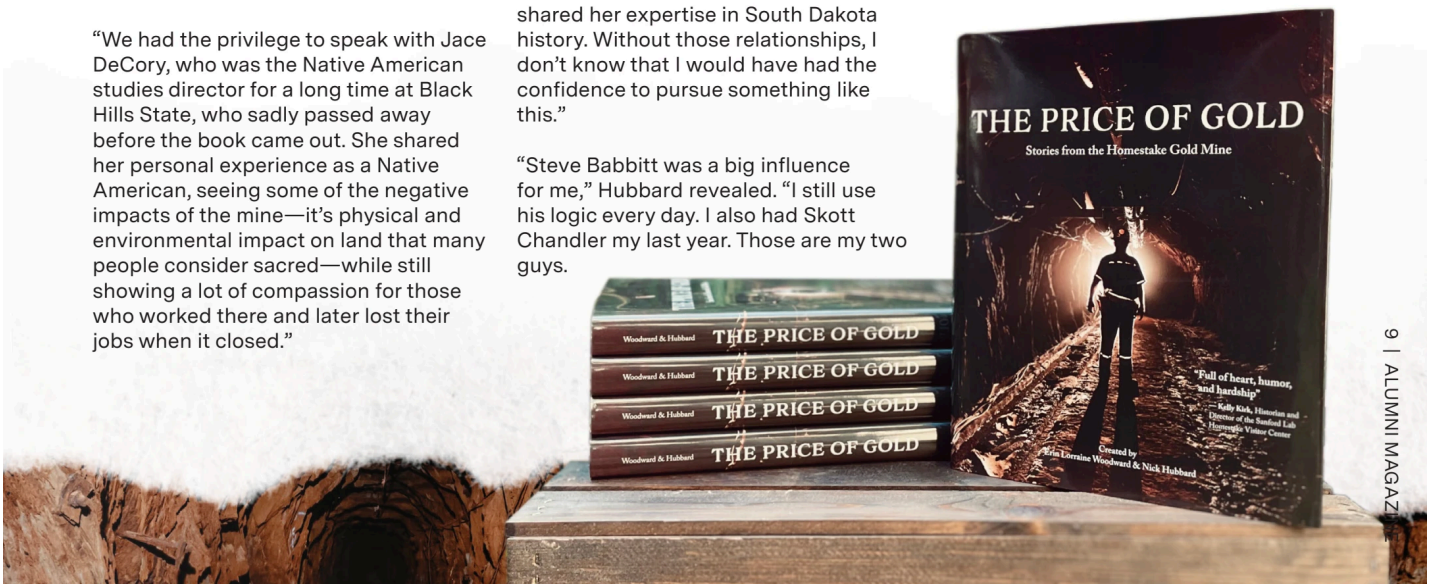
"Steve Babbitt was a big influence for me," Hubbard revealed. "I still use his logic every day. I also had Skott Chandler my last year. Those are my two guys.

"Those were really fun days. We are looking forward to the future, but it's so lovely to have this physical piece of work that reminds us of what an awesome time we had and the beautiful people that we were able to meet."

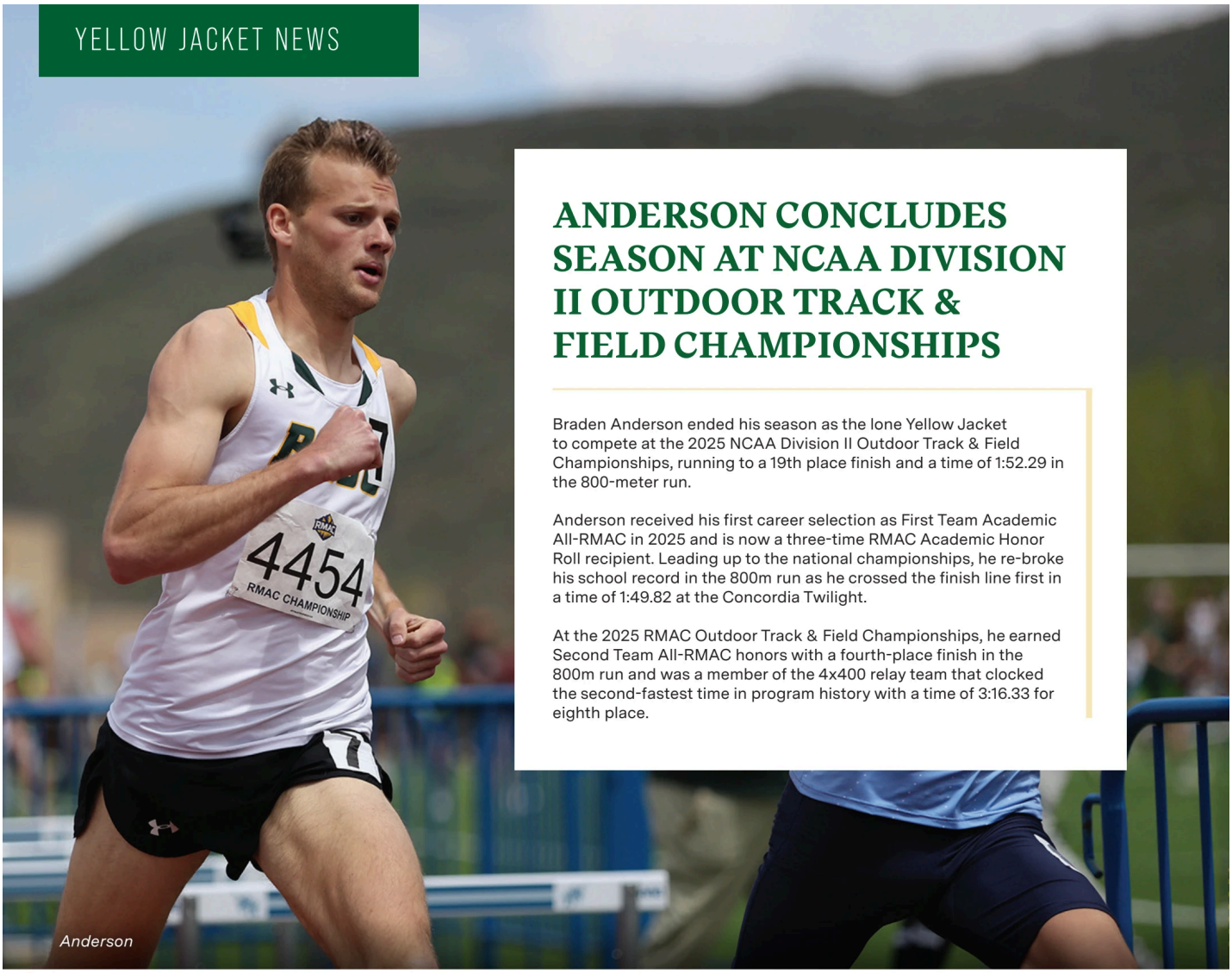
The pair's lasting tribute to the people and legacy of the Homestake Gold Mine stands as a testament to the impact BHSU graduates can make when they stay rooted in community, history, and the stories that matter.

Woodward now lives with her husband, David, in Berkeley, California, and is a science and technology communications officer at SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory. Hubbard resides in Rapid City with his wife, Kaylee, and their children. He founded his own multimedia company, Frontier Creative.

More information on *The Price of Gold: Stories from the Homestake Gold Mine* can be found at www.ThePriceOfGoldBook.com.



