## WINTER 2021-2022

# THANK YOU – OUR "PHANTOM OF THE KNIGHT" WAS A HIT!

CRUSADER



What an incredible niaht full of fellowship, exciting auctions, a delicious meal and celebration - and it was the highest earning Knight ever! The 24th annual Knight Dinner and Auction was held on November 19th with 540 attendees. The event generates revenue to meet the needs for Grand Island



DATE ALUMNI, DEVELOPMENT & SCHOOL NEWS

> PHANTOM OF THE KNIGHT

many to create such a wonderful and unique event that raises money to help Central Catholic." Kellie and Scott Weyers, Knight 2021 Co-chairs added, "Every year, the Knight provides a chance to contribute to our school; but this year – it was especially meaningful to gather back together again, and we thank all the donors, volunteers and attendees who supported the event." Plans are already underway for The 25th Anniversary Knight 2022 slated for Friday, November 18, 2022 with Jennifer and Greg Alberts and Stephanie and Brandon Connick as Knight Co-chairs.

Central Catholic which cannot be covered by tuition or parish support alone. Over

its 24-year history, the Knight has raised over \$5.7 million for operating support and educational items at GICC.

The evening included a silent and live auction as well as raffle winners. Bill Werner won the raffle prize of \$40,000 towards a vehicle of choice, generously donated by Kim & Tom Dinsdale and Dinsdale Automotive. The Fund an Item during the live

auction generated almost \$60,000 towards teachers' desks, a refresh of the music and bands rooms, and a new media/film room for students.

"The Knight means that through the efforts of many people we are able to fulfill the mission statement of the Foundation - to enhance the quality of education at Central Catholic by providing ongoing financial support," stated Jean and Mike Hamik, Knight 2021 Co-chairs. "It's remarkable to see the combined gifts of so









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# **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NOTES**

We are so incredibly grateful to all of our families, faculty and staff, alumni and community members who supported our school at the Phantom of the Knight. The event is extraordinary because of the numerous donors, volunteers and generous attendees that come together for Catholic education. Grand Island Central

Catholic is unique; the faith-based education cultivates a feeling of family. Students are not only able to excel academically but foster a closer relationship with God which will benefit them for a lifetime. The support of the Knight allows Central Catholic to



carry out activities that support its mission; providing a quality faith-based education. The generosity of the donors and volunteers that make The Knight a success, allow GICC to march toward this vision.

As always, I would love to take the opportunity to thank all of you who have supported us either financially or with your time. We appreciate all you do for our school and our students. Our students are the next wave of individuals that will support our community. They have learned to embrace their sense of community from you who have supported them through their educational experience at Central Catholic. Many blessings,

JOLENE M. WOJCIK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# **A WORD FROM OUR PRINCIPAL**

Crusader Family -

As always, you are in my prayers! May the God of all Creation continue to bless all who call our school home past, present, and future!

Our school recently completed our accreditation process. The feedback we received from the agency who does accreditations (Cognia, by name) indicates the academic prowess of our school has been maintained and improved over the past five years. We're very proud of the hard work our staff, our students, and our supporters put into making Central Catholic a premier school.



As we move into the second semester of this school year, we stand at a decision point in the future of Central Catholic. A long requested addition to our school is elementary grade Catholic education. We are closer to achieving this than ever before, and I have a long list of individuals who have invested personal time and resources into laying the foundation for a potential grade school. I ask, though, that all who have ever called this school home join me in praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as these decisions will likely be made during this semester. If you would like more information about these efforts, please never hesitate to contact me directly at the school or the foundation office to speak with Jolene!

Catholic Schools Week is celebrated annually during the final week of January into February. I encourage all to stay up to date on the day-to-day happenings at our school via social media. As Catholic Schools Week approaches, there will be opportunities for those in the community to celebrate our school and our faith along with us!

With Christ,

JORDAN ENGLE, PRINCIPAL

# HUGH BRANDON BY CATHY HOWARD

Three days after Christmas our doorbell rings, and there stands Hugh Brandon.

