

IOWA WESTERN

A Magazine for Alumni & Friends

2019
**OUTSTANDING
ALUM**
Deb Debbaut

in this issue

Fall 2019

2019 Outstanding Alum : Dr. John and Jean Marshall Wellness Center

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“The two most exciting times to be a part of the Iowa Western family are the beginning of a new school year and graduation. The campus is abuzz with activity right now as faculty, staff and students settle in for what promises to be a year filled with stories of personal achievements.

Ultimately, those accomplishments will lead our students to the stage at commencement, where I get to shake hands with hundreds of smiling graduates. Before that happens, everyone at Iowa Western will be working diligently

to ensure our students are put in the best position to succeed by offering an array of services that help everyone achieve their goals.

Adding to the excitement this year is the opening of our new Wellness Center, named in honor of longtime college supporters Dr. John and Jean Marshall. The Marshalls looked at the data our college staff put together on the need for wellness activities on our campus and the importance of those functions to student success. They decided that a campus wellness facility would be a perfect fit and dedicated the lead gift to make this dream become reality.

The college staff and board of trustees are grateful to the Marshalls and all of our donors who continue to make student achievement a top priority today and in the future. Good luck to all of our students this fall; I will see you on the graduation stage!”

Dr. Dan Kinney
President



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Iowa Western Alumni Magazine

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Fall 2019

Alumni Spotlight

Fran Sillau CREATING OTHER WORLDS THROUGH THEATER

By Mike Watkins

Growing up with cerebral palsy, Fran Sillau often found a need – and outlet – for escape from his real world on the stage.

Whether it was acting, writing or now producing and directing, Sillau, a 2005 graduate of Iowa Western, always knew he could become other people and create other stories and worlds because his wasn't always accepting or easy.

In these worlds, he wasn't limited by his birth disability that severely limits the use of his legs and requires him to walk with crutches.

He wasn't picked last in gym class or ostracized or ridiculed at school for not being able to play sports like the other kids.

In the theater, he found friends who became like family – who accepted him for who he is and praised his gifts.

“The theater was my way to be other people than myself by playing a role and being part of something,” he said. “I couldn't play sports, so kickball or baseball weren't there to help me become part of something bigger than me – a team.”

“But I found that in acting. It was my place where I didn't have to think about physical limitations because I could be anyone and do anything on stage.”

While he doesn't act very often these days, Sillau has turned his attention – and passion and talent – toward writing, producing and directing.

He recently co-wrote and directed "The Dollmaker's Gift", which world-premiered in February at Omaha's Rose Theater to rave reviews and packed houses.

Deborah Denenberg, who worked in New York theater

for years, showed Sillau the children's book upon which the play is based, and he contacted author Sashi Fridman in St. Petersburg, Russia, about turning it into a play.

Once they obtained the rights to the story, Sillau wrote the script with playwright EllaRose Chary.

Sillau said the play looks at the impact of pogroms – the organized massacre of a particular ethnic group – on Russian Jews in the early 1900s.

Zalushka, the kind dollmaker in the story, helps Nora and her family in their time of need. Along the way, he teaches Nora that anyone can overcome obstacles with the help of good friends and community – along with some beautifully crafted dolls.

“Ultimately, it has more to say about kindness and hope – helping adults and children alike believe that the world may just hold more good people than bad,” Sillau said.

When he's not producing and directing at The Rose, Sillau works there as the accessibility coordinator.

He spends his days creating access points for individuals who have disabilities and need physical or mental assistance to be able to comfortably and adequately attend and see productions at The Rose with their peers.

Having felt and been excluded from various events and activities during his childhood and teen years because of his disability, Sillau said he enjoys making sure other kids don't experience those same feelings – not at The Rose, anyway.

“We're constantly working to make things better for kids to have access in inclusive ways,” said Sillau, who also works as a freelance consultant doing professional development for teachers and artists, integrating strategies for access and inclusivity with the John F. Kennedy Performing Arts Center.

In addition to the theater, another place Sillau said he always felt comfortable and included was at Iowa Western.

Originally an education major, he enrolled at IWCC in 2002. It didn't take long for him to realize he didn't want to teach after all.

He followed his heart and switched his major to communication and quickly found himself again on the stage as well as in the audience as a producer and director.

He connected with former IWCC instructor Hersh Rodasky, who encouraged him to join theater classes and mentored Sillau to participate with summer camps.

'Oklahoma' was the first production I was involved with at the Arts Center, and I knew I had made the right decision (to change majors),” he said. “Hersh said I should audition for a scholarship, and that allowed me to get my general education courses out of the way for a higher degree.”

One thing Sillau said he loved about his time at Iowa Western was that instructors treated him with respect.

They didn't try to pigeonhole him or limit him because of his cerebral palsy or his dyslexia – something he had

struggled with all through his younger years in school.

“No one at IWCC put me in a box; I appreciated that Hersh and Frankie Parrott (retired Iowa Western dean) saw me for me and listened to me rather than assumed what they thought I needed,” said Sillau, who endured multiple surgeries to help him walk due to his CP. “They truly helped me grow from the ground up, and I needed that can-do spirit.”

