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CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL FOUNDATION

Eagle News *September 2026*



After 10 years of service as our Finance Manager, we'd like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Joanne Wagner Givens, CHS 1968. You will always be family to us, Joanne. Thank you for everything!



Dear Supporter,

Fall is almost here! Central recently opened its doors to the class of 2030, and we want to welcome them to the Eagle family!

The Central High School Foundation has several alumni events on the horizon. The Central High School Hall of Fame ceremony will be on October 8th, 2026, so register today to be part of the fun! Our Passing Periods: Alumni Luncheon, featuring guest speaker Alex Harz, CHS 1991, will be on October 9th, 2026. Click here to reserve your spot!

Keep an eye out for our 2026 Annual Report! Every graduate and supporter will receive one in the mail over the next couple of weeks. This year's annual report details what was accomplished during the 2025-26 fiscal year. I want to thank our

Creative Director and Database Administrator, Josh Bucy, for creating the Annual Report. A reminder that if you haven't received our mailings recently, we encourage you to update your record to ensure that we have your current contact information.

As always, thank you for helping perpetuate more than 167 years - and counting - of tradition and excellence.

Go Eagles!
Sincerely,

Michele Roberts
Michele Roberts, Executive Director

Passing Periods: Alumni Luncheon Series



Eagles all across Omaha are brushing shoulders for a quick hello during the Passing Periods: CHS Alumni Luncheon Series, and we hope to bump into you there! For $25, you can enjoy a great meal, catch up with friends you haven't seen since first period, talk with teachers who you haven't seen since homeroom, listen to a talk from our guest speaker, Alex Harz (CHS 1991). Guests are invited to arrive early for a special screening of Alex's documentary, "The Quest: Everest" at 9:45 in the ballroom. Guests may attend the screening or simply join us for lunch.

Friday, October 9th, 2026
Field Club of Omaha (3615 Woolworth Ave)
9:45 Screening of "The Quest: Everest"
11:30 AM Check in for Passing Periods

Thank you for your support. We will see you October 9, 2026!

Sign Up for Passing Periods

Register for Hall of Fame



The 27th Annual Central High School Hall of Fame Dinner and Ceremony will be held on Thursday, October 8, 2026, at Central High School. The Central High School Alumni Association is proud to induct ten individuals whose paths from the halls of Central High School led them to the highest levels of achievement in business and community service. Inductees are selected by the Central High School Alumni Association, and the program is presented by the Central High School Foundation. To learn more about the Alumni Association, click here.

Schedule of Events
Social Hour in Courtyard: 5:30 PM
Dinner in Courtyard: 6:15 PM
Ceremony in Auditorium: 7:30 PM

Thank you for your support. We will see you October 8, 2026!

Register for Hall of Fame

2026 Hall of Fame Inductees



Edward Bennett, Ed.D. *Distinguished Educator*

Dr. Ed Bennett is a distinguished educational leader whose career with Omaha Public Schools spans decades of dedicated service and impact. Beginning in 1995, he served in various roles across the district, including Assistant Principal at Central High School from 2006 to 2011 and later as Principal from 2013 to 2021. During his leadership at Central, Dr. Bennett helped usher in the International Baccalaureate program and led the development of the school's Library and Arts addition, strengthening both academic excellence and student opportunity. His steady guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated resilience and an unwavering commitment to students, staff, and the community. Known for his approachable leadership style, humor, and dedication to tradition, Dr. Bennett fostered a culture of pride, inclusivity, and achievement. His legacy is defined by inspiring generations of students and educators while elevating Central High School as a premier destination for learning.



Comfort Baker Caldwell *CHS 1889*

Comfort Baker Caldwell was a pioneering educator and trailblazer whose achievements broke barriers and reshaped opportunities for future generations. In 1889, she became the first African American woman to graduate from Omaha Public Schools, earning honors and demonstrating exceptional academic determination despite significant financial hardship. With the support of a local teacher, she attended Fisk University, where she again graduated with honors, beginning a lifelong commitment to education and service. Over a distinguished career, she taught for more than two decades and continued her professional development at institutions including the University of Southern California and the University of Arizona. Caldwell made history once again in Phoenix, becoming the first African American teacher and later the first African American principal in the Phoenix Union High School District. She also founded a school serving Black students in the community. Her enduring legacy reflects courage, leadership, and an unwavering dedication to education.

Comfort passed away in 1946 at the age of 76.