I'm so glad to see him I don't know whether to laugh or cry. Laughter wins.

"Come in!" I hug him, delighted. Then I stand back to survey my old boss. We haven't seen Hugh for more than a year. Nearly 80 years old, he's lean and fit and still smiles with the impish grin that reminds me exactly of his 13year old grandson Luke. I've coaxed him all the way from Omaha to have lunch with John and me. Hugh Brandon is one of my very favorite people in the world, and I miss him.

We stand there grinning foolishly until it occurs to me he hasn't even said hello. Instead, right out of the gate, he stammers like a little boy. "I, I, I..."

For a terrible moment I fear he will tell me he's sick.

"I've met a gal," he finally says.

Astonished, I stare at him. Then I grip his shoulders hard. "Tell me everything."

Hugh has been my friend for nearly 45 years. It's because of Hugh Brandon, Central Catholic's former long time principal/superintendent, and his wife Fran that I have the life I do. Many years ago, when we are all young people at Central Catholic, the two of them conspire to bring John Howard to GICC. Well. Fran conspires. Hugh only follows orders.

"You need to hire that young guy,"



HUGH AND FRAN WITH MIKE, KELLY, SEAN AND ERIN

Fran tells him about the applicant for the new social studies job. "He's 6 foot 8. He's perfect." He's perfect for me, she means. I'm the single 6 foot 1 inch English teacher, and Fran has decided something has to be done.

Her instincts are correct. A year later, just before the following school year begins, John Howard and I are married at Blessed Sacrament Church with the entire school in attendance. John asks Hugh to be his best man.

"After all, you hired me to marry the spinster school marm," he jokes.

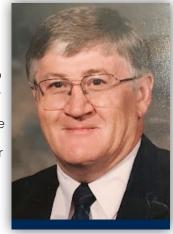
These are my favorite days at Central Catholic. When Hugh arrives in 1978, the school needs him badly. Only 35-years-old, he and Fran and four little Brandons roll into Grand Island from Hay Springs, a small community in western Nebraska, and immediately endear themselves to all of us. Hugh is wise and kind with a funny self-deprecating humor, and Fran is charming and lovely. Her beautiful smile embraces you on sight.

"Well, hello there," she greets you warmly in her low, wonderful voice. She and Hugh are a package deal at Central Catholic. Fran and the kids are every bit as invested in the school as Hugh is. We love all of them very much.

She spends hours sorting dozens and dozens of photo albums and filing away every tax form, utility bill, report card and funeral program. Hugh never understands the need for saving every single document.

"Is it really necessary, Frannie?" he attempts to reason with her.

Yes, it is, replies Fran who holds firm ideas about all things and all subjects. As far as Fran's concerned, danger lurks from every corner. Fireplaces are death traps, stiff winds can - at any second - whip into tornadoes, and reciting five decades of the Rosary is the only way to survive a family road trip without becoming a bloody statistic. Organizing her possessions helps her to feel in control of the chaotic world that relentlessly threatens her family. It is useless, her family understands, to argue. In the end, mild-mannered Hugh throws up his hands. "Fine, Fran. Have it your way." After all, he



acknowledges, she's usually right.

Fran is deeply Catholic, a Jihad Catholic, we like to tease her. Before she meets Hugh, she even enters the convent. Hugh doesn't exactly talk her out of becoming a nun, but all thoughts of a vocation are affectively banished after she meets him. Fran is beguiled by Hugh's naughty irreverence, his under-stated humor, and even his bad smoking habit.

"My mission in life," she tells him early in their marriage, "is to get you into Heaven."

But Hugh's misspent youth is the reason he's such a savvy administrator. There is not a deceitful teenager alive who can pull anything over Mr. Brandon. At Central Catholic, he cultivates easy but meaningful relationships with the kids. Responsible for the school's financial health, school policy, discipline and building maintenance, Hugh's favorite part of the job is, nevertheless, visiting with kids in the hall. He jokes with them in the cafeteria and the senior lounge and nourishes the warm, family environment that GICC is famous for.

