

CougarCORNERNews

Western Nebraska Community College Alumni Newsletter

Summer 2020



HOMECOMING
2020

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT
ALEXIOS ANEST

STUDENT
AMBASSADORS





Carole Taylor



Stewart Rusch

A NOTE FROM THE ALUMNI DIRECTOR

The long-term effects of the pandemic on our Cougar family living all over the world are uncertain. As we navigate through the uncertainty, we have an opportunity to make the world a better place. I recently had the opportunity to speak to many 1970 graduates, and their collective years of wisdom is inspiring. Carole (Barrett) Taylor said,

“You have the sensibility, compassion, and understanding to move forward and embrace what comes next with dignity, grace, and courage.” Thank you to the Class of 1970 for your help in welcoming and encouraging our newest alumni, the Class of 2020. See more from 1970 graduates on our Facebook page facebook.com/WNCCAlumni. I look forward, with optimism, to welcoming students back on campus as we resume in-person instruction this fall. Meanwhile, I will heed the advice of 1970 graduate, Stewart Rusch, “We need to keep smiling!”

Mary Sheffield

WNCC Foundation Alumni Relations & Stewardship Director

ALUMNI AMBASSADORS

Last year, the WNCC Alumni Association added two student alumni ambassadors to the staff. This addition has allowed for more student presence at alumni events. The ambassadors are invaluable in their help with preparing for events in the Foundation office. We congratulate Ethan “Q” Miller on his recent graduation and wish him well on his next adventures. We are happy to have Maria Negreira continue working with us. After interviewing thirteen students for the remaining position, Michael Steele will be joining us as our newest student alumni ambassador.



Michael Steele

Michael is a Kimball, Nebraska, native, who originally did not see himself taking classes at WNCC. However, he discovered over time that WNCC was where he is supposed to be. He credits his new friendships and the great campus culture for helping him decide to stay. He is a sophomore, studying Biology. After graduation, he plans to continue his education to become a geneticist.



Maria Negreira

Maria, a sophomore from Uruguay studying Nutrition, had this to say about returning as an ambassador “I am so excited to work another year with the Foundation Office as an Alumni Ambassador! Last year was such an amazing experience that helped me grow as a person. I met a lot of great alumni who were happy to share their life stories with me! I am ready for whatever this new year brings!”

CONGRATS GRADUATES

Congratulations to our 2020 graduates! Graduation was different this year with a virtual ceremony and celebratory grad packages. We are still proud of our Cougar Alumni! Welcome to the Alumni Association!





ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

ALEXIOS ANEST

Thirty-six miles is the distance from Bayard, Nebraska, where Alexios Anest grew up on a farm, to Western Nebraska Community College's Scottsbluff Campus. Alexios' choice to study music here has taken him so much further.

"When I began at WNCC I could not even read music, but by the end of my time there, I was analyzing scores by Beethoven, Bach, and Mozart. I left with a solid understanding of classical harmony & music theory and began to compose my own works on piano and guitar. I did have a vision and worked extremely hard, often studying and practicing eight to ten hours a day, but the environment and teachers were always very helpful," Anest said.

Self-diagnosed with musical Attention Deficit Disorder his time at WNCC was perfect to help him focus his musical energy.

"I was thrown into a lot of musical performances. I did every kind of music and it helped me figure out what I like," Anest remembered.

He credits this unique opportunity for helping him unlock his potential in composition and improvisation. A favorite class was Music Theory, taught by Dr. Nathaniel Johnson, Instrumental Activities Director. This class made the rest of his music studies at Berklee College of Music in Boston and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln a breeze.

After graduation from UNL, Alexios was hired to perform as a guitarist on cruise ships, which he did for 3 years. During breaks between cruise ship contracts, he lived in Grenada, Spain, where he studied flamenco guitar with the gypsies.

