

Maroon&Gold

ELDON ALUMNI MAGAZINE

FALL 2022



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ELDON HIGH SCHOOL'S 9TH ANNUAL ALUMNI REUNION WEEKEND September 23rd - 24th 2022

FRIDAY:

2:00 PM HOMECOMING PARADE
4:30 PM LIONS CLUB DINNER - MIDDLE SCHOOL CAFETERIA
5:30 PM ALUMNI TAILGATE PARTY - VICTOR FIELD (food provided)
7:00 PM HOMECOMING FOOTBALL GAME

SATURDAY TURKEY FESTIVAL 5K

7:00 AM CONTACT: ELDON PARKS & REC 573-392-2156

10:00AM TURKEY FESTIVAL PARADE
10AM -4PM TURKEY FESTIVAL

ALL DAY ELDON GOLF CLUB WILL BE HOSTING AN ALUMNI GOLF TOURNAMENT. ALL PROCEEDS WILL GO TO THE ELDON MUSTANGS BOYS & GIRLS GOLF TEAMS.

1:00 PM TOUR OF EHS BEGINS AT THE OLD GYM

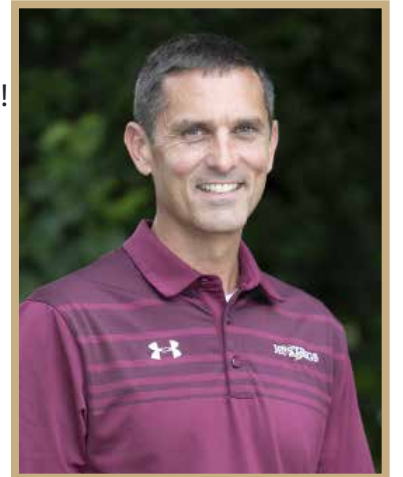
7:00 PM ALUMNI REUNION STREET PARTY AT THE POCKET PARK ON MAPLE STREET
FOOD AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT WHITTLES
MUSIC 7:00PM - 11:00PM

For more information contact

Wendy Winters - (573) 392-8010 ext. 1009 wendy.winters@eldonmustangs.org

LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

I am so glad you are reading the seventh edition of the Maroon & Gold! Our goal is to keep our patrons connected with what is happening in the school and with Eldon Alumni. I know we all have some great memories of our school. It could be your favorite teacher, your best friend that you haven't seen for years, your coach, your bus driver, or the cook that made you smile. We want to do our best to remember those days but also focus on the great things that are currently happening. In order to accomplish this, we need you to send us ideas about who to interview for our stories. I believe the Maroon and Gold is going to be the venue that allows Eldon Alumni to stay connected. Send your information to wendy.winters@eldonmustangs.org or mail it to her at 101 South Pine St. Eldon, MO, or call Wendy at 573-392-8010 ext. 1009



Another idea I want you to consider is coming back home. We continually strive to make our school and community one of the best places in the state. I believe you and your family will make an economic impact on our community. You will help us build an even better community that has a great infrastructure, great schools and great people. I feel blessed to live in Eldon, I know you will, too.

We are including information about some job opportunities in the area. Please take a look at them and see if any of them fit your needs.

I hope you enjoy the Maroon and Gold!

Matt Davis

EHS'95

JOIN THE ELDON ALUMNI ASSOCIATION FOR ONLY \$10 PER YEAR

Money will be used to keep you connected through the Maroon and Gold

Please send the following information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

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Mail to Eldon High School, attention
Wendy Winters, 101 S. Pine St., Eldon, MO 65026.

wendy.winters@eldonmustangs.org or 573-392-8010 ext. 1009.

You may also find us on Facebook at Eldon Mustangs or Eldon High School Alumni.

ELDON TOWN PLAN

GRO ELDON'S PLAN TO ACHIEVE COMMUNAL PROSPERITY



Prepared by: The GRO Eldon Core Leaders
GRO Program Coordinator: Matt Davis
Technical Support Provided by: Innovation Economy Partners



GRO ELDON

WHAT IS GRO?

Growth In The Rural Ozarks (GRO) program launched in 2016 to help Missouri towns design and launch community and economic development initiatives that bring sustainable local prosperity. The GRO program has grown over the years to include nine communities and tap into the knowledge of more local leaders.



KEY FOCUS AREAS FOR GRO

1

COMMITTED LEADERSHIP

- Governance & Planning
- Action & Accountability
- Resource Development

2

ENGAGED CITIZENS

- Community Outreach & Programming
- Academic & Experiential Learning
- Community Support Services

3

VIBRANT PLACE

- Quality & Affordable Housing
- Public Spaces & Experiences
- Town Infrastructure

4

RESILIENT ECONOMY

- Create It: Entrepreneurship and Innovation
- Grow It: Expand local businesses
- Attract It: Bring in new businesses

BI-MONTHLY COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

PERIODIC CONVENINGS FOR GRO COMMUNITY LEADERS TO SHARE, LEARN, AND COLLECTIVELY EVOLVE.

- HOUSING
- RURAL HEALTH
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- CHAMBER CONSORTIUM
- BUSINESS SPEAKER EVENT

WHY DID ELDON JOIN GRO?

Eldon has a small-town feel with a drive for continuous improvement. Many towns can be resistant to change, but Eldon is constantly improving. We joined the GRO family to bond the businesses, city, and schools together. We are creating a united vision and working toward making that bond a reality.

OUR VISION

Together We Rise!

INITIAL ASSESSMENT & FINDINGS

OUR COMMUNITY'S VOICE

Our big observation: The survey reveals that the citizens of Eldon hold the efforts being lead in the city and its local leaders in a very high regard. In fact, the perceptions scores have improved dramatically in the last 20 months since the last community survey was conducted. Eldon should continue to build on its wins by tackling visibility citizens wins such as attracting a prominent business or helping improve the local infrastructure such as improvement of rundown properties, development of sidewalks,

THE ASSETS THAT WE NEED TO BUILD ON



- We embrace our youth and educate them to become active members of the community in hopes for them to continue as leaders of the town.
- There are several originations and projects for the community to get involved and have a voice.
- We are proud to help each other and be citizens of Eldon.
- We have a beautiful park and recreational facilities including a golf course and bowling alley. Soon to be coming is the Rock Island Trail.
- School district has several opportunities available to help our students thrive. We have a very active chamber of commerce vested in the businesses and community.
- Have been working in the past 5+ years in identifying affordable housing.
- We have medical and dental practionars easily available along with local pharamcy.