There are painful times - the death of Dave Rombach, our much loved science teacher - who drowns in the lake behind his home attempting to save his dog. Hugh sobs like a baby at his funeral. Difficult economic stress seems to threaten the school's very existence at times. Hugh depends on Beata Moore, Central's long time business manager residing in her little office upstairs, to guide him through those lean days.

"Beata was a financial miracle," Hugh says now. "She kept every ledger in long hand and always knew how to

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 6** 

3



# THE PHANTOM OF THE KNIGHT FUND AN ITEM

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DONORS WHO HELPED RAISE NEARLY \$60,000 FOR THE KNIGHT FUND-AN-ITEM: • MUSIC AND BAND ROOMS REFRESH • TEACHERS' DESKS • MEDIA/FILM ROOM FOR ALL STUDENTS

### \$5,000 +

Greg & Jennifer Alberts Josh & Anny Anderson Dennis & Mary Harb

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# THE PHANTOM OF THE KNIGHT DONORS A SPECIAL THANKS TO THESE GENEROUS DONORS:

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# LIBRARY RENOVATIONS

Our library renovations are complete. The fresh paint and carpet look wonderful and we are excited to utilize this beautiful space!

Thank you Vince & Sharon Zavala, James & Rina Huntwork and Rob Czaplewski for all of their help.

Thank you to these wonderful donors for funding this project –

### Sheila Alder

Family of Dick Kittridge - Memorial Donations Dinsdale Charitable Foundation Dr. Robert & Susan Recker







## CLASS OF '70 TURNS 70 ~ OUR 50TH + 2

### FRIDAY, JULY 22, 2022

• 6:00 ~ Casual night at Anne Riebschlager's (picnic meal)

### SATURDAY, JULY 23 - SEE BELOW

Contact ~ Anne (Northup) Riebschlager (308-379-1009)

### CLASS OF 1972 ~ 50TH REUNION FRIDAY, JULY 22, 2022

• 5:00 - 11:00 ~ Casual night at Deb Pieper's (picnic meal)

SATURDAY, JULY 23 - SEE BELOW Contact ~ Deb (Dingwerth) Pieper (308-379-1294)

### SATURDAY, JULY 23, 2022

GICC Classes of "70 and '72 – RSVP will be sent in May.

- AM ~ Golf Outing
- 2:30 ~ Tour of Central Catholic followed by Mass
- Evening at the Platt-Duetsche 5:00 - 6:00 ~ Social Hour w/Cash Bar 6:30 - 7:30 ~ Dinner
- 7:30 11:00 ~ D.J. ~ Music, Dancing and Fellowship
- \* GICC Classes of '68, '69, '71, & '73 are invited to join us at 7:30 for the Music, Dancing, & Fellowship.

## **CLASS OF 2001**

Saturday, June 4, 2022 – More details to follow later

- Morning: Family get together at a park
- Afternoon: Tour the school
- Evening: Adult gathering

A Facebook page has been set up www.facebook.com/GICC2001

Thank you to the Class of 1971 who donated their excess funds collected for their class reunion to Central Catholic! We are so grateful!

5

+ CENTRAL CATHOLIC UPDATE • WINTER 2021-2022

squeeze another penny out of the budget."

For several years, Hugh can't afford to give teachers a raise. When we don't get a raise, however, Hugh doesn't get one either. "I couldn't reward myself and not the staff," he recalls. "We operated on faith. Even when there was no tangible evidence, we had to believe God would provide."

But there are good times, too. Sisters Mary Leo and Sue rule the main office. Sister Sue shushes students at the office counter so that she can sip her coke and listen to Big Bucks Bingo every noon on KRGI, and Sister Mary Leo fishes every piece of paper out of the garbage to use for scraps. Howard Schumann reigns over all activities, Fred Northup daily forgets his false tooth in the faculty lounge, Pam Krall creates a space for talented orators, Carl Tesmer is building a football dynasty, and Sharon Zavala is on her way to becoming the winningest volleyball coach in the country.