Alex Harz *CHS 1991*



Alex Harz has built an extraordinary career that combines adventure, filmmaking, international business, and storytelling. Born in Spain and raised in both Europe and Omaha, Harz developed an early passion for exploring the world and understanding different cultures. Following his studies at the University of Nebraska Omaha and the University of Colorado Boulder, he pursued careers in international business, sports marketing, and information technology before turning his focus to filmmaking and exploration. In 2018, he achieved a lifelong dream by summiting Mount Everest, joining a small group of individuals who have reached the world's highest peak. Drawing on that experience, he created "The Quest: Everest" and "The Quest: Everest VR," groundbreaking documentaries that bring audiences to the summit through immersive storytelling and virtual reality. His work has earned recognition at film festivals worldwide and reflects his commitment to education, adventure, and cultural understanding. Harz credits Central High School's diversity and strong sense of community with helping shape the values that continue to guide his work and inspire others.



Morris Jacobs *CHS 1914*

Morris Jacobs was a visionary entrepreneur, civic leader, and pioneer in the advertising industry. Beginning his career as a reporter for the *Omaha World-Herald*, he developed the storytelling skills that would shape his future success. In 1921, Jacobs co-founded Bozell & Jacobs in Omaha, growing the firm from a single desk into a nationally and internationally recognized advertising and public relations agency. Under his leadership, the agency helped shape modern communications and produced iconic campaigns while promoting major clients and community institutions, including Boys Town. Deeply committed to Omaha, Jacobs played a key role in supporting civic and cultural organizations, including Ak-Sar-Ben, the College World Series, the Omaha Symphony, and local universities. Recognized for both innovation and integrity, Jacobs exemplified the belief that success carries a responsibility to serve, leaving a lasting legacy in Omaha and beyond.
Morris passed away in 1987 at the age of 90.



Heather Schacht Reisinger, Ph.D. *CHS 1992*

Heather Schacht Reisinger, Ph.D. is a nationally recognized medical anthropologist and implementation scientist whose work has improved healthcare delivery across the United States. As a Professor of Internal Medicine at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine and inaugural Director of the University of Iowa Implementation Science Center, she has helped transform how scientific discoveries are

translated into effective patient care. Dr. Reisinger has secured more than $37 million in research funding, authored over 150 peer-reviewed publications and book chapters, and mentored numerous physicians and scientists. Her research has advanced the fields of rural health, telemedicine, veteran care, and healthcare quality improvement, influencing practice and policy. A respected scholar, educator, and mentor, she has dedicated her career to improving health outcomes through innovation and collaboration. Dr. Reisinger credits Central High School with introducing her to the field of anthropology, fostering her intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and lifelong love of learning that continue to guide her distinguished career.



Alvin R. Samuels Jr., DDS *CHS 2006*

Father, son, educator, military officer, dentist, and community leader describe Dr. Alvin Samuels. After earning his Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from Creighton University, he served five years on active duty as a dental officer in the United States Navy providing care to service members across multiple assignments. For his exemplary military service, he earned the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal and Surface Warfare Medical Department Officer designation.

Upon returning to Omaha, Dr. Samuels joined the Creighton University School of Dentistry as an Assistant Professor. A published researcher and award-winning educator, he has received Creighton's Dr. Harry & Maude Boyne Memorial Award for Outstanding New Faculty, the Student National Dental Association Faculty Member of the Year Award, and Summit Dental Health's Doctor of the Year Award. Through community health fairs, mentorship, charitable initiatives, and leadership within the Central High School Alumni Association, he embodies a lifelong commitment to service, education, and improving the lives of others.



Rachel Shukert *CHS 1998*

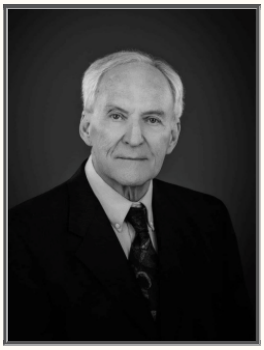
An acclaimed author, playwright, television writer, producer, and showrunner whose creative work has earned national recognition across literature and entertainment. A third-generation Central graduate, Rachel Shukert first distinguished herself on Central's stage in leading roles in *The Matchmaker* and *Fiddler on the Roof*, laying the foundation for a career in storytelling and performance. After graduating with honors from Central, she attended the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, earning her degree in 2002. Shukert has authored four critically acclaimed books, including the bestselling memoir *Everything Is Going to Be Great*, numerous articles, and nine plays performed in the United States and abroad. She later became a successful television writer and producer, contributing to

series including *GLOW*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *The 'Burbs*, earning two Emmy nominations and three Writers Guild of America nominations. As creator, showrunner, and executive producer of Netflix's *The Baby-Sitters Club*, she won two Emmy Awards and two Television Critics Association Awards. Shukert continues to develop and produce major television projects, carrying forward the creativity, passion, and love of storytelling first nurtured on the stages and in the classrooms of Central High School.



