

Cougar CORNER News

Western Nebraska Community College Alumni Newsletter

Winter 2022



PICTURED ABOVE:
INAUGURAL PTK HONOR SOCIETY
1961



PTK CELEBRATES
60 YEARS

FOUNDATION
CELEBRATES
50 YEARS

ATHLETIC
HALL OF FAME

PHI THETA KAPPA
HONOR SOCIETY

A NOTE FROM THE ALUMNI DIRECTOR



As my family and I prepare for my daughter's wedding this spring, my mind is full of memories and how much it matters to keep these alive to connect the past and present as one prepares for the future.

This issue is full of exciting WNCC

milestones. Phi Theta Kappa celebrates 60 years of sending leaders out into the workforce and communities. The WNCC Foundation commemorates 50 years of supporting the college's mission. The athletic department will induct

two into the Hall of Fame in January. A former student, and current Math instructor, Tom Robinson, is recognized for meeting his goal to teach at the school that inspired him. We applaud Eloise Thomas, a non-traditional graduate, who chose to continue mentoring community college students just as she once was at WNCC.

You can help keep these moments alive. Look over the calendar on page six and plan to join us in these celebrations. Share your experiences as a student by contacting me or visiting our website. Consider joining the Alumni committee or contact me about other volunteer opportunities. As we work together, we can be assured with milestones like these, WNCC is well prepared for whatever is in store on the road ahead!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Sheffield".

Mary Sheffield

WNCC Foundation Alumni Relations & Stewardship Director

EMPLOYEE ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Tom Robinson | Current WNCC Math Instructor and Class of '94

When Tom Robinson decided to go back to college as a non-traditional student, he was apprehensive. But the support shown to him from faculty at WNCC made him feel comfortable and eventually sparked a desire to teach. How could he make that a reality?

Tom continued at Chadron State College earning his bachelors and masters degrees while working for the Department of the Interior and substitute teaching. One summer, he taught WNCC's Upward Bound program and was later hired as a technology assistant in the WNCC library. During this time, he developed and taught a class on using the Internet. Tom was grateful when a position opened to teach Information Technology, and he was chosen to fill it. Over the years, departments and the classes have changed. Tom now teaches Math and Astronomy in the Math and Science Division, and he loves it!

"As a WNCC student, I liked what I saw and was determined to work here. The opportunities for our students are the same today as when I attended. It's a great source of pride to see our students succeed and go on to bigger, brighter, and better things."

A DREAM IS A WISH YOUR HEART MAKES

Homecoming 2021



Aviation students serve breakfast at the Sidney Fly-In



Powerline students enjoy playing bingo with senior citizens in Alliance



Students interact with community professionals at the Business After Hours event



PHI THETA KAPPA
HONOR SOCIETY

Growing Stronger Together After 60 Years!

By Amy Winters & Patsy Yager, WNCC PTK Advisors

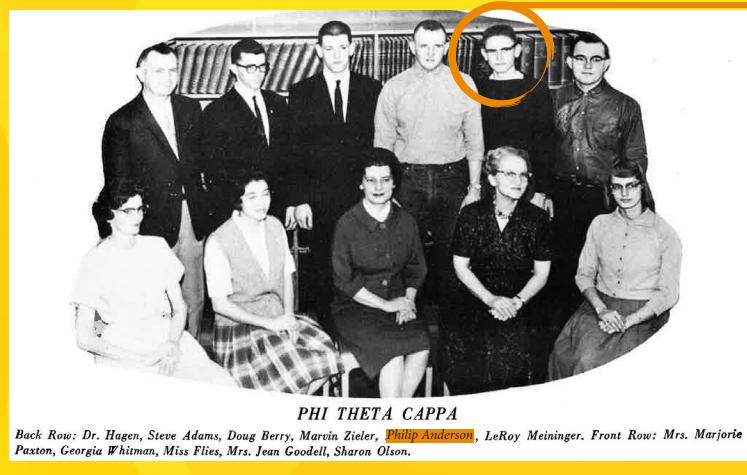
WNCC's Lambda Pi Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) was chartered on December 28, 1961. This was the beginning of 60 years of student excellence. PTK is the premiere student honors organization at WNCC. Our student leaders epitomize the Four Hallmarks of PTK: Scholarship, Service, Fellowship, and Leadership. Scholarship focuses on academic research for the Honors in Action Project. Our chapter received a Distinguished Honors in Action Project Award (top 50) last year. Participation helps our students grow into the leaders of tomorrow by taking on leadership roles in PTK, our community, and our college. We focus on service to others as agents of change in our community and on our campuses. Fellowship allows students to network and build relationships at the college, in the community, and with other chapters regionally and internationally.