Now armed with his Master's in Fine Arts degree from Goddard College – earning his degree in a distance-learning program that required short but frequent visits to the campus – Sillau also makes time as a board member with The Circle Theater and is active as a writer, producer and director throughout the community.

And while he doesn't act much these days because he's so busy producing and directing, he returns to his roots – which started with roles at Chanticleer Theater in Council Bluffs as well as The Rose as a youngster – for inspiration and direction in his other theater roles and responsibilities.

“Acting is very freeing and has always allowed me to escape inside someone else,” he said. “Acting is my community, the place where I belong, where I'm accepted despite my disability, and it will always be very special for me.”

“Likewise, Iowa Western will also hold a special place in my heart because of the people there and the collaborative atmosphere I enjoyed as a student. Even now, whenever I visit the campus, I still feel very welcome.”

Sillau at The Rose Theater in Omaha, Nebraska.





Dr. John and Jean Marshall Wellness Center at Iowa Western

By Anthony Flott

The body is a temple, and the new Dr. John and Jean Marshall Wellness Center on the Iowa Western campus is a shrine to all things physical.

But matters of the mind are what led to its taking shape. Several years ago, as IWCC President Dr. Dan Kinney noted in a 2018 ceremony announcing the center's name, Iowa Western began seeing an increase in the number of students experiencing mental health issues.

"Mostly depression and anxiety," Kinney told the audience.

The college addressed the trend by hiring a part-time mental health practitioner who soon thereafter was made a full-time employee. A year later, a second mental health practitioner was hired.

Kinney saw the trend and knew something more had to be done for the well-being of IWCC students.

"We did a bunch of research, and one of the things we learned is that if students are physically active and fit, they will improve their mental outlook on things, and it helps their issues with anxiety and depression," Kinney said.

Iowa Western students, though, had limited on-campus opportunities to work out their issues by working up a sweat.

Dean of Student Life Kim Henry says fitness offerings on campus were sparse.

"Very limited cardio equipment and some outdated strength training equipment," Henry says. "And the spaces were not super close together."

Students had access to the equipment through a \$50 wellness membership paid each semester. They also could participate in intramural sports, but court and field access were off limits when they were being used by athletes practicing for Reivers sports teams.

"We limped along," Henry says, in terms of wellness offerings for students.

And so the college began planning for a wellness center. IWCC representatives visited facilities at other campuses in and out of Iowa, making a list of what worked out to get students to work out. Blueprints were drawn and ground was broken on a center in June 2017.

Then the project got an unexpected lift from longtime IWCC supporters Dr. John Marshall and his wife, Jean. The couple, extensively involved in the community, already were generous benefactors to the college, funding a nursing scholarship. Dr. Marshall also was a member of the foundation board, and an elected member of the Iowa Western Board of Trustees, and the couple had been intimately involved in the Black Tie Harvest since its 1999 inception. That includes hosting the Black Tie Patio Party at their home for nearly 20 years.

But Marshall and his wife wanted to do more. So he sat down with Kinney and asked if the college had any projects needing significant funding. Kinney told Marshall about the wellness center, which the latter had seen taking shape.

The president later related the amusing nature of the conversation.

"He really believed in the purpose of this building and so he



Dr. John and Jean Marshall at a patio party hosted at their home.

wanted to give us \$2 million and ‘Would that be OK?’” Kinney said to laughs.

“Yeah,” Kinney told Marshall. “We can probably deal with that.”

It was, Kinney said, “the easiest \$2 million I ever raised.”

The gift from the Marshalls and other private contributions has created a wellness center that rivals any other at a community college IWCC’s size — or even at some four-year institutions.

“We’re very competitive with these schools in what they offer,” Henry says. “For a two-year school, this is a facility you would see at any four-year university. We kind of thrive on our student life and offer the four-year experience.”

Consideration had been given to building a health center off campus that also could be used by the community. Having it on campus, though, adds to the college’s overall attractiveness as a complete campus.

Standing on the southern edge of campus near the student housing, the 92,000-square-foot center includes two courts usable for organized or pickup basketball, volleyball and other sports. A mezzanine level has fitness areas offering numerous cardio machines, including ellipticals, treadmills, bikes, stair climbers, etc. Some of them have monitors to which students can connect their own devices as they stream whatever content they’re currently bingeing.

There are cable-assisted weights, kettlebells, medicine balls, mats and more. An indoor turf area can be used by intramural teams for flag football, softball, Frisbee, soccer and other sports.

More and varied fitness classes also will be offered. “You’re hearing a lot of buzz about that,” Henry says.

Students and employees can use the facility and attend exercise classes for free.

“This will really serve a need for our students to take us to the next level in terms of recreation,” Henry says. “Compared to what we had, this will be a night-and-day difference.”

Henry says she’s personally looking forward to having more students vs. faculty/staff volleyball and softball games. “That’s a great time for our students to get to know us and us to get to know our students,” Henry says. “They love to beat us.”

The center will be open for students to use in September, just after the start of the 2019



fall semester.

It is expected to give a boost to student retention and recruitment.

“With this building, it’s going to really help us help more students stay in class and complete their education they start here at Iowa Western Community College,” Kinney says.

