

CRUSADER UPDATE

Alumni, Development & School News

THE KNIGHT: AN EVENING OF IMPACT

A KNIGHT FOR GOOD

The annual The Knight fundraising event was held Friday, November 21, 2025, at Riverside Golf Club. This year's theme was *A Knight for Good*, where more than 450 guests gathered for an evening of fellowship, fun, and fundraising. This signature event raises funds for GICC's operating costs and educational initiatives. This year included raising funds to support teachers, maintain the elementary school, improve the track and equipment, and purchase new chairs for Masses, concerts, and performances.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the businesses, families, and community members who donated items, volunteered, and contributed funds to Grand Island Central Catholic. We are especially grateful for this year's chairs: Greg and Jennifer Alberts and Brandon and Stephanie Connick.

Thank you for your continued support and generosity of The Knight and Grand Island Central Catholic!

Over the past 28 years, The Knight has raised an astounding \$8.1 million for operating costs and educational initiatives at Grand Island Central Catholic



This year's The Knight fundraising event was a night to remember as Riverside Golf Club was transformed into the magical land of Oz for *A Knight for Good*. Guests enjoyed an immersive setting featuring moody lighting, oversized florals, floating bubbles, and elegant gold accents that brought the theme to life and set the tone for an evening of generosity and community.

The Knight once again demonstrated the powerful impact of collective support for Grand Island Central Catholic. Thanks to the generosity of attendees, sponsors, and donors, \$100,000 was raised for this year's featured Fund an Item supporting track improvements and new event chairs. These updates will enhance athletic programs and provide improved seating for Masses, concerts, and school

performances, benefiting the GICC community for years to come.

One highlight of the evening was recognizing Jolene Wojcik for her remarkable leadership and service to the Central Catholic Development Foundation. She plans to retire at the end of this school year. During her six years as Executive Director, Jolene led key initiatives, including the Elementary School capital campaign and construction. Through her leadership and commitment, more than \$20 million was raised for GICC.

A Knight for Good was not only a celebration of generosity, but also a powerful reminder of the people and purpose that make Grand Island Central Catholic thrive.



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NOTES

Winter is a wonderful time to reflect on all that makes Central Catholic so special, and this year our community has given us so much to celebrate. From the energy in our classrooms to the faith and kindness our students show each day, we continue to see God at work in our school.

One highlight of the season was *A Knight for Good*, which was our most successful event ever. With an outstanding theme and décor—and maybe a little extra excitement from having our football team in the State Championship game—spirits were high and generosity was overflowing. We're grateful to everyone who helped make The Knight such a success.

During the holiday season, our students also lived out their faith through service in a big way. They donated more than \$1,000 each to Mary's Cradle, the Central Nebraska Humane Society, and Hope Harbor Homeless Shelter, helped provide Thanksgiving baskets for 19 families (75 people), and supported our local homeless shelter with much-needed supplies. Their compassion and generosity are a beautiful example of what it means to be part of the Central Catholic family.

As we head into the rest of the school year, we're excited for what's ahead and so thankful for the support that surrounds our students every day. Thank you for being part of Central Catholic and for all you do to help our school thrive.

Many blessings,
JOLENE WOJCIK | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The Central Catholic Development Foundation is pleased to share that Emily Dexter has been hired as the next Executive Director. She has started her role and will work alongside Jolene Wojcik through the end of the 2025-2026 school year to ensure a smooth and thoughtful transition.

Emily is already a valued member of the GICC community. She previously served on the Board of Trustees, giving her a strong understanding of the Central Catholic Foundation's mission and priorities. She brings valuable fund development experience from her service on various boards and committees in the Grand Island area. Most recently, she served on the Grounded in Faith - Building Our Future capital campaign cabinet for the GICC Elementary School as part of the Lead Gifts team.

Emily holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and is a graduate of Daniel J. Gross Catholic High School in Omaha. She is also a member of the Hall County Leadership Tomorrow Class 30. Prior to this role, she worked in the City of Grand Island's Finance Department.

She and her husband, Josh (GICC Class of 2008), are proud parents of two daughters, one a current Crusader and the other a future Crusader. They are parishioners at Resurrection Catholic Church.

Please join us in welcoming Emily Dexter!

