



**VALLEY CITY**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

# THE BULLETIN

A Publication for Alumni & Friends of Valley City State University

ISSUE 071663 | APRIL 2023



## Inspiring Music Educators

Read how music education graduates have used their skills to keep new students up to tempo, and why future educators are excited to take the lead. – PAGE 6

# THE BULLETIN

ISSUE 071663 | APRIL 2023



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# Season of Blizzards and Budgets

President Alan LaFave, D.M.A.

The winter weather has not loosened its grip as of late! Despite the continued longevity and persistence of this weather, the business and work of the institution continue.



I have made the trip to the State Capitol in Bismarck for the 68th Legislative Assembly a few times this year to present our achievements and budget request to the Education and Environment Divisions of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees.

Our budget request is included in House Bill 1003. A significant part of that bill received approval from the House on a 78-16 vote, including our \$11.5 million in state funds to renovate McCarthy Hall, and a system-wide initiative (\$236 thousand) supporting student behavioral health needs.

This one-time funding will transform McCarthy Hall into the home for our nationally-recognized School of Education.

It is no secret that the VCSU education program leads the state

and nation in producing high-quality teachers. With a critical shortage of teachers across North Dakota, we believe we are uniquely positioned to continue meeting this important workforce need.

Did you know that 1,514 VCSU alumni are serving as teachers and administrators in 359 schools in 151 communities across North Dakota?

The request for McCarthy Hall funding will be combined with \$2 million in private support raised in our capital campaign. These efforts to update and modernize the facility will provide classroom, labs and learning spaces to support pedagogy and continue the training of the teaching workforce for the next generation of North Dakotans.

In addition to our one-time requests, HB1003 also includes the request from the North Dakota University System office.

Valley City State will see a slight increase in our funding due to the enrollment increases during the past two years. We support the system request aligning with the Governor's recommendation of a 6% and 4% raise for our faculty and staff for the next biennium.

Attracting qualified and outstanding employees is a challenge for employers in all sectors, but especially significant for higher education.

There is a positive correlation between a high quality and stable workforce providing excellent preparation and service for our students, and our ability to continue attracting outstanding students. Increased competition from surrounding states for students and workforce continues to be a factor in this success.

This success is also impacted by scholarship support. A significant part of keeping a VCSU education affordable and attainable is the outstanding scholarship support for our students. Last year we were fortunate to be able to provide nearly \$1.9 million in scholarship assistance for our students. This was made possible through the generous support of our alumni and friends who continue to support student scholarships in such a significant manner. Combined with the current capital campaign efforts, we are especially grateful to see our scholarship support continue in such a strong fashion.

Go Vikings!

## A NIGHT AT THE TRACK



### Join in the 29th annual Scholarship Auction silent auction fun and support VCSU

Next steps

- Download the Handbid app and create an account\*
- Search for our auction "VCSU Scholarship Auction 2023"



Bidding on the silent auction starts Monday, April 24  
at 1 p.m. and ends Friday, April 28 at 8:30 p.m.

Please contact our office at 701-845-7203 with any questions  
regarding the Handbid App.

\*If you participated in our 2022 silent auction, you've already created an account.  
Use your same username and password (there is an option to reset password if needed).

# Appreciating the Attitude of Gratitude

Cory Anderson '89  
Executive Director for University Advancement



Spring is a perfect time to celebrate accomplishments and growth and push forward into the next chapter. We look into the future, we reflect upon the past, and adjust our vision. We take aim at keeping our amazing University in a great place.

Greatness is never an accident. Greatness is the result of doing things with purpose. Without purpose we can easily get busy and distracted and settle for a mediocre version. Everyone involved with VCSU has worked diligently to get us where we are currently, and we intend to drive change for the betterment of this special place.

An example of driving change happened four years ago when we moved from one-year scholarship awards to renewable four-year awards. In addition to the obvious benefit to recruiting new students, this change brought stability to retaining students.

That commitment started with donors who collectively felt the attitude of gratitude for Valley City State. This allowed us to continue to be the best University to attend, and the most affordable. The VCSU Foundation champions those who dream of an education and great future through

scholarship assistance. Your gifts make a difference in the lives of our students every day.

There are few things as important as the need for connection, to bond with others over common interests, beliefs, and experiences. Kim Hesch, our Assistant Director for Advancement & Alumni Relations does a terrific job of creating opportunities for VCSU alumni and friends to gather and connect and celebrate gratitude for their time at Valley City State.

I always feel privileged to attend these engagements. They reflect our past, represent of our present and link us to our future. No matter your decade of graduation, it's a perfect opportunity to share your attitude of gratitude about VCSU.

I encourage all alumni and friends to continue gathering, celebrating VCSU and instilling a deeper attitude of gratitude. Hear, in person, how you can partner with us to drive change on the campus through campaigns, legislation, special projects and ideas for a greater purpose.

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**V-500**  
SUPPORTING STUDENTS  
SINCE 1972

How can you support VCSU student scholarships?



**GIVE ONLINE:** fast, easy and secure. Use our online form at [give.vcsu.edu](http://give.vcsu.edu) to make your gift of choice.



**MAIL YOUR GIFT:** give by check or credit card using the enclosed form. Choose your frequency of payment and return to our office.



"My VCSU scholarship was a big factor when choosing a school. It has lessened the financial burden and allows me to focus on pursuing a business degree."

Taryn Dieterle,  
Valley City, N.D.

A photograph of a stone wall with the text "WELCOME TO VALLEY CITY STATE UNIVERSITY" in large, dark letters. Several people are walking along a path in front of the wall. In the background, there are trees and parked cars.

# WELCOME TO VALLEY CITY STATE UNIVERSITY

## Valley City State University Ranked by U.S. News and World Report for Offering Best Online Programs



Top Regional School in North Dakota for online Bachelor's degrees and online Master's Education degree

Valley City State University (VCSU) has been ranked by U.S. News and World Report as having one of the best online Bachelor's programs and one of the best online Master's Education programs in the nation.

The U.S. News and World Report Best Online Programs report was released today.

Overall, VCSU had the second-highest score among all schools in North Dakota for online bachelor's degree programs. VCSU was also one of only two North Dakota universities ranked for having the best online Master's Education program.

"We are proud to offer a high-quality education in multiple formats at VCSU," President Alan LaFave said. "Our faculty and academic affairs team prioritize ensuring every student has an excellent experience, regardless of classroom location or delivery method."

Faculty at VCSU have participated in multiple Quality Matters workshops to ensure online courses are of the highest quality possible.

"We are happy to see that external sources recognize the efforts we have made to provide a great education in person and online," Larry Brooks, Vice President for Academic Affairs, said. "We have a dynamic team of faculty that take the extra time and effort to ensure courses help students succeed in school and beyond."

The U.S. News and World Report utilizes multiple data points when compiling the rankings, including how well the program promotes participation and engagement. The utilization of services and technology also weigh heavily in the report. Faculty credentials and peer assessments are factored into the ranking.

## VCSU Night at the F-M RedHawks Game!

The VCSU Alumni Association invites you to join alumni and friends at Newman Outdoor field for an F-M RedHawks baseball game on Wednesday, **August 9**. It will be Valley City State University night at the game. We will have booths set-up on the concourse with giveaways, current students will be singing the National Anthem and we get to throw out the first pitch!

### **COST \$20 per person**

- INCLUDES**
- Reserved Game ticket in Section B
  - All-you-can-eat picnic including hot dogs and pulled pork served with potato salad, potato chips, pop and water.

**6:02 PM GATES OPEN | SOCIAL HOUR AND PICNIC**

**7:02 PM GAME TIME**



**PLEASE RSVP. Call 701-845-7203 by July 21 to reserve your tickets.**

# GRADUATE PROFILE

## Jacob Knapek: The Plant Guy

by Garret Fettig, '23

As a high school student in St. Cloud, Minn., Jacob Knapek '22 had no idea he'd spend his future days thinking about grass.

Not just any grass — specifically, native prairie grasses. Though Minnesota is the Midwest's most forested state, there's more to their terrain than trees. Prairie once covered one-third of Minnesota's 86,000 square miles. Today, less than 1% of that landscape remains.

When Knapek learned this during a high school Minnesota Ecology class, it changed the course of his future. A seed of interest in natural science sprouted in him that eventually led to Valley City State University.

"That fact opened my eyes and made me think of how much we've changed the natural world," Knapek said. "I became passionate about native plants, and I learned about ecological restoration, which is the process of using native plants to restore the environment to what it once was."

Knapek graduated in December with a degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Science. Knapek's passion for native and prairie plant life has only grown stronger as he's seized opportunities at VCSU and beyond.

In his academic department at the Rhoades Science Center on campus, others unofficially refer to Jacob as "the plant guy." He welcomes the title.

"Everyone has to nerd out about something," Knapek said with a laugh. "For me, it's plants. I'm fascinated by how they operate, their ecosystems, their niches."

### SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPING

Knapek started his college journey in the fall of 2019, and knew how important gaining seasonal work and field experience were for his future. Possessing hands-on abilities and technical skills separated students from the crowd. Knapek found ways to gain both.

In the fall of 2020, Valley City was adding two more pollinator gardens to the orchard on 5th Avenue Northeast. Dr. Casey Williams, a professor in the Fisheries and Wildlife Department, had noticed Knapek's interest in plants and sustainable landscaping. Williams mentioned the

gardens project to him, and Knapek eagerly agreed to take it on.