YELLOW JACKET NEWS



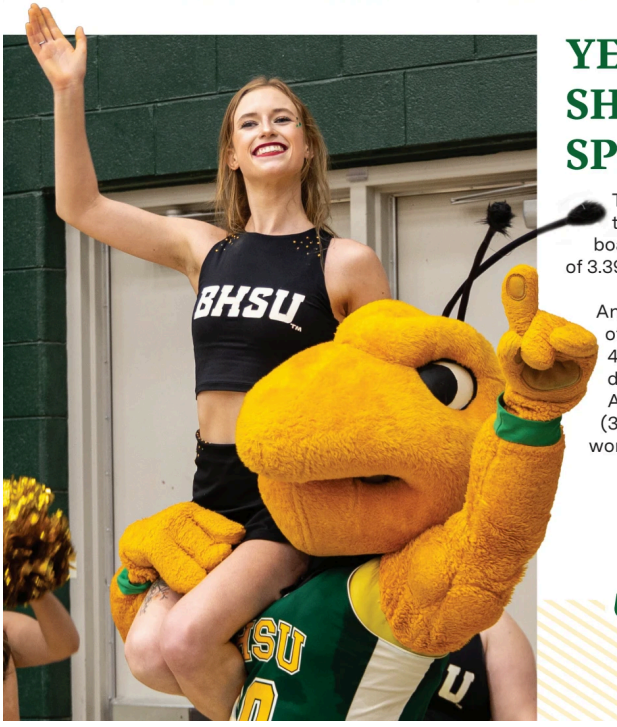
Anderson

ANDERSON CONCLUDES SEASON AT NCAA DIVISION II OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Braden Anderson ended his season as the lone Yellow Jacket to compete at the 2025 NCAA Division II Outdoor Track & Field Championships, running to a 19th place finish and a time of 1:52.29 in the 800-meter run.

Anderson received his first career selection as First Team Academic All-RMAC in 2025 and is now a three-time RMAC Academic Honor Roll recipient. Leading up to the national championships, he re-broke his school record in the 800m run as he crossed the finish line first in a time of 1:49.82 at the Concordia Twilight.

At the 2025 RMAC Outdoor Track & Field Championships, he earned Second Team All-RMAC honors with a fourth-place finish in the 800m run and was a member of the 4x400 relay team that clocked the second-fastest time in program history with a time of 3:16.33 for eighth place.



YELLOW JACKET STUDENT-ATHLETES SHINE IN THE CLASSROOM IN 2025 SPRING SEMESTER

The BHSU Athletic Department continued to see a jump in the classroom success of their student-athletes as they improved their GPA for the third consecutive semester and boasted their best mark since the fall of 2022, turning in a cumulative grade point average of 3.392 for the 2025 spring term.

Another major accomplishment for the Yellow Jackets saw all 14 programs record a GPA of 3.0 or higher, and seven above a 3.5. Of the 441 student-athletes, 123 secured a perfect 4.0 GPA for the semester, while 259 were above a 3.5. Leading the way for the athletic department during the spring semester with a team GPA of 3.879 was women's triathlon. Among the seven teams to sit above a 3.5 were women's basketball (3.865), softball (3.660), volleyball (3.571), women's cross country (3.570), women's golf (3.541), and women's track & field (3.534).

3.392
DEPARTMENT GPA

123
4.0 STUDENT-ATHLETES

READ MORE | BHSUATHLETICS.COM



2024-2025 Black Hills State University softball team.

YELLOW JACKET SOFTBALL AND WOMEN'S BASKETBALL RECIPIENTS OF RMAC'S BRECHLER AWARD

Recognized as the top academic teams in their respective sports in the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference (RMAC), the BHSU softball and women's basketball programs were announced as recipients of the RMAC's Brechler Award on July 3.

The Yellow Jacket softball team ranks second all-time in conference history as Brechler Award winners. The team posted a grade point average (GPA) of 3.719, had three student-athletes earn a 4.0, and had 14 above a 3.50. All 23 team members were above a 3.00 on the year.

Tied for the most Brechler Awards in the RMAC, Yellow Jacket women's basketball took home the honor for the third time in program history. The squad posted a GPA of 3.833, had four student-athletes earn a 4.0, and had 11 above a 3.50. All 14 team members were above a 3.25 on the year.

Established in 2012-13, the Brechler Awards recognize the conference's top team grade point average (GPA) in each of its 22 sports.



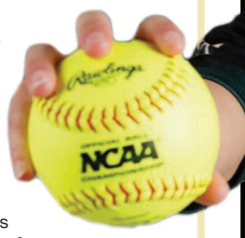
2024-2025 Black Hills State University women's basketball team.



Pauwels

PESKEY, PAUWELS EARNS PROGRAM'S FIRST EVER D2CCA ALL-REGION HONORS

BHSU pitcher Laci Peskey and first basemen Ashlynn Pauwels were named to the 2025 D2CCA All-South-Central Region Second Team to become the first two to receive such honors in program history. They join Erica Everson (2015) as the only Yellow Jackets to ever be placed on an All-Region Team.



Peskey also earned NFCA All-Region Honors and was named RMAC Pitcher of the Year and All-RMAC First Team. She is only the 10th pitcher in RMAC history to reach 200 strikeouts in a season and was a five-time pitcher of the week in 2025.

Pauwels was also named First Team All-RMAC. She tied the BHSU Division II record for RBI in a game with five and is the program's all-time leader in career RBI, home runs, single season RBI, and single season hits. She is the single season home runs record holder, the career doubles record holder, and the career leader in slugging percentage.



Peskey

PAST ALUMNI GATHERINGS



BLACK HILLS STATE UNIVERSITY
CLASS OF 1975 REUNION

(ABOVE) Nine graduates from the Class of 1975 gathered on campus during spring commencement to celebrate their induction into the 50-Year Club. Members from the Class of 1975 in attendance at commencement were (left to right); Karyl (Ketelsen) Meyer, Gillette, Wyoming; Tracee (Page) Anderson, Bar Nunn, Wyoming; Dwayne LaFave, De Smet; Kenneth Bartell, Belle Fourche; Nancy (Remschel) Kroeger, Rapid City; Dean Obenauer, Spearfish; Gretchen (Hutter) Cooney, Spearfish; Kenneth Shepardson, Rapid City; and Virginia (Eneboe) Schmunk, Spearfish.

(BELOW) Black Hills State graduates from the Class of 1975 gathered on campus during the 189th spring commencement ceremony to celebrate their induction into the 50-Year Club. Each year, classmates from the 50-year class return to campus to celebrate the anniversary of their graduation. Members from prior graduating classes are also invited to attend a banquet in honor of the 50-year class.



UPCOMING EVENTS

SAVE THE DATE!

RETIRED BLACK HILLS STATE FACULTY & STAFF GATHERING | SEPT. 11, 2025

All former retired Black Hills State faculty & staff are invited back for the annual retired faculty & staff gathering on Thursday, September 11, at 5:00 p.m. The gathering will take place at the Joy (Proctor) Krautschun Alumni/Foundation Welcome Center.

FOR MORE INFO AND TO REGISTER | Christina.Couch@BHSU.edu · 605.642.6385
Pre-Registration for this gathering is required.

10:15 SALEM PARK SHOWING | SEPT. 26, 2025

10:15 Salem Park is an independent film written, produced, filmed, performed, and edited by BHSU students 20 years ago. Dylan, a college student, and Shelly, a sheltered young woman, begin a secret relationship that leads to complications in their personal lives, including jealousy, secrets, and pasts they'd rather forget. As their worlds unravel, Dylan must decide whether to hold on to Shelly or let her go, while others around them fight to keep their dark secrets buried. There is no fee, and everyone is welcome to attend as we look back in time to 2005 to watch the film and celebrate the artistry and work of our talented alumni.

7:00 PM, Jonas Academic Hall: Room 305 (3rd Floor)
MORE INFO | Jane.Klug@BHSU.edu · 605.642.6080

THE 1970s BHSC MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAMS REUNION | DEC. 13, 2025

Former men's basketball players and coaches from the decade of the 70s are invited back to campus. The reunion will include a reception and recognition at halftime of the men's basketball game. Special recognition will be given to the 1975-76 men's team on the 50th anniversary of their conference championship.

IF INTERESTED IN ATTENDING THIS REUNION, OR FOR MORE INFO | Tom.Wheaton@BHSU.edu · 605.642.6385

BHSU WOMEN'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY BASKETBALL REUNION

Former women's basketball players and coaches are invited back to campus to celebrate the 50th anniversary of intercollegiate women's basketball at BHSU. Plans are underway for a spring 2026 reunion that will include a reception and recognition at halftime of a women's basketball game.

IF INTERESTED IN ATTENDING THIS REUNION, OR FOR MORE INFO | Tom.Wheaton@BHSU.edu · 605.642.6385

CLASS OF 1976 REUNION | MAY 8 & 9, 2026

The Class of 1976/50-year reunion will take place May 8 & 9, 2026. Registration information will be mailed out in late February/early March of 2026.

