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CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL  
FOUNDATION

## EAGLE NEWS October 2025



Congratulations to the Central High School Hall of Fame Class of 2025!



### Dear Supporter,

With fall in full swing, we've had an incredibly busy and exciting month!

Last week, we proudly inducted twelve new members into the Central High School Hall of Fame. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who made this possible, and congratulations to all the inductees. Special thanks to the Central High School Alumni Association for their invaluable support in making this event a success!

Our annual campaign, Generation "C," is in full swing. This campaign allows your generous contributions to help the Foundation maintain the legacy of excellence established at Central over 165 years ago. Donations from the extended Central community are crucial for enhancing the Central experience. Please [join Generation "C" today!](#)

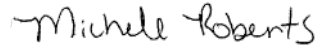
Lastly, class reunion season is nearly over! If your reunion is scheduled for next year, you can find the most up-to-date information at the bottom of our newsletter. Also, please [update your record](#) to ensure your physical invitation

and event communications are sent to the correct address.

Thank you for being a vital part of the Central High School community. Together, we continue to uphold more than 166 years of tradition and excellence.

Go Eagles!

Sincerely,



Michele Roberts, *Executive Director*

## Welcoming the 2025 Hall of Fame Inductees



## 2025 Hall of Fame Inductees



The 26th annual CHS Hall of Fame was held Thursday, October 9th at Central High School. The Central High School Alumni Association was proud to induct 12 individuals whose paths from the halls of Central High School led them to the highest levels of achievement in business and community service. Inductees were selected by the Central High School Hall of Fame selection committee from a pool of nominations, and the program was presented by the Central High School Foundation. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the student ambassadors, JROTC, theatre students, and student broadcasters for helping make the evening a great success!

[Make a Tribute Gift in Honor of an Inductee](#)

[Hall of Fame Inductees Speak with Students](#)



After the Hall of Fame dinner and ceremony, the inductees had the chance to speak with current Central students on Friday morning. A big thank you to the following host classrooms for welcoming the inductees back to their alma mater:

- **Stuart Oberman, CHS 1988** – Marshall Barney
  - Robotics Class
- **Pete Festersen, CHS 1989** – Jordan Boyer
  - Government & U.S. Politics
- **Joel Rogers, CHS 1975** – Ryan Cripps
  - JROTC
- **Gary & Cheryl Marks Willis, CHS 1970** – Brody Hilgenkamp
  - Newspaper Production
- **Donald Goldstein, CHS 1964** – Jennifer Stastny
  - Holocaust Literature
- **Quatesha Kern, CHS 1993** – Paul Nielson
  - International Baccalaureate



[Nominate an Alum](#)

## Passing Periods: Alumni Luncheon Series



To conclude Hall of Fame week, we hosted the Passing Periods: Alumni Luncheon at the Field Club of Omaha. The event drew a great turnout of attendees who were eager to hear from our guest speaker. Reverend Scott Barker, CHS 1981, served as our emcee for the day and conducted an interview with one of the 2025 Hall of Fame inductees, Pete Festersen, CHS 1989. Pete shared insights into his long career on the Omaha City Council, growing up in Dundee, and some of his fondest memories from his time at CHS. Thank you for joining us, Pete!

[Join Generation "C" Today](#)

## Alumni Spotlight: Alex Harz, CHS 1991



This month we are so excited to highlight Alex Harz, CHS 1991 on the heels of the premier of his latest film, 'THE QUEST: Everest'. Alex is excited to get the word out to Eagle Nation about where he is in life, and about his new movie, so this spotlight will be in his own words:

*I was born in Spain and lived in Germany early on before moving to the US. My mom's side of the family is from Omaha and the Midwest, so that's why we moved to Omaha upon leaving Europe. I spent many of my childhood summers in Europe after moving to the US, because my dad's side of the family is German. Thus, the desire to experience the wonderful landscapes and cultures of our world was entrenched in me early on. It became clear that international travel, adventure, business and philanthropy would become major driving forces in my life.*

*Since I was able to walk, athletics have always played a huge part in my life as well. High School and college soccer, scuba diving, snowboarding, basketball, rock climbing, high-altitude mountaineering, etc. have all helped instill in me some useful traits...discipline, dedication, team work, hard work and to never give up.*

After graduating from Central and my freshman year at UNO, I moved to Colorado and transferred to the University of Colorado Boulder. While in college I began making short films, but upon graduating from CU I used my degree to go directly into international business, working in sports marketing, import - export trade and IT. After several years of high end corporate work, I quit my IT job and started working on my first feature film. This is when my journey into filmmaking, acting, commercials and improv comedy started taking hold, with my international business experience helping me to navigate through the business side of the entertainment industry. From feature films to documentaries, from improvised comedy & radio to international sports marketing and more, I take great joy in working on a wide range of original productions.

