

# CougarCORNERNews

Western Nebraska Community College Alumni Newsletter

Summer 2022



WNCC  
ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?  
LINDSAY HUSE

WNCC FOUNDATION  
50TH ANNIVERSARY





## A NOTE FROM THE ALUMNI DIRECTOR

If you were talking to someone contemplating college and they asked you, "Why should I choose WNCC?", how would you answer?

The WNCC admissions office regularly has contact with prospective students. Could your words help that student decide to attend WNCC? Maybe. Let's find out.

Whether it was a just couple years ago or a few more than that, think back to when you were trying to decide whether to come to WNCC. What influenced you to make that decision? How did that decision help you? What was your experience as a student? Did you utilize a student service that particularly helped you? Were you involved in any campus-life activities or organizations that helped? What benefits have you experienced because you came to college here? Did you feel better prepared for your next steps when you left WNCC? What do you know now that you wish you would have known then?

We would like to collect your answers to help someone that is looking into WNCC make the decision to attend here. There are a few ways you can submit your answers that our admissions office will use in their communications with potential and incoming students. Go to [wncc.edu/alumniform](http://wncc.edu/alumniform) and submit your thoughts in the "TELL US YOUR WNCC STORY" section OR stop by the Alumni office in the John N. Harms Center and hand write a postcard to a future Cougar! An opportunity to submit answers will be available during our 9<sup>th</sup> annual WNCC Alumni & Friends banquet on Friday, October 21, 2022.

You could inspire someone to attend WNCC!

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

Mary Sheffield

*WNCC Foundation Alumni Relations & Stewardship Director*

## ALUMNI **AMBASSADORS**



### **Kathryn Blankenship**

Kathryn is a sophomore from Gering, Nebraska. She is studying nursing. "I am extremely excited to be able to extend a warm and friendly welcome to the alumni as an Alumni Ambassador. I think it is important to maintain the positive environment of WNCC while also showing my excitement towards attending."



### **Rennan Sousa**

Rennan is a sophomore and returning soccer player from Sao Paulo, Brazil studying Business Administration. "I'm very excited and glad to receive the opportunity to become an Alumni Ambassador. This will help me to learn new things and make a lot of networking connections with people. In addition, this experience as an ambassador will help me to improve my communication skills."

# CONGRATS GRADUATES

Congratulations to our 2022 graduates!  
Welcome to the Alumni Association!



# ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

## CLASS OF 2022

**Jennifer Pedersen, Class of 1996, WNCC English Instructor, and member of the Hall of Fame committee**

WNCC expanded the Athletic Hall of Fame this past academic year, with the induction of the second class on January 28. WNCC inducted former men's basketball player Bernard Garner and faithful Cougar supporters Neal and Lora Blomenkamp into the Hall. They join Dick "Night Train" Lane and Bobby Jackson in the Hall of Fame, who were members of the inaugural class in 2017.

For many alumni, these names are reminiscent of past Cougar Athletics as all helped contribute to a strong foundation for future athletes.

The Blomenkamp family, who own and operate Runza® Restaurants in the Panhandle, became involved in Cougar Athletics in the early 1990s, the same year Bernard Garner began playing for Soupy Campbell. Neal and Lora were first invited to a Cougar basketball game in 1992, and while they were not sports fanatics, Neal recalls being overwhelmed by all of the people in attendance at the games. Cougar Palace had not yet been renovated and held 3,200 fans—most of which were in attendance that night.

He remembers being touched by the families – grandparents, parents, and children.

"No other event had this much positive impact on families at one time in our community," he said. "I was surprised that the ticket prices and concessions were reasonable. A family of four could attend the game and all have a soda pop and popcorn for less than \$20. I was hooked. We had to get involved."

Coach Campbell and the Blomenkamps came up with the idea to give away free Runza® sandwiches when the men's basketball team hit 90 points in a game. Fans were excited and often chanted "Runza, Runza, Runza" as the team neared the 90-point mark. This partnership was well worth it as the franchise gave away more