Henry, prior to the building’s opening, said: “We believe it’s going to assist in recruiting students at Iowa Western. I think there’s an excitement in the air already. I hear tours and hear students and parents talk about ‘What’s that large facility going up over there?’ and then tour guides telling them all about it.”

For Marshall, the project’s health focus especially resonates with the retired physician.

“Being a retired internal medical specialist, I kind of like to continue my efforts in the field

even though I’m not gainfully employed anymore,” Marshall says with a laugh. “This is something that is not only medically related, but also extremely beneficial for students.”

“No doubt, physical activity reduces stress levels. Reduction of stress level helps you recharge to get back to the classroom.”


That’s echoed by Henry, who points to the disturbing trend among college students that Kinney and IWCC began to address several years ago.

“College is a time ... when a lot of these issues surface,” Henry says.

“Nationwide, more and more college students are struggling with mental health issues, and we’re not an exception at Iowa Western.”

The rise in depression and anxiety coincides, she says, with a trending decline among college students in physical activity and an increase in sedentary behaviors.

“We really want to curtail that and provide programs that will increase our students’ health and promote a healthy lifestyle,” she says. “Get their gaming minutes down and go out and actively participate in wellness activities.”

“Have your mind healthy, your body healthy and you’re going to be more successful.” 

PHOTONICS SEEING THE LIGHT

By Mike Watkins

Growing up, Jack DeLong always excelled at math and science. While his classmates struggled with numbers and formulas, he was the student finishing early, staying after to help and often providing tutoring assistance for algebra and calculus.

“It always just came really easily to me; I loved it,” said DeLong, who earned his MA in Optics from the University of Rochester in Rochester, New York. “I always knew, because of this, that I was meant to do something professionally with math or science or both.”

More than those numbers and formulas flying around in his head, DeLong also loves teaching.

It’s his greatest passion – harkening back to those days of tutoring – as an opportunity to pass along his knowledge and understanding in ways that excited and impacted his students.

It’s that calling that led him to this past academic year to teach Photonics – the physical science of light generation, detection and manipulation. It’s a relatively new offering at IWCC.

“I’ve wanted to teach my entire life, because I love shaping the lives of students and seeing them make the most of themselves,” said DeLong, from Sparks, Nevada, and a military veteran who completed a tour in Iraq. “When I’m teaching, I’m at my happiest. There is no greater rush or feeling of accomplishment for me.”

A big part of photonics involves lasers and optics, and a burgeoning profession with growing interest at Iowa Western is Laser Systems Technician, an associate of applied arts degree.

Classes in the program prepare individuals to apply basic engineering principles and technical skills in support

of engineers and other professionals developing and using lasers and other optical for commercial or research purposes.

Instruction includes laser and optical principles, testing and maintenance procedures, safety precautions, specific applications to various tasks and report preparation.

DeLong helped develop the program, and over the course of the past year since its inception in fall 2018, he said he’s seen students who have knowledge of photonics at varying levels learn things they never knew they wanted to learn.

“They don’t need to know everything when they start the program; they just need to have an interest and a desire to want to learn,” he said. “As a laser tech, students will have completed one robotics course, along with four new courses added to the program. It’s dual-purpose and provides hands-on learning in a variety of different ways.”

DeLong said students gain working knowledge and skills of electronic and electromechanical devices/ systems, combined with specialty knowledge and skills in photonics.

Through lab experiences, they efficiently and effectively repair, operate, maintain and calibrate photonic subsystems, then integrate these subsystems into full systems.

This program prepares students for a technical level career in lasers in four primary electronic fields: computers, telecommunications, biomedical electronics and industrial electronics.

DeLong said there are approximately 1,000 new jobs available nationwide in this field each year, which is why Iowa Western saw an opportunity to meet a growing need for laser welders and laser cutters. Iowa Western offers one of 35 photonics programs in the country.


“These are positions available and needed across all industries throughout the country,” DeLong said of the program, which also includes a diploma option that students can complete while pursuing their AAS degree in Electronics or Robotics from IWCC.

“The ability to understand lasers as well as robotics makes our students very marketable upon graduation and makes the degree more valuable.”

Graduates are employed as technicians in the installation and maintenance of various electronic systems and equipment, including power distribution, security, medical, ATMs, telecommunication, aviation and manufacturing.

The local job market is strong with major employers needing to replace most of the electronic technicians in the next 10 years, a positive sign that this program will have students vying for its classes for years to come.

“Students have told me this is the most difficult class they’ve ever taken, but it’s also the best course they’ve ever taken,” DeLong said. “They all said they learned an incredible amount from the book as well as from me and learned at multiple points of understanding.”

“I’ve always felt that lasers and photonics, in particular, are a way of analyzing what’s happening in the world without creating any structural damage. I have the best job in the world: I get to play with lasers every day. I can’t think of anything better, and I know that my excitement comes across in my teaching.” 



Upon the successful completion of the program students can:

- ▶ Create processes that efficiently identify problems and effectively use available resources to propose solutions.
- ▶ Develop a self-directed learning style that is able to adapt to changing technology.
- ▶ Demonstrate and use fundamental aspects of the photonics technologies.
- ▶ Demonstrate procedures and skills in laboratory processes and maintenance.
- ▶ Maintain and integrate photonics systems into manufacturing, biomedical and research laboratory and processes.
- ▶ Demonstrate and use the fundamental aspects of electronic technologies.