"The first time the volleyball team won State," Hugh remembers, "I sat in the bleachers and wept."

Eventually, after 12 years, the rigors of being superintendent, principal and spending 80 hours a week at school exhaust Hugh. When he announces he's leaving, we feel as though our best friend is abandoning us.

For the next 16 years, he takes on the role of administrator at St. Libory Public Elementary, another small community of tightly knit kids, staff and parents. Fran, in the meantime, retires from her teaching job at Westlawn Elementary and opens her own very successful home day care. But after those 16 years, both are ready to retire to the Gretna and Omaha area to spend more time with their kids and grandkids

Hugh and Fran delight in being close to their kids and being able to follow the activities of their talented grandchildren. It's the perfect life.

Until Fran is diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma.

Hugh's devastated, but Fran remains stoically calm.

"She had such faith," Hugh recalls, "and was never worried about it. God was on her side, she believed, however it turned out." Slowly, Fran's health deteriorates. She endures a stem cell transplant for her disease which leaves her with a nearly fatal infection. As she lies almost comatose, her family huddles close to her preparing for the end, but Fran, with her legendary determination, recovers. During the months and years that follow, she suffers several mini-strokes, is resusitated after cardiac arrest, falls and breaks her arm, and finally receives dialylsis for kidney failure.

During those four years, Hugh refuses to leave her side.

"I can't leave Fran," he tells wellmeaning visitors who offer to stay with her to give Hugh a breather. Hugh, in fact, even installs a camera on the refrigerator so that he can keep an eye on her if he has to make a quick trip to the store.

One particularly difficult day when Fran is terribly sick, Hugh bathes her, helps her to the bathroom, and gently guides her to the recliner. She looks up at him with gratitude.

"You know," she says, "you're going straight to Heaven."

On a mild September night in the middle of a terrible Pandemic, Fran breathes her last surrounded by Hugh and her children.

Even now, Hugh says it would have been impossible to survive those dark days without his kids.

"I'm so thankful," he becomes emotional now, "for my kids and my grandkids. They were so involved and helplful and supportive."

Only a few of us will attend Fran's funeral. It seems cruel that a virus will prevent what should have been one of the biggest funerals of the year. Oh, the stories we could share about our Frannie!

Her ashes rest in a beautiful urn that Fran would love, and Hugh keeps them close.

But life without Fran gives Hugh too much time, he says. When he wakes up in the early morning, there is no Fran to talk to over coffee. "That's when I really struggled," Hugh says. "I stopped taking care of my diabetes. Frankly," he sighs, "I didn't give a damn whether I lived or died."

Then a number of things occur. First, Hugh gets a tattoo. It's on his bucket list. Why not? he reasons. His son Sean accompanies him and is sure the pain will be too much for his old man.

"I refused to flinch in his presence," Hugh laughs.

The second item on his bucket list is a Corvette. Fran would never approve, and Hugh knows it. It proves to be, however, the purchase that sparks new life. Whenever he gets the chance on a flat stretch of highway, he drives his low, black, sleek toy much too fast.

"Because I can, and I have to," he explains.

Finally, his youngest daughter Erin, whom Hugh calls "my little mother", worries about her father's struggle with loneliness and insists he join a senior citizen dating site.

"You need companionship!" she nags in her forthright fashion.

Hugh finally relents and joins Silver Singles. To his surprise, he receives dozens of hits. Hesitantly, he arranges an outing with one woman. Then he takes out another. Finally, he meets Mary. A former educator like himself and a long time widow, Mary is the companion Hugh needs.

"I have found happiness again," my sweet old boss says simply.

He smiles and then shakes his head thoughtfully. The idea that he's met somebody so well-suited to himself seems, he acknowledges, "more than coincidental".

Of course, it's no coincidence, I snort. It's Fran.

I picture her in Heaven organizing throngs of angels, charming the Saints, and making helpful suggestions to the Big Guy.