Muzette Hill Stallings, J.D. *CHS 1974*

A distinguished attorney, corporate leader, and advocate for diversity and professional excellence, Muzette Hill Stallings built an exceptional career in law, business, and public service. As Associate General Counsel for Ford Motor Credit Company LLC, she provided leadership in consumer finance litigation, strategic planning, international transactions, and operations. She previously led Ford Credit's litigation practice, overseeing complex legal matters and professional development for a 22-member department. Before joining Ford, Stallings was a partner with the Chicago law firm of Lord, Bissell & Brook, where she developed employment and directors' and officers' liability practices. A graduate of Northwestern University and the University of California, Berkeley, she also served as a judicial clerk for judges of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. Her honors include recognition in Crain's Chicago Business "40 Under 40," selection as a U.S. Delegate to the London School of Economics European Series, and the Black Women Lawyers Association Distinguished Service Award. Stallings exemplifies the excellence and achievement of Central High School alumni.



Gary Thompson, Ed.D. *Distinguished Educator*

Dr. Gary Thompson, Distinguished Educator, dedicated his career to advancing education and strengthening the Central High School community. Serving Omaha Public Schools from 1970 to 2002, he held roles as science teacher, department chair, assistant principal, and principal, leading Central High School from 1995 to 2002. Known for his visionary leadership, Dr. Thompson championed academic excellence, expanded honors and Advanced Placement opportunities, and promoted the integration of technology long before it became commonplace in education. He helped guide major school renovations, modernizing facilities and technology resources for future generations. A strong advocate for diversity, he viewed Central's inclusive culture as one of its greatest strengths. Dr. Thompson also helped form the Central High School Foundation. He was an advocate for the renovation projects that air-conditioned and modernized Central High for future generations of students and

athletes. Following retirement, he spent 16 years mentoring future educators, extending his legacy of leadership and service.



Matthew Wynn *CHS 2002*

A passionate advocate for public-service journalism, Matt Wynn has dedicated his career to ensuring that trusted, independent reporting remains relevant, accessible, and impactful in an ever-changing media landscape. His commitment to journalism began during his years at Central High School, where he developed the curiosity, storytelling skills, and sense of civic responsibility that would shape his professional career. As Executive Director of the Nebraska Journalism Trust, he leads the organization behind the *Flatwater Free Press*, a nonprofit newsroom producing some of Nebraska's most consequential investigative and community-focused reporting. Throughout his career, Wynn has held influential journalism positions in Nebraska and across the nation, including roles with *USA TODAY*, *MedPage Today*, *The Arizona Republic*, and *Springfield News-Leader*, championing innovative approaches to local news and civic engagement. At a time when traditional media faces significant challenges, his leadership reflects a deep belief that strong communities depend on well-informed citizens, exemplifying the values of service, integrity, and excellence fostered at Central High School.

Nominate Someone for Hall of Fame

Your Impact: CHS Softball



Last season, funds from the Foundation were able to buy the CHS softball team new uniforms!

Our ability to fund things like this is thanks to YOU, Eagle Nation! To continue making an impact, join Generation “C” today!

Join Generation “C”

Alumni Spotlight: DeAnthony Dial, CHS 2026



Since graduating from Omaha Central this past spring, DeAnthony has entered the fields of marketing and advertising full time. What started as something he was building on the side during school has grown into a real business. He recently entered a partnership with a fellow entrepreneur, and together they run Theodore Marketing. Some of the results DeAnthony is most proud of are helping one client generate $24,500 in new business from just $1,000 in advertising expenditures and assisting another client who saw $3,600 in results on day one of their partnership. They recently expanded into the car detailing and ceramic coating space, and in just the past week, they have booked 10–15 discovery calls with new prospects. Right now, they're focused on scaling the business into a consistent, high-performing operation. DeAnthony is aiming to hit his first $10K month, and by the end of the year, they plan to add two virtual assistants to help manage day-to-day operations as they grow.

"Looking back, I don't think I could've predicted how much building this while still in high school would shape where I am now. Central gave me the foundation to take a risk on myself, and I'm excited to see where the next chapter takes me. I'd love to stay connected with other alumni entrepreneurs; feel free to reach out anytime."
- DeAnthony - dedial2007@gmail.com

Nominate an Alum for the Spotlight

Back-to-School Teacher Luncheon a Success



Central faculty were welcomed back to the Nest at the annual Back-to-School Luncheon on Wednesday, August 12th at Field Club of Omaha. After being greeted with CHS themed goody bags, faculty were given raffle rickets and then sat down for a delicious Mexican buffet lunch.

Raffle prizes included CHS classroom door bookends, gift cards, Central swag, and more. Goody bags contained various classroom supplies to help them prepare for the coming school year.

Tons of fun was had by all! This event provides a special opportunity for teachers to catch up after the summer and enjoy each other's company. Your donation to the Central High School Foundation helps support our teachers at Central High School. To continue to help our Eagles soar, join Generation "C" today!