2019

OUTSTANDING ALUM

Deb Debbaut: Homegrown

By Anthony Flott

Given how ingrained Deb Debbaut is in the community, it might come as a surprise to those who know her to discover just how much time she's spent exploring the rest of the country.

Debbaut and her husband, Marion, have visited 49 states (Alaska remains) — 48 of those on the couple's Honda Gold Wing touring motorcycle.

Fortunately for Council Bluffs, Debbaut always returns — and she wouldn't have it any other way.

"I've been a Manawa Girl all my life," she says.

She still is, too, living only about two miles from where she was raised near Lake Manawa by her parents, Ed and Frances Milburn. Her Council Bluffs roots go deep. Debbaut graduated from Lewis Central High School in 1973, then from Iowa Western Community College. And for more than two decades she's been building up her hometown as director of Grants Programs for the Iowa West Foundation.

"Council Bluffs is a thriving community thanks to incredible individuals like Deb Debbaut," says Tara Slevin, vice president of Volunteer Services and Foundation at Jennie Edmundson Hospital. "From the first moment I met Deb, I was inspired by her passion for our community and commitment to providing leadership, guidance and support to dozens of organizations that impact some of our most vulnerable citizens."

Numerous others echo Slevin's praise of Debbaut, the Iowa Western Alumni Association's 2019 Outstanding Alum.

Popcorn for Dinner

Getting her IWCC degree was no easy feat. Debbaut attended classes nights and weekends, usually carrying 12 to 15 credit hours while working full time at First National Bank of Council Bluffs. She had begun working there immediately after graduating from Lewis Central.

Initially, Marion was attending Iowa Western while working full time, too. But they became ships passing in the night.

"We decided it wasn't working for us," Debbaut says. Their marriage meant more than a degree, so Marion finished his studies while Debbaut "kept the home fires burning."

A few years later, though, after Marion earned his IWCC degree, Deb began taking classes again. Often, that was with like-minded individuals. The classes were comprised of a diverse group of individuals in age, professional and life experiences.

"I'm not unique; many nontraditional college students have to juggle family life, work and their studies. At times it wasn't easy," she says. "I would go directly to campus after work to be on time for class. There were many evenings of popcorn for dinner in the college library before class."

Or study sessions for statistics or quantitative methods that went past midnight.

But she persevered, earning an AA in Business Administration in 1984. Both she and Marion also would earn degrees from Buena Vista University on its IWCC campus, Deb with a BA in Management, Systems and Personnel and a Minor in Banking and Finance.

Staggering their studies paid off not just for their education, but also for their marriage.

"We recently celebrated our 45th wedding anniversary," Debbaut notes.



“Council Bluffs is a thriving community thanks to individuals like Deb Debbaut.”
- Tara Slevin

Foundational success

Debbaut also is celebrating 23 years as the longest-tenured employee at the Iowa West Foundation. And this after 23 years with First National, where she had become assistant vice president of Operations.

Debbaut joined the foundation in 1996 at a time when financial institutions were being restructured, bought and sold, merged and even closed.

"There were many who were losing their jobs and only had completed their high school education," she says. "I was fortunate that I had a college degree."

The Iowa West Foundation had just begun, and Debbaut was the first employee hired by then-Executive Director George Beno.

She made her impact with the foundation not long after arriving, implementing STARS, a scholarship program developed in collaboration with other organizations and launched in 1997. The program assists parents and custodial grandparents with college expenses that are beyond most financial aid packages.

More than 300 Pottawattamie County residents have received an associate's and/or bachelor's degree through STARS. Often, that's at Iowa Western.

"Out of the nearly 500 scholars that have participated in this program, more than 50% chose to attend Iowa Western Community College," Debbaut says. "It is a special privilege when I have the opportunity of speaking with a STARS participant and share that I, too, was a nontraditional college student. They see firsthand that there are huge opportunities for them. The 'Big Hug' I receive at the end of our conversation is so affirming to me that we are meeting the significant needs of these special scholars."

Debbaut didn't stop with STARS. She has continued to impact others in the two-plus decades since, helping IWF become the third largest foundation in Iowa with more than \$500 million issued in grants and initiatives. She's overseen much of that disbursement working with the foundation's Healthy Families portfolio, its multiyear funding and its Small

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Photos by Machaela Morrissey, Morrissey Photo

“It is exciting to be part of making Council Bluffs a better place to live.”
- Deb Debbaut



Home is Where the Heart Is

She extends that personal care for others outside her job with professional and community service.

Debbaut currently is chair of the Midwest Region of PEAK Grantmaking. It's the second largest PEAK region, composed of eight states and more than 500 members.

“She is soft-spoken but never afraid to say what needs to be said and is truly one of the most caring, warm and humble people I know,” says Sara Sanders, regional chapter manager of PEAK Grantmaking. “She loves to give back to her community and elevate the voices of those around her.”

She and Marion also have been involved with youth sports in baseball and girls volleyball.

And she's participated in the Breast Cancer 3-Day walk four times. Participants walk 60 miles over three days to raise money to fight the disease. She's walked twice in Los Angeles, once in Kansas City and also crewed an event with Marion in Kansas City.