"I got to choose the species to plant, design the layout, and make all of the purchasing decisions," Knapek said. The gardens have thrived. Knapek said kiosks will soon display information he's gathered, to educate orchard visitors about sustainable landscaping with native plants.

### RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

In the spring of 2022, Knapek decided to continue studying and working with plants at a graduate level. He reached out to schools about their graduate programs. Dr. Kathryn Yurkonis, a professor of Biology at the University of North Dakota, answered his call and specifically expressed interest in Knapek's previous work.

Yurkonis and UND had been enlisted to help study the benefits of the federally funded Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a national undertaking.

"If you can restore the soil a little bit, then farming is going to be better," Knapek said.

The project specifically measures soil health benefits of the CRP on a large scale.

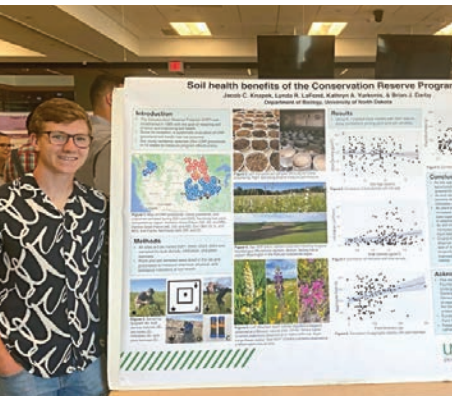
"It is easy to envision a pristine species-rich grassland after seeding a bare field, like a painter hopes for a masterpiece while looking at a blank canvas, but that vision is likely unattainable. This latest experience taught me that there is no 'perfect restoration' as I originally perceived, because there will always be an ongoing battle with invasive species and other environmental factors."

For Knapek, it's absolutely a battle worth fighting.

"Grasslands provide services like reducing soil erosion and improving the soil health. They provide a lot of wildlife habitat. They increase biodiversity. They help to purify water. They decrease flooding," Knapek explains.

Ultimately, Knapek hopes to do his part for the prairie — and all of plantkind.

"I just want to be able to make important, sustainable decisions in conservation, and manage our ecosystems and their plant aspects to make sure they survive for the future."





# Alumni Anecdotes

## VCSU lauded by National Council on Teacher Quality

NCTQ highlights VCSU for equity and excellence for aspiring teachers of color; education majors hold a 95.5% pass rate for the Praxis II exam

Recent data released by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) shows that Valley City State University (VCSU) continues to be a leader in preparing the next generation of teachers, including helping students of color achieve success.

The NCTQ lauded VCSU for helping students of color achieve success on licensure tests. A critical component to that success is VCSU's Student Academic Services and Resource Center which helps teacher candidates prepare for difficult content areas that appear on standardized tests.

Teacher Education candidates are required to complete and pass content and pedagogy examinations for graduation and teacher licensure, such as the Praxis II test. Since Praxis II testing requirements for licensure began in 2006, 95% of all VCSU education graduates have passed the content exams and 96% have passed the pedagogy exams.

As one of VCSU's flagship programs, education has long since been a powerful program that has adapted to incorporate changes in the educational landscape. These changes help students transition into successful teachers.

Professor Alan Olson explained, "Our curriculum and field experiences are designed to

prepare teacher candidates with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to enter the profession and become effective teachers. VCSU has dedicated faculty and staff working with teacher candidates and we are fortunate to have excellent cooperating teachers in partnering schools."

VCSU has a long-standing goal of providing inclusive and diverse learning experiences for all students. The institution is moderately selective and exceeds the state's average first-attempt pass rate.

Using information and data gathered from faculty, first-year teachers, employers, cooperating teachers, teacher candidates and Praxis II data, VCSU works to improve the program and develop an effective curriculum.

Currently, VCSU has 1,514 education alumni in the field working across North Dakota in 359 different schools. Those relationships and networks help newly graduated teachers find a home in a classroom of their own.

"It's not only what we do in our program but also within our university," Dean of the School of Education Allen Burgad said. "The culture within our university has the greatest impact."



### Dr. Ryan Lorenz PT, DPT '07

Dr. Ryan Lorenz PT, DPT was prepared for grad school after receiving his health science degree from VCSU. Upon completing his Doctorate of Physical Therapy, Lorenz decided to head back to his hometown of Valley City where he now not only practices, but owns Mobility Plus Rehabilitation. Lorenz provides physical therapy to patients full time in addition to helping the Mobility Plus management team lead staff for their five locations in the region. During Lorenz's undergraduate time, he wanted to catch up on credits after taking a year off for military service and sought an exception to take 18-21 credits per semester. This heavy case load prepared Lorenz for the study habits required and intensity of graduate school. Lorenz's hardwork also enabled him to graduate from VCSU in three years.



## Teaching more than music through **Music Education**

Pursuing a music degree requires artistic talent and skills in math, science, languages and artistic expression. Hear from alumni and future teachers how their musical education at VCSU prepared them for success in the classroom and beyond.

Tedi Dimmer remembers the day her life's trajectory changed. The clarinet player from West Fargo, N.D., was sitting in band when she had an epiphany.

"That day it hit me," Dimmer said. "I want to keep coming to band every day. I love this that much."

Dimmer set her course to pursue musical training and become a music educator. Now, as a junior at Valley City State University, she is taking courses in theory, mastering multiple instruments and preparing to join Vikings in the field making music in classrooms across the nation. We caught up with a few music educators to see how they think their time at VCSU prepared them for the classroom and why they think music is one of the most important areas of a well-rounded educational experience.

### Skills for all ages

VCSU alumni John Monilaws, '87, taught music for 31 years. In that time he worked with groups on countless performances, and brought a group to perform in California for Disneyland's 50th anniversary parade.

Beyond the performances, Monilaws said music helped him teach many important life lessons

including how to dress professionally to starting a conversation with a stranger.

"We would perform at the veteran's home and each student had to go say hello to a resident," he explained. "It's not about going to the veteran's home, it wasn't about performing, but it's about learning to visit with an older generation. Those skills are still helping my students today."

This approach was something he learned at VCSU through Associate Professor of music Gloria Peterson. Monilaws, a trombone player, was also a tenor in the Valley Troubadours which was led by Peterson at that time.

"She was one of the best professors I ever had," Monilaws said. As a student, Monilaws was required to call an alumni every quarter and ask them questions for a questionnaire. The cross-generational approach to music education made it a valuable and memorable experience.

"There are many ways for music to open doors for communication," Monilaws said. "Music is something you can do together and build confidence and skills."

Now, Monilaws is retired from teaching, conducts The Valley Troubadours and works for a music company introducing instruments to young musicians and supporting music educators across the eastern part of North Dakota.



Monilaws



Although the role is different, the thrill is the same.

"When a student puts a horn up and gets their first sound, and their eyes get big, I don't know if it's the grandpa in me, but that's really special to me," he explained. "It builds self-esteem right away."

## Learning how to learn

Like Monilaws, Brian Bubach, '97, studied music at VCSU. Although he didn't start as a music major, a professor encouraged him to switch his major and join others in Foss hall. He quickly realized he had some important courses to master and skills to hone to catch up with other music majors who declared as freshmen.

"Pretty much everybody in the music department was better than I was and that has been a core tenant of my teaching philosophy," Bubach said. "I believe that everyone I came across teaching was better at music than I was, but most didn't realize it yet."

Bubach graduated and taught music in Maddock, N.D., served as a school administrator and eventually joined the North Dakota High School Activities Association. As an associate director, Bubach leads official contests for music, debate, plays, speech and tennis.

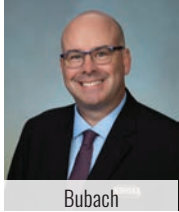
While musical competitions do not get the same television coverage as athletic counterparts, they are still a huge part of many high school experiences.

"Overall, general participation numbers in schools is around the 10,000 mark," Bubach said. "There are 171 member schools participating in 32 regional and state music festivals in North Dakota alone. In those events, there are 244 secondary music education teachers bringing students to perform."

Students practice for months to master difficult pieces and techniques.

"When you take kids to music festivals, it is real-time learning in citizenship, communication and problem-solving," Bubach said. Students must work together to fix things, manage deadlines or find solutions, for example, if something critical was forgotten.

Bubach is committed to the idea that music education broadens individuals' overall ability to learn.

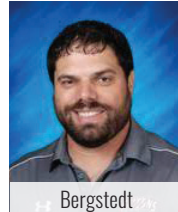


Bubach

"We go to school to learn important things like reading and math, but I honestly believe the most important thing we go to school for is to learn how to learn," he said. "Music is a language. Good music instruction broadens your learning capacity. It increases your ability to learn how to learn."

## Teaching skills and musical expression

Like Bubach, Eric Bergstedt, '05, wasn't sure what he wanted to do with his career when he landed at Valley City State. Bergstedt had always participated in music and thought it might be the key for his success.



Bergstedt

When he came to Valley City State he jumped into musical groups including concert choir, hand bells, band, university singers and participated in several musicals.

After graduation he landed a job in Enderlin and still teaches music there today.

"I came in as the program was moving in the right direction," he explained. As a program develops, so do the bright moments.

Bergstedt recalled a particular large group music contest with his students. "That day, they were all getting into the song we were singing. These kids were so excited about what they had done and the music they performed," he said.

"It's a group expression, which is so unique," he said. "Bringing that expression to the wider community through support of music education means a great deal."