GRO INITIATIVES

2022 OBJECTIVES

- Launch an Eldon Leadership program that provides structured training to citizens interested in serving their community.
- Project RISE: Recruit the first class.
- Investment Water and Sewage infrastructure, Walkability, Housing ordinance refinement.
- Identify and pursue grants that can help further develop the trails projects.
- Find workers to fill the estimated 400 new jobs in Eldon

WINS TO DATE

Heart of the Program: A Strong Leadership Team

GRO Program sits on the shoulders of strong inspired and inspiring local leaders who are committed to seeing their community thrive. We thank you for your commitment and your leadership!

- Megan Hees
- Matt Davis
- Erin Rohwer
- Todd Rader
- Linda Conner
- Linda Scrivner
- Bill Foglesong
- Matt Kostelnik
- Reagan Limbach
- and many more...

Strengthening Eldon's Infrastructure

The city has undertaken several different projects this year: Lining sewer pipes, ordering equipment to refurbish wastewater treatment, and refurbishing concession stand at Apperson Park. The city also received a **\$750,000 grant** to repair stormwater drain next to High School.

New Factory in Eldon!

Quaker Window Products is building a **\$65 million** campus along in Eldon. This summer the company started constructing in its third phase. This third phase involves a new **250,000-square-foot** commercial window and door facility. Bringing more than **150 jobs** to Eldon!

Rock Island Depot

The Rock Island Depot depot was originally the place where products were unloaded from trains and carted to the local shop owners. The new depot is constructed in the same location to welcome visitors from the Rock Island Trail and usher them to downtown Eldon amenities. Leaders in Eldon have spent over eight years working toward initiating the construction of the depot..

GRO Eldon's Small Town Big Heart

- Small Town, Big Impact:**
- Manned with **84 Volunteers**
 - **172 Hours** of service
 - Gathered **900 jars** of peanut butter
 - Collected **900 books** for parents as teachers
 - Raised **\$3,856** for **gas cards** and haircuts
 - Organized **24 backpacks** for children in foster care.



GRO ELDON'S PROJECTS

OUR ELDON LOCAL LEADERS ARE FOCUSING ON THESE FIVE EFFORTS TO BETTER ELDON'S PATH TO PROSPERITY. LEARN MORE ABOUT ELDON'S PROJECTS AT WWW.GROOZARKS.COM

CONTACT LEADERSHIP:
MATT DAVIS
MATT.DAVIS@ELDONMUSTANGS.ORG

GRO FOCUS AREA: COMMITTED LEADERSHIP

PROJECT 1: SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP

- **GRO Team Effort Project:**
- The key to community prosperity is strong local leadership. Often the same set of individuals serves in a variety of leadership roles and as a result experience burnout. Additionally, local citizens who could be potential leaders, lack the knowledge on how to engage. GRO Eldon will tackle this opportunity by creating two specific pathways.
- **2022 Goals:** (1) Engage and recruit co-leaders for each of the GRO projects. (2) Launch an Eldon Leadership program that provides structured training to citizens interested in serving their community.

GRO FOCUS AREA: ENGAGED CITIZENS

PROJECT 2: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- **GRO Leaders working on this Projects:** Megan Hees and Regan Limbar
- Local citizens sometimes lack the knowledge on the direction where their community is headed. This lack of understanding causes dis-engagement and at worst mistrust. It is incumbent upon local leaders to proactively share with local citizens details about community strategies, local development priorities, and progress. In order to tackle this opportunity, GRO Eldon team will use several tools and techniques: social media, in-person events, and newsletters.
- **2022 Goals:** Engage and Inform 3.5% of our population.

GRO FOCUS AREA: ENGAGED CITIZENS

PROJECT 3: PROJECTRISE

- **GRO Leaders working on this Projects:** Bill Foglesong
- This complete wrap-around program provides support to individuals and families that are trapped in a generational cycle of poverty. Through this program, families living paycheck to paycheck can stabilize their finances (increase their income, reduce debt, etc), and chart a path to personal prosperity.
- **2022 Goals:** Recruit one family

GRO FOCUS AREA: VIBRANT PLACE

PROJECT 4: INFRASTRUCTURE AND HOUSING

- **GRO Leaders working on this Projects:** Don Smith
- Access to quality local infrastructure and housing are the most fundamental assets that are needed to attract/retain young families to small, rural communities. The GRO team will work alongside the Eldon City Hall to create and mobilize a plan that addresses this opportunity.
- **2022 Goal:** Investment Water and Sewage infrastructure, Walkability, Housing ordinance refinement.

GRO FOCUS AREA: VIBRANT PLACE

PROJECT 5: TRAILS PROJECT

- **GRO Leaders working on this Projects:** Matt Kostelnik
- The Rock Island Trail is a 144-mile stretch of Missouri's old Rock Island Train Line. This train line is being redeveloped as a multiuse trail. This can be a distinct new asset to communities that are adjacent to the trails. Eldon has the opportunity to further connect and build this asset (already finished working on the Trail Depot).
- **2022 Goals:** Identify and pursue grants that can help further develop the trails.