A KNIGHT FOR GOOD

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

\$40,000 OR MORE

Kim & Tom Dinsdale

\$10,000 OR MORE

Drs. Jennifer & Gregory Alberts, Grand Island Dermatology
Jean & Mike Hamik, U-Save Pharmacy
Abby & Jack Henry
Janie & Harry Hoch, Jr.
Kristen & Matt Maser, Five Points Bank
Sue & Tom Pirnie
Barbara & Dr. John Reilly
Cheri & Steve Schmidt

\$5,000 OR MORE

Anny & Dr. Josh Anderson
CHI Health - St. Francis
Dr. Susan Corey, Grand Island Dermatology
Laura & Ryan Dexter, Nebraska Fire Sprinkler Dormie Network
Exchange Bank
Grand Island Clinic
Hornady Manufacturing
Renee & Mark Miller, Eakes Office Solutions
Jama Obermiller-Miller & Adam Miller
Ashley & Brock Peters, Peters Painting
Kim & Steve Ryan, Northwestern Mutual; Alisa & Vince Ryan, Northwestern Mutual
Bana & Dr. CJ Stec, Stec & Stines Cosmetic and Family Dentistry
Kellie & Scott Weyers, U-Save Pharmacy

\$3,500 OR MORE

Janelle & Matthew Armstrong, Edward Jones;
Will Armstrong, Edward Jones
AMGL - CPAs & Advisors
Bryan - Grand Island Regional Medical Center
Chief Industries
Copycat Printing and Signs
Cornerstone Bank
Most Reverend Bishop Emeritas William
Dendinger
Dan Govier, Wells Fargo Advisors
Hamilton

Highstreet Insurance
Home Federal Bank
Island View Dental, Dr. Rick Kearns, Dr. Matt Serbousek & Dr. Riley Santin
Dr. Molly & Justin Johnson
Stacey & Mike Kalvoda, GO Physical Therapy
Drs. Jennifer & Jeff King
Lutz
Morledge Family
Pinnacle Bank
Amy & Todd Price
Surgery Group of Grand Island
Union Bank & Trust

\$2,500 OR MORE

Alissa Axford - www.investwithhfn.com
Stephanie & Brandon Connick
Rita & Jeff Hamik
Rita & Craig Hand, Howard's Jewelry
Dr. Kathryn & John Kenna
Kristen & Brett Klein, Flatwater Wealth, Inc.
Pioneer Hi-Bred
Jill & Dave Staab, Rose Mary & Ken Staab
Jolene & Tim Wojcik

\$2,000 OR MORE

Allen Capital Group
Equitable Bank
Kay Fowles
Katie & Dr. John Goering
Dr. Erica & Trevor Haake, Twin Loups Quality Meats
Marilyn & Dr. Richard Hoffmann
Majestic Treasures
Dana & Chris Rosacker, Blue Rose Agency

\$1,000 OR MORE

Ashley Brooke Jewelry
Big & J Industries
Fr. Jorge Canela
Drs. Lynda & Josh Conner
Crane Meadow Trust
Creighton University
Emily & Josh Dexter

Deterdings
Sonia & Ted Eden
Elite Dreamscapes, Steve Meyer
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Angie & Darren Hellbush
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Tami & Kevin Reilly
Christine & Jim Rein
Jane & Whitey Richardson
Riddles Jewelry
Karla & Dr. Steve Schneider
Michelle & Mike Schuster
Slumberland Furniture
Katie & Jeremiah Stump, Stump Construction
Bonna & Mike Wanek
Donna Wanitschke, Dee & Dr. G.H. Hanssen,
Dori Wanitschke

The Knight is our largest annual fundraising event. This year's *A Knight for Good* reached a new milestone. Thank you to our incredible community for making this year's event the most successful in Foundation history!

Grand Island Central Catholic Teacher Receives Excellence in Teaching Award



Grand Island Central Catholic is proud to celebrate Caitlin Stump as the recipient of the Kim Dinsdale Excellence in Teaching Award, presented by the Greater Grand Island Community Foundation. After being named a finalist for the award for two consecutive years, Mrs. Stump was selected in recognition of her consistent commitment to excellence and her unwavering belief that every student deserves a champion.

As a special education teacher at GICC, Mrs. Stump's impact goes far beyond the classroom. She has been a leader in establishing unified sports at GICC, creating meaningful opportunities for students of all abilities to compete, connect, and belong. Through this work, she has fostered understanding, inclusion, and respect among students, modeling what true community looks like in practice each day.

Mrs. Stump's dedication is rooted in relationships. She works across multiple

grade levels, allowing her to support and advocate for students throughout their educational journey. Her approach reflects deep care for students as individuals and a commitment to helping each one reach their potential.

Gratitude was central to Mrs. Stump's acceptance of the award. She expressed appreciation for her colleagues and students who make GICC a special place to learn and grow. She also expressed heartfelt thanks to the individual who nominated her for the honor, as well as to her husband and sons, whose love and support continue to inspire her work. Mrs. Stump's family, friends, and colleagues attended the presentation, celebrating with her.