Currently, I'm engaged in a documentary series titled '**THE QUEST**', which is designed to take global audiences on “educational thrill-rides” to reveal “rarely seen” stories from some of the most fascinating places on earth. I spent 63 days in Nepal filming the initial installments of 'THE QUEST' in 2D as well as one-of-a-kind 1st-person Virtual Reality all the way to the summit of Mt. Everest (29,032 feet / 8849 meters). The most recent installments of the series, '**THE QUEST: Everest**' Documentary and '**THE QUEST: Everest VR**' real-life Virtual Reality Documentary ([www.TheQuestEverest.com](http://www.TheQuestEverest.com)), are extraordinary journeys to deeper understand & climb the most iconic mountain in the world, Everest, and to unveil the captivating culture, history and nature of Nepal.

My experiences at Central were invaluable for my personal development and growth. It not only gave me a solid educational foundation, it also provided me the opportunity to interact with a wide spectrum of people. The diverse interpersonal relationships I developed at Central and the take-care-of-your-neighbor attitude of Omaha has stuck with me ever since, and helped solidify my belief that no matter what job you have, what religion you may believe in, what language you speak or what country you may come from, there are only 2 kinds of people in this world...good or bad.



Thank you so much for sharing, Alex! We are impressed and so proud of you! Eagle Nation, Alex invited us to a showing of his film at Film Streams last week and trust us, you will want to watch "**THE QUEST: Everest**" as soon as you can! Alex explained at the showing that his goal was to create a film about summiting Mount Everest that wasn't just about showboating athletic achievement, but highlighting the human connection and beautiful culture around the sacred mountain. Throughout the film, the audience is shown an intimate look into the relationships that Alex built with his climbing team from all over the world, as well as the Sherpas of Nepal who supported all of them mentally, physically, and spiritually during their journey. This documentary is truly unlike any other in the genre, and it is well worth the watch. It is now streaming on Tubi, Fandango, Amazon Prime, Youtube, Google Play, and Apple TV.

If you know any alumni who you think deserve to have the spotlight, send them to us at [connect@chsfomaha.org](mailto:connect@chsfomaha.org).

[Nominate an Alum for the Spotlight](#)

Class of 1985 40th Reunion

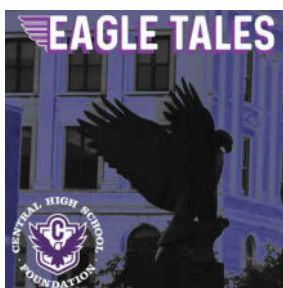


### The class of 1985 recently celebrated their 40th reunion!

The reunion weekend began on Thursday night at the Inner Rail for an initial meet and greet. On Friday, they met at Secret Park with food provided by the culinary students at Blackburn School. The rest of the evening consisted of the football game at Central, followed by a post-game celebration at the Dundee Dell. The next morning, the group took a tour of Central, met back up at Barrett's to root for the Huskers, and finished the weekend at Saro for '80s night with food, music, and a lively game of trivia.

[Donate to the First Class Challenge](#)

[Listen Now to a New Episode of Eagle Tales](#)



[Eagle Tales](#) is a podcast where our creative director, Josh Bucy, sits down with a Central High School alum to talk about their time at Central and how it has impacted them. Listeners hear all about the amazing things that alumni are doing to change the world!



#### [Episode 22 - Steven Rue](#)

We are excited to share that we released Episode 22 of Eagle Tales! Steven Rue, a class of 2003 alumnus who is the Construction & Street Maintenance Engineer for the City of Omaha, joins host Josh Bucy for Episode 22 of Eagle Tales.

Want to be notified of new episodes as they are released? Subscribe to Eagle Tales on [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), or wherever you listen to your podcasts!

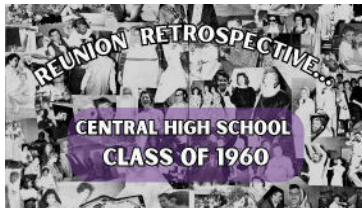
Listen Now

## Catch up with the Quill & Feather



### [The Quill & Feather](#)

With reunion season and the school year in full swing, keep an eye out for new stories from the *Quill and Feather*, written by Brett Comstock. [Bookmark this page](#) and follow us on social media to stay up-to-date on our latest articles!



### [Reunion Retrospective - 1960](#)

In the spirit of reminiscing at class reunions, we are starting a new series called “Reunion Retrospectives,” where we take a look at what was going on during the senior year of the classes that are celebrating in 2025! Read on to find out what was happening at Central High School, and in the world, during the 1959-1960 school year.

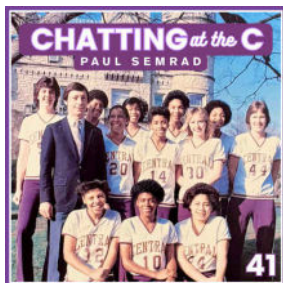
Read the Quill & Feather

## New Podcast Episodes: Chatting at the C



Chatting at the C is a podcast series by CHS teachers Scott Wilson and Ben Boeckman, focusing on the teaching history of Central High School. In each episode, they interview past and present CHS staff to preserve their contribution to Omaha Central High School.