GRO FOCUS AREA: RESILIENT ECONOMY

PROJECT 6: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- **GRO Leaders working on this Projects:** Matt Davis
- New jobs are coming to Eldon. The purpose of this project is to plan and prepare for Eldon to attract families and workers to the area to work these new positions.
- **2022 Goals:** Find workers to fill the estimated 400 new jobs in Eldon

One Word... Love



2005 Eldon Alumna and daughter of Eldon School staff Jim & Clare Herriman

Research done by Tammy Witherspoon

Jim Herriman and Amanda Herriman-Reichel have more in common than their father-daughter family connection; they are both published authors. Now they share a love for their family, a love for education, and also a love for telling a story. Amanda is a 2005 Eldon alum and the daughter of Jim and Clare Herriman, who have together served over 80 years in the Eldon School District.

Anyone who graduated from Eldon with Amanda will definitely remember the bubbly girl with the bright red hair who demonstrated a zest for life. Well, the hair and the zest for life are still the same. She strives to spread positivity in all that she does. Her achievements since then are devoted wife, loving mother, caring teacher and now...published author. Her book, My Word of the Year is available on Amazon.com. Asked how she chose the subject matter, Herriman-Reichel explains, "I have applied the practice of having a word of the year to my life since 2017. This concept allows my mind to hyper-focus on one central theme for an entire year."

Her parents taught her early in life the importance of setting goals and she has made it a lifetime practice. "A few years ago, I paired goal setting with my word of the year, and it has set my journey along a unique path to which I am forever grateful. I started 2021 with my word of the year, "Prayer." I

also set three goals; one for the mind, one for the body, and one for the spirit. Her goal to develop her mind was to read one book per week, which would add up to fifty-two books by the end of the year. A goal for her body consisted of a nutrition plan, physical training, and weight loss. This plan would allow her to be ready to complete a half marathon. "My goal for spirit was to read the Bible from start to finish. This was the year that 'Prayer' allowed me to surpass my limitations so much that I felt a great calling to write this book."

As a wife, mother, and teacher, time spent writing must be accomplished with intentionality. "I spent every spare minute I had available working on this project, including several late nights." My Word of the Year was completed December of 2021. "I hope My Word of the Year brings readers inspiration and joy! I hope to get the opportunity to talk with my readers as I truly want to hear their word of the year and the three goals they have selected to pursue. I would also love to know that my book has inspired a more robust practice of prayer that sends my readers on their spiritual journey."

Amanda's newest book, published at the end of March 2022, carries the title, One Kid. One Word + Goals. One School Year. The book is a fictional

story for kids. The story is about a fourth grade boy who chooses one word and three goals for the new school year. After Herriman-Reichel came up with the storyline, she also decided to illustrate the book using her own ink drawings and watercolors. "This project stretched every creative muscle I possibly have to its limit, but I stayed focused on the ultimate goal: creating a book for children to enjoy reading."

"I hope that people know that I strive to spread positivity in all that I do."

The completion of her first book inspired her father, Jim Herriman to finish a book he had started 20 years prior. "There were things I saw in my job as a teacher and coach that I thought someone should write a book about," he explains. "Learn and Serve student Jordan Drake-Bysor typed a few chapters, however, had trouble reading my handwriting," he explains. So, Herriman put it on the back burner and didn't think about finishing it until Amanda published her first book and quickly began work on her second. Jim Herriman's book is named Eldon HIStory. It is a history of one teacher's journey in a school district over decades. Jim says he wants people to understand what educators go through. His hope is that every former Eldon student that reads his book, winds up taking their own walk down memory lane. Amanda considered it an honor to help her father self-publish his book. She remembers, "First, it started with a phone call, 'Amanda, I'm getting back to writing my book. Can you type it for me if I hand-write it on notebook paper?' Which resulted in a somewhat hesitant, 'Sure, Dad' response on my end," she explains. "After many phone calls, texts, and in-person typing sessions, we got all 20

typed, edited, and formatted. My favorite discussion was when I would tell my dad, 'Dad I just have one little suggestion.. how about you add this, or we can remove that, but re-word it this way?' This was quickly followed by, 'Thank you for the 'suggestion' Amanda, but who is writing this book, me or you?' Unfortunately for my dad, I'm like my mom in the aspect of having a ten-second rebound before I'm back to making my next book 'suggestion. This back and forth banter over the writing suggestions resulted in a ton of shared father-daughter laughter. Anyone who knows my dad knows that he's got a great sense of humor and he included that charm many times in his book which we hope you enjoy. As an EHS Alum myself, I feel this nonfiction about our school's history from the perspective of one teacher's journey is delightful," she finishes. His masterpiece was published in March of 2022 and now all three of their books can be purchased from Amazon.com.

Although Amanda enjoys writing and editing, her first love goes to her precious family. She met Gary Reichel while she was student teaching at Eldon and the two were married three years later. Mr. Reichel was an Eldon Career Center Agriculture teacher for 13 years and now is in his second year at California, Mo. They live in California on his family's century-old farm where they carry on the legacy. "Country life was an adjustment at first, but getting our 50-acre farm in view beyond our family room windows is one of the most spectacular sights to take in. I feel truly blessed to be in a place where my creativity can thrive on inspiration." Their three children enjoy the spacious farmland to explore and play, and their cattle, pigs, and dogs are fun for the family and definitely keep life interesting.



Jim and Clare Herriman at their son Christopher's wedding.

Herriman cont.



Amanda, Gary, Allison, Aiden, and Addison Reichel

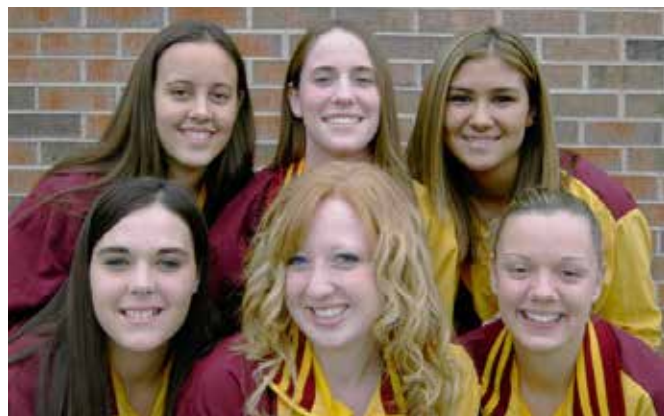
Raising her children in a small farming community gives peace to Amanda. "I absolutely love the small-town atmosphere where everyone knows everyone. Growing up, I felt like everyone was a friend. We supported each other, and we lifted each other up. Truthfully, I don't recall having to ever shake anyone's hand and introduce myself until I went to college. Knowing everyone, made me feel safe. It is truly a comfort to feel as though you are amongst friends everywhere you go, and this is a luxury I will never take for granted."