Caitlin Stump's dedication, compassion, and leadership exemplify the spirit of the Kim Dinsdale Excellence in Teaching Award and the mission of Grand Island Central Catholic.

On December 19, the Greater Grand Island Community Foundation surprised Caitlin during Christmas Mass with the Excellence in Teaching Award. She was presented with a \$5,000 award check, and in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Kim West Dinsdale Excellence in Teaching Award, she also received a special bonus: a \$2,500 charitable gift to be directed to Hall County nonprofits of her choice.



A Hundred Years Young and Still Teaching

By Cathy Howard

My friend Peggy Ley is 100 years old.

I hadn't meant to call her today to blather on about death. Peggy's the most cheerful centenarian I know. All right, sue me. I don't know any others. Let's just say she's more cheerful than all the 90-year-olds I know, and I'm acquainted with two of them.

Peggy was my typing teacher at Central Catholic about a gazillion years ago. We eventually taught together and have remained close friends ever since. She lives in Arizona with her son RJ and daughter-in-law Barb, and whenever I call, she fills me in on her children, her grandchildren, and her great grandchildren.

"I hit the jackpot," she raves all the time. "I'm the most fortunate person alive."

At her hundredth year checkup, she sat next to RJ in the doctor's office and filled out the required paperwork.

Describe your current state of health, the form instructed. Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor.

Without hesitation, Peg checked Very Good. RJ made a noise.

"What?" she said.

"Mom," he shook his head. "You're a hundred years old, you're blind and deaf, and you're in a wheelchair. You call that 'Very Good'?"

She erupted into wonderful laughter. "Yes!" she said.

See what I mean about being cheerful?

Today, though, when I called, she was having trouble with her shoulder. Peggy never - and I mean never - complains, but this shoulder pain was a bugger. The x-ray

at the doctor's office revealed severe arthritis.

"Get a steroid injection, Peg," I said.

"Really?" she said. "How long will it work?"

Three or four months, I told her. "Then you can get another if you need it." She considered.

"I'm a hundred," she said. "I think I'll need just the one."



Photo: Peggy Ley and Cathy Howard

She laughed, just like she always does. Still, I don't like to think about life without Peggy.

"Peg," I pleaded all at once, "promise me you'll give me a little heavenly greeting when you get there, would you?"

She thought about it. "How shall I do it?"

I suggested that she come to me in a dream so that I could see her.

"Funny you should say that," she mused. "I always hope one night I'll go to sleep and see Jesus come for me in my dreams."

When she joined the Church 75 years ago,

a priest told her that the gift of faith was the best of all the gifts.

"It's okay if you don't receive that particular gift, but it's a good one to get," he said.

My friend Peg is very blessed. She's possessed the gift of faith for seven and a half decades and hasn't once doubted God's presence in her life. I'm envious of this because, although there are days I often feel that strong surge of faith, there are some days I don't. My husband John, philosophical as always about spiritual matters, says if it's not possible to have faith, then we must rely on hope.

He also tells me to quit watching the news. But how, I reason, can any of us simply dismiss the news and ignore the children who are starving in the Middle East or kidnapped in Africa or torn away from their parents here in the United States?

When I find myself questioning God's goodness or relying on the weak fumes of hope, that's when I call Peg.

"You have more faith than you know," she soothes.

As for Peggy, every morning she wakes up and reminds herself of a familiar little mantra: Good morning. This is God. I will be handling all your problems today. I will not need your help, so have a great day.

It seems so simple, I say.

"It is that simple," Peg assures me.

Peggy Ley believes she's the most fortunate person she knows. But I am, in fact, the most fortunate person she knows.

I've had Peggy Ley's presence and example to guide me almost all my life. If I can't have the gift of unflinching faith, Peggy's friendship is the next best thing in the world.