All that while still finding time to travel. Next up is the Debbauts' annual trip to Long Beach, Washington, where they've been participating in the Washington International Kite Festival for more than 20 years. There the couple flies kites they've designed and built, with her brother Rod Milburn and his wife, Marti.

“We have found this hobby to be very relaxing and have met many great people,” Debbaut says. “If you tell us to ‘Go fly a kite,’ we would be happy to oblige.”

But she'll always return home. You can often find her and Marion at their favorite spot — Lake Manawa State Park — where they like to photograph the wildlife.

This is home. And Iowa Western helped her make it. “Council Bluffs is where I was born and raised. This is where I have chosen to live, receive my education and work. Iowa Western and the education I received was one of the cornerstones in building this sense of community.”

“It is my hope that the current and future students of IWCC will decide to stay in our community and make a difference.” *u*

Grant Programs.

She makes her work personal, often visiting organizations seeking IWF's help.

“Many of the nonprofits I work with do have real challenges,” Debbaut says. “It is exciting to be a part of making Council Bluffs and Pottawattamie County a better place to live.”

Among the multiyear funding beneficiaries is MICA House. When its executive director, Jaymes Sime, started at MICA House in 2015, he made sure Debbaut was one of the first connections he made.

He says Debbaut has a talent for making a partner organization's mission her own. And she gets things done, often through creative connectivity.

“As an example of Deb's creative thinking about our work, she recently connected us with Opera Omaha,” Sime says. “That connection started an amazing art program at MICA House for the women staying in the shelter. The fellows from Opera Omaha are now coming a couple times a year to facilitate programming.”

But Debbaut's connections aren't just in Council Bluffs or the surrounding area. Debbaut connected Jennie Edmundson to a national foundation that awarded a \$1 million grant toward a state-of-the-art linear accelerator in its cancer center.

Says Slevin: “One of Deb's many strengths is her ability to make connections and foster collaborations on the local, state and national level.”

Molly Noon, vice president of Institutional Advancement at Iowa Western, says Debbaut often has walked IWCC staff through the sometimes stressful grant application process, then its implementation.

“I first got to know Deb in 2007, when she helped with a grant for the Arts Center,” Noon says. “I have found her to always be supportive of the college's grant applications and of me personally.”

“Deb deals with a large number of individuals and organizations, but she makes time for every interaction. After a conversation with Deb, you can tell that her job is more than professional; it's personal.”



Reivers

in the

Community

By Kara Schweiss

From Reiver cheerleaders getting their hands dirty assisting with landscaping at a public playground to an incoming student raising money for veterans by walking across the country, IWCC students give back in many ways to numerous causes in the local community and beyond. Here are just a few of their stories.

REIVER CHEER

Raven Gau, the spirit coordinator and head cheer coach for Iowa Western's competitive cheerleading team, requires participation in eight merit events per semester from each member of the group. It's an easy sell, she said.

"As ambassadors for Iowa Western Community College, it's important for them to be involved in the community. They are willingly doing this and happily participating," she said. "They see the benefit of being involved and the good in it; it's an opportunity for them to make connections. The people in the community support Iowa Western athletics, so I think it's important that we give back, too."

Last year's team of 30 Reiver cheerleaders contributed 610 volunteer hours to various community projects, including: assisting with landscaping and gardening work for On With Life, a long-term skilled care facility in Glenwood, Iowa and



Raven Gau with a member of her team at On with Life, a long-term skilled care facility in Glenwood, Iowa.



Creek Top Community Garden in Council Bluffs, Iowa

Dream Playground Re-imagined, an inclusive public playground in Council Bluffs; performing at a local Muscular Dystrophy Association gala and helping behind the scenes; collecting goods for Food Bank for the Heartland through Shine the Light on Hunger events during Omaha's Holiday Lights Festival, and taking a group of children ice-skating at the associated rink; and reading to schoolchildren at a Raise Me to Read literacy awareness event in Council Bluffs' Bayliss Park.

That's just a sampling, Gau said. "It's very diverse. It's a little bit of everything."

This year's cheerleading program has expanded to 52 student-athletes among a co-ed team and a new women-only team. Gau said her education background and personal experience as an IWCC cheerleader was behind the idea of tying community service to membership on the cheerleading team. Implementing the volunteer requirement in her first year as head coach last year was so successful that the expectation for community involvement will continue for cheerleaders going forward, she said.

"They're building camaraderie, which is vital for a cheerleading program. And I think it's important for them to see how giving back by volunteering strengthens the community. It helps make connections, and you have empathy for people and (appreciate) our differences," Gau said. Plus, it's part of the bigger picture of what being a cheerleader is all about: motivating others. "Our goal and team 'why' is to find value in each other's differences that will inspire change, make a mark, leave a legacy and will continue to follow each of us for the remainder of our lives."