Mrs. Herriman-Reichel also pours herself into her 3rd grade students whom she adores. After graduating from Eldon Herriman-Reichel furthered her education by attending William Woods University and double majoring in Elementary Education and Art Education. Later she obtained a Master's Degree in Athletic-administration and a Specialist Degree in School Superintendency, all from William Woods University. Her first teaching job was at the High Point R-III School District teaching art, computers and physical education. Gary and Amanda both teach for the California R-1 School District and their children are enrolled there as well. Addison is a second grader, Allison is in first grade and Aiden just started kindergarten this year.

The desire to become an educator started with her mentors who were her parents. Herriman-Reichel was born and raised an Eldon Mustang. "I will always love my hometown. She is the daughter

of Jim Herriman, a retired social studies teacher, former football coach, former administrator, and former school board president for the Eldon R-1 School District. Her mom is Clare Herriman, the current transportation director for Eldon Schools, and also former girls P.E. coach and athletic director. Jim and Clare Herriman have given respectfully 43 and 42 years of service to the Eldon School District. Amanda says her parents are "indeed" her heroes. "They have dedicated many years of service to the pursuit of educating, inspiring, and helping students achieve their dreams. I have witnessed many times that they have set their own needs aside to put others first. They have taught me the importance of faith and seeking God out in prayer to allow Him to guide my next action step." Her brother also continues the family legacy in education. Chris Herriman, an Army National Guard sergeant, served in Iraq from 2010-2011, teaches Business at Jefferson City High School and his wife, Bethany Herriman, teaches Math & History at Southern Boone Middle School.

Herriman-Reichel can also point to many other Eldon teachers who influenced her life choices. "I loved all of the high school teachers I had at Eldon. In fact, choosing one would be as impossible as telling you which of my own children is my favorite. They genuinely have all influenced my life. To name a few; David Bailey, Mary Gainey, Lisa Wyatt, Kristina Harwood, Steve Henderson, David Herren, Chuck Campbell, Willard Haley, Matt Biddle, Matt Davis, Tammy Martin, Dennis White, Amy Pratt, Rex McCargar, Sandra Ingram, Adriana Creath, Patti LaDuke, Mr. Hannah, and of course both Coach



A few friends on the 2004 EHS Volleyball Team. Sarah Cox-Wilhoit, Colleen McDevitt, Melanie Boots, Keri Mueller-Banner, Amanda Herriman-Reichel, & Jenna Hardin-Kautch.

Herrimans. Debbie Geritz and Sandy Wilson are two of my elementary teachers that have impacted my life in more ways than words can describe. They were patient, kind, loving, and caring to all their students. I always felt welcomed in their classrooms, they made learning fun, and I always felt comforted under their care."

In parting, there is one thing Amanda Reichel-Herriman would like people to know about her, "I hope that people know that I strive to spread positivity in all that I do. I hope I am known for being a loving mother, wife, daughter, family member, and friend, as well as being an influential elementary teacher, artist, and author."



Jim, Clare, Aiden, Christopher, Bethany, Amanda, Gary, Allison, Gracelyn, Maxwell and Addison.

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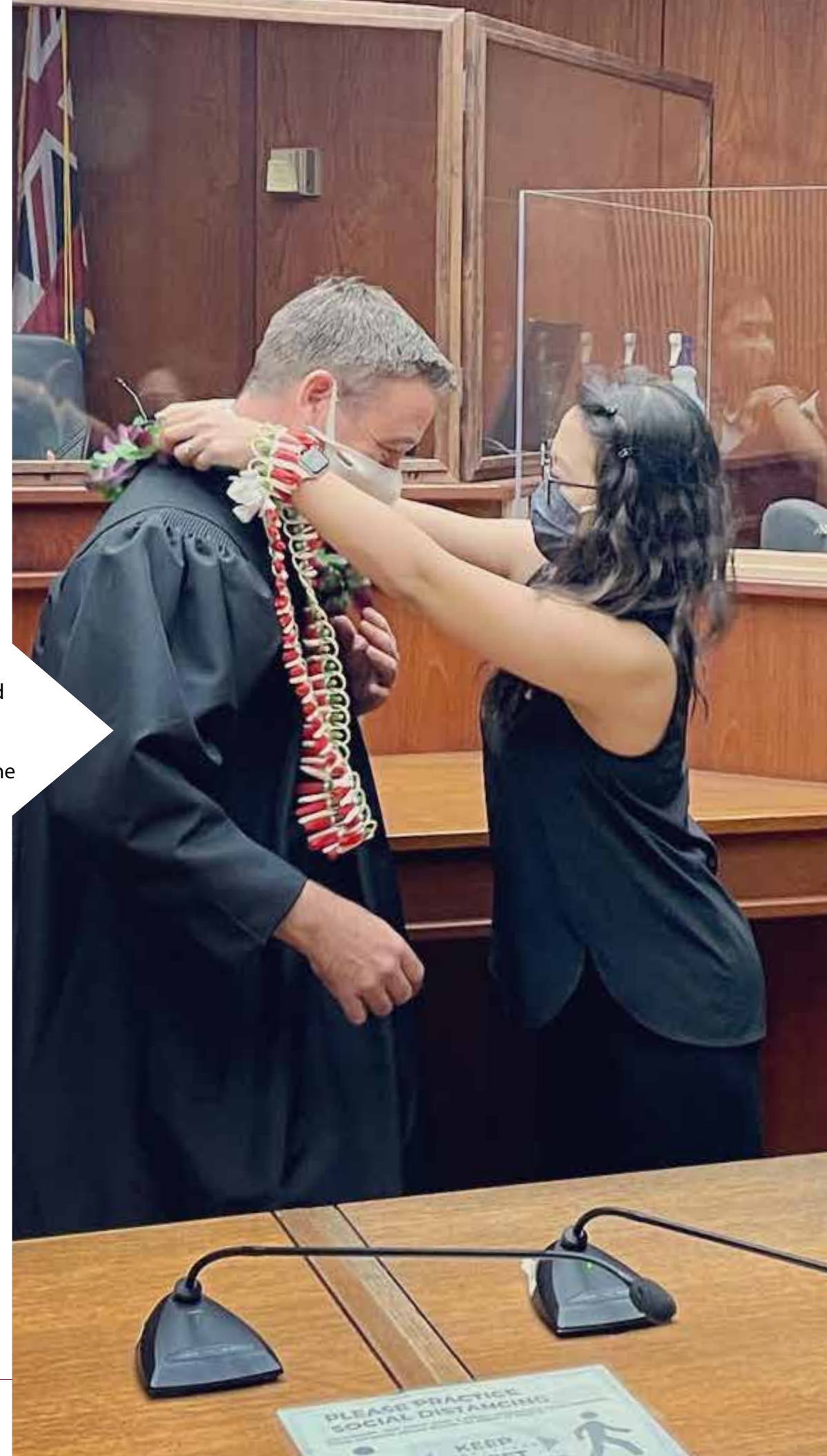
Jason Burks -'92