MEMORIALS

SEPTEMBER 17, 2025 - JANUARY 8, 2026

JERRY ALDANA MEMORIAL

Shannon Aldana
Mark & Judy Moravec

IKE ANDERSON MEMORIAL

Matthew & Kristen Maser

ROGER ARTHUR MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

REV. ANDREW AUGUSTYN MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

KATHLEEN BIXENMANN MEMORIAL

Annette Kenney & Ian Barclay

FRANKLIN BROTT MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

MARY ELLEN BUHRMAN MEMORIAL

Andy & Vicky Buhrman
Kay Buhrman
Sandy Buhrman

MARGARET BUKOWSKI MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

HOWARD CHIARBOS MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

JAMES DAVIDSON MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

ROBERT "BOB" DAVIS MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

CAP & GLORIA DIERKS MEMORIAL

Jerry & Stephanie Upp

MARY JO DOWD MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

JEAN GOLKA MEMORIAL

Jim & Cindy Jussel

ED GOWLOVECH MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

GRANGE FAMILY MEMORIAL

Dr. Thomas & Cynthia Grange

ROBERT & HELEN GRENNAN MEMORIAL

Ted Grennan

LILA HILLER MEMORIAL

Penny Tillman

DAN HOSTLER MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

DAN JACOBSON MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

DARLENE (ROEPKER) JANSEN MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

SHARON JARECKE MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

CONRAD & DELLA KAUP MEMORIAL

Barry & Heather Kaup

DENNIS KING MEMORIAL

Drs. Greg & Jennifer Alberts
Matthew & Kristen Maser
Tim & Jolene Wojcik

TOM KOEHLER MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

KEN KULUS MEMORIAL

LaVonne Kulus

WARREN LESCHINSKY MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

MARY ANN LEWANDOWSKI MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

MIKE LEWANDOWSKI MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

BRIDGET LONG MEMORIAL

Curran Funeral Chapel

MARCIA MCDERMOTT MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

MILDRED MCDERMOTT MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

CLEETIS MEYER MEMORIAL

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Stephanie Roberts

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Jeannee Fossberg
Bill & Jody Gavers
Fred & Joan Goering
Rod & Patty Hooker
John & Cathy Howard
Nancy Husen
Brian & Shlley Kort
LaVonne Kulus
Tim & Tonia Luschei
Joyce Messing
Denise, Logan, and Caleb O'Brien
Stephanie Roberts
Francis & Rose Ann Sindelar
Ann & Cathy Wieck
Vince & Sharon Zavala

GLEN OSTDIEK MEMORIAL

Rich & Amy Ostdiek & family

JACLYN PARTINGTON MEMORIAL

Bill & Kathy Partington

ROSE ANN (BOEHL) PFEIFFER-WODRICH MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

GERHARD & FLORENCE PLACKE MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

SYL & MARY PLACKE MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

ANNE PUNCOCHAR MEMORIAL

Paul & Barb Olsufka

LOU ROSNO MEMORIAL

Kim Bainbridge
Rick & Ginger Blunk
Curran Funeral Chapel
Kevin & Mary Grode
Tom & Loretta Jensen
Rosno Family
Bill & Joyce Ryan
Robert & Mary Kay Schoettger

ESTHER SCHNEIDER MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

ANN ELIZABETH "BETTY" SCHWENK MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

JANE (EASLEY) SEIM MEMORIAL

Stephanie Roberts

MICHAEL 'MIKE' SEIM MEMORIAL

Stephanie Roberts

BILL SHOMSHOR MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

HARLAN SIEBRASS MEMORIAL

Deacon Bill & Nancy Buchta

MILDRED SIEBRASS MEMORIAL

Deacon Bill & Nancy Buchta
Ted & Sonia Eden
Jerry & Jerrilynn Lyons

LUCY BELLE SIMON MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

DOLORES (MCNELIS) STAFFORD MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

JERRY STARKEY MEMORIAL

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Curran Funeral Chapel
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Mark & Brenda Hasenjager
Marlin Krull
Anita Leschinsky
John & Pamela Reinking
Steven & Cheri Schmidt
Sharon Starkey

KATHY STAVA MEMORIAL

Drs. Greg & Jennifer Alberts

JOHN 'JACK' TAGEL MEMORIAL

Jean Placke

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Karen Hutt
Matthew & Kimberly Joynt
Becky Peterson
Susan Thomsen
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BERNARD & ANN VOLKL MEMORIAL

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JIM WIECK MEMORIAL

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TONY WRAY MEMORIAL

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DOUG ZASTROW MEMORIAL

Annette Kenney & Ian Barclay
Stuart & Michelle Zastrow

RICHARD ZASTROW MEMORIAL

Stuart & Michelle Zastrow

CHARLOTTE ZORTMAN MEMORIAL

Jordan & Jenna Engle
Jerry & Jerrilynn Lyons
Rich & Amy Ostdiek & family
Tim & Jolene Wojcik

IN HONOR OF BISHOP GOLKA

Julie & Wade Colson
Gregory & Mary Keslar
Michael & Gena Knust
Trish Knust & Morgan Mendelson
Tim & Jolene Wojcik

IN HONOR OF JANIE & HARRY HOCH, JR.