MORE INFO | Tom.Wheaton@BHSU.edu · 605.642.6385

ANNOUNCEMENT

RECOGNIZE A BHSU LEGACY FAMILY

The BHSU Alumni Association needs your assistance in identifying a Legacy Family. In 2008, BHSU created the Legacy Family Award honoring family members that have attended, graduated, or are currently attending Black Hills State. For more information or to nominate a deserving family, contact Tom Wheaton, director, alumni affairs, at Tom.Wheaton@BHSU.edu or 605.642.6385.

SWARM DAYS



SWARM DAYS SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, SEPT. 25

Scholarship Luncheon* ..... Noon
Joy Center
Coronation ..... 6:30 p.m.
Clare & Josef Meier Recital Hall
Burning of the BH ..... 7:45 p.m.
Meier Hall Circle

FRIDAY, SEPT. 26

Alumni Awards Luncheon** ..... 11 a.m.
Joy Center
Hall of Fame Banquet** ..... 6 p.m.
David B. Miller Yellow Jacket Student Union, Jacket Legacy Room
BHSU Volleyball Game ..... 6 p.m.
Young Center
10:15 Salem Park Showing*** ..... 7 p.m.
Jonas Academic Hall: Room 305 (3rd Floor)

SATURDAY, SEPT. 27

Swarm Day Parade ..... 10 a.m.
Hillsview Rd., to North Ave./Main Street
Tailgate Social ..... 11:15 a.m.
Young Center Parking Lot
BHSU Swarm Day Football Game ..... 1 p.m.
Lyle Hare Stadium
BHSU Swarm Day Volleyball Game ..... 5:30 p.m.
Young Center

**Scholarship Luncheon (invite only).*

***Registration/Payment for the Alumni Awards Luncheon and Hall of Fame Banquet must be made in advance of the event. Call 605.642.6385 FOR MORE INFO.*

CALL 605.642.6385 FOR MORE INFO.

Alumni Awards 2025 RECIPIENTS



CLAIR DONOVAN
Distinguished Alumnus

Clair Donovan, attended, has served two terms on the Spearfish City Council and held numerous other community roles. Donovan officiated high school wrestling for 28 years and was inducted into the South Dakota Wrestling Hall of Fame. As owner of Donovan Construction for over 40 years, Donovan contributed to numerous community projects, including the Newman Center and local banks. He helped raise over $500,000 to build the Black Hills Sports Complex and co-founded the Stadium Sports Grill. In 2022, he received the Spearfish Chamber of Commerce Lifetime Achievement Award.



DR. JULIE (OWEN) HATLING
Excellence in Education

Dr. Julie (Owen) Hatling, '05 & '09, is the Elementary Principal for the Belle Fourche School District. She was named the 2024 South Dakota Elementary Principal of the Year and the 2022 South Dakota Elementary Principals' Association's Innovative Leader of the Year, among other honors. Julie holds advanced degrees in education and currently serves as president of both the South Dakota and West River Associations of Elementary Principals.



SEAN SHERMAN
Special Achievement

Chef Sean Sherman, attended, a member of the Oglala Lakota tribe, is the founder of NĀTIFS (North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems) and the award-winning restaurant Owamni by The Sioux Chef. Sean has earned James Beard Awards for both his cookbook *The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen*, named Best American Cookbook in 2018 and Owamni, named Best New Restaurant in America in 2022. In 2023, he was named one of TIME's 100 Most Influential People and received the Julia Child Award. Photo credit: Nancy Bundt.



CALVIN CROOKS
Special Service

Calvin Crooks, '72, helped launch KBHU-FM in 1974 and served BHSU for over 40 years in media technology, retiring as Director of Digital Media Resource Services. He also served 28 years in the South Dakota Army National Guard, retiring as Public Affairs Chief. Crooks was the first technologist in South Dakota to earn Certified Technology Specialist certification from AVIXA. He continues to support local radio as Chief Engineer for KBHU-FM and KJKT-FM.



CASSIDY (KOTELMAN) PETERSON
Young Alumni Achievement

Cassidy (Kotelman) Peterson, '15, is a physician assistant specializing in plastic surgery at Monument Health in Rapid City. A summa cum laude graduate of BHSU and former NCAA student-athlete, she also co-owns Black Hills Trimlight and mentors aspiring PAs. Cassidy is active in professional organizations and contributes to research and community outreach. Cassidy is a member of several professional organizations, including the Association of Plastic Surgery Physician Assistants.

SWARM DAYS

2025 SEPTEMBER 22 - 27

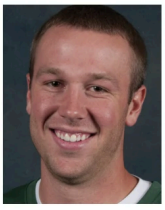
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS - BHSU.EDU/SWARMDAYS

Yellow Jacket Hall of Fame 2025 INDUCTEES



Blakelee (Binning) Hoffman
ATHLETE

Blakelee (Binning) Hoffman (1998–2001) distinguished herself as one of the most dynamic multi-sport athletes in Black Hills State University history. A four-year starter at outside hitter, Blakelee was a relentless competitor on the volleyball court, earning All-Conference honors all four years—twice in the SDIC and twice in the DAC-10. In 1999, she was named AVCA All-Region and received AVCA Honorable Mention All-American honors, marking her as one of the nation's top players at the NAIA level. Upon graduation, she held eight school records and ranked second in another while appearing in numerous top-ten lists for both season and career stats. Not only a standout in volleyball, Blakelee also made her mark in track & field, qualifying for the 2001 NAIA Indoor Nationals in the 60m hurdles and, at one point, holding the school record in the 55m hurdles. Her commitment to excellence, leadership, and legacy of performance secures her place among the elite in BHSU athletics history.



Will John Johnson
ATHLETE

Will John Johnson had an impressive collegiate basketball career at BHSU, playing from 2007 to 2011. A dominant force on defense, he earned DAC Defensive Player of the Year honors in 2009–2010 and was named to the DAC Second Team that same season. He followed up with a standout senior year, earning First Team All-Dakota Athletic Conference (DAC) recognition in 2010–2011. Over the course of his career, Johnson recorded 85 blocked shots and grabbed an outstanding 1,213 rebounds, averaging 9.4 boards per game. He also proved to be a highly efficient scorer, finishing his career with a .564 field goal percentage. The Jackets won 94 compared to just 35 losses during this time span, winning three conference championships.



Kristal Keffeler
ATHLETE

Kristal Keffeler had a remarkable track and field career at Black Hills State University, earning national recognition as a three-time All-American in the outdoor discus event in 2003, 2004, and 2005. Her dominance in the throwing events extended to the conference level as well, where she captured a DAC-10 Conference title in the discus and added two more championships in the shot put. Capping off her outstanding senior season, Kristal was honored as the "DAC-10 Outstanding Field Event Athlete" at the Outdoor Conference Meet, solidifying her legacy as one of the most decorated field athletes in the program's history.



Kirk McLaughlin
COACH

Kirk McLaughlin is a highly decorated multi-sport coach with a career spanning several states. He was named Colorado's Western Slope 3A Boys Track Coach of the Year in 2009 before moving to Wyoming, where he earned numerous accolades in football and track. In football, McLaughlin was Assistant Coach of the Year in 2013 and led teams to state titles in 2013, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2022, and 2024—earning Head Coach of the Year honors in each championship season. He was also named Powder River Conference Coach of the Year multiple times and served as Shrine Bowl head coach in 2023. In track and field, McLaughlin guided boys' teams to 2A state titles in 2019, 2023, 2024, and 2025, earning State Coach of the Year honors the last three years. His girls' teams won state championships in 2015, 2016, and 2017, with McLaughlin named Girls Coach of the Year all three years.



Brittney (Klipfel) Phillips
ATHLETE

Brittney (Klipfel) Phillips' extraordinary basketball career at Black Hills State University from 2003 to 2007 has earned her a rightful place among the program's all-time greats. A dynamic force on both ends of the floor, Brittney was named a Second Team All-American in 2006-2007, capping off an impressive career that saw her earn First Team All-Conference honors in the Dakota Athletic Conference (DAC) in both 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, along with Third Team All-DAC recognition in 2004-2005. Throughout her career, she shot an impressive .504% from the field and totaled 586 rebounds. Her scoring ability was equally remarkable, as she made 457 field goals and scored a total of 1,192 points. Brittney's consistent excellence and all-around play have made her a standout in the history of Black Hills State basketball, and her legacy continues to inspire future generations of athletes.