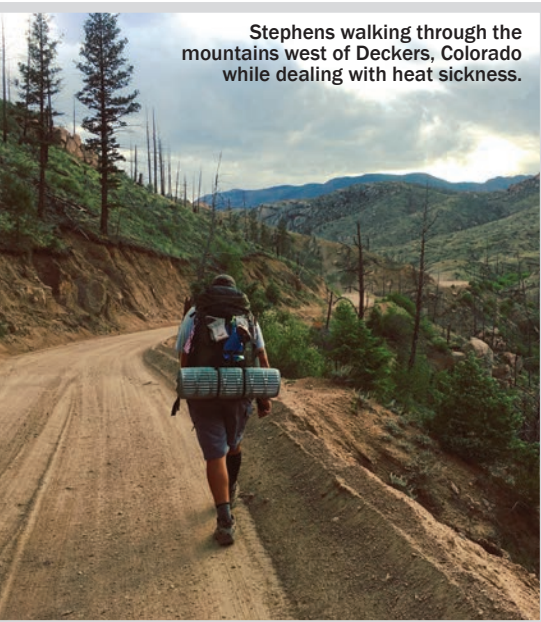
Shine the Light on Hunger



Dream Playground Re-imagined

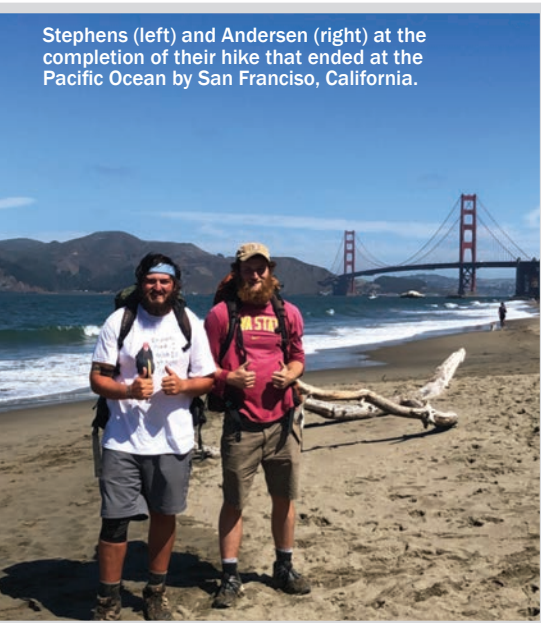


Raise Me to Read



Stephens walking through the mountains west of Deckers, Colorado while dealing with heat sickness.

“There were a lot of people rooting for us ... we had somebody every day offer to help us with something.”
- Trevor Stephens



Stephens (left) and Andersen (right) at the completion of their hike that ended at the Pacific Ocean by San Francisco, California.



Andersen (left) and Stephens (right) stop at The White House before leaving Washington, D.C. after a three-day stay.



Stephens on Memorial Day near Grand Island, Nebraska. He loved that nearly every car that passed them with the flag honked or waved.

VETERAN REIVER

Trevor Stephens and Matt Andersen, longtime friends from Council Bluffs, wanted to do something big to mark the end of their time in the military and college, respectively, and the beginning of a new phase in life.

“We both decided that when we finished college (Andersen) and the Marine Corps (Stephens) we were going to do this crazy road trip and see all these places; we both like to travel a lot,” Stephens said.

While serving as an infantry mortarman in the Marine Corps, Stephens saw a television documentary about music festival enthusiasts traveling on foot across multiple states to events. His idea of a walking trip fell flat, however, the first time he presented it to Andersen.

“I asked Matt and he said, ‘No. You’re crazy, dude. You’re crazy,’” Stephens recalled. It took some time and effort, but his friend eventually came around and agreed to a coast-to-coast walking trip that would also raise money for a veterans charity. A staff sergeant and combat veteran suggested the Purple Heart Foundation, a reputable nonprofit established more than 60 years ago to support veterans and their families.

Stephens and Andersen set out on March 1, 2018. Their 3,105-mile journey from Lewes, Delaware, to San Francisco, California, would take 191 days to complete.



Stephens walking through the desert west of Green River Utah on a 100 mile stretch between civilization.

Although he was physically conditioned from years of athletics plus his military training, nothing could have prepared his feet for the beating they took. Stephens said they averaged 25 miles a day and had “blisters every single day.” A GPS unit kept them on track and had an emergency communication function in case they ran into serious trouble and couldn’t reach help.

“We had our cell phones but a lot of places we were had almost no service, like all of West Virginia and a lot of Nevada and Utah, where we went for a few-hundred-mile stretches without seeing civilization and without any cell service,” Stephens said.

The walkers were determined to focus on the goal but also open to the idea of abandoning the plan if the weather or other obstacles proved too hazardous.

“We were two guys that were going to just go out there and see the country. We didn’t know how far we would make it on the trip,” Stephens said. “And we definitely wanted to quit, all the time.” They persevered through frigid conditions at the beginning, but it was a bout of heat exhaustion in triple-digit conditions in Utah that nearly spelled a premature end to the journey. However, a new incentive had emerged.

“There were a lot of people rooting for us,” Stephens said.

Friends and family tracking their progress on “Matt and Trevor’s Walk Across America” Facebook page and GoFundMe campaign for the Purple Heart Foundation were eventually joined by more than 1,500 followers. Stephens and Andersen had anticipated possible news coverage in their hometown newspaper, the Daily Nonpareil of Council Bluffs, but they were also featured in print, broadcast and online sources around the country.