"I have ideas," she tells God in her determined way: ideas about climate change, the economy, world hunger, and especially about the good husband who tenderly nursed her through the final years of her life.

"I know of a nice woman," she whispers conspiratorially.

God throws his hands up in the air. "Fine, Frannie," he gives up.

Because after all, even the Almighty knows it's useless.

Fran is always right anyway.



# OUR HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES

#### **PAULINE "POLLY" HUPF**

Survived by son and daughter-in-law, Thomas and Linda Hupf; three daughters and two son-in-laws, Debra and Roger Sweley, Barbara and Larry McGowan, Mary Jane Hupf; sisters-in-law, Mrs. Paul (Gladys) Hupf, and Mrs. Don (Delores) Hupf, now Mrs. Bernard Herbeck; 8 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren, numerous nieces and nephews.

#### **ROBERT J. KEMPER. ST. MARY'S GRADUATE 1950**

Survived by his wife, Jeanette; three children, Steve (Mary), Kathy (Scott), and Vicki (Mark); a son-in-law, Dave; 12 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.

#### MARY ANN LEWANDOWSKI

Survived by her children, Michelle Sharp (Alan), Marcie Stokman (Peter), Sharon Doran (Steve), Kristin Merck (Mike), Paul Lewandowski (Terri), Joanie Lang (Scott) and Tom Lewandowski (Janel); 42 grandchildren and 34 great-grandchildren.

#### **RON MILLER**

Survived by his wife, Ann Miller; sons, Ronald, Jason (Suzanne), and Jim (Chris); grandson. James Goodwin III and adopted grandson, Kyler Bartels; brother Richard (Arlene); step-sisters Jean (Darrell) Roth, Jan (Ken) Kavensky, and Deb (Dale) Rasmussen; sister-in-law Janet Jungels; numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

#### FREDRICK "FRED" STUMP

Survived by his wife, Elizabeth "Betty"; sons Bill (Therese), Fred "Rick" (Diane) and Pat; 5 grandchildren, Jeremiah (Katie) Stump, Joseph (Jennifer) Stump, Kate (Nik) Statz, Maureen (Matt) Horne and Maggie (Justin) Roehrich; 13 great-grandchildren.

#### MARY WALKOWIAK

Survived by her four sons and daughters-inlaw, David and Diane Walkowiak, John and Joy Walkowiak, Robert and Deb Walkowiak, and Paul and Cindy Walkowiak; five daughters and three sons-in-law. Kathleen Clark, Rebecca Walkowiak, Joan and Rob Unruh, Janice and Jack Luth, and Susan and Jim Dieckgrafe; 19 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren. Mary worked at Grand Island Central Catholic as a librarian.

### MEMORIALS September 8, 2021 - January 6, 2022 **Columbus Community Hospital**

**ROGER ARTHUR** Placke, Jean

#### **REV. ANDREW AUGUSTYN**

Placke, Jean

#### **MARY ROSE BECKMAN SCHAINOST**

Rerucha, Greg and Lisa Wojcik, Tim and Jolene

#### **FRANKLIN BROTT** Placke, Jean

NORM BUCK Buck's Rentals, Inc.