That support helps a music program teach musical concepts, artistic expression and many other real-world skills like practicing, meeting deadlines, performing in public and working as a team.

Having conversations in the community and with administrators about the importance of music education can help sustain programs, Bergstedt said.

"So many decisions can impact music education. Scheduling, the school calendar and other little things can have a major impact on a music program," Bergstedt said. "Stakeholders and community members can have conversations with leaders about the value of music education."

"I want to keep coming to band every day. I love this that much."

– VCSU Music Education student Tedi Dimmer



Music is critical for an education and Bergstedt said it has to be a continuing focus for schools.

"Music is daily. Some of what we do is a daily job of reminding people in your school why what you do is important," he said.

## A rigorous, ideal group project

Tedi Dimmer started her music studies at VCSU in Foss Hall like her predecessors.

Foss Hall was taken down as part of flood mitigation efforts after the new Center for the Arts opened in the spring of 2022. From the state-of-the-art performance hall, to specially designed practice rooms, the entire building is designed to help students study and perform music of the highest quality. Dimmer said the new facilities also allow for students to gather in a much brighter and comfortable way.

"I feel like our community has bonded even more in this new building," she said. "Band is such a community builder. The people I come to school with every day are my best friends. We sit and make music together every day for an hour or two. It's the most ideal group project you could think of because we all want to be here and contribute. We all want to do our best every day."

Dimmer was a high school and college student when the pandemic affected music programs everywhere. She recalls how hard it was to hear other members of the band when everyone was sitting six feet apart.

With that experience clearly in the review mirror, Dimmer said one of the best things about the new facility is the fact that there are always friends around.

"We enjoy each others company and at all times of the day I find people down in the lobby or upstairs to talk with," she said. "We really have a family feeling here."

Dimmer has been taking theory classes and mastering different musical instruments from strings to brass, woodwinds and percussion, and developing her skills as a teacher.

"You go to math and can learn formulas or English and build sentences but music teaches you how to meet people," she said. "You build a sense of community in large ensembles and you are all working for a common goal. Every moving part has to fit just right."

## Incredible experiences

"There are so many opportunities in the Music Department at Valley City State," Director of Bands and Professor of Music Jerrold Heide said. "We have a 21st century approach that trains students if they are interested in being a performer, audio production specialist or a music educator."



Heide

In addition to the curriculum, the physical space in the new Center for the Arts has enhanced the student experience, he said. The building was designed to help students develop their craft. The choir hall, performance hall and practice rooms make it easier than ever before for students to work closely with faculty in developing their musical skills.

Faculty, Heide said, are committed to helping students become the best educators, performers and leaders possible.

"As director of bands, I get the opportunity to help build future music educators and develop their leadership capabilities, but also to teach them to inspire others through instrumental music," Heide said. "I get to watch students grow from freshmen to seniors and help them to develop as they start their own careers. It is an incredible experience."



## Catching up with Student Teacher Rachel Baker

How has VCSU helped prepare you for being a music educator?

VCSU has prepared me to be a music educator by providing a variety of opportunities to gain teaching experience. Whether it's helping with sectionals in band and choir or conducting VCSU's Athletic Band or spending over 70 hours in the classroom working with students, I have been able to build confidence in my teaching and feel ready to start my teaching career.

What parts of student teaching have helped prepare you to have a music classroom of your own?

Student teaching has exposed me to a variety of teaching methods through observation, my own teaching, and conversations with my cooperating teachers. This has shown me that there isn't one right way to teach something. I have to be willing to try different techniques and be able to adapt based on feedback I get from my students. I have been encouraged throughout my student teaching experience to reflect on each day to try and improve and to think of different ways to instruct students.

Why is it important for communities to support a strong music program in their schools?

Strong school music programs teach much more than music to their students. Students learn leadership skills, such as communication and organization, gain confidence, and make connections with those around them. By supporting the school's music program, community members are supporting the development of these valuable skills that students will use no matter what career they choose.

# Excitement, Progress – Moving Forward Together

Larry Robinson '71, Capital Campaign Director

VCSU is in the midst of our first ever Capital Campaign, Forward Together. The campaign has brought excitement to campus! Our priorities for the campaign include a major addition to the W.E. Osmon Field House and a complete renovation of McCarthy Hall. These long overdue improvements will enhance these two important facilities.

The campaign will transform the McCarthy Hall facility into VCSU's School of Education and Graduate Studies. The need for this transformation is without question. McCarthy Hall was constructed in 1930. The proposed improvements will create the classrooms of today and tomorrow for our education students. These classrooms will feature interactive video labs, collaborative student study areas,



Robinson

and the latest in instructional technology equipment.

Although W.E. Osmon Fieldhouse (The Bubble) continues to be a popular facility, we have outgrown the space due to the significant increase in the number of programs and athletes since it first opened in 1960. The proposed addition of an indoor turf practice facility will be a major attraction to our beautiful campus. Among the benefits to our student athletes will be additional locker rooms and increased practice space, so some of our athletes can spend their time practicing - not traveling to other facilities to practice. Approximately 90 out of 280 athletes do not have locker space in our current facilities. These improvements will benefit and retain current student-athletes, as well as make VCSU a competitive force in the NAIA conference.

As the Capital Campaign Director, I would characterize our campaign as one of excitement and steady progress. However, we have had

our share of challenges. Soon after we kicked off the campaign, we were faced with the pandemic. Then came significant increases in construction and labor costs reaching 35%. Despite these challenges, we continue to move Forward Together! We have worked hard to revise the initial building designs and to do value engineering. A special effort has been made to control costs and to use construction materials that are available.

At the end of this campaign, we are confident that we will have facilities that will serve the students of Valley City State University for many years to come. We are building the future today!

If you have already made a contribution to this important Campaign, we thank you for that support! If you have not made a contribution to this campaign, please consider doing so today! Pledges can be made payable over a 5- year time period.



## SAVE THE DATE

Peggy Lee Day  
June 17, 2023  
Valley City, ND

*Celebrate Barnes County's own Peggy Lee in Valley City during Rally in the Valley. Learn more about her music and radio career and how it started in Valley City!*

# VCSU FINE ARTS 2022-2023 CALENDAR

## APRIL 2023

### Thursday, April 6

Percussion Concert  
CFA Performance Hall - 7:30 p.m.

### Friday, April 14

Cassie Boelke & Abby Marfell, Sr. Recital  
CFA Performance Hall - 7:30 p.m.

### Tuesday, April 18

Guest: Jeremy Wohletz, bass clarinet  
CFA Performance Hall - 7 p.m.

### Tuesday, April 25

VCSU Music Faculty Recital  
CFA Performance Hall - 7:30 p.m.

### Friday, April 27

Instrumental Concert  
CFA Performance Hall - 7:30 p.m.

## MAY 2023

### Tuesday, May 2

Non-Major Student Recital  
CFA Recital Hall - 11 a.m.

### Friday, May 5

Spring Choral Concert  
CFA Performance Hall - 7:30 p.m.

## GALLERY SHOWS

### April 13

Senior Art Show  
Bailey Nelson "Everlasting"  
Virtual talk 3-4 p.m.  
In-person reception 4-5 p.m.

### April 26

Senior Art Show  
Jared Grommesh "Drawn In"  
Virtual talk 3-4 p.m.  
In-person reception 4-5 p.m.

### May 4

Juried Art Show

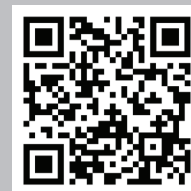


## Everlasting

Bailey Nelson's capstone exhibit, *Everlasting*, will be on display in the VCSU Center for the Arts Gallery April 3–14. Nelson will discuss her artwork in a livestreamed artist talk on Thursday, April 13 at 3 p.m. on Valley City State University's YouTube and Facebook pages. Following the talk, there will be a reception in the Center for the Arts gallery at 4 p.m.

Nelson's exhibit showcases typography through font creation, hand lettering and poster design. Through her work, Nelson wants viewers to see how the classic practices of hand lettering and typography have developed alongside technology. A virtual tour of *Everlasting* is available on the VCSU Art Department Facebook page. The virtual tour and all artwork images can also be found on Nelson's website: <https://bayknelson.wixsite.com/my-site-2>

Nelson is an Art and Digital Design double major with a minor in marketing. After graduation, Nelson plans to pursue a career in graphic design and continue working as a freelance hand lettering artist.



## Solo Song Symposium

High school vocalists were invited to join the Music Department at VCSU for the Solo Song Symposium, March 3-4. This festival is designed to prepare high school students for Solo and Ensemble Contests by providing the opportunity to work on their solo repertoire through lessons and masterclasses with three clinicians while developing their skills as a choral singer with VCSU's Concert Choir. The VCSU Concert Choir kicked off the festival with a concert featuring the clinicians on Friday, March 3. High school students joined the VCSU Concert Choir Saturday, March 4, for a closing concert. Watch the livestream from the VCSU Concert Choir on the Valley City State University Music youtube channel or scan this QR code.



# ALUMNI CORNER

Kim Svenningsen-Hesch, '91  
Asst. Director for University Advancement and Alumni Relations

As an alumna of Valley City State University, I could not be prouder of the University's accomplishments. We are having a wonderful 2022-23 academic year. In early February our staff traveled to Arizona to catch up with our alumni that live and winter there. Our staff enjoyed our time there, sharing the latest campus news (see page 13 for photos).