Our members have received international recognition throughout the last 60 years. These young leaders excel in the classroom and the community. Olivia Schaub was named a 2021 New Century Transfer Pathway Scholar and Adam Ouderkirk was recognized as a 2021 New Century Workforce Pathway Scholar. Hermela Tamirat was a 2020 New Century Pathways Scholar. Natalie Saenz, a former secretary of Lambda Pi, continued her education at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln where she received an award from the Nebraska Broadcasters Association and recently accepted a position at Telemundo Nebraska.

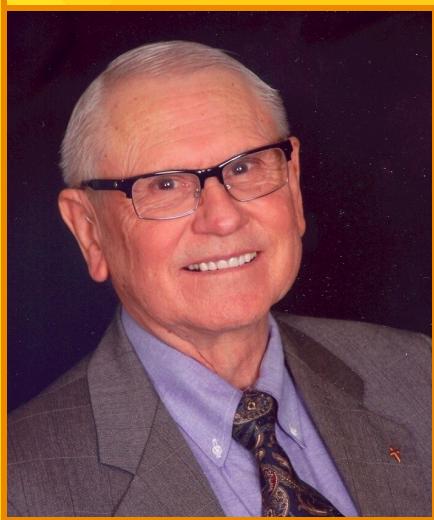
Shelby Benson, former Lambda Pi President, recently became a Certified Surgical Technologist (CST) at Presbyterian/St. Luke's Medical Center in Colorado. Jeremiah Marchington, a former chapter officer and a regional officer, was recently hired as a staff accountant at Dana F. Cole.

We want to celebrate 60 years of growing stronger together. All former Lambda Pi members are invited to join the Alumni Association on January 22 for a social. Former members will get into the basketball games vs. Northeastern Junior College at 2:00 & 4:00 p.m. for free. We will have snacks and refreshments in the newly renovated Learning Commons in between games.



PTK 1961**PTK 2021**

Front (left to right): Alan Onderkirk, Adam Onderkirk, Maya Wilson, Alyson Holt, Jose Polivany
 Back (left to right): Morgan Sinks, Wyatt Fiscus, Sarah Mortimore, Olivia Schaub, Macey Boggs, Alexie Cushing, Favour Ogboh, Wendy Kennedy, Quinn McCafferty, Leticia Heemann, Jongwha Lee



Philip Anderson

Philip Anderson was in the inaugural cohort of PTK. In a recent interview, Phil shared that Dr. Hal Hagen, then dean of students, recruited him to the honor society. He humorously remembers that Phi Theta Kappa was misspelled in the 1962 yearbook, (shown above). “I felt honored to be a part of the honor society. I have kept the certificate and listed it on future education and job applications.”



Jose Polivany

Current Chapter President and Regional Vice President of Leadership, Jose Polivany wanted to join PTK to help him enhance his leadership skills and the scholarship allowed him to do this. “For me, learning the fundamentals of leadership and the talents that great leaders possess is a top priority.”

If you participated in PTK during your time on campus,
 we would like to hear from you. Please email
alumni@wncc.edu or call 308-630-6571.

LOOK WHAT WE FOUND



Jerry Bretthauer attended WNCC from 1967-69 and played hundreds of hours on the campus racquetball courts with his brother Dick, faculty, friends, and fellow students. "Playing racquetball afforded my brother and I a form of physical and emotional stress relief we could not have gotten any other way."

As a University of Nebraska-Lincoln Physical Education graduate student from 1973-75, Jerry was tasked to teach paddleball to undergraduate students. Finding the sport too slow and boring, he sought and gained permission to teach racquetball instead. Later at a state racquetball competition in 1984, Jerry and his brother placed 2nd in the doubles open division. Then in 1993, Jerry captured a 3rd place finish in the Class B singles championship.

Did you ever play racquetball in the courts off the lower level by Cougar Palace? If so, we want to hear from you.