1999 WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

The 1999 women's cross country team, coached by Scott Walkinshaw, finished in 16th place at the NAIA National Meet and was the first women's cross country team in school history to qualify for the NAIA National Meet. This team also won the South Dakota Intercollegiate Conference (SDIC) Championship. Team members include (L-R): Nikki (Underwood) McDaniel, Penny Hendrickson, Jessie Palczewski-Longbrake, Coach Scott Walkinshaw, Mary Kate Guilfoyle, Elise (Pfefferle) Fowlkes, Lisa (Reynolds) Bomengen, and Monica (Headlee) Dorn.



CREATING A LEGACY

BRADY FAMILY AWARDED BHSU 2024 BOOSTER OF THE YEAR



From L to R: Steve Elliott, BHSU President, Bob Brady, Barb Brady, and Mark Nore, BHSU Director of Athletics.

The Florence Brady family is honoring their late mother's legacy in a powerful and lasting way through the creation and growth of a scholarship endowment at Black Hills State University. Inspired by the generous matching program established by Miles and Lisa Beacom, the Brady family has significantly expanded the Florence Brady Memorial Scholarship to support women in athletics at BHSU.

Robert Brady of Spearfish first heard about the Beacom match and quickly recognized an opportunity to make a meaningful impact. The scholarship was originally established in 2023 with a $12,500 gift from the Brady family, which was matched to reach the $25,000 threshold needed to start an endowment. Motivated by the Beacom's continued support, the family has remained committed to growing the fund. To date, the Bradys have contributed a total of $142,500, with matching contributions from the Beacoms and investment earnings bringing the current endowment to an impressive $307,458.

In honor of their steadfast support for BHSU and commitment to student-athletes, the Brady family—represented by major contributors Bob and Barb Brady—was named the 2024 Booster of the Year during the Gold Rush Raffle on April 25. This well-earned recognition celebrates their generosity and enduring influence. Steve Meeker, Vice President of University Advancement, praised the Brady family for their commitment: "The Brady family embodies the spirit of giving and community support that makes BHSU such a special place," Meeker said. "Their generosity not only honors Florence's memory but also ensures meaningful opportunities for our women student-athletes now and into the future."

Since the inception of the Beacom match program in 2023, ten new endowments have been established, and contributions have been made to two existing ones. To date, the Beacoms have matched $614, 391 in gifts to BHSU. It takes a $25,000 investment to establish an endowment, but with the Beacom match, donors can start one with just $12,500. This dollar-for-dollar matching opportunity is available through 2028, allowing more families and individuals to create a lasting impact on women's athletics at BHSU.

For more information on how to establish or contribute to an endowment at BHSU, contact Steve Meeker at Steve.Meeker@BHSU.edu or call 605.642.6385.


Ella and Junior Schloe

ELLA AND JUNIOR SCHLOE LEAVE $1.4 MILLION LEGACY GIFT TO SUPPORT BHSU BUSINESS STUDENTS AND FACULTY

The Black Hills State University (BHSU) Foundation recently received the final distribution from the estate of Ella and Junior Schloe, marking a generous and impactful legacy. The total estate gift amounts to an impressive $1.4 million, with a final distribution of $396,278. This planned gift will significantly enhance the educational opportunities for BHSU business students and faculty for generations to come.

Guided through the estate planning process by BHSU Foundation estate planning attorney John W. Griffin, the Schloes designed their estate to reflect their deep values and long-standing support of higher education. Griffin, an experienced estate planner and major gifts consultant, helped structure the gift to align with the Schloes' philanthropic goals and family priorities.

The Schloes' thoughtful legacy gift has been designated to support three key areas within BHSU's College of Business:

- 60% of the income will fund business scholarships, with a specific preference that at least one scholarship recipient be Native American, reflecting the Schloes' commitment to inclusivity and diversity.
- 20% of the income will be used to provide student stipends for study abroad programs, emphasizing the Schloes' belief in the importance of global learning and international experience in today's business environment.
- 20% of the income will support faculty development, offering stipends for travel, research, and scholarly advancement. Recipients will be selected by the Dean of the College of Business in accordance with university procedures.

In addition to the direct estate gift, the Schloes also established a $300,000 Charitable Remainder Unitrust (CRUT). This trust will provide income to family members for a designated period, after which the remaining funds will be transferred to the BHSU Foundation to further support the business program initiatives outlined in the estate.

Ella and Junior Schloe were recognized in 2012 with the Difference Maker Award from BHSU—an honor that reflects the lasting impact of their support on the university community.

Steve Meeker, Vice President for University Advancement, stated that "the Schloes' vision and generosity exemplify how thoughtful estate planning—guided by experienced professionals like John Griffin—can leave a lasting legacy that changes lives and advances educational excellence."

For more information on how you too can set up an estate gift for the BHSU Foundation, please contact Steve Meeker at Steve.Meeker@BHSU.edu.

BHSU FOUNDATION LAUNCHES DIGITAL ARCHIVE WITH ROCKET ALUMNI SOLUTIONS

Interactive Touch Screen Celebrates Alumni, Donors, and Campus History

The Black Hills State University (BHSU) Foundation has partnered with Rocket Alumni Solutions to bring campus history to life through an innovative new digital platform. This exciting project, now live, offers touch screen access to decades of photographs and memories from the BHSU community. The system is designed to provide an engaging, interactive experience, allowing users to browse through hundreds of images showcasing campus life, student activities, and the vibrant legacy of BHSU. It features dedicated sections honoring distinguished alumni award recipients, Athletic Hall of Fame inductees, donors, and scholarship recipients — highlighting those who have shaped the university's proud tradition.



1998-99 Concert Choir Christmas Rehearsal.

"This partnership allows us to preserve and showcase the history of BHSU in a dynamic way," said Steve Meeker, Vice President for University Advancement. "We're thrilled that alumni, students, and visitors can now explore our shared heritage through this modern platform."

Access to the digital archive is available both in person and online. On campus, visitors can interact with the displays at touch screens located in the Young Center and the Joy Center. For those off campus, the archive can also be viewed by visiting BHSUFoundation.org.

While the system is now accessible for viewing, university officials emphasize that the project is ongoing. With over a century of history to capture, organizing, curating, and uploading the full archive will take time. "Please be patient with us," Meeker added. "This is a massive undertaking that will evolve over the coming months — and even years — as we continue to scan, label, and catalog images and stories from our past."

This meaningful initiative not only preserves BHSU's past but also strengthens connections within the Yellow Jacket community — one memory at a time.



1980-81 Golden Sting

BLACK HILLS STATE UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION

JACKETS GIVE BACK — 2 DAYS, ONE BIG IMPACT!

Yellow Jacket alumni and friends, join us for Black Hills State University's Giving Day 2026 on February 26 & 27!
You can support the area of BHSU that means the most to you—whether it's scholarships, student success, or campus initiatives.

Your generosity fuels future generations and strengthens our university community. Every gift makes an impact.
Any gift made during the month of February helps us reach our goal—donate anytime at BHSUFoundation.org/Donate.

KUDOS + ANNOUNCEMENTS

1960s


Miller, Attended

Tom C. Miller, Attended, Red Owl, last July was inducted into the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) Hall of Fame in Colorado Springs, Colo. Tom qualified for the National Finals Rodeo (NFR) in the saddle bronc riding six times (1975-77 and 1979-81), winning the average three times (1975, 1979, 1981). He won the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association's Central Plains Region in the bareback riding, saddle bronc riding, and all-around several times and won the all-around at the College National Finals Rodeo in 1970 and 1971. Tom retired from pro rodeo competition in 1981 and began judging. He judged pro rodeo across the nation, judging the NFR five times. In addition to the PRCA shows, he judged bronc matches and the National High School Finals rodeo 14 times. Tom served on the PRCA Rules Committee for four years and the PRCA Humane Committee for two years.