Svenningsen-Hesch

The VCSU Foundation and Alumni office is a liaison between alumni and the university and provides opportunities for alumni to stay connected to their alma mater. We work hard to communicate messages to our alumni that support recruitment and retention of students as well as fundraising goals. We encourage alumni to keep their contact information updated so we can share news, events and networking opportunities. We look forward to helping to facilitate class reunions and homecoming activities.

The students who attend Valley City State University depend on the support of alumni. Without the participation of alumni assisting with fundraising and scholarship initiatives, the students and university cannot succeed. I

encourage you to re-establish your commitment to our students and to Valley City State University through your continued involvement. As alumni it is not only our responsibility, but our duty to give back.

In January and February, we conducted our annual Phone-a-thon. We need your help in reaching our phone-a-thon goal! I would like to personally ask you to support VCSU's Phone-a-thon. You can make an investment in your alma mater and ensure that the students of today have the same opportunities and quality experience as you did at Valley City State University!

Thank you to all the alumni who have already made their commitment and donated to our annual Phone-a-thon. For a listing of alumni who have already donated to the VCSU Phone-a-thon, see page 14. To join these alumni, please use the envelope inserted in the Bulletin and mail in your contribution today. Better yet, make your contribution online at [vcsualumni.org](http://vcsualumni.org) or scan the QR code located on this page.

To update your information and re-connect to the University, please fill out this form. Alumni and friends—I look forward to your continued support of Valley City State University. It is an honor and privilege to serve you and our alma mater.

Go Vikings!



DONATE TO THE  
PHONE-A-THON



UPDATE YOUR  
INFORMATION

## Alumni Anecdotes



### Tasha Piehl-Thomas, '18

Tasha, a business process integration management graduate, was encouraged by her professor to apply for an internship at Doosan Digital Innovation America (DDIA) during her undergrad. After she found the courage to apply, that opportunity led her down a road she is still traveling. After graduating from VCSU, Piehl-Thomas went on to get her Master of Business Administration from the University of Mary. She is still working at DDIA. DDIA is owned by the same parent company as Doosan Bobcat, which is the larger Doosan company. Piehl-Thomas enjoys the new and innovative projects that she gets to be a part of. A primary part of her job is to provide IT services and solutions to the various Doosan affiliates. Piehl-Thomas is traveling to Seoul, South Korea in the upcoming weeks and looks forward to meeting the colleagues she virtually worked with for some time.



## VCSU Alumni Publish Book Together

Tom Sandhei, '64, and Tricia Velure, '95, share the inspiring story of Muriel, a quintessential Norwegian American farmgirl.

VCSU Alumni Tom Sandhei and Tricia Velure share many things in common. They grew up 20 minutes from each other, granted a few decades apart. They both graduated from VCSU and eventually settled in the Twin Cities area.

As parallel as their paths ran, they didn't come across each other until 2019.

"I wanted my grandchildren and their children to know about my mother," Sandhei explained. He started writing Muriel's story for a decade when family health issues took priority and the book was shelved.

After Sandhei, a former school administrator, lost his wife to Parkinson's disease, he was ready to pick the project back up, but wanted it to be a readable story.

Then a friend, also from North Dakota, told him about an article she read about Velure and her work to help families tell their stories. Sandhei made the call and he and Velure hit it off.

"Right away we got to work," Velure said. "He would share chapters with me and I would create a narrative around it." At first, the project was only intended for family members, but after putting together Muriel's story, the pair realized it may be of interest to a wider audience.

"It started as Tom's mom's biography, and ended as that," Velure explained, "but it is so much more. It's

the history of his family, a farm story, a story about the community and there was so much history happening all around them."

After the events of the book, Muriel went on to serve as the pastry chef at VCSU for more than 20 years. She retired in 1983 and passed away in 2004. But her story lives on in her children, her community, and now, in printed paperback form.

"It became very emotional for me," Sandhei said. "Even now for me to go back and read the story, it's difficult because of events that occurred during my lifetime."

Velure said working on the story with Sandhei was inspiring.

"What was especially inspiring is how Muriel responded to situations. She rose to the occasion in a way that was pretty remarkable," she said.



**Dust Yourself Off: The Gravel Road to a Good Life** is available from North Dakota State University Press and available at local booksellers or online.



# ➤ ARIZONA SOCIALS

**Back Row L to R:** President Alan and Kari LaFave, Cory '89 and Kristi (Tait) '93 Anderson and Dave '71 & Linda (Olson) '72 Koschney.

**Front Row L to R:** Dan '65 & Pat (Sheldon) '67 Parish, Glen Engle '61, Linda (Sander) '70 and Bob '68 McKenzie, Dan '72 & Marion Schlecht, Marie (Vining) '74 and Jerry '74 Topp.

Once again VCSU alumni and friends came together for the annual Arizona alumni events. Staff from the VCSU Foundation and Alumni office along with President Al LaFave and his wife Kari hosted events the weekend of February 3 and 4. Events include a social hour, lunch and a short

program from President LaFave on campus updates. This year a Young Alumni gathering was also held at a local pub. If you are an Arizona snowbird and would like to be part of our mailing list for the Arizona socials, please send your contact information to [alumni@vcsu.edu](mailto:alumni@vcsu.edu).

**Back Row L to R:** Terry Dunphy '68, Brad Rice '75, Dave Hodgson '73, Steve Rice '75, President Alan and Kari LaFave, Judy Mathias, Jane Lemnus, Bob Horne '59, Bill Schaller '74, George Berger '74 and Al Dosch '55.

**Front Row L to R:** Georgia (Vaughn) Rice '75, Marilyn (Orn) Hodgson '73, Rod Olin '74, Leona and Curt '62 Olson, Don Lemnus '58, Deanne (Roseth) Horne '60, and Carol Schaller.



**Back Row L to R:** Larry Hodgson '69, Dale Hillstrom '69, Tom Kinn '87, President Alan and Kari LaFave, Jeff Bopp '99, Chad '94 and Kelly (Olson) '96 Anderson, Jim Egeberg and Cory Anderson '89.

**Front Row L to R:** Dee (Isensee) Hillstrom '69, Mr. and Mrs. Joe '67 Welder, Deb (Hill) Bopp '77, Gary and Lori Thompson, Pat Egeberg, and Kristi (Tait) Anderson '93.



## MESA YOUNG ALUMNI GATHERING

**L to R:** Cory Anderson '89, Klay Donaldson (holding Kooper Donaldson), Erick and Barb (Ector) Dameron '16, Kaitlyn (Langdon) Donaldson '16, Aurissa (Martens) Brinson '15, Kim Svenningsen-Hesch '91, Sierra (Even) '15 & Thomas Cortez '15 and Kristi (Tait) Anderson '93.



# Phone-a-Thon & Giving Hearts Day

The VCSU Alumni Association's annual Phone-A-Thon, one of our major activities each academic year, allows our alumni to show their Viking Pride in supporting our university. Donations allow us to stay in touch with alumni in several important ways, including publication of The Bulletin, hosting socials and reunions, sponsoring alumni award programs and supporting programs on the campus of Valley City State University. The Phone-A-Thon also provides scholarship support to our current students attending VCSU.

By supporting the annual Phone-A-Thon, you can help VCSU achieve the strategic initiatives underway that move VCSU forward.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the 2023 Alumni Phone-A-Thon. The following list includes cash donations and payment on pledges received as of March 15, 2023.

If you haven't made your donation, there is still time! Send your contribution today or find us on the web at [www.vcsualumni.org](http://www.vcsualumni.org) and click on the "Make a Gift Online" button. We accept Visa, Discover and MasterCard, or if you prefer, call the VCSU Foundation Office at 701-845-7203. Thank you for your continued support.

♥ Indicates the donor gave on Giving Hearts Day

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 ♥Virginia A. Moran  
 ♥Maara B. Nelson  
 Taylor J. Nelson  
 Robert G. Nielsen  
 Jenna M. Nordquist  
 ♥Anne M. Nyberg  
 ♥Rod & Judy Olin  
 ♥Casey & Kari Olney  
 Al & Trisa Olson  
 Jacob & Jessica Olson  
 Kaye M. Omdahl  
 ♥Susan K. Paulson  
 Dennis Pederson  
 Jean M. Peterson  
 Lucas R. Potter  
 ♥Mark & Cora Potts  
 ♥Jane T. Radig  
 ♥Scott & Lynn Rerick  
 John A. Richardson  
 ♥Dave & Patti Rickford  
 Joshua W. Rode  
 Florene Rogne  
 ♥Shirley D. Ruud  
 Mark & Jodi Sand  
 ♥Scott & Traci Sand  
 David A. Sather  
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 Donna J. Scherr  
 Leo & JoAnn Schmidt  
 ♥Terry A. Schock  
 Becky & Darrell Schroeder  
 Donald H. Schuler  
 Janet Simon  
 ♥David A. Smith  
 ♥Kyle & Layne Smith

♥Patricia L. Smith  
 Shirley L. Sobolik  
 ♥Heather & Brandon Solberg  
 JoAnn D. Spickler  
 ♥Robert J. Stack  
 Bruce & Cyndi Stein  
 ♥Dean & Charlene Stenson  
 Carlyn A. Stevens  
 Thomas S. Stingl  
 Barbara A. Stockstad  
 Darwin & Jackie Subart  
 Lisa K. Symens  
 Elaine K. Theisen  
 Jeff Thompson  
 ♥Paula & Mark Thomsen  
 Otto & Linda Uhde  
 ♥Jim & Becky Ukestad  
 ♥Lacey & Jeremy Undem  
 Jessie Urlaub  
 Carolyn Utke  
 ♥Cindy K. Waagen  
 Alice L. Walz  
 Francis E. (Hank) Weber  
 ♥Kenneth P. Weshnevski  
 Theodore W. Wieser  
 ♥Annette M. Willis  
 Lorraine A. Wooten  
 Stuart E. Wyum  
 ♥Dustin & Alyssa Yorek  
 Wayne Ystaas  
 ♥Tracie & Ryan Zaun

**These donors gave on Giving Hearts Day to other VCSU Funds.**

♥Elaine Kluck  
 ♥Jarvis & Alesha Knudson  
 ♥Dennis McCulloch  
 ♥Dan & Katherine McRoberts  
 ♥Michael Mikkelson  
 ♥Isaac & Katie Olson  
 ♥Carl & Evelyn Peter  
 ♥Jonna Reule  
 ♥Charles & Colleen Zick



**Thank you for making Giving Hearts Day a success!**

**255 Donors  
 \$35,035 Raised**

# Alumni Anecdotes



## Ryan Hanson '92

DEVILS LAKE, N.D. — Ryan Hanson, principal of Devils Lake High School, has been named North Dakota Principal of the Year by the North Dakota Association of Secondary School Principals.