Bernard Garner



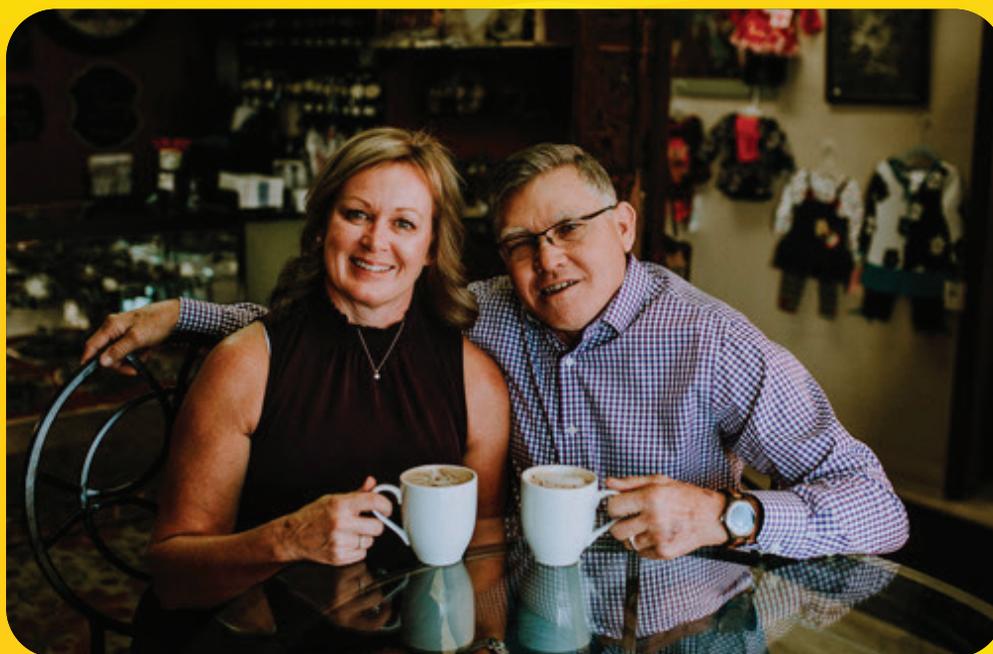
than 5,000 Runza® sandwiches in just the first year of the promotion. Runza® Restaurants continues to support Cougar Athletics with the same promotion for today's fans, among many other contributions.

Bernard Garner often helped give fans a free sandwich with his play on the court. Garner played on the men's team from 1993-1995 and still holds the all-time scoring record with 1,304 points during his stint with the Cougars. After WNCC, Garner played at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where he finished as the eighth-highest scorer in program history among two-year players.

"It's a great honor to be inducted into the Hall of Fame. I never thought this moment would ever happen," he said.

The same family atmosphere that drew in the Blomenkamp family also played a pivotal role in Bernard's memories. Garner deeply thanked Coach Campbell and other booster families for making WNCC a home away from home. He recalls that he "had great dorm parents – what great memories we all had together."

Neal and Lora Blomenkamp were not able to attend the induction ceremony; their children Spencer, Brooke, and Tanner, pictured on the cover, were in attendance to accept the award. Garner was able to travel to Scottsbluff with several members of his family to accept his award, and as the night came to a close, Garner stated, "Thanks to Coach Soupy Campbell and Coach Dewy, and all of the dorm parents and sponsors. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. But, overall, thanks to the whole Western Nebraska Community College program."



Lora and Neal Blomenkamp



## WHERE ARE THEY NOW? **LINDSAY HUSE**

*"I truly would not be where I am today without the help and support I received at WNCC."  
Lindsay (Vernon) Huse, Class of 1999*

Lindsay Huse grew up in Gering, graduating from Gering High School in 1997. As an average achiever with parents that did not place college expectations on her, a friend's invitation to go to nursing school at WNCC with her seemed to be as good a plan as any. Even after getting a speeding ticket on her first day of classes, she felt comfortable on campus. She credits the small class sizes, easily accessible instructors, and great support resources in helping her learn the invaluable skill of how to be a student.

Wayne Schumacher, former English instructor, challenged her in a way that helped her find her potential and recommended her as a tutor. This job, plus scholarships available to her as a first-generation student helped her pay for school. There were a couple classes she needed that WNCC didn't offer, but she was able to take them through Chadron State College.

After graduation, she attended UNMC, where she fell in love with public health. She achieved a 20-year goal when she became the Douglas County Public Health Director in Omaha, Nebraska, May of 2021. Looking back, Lindsay is grateful that she had access to WNCC.

"I was a first-generation college graduate and would never have gotten to attend college had WNCC not been an option. I'm very grateful for my start there!"

## LOOK WHAT WE FOUND

### Remembering WNCC's *Emerging Voices* *A Journal of Literature and Art*

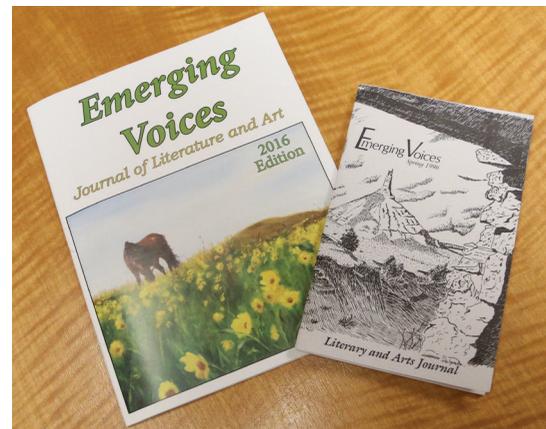
by Janet Craven, retired WNCC staff

As I look back on my career at Western Nebraska Community College, a major highlight and honor was serving as advisor for *Emerging Voices A Journal of Literature and Art*. The magazine was co-produced by Student Services and the Language and Arts Division with technical assistance from Mark Rein in sports information.