"We want to give our students skills, and knowledge, and opportunities, and send them out into the world to do awesome things, and that's exactly how it happened with Alexi," Johnson said. "He went from here to Berklee, one of the leading jazz schools, and then on to UNL to finish his performance degree. And to Spain, and playing on the cruise ship, and all the great things he's been doing in Denver. It's really great knowing that we had some small part of that."

Alexios now lives in the Denver area where he teaches and performs flamenco, classical, and gypsy jazz guitar. He currently has two albums out on Spotify and iTunes. He likes different instruments and styles but leans towards symphonic rock music. This last fall he had his first live performance with a full band at the Midwest Theater. The concert showcased the energy of rock and roll with his love of intricate classical music. This unique blend has been termed neoclassical symphonic metal. He has plans to return to the area to perform sometime this fall. Follow him on social media for more details.

Thirty-six miles was the perfect distance for this WNCC alum to get started on his life's musical journey.

LOOK WHAT **WE FOUND**

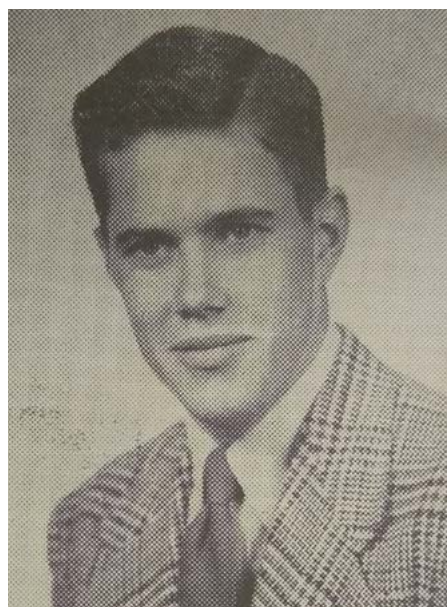


Gary Eckhardt, class of 1956, has had a love of photography for as long as he can remember. Recently, he donated hundreds of negatives from his time as a school photographer at Scottsbluff Junior College to the WNCC Alumni Association.

He developed these negatives himself in a darkroom that his father built in their family home north of Scottsbluff. There are negatives of athletes including boxers, football athletes, and basketball players. There are negatives of cars, crowds, and buildings from Homecoming parades on Broadway Avenue as well. In addition, Gary captured general campus life in the mid 1950's. With current technology, we hope to bring this time capsule to life to be treasured by WNCC and the community. To help with this project, please contact us at alumni@wncc.edu or 308.630.6571.



WHERE ARE **THEY NOW**



Paul Camerzell
Scottsbluff Junior College Alum
Associate of Arts 1947

Paul Camerzell, class of 1947, lives in Southern California with his wife Betty Jo and is looking forward to celebrating his 95th birthday this summer. After graduating from Scottsbluff High School and spending a few years in the Navy, he decided to attend Scottsbluff Junior College. Paul says it was "a little weird" to go to college in the same building he attended high school, especially since he had experienced and changed so much in the Navy. "Even though I had to work at Norman Kent News Agency in town, the G.I. Bill helping me go to Scottsbluff Junior College was the best thing that ever happened to me."

Paul remembers basketball coach, Bill Putnam, fondly and loved his time on the basketball team. Paul also remembers a calculus class taught by Mr. Wood that had five students. Paul got his degree in engineering and spent his life's work in that field. The highlight of his career was helping design the first solar electrical plant in Barstow, California.

We all wish you a happy birthday Paul.