Stephens said an important takeaway from his journey was “just how good people are.” In addition to the virtual support from online followers, various strangers along the way provided money for meals, opened their homes as places to sleep and shower, and even hit up hotels and motels along the route to donate rooms. “We had somebody every day offer to help us with something,” he said.

A little more than six months after they started, Andersen and Stephens reached California and had raised \$8,284, topping their \$5,000 goal, for the Purple Heart Foundation.

It was challenging to transition from a stringent military life to six months of relatively freestyle walking across the country, but it was an easier adjustment to start classes at IWCC shortly after returning home, Stephen said. Almost a year later, he’s a member of the wrestling team and is studying K-12 education. He intends to transfer to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in about a year and a half to complete his bachelor’s degree. He wants to then teach history and coach wrestling or football at the secondary level.

Looking back, Stephens said that despite the rigors of his walk across America, he has mostly fond memories of the experience and no regrets.

“It’s not something many people can say they’ve done,” he said. **u**

What we pride ourselves in is competing at the highest level and representing IWCC and Council Bluffs in a positive manner. To be the BEST is the expectation, and that is exactly what was accomplished last year. Here are highlights from last season:

Reiver Athletics

by Jeremy Capo and Jake Ryan

Baseball

Reiver baseball battled its way through inclement weather to clinch its 19th trip to the JUCO World Series in Grand Junction, Colorado. On its way to a runner-up finish, the team helped Head Coach Marc Rardin seal his 800th career victory (all at Iowa Western) and set an NJCAA D1 record for runs scored in a tournament with 74. Baseball alum Daniel Tillo (2016) continues to climb the minor league ladder. The Sioux City native was recently promoted to AA Northwest Arkansas in the Kansas City Royals system.

Women's Basketball

Head Coach Lindsey Vande Hoef battled one of the top nonconference schedules in the country and the loss of their top returning player and NJACC All-American to injury, before winning the Region XI Championship. Redshirt freshman Aubriana Noti and sophomore Kiara Dallmann signed with Utah of the Pac-12 and DePaul of the Big East, respectively.

Bowling

After a midseason coaching change and a few inaugural season hiccups, Reiver Bowling impressed everyone with its never-quit attitude. The team bussed to Buffalo, New York for NJCAA Nationals and placed in the top 10 on both the men's and women's sides. The women finished 10th with 10,184 total pins, while the men finished sixth with 11,963 pins.

Football

A come from behind win over Snow College clinched the team's 6th bowl win and its sixth season of 10 or more wins as the team finished third in the final rankings. Highlights for Reiver alumni included



Andrew Van Ginkel (2016) being taken in the NFL draft by the Miami Dolphins, while Nick Easley (2015, 2016) and Anthony Johnson (2015) signed with the Buffalo Bills and Tampa Bay Buccaneers, respectively. Easley also won Outback Bowl MVP honors in the University of Iowa's postseason win. Trevon Young (2013) also became the first Iowa Western Reiver to make a Super Bowl roster as his Los Angeles Rams played on the NFL's biggest stage. Watch out on Sundays this year for the aforementioned Easley, Van Ginkel, Young, Rico Gafford (Raiders), Isaiah Johnson (Buccaneers) and Geronimo Allison (Packers) as former Reivers suiting up in the NFL!

Women's Soccer

The Reivers locked up conference and district titles before falling in the NJCAA National Tournament to eventual national champion Monroe. Sophomore Laura Chavez finished second in the country with 30 assists; a career mark for IWCC helpers. Highlights for alumni included Celia Jimenez Delgado playing for Spain in the FIFA Women's World Cup. After the World Cup, the aerospace engineer rejoined her professional team in Seattle, where she promptly scored the first goal of her career.



Shotgun Sports

One of two new sports on campus, Reivers Shotgun Sports hit its peak at exactly the right time as Bailey Schmitz won the national championship in American Trap and Wobble Trap while the Reivers finished third overall in Division IV. Weston Zolck paced the Reivers in the open division, hitting nearly 80% of his targets on the day. Nine out of 10 Reivers will return from the inaugural team for the 2019-20 season.

Volleyball

Reiver Volleyball nearly pulled off the impossible. After locking up yet another trip to the NJCAA National Tournament, the Reivers took two-time defending national champion Miami-Dade to five sets before falling in one of the most emotional and heartbreaking matches in program history. The Reivers rebounded after the tough loss to top Seward County for a third-place finish. Hina Pua'a (Arizona) Savannah Downing (Arkansas), Irina Alekseeva (Dayton) and Morgan Bossler (Winthrop) are just a few of the Reivers who have moved on to play at the four-year level.

Wrestling

Iowa Western hosted NJCAA Wrestling tournament again at the Mid-America Center in Council Bluffs. Jacob Ruiz stood on the podium as an All-American after taking third at 133.

Off the Field

For the second consecutive year, Iowa Western Athletics was the Academic National Champion. 87 Iowa Western Reivers were named to the list, led by Reiver softball's 11 student-athletes. Additionally, women's soccer's Paige Moser was named the NATYCCA Scholar-Athlete of the Year.

Jeremy Capo, in his third season as Athletic Director at Iowa Western, was named the 2018-19 recipient of the Under Armour AD of the Year Award. The award highlights the efforts of ADs for their commitment and positive contributions to student-athletes, campuses and their surrounding communities. The award marks the first time Capo was named the recipient and was the first time since 2012 when Brenda Hampton received the award, that Iowa Western was honored.