Join Generation "C"

CHSF Scholarships: Joshua Shapiro



Introducing the 2026 recipient of our Arthur, CHS 1914, and Genevieve K. Loomis Scholarship, Joshua!

"I will be attending Yale University this fall to study chemistry on a pre-medicine track. I am incredibly grateful for my time at Central, and am so proud to call myself a lifelong eagle. My life has been changed by the vibrant intellectual community and incredible mentorship I found within the International Baccalaureate program. As I head into the next chapter, I feel incredibly fortunate to have been shaped by Central's historic traditions and culture of infectious curiosity. My time at Central was profoundly shaped by Dr. Elliott, who sparked my passion for chemistry and inspired my future path; Mrs. Beitel, who provided me endless opportunities to grow and lead in the math department; and Mr. Wilson, who made history truly come alive. I am also especially thankful for the unwavering support of Mrs. Denton and Mr. Nielson, who welcomed me into the Central community from day one. Finally, I owe so much of who I am today to all of my teachers at Central who challenged, supported, and believed in me."

Congratulations, Joshua, and best of luck!

Learn More About CHSF Scholarships

New Episodes of Chatting at the C

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





Listen to Chatting at the C

2026-2027 Generation “C” Chair



Since graduating from Central High School in 2011, Kane Adkisson has built an internationally recognized culinary career while remaining deeply connected to the school that helped shape his journey.

Following elementary school at Belle Ryan and Swanson, and middle school at Westside, there was never much doubt about where Kane would attend high school. With a family legacy of Eagles, his mother and her sisters are all Central graduates, Central was always part of his future.

During his four years at Central, Kane valued the opportunity to learn alongside classmates from diverse backgrounds and cultures. His favorite course, Holocaust Literature, challenged him to think beyond the surface and engage deeply with history and humanity. A class trip to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., remains one of his most meaningful educational experiences and left a lasting impact on his perspective of the world.

After graduating from Central, Kane attended Metropolitan Community College’s Culinary Arts program. At just 19 years old, he moved to Oslo, Norway, to begin his professional career at the Michelin-starred restaurant Maaemo. Over the next several years, he trained and worked at some of the world’s most acclaimed restaurants, including Saison and Coi in San Francisco, as well as Crony and Nihonryori RyuGin in Tokyo. While living in San Francisco, Kane launched kanō, a pop-up dining concept designed to introduce diners to Nebraska through food. After returning to Omaha, he reimagined kanō as a private in-home dining experience, bringing a Michelin-level tasting menu directly to guests. In 2023, Kane and his team earned national recognition as James Beard Award semifinalists for Emerging Chef, and in 2024, he was featured by the James Beard Foundation, further establishing his reputation as one of the Midwest’s most innovative culinary talents.

Omaha is also where Kane met and married his wife, Meg. Together, they enjoy traveling, playing pickleball, cooking, and taking on home improvement projects. They are proud to call Omaha home and are committed to building their future in the community. Kane credits Central with providing the foundation that prepared

him for success both professionally and personally. His experiences at Central fostered an appreciation for culture, diversity, curiosity, and lifelong learning – values that continue to guide him today.

As Chair of the Central High School Foundation's Generation C Campaign, Kane is proud to give back to the school that invested in him and wants to ensure that current and future Eagles have access to the same life-changing opportunities and experiences that helped shape his own journey.

Join Generation "C"

Join the 1859 Society Today



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.

Join the 1859 Society

Upcoming Reunion Schedule



The class of 1965 at their reunion in 2025!

Class of 1961

August 21-23, 2026

Dick Zacharia - dickzacharia@gmail.com

Class of 1966

September 4-5, 2026

Cindy Hadsell – clhadsell@aol.com

Class Website

Class of 1976

September 11-13, 2026

Rosalyn Cotton - rosalyncotton56@gmail.com

Class Website

Class of 1981

September 4-5, 2026

Scott Barker - sbarker@episcopal-ne.org

Bob Atherton - athertonrobert8@gmail.com

Class of 1986

October 2-3, 2026

Becky Reynolds Crowell – rebeccajane67@gmail.com

Bart Lovgren – bartlovgren@gmail.com

Class of 1996

October 10, 2026

Kelly Titus - kellytitus@me.com

Sally Reiser Christensen - sallyachristensen@gmail.com

Class of 2001

October 2-3, 2026

Jenny Storm – Jennifer.storm@ops.org

Abby Waller – Abigail.waller01@gmail.com

Class of 2006

October 2-3, 2026

Hannah Andahl-Newman - hannahandahl@gmail.com

Jim Hubbard - James.d.hubbard@gmail.com

Alvin Samuels - alvin.samuels1@gmail.com

Class of 2016

September 11-12, 2026

Charita Dailey - daileycharita@gmail.com

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 Erika Buffington at events@chsfomaha.org or call 402-556-1996.

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