Research done by Tammy Witherspoon

Caring for customers at an early age in the family business and appreciating the diversity of students throughout his Eldon school days, led Jason Burks on a path to become a criminal defense attorney and recently a judge. Judge Jason Burks is a 1992 Eldon graduate and has recently been appointed by the Chief Justice of Hawaii's Supreme Court as a per diem district court judge. Although he has achieved much, he was humbled and appreciative to be chosen as a feature in the Maroon and Gold Alumni magazine.

Burks is the son of Redus and Rita Burks. Jason transferred to the Eldon School District in 1980 after attending kindergarten in Iberia. His eldest brother Randy was a graduate of Iberia High School and Darryl was a 1982 Eldon graduate. Their early years were spent on his family's farm outside Iberia. He also recalls spending much time in the aisles of Mid-Missouri Office Equipment and Supply, which his parents owned and operated in Eldon. The interconnection with customers had a great impact on his life. "For as long as I can remember I was interacting with customers at the store and helping them. I could operate a cash register, typewriter, photocopier and even the early personal computers by the time I started second grade. Having that early and constant influence of technology in my life, along with the human interactions I had with customers of all kinds of backgrounds, I believe has helped me tremendously get to where I am today." The work ethic and carry family culture forwarded by his family had great influence on Burk's life. "I couldn't have done it without any one of them. They are all among not only the smartest people I know, but also the most compassionate. And it's that compassion for people that I admire the most and strive to replicate."

Burks points to two Eldon High School teachers who had a



significant impact on his life, speech and debate teacher, David Bailey and math teacher, Merle Matzen. From Mr. Bailey, he received speaking and debate skills which he would skillfully use in his future career. "Mr. Bailey really encouraged me and I think it was from debate where I first got the idea that maybe I would go to law school. Prior to that I don't remember having any ambitions in law." He admired the calm, no nonsense teaching demeanor of Mr. Matzen. "If I ever didn't understand anything, he could always find a way to help me understand. And he never seemed to get frustrated with anything. I always strive to have a temperament like him."

Burks believes that being raised in a small town helped him in life as well as his career. In a large city, students usually group by special interests or socio-economic position. "Growing up in the small town there was essentially one school. Whether you were rich or poor; Catholic or Protestant; athletic, musical or an academic; you all go to the same school and have classes together. I think having that experience is invaluable." He believes the close relationships that were formed in Eldon helped him understand people better. "Throughout my career in law I think while my clients may not look like me or have the same background as me, they can tell I still understand and can relate to their situation and where they come from."

After graduating from Eldon, Burks first attended Southwest Missouri State University (now Missouri State University) in Springfield. He didn't feel like he belonged there though, and transferred to the University of Missouri-Columbia for his sophomore year. While attending M.U. he had the opportunity to study in Mexico. He says learning a new language and experiencing a completely different culture gave him a taste for adventure and he was hooked. After returning from Mexico, he finished his last two years at Mizzou, graduating in 1996 with a bachelor's degree in international studies with an emphasis in business administration and Latin America. Next came major decisions about where to attend law school. He was accepted to Washington University in St. Louis, University of San Diego, and Loyola Marymount in Los Angeles as well as being wait-listed at the University of Hawaii. "I had never been to Hawai'i and really knew very little about it, so I decided I would go to San Diego and I bought my tickets and started looking for apartments. Then over the summer I got a call from Hawai'i that I had been accepted and they offered me a spot in the fall. Hawai'i was the smallest law school in the nation at that point and it was very difficult to get in if you were not a Hawai'i resident. The offer was too good to pass up, so after talking over the

Compassion cont.

opportunity with his parents, he accepted the Hawai'i opening, packed his two bags and guitar and made the transition to Aloha State in Oahu where he knew not one person.

After a few days in a hotel, he found an apartment and dove into the culture of Hawai'i. "A lot of people who come from the mainland really have a hard time living here because so many things are so different. The food is different. The way people speak is different. The music is different. I fell in love with the food, people and culture here and knew at that point this was where I would be for a while."

Burks would spend the next three years devoting his time to law school. When he graduated in 1999, he took a judicial clerkship with a judge who was on the First Circuit Court of Oahu. The clerkship gave him the opportunity to see actual law practice and criminal jury trials. It was the catalyst for his decision to become a criminal defense attorney. Practicing criminal law was his avenue to conduct trials in the courtroom. "I liked the idea of helping people who were in trouble. Most of the people charged with crimes are not bad people, but people who have made bad decisions or have had a lot of other bad breaks in their past that have led them to where they are. And most of them are underdogs and don't really have anyone rooting for them to fix their problems." As a criminal defense attorney he was able to make a difference in the individual lives of people. He has been truly inspired by some of the clients he has helped. "Seeing a client who ended up in jail with a severe drug habit work hard to achieve two years of sobriety and get her children back from CPS is pretty heroic and inspiring to me."