Tim & Jolene Wojcik

IN HONOR OF LEXI, JACK, CLAIRE, & LIAM RYAN

Nadine Iverson

IN HONOR OF CARL AND DEBBIE TESMER

Father Chuck Kottas



Katie (Golka) Czerwiec (middle)

ALUMI JOINS COLLEGE OF ST. MARY'S HALL OF FAME

Katie (Golka) Czerwiec, GICC Class of 2015, was inducted into the College of St. Mary's Hall of Fame for tennis. She played No. 2 singles and No. 1 doubles for the Flames and graduated in 2019.

OUR HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES

CHARLOTTE "TODDY" ZORTMAN

Survived by her children, Bill (Carolyn) Zortman, Dick "Doc" (Louanne) Zortman, Jeannee Fossberg, Kathryn (Terry) Clarkson, Carole (Randy) Syse, and Karen Zortman; 22 grandchildren, 33 great-grandchildren, and seven great-great-grandchildren; a very special family friend and caregiver, Sue Hatch; and many nieces, nephews, cousins, other relatives, and friends.

DENNIS KING

Survived by his wife, Kathryn King; their children Jeffrey (Jennifer) King, Trina (Mike) Kuper; five grandchildren; Abigail King, Madeline King, Alexander King, Logan Kuper, and Ryan Kuper; and many extended family members and friends.

GERALD T. "JERRY" STARKEY

Survived by his wife of 40 years, Sharon Starkey; children Nicole Starkey, Joe (Daneila) Starkey; three grandchildren; brother Chuck (Bonnie) Starkey; sisters Joan Starkey (Rod), Connie (Julien) Whitaker, Jan Starkey, Jill (Randy) Schreck; sister-in-law, Gladys Starkey; and numerous nieces and nephews.

LOYALA M. "LOU" ROSNO

Survived by her husband, Richard Rosno; seven children, Stephen (Tricia) Rosno, Denise (Bill) Ourada, David (Sheila) Rosno, Mary (Kevin) Grode, James (Patty) Rosno, and Ricky Rosno; 29 grandchildren, 41 great-grandchildren; sisters, Sally (Bob) Price and Connie (Keith) Weinzetl.

ED O'BRIEN '94

Survived by his wife, Denise O'Brien; their sons, Logan O'Brien and Caleb O'Brien; his father, Jim O'Brien; sister Tonia (Tim) Luschei; sister-in-law, Michelle (Tim) Winkelmann; brother-in-law, Scott (Amy) Preusser; father-in-law and mother-in-law, Joe and Therese Preusser; niece, nephews, aunts, and uncles.

LANNY DEAN THOMSEN

Survived by his wife, Susan Thomsen; children, Amanda (Justin) White, Alexis Thomsen; step-children, Dawn (Brian) Stock, Braden (Trisha) Manolidis; 10 grandchildren; great-grandson, Arthur; siblings, Glenna (Jerry) Engdahl, Roger (Darlene) Thomsen; and numerous extended family members.

Hall of Fame Inductee Mass and Reception



On December 1, Bishop James Golka was inducted into the Honorary Hall of Fame. Each was recognized during the reception, Cathy Howard shared thoughtful, heartfelt tributes highlighting how Bishop Golka and the Hoch family have impacted Grand Island Central Catholic and helped shape its tradition of faith, excellence, and service. Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the Hall of Fame Mass and Reception such a special event. We are proud to honor those whose leadership and generosity have helped make Grand Island Central Catholic what it is today.

Alumni Hall of Fame and Janie and Harry Hoch, Jr. were recognized for their lasting commitment to faith, service, and support of Central Catholic.



CLASS OF 1970 COMES TOGETHER FOR 55TH REUNION

Fifty five years later and the Class of 1970 is still making memories. Twenty classmates gathered this fall to celebrate their reunion.



CENTRAL
CATHOLIC
DEVELOPMENT
FOUNDATION

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20%

55%

This 15% gap is filled by generous donors like you.

Knight Event

Parish Support

Tuition & Tuition Assistance Programs

GIVE TODAY



Tuition alone does not cover the full cost of a Grand Island Central Catholic education. Nearly 25% of each student's education is funded through generous donations that provide essential tuition assistance, enhance academic programs, and support faith-based learning opportunities. Every day, our students walk through our doors ready to learn, grow, and live their faith—but they can't do it without you. Giving today ensures they continue to receive the transformative, Christ-centered education that shapes their future. Gifts are tax-deductible. Donate today by scanning the QR code. Checks are also accepted at the Foundation, High School, or Elementary School offices.