Jerry W. Rhodes, Sr., '69, Philip, was inducted May 31st into the South Dakota Cross Country and Track & Field Coaches Association Hall of Fame during the state track meet in Sioux Falls. For 40-plus years he coached, among other sports, track & field and cross-country. In the fall of 1983, as the head coach of the Philip cross country and track & field team, he, co-worker Gayle Patterson, and several other coaches from around the state worked on developing in-season state qualifying standards for state track & field competition. The qualifying amendment was instituted in 1990. Jerry won 18 region championships in boys' and girls' track & field. In 1987, the Philip boys' cross-country team finished second at the Class A State meet. In 2009, the boys' track team was the Class B state runner-up, and in 2010, his boys' team won the 2010 Class B state championship.

1970s

Francie (Van) Ruebel-Alberts, '70, Sturgis, was presented with the Bob Davis Award during the 79th annual Sturgis Area Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau (SACCVB) banquet last April. Considered the highest award bestowed by the SACCVB, the award recognizes a person, business, or organization whose spirit and attitude exemplifies the best of business, community, and family. Francie is a distinguished member of the community whose dedication and advocacy have made a profound impact. She has been at the forefront of community engagement moderating numerous political forums and providing a platform for informed discussion on critical local issues. A former educator in the Sturgis school system, Francie volunteers her time and energy to a variety of important causes, serving as an election volunteer, and contributes to organizations such as the Golden Kiwanis and the Sturgis Arts Council.


Finch, '79

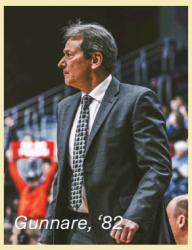
Allen "Al" Finch, '79, Glenrock, Wyo., was inducted into the National High School Athletic Coaches Association (NHSACA) Hall of Fame in June during a banquet in Rapid City. His 42-year coaching career includes 36 years at Glenrock High School, where he coached middle school and high school boys' and girls' track and cross country. In 1983, he started the boys' and girls' cross country programs in Glenrock. Al's track & field and cross country teams achieved 448 postseason wins, including multiple conference and state-level titles and placements. Notably, his girls' cross country teams won four conference championships and placed third at state 12 times, while his boys' cross country teams won three state titles. His girls' track teams won eight regional championships and two state meet second place finishes, while his boys' track team won two state championships. Al has received multiple Coach of the Year honors that include being named a four-time Wyoming Coaches Association (WCA) Cross Country Coach of the Year recipient and has been inducted into both the WCA Hall of Fame (2004) and the BHSU Yellow Jacket Hall of Fame (2019). Today he serves as an assistant track coach at Glenrock High School.

1980s

Kelly Huether, '85, Indian Rocks Beach, Fla., along with his daughters Riley and Reese, opened Buy-Buy Golf balls. The Huether family founded this business after 35-plus years of owning and operating many businesses in the professional beauty industry.

Steve Meeker, '84, Spearfish, was selected to be "The Last DJ" on Tom Petty Radio Sirius XM Channel 31. Each week a different voice takes to the airwaves to tell their own Tom Petty story and play their five favorite tracks. Steve's episode aired the week of April 7-13, 2025.

Pat Rotert, Attended, Spearfish, last June retired after 35 years in law enforcement, the past 24 years as the Spearfish chief of police and later Spearfish's first public safety director. His 24 years in charge made Pat the longest serving leader in department history.


Gunnare, '82

Dwight Gunnare, '82, Casper, Wyo., retired after 17 seasons as the head women's basketball coach at Casper College (CC). Dwight amassed 453 victories and only 105 losses, averaging 26.2 wins per season as the Lady T-Birds coach. His teams played in the NJCAA National Tournament nine times, placing fourth in 2010 and ninth in 2011. Team records include the teams longest winning streak, 37 games from 2019-2021; and the first undefeated regular season in schools' history, 20-0 during the 2020-21 season. Dwight has been named the Region 9 Coach of the Year nine times. On November 26, 2022, he hit a historic milestone when he reached his 500th win as a college coach. Prior to his time at CC, he served as the women's head basketball coach at Miles Community College in Miles City, Montana. During his tenure, he led the Pioneers to 125 victories and posted a 31-2 record during his final season at the school. During his 43-year coaching career, Dwight has received 25 Coach of the Year recognitions and was inducted into the Yellow Jacket Hall of Fame, as a coach, in 2015. In his final season (2024-25) as head coach for the Lady T-Birds, CC amassed a 28-7 record, won the Region 9 Tournament Championship, and advanced to the second round of the NJCAA DI Women's Basketball Championship.

1990s

Vonna Laue, '96, Jensen Beach, Fla., has authored "Glad I Didn't Know: Lessons Learned Through Life's Challenges and Unexpected Blessings". This book is an anthology that weaves together the stories of resilient individuals who bravely recount some of the challenging periods in their lives, as well as unexpected moments of joy and blessings. The common thread in each story lies in the revelation that the individuals are grateful they didn't know during those trying times. In addition, Vonna currently serves as the board chair for World Vision US and as a member of the World Vision International board. World Vision is one of the largest humanitarian organizations in the world providing a holistic approach to community development through water, education, child protection, medical care and more.

Loree (Anderson) Schlichtemeier, '93, & '02, Sturgis, last February stepped down after 17 seasons as the head volleyball coach at Belle Fourche High School (BFHS). In 2011, she led the Broncs' to a 32-0 regular season record before falling in the district 16A tournament

championship match. Loree led the Broncs' to three fourth-place finishes at the state Class A volleyball tournament: 2012 (32-3 overall record), 2013 (30-5 overall record), and 2017 (31-5 overall record). In 2022, she led the Broncs' to a fourth state Class A volleyball tournament with an eighth-place finish and a 32-9 record on the season. She was the 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2017 recipient of the Region 8 Coach of the Year honor from the South Dakota Volleyball Coaches Association. During her 17-year career at BFHS she amassed a record of 364-180. Loree's overall career record was 426-245. This fall she will teach fifth grade science at Stagebarn Middle School in Summerset.

Brent Tipton, '97, Spearfish, on June 13, 2025, celebrated 25 years as owner of Papa Murphy's Pizza in Spearfish. Papa Murphy's is a take-and-bake pizza company based in Vancouver, Wash.



Randy Stanton, '76, Rapid City, last March was inducted in the Black Hills Sports Officials Association. Randy's career as a registered sports official began in 1971, in Wyoming, in both football and basketball. During his career, Randy has been selected to work 30 South Dakota High School Activities Association (SDHSAA) state basketball tournaments that included six championship games, five SDHSAA state football championship, 35 Lakota Nation Invitational Basketball Tournaments that included five championship games, and during a 10-year span served as the Region 10 Coordinator in South Dakota. His honors include the SDHSAA Distinguished Service Award, the NFOA Girls Official of the Year, the Steve Withorne Award, the Rapid City Sports Association Hall of Fame Contributor Award, the Lakota Nation Invitational Golden Whistle Award, and he was inducted into the South Dakota Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Shrine as an official. This fall marks his 56th season officiating high school football and basketball.

2000s

Lauren Beyersdorf, '04, Spearfish, earned the National Title Professional (NTP) designation from the American Land Title Association (ALTA), the national trade association for the land title insurance industry. This designation recognizes land title professionals who demonstrate the knowledge, experience, and dedication essential to the safe and efficient transfer of real estate property. She is one of 122 leaders across the Unites States who have devoted their careers to the land title industry and earned their designation. Lauren serves as director of client services and closing agent for the Black Hills Title Company.



Jennifer Anders, '95, Buffalo, was named the 2025 Harding County School District Teacher of the Year and South Dakota's 2026 Region 4 Teacher of the Year by the South Dakota Department of Education. Jennifer is a high school math teacher in the Harding County School District in Buffalo and has taught there for the past 28 years. A statewide panel of educators will select one of five regional winners to represent the state as the 2026 South Dakota Teacher of the Year. That teacher will then be a candidate for the National Teacher of the Year award.

Pictured above L to R: Teacher Quality Specialist Allison Englund, Jennifer Anders, '95, and SD Secretary of Education Dr. Joe Graves.

LeeAnn (Anderson) Collins, '01, Spearfish, retired last May after 35 years with Black Hills Federal Credit Union. Most recently, LeeAnn spent most of her time as a loan officer. Over the years she also served as a part-time check encoder, moved to the accounting department and then to the loan department as a receptionist, and a loan processor.