After finishing his clerkship he was hired by the state public defender's office and the



position was in Hilo on the Big Island of Hawai'i. Once again, Burks packed his bags and headed to a new job and a new town. Hilo was a much smaller town with a more rural feel than Honolulu. While in Hilo at the public defender's office he started doing traffic cases and misdemeanors. Through his experiences he developed a yearning to become a judge. In Hawai'i judges are appointed and not elected. As a per diem judge Burks doesn't have to sit full time so he can maintain his private law practice, as long as he doesn't take any cases that are heard in the district court. The district court handles general traffic cases, misdemeanors, small claims, and landlord-tenant cases. The district court does not do felony cases or any jury trials, nor family court/divorce/custody cases. "So presently I sit on the bench in district court 5-10 days per month and the remaining time I am handling felony cases in circuit court as a defense attorney."

After moving to Hilo, Burks married Tammy, and the couple had a son, Ethan. Two and a half years after moving to Hilo, Burks got the opportunity to transfer back to Oahu. In 2003, the family moved to Oahu. Burks says

he began climbing his way up the ladder to felony jury trials and to the top level of trial attorneys who defended class A felonies and murder cases. In 2009, he and Tammy divorced, but remained good friends and co-parented Ethan. After 10 years in the public defender's office, Burks decided to go out on his own in 2011, taking his first case as the law office of Jason R. Burks. He still operates the office. His son graduated from Iolani High School on Oahu in 2019 and presently attends the University of Hawai'i studying computer science. Ethan took the opportunity to study abroad in Paris during the most recent winter/spring semester. "Of any of my achievements, he is by far the one I am most proud of. He amazes me in some way almost every day."

When not being a judge or an advocate, Burks has a variety of interests that help him relax. In his free time he enjoys playing music, specifically guitar. He is so invested in his music that he turned an extra bedroom in his house into a studio and guitar room. Traveling is also an adventure he enjoys, over the last five years Burks has taken six trips to various places in Europe, as well as Japan. Burks is a busy man and doesn't get the chance to travel to central Missouri that often, but when he does, he always tries to meet up with high school friends. "Thanks to Facebook and social media I have been able to keep in touch with a lot of my friends and classmates and always enjoy seeing what is going on in their lives. I really appreciate all the support and congratulations I have received from those old classmates and friends."



Jason and his son Ethan up in the London Eye, England, with Big Ben in the background.



Jason playing guitar in 2017 at the first annual "Rock 4 Justice". Jason was a co-founder of this event where attorneys and judges get together in bands and play music.



Jason playing guitar with fellow classmate Chad Duncan on drums and singer Ken Sinclair during the summer of 1993.

Four Loves

2011 Alumna Arika Myers Quezada



Arika, husband Jonathan, son Zeno 3 yrs and daughter Nova 2 yrs.
Photo courtesy of Chelsea Plemmons Photography

"I want to inspire others to take the risk, do the hard things, find their passion and make it happen."

Arika Quezada (Myers) was born and raised in Eldon, MO and after a short season living out of state, she calls Eldon home again. She grew up through the Eldon R-1 school program. Her time in high school was mostly dedicated to sports and our local Eldon FFA chapter. Upon graduating, she attended the University of Missouri to study Agricultural Education, but before long, she followed her heart to Alabama for the Ramp School of Ministry. This is where she would meet her now husband, Jonathan Quezada. After spending a year in Houston, TX working for Hurricane Harvey relief programs, Jonathan and Arika decided Eldon would be a great place to start a family.

There's no question if you apply yourself in school, you will gain something that can be carried for the rest of your life. It might be knowledge, friendships, skills or even life passions. Arika Quezada (Myers) is now building a local business and life around the

support and education she received from Eldon R-1 and our local Eldon FFA Chapter. Right here in the middle of Eldon, MO, she has created an urban garden, growing cut flowers and produce to sell.

The following is a brief look into Arika's dream and what inspired her to make it come to life... literally.

I wasn't raised in a farming family. I would say my desire to garden was ignited during my high school years. My junior year I joined our FFA chapter in due diligence to my best friend, who had just become the chapter president. The doors that were opened to me out of that decision were innumerable. I experienced great success with contest teams, where I developed skills in communication and public speaking. I was also introduced to the work of the greenhouse.

Eldon's FFA chapter hosts an annual plant sale to raise money. The students have the opportunity to learn some of the ins and outs of raising plants: planting, watering, fertilizing, pruning and selling.

There is something to be said about the power of a planted seed. I do believe that a seed was planted in me during that season that I



couldn't ever quite shake. My journey has led me down many different paths since high school, but I am thrilled that I somehow managed to find my way back to Eldon, MO where it all started.

Last Spring, we built two little raised garden beds and threw a whole mess of seeds in there to see what would happen. At some point last Summer, I knew it needed to be bigger. I was stirred very deeply to make a greater impact in our community. If you haven't noticed, our little town is quickly developing into a thriving place to be. I have a strong entrepreneurial spirit, so my mind was constantly racing as to what we could contribute. What I learned is that the best thing we can each contribute is something we are passionate about.

Gardening is way more to me than just sowing and reaping. A garden is a place to connect with the earth and with family. My biggest joy in this endeavor is watching my two children soak up each moment. How much richer an education on creation than to dig in the dirt with bare hands. How better to learn the value of hard work than to relish in the fruits of your labor.

But it's also more than that...

I want to inspire others to take the risk, do the hard things, find their passion and make it happen. I want to show people that you don't have to have a 300 acre property to have a farm. You can do it with a borrowed backyard. I purposely named our business Four Loves Urban Farm to break down a few of those boxes around farming. No, we don't live in an urban area. But for our little farming community, a farm in the middle of town is a bit unconventional.