Hanson strives to build relationships throughout the school and community, while assisting every student to become the very best version of themselves, according to a news release.

“His leadership promotes engagement, perseverance and advocacy for self and others,” the release said.

Hanson, who has served as principal of Devils Lake High School since 2004, earned an undergraduate degree from Valley City State University in math education, and completed a master’s degree in educational leadership at UND.



SAVE THE DATE

# Homecoming

September 22-23, 2023

The VCSU Alumni Association invites you to join alumni and friends of VCSU for many of the activities we have planned for Homecoming this fall. These are just a few of the events planned. Watch our website at [vcsualumni.org](http://vcsualumni.org) as more events are added.

### Monday, September 18

41<sup>st</sup> Annual Bill Osmon Fun Run 4:00 p.m. Lokken Stadium

### Friday, September 22

Alumni Welcome Back Ice Cream Social 2:30 p.m. Student Center – Upper Lounge

VCSU Bookstore Open 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Student Center

Campus Tours 3:00 p.m. Student Center

Hall of Fame Social 5:00 p.m. Valley City Eagles

Hall of Fame Banquet & Ceremony 6:00 p.m. Valley City Eagles

### Saturday, September 23

Alumni Honors Breakfast 8:30 a.m. Student Center Cafeteria

VCSU Bookstore Open 8:00 a.m. – noon Student Center

Homecoming Parade 10:30 a.m. Central Avenue

Viking Tailgating noon – 2:00 p.m. Lokken Stadium

Vikings vs. Mayville State University 2:00 p.m. Shelly Ellig Field

Postgame and All-Alumni Social 5:00 p.m. Valley City Eagles

College Student and Alumni Dance 9:00 p.m. Valley City Eagles

For up-to-date schedules and more information,  
visit [www.vcsu.edu/homecoming](http://www.vcsu.edu/homecoming) or call 701-845-7203.



## Coaching and Leadership Support – BE Viking

Dennis McCulloch, Interim Athletic Director

I've been asked a lot over the last few months about how I'm handling being the Interim Athletic Director and Head Football Coach, and that question



is probably better answered by our coaching staff. Nothing is ever perfect and never will be but having a high-quality athletic department that has experience, passion, knowledge in their sport or area of expertise (athletic training, strength & conditioning, office management, equipment) has made the opportunity possible for me to manage both roles.

When I was appointed Interim AD, we also named Anna Bratsch, Casey Olney and Mark Potts to Assistant AD positions to help cover workload, and they are doing a great job. I'm enjoying the opportunity to help lead our department and take on a different leadership role. Someone asked me why you would want to do both roles and I said "money" so I can sustain my high lifestyle of living in beautiful Valley City. I hope when

you read that you chuckled. My love and passion is coaching football. It is my lifetime work, but I also understand we cannot advance our athletic department without the right leadership. I feel strongly that I can help lead our department because of my experience and developed relationships that are unique to me. I appreciate that Dr. LaFave has given me this opportunity to do both, and we are evaluating the ability of this to work in the future. Stay tuned!

As our athletic director, I'd like to encourage you to **BE Viking**. I've shared this with a lot of our football alumni in the past, and I believe it is a message for all our alumni and supporters. **What that means is to be actively involved in the future of Viking Athletics, not just a fan.** A fan is someone who cheers a team on and is a casual observer of what is happening but doesn't really have a true effect on the team's success.

We all can come up with great reasons not to get involved, but those reasons will not help VCSU or Viking Athletics be successful. As always, please feel free to contact me. I always enjoy talking with the people who made the tradition of VCSU and Viking Athletics so strong.

### How can you BE Viking and find ways to get involved in a successful future of our teams?

- Be a member of Viking Century Club, V-500, etc. and find ways to give resources
- Come to events: games, golf, socials, homecoming, etc.
- Help recruit athletes from your area
- Stay up to date: check out our website, Bulletin, talk with alumni
- Positively promote VCSU and Viking Athletics – wear VCSU gear and talk about the positive affect it had on your life
- Find ways to donate your time and talent to Viking Athletics or VCSU

# Basketball Season



## Men's Basketball

The Valley City State men's basketball team advanced to the conference tournament semifinal round for the third straight season this year.

The Vikings finished the 2022-23 season with a 16-14 overall record and an 8-6 mark in conference play. VCSU earned the #4 seed for the North Star Athletic Association postseason tournament and opened it with an impressive 72-54 win over #5 Bellevue University. VCSU's season came to an end at the NSAA Final Four in Watertown, S.D., losing 102-82 to eventual conference champion Mayville State.

Senior guard Daevonte Munson was named 1st Team All-Conference after an impressive season as one of VCSU's go-to options. He led the team in scoring at 14 points per game and was even better down the stretch, averaging 18 points and six rebounds per game over the second half of the conference season.

Sophomore guard Cayden Rickard was named Honorable Mention All-Conference after averaging 11 points, two assists and two steals per game. Senior guard Duoth Gach was named

to the All-Defense Team – which recognized five players throughout the conference. Gach excelled at the top of VCSU's zone defense, which forced teams into almost 19 turnovers per game this season – best in the NSAA. Gach led the Vikings with 56 steals during the regular season and averaged 11.4 points per game.

Senior Hunter Sand was named VCSU's Champions of Character representative, a student-athlete who best represents the NAIA's five core values of integrity, respect, responsibility, sportsmanship, and servant leadership.

Sand, Munson and Gach are among eight seniors who will graduate the program this season. Other seniors include Edmon Paul Oyet, Tate Hebrink, Will Tinjum, Keaton Kvilvang and Matthew Schlottman.

Over the past three seasons, that group of seniors helped the Vikings to a 53-32 overall record (.624 win pct) and a 25-17 record in conference play.

The Vikings were exceptionally good at home during the 2022-23 season, going 11-3 overall in home games and 7-1 against conference opponents. ♦

## Women's Basketball

The Valley City State women's basketball team concluded the 2022-23 season with two All-Conference selections and a .500 overall record. In head coach Vanessa Johnson's sixth season leading the Viking squad, VCSU went 14-14 on the season and finished with a 7-7 record in conference play. The Vikings earned a No. 5 seed in the postseason, falling to No. 4 Dickinson State in the NSAA Quarterfinals.

Ashlyn Diemert earned Second Team All-Conference after leading the Vikings in scoring this season, averaging 11.3 points per game overall and 14 points per game in conference play. The West Fargo, N.D. native provided the highlight of the season, scoring the game-winning basket at the buzzer as part of a career-best 23-point effort at Viterbo on Feb. 4.

Taryn Dieterle was named Honorable Mention All-Conference for the second straight season. Dieterle averaged 11.1 points per game while shooting 44 percent from the field for the Vikings. The Valley City native grabbed 6.3 rebounds per game and added 33 total assists this season. She scored a season-high 21 points in a non-conference victory over Presentation College on Nov. 19.

Emma Nielsen was named VCSU's Champion of Character, awarded to a student-athlete who best represents the NAIA's five core values of integrity, respect, responsibility, sportsmanship, and servant leadership.

The Vikings graduate five seniors with this year's team: Dieterle, Nielsen, Meredith Dumas, Allie Critchley and Bayli Heap. ♦

# HALL OF FAME



Valley City State University will induct five individuals and one team into the VCSU Athletics Hall of Fame during Homecoming weekend this fall.

Aaron Kramlich, Joe Maresh '07, Travis Lester '07, Megan Floerke '10 and Heidi Larson '10 will be inducted into the Vikings Hall of Fame as individuals. The 2005 Football Team will also be inducted.

The induction ceremony takes place Friday, Sept. 22, in Valley City during VCSU's Homecoming weekend. For tickets or more information about the induction ceremony, please contact the VCSU Alumni Office at 701-845-7203.