#### JOAN BUFFINGTON Bartunek, Bill and Kathy

MARGARET BUKOWSKI Placke, Jean

**HOWARD CHIARBOS** Placke, Jean

JAMES DAVIDSON Placke, Jean

MARY JO DOWD Placke, Jean

#### REGINA GALL Sindelar, Francis and Rose Ann

THERESA GARRETT Rice. Lonnie and Patricia

ED GOWLOVECH Placke, Jean

#### **GRANGE FAMILY FUND** Grange, Thomas and Cynthia

**LILA HILLER** Tillman Penny

#### DAN HOSTLER Placke, Jean

#### **LEONARD HUPF** Sweley, Roger and Debra

PAULINE "POLLY" HUPF

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Curran, Randy and Trish Donovan. Tim and Colleen Fossberg, Jeannee Hansen. Bob and Kathi Hunt Irene Hupf. John and Diane Johnson, Karen Jones, Lois and Derald Kitt. Patti and Lonnie Kracl. Glee and Emil Kucera, George and Nancy Lliteras Rita McGowan, Larry and Barb McGowan, Mark and Kim McGraw, LaVonne Mettenbrink, Arlene Moore. Tom and Sherry Mvers, Mike and Jill Niedfelt, Karen Nietfeldt, Norm and Chervl O'Connor, Shawn and Coleen O'Connor, Tim and Cathy Owings, Don and Becky Pieper, Debbie Redman, Matt Reha, Carol Rice, Jeff and Vianna Riebschlager, Anne Riedy, Marcia Roh, Larry and Rita Seckman, Richard and Sandy Summers, Rick and Linda Svehla, Kris and Tom Sweley, Roger and Debra & Family Sweley, Wayne and Dorothy Trofholz, Dana Wardyn, Marvin and Rhonda Woodward, Carol Woodward, Duane and Sharon Zegers, Bill and Bev Zelenda, Judy and Jerry DAN JACOBSON

### Placke, Jean

DARLENE JANSEN Placke, Jean

**BOB KEMPER** Frei, Don and Grace

### **RICHARD "DICK" KITTRIDGE** Bauer, Louis and Marv

Rice. Lonnie and Patricia TOM KOEHLER

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**KEN KULUS** Kulus, LaVonne

**DON LEIFELD** Lammert Bill and Lude

#### LARRY AND FRANKIE LEIFELD Lammert, Bill and Jude

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#### MIKE LEWANDOWSKI Placke, Jean

MARCIA MCDERMOTT Placke, Jean

**MILDRED MCDERMOTT** Placke, Jean

#### **RON MILLER SR.** Miller, Ann

Sindelar, Francis and Rose Ann

**GRACIE MAE MUELLER** Mueller, Jeremy and Kate Roberts, Stephanie

**BRANDON OSTERBUHR** Schumann, Howard Wojcik, Tim and Jolene

**ROSE ANN BOEHL** Placke, Jean

#### **GERHARD AND FLORENCE PLACKE**

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#### ANN ELIZABETH "BETTY" SCHWENK

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MIKE AND JANE SEIM Roberts, Stephanie

**BILL SHOMSHOR** Placke, Jean

LUCY BELLE SIMON Placke, Jean

**DOLORES STAFFORD** Placke, Jean

### **FRED STUMP**

Buchta, Bill and Nancv Schmidt, Steven and Cheri Wojcik, Tim and Jolene

#### JOHN 'JACK' TAGEL Placke, Jean Pat Vejvoda Placke, Jean

**BERNARD AND ANN VOLKL** Placke, Jean

#### MARY KATHERINE WALKOWIAK

Douglas, Steve and Linda Durning, Brian and Deb Erickson, Tim and Jane

Howard, John and Cathy Kussman, Rick and Debra Moore. Tom and Sherry O'Neill, Gordon and Colleen Phelan, Patrick and Marv Ryan, William and Joyce Schumann, Howard Stepanek, Rick and Mary Ann Walkowiak, Paul and Cindy

**KATHLEEN WHETSTONE** Placke, Jean

JIM WIFCK Placke, Jean

**ELAINE WISSING** Sindelar, Francis and Rose Ann Wissing, Daniel and Christine

TONY WRAY Wray, Frank

#### **DOUG ZASTROW**

Zastrow, David and Luann **Richard Zastrow memorial** Zastrow, David and Luann Zastrow, Stuart and Michelle

### IN HONOR OF JEFF BALZ

Dunn, James

IN HONOR OF JACK AND SHARON JARECKE Jarecke, Jeremy and Jodi

IN HONOR OF JAMIE LARSEN Dunn, James

IN HONOR OF SHERRY MARSHALL AND THE LATE BILL MARSHALL Maser, Matthew and Kristen

IN HONOR OF MARY SLATTERY Dunn, James

IN HONOR OF MOLLY TUBMAN Dunn, James



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