Victoria (Spaid) Fedora, '07, Alva, Wyo., was hired last March as the bookkeeper at Sundance State Bank in Sundance, Wyo. Victoria previously worked as a recreation fee technician at Devils Tower National Park for one year. Prior to that she spent seven-plus years at Summit National Bank in Hulett, Wyo., as a customer service representative.

Jennifer (Sack) McBurnett, '06, Spearfish, was named the 2024 Spearfish American Legion Post 164 Educator of the Year. This award recognizes outstanding teachers who not only excel in their profession but also contribute to their communities and inspire future generations. Jennifer is a kindergarten teacher at Mountain View Elementary School in Spearfish.

Eric Schmidt, '05, Spearfish, received the 2024 Tip of the Spear Award during the 16th anniversary celebration of Visit Spearfish. Eric is the owner and general manager of the Spearfish Sasquatch Baseball Team. The Sasquatch, a member of Independence League Baseball, is a summer collegiate wood bat baseball team. The Sasquatch bring in college baseball players from all over the country, with the goal of helping them develop. Five Sasquatch players over the last three years have signed with major league baseball organizations. In addition, the Sasquatch help develop coaches and interns. Dozens of interns have gone on to jobs with major league teams, and multiple coaches have gone on to minor league teams.

John L. Williams, '07, and wife Rebecca, Spearfish, now own and operate Spearfish Brewing Company. In addition, the couple own and operate Leones' Creamery with Rebecca's sister, Hannah.



Dadra (Morris) Avery, '97, Sturgis, was awarded the 2025 Orv Schmieding Award by the South Dakota School Counselor Association (SDSCA). The award recognizes excellence and outstanding service to the area of school counseling over an extended period of time. This is the top award determined by the SDSCA Awards Committee. To be considered for the award, there must be at least two nominations, and provide evidence that speaks to the character and nature of the recipient. Within this consideration, they look at length of service, contributions both professional and personally, and local/community involvement. Dadra has been a school counselor for 23 years with the past 20 years at Sturgis Brown High School.

Pictured above L to R: Shawn Koontz, Dadra (Morris) Avery, '97, and Aaden Roy. Shawn and Aaden are Dadra's co-counselors at Sturgis Brown High School.

2010s

Mike Abell, '10, Sturgis, head coach of the Sturgis Brown High School (SBHS) wrestling team, last spring led the Scooper boys' to its second consecutive State Class A Wrestling Championship at the Monument's Summit Arena in Rapid City. The boys' team had 14 athletes qualify for state, where 12 received medals, and two brought home state titles. The Lady Scoopers took 12th place, and two brought home medals. In addition, for the second consecutive year, SBHS won the State Class A Dual Championships and the boys' Region 4A Championship.

Austin Albers, '12, Fruita, Colo., was recently inducted into the Laramie County Community College (LCCC/Cheyenne, Wyo.) Athletics Hall of Fame. Austin was the head coach of the LCCC volleyball team from 2014-18 and had a 145-57 career record. He left as the program's all-time wins leader and wins percentage leader (.718). While at LCCC, he was named as the NJCAA Region IX and NJCAA Division I District C Coach

of the year two times. All five of his teams won at least 25 matches. In addition, two of Austin's teams (2017 & 2018) were also inducted into the LCCC Athletics Hall of Fame. The 2017 and 2018 volleyball teams appeared at the national tournament, finishing 10th and ninth, respectively. Both teams won the Region IX North titles, and the 2018 team went undefeated in conference play. This fall Austin takes over in his first season as head volleyball coach at Colorado Mesa University.

Jenna Bolstad, '11 & '17, Cleveland, Ohio, was named assistant coach for the Cleveland State University women's basketball team for the upcoming 2025-26 season. Jenna spent the previous year as the assistant women's basketball coach at Northern Illinois University.



Amanda (Tucker) Bender, '07, Lead, was awarded the 2024 South Dakota School Counselor of the Year Award from the South Dakota School Counselor Association (SDSCA). To be considered for this award, the applicant must demonstrate outstanding contributions to the applicants' school, and excellent rapport with pupils, parents, or school personnel, be a current member of the SDSCA with a master's degree and certification by the state of South Dakota, and the applicant must be working towards the development of maintenance of a comprehensive school counseling program. Amanda is the school counselor at Lead-Deadwood Elementary School.

Pictured above L to R: Amanda (Tucker) Bender, '07, husband Adam Bender, at the School Counselor of Year Gala in Washington, D.C.

Stephenie (Franzen) Campbell, '11, Lead, was named Educator of the Year by the Lead-Deadwood School District. Stephenie is a literacy specialist at Lead-Deadwood Elementary School.

Jenna Carda, '14, Rapid City, received the Derby Award from the American Advertising Federation (AAF) Black Hills Chapter in February 2025. This inaugural award honors an individual who has generously volunteered their time and effort to support the organization and was selected by the board of directors and the namesake of the award. The AAF Black Hills is part of the national federation that works to accelerate the success of advertising throughout the United States. Locally, the club provides continuing education, resources, and support to the community; recognizes advertising excellence; develops future leaders; and promotes the value that advertising brings to the area's well-being. Jenna currently works as an interior design assistant at At Home Design and heads client communication efforts.



(Rinas) Anderson, '10

Ann (Rinas) Anderson, '10, Spearfish, was named the Belle Fourche School District's 2025 Teacher of the Year and South Dakota's 2026 Region 5 Teacher of the Year by the South Dakota Department of Education. Ann is a 5th grade teacher at Belle Fourche Middle School. A statewide panel of educators will select one of five regional winners to represent the state as the 2026 South Dakota Teacher of the Year. That teacher will then be a candidate for the National Teacher of the Year award.

Nicole (Alana) Davis, '19, East Lansing, Mich., graduated last May from Veterinary School at Michigan State University. Nicole is currently employed at the Michigan State University Veterinary Medical Center as a rotating intern.

Sam Holden, '10 & '12, married Megan Brettingen, August 2, 2025. Sam and Megan also welcomed their first child, Archie Lee, March 4, 2025. Sam is the associate athletic director of internal operations at SDSU.

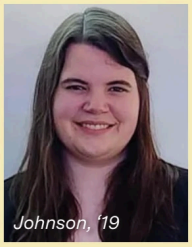
Madison Jilek, '18, Boulder, Colo., graduated last May with her PhD in Chemical Physics from the University of Colorado-Boulder. She currently works for Handshake as a MOVE Fellow, training AI models to reason like a scientist.

Dakota (Barrie) Johnson, '16, Spearfish, head coach of the Spearfish High School girls' basketball team, last spring led the Spartans to their second consecutive State AA Basketball Tournament appearance with a 53-45 victory over Sioux Falls Roosevelt in a Class AA SoDak 16 basketball game. In the state tournament, the Spartans defeated Sioux Falls Jefferson 61-54 to advance to the fifth-place game. The Spartans placed sixth at the state tournament and finished the season with an 18-6 record.

Codi Miller, '12, Amidon, N.D., was named the new events and tourism director for the North Dakota Cowboy Hall of Fame (NDCHF) in Medora, N.D. Codi previously served as the NDCHF events coordinator for several years. In her new role, she will be contributing to the Hall's signature events, handling facility rentals, and growing tourism relations. In the summer of 2024, she was crowned Miss North Dakota and competed in the Miss USA pageant in Hollywood, Calif. In addition, Codi serves as the national director for the Miss Rodeo North Dakota Organization.

Paul "PJ" Painter, '10, Cincinnati, Ohio, has been promoted to assistant vice president - Sr. Corporate Counsel at United Fire Group (UFG) Insurance. This promotion within UFG now makes PJ an officer of the company, where he leads the Legal Coverage and Litigation team. UFG is a multibillion-dollar insurance company, offering property and casualty commercial insurance, excess and surplus insurance, reinsurance, and construction surety bonds.

Cora (Tobin) Rafferty, Attended, and husband **Ryan Rafferty**, Attended, Rapid City, had a baby boy, Emmet Thomas, February 28, 2025. Cora is a nurse working in dermatology at Rapid City Medical Center. Ryan is working at Monument Health - Surgical Intensive Care Unit (ICU).