Let us know your memories of the racquetball courts by emailing alumni@wncc.edu

English instructor, Wayne Schumacher, playing racquetball in one of two courts that used to be a part of Cougar Palace. Photo found in an April 1984 issue of *The Spectator*.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

Eloise Thomas



Eloise Thomas was raised in Alliance and finished the nursing program when she was 19. She married and had two sons. At 40, she found herself single with mostly grown children. She enrolled in one class at WNCC with hopes of just passing. Finding a welcoming and supportive environment, she passed that class, then more classes. She graduated in 2009 and moved to Missouri where she received her bachelor's and master's degrees. Eloise taught as an adjunct instructor at a local community college while completing the needed hours to become a licensed professional counselor. She discovered she belonged in a classroom and became a full-time instructor at Ozarks Technical Community College in Springfield, Missouri, helping students that reminded her of herself. In August of 2020, she completed a bucket list item and obtained her doctorate. Recently, she considered a full-time teaching job at a university, but has chosen to stay at Ozarks Technical Community College, to instill confidence in students, like WNCC once did for her.

A first-generation, non-traditional student who found her confidence at WNCC, Eloise would tell anyone considering college, "Just give it a try. Even one class, just try it. And utilize the math and writing center that your fees pay for."

2022 EVENT SCHEDULE

To see a full list of events visit wncc.edu/events

January 22

Celebrate 60 years on campus with PTK - Learning Commons between men's and women's basketball games

January 28

WNCC Athletic Hall of Fame Induction - Learning Commons open house/ceremony 5:00/5:30 p.m. Induction during halftime of men's basketball game

January 30

Faculty Recital - Judy Chaloupka Theater 2:00 p.m.

February 25-27

Winter Play - Judy Chaloupka Theater

March 24

WNCC Foundation's 50th Anniversary event
Gering Civic Center

April

Student Awards, TBA for each campus

April 1-2

Vocal Music Gala - Gering Civic Center 6:00 p.m.

April 24

Spring Band Concert - Judy Chaloupka Theater 3:00 p.m.

April 29 - May 1

One-Act Plays - Judy Chaloupka Theater 3:00 p.m.

April 30

Student Art Exhibit - Western Nebraska Arts Center

May 7

Honors Recital - Judy Chaloupka Theater 3:00 p.m.

May 8

Jump, Jive, & Swing - Hampton Inn - 5:15 p.m.

May 14

Graduation



Jennifer Reisig, *Foundation Executive Director*

In March, the WNCC Foundation will celebrate 50 years of supporting the mission of WNCC!

50 years of funding programs
50 years of building infrastructure
50 years of student scholarships
50 years of enhancing the lives of the community,
the quality of the college, and the communities we serve!

Save the Date for March 24, 2022

as we celebrate the past and look forward to the future!

For more information, follow us on Facebook,
Watch our website wnccfoundation.org or email us at
wnccfoundation@wncc.edu.



2021 ALUMNI AWARDS WINNERS



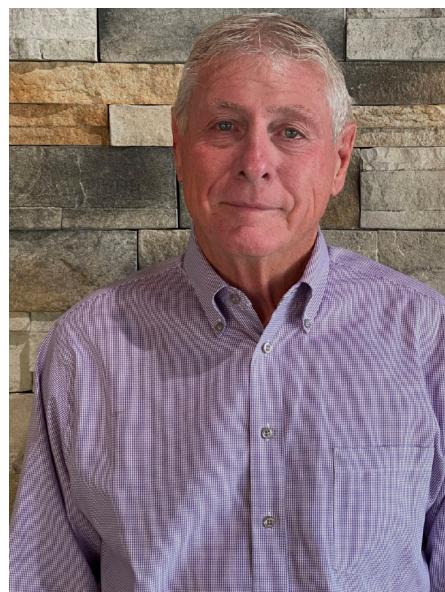
Cara Perkins Meritorious Service Award
Luke Stobel



Outstanding Young Alumnus Award
Katelyn Groves, Class of 2010



Friend of the College Award
Sen. John P. Stinner, District 48



Lifetime Achievement Award
Willie Quindt, Class of 1967



Western Nebraska Community College is proud to announce this year's inductees to the Athletics Hall of Fame!

Neal and Lora Blomenkamp, Runza® Restaurant & Bernard Garner.

Join us January 28 for an open house ceremony and presentation at 5:00 p.m. in the Learning Commons. Induction during halftime of the men's home basketball game.