## 2005 Football Team

The 2005 VCSU football team was Co-Conference Champion with Dickinson State, finishing with a 7-3 overall record and a 6-1 mark in the Dakota Athletic Conference. The Vikings recorded two shutouts and held opponents to just 14 points per game. VCSU's defense forced a school-record 38 turnovers (23 fumbles and 15 interceptions) as the team led the entire NAIA with a +2.1 turnover margin. The Vikings were 6th in the nation in points allowed (14/game) and 10th in yards allowed (284/game). Travis Lester (OL), Barrett Sczepanski (TE), Joe Maresh (DE) and B.J. Ingram (DE) were named 1st Team All-Conference. Earning 2nd Team All-Conference were: Rochenel Absolu (WR), Chad Lueck (QB), Bryce Kilmer (OL), Chauncey Calhoun (DB) and Jeremy Payne (LB). Maresh and Lester were named Honorable Mention All-American.



### Photo Outline for 2005 Football Team

Row 1, from left: Coach Cory Anderson, Rochenel Absolu, Raymond Caylor, Chad Lueck, Jeremy Payne, Kenard Walker, Matt Axtman, Coach Dennis McCulloch, Travis Lester, Brett Kilmer, Bryce Kilmer, Michael Wagner, Barrett Sczepanski, B.J. Ingram, Nate Pecoraro, Coach Gregg Horner.

Row 2: Coach Nat Hill, Brandon Siverson, Jordan Fylling, John Grohol, Chauncey Calhoun, Justin Folk, Jason Beilke, Mike O'Leary, Greg Innocent, Shane Ross, Brandon Albrecht, Taylor Albrecht, John Lahr, Reece Henrickson, Coach Dave Rausch.

Row 3: Coach Travis Engen, Ryan Drinkwater, Jonathan Anderson, Chris Triana, Chris Rogers, Jon Rogers, Dakota Craig, Scott Norman, Garrett Foss, Charles Spencer, Sean Ritchie, Kelly Coghlan, Nick Hutchinson, Gracy Mwamba, Coach Travis Anderson.

Row 4: Coach Brandon Bartsch, Travis McGahan, Dan Ryba, Jake Fylling, Brett Stanhope, Michael Weber, Brian Wieland, Paul Mehle, Chris Wendt, Quentin Sterling, Daniel Tuhy, Tate Goeden, Joe Maresh, Jesse Shearon, Coach Erik Monson.

Row 5: Coach Pat Metzger, Cole Halland, Herbert Obah, Timothy Woods, Clint Klemisch, Randy Hjort, Michael Hollett, Eric Cliplef, Rodrigo Gaitan, Brandon Brown, Mark Bishop, Adam Berger, Marty Stokes, Coach Chris Meyer.

Row 6: Sara Roth, Brad Elliott, Daniel Bessler, Nathan Lutkemeier, Jeremiah Stokka, Jason Hollett, Dustin Brandt, Raymond Ledet, Tony Jenkins, John Jacob, Eric Spooner, Codi Shemon, Kyle Anderson, Jackyson Bazile.

Row 7: Iotamo Falealili, Dion Williams Jr., Marineo Toslluku, Camden Kretchman, Kristopher Nickson, Justin Ballek, Rashad May, Elyjag Harris, Kirk Wieland.



## Joe Maresh '07

Glencoe, Minn.  
Football, 2002-06

Joe Maresh came to VCSU an undersized defensive lineman and left as a two-time All-American, shredding offensive linemen with his speed and wreaking havoc in the offensive backfield. He tallied 20.5 sacks and 41 tackles for loss (TFL) over his final two dominant seasons. Maresh was named 1st Team All-Conference and Honorable Mention All-American as a junior in 2005, helping the Vikings to a conference title with 22 TFL and 9.5 sacks. As a senior in 2006, Maresh totaled 11 sacks and 19 TFL, earning 1st Team All-American and 1st Team All-Conference honors. For his career, Maresh finished with 148 tackles, 46.5 TFL and 23.5 sacks. Maresh holds the school records for both single-season TFL (22) and career TFL (46.5).



## Travis Lester '07

Milbank, S.D.  
Football, 2002-05

Travis Lester made his mark as a dominant offensive lineman on the Valley City State football team in the 2000s. A native of Milbank, S.D., Lester played for the Vikings from 2002-05, earning two All-Conference selections and one All-American honor. He was named 1st Team All-Conference as junior in 2004. During his senior season of 2005, Lester helped the Vikings to a conference championship and earned 1st Team All-Conference and Honorable Mention All-American.



## Aaron Kramlich

Kulm, N.D.  
Football, 1983, 85-87

Aaron Kramlich excelled as an elusive and efficient running back for the Vikings in the 1980s, taking full advantage of his touches. Kramlich averaged more than 7 yards per carry over his Viking career, ranking second in VCSU history. He scored 23 total touchdowns (8th in VCSU history) and ranks 6th all-time with 19 rushing TDs. His 1987 season was one for the record books as he averaged 103 all-purpose yards per game and scored 15 total touchdowns in nine games. Kramlich was named 1st Team All-Conference and earned the team's Top Offensive Player Award after his senior season in 1987. He finished his career with 1,205 rushing yards on just 168 carries (7.17 yds/carry).



## Heidi (Larson) Backstrom '10

Grand Rapids, Minn.  
Volleyball/Women's Basketball, 2005-10

Heidi (Larson) Backstrom was a dual-sport athlete at VCSU, earning most of her accolades as one of the best hitters in Viking volleyball history. A native of Grand Rapids, Minn., Heidi was the DAC Freshman of the Year in 2005 and went on to be named All-Conference each of her four seasons on the volleyball court – topping 400 kills in each of her final three seasons. As a senior, Heidi totaled 545 kills (4.78/set) and was named DAC Player of the Year, Northwest Region Player of the Year and 1st Team All-American. She holds the school career record for kills per set (4.09) and ranks second in school history with 1,698 total kills. Heidi was also a key role player for women's basketball and as a senior she averaged 6.3 points, 4.1 rebounds and 1 block per game.



## Megan (Floerke) Jacob '10

Inver Grove Heights, Minn.  
Volleyball, 2005-08

Megan (Floerke) Jacob finished her Viking career as the school's all-time assist leader, leaving her mark as one of the best setters in Viking volleyball history. A native of Inver Grove Heights, Minn., Megan has three of the Top 10 assist seasons by Viking setters. She is the only Viking setter to top 4,000 career assists, finishing with 4,217. Her 245 service aces also rank her second in Viking history. Megan earned All-Conference honors each of her four seasons, collecting two 2nd Team honors and two Honorable Mention honors. She was a 5-time conference setter of the week and twice earned the Region Setter of the Week award.

# INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD



Jaiden Peraza and Taylor Sargent both qualified for the NAIA National Championship as the Viking Track & Field teams put together a largely successful indoor season this winter.

Peraza qualified for nationals in the men's high jump, where he placed 12th in the entire NAIA by clearing 2.01 meters at the national meet. Peraza had a top mark of 2.03 meters during the season.

Sargent qualified for the national meet in the women's 60-meter hurdles. She placed 29th out of 46 competitors at nationals with her prelim race time of 9.05 seconds. Sargent set a new school record with her best time of 9.02 seconds earlier in the season.

Viking athletes had five All-Conference performances at the NSAA Indoor Conference Championships on Feb. 19. Jaiden Peraza led the way on the men's side with a pair of All-Conference finishes. Peraza tied for second in the men's high jump, clearing 1.96 meters, and set a new personal record in the long jump (6.74 meters, 22-1.5) to place second as well.

Valley City State's women had three third-place finishes for their All-Conference honors. Taylor Sargent lowered her own school record in the 60-meter hurdles, placing third with a time of 9.02 seconds. Jasmine Barnes ran three races at the meet and had three Top 8 finishes in the distance events. Barnes earned All-Conference and took third in the 5000 meters with a personal-best time of 19:36.19.

In the shot put, Sadie Hansen placed third to earn All-Conference as well. She recorded a top mark of 11.91 meters (39 feet, 1 inches).

The top three individuals in each event earned All-Conference, and the top eight finishers scored team points. Valley City State's women totaled 47 team points as they finished in fourth place out of seven teams at the conference meet. The Viking men scored 31 points to finish seventh.

VCSU begins the outdoor season in late March. The NSAA Outdoor Conference Championships are scheduled for May 11-12 in Dickinson.

## 2023 OUTDOOR TRACK AND FIELD

April 1  
Al Bortke Open  
Bismarck, N.D.

April 14  
Blue Hawk Games  
Dickinson, N.D.

April 15  
Al Cassell Classic  
Jamestown, N.D.

April 21-22  
Bison Open  
Fargo, N.D.

**April 26**  
**Viking Twilight**  
**Valley City, N.D.**

April 29  
Ron Masanz Classic  
Moorhead, Minn.

May 5  
NDSU Tuneup  
Fargo, N.D.

May 11-12  
NSAA Outdoor Championships  
Madison, S.D.

May 24-26  
NAIA Outdoor National Championships  
Marion, Ind.





# SPRING BASEBALL

April 1  
Viterbo University\* (DH)  
12 p.m.

April 4  
Mayville State University\*  
TBA

**April 7**  
**Presentation College\* (DH)**  
**2 p.m.**

**April 8**  
**Presentation College\* (DH)**  
**12 p.m.**

**April 11**  
**Dickinson State University\***  
**3:30 p.m.**

**April 14**  
**Waldorf University\* (DH)**  
**1 p.m.**

**April 15**  
**Waldorf University\* (DH)**  
**12 p.m.**

April 21  
Dakota State University\* (DH)  
1 p.m.

April 22  
Dakota State University\* (DH)  
12 p.m.