This is only my first year, so I am definitely still in the learning and experimental process. I wish I could put the vision in my head for this business into proper words. There is so much that I want to offer our community through this journey, and I cannot wait for you to see it unfold! There is much to be said about the verse in the Bible which says to "not despise these small beginnings". (Zechariah 4:10) I am thankful for the seed that was planted in me all those years ago, and I am thankful to be in a position where I can "plant it forward".



Arika with the 2010 Parliamentary Procedure team that took first place at National FFA Convention.



Arika prepping rows in the spring and getting seeds in the ground.



Arika helping set up the Eldon FFA chapter's plant display at the 2010 Miller County Fair.



Flowers from Arika's farm.
Photo courtesy of Taylor Morgan Photography & Design

Thankful... 1997 Alumnus DJ DeGraffenreid



Landon, DJ, Cherish, Devin and daughter-in-law Alysa DeGraffenreid.

Written by 2020 Eldon alumna Reagan Limbach

Located on 7 Hawkeye Lane in Eldon, Missouri is a family owned business called DeGraffenreid Heating and Cooling. It is owned and operated by David Jr. and Cherish DeGraffenreid. While David and his wife have built a very successful business of their own, it was through hard work and determination that they got to that point. DJ, a graduate of Eldon High School class of 1997, first started working with HVAC when he was 19 and since then his success has blossomed. When asked how he got into the business he said, "My dad and I used to be a part of a bowling league in Eldon. At the time I was also in need of a job. One of the guys that were a part of the bowling league ended up hiring me to do HVAC and I have been doing it ever since". Before DJ became apart of the heating and cooling business, it was FFA in high school that helped lead him to a path of working with his hands. Some of his favorite times and memories in high school were while being an active member of the Eldon FFA Chapter. "Some of my favorite teachers were my FFA advisors Matt Bittle and Willard Haley. Both of those teachers pushed me to be active in FFA and get everything out of it that I could. Mr. Haley

especially pushed me to be on the Ag Mechanics contest team". During his time in Ag Construction and in the Eldon FFA department, he built a trailer that he still uses today, 25 years later.

DeGraffenreid comes from a line of entrepreneurs. His dad, Dave DeGraffenreid, owned a body shop business in Eldon, MO called Double D Collision Repair. Like DJ, his father Dave also has been a resident of Eldon for as long as DJ can remember. DJ also has an uncle, Troy White, that owned a muffler shop called Troy's Muffler. When it came time to decide where DJ wanted to start his business, he knew that Eldon was the perfect fit. "Eldon has opportunities that other towns do not provide. Since I grew up in Eldon, I already knew a lot of people who live in the area. My family already had a few businesses around the area, so I knew a lot of people from that".

After working for one Heating and Cooling Company around the area, the DeGraffenreid's eventually decided that they wanted to open their own heating and cooling business. When asked why DJ wanted to open his own business he said, "I have seen other companies around the area that

over price and may not show up on time. I want to make it a point to be honest and respectful of people's time. A lot of the people whose houses and buildings that I am working on, I know them personally". When starting their company, the DeGraffenreid's began their business out of the garage of their home, but eventually their business grew. They moved into the building where their business is currently located in 2010. Since then, their business has continued to grow adding on more employees including DJ and Cherish's son Devin, a 2018 graduate of Eldon. DJ's pride in helping is customers has not gone unnoticed. They have been nominated and won various Missouri's Best and Best of the Lake awards.

Together, DJ and Cherish have two sons, Devin, and Landon. Devin was a 2018 graduate of Eldon High School where he still resides with his wife Alyssa, and Landon was a 2022 graduate. While Devin was in high school, the couple spent many nights in the basketball gym watching him play basketball and while both boys were in high school, they were active members in Eldon FFA. DJ and Cherish also supported them on those endeavors. When the DeGraffenreid's are not working, their family enjoys spending time going to car shows and working on vehicles. They are also involved with Lake Ozark Speedway where DJ used to race. DJ enjoys working on his vehicles, "If it has wheels on it, I'm probably interested in it" he says. Not only do they enjoy working with cars, but they also give back to the youth involved in agriculture in Eldon and the surrounding communities. During the livestock sale at the Miller County Fair, they purchase animals from the youth at the sale. Not only are they involved in that, but DJ continues to support the organization that not only him, but also his sons in high school, by supporting and donating to local FFA chapters in the area including the Eldon FFA chapter. They are also members of the Tuscumbia First Assembly of God Church. When asked about DeGraffenreid's successes he says that he still cannot believe it. "When I started this business, I had no idea that I would end up where I am right now. I am very thankful to God and my family for where I am".



Devin finishing up some work at the new Antique Mall in Eldon.



DJ & Cherish DeGraffenreid.



Pictured left to right: Dallas Hardy, Devin DeGraffenreid, Tyler Scurlock, DJ & Cherish, George Croy & Josh Colbert.