Johnson, '19

Hannah Johnson, '19, Phoenix Ariz., last February accepted a postdoctoral fellowship at the Mayo Clinic in Phoenix where she is researching ovarian cancer. In December of 2024, she graduated with her Ph.D. in Biomedical Sciences from Penn State College of Medicine.

2020s

Dawson Dolney, '22, Rapid City, graduated last May with a master's degree in athletic training from the University of Saint Mary in Leavenworth, Kan. Dawson has joined Monument Health and their sports medicine staff as a full-time athletic trainer.

Molly Graesser, '20, based in San Bruno, Calif., has joined Kaiser Permanente as a pediatric occupational therapist. She will be serving one of California's largest healthcare providers. Molly previously gained experience at Ascend Rehab Services, a pediatric therapy company.

Kathryn (Hastings) McGaugh, '21, and husband Tyler, Brunswick, Maine, had a baby boy, Roland Augustine, February 22, 2025. Kathryn is a CPPA for the Noblis corporation.

Duston Mullen, '22, Piedmont, has been selected to attend the United States Army War College's Service College Fellowship program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). This prestigious fellowship is part of the Army's initiative to provide senior military officers with advanced educations opportunities at leading academic institutions across the country. Duston currently holds the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army.

Niki Van Wyk, '23, Hortonville, Wisc., graduated last May with a master's degree in management, marketing focus, from Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas. Niki is currently working at Blaze Sports & Fitness, in Appleton, Wisc., as a recruiting coach.

1883 - 2024

Last May, three alumni were recognized during the Spearfish Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 5860 awards banquet. **John Bokker**, '01, a fifth-grade teacher at Creekside Elementary School, was named the VFW Elementary School Teacher of the Year; **Aaron Nida**, '93, Spearfish High School government and world geography teacher, earned the VFW High School Teacher of the Year award; and **Elizabeth Verhey**, '05, was recognized as the VFW EMT of the Year.

Two alumni were honored during the 14th annual Women in Business Awards Luncheon. Honorees include **Roxie (Kleinsasser) Kelly**, '92, owner of Yours on the Spot in Tea, received the annual Black Hills State University Alumna Entrepreneur in Excellence Award. This honor recognizes an exceptional woman who embodies entrepreneurship, leadership, and community engagement, modeling the values of BHSU through her work; and **Michelle Thomson**, '97, president & CEO of Black Hills & Badlands Tourism Association (BH&B) in Rapid City, received the Woman's Choice Award. Michelle is a visionary leader whose intrapreneurial spirit, innovative marketing strategies, and strong industry partnerships have transformed the BH&B into a powerhouse of regional economic development and record-breaking tourism growth.

Two alumni were honored during the annual Belle Fourche Chamber Banquet. Honorees include **LaVern Bills**, '72, who joined the Belle Fourche Business Hall of Fame. To be inducted, a chamber member must have been in operation for a minimum of 10 years. Nominees should be visionary, seeking and implementing a quality care workforce, possessing outstanding leadership attributes resembling a progressive manner, and portraying pride in their business and community. Bills is an insurance agent with New York Life; and **Clint Haffner**, '92, who received the Faye Kennedy Award for 2025. This award recognizes individuals or groups that demonstrate the importance of community involvement. Clint is the Belle Fouche code enforcement officer.

Two alumni were honored during the annual Lead Area Chamber of Commerce annual banquet and awards ceremony. Honorees include **Brianne Alley**, '05, who received the Thomas J. Grier Award for demonstrating a positive impact on Lead through her efforts in volunteering and other community service; and **Amanda (Tucker) Bender**, '07, who received the Phoebe Hearst Education Award for exhibiting excellence in education and inspiring those who serve and investing her time and commitment to shaping those around her.

Six alumni were recognized in the April 2025 issue of Elevate Magazine/Rapid City as "Black Hills Region 2025 40 Under 40" list. Honorees include **Allie (Geier) Barlow**, '18, senior marketing strategist/Midwest Marketing; **Megan (Foster) Batteen**, '08, president/Midwest Marketing; **Chelsey Groseclose**, '14, mental health therapist/The Couch Connection Mental Health and Wellness & SD Mines; **Kayla (Westby) Klein**, '10, founder & CEO/Klein Visioneering Group; **Ashley (Buchanan) Meggs**, '12, general manager & partner/Four Seasons Motorsport & Marine; and **Traie (Roberson) Miles**, '09, owner & coach/Rushmore Crossfit.

Alumni honored by the Meade School District for their years of service include: **Taylor Anderson**, '22, (10 years); **Dadra (Morris) Avery**, '97, (20 years); **Twyla (Geis) Barden**, '89 & '00, (35 years); **Jerri (Maney) Heggem**, '82, (40 years); **Loreena (Haynes) Larson**, '15, (10 years); **Michelle (Morris) Ludens**, '11 & '16, (10 years); **Maranda (Berg) McGillivray**, '09, (10 years); **Michela (Wiblemo) Meredith**, '05, (20 years); **Cooper Stanforth**, '09 & '13, (10 years); **Ian Walton**, '14, (10 years); and **Rebecca (Hafner) Weber**, '88, (10 years).

Alumni honored by the Meade School District include retirees: **Anita (Plaggemeyer) Da Silva**, '13; **Jerri (Maney) Heggem**, '82; **Marnie Masten**, '96; and **Kerry (Chaffee) Skinner**, '92 & '02.

Alumni honored as Teacher of the Year by the Meade School District include: **Michela (Wiblemo) Meredith**, '05, Whitewood Elementary School; and **Kayleen Selfridge**, '18, Piedmont Valley Elementary School and Meade School District.

Alumni honored by the Spearfish School District for their years of service include: **Allison (Mowry) Coin**, '07, (10 years); **Doug Custis**, '91, (25 years); **Kristi (Dykes) Delahoyde**, '99, (25 years); **Avery Greenwalt**, '15, (10 years); **Nadene (Page) Harr**, '90 & '02, (35 years); **Sarah (Gibson) Heilman**, '03, (15 years); **Ashleigh Hoff**, '10, (15 years); **Paul Jamison**, '13, (5 years); **Alex Johnsen**, '15, (10 years); **Ryan Lee**, '14, (10 years); **Eric Ligtenberg**, '04, (20 years); **Ann (Wince) Lyon**, '94 & '98, (30 years); **Don Lyon**, '95, (10 years); **Katie McArthur**, '20, (5 years); **Ashley (Jones) Skavang**, '11 & '16, (5 years); **Michael Soriano**, '11, (5 years); **Brady Sudbeck**, '17, (5 years); **Becky (Thomas) Sukstorf**, '83, (30 years); **Chase Tyson**, '13, (10 years); **Dalton Wademan**, '15, (5 years); and **Jennifer (Hehn) Williamson**, '93, (5 years).

Alumni honored by the Spearfish School District include retirees: **Kristi (Dykes) Delahoyde**, '99, (25 years); **Dan Olson**, '83, (31 years); and **Tammie (Waggener) Wood**, '97, (13 years).

Alumni honored as Teacher of the Year by the Spearfish School District include: **Teri (Dibble) Aberle**, '07, Spearfish Middle School; **Roxanne (Gray) Hartl**, '12, Mountain View Elementary School; **Brianna Schmidt**, '14, Creekside Elementary School; and **Brooke (Young) McLellan**, '10 & '13, West Elementary School and Spearfish School District.