April 25  
University of Jamestown  
TBA

April 28  
Mayville State University\* (DH)  
1 p.m.

April 29  
Mayville State University\* (DH)  
1 p.m.

May 5-8  
NSAA Tournament

# SPRING SOFTBALL

**April 1**  
**Bellevue University\***  
**2 p.m.**

**April 2**  
**Bellevue University\***  
**12 p.m.**

**April 5**  
**Mayville State University\***  
**2 p.m.**

April 7  
Viterbo University\*  
2 p.m.

April 8  
Viterbo University\*  
12 p.m.

April 12  
Mayville State University\*  
2 p.m.

**April 15**  
**Presentation College\***  
**2 p.m.**

**April 16**  
**Presentation College\***  
**12 p.m.**

April 19  
University of North Dakota  
3:30 p.m.

**April 22**  
**Waldorf University\***  
**2 p.m.**

**April 23**  
**Waldorf University\***  
**12 p.m.**

April 29  
Dakota State University\*  
2 p.m.

April 30  
Dakota State University\*  
12 p.m.

May 4-7  
NSAA Tournament



# GOLF

April 7-8  
Iowa Central Invite - Fort Dodge CC  
Fort Dodge, Iowa

April 17-18  
Dickinson State Invite - Heart River GC  
Dickinson, N.D.

April 24  
Jamestown Spring Invite - Jamestown CC  
Jamestown, N.D.

April 25  
VCSU/DSU Dual - CrossRoads GC  
Carrington, N.D.

May 1-2  
NSAA Championships - Plattview GC  
Bellevue, Neb.

# Just Married

Send us your wedding photo so we can include it in the next issue of **The Bulletin**. Email the photo and a short description to [kim.hesch@vcsu.edu](mailto:kim.hesch@vcsu.edu).



1



2



3



4

**1 - Stephanie Fettig '15** and Dylan Ripplinger were married October 9, 2022.

**2 - Allison Deal and Curtis Brisk '18** were married June 18, 2022 in Mobridge, SD. Curtis is in his 6th year teaching welding and small engines at Brainerd High School in Brainerd, Minn. He also coaches varsity football and wrestling and is the Supermileage Club advisor.

**3 - Tara Von Hagen '18** and Tom Tabatt were married on September 17, 2022. They met at VCSU their freshman year in 2014. Tara is the high school music director at Lisbon High School and Tom is an assembler at Bobcat.

**4 - Anne Welch and Nate Soulis '19** were married December 31, 2022. Nate is in his third year of teaching and coaching at Thompson Public School and Anne is in her second year of working on the Labor and Delivery floor at Sanford in Fargo. The couple resides in Grand Forks.

Not Pictured

Paige Emmel & **Marc Wagner '19**, July 30, 2022  
**Brooke Ronningen '19** & Alex Perleberg, August 6, 2022  
Lexie Coalwell & **Graham Sauve '22**, September, 17, 2022  
**Jaycee George '17** & Quintin Fisher, October 1, 2022  
Cassie Pike & **Grant Wehseler '20**, October 15, 2022  
**Mariah Smith '17** & Jonathon Dodge, October 29, 2022



**5 - Taren Braunberger '20** and Kyle Ravnaas were married October 22, 2022.



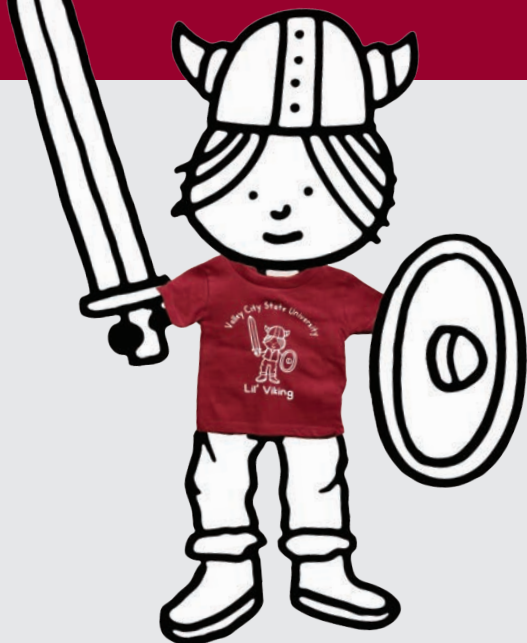
**6 - Mackenzie Huber '20** and **Carter Buelow '21** were married September 24, 2022. They are very grateful VCSU brought them together. Being teammates in track and field to being husband and wife is something they will never forget. GO VIKES!



**7 - Haley Olsen '21** and **Drew Jacobson '21** were married November 19, 2022, at St. Catherine's Catholic Church. They purchased their first home in October of 2021 in Valley City where they reside with their 2 dogs and 1 cat. After graduating from VCSU, Drew landed a job at North Star Ag where he is a sales coordinator and Haley works for J&S Marketing as the office manager.



**8 - Jenna Pommerer '22** and **Daniel Biggers '20** were married August 6, 2022. Daniel is working at Valley-Edinburg as a fifth grade teacher. Jenna graduated in December with a degree in Elementary Education.



# Lil' Vikings

Have you had an addition to your family?  
Share your good news with the Viking family!

Contact Kim Hesch at [kim.hesch@vcsu.edu](mailto:kim.hesch@vcsu.edu) to receive a free t-shirt for your new Lil' Viking. Include your baby's name and birth date. After you have your Lil' Viking shirt, send a photo to [kim.hesch@vcsu.edu](mailto:kim.hesch@vcsu.edu) so we can include it in the next issue of **The Bulletin**.



## Samuel Walter Blaufuss

**March 28, 2022**  
**8 lbs. 9 oz., 21.5 in.**

Lacey (Anderson) '07 and  
Tim Blaufuss



## Jackson Jay Larson

**June 27, 2022**  
**6 lb. 10 oz., 20 in.**

Big sister: Ellie (2 ½ years)  
Nicole (Mauch) '15 and  
Brandon Larson



## Rowan Finn Horner

**January 4, 2022**  
**8 lbs. 10 oz., 21 in.**

Big sister: Alexis (4)  
Ashley (Gierke) '12 and  
Nick Horner



## Finn Oivind Jorgensen

**February 2, 2022**  
**7lb. 14oz., 20.5 in.**

Siblings: Noah, Elise & Theo  
Alex & Megan Jorgensen



## Isla Anne Lentz

**October 18, 2021**  
**7 lbs. 5 oz., 20.5 in.**

Cameron '13 and Haley  
Lentz

Grandparents: Mike '88 and  
Kathy (Burchill) M.Ed. '07  
Lentz



## Stevie Alayna Paulsrud

**November 12, 2021**  
**6 lb. 12 oz., 19 in.**

Lakken (Rufsvold) '12 and  
Nick Paulsrud



# Vikings on the Move

Submit your latest news to  
alumni@vcsu.edu

## CLASS OF 1960s

**Jean (Henrickson) Peterson '68** is retired and spends her winters in Arizona.

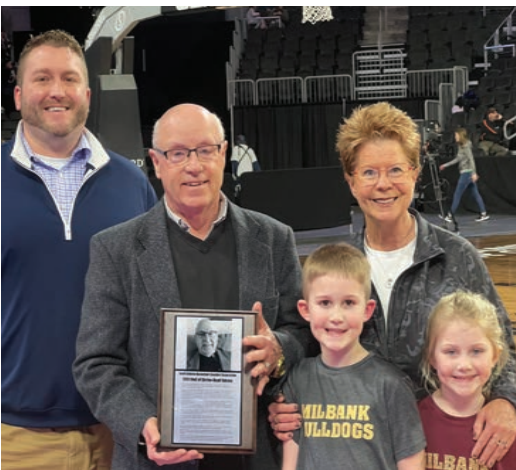
**Gary Rufsvold '68** was awarded the St. Joseph Award by the Academy of Holy Angels. It is a lifetime award for service to the school.

## CLASS OF 1970s

**Craig Sturlaugson '70** still does behind the wheel drivers training for Centennial Schools in Circle Pines, Minn. since retiring from teaching in 2003. Craig is also entering his 20th year ushering for the Minnesota Twins.

**Gene Edwards '72** and his wife, Stella, celebrated 50 years of marriage in the summer of 2022!

**Boyd '75** and **Kathy (Shape) Sussex '74** continue to enjoy retirement. Boyd subs often at a local tribal school and loves the connection with the students. He attends as many athletic events as possible. Kathy subs at their local school as she chooses. They make many trips to Grand Forks to spend time with their son, **Jackson '08**, and his family. Boyd is enjoying reconnecting with many of his VCSU friends. They love to have people stop and enjoy their lake home. Boyd was inducted into the South Dakota High School Basketball Coaches Association (SDHSBCA) Hall of Shrine on Friday, March 17. Sussex was involved in coaching for 33 years (31 as a head boys basketball coach). Kathy and Jackson and his grandchildren, Baker and Lauren, accompanied him to the event.



**David Katzenmeyer '78** says "hello" to all the VCSU alumni from the 1970's. Time has gone by fast with many great memories from his time at VCSU. David is still enjoying retirement. He hopes to see alumni at upcoming homecoming games. Go Vikings!

## CLASS OF 1980s

**Diane (Winter) Graff '82** said 2022 was a year of traveling for her and her husband. Travel included an extended stay in MO with the arrival of their grandson, Lane Claud. They love being grandparents.