EHS STUDENTS SCORING 30+ ON THE ACT



JACOB ARNOLD



MADDOX BERLENER



AMYA BRISBIN



DAKOTA FORRESTER



ADDISON GERBER



IRIS HENG



CONNOR LEE



NICKY MARTONFI



ZOEY MARTONFI



PAYGE SERGENT



AYLA SMITH

STUDENTS ENTERING THE MILITARY



KYLE CONNER
ARMY BAND

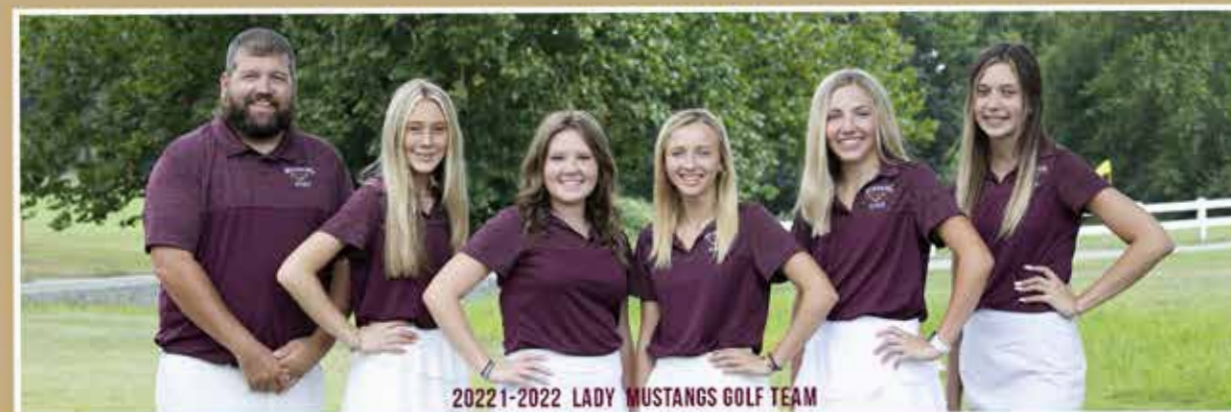


NICKY MARTONFI
NAVAL ACADEMY



KILLIAN WILSON
MARINES

CLASS 4, DISTRICT 10 CHAMPIONS



2021-2022 LADY MUSTANGS GOLF TEAM

2020-2021 ALL-STATE ATHLETES



CAROLINE BECKMANN
4X800M RELAY - 3RD
400M DASH - 4TH
TRIPLE JUMP - 3RD



HEATHER BRADFIELD
4X800M RELAY



JASPER DEGRAFFENREID
WRESTLING - 6TH STATE
SHOT PUT - 7TH STATE



TATUM FRANK
VOLLEYBALL



EMILY GUTHRIE
4X800M RELAY



HEATHER HARBISON
POLE VAULT - 6TH



ZOE MARTONFI
4X800M RELAY - 3RD
300M HURDLES - 2ND
HIGH JUMP - 3RD
1600M RUN - 2ND
CROSS COUNTRY - 3RD



PJ PATTON
4TH PLACE - DISCUS



NATE REYNOLDS
CROSS COUNTRY
17TH PLACE

1984 Alumnus Jeff Hargroves

Finding a way back home.

Written by 2021 Eldon alumna Payge Sergent



Jeff, his wife Amy and two children, Katie & Jackson.

For Mr. Jeff Hargroves, Eldon is more than just a small town. It is a place full of friendships, life lessons, and a home to his business- the beautiful Stark Caverns.

Being an Eldon High School Graduate of 1984 and an avid sports player, Jeff quickly learned that Eldon was a special place. While attending EHS, Jeff was a part of the football, basketball, and track teams. "We had a lot of fun – on and off the field/courts and sure made a lot of lifelong friends" he says. Sports taught Jeff "per-

severance, hard work, teamwork and gratitude," and he was heavily influenced by his many coaches who taught him the importance of those traits.

Aside from sports, his former teacher Mr. Matzen left a lasting effect on him. "He significantly enhanced my love of learning and appreciation for math. The knowledge he shared and the curiosity he cultivated were the basis for my going on to the University of Missouri where I earned a B.S. in Computer Engineering and a B.S.

in Electrical Engineering" says Jeff.

His Junior year of high school, Jeff obtained a job at what is now known as Stark Caverns, and continued working there over the next four years.

During his time there he became friends with the past owner, Curtis Whitman, who taught him many important life and business lessons that were carried with him through the next several years. Then, "About 5 years ago, [Jeff] learned of the opportunity to acquire the property and business and quickly did just that." Jeff and his family then added a new Visitor Center to the cave, which included a space for families, businesses, scouts, and school groups to utilize. These groups would have access to the event space as well as the facilities and property. "My wife - Amy, was heavily involved in the planning of the Visitor Center and grounds, and the construction was overseen by former Eldon High School class of '84 friend - David Ruiz" says Jeff, and "many others participated in the work needed to bring the Caverns and property to their current state." Although Jeff is very grateful for the help he received, a special thanks was given to a current employee - Lee Penserum - whom Jeff worked with at the caverns when he was in high school. "Because of the hard work of all involved and the support of the community,



Stark Caverns Boardwalk

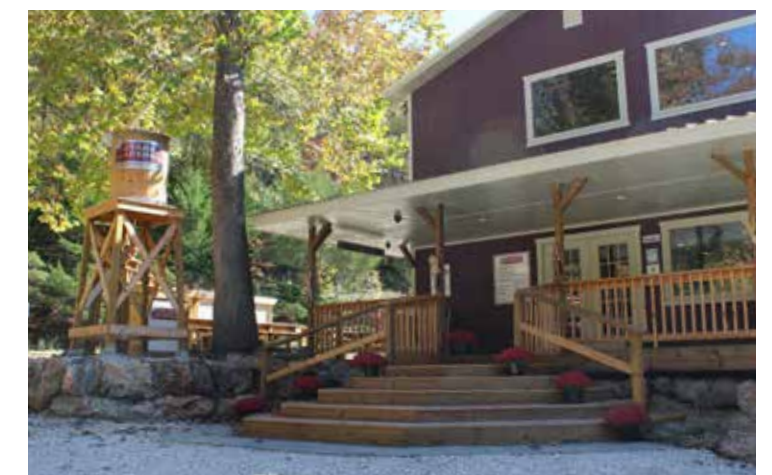
the business quickly grew and expanded. Excited to be involved in the business is an understatement for the family, and there are many reasons as to why. "The cave is an important piece of history, and we see ourselves as caretakers for a moment in time" he says. He went on to add that Stark Caverns has served many purposes in the local area over the last 100 years, and has recently become an important employer in the Eldon area. Lastly, in the words of Jeff, "how could you pass up the opportunity to own your own cave?"

Additionally, Jeff enjoys more about Eldon than just the caverns itself. The town holds a special place in his heart, and what he loves most about working here is nothing