The journal featured poetry, prose, artwork, and photography created by students, faculty, staff, and regional authors and artists from the early 1990s through 2016. One year, we even published a photographer from Great Britain! The far reach of the journal was one of its most amazing aspects. We published writers and artists of all ages from Nebraska, Wyoming, Colorado, and South Dakota. For many, it was their first published work and they expressed great joy upon publication. In some instances, widely published authors and artists were featured. College staff and community members regularly encouraged students and others to submit their work.

A main feature of the journal was hosting poetry and prose readings, both at the college and various local venues including coffee houses and even at the Scotts Bluff National Monument. We also hosted visiting authors and Poetry Alive, a professional poetry performance group from North Carolina. The greatest joy, however, was mentoring the student editors who volunteered time to desktop publish the journal. Many of these WNCC students went on to professional journalism and other successful careers.

The Alumni Office has extra copies of the 20 years of publications available first come first served. If you would like a copy, email [alumni@wncc.edu](mailto:alumni@wncc.edu) or call 308.630.6571.





# 2022 EVENT SCHEDULE

## WNCC Alumni Night at the Ballpark | July 28

Fremont Moo vs Western Nebraska Pioneers  
Purchase tickets online at [wnpioneers.com](http://wnpioneers.com)  
Use promotional code WNCC for \$3.00 tickets

## 11<sup>th</sup> Monument Marathon | Sept 24

Register to run or volunteer at  
[www.monumentmarathon.com](http://www.monumentmarathon.com)

## Homecoming 2022

Voc-Air Fly-in in Sidney | October 15

Bingo in Alliance | October 19

Business After Hours | October 20

Alumni & Friends Award Ceremony | October 21

See the full schedule at [www.wncc.edu/homecoming](http://www.wncc.edu/homecoming)

**Don't miss out on the winter digital newsletter!**

**Make sure we have your correct email address**

[go.wncc.edu/alumniform](http://go.wncc.edu/alumniform)

# WNCC FOUNDATION 50TH ANNIVERSARY

By Jennifer Reisig, WNCC Foundation Director

The WNCC Foundation is 50 years old. That milestone was marked with a celebration on March 24, 2022, exactly 50 years after receiving the non-profit status that allowed the Foundation to receive tax deductible gifts on behalf of the college.

For 50 years, the Foundation has served its mission of supporting WNCC while enhancing the lives of community members, the quality of the college, and the communities it serves.

Today, more than 70 named, donor-funded scholarships are administered by the Foundation each year, helping students from all walks of life receive an education. Nearly \$750,000 is awarded through the Foundation each year.

One of the best ways that we continue to support the efforts of WNCC, is backing programs of study that train tomorrow's workforce. From programs of study, like the Powerline Construction & Maintenance program in Alliance or the new Diesel, Truck & Heavy Equipment program, to new ways to support students in finding their true calling with our Career Pathways & Advising department, we are constantly finding and launching new efforts to meet the needs of our area.

To meet changing and emergent needs of students, a Student Emergency Fund was established in 2014. This fund helps any WNCC student with immediate financial assistance. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, the Student Emergency Fund expanded more than five times to respond to current needs. Many students credited this fund as helping them be able to stay in school during the pandemic.

The WNCC Foundation could not support the needs of the Panhandle and WNCC students without your donations. To learn more about how you can give to support a WNCC student, visit [wnccfoundation.org](http://wnccfoundation.org) or call us at 308.630.6550.



WNCC Foundation Timeline



Impact Stories

# NOMINATIONS FOR 2022 ALUMNI AWARDS

Nominate your friends, family, or local organizations that have made a positive impact at WNCC for the 2022 Alumni Awards. Winners will be recognized on October 21, 2022 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 8, 2022** by emailing [alumni@wncc.edu](mailto:alumni@wncc.edu) or visiting the alumni webpage at [wncc.edu/alumni-friends](http://wncc.edu/alumni-friends).

Visit [wncc.edu/alumni-friends](http://wncc.edu/alumni-friends) to update your email to receive a gift and our winter alumni e-newsletter.

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