**Laurel Westby '84** is in her 39th year of teaching (4 years at VCSU) and is hoping to get one more year to reach 40 years. Laurel and her husband, Neil, have 3 grown children. Their oldest daughter is engaged; their son, **Scott Westby '15**, works at MSUM and has a girlfriend. Their youngest daughter made them grandparents with a beautiful daughter who is 1 1/2 years old.

**Betty (Kuss) Schumacher '87** and her husband, Al, are proud grandparents of Koye and Kolton Grebel, 2023 ND State Wrestling Champions.

**Kris (McCarthy) Piehl** started a new job in August of 2022 at LaMoure County Public Health as an administrative assistant and prevention grant facilitator. She and her husband, Jeff, have been married for 30 years. Their oldest son, Devin, was married in September of 2021 and they are expecting their first child in April 2023. Their daughter, **Tasha (Piehl) Thomas '18** married Eric Thomas in August, 2022. Landon, their youngest son, attends VCSU and plays on the Viking baseball team.

## CLASS OF 1990s

**Durand Johnson '91** was promoted to director of Clark Planetarium in Salt Lake City, Utah, in March 2022. Duke and his wife, **Marsha (Walen) '93**, reside in Syracuse with their children.

## CLASS OF 2010s

**Jenna Sloan '18** continued her education and received her Master of Software Engineering degree from NDSU in May of 2022.

**Darika Lemna '19** graduated with an elementary education degree, endorsement in Kindergarten, and certificate in coaching. She is in her 3rd year of teaching 3rd grade in Mapleton and is absolutely loving it. Darika is also one of the coaches for their 5-6 grade volleyball team. She is currently working on getting her masters in teacher leadership and is loving getting the opportunity to grow in her career as a teacher. In her spare time, she loves spending time with her boyfriend, Chris, and their goldendoodles, Henry and



Sophie. They sure are busy, but couldn't imagine life any other way. Darika is thankful for all that VCSU provided her and she wouldn't be the teacher she is without such an amazing and supportive education program.

**Kylie (Scherr) Weber '19** is excited to share that she is in her first year of teaching kindergarten at Oakes Public School. Kylie has spent the past three years as a para.

# In Remembrance

**Joyce (Olson) Koehn '49**, Devils Lake, N.D.  
**Francis "Hank" Weber '51**, Casselton, N.D.  
**Lillian (Vogel) Junkert '55**, Jamestown, N.D.  
**Olive (Nelson) Jacobson '56**, West Fargo, N.D.  
**Doris (Swanke) Sauerland '56**, Broomfield, CO  
**Anna (Dahl) Haga '57**, Valley City  
**Evelyn (Haro) Johnson '57**, Aurora, Minn.  
**Nancy (Grotberg) Noblitt '57**, Meridian, Idaho  
**Anne (Johnson) Ringdahl '57**, West Fargo, N.D.  
**Gary Bryngelson '58**, Wilton, Minn.  
**Beverly (Hofstad) Quamme '58**, Fargo, N.D.  
**Arlene (Japel) Altringer '60**, Jamestown, N.D.  
**Charles Stenslie '60**, Broken Arrow, Okla.  
**Stuart Sander '61**, Faribault, Minn.  
**LeRoy Mackove '62**, Sauk Centre, Minn.  
**James Sosalla '62**, Blackfoot, Idaho  
**Janice (Bauch) Ernst '63**, Huntington Beach, Calif.  
**Kenneth Koppelman '63**, Spring, Texas  
**Wesley Peterson '63**, Valley City  
**Jean (Bartle) Salzsieder '63**, LaMoure, N.D.  
**Elwood Adams '64**, Fargo, N.D.  
**Mary (Kruschwitz) Schroeder '65**, Verona, Wisc.  
**Gail (Strand) Evans '66**, Sheldon, N.D.  
**Geraldine (Maasjo) Fairfield '66**, Fargo, N.D.  
**H. Kenneth Hanson '66**, Devils Lake, N.D.  
**Sharon (Olsen) Scharberg '66**, Hayfield, Minn.  
**June (Gale) Wicks '66**, Rochester, Minn.

**Ina (Peterson) Sabby '67**, Valley City  
**Robert Zollar '68**, Cold Spring, Minn.  
**Rosella (Keller) Amann '71**, Wheaton, Minn.  
**Mary Jane (Van Duyn) Manke '72**, Fargo, N.D.  
**Lorraine (Strang) Olson '73**, Fargo, N.D.  
**Harold Fass '74**, Prospect, KY  
**Norman Heron '74**, Grand Forks, N.D.  
**Carol (Larson) Holmstrom '74**, Fargo, N.D.  
**David Dunham '76**, Valley City  
**Jerry Rocheleau '76**, Rugby, N.D.  
**David Wileman '76**, West Fargo, N.D.  
**Betty (Linerud) Sjostrom '78**, Fargo, N.D.  
**Gary Olson '88**, Custer, S.D.  
**Patrick Windish '88**, Valley City  
**Emily (McDaniel) Kracht '99 M.Ed. '14**, St. Peter, Minn  
**Jon Person '06**, Lisbon, N.D.  
**Virginia Schmidt '06**, Fargo, N.D.

**Tom Breckheimer**, Luverne, N.D.  
**Maynard Satrom**, Oriska, N.D.  
**Gini Stevens**, Valley City  
**Bonnie Wieck**, Valley City

## Former Faculty & Staff

Jan. 13, 2023 – Larry "Buck" Grooters '75, Fargo, N.D.



## Continuing the Connection

If you know the address of any of these individuals, please contact the VCSU Foundation Office at 1-800-532-8641 ext. 37203 or email [alumni@vcsu.edu](mailto:alumni@vcsu.edu).



## Larry Grooters '57 - 1963-2005

Larry "Buck" Grooters, 87, Fargo, ND died on Friday, January 13, 2023 at his home.

Larry Leighton Grooters was born March 12, 1935 at Camp Crook, S.D. to George and Leone Grooters. He grew up in small towns in North Dakota following the travel of his dad being in education as a teacher and administrator. Larry, known to many as "Buck" graduated from Bowden High School and went on to receive a bachelor's degree from Valley City Teachers College in 1957. Larry married Hazel Ussatis on Aug. 18, 1957 in Valley City. He continued his education in Colorado where he earned his Master's degree in Physical Education. He taught school and coached in Casselton and Dickinson, N.D. In 1963, he returned to Valley City State University as a teacher and coach of track and field, cross country and assistant basketball and football. In 1971, he earned his Doctorate degree in Education from the University of North Dakota. In 1981, Larry was named

chair of the Division of Education at VCSU. He semi-retired in 2005, but continued to be a Director of Transition to Teaching Consultant at VCSU. Larry and Hazel moved to Fargo in December of 2012.

Larry took pride in being part of the VCSU community. He was awarded several honors throughout his professional career including: VCSU Hall of Fame, VCSU Distinguished Alumni Award and VCSU Coaches Hall of Fame, along with being inducted into the ND Officials Hall of Fame. Buck was an avid runner; participating in countless road races and completing over 10 marathons, most notably the Boston Marathon. He enjoyed Bible studies, gardening, fishing and visiting with people, he always wanted to know where everyone was from. He enjoyed nothing more than spending time with and supporting his children and grandchildren. Larry and Hazel also loved summers with family at Lake Ida near Alexandria, Minn.

### 1976

Cynthia Abraham  
Vernon Engblom  
Helen (Feist) Gassmann  
Lynda (Carlson) Goggin  
Judith Kaiser  
David Lloyd  
Adeline Thorne  
David Tischer

### 1966

Kathryn Eng-Eidsmoe  
Sandy (Rood) Heise  
Daniel Liberda  
Robert White

### 1978

Jeronald Davis  
Gayle Haugen

### 1979

Faye Anderson  
Tom Stevenson

### 1980

David Bjornson  
James Brewer  
James Clemens  
Charles Gibson  
Jon Gilbertson  
Roy Ottinger  
David Shorey

### 1981

Martin Dahl  
Thomas DeKrey  
Kim (Monson) Oberlander  
Evy (Lerfald) Schilling  
Sandra (Offner) Walser  
Jeanney (Hauff) Wright

### 1982

Julie Basingthwaite  
Lisa (Ham) Beckman  
Francine (Netzer) Harter  
Rick Reding  
Massoud Safiri  
Daniel Stephan

### 1983

Michael Brown  
Jane Habiger  
Sherri (Frederikson) Knutson  
Brooke Lilly  
Thomas Peterson  
Pauline (Gault) Wuori

### 1984

Barbara Bue  
Gayle (Gomke) Forester  
Deann (Olson) Holm

Lori (Krueger) Oldenburg  
Debra (Goehring) Olson  
Brian Samdahl  
Michael Thompson  
Christine Wiese  
Evelyn (Laube) Youle

### 1985

Ronald Reardon  
Lisa Tollefson-Larson  
Susan Whitney

### 1986

Janette Erickson  
Corrine (Marsh) Oberlander  
Shannon Rose  
Joel Strom



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**PARENTS:** If this issue is addressed to your son or daughter who no longer lives at this address, please contact the Alumni Office with an updated address at [alumni@vcsu.edu](mailto:alumni@vcsu.edu) or 701.845.7203. Thank you for your help in keeping our records current.



Know a high school junior or senior  
who could be a future Viking?  
**[VCSU.edu/visit](http://VCSU.edu/visit)**