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1200 University Street Unit 9506
Spearfish, SD 57799-9506



IN MEMORY

BLACK HILLS TEACHERS COLLEGE · 1941-1963

Ethelmae (Konshak) Anderson, Attended, Redfield
Beverly J. (Ellingson) Byers, ’58, Hettinger, N.D.
Joseph “Joe” E. Di Santo, ’57, Calgary, Alberta, Canada
John R. Graham, ’57, Madison
Ronald “Ron” G. Hennies, ’56, Rio Rancho, N.M.
Arthur “Art” L. Hill, ’52, Casper, Wyo.
Ronald “Ron” D. Jarvis, Attended, Ocala, Fla.
Cecil D. Johnson, ’62 & ’68, Presho
Robert “Bob” J. Julius, ’60 & ’70, Sturgis
Peter “Pete” C. Larson, Attended, Spearfish
Pat L. (Eikenbary) Litton, Attended, Gillette, Wyo.
Marian A. (Newton) Long, ’60, Lafayette, Ore.
Nancy L. (McVey) Mackaben, Attended, Kent, Wash.
Shirley M. (Vollmer) Mallow, Attended, Rapid City
Peter H. Marros, ’59, Yuba City, Calif.
Delores J. (Klein) Overacker, Attended, Weiser, Idaho
Loretta M. (Smithburg) Rea, Attended, Rapid City
Mary H. (Doran) Sautter, Attended, Philip
Frances (Giroux) Spatz, ’54, Swartz Creek, Mich.
Hartley R. Spatz, ’55, Swartz Creek, Mich.
Joan T. (Brown) Theide, Attended, Gregory
Dale B. Thein, ’62, Lakewood, Colo.
Marlene K. (Heather) Watts, Attended, Billings, Mont.
Patricia “Pat” J. (Estes) Willard, ’49, Kadoka
Peggy “Peg” L. (McVey) Zimmerman, Attended, State College, Penn.

BLACK HILLS STATE COLLEGE · 1964-1988

Edward “Ed” R. Anderson, ’81, Custer
David C.A. Arnio, Attended, Whitewood
Richard “Dick” L. Auchampach, Attended, Central City
Kim L. Bierle, ’84, Midland
Timothy “Tim” C. Blakeman, ’77, Fort Collins, Colo.
Susan K. (Bergan) Bristow, ’66, Lyons, Colo.
David “Dave” A. Broadie, ’76, Rapid City
LaVaun R. (Rethmeier) Campbell, ’53, Santa Maria, Calif.
Kathryn “Kathy” J. (Taft) Cole, ’74, Spearfish
Terrence “Terry” L. Copeland, ’66 & ’75, Wadsworth, Ohio
Marian J. (Linder) Dilly, ’75, Lafayette, Colo.
Raymond “Ray” J. Gibson, Attended, Philip
Clifford “Cliff” W. Hanson, Attended, Spearfish
Priscilla C. Hegedus, ’70, Casa Grande, Ariz.
Ronald “Ron” His Horse is Thunder, ’85, Hardin, Mont.
Charles “Chuck” E. Hull, ’67, Lovell, Wyo.
Duane “Mike” M. Iversen, Attended, Rapid City
Duane A. Kaitfors, ’70, Fort Myers, Fla.
Gary L. Keehn, ’68, Deadwood
Bryan L, Kessel, ’88, Bowdle
Daniel “Dan” J. Kinsella, ’86, Bismarck, N.D.
Dawn M. (Pattison) Lambertz, ’82, Sioux Falls
Howard D. Larsen, ’66 & ’69, Rapid City
Mary “Marylu” L. (Johnson) Luther, Attended, De Smet
William “Bill” H. Manzer, ’64, Sequim, Wash.
Kathy K. (Fraser) McKnight, ’76, Calgary, Alberta, Canada
Janet L. (Gage) Merkle, ’69, Spearfish
Kirby M. Nauta, ’84, Spearfish
Ardeth A. (Towner) Overbay, Attended, Mill Creek, Wash.
William “Bill” T. Quijas, ’79, Pine Ridge
Carol G. Robertson, ’77, Flandreau
Frederick “Fred” W. Schaefer, ’73, Sioux Falls
Thomas “Tom” M. Sprigler, ’67 & ’71, Laurel, Mont.
Rosalie A. (Karp) Stangle, ’74, Scenic
John P. Sullivan, Attended, Portland, Conn.
Kellye L. (Haughian) Thompson, Attended, Spearfish
Henry A. Urban, ’67, Spearfish
Frieda I. (Vainio) Waterson, ’72, Newcastle, Wyo.

BLACK HILLS STATE UNIVERSITY · 1989-PRESENT

Alan L. Anderson, ’96, Laramie, Wyo.
Kimberley “Kim” A. (Hammrich) Davis-Ambach, ’91, Pierre
Kevin J. Keegan, ’94, Belle Fourche
Jennifer L. (Stadler) Lee, ’93, Spearfish
Ryan A. Roberts, ’15, Rapid City

FORMER FACULTY/STAFF

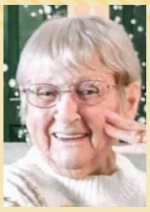
Barbara J. (Cox) Crawford, ’68, Sundance, Wyo.
Shezalle G. Simons, ’74, Hot Springs



MAX WELDON DURGIN SPEARFISH

6/22/1940 - 6/17/2025

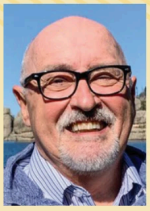
Max Weldon Durgin was born on June 22, 1940, in Beaver Creek, Minn., and graduated from Murdo High School in 1958. He attended Black Hills Teachers College, played football, and earned a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education in 1962. That same year, he married JoAnn, and they welcomed their son, Shane, in 1963. Max completed a master's degree in mathematics from the University of Northern Colorado in 1965 and began teaching at Black Hills State College. Their second son, Scott, was born in 1967. He earned his Ph.D. in Mathematics from the University of South Dakota in 1977. In 1983, Max and his twin brother, Jerry, co-founded D-Ware, a software company serving county highway departments. Max retired from BHSU in 2002 after 37 years of teaching, including one year of coaching football in 1967.



JERRI LEE (HEIMRICK) GEIST SPEARFISH

6/2/1940 - 5/24/2025

Jerri Lee Geist passed away on May 24, 2025, in Spearfish at 84 years old. Born on June 2, 1940, Jerri was a matriarch who found great joy in her family. She is now reunited in heaven with her beloved husband, Roger. Jerri was employed at Black Hills State from 1977 to 2002 with her last position as a senior secretary. Jerri embraced a life where she could focus on her loved ones after her retirement. She loved attending church at the Church of All Angels. Her presence enriched the lives of all who knew her, and her memory will be treasured. Jerri is survived by her sons, Randy, and Jeff, Jeff's wife Keri, and their daughters Madalynn and Jenna. She will be missed by her sister, Jean Martin, and niece, Amanda Eitterim, and her husband, Ryan.



PAUL EMMETT YOUNG SPEARFISH

1/2/1956 - 4/24/2025

Paul Emmett Young passed away peacefully at his Spearfish home on April 24, 2025, at age 69. Born January 2, 1956, in Deadwood, he graduated from Spearfish High School in 1974 and Black Hills State College in 1978, remaining closely involved with BHSU for over 40 years. In 1982, Paul married Kathy, and together they raised three children: Ryan, Andy, and Katie. He was a proud grandfather to Tayler, Madden, Palmer, Henley, Hudson, and Emmett. Paul served as BHSU's strength and conditioning coach and taught classes, later working as human resources director for Prairie Hills Transit. He served on the Spearfish City Council from 1996 to 2016 and was elected president of the South Dakota Municipal League in 2013. A lifelong musician, Paul performed with The Lyle Berry Band and cherished touring then-Soviet Union and Poland with the BH Wind Ensemble in 1977.

Black Hills State University
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Spearfish, SD 57799-9506

BHSU.edu/Alumni

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LOOKING AHEAD

09 SEPTEMBER

11	Retired Faculty & Staff Gathering
22-27	Swarm Days (Sept. 27 - Swarm Day)
26	10:15 Salem Park Showing

12 DECEMBER

13	Commencement
13	1970s BHSU Men's Basketball Teams Reunion

01 JANUARY

17	33rd Annual Alumni Mile
19	Arizona Yellow Jacket Golf Classic

02 FEBRUARY

26-27	Jackets Give Back - Two Days to Make a Big Impact

These dates/events are subject to change. Please check BHSU.edu/Events for the most up-to-date information.
For athletic events, visit BHSUAthletics.com

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February 27, 2025, was our annual Giving Day in honor of the day that BHSU was founded. If you participated and made a gift to us, we thank you for your support and generosity.

If you missed Giving Day or are not a social media fan, not a problem. You can text your gift by typing **GIVEBH** and sending to **41444**, donate online at BHSUFoundation.org or scan the QR code. All methods of giving are safe and secure.

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