2020 EVENT SCHEDULE

October 16

Alumni & Friends Banquet | 5:00 p.m. | Scottsbluff Campus

- Please contact alumni@wncc.edu or call **308.630.6571** to RSVP

Cougar Volleyball | 7:00 p.m. | Cougar Palace

Fall Play | 7:30 p.m. | Scottsbluff Campus

October 17

Voc Air Fly-In | 7:00 a.m. | Sidney Campus

Cougar Volleyball | 6:00 p.m. | Cougar Palace

Fall Play | 7:30 p.m. | Scottsbluff Campus

October 18

Fall Play | 2:00 p.m. | Scottsbluff Campus

October 20

Cougar Volleyball | 6:00 p.m. | Cougar Palace

Announcement of Homecoming Court

October 21

PTK sponsored Lip-Sync | 7:00 p.m. | Scottsbluff Campus

October 22

Event TBD | Alliance Campus

Business After Hours | 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. | Scottsbluff Campus

October 23

Cougar Volleyball | 6:00 p.m. | Cougar Palace

Fall Ball | 6:00 p.m. | Gering Civic Center



Western Nebraska Community College
FOUNDATION

Jennifer Reisig, *Foundation Executive Director*

We are fortunate at WNCC to serve a vastly diverse population of students during various stages of their lives. Many register for classes immediately following high school graduation, and others join us years later. Some come back for further training or certifications even after graduating.

As WNCC educates the workforce of tomorrow, our students cannot afford to take a winding, meandering path toward their career. We must help guide them to the right classes, programs, internships, and careers to make the most impact on their lives and the success of our entire community.

In 2018, The Peter Kiewitt Foundation generously pledged a \$460,000 matching grant to WNCC to create Guided Pathways to student success. This multi-faceted approach includes career testing, dedicated advising, and purposeful interactions with employers. To take full advantage of the Peter Kiewitt Foundation's pledge, the WNCC Foundation must raise \$210,000 in matching funds, with 53% currently raised.

WNCC created the Career Pathways & Advising Center in the fall of 2018 with the mission of helping students make informed decisions about career pathways, and to support them along their journeys to achieving their career goals. Students have found this service to be of great benefit to them.

"Career Pathways & Advising has been of great use for me," Molly Tamirat, 2019 graduate said. "They helped me create a resume and made me realize all of the campus activities that I participated in were worth writing about."

What can you do? As an alum needing a career change, you can use this free service to help find your next step. As an employer, you can offer job shadow, internship, or job opportunities. As a donor, you can donate to the WNCC Foundation Guided Pathways fund at go.wncc.edu/give.

Get started today by calling the Career Pathways & Advising office at **308.635.6050**, or emailing pathways@wncc.edu, or go to wncc.edu.



Current student, Connor Moore, speaks at a recent Career Pathways luncheon.

This schedule is subject to change depending on directed health measures at the time.

Please visit wncc.edu/homecoming or follow us on Facebook @WNCCAlumni to stay up to date.

NOMINATIONS FOR 2020 ALUMNI AWARDS

Nominate your friends, family, or local organizations that have made a positive impact at WNCC for the 2020 Alumni Awards. Winners will be recognized on October 16, 2020 during the Alumni & Friends Banquet.

Cara Perkins Meritorious Service: A person (need not be an alumnus) or organization that has served WNCC and students in a special or extraordinary way. If this person is not an alumnus he/she is granted "honorary" alumni member status for life.

Family Pride: A family with multiple generations of family members that have attended or graduated from WNCC. Include a list of all family members, years of attendance, areas of study, and a description of how each are related.

Friend of the College: A person, organization, or business that has demonstrated a commitment to the educational advancement of people in the Nebraska Panhandle.

Lifetime Achievement: A WNCC staff or faculty member (current or former) who has shown a lifetime commitment to the mission of the College.

Outstanding Alumnus: A graduate of WNCC that has displayed great personal achievement in their career field or shown outstanding community service.

Outstanding Young Alumnus: A graduate of WNCC that is 40 years of age or less who has proven to be a "rising star" professionally or has shown outstanding community service.

Please submit nominations by **August 28, 2020** by emailing alumni@wncc.edu or visiting the alumni webpage at wncc.edu/alumni-friends.

Visit wncc.edu/alumni-friends to update your email to receive a gift and our winter alumni e-newsletter.

Follow us on Facebook: @WNCCalumni

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