IOWA WESTERN CAPTAINS' ASSOCIATION

Booster Club

The Iowa Western Athletic Department invites you to support these hard-working teams and individuals by becoming a member of the *Iowa Western Captains' Association*.

Our rebranded booster club provides the foundation for the success that the Reivers achieve year in and year out. Membership includes season tickets, Reivers-branded merchandise and more. Sign up today and help make a difference in Iowa Western student-athletes' lives. For information on joining the Captains' Association as an individual or corporate partner, go to:

www.GoReivers.com/information/booster

Thank you for rooting on the Reivers and making Iowa Western YOUR team! #SailsUP



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Taylor Dixson

Revving it UP

By Mike Watkins



Based on her upbringing, it would have been more likely that Taylor Dixson would study cuisine rather than carburetors when she started at Iowa Western last fall.

She grew up working in the kitchen, cooking regularly with her entire family. But when she started having trouble with her first car – a 2009 Kia Rio – her uncle taught her about basic auto maintenance, and she was intrigued.

Her boyfriend shared his love for cars with her and began teaching her more complicated procedures, and she was hooked.

Now, she's one of two females in Iowa Western Community College's Automotive Technical Trade Program – and she's just a year away from graduating with her associate of applied sciences degree and a future in auto mechanics.

"My boyfriend, Austin, and his father love cars more than just about anything else, and they taught me even more (than my uncle)," she said. "I loved to be outside learning and working with them. By the time I was out of high school, I knew I didn't want to be working at Buffalo Wild Wings forever, so I looked into colleges around me."

"I'll be honest, it wasn't my first choice. Initially, I looked at history classes at IWCC because I wanted to be a historian.

When I learned they had an Automotive program, I was excited. After some long, hard thinking, I knew that it was what I wanted to do."

When she first came to class, Dixson said she didn't know what to expect.

"I'm not a very social person, so I didn't quite put myself out there right away," she said. When asked about the dynamics of being the only female in the first year of the program, Dixson replied, "I didn't make it a priority. I'm there to learn and be the best mechanic I can be."

Her teacher, Andrew Estrada agreed. "The first week or so is always awkward, regardless of the student demographics, simply because no one knows each other." He continued, "this usually changes rather quickly because the students spend a lot of time together."

Estrada said, "everyone – male or female – in these classes needs to prove themselves."

"Taylor has earned my respect as well as the respect of her peers because she is friendly and intelligent, works hard and is eager to learn."

Dixson said her biggest asset is her tenacity, and there are a lot of factors in her life outside of school that would have stopped "a lesser person" from getting through the program.

But true to form, she said she refuses to let anything get in her way – being assertive and not afraid to give things a try, believing her confidence will bring about great things and the hope that it inspires her classmates to take more chances


and put themselves out there for the sake of bettering others as well as herself.

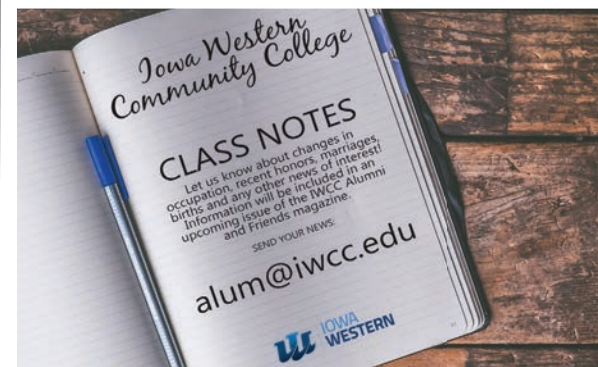
"Being the only female in class has definitely opened my eyes to what I am going to face out in the working environment," she said. "They were definitely not used to working around women, and I am not exactly stereotypical, as you can imagine."

"I'm not quite sure what they were thinking, but after a while, we warmed up to each other and I have an acquaintanceship with a couple of the guys and have found another best friend in one of my classmates."

Estrada sees Dixson as a role model.

"I want all the girls out there to know that nuts and bolts are not just boy stuff," he said. "So often I hear the parents of little girls say that what we do here in the automotive department is 'guy stuff.'"

"That strikes a chord with me, because gender has nothing to do with someone's ability to understand how electricity works or their affinity for mechanical systems. Diversity and inclusion make us stronger and more capable." 



ALUMNI BOARD

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Above: Alumni gather for a social hour at Glory Days in Council Bluffs.

ALUMNI EVENTS

The Iowa Western alumni office hosts a variety of events aimed at reconnecting alumni with the college. Watch the alumni Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages for future social events.

If you are interested in planning an alumni event, contact the alumni office at 712-325-3282. It is always great to have alumni back on campus!

To be included in future reunion mailings, send your updated information to alum@iwcc.edu. Visit us at iwcc.edu or facebook.com/IWCCAlumniandFriends.



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**HOMECOMING
SAVE THE DATE
OCT. 5, 2019**

Tailgate

12:00 p.m.
Lewis Central Parking Lot

Football Game

2:30 p.m.
Titan Stadium

Postgame

Barley's and Glory Days
100 Block of Council Bluffs