**Recent episodes below:**

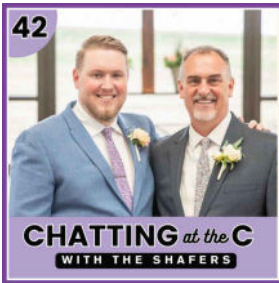


### [Paul Semrad, Distinguished Educator](#)

Listen as the hosts talk about Omaha Central Hall of Fame Distinguished Educator Paul Semrad. Paul was at CHS from 1973-2005. He taught Social Studies, was Central's very first Girls Basketball coach, and then finished his career as an Asst. Principal. Paul passed away in 2020, but the hosts sat down with his two daughters, Kerri Murtaugh and Cindi Brown, both of whom are OPS elementary principals.

### [Matt and Jackson Shafer](#)

Listen as the hosts speak to father and son, Matt and Jackson Shafer. Matt Shafer taught



business and coached at Omaha Central from 1997-2004. Matt's son and daughter both later attended CHS, and his son Jackson returned as a Math teacher in 2019, another one of Central's faculty members from the alumni ranks.

[Listen Now](#)

## 2025-2026 Generation "C" Chairs



### The Past: A Tradition Begins

**Jennifer** Johnson Taylor, Class of 1991, was the first in her family to attend Central, and in doing so, she began a proud family tradition. Growing up in Omaha's Dundee neighborhood, Jen followed the classic midtown path: Dundee Elementary, Lewis & Clark Middle, and finally, Central High School. The historic architecture of Central

first drew her in, but it was the vibrant community and transformative experiences that made her a lifelong Eagle. After graduating, Jen pursued a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy at Hamilton College in New York, then returned to Omaha to earn her Juris Doctor from Creighton University School of Law. Her career has taken her from private practice to public service, and today she serves as Deputy City Attorney for the City of Omaha - working in an office with a view of downtown that reminds her of her days at Central. Jen's sisters, Kathryn Johnson Krueger, Class of 2004, and Molly Johnson, Class of 2014 also joined the Central family further cementing the Johnson legacy at Central.

### The Present: Soaring Higher

When she and her husband, Darin, started their family, Jen passed on her love for Central to the next generation. Her daughter, **Cecilia** Taylor, Class of 2026, is a four-year varsity swimmer and state qualifier, a varsity golfer, and an active member of HOSA and National Honor Society (serving as Activities Coordinator). She is also involved in several advanced academic programs outside of Central, including the Haddix STEM Corridor and the UNMC High School Alliance. Cecilia credits Central with connecting her to these incredible opportunities and inspiring her passion for science. She plans to major in Microbiology with a minor in Chemistry and is exploring undergraduate research programs at the University of Washington and the University of Pittsburgh.

### The Future: The Legacy Continues

The Eagle spirit lives on in Charles "**Chuck**" Taylor, Class of 2032. Currently a student at Dundee Elementary School, Chuck is already preparing to follow in the footsteps of his mother, aunts, and sister. An avid golfer in the Nebraska Jr. PGA League, Chuck also enjoys basketball, football, swimming, baseball, and chess. His teachers note his love of history and enthusiasm for fun facts. With his boundless curiosity and love for learning, Chuck is ready to carry the family legacy forward at Central High School.

Join Generation "C" Today

Join the 1859 Society Today



What is Your Legacy?

Named for the year of Central's founding, the 1859 Society honors donors who have included The Central High School Foundation in their estate plans. By arranging for such deferred gifts, alumni, parents, and friends of CHS play a vital role in securing the future of Omaha's oldest educational institution. Combining financial planning, estate planning, and tax planning techniques, planned giving enables donors to make gifts of significance often with tax and financial rewards. If you're interested in joining the 1859 Society and making a planned gift, contact Michele Roberts at the CHSF Office at 402-556-1996 or [michele@chsfomaha.org](mailto:michele@chsfomaha.org).

Click Here for the 1859 Society Brochure

Upcoming Class Reunion Schedule



The class of 1989 at their reunion in 2024!

# Upcoming Reunion Schedule

## **Class of 1980**

November 15, 2025

[Contact Jay Ball](#)

[Contact Rhonda Wilson Duffy](#)

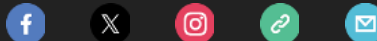
If you are the reunion organizer for your class and haven't finalized a date for your class reunion or would like to look at postponing or cancelling it, please contact the Foundation office at [events@chsfomaha.org](mailto:events@chsfomaha.org) or call 402-556-1996.

## Stay Connected With Us on Social Media



Are you on [Facebook](#)? How about [Instagram](#) or [X](#) (Formerly known as Twitter)? Follow and like us across social media platforms to stay connected to other Central alumni, staff, parents and supporters, all while receiving the latest news.

## Thank You to Our Adopt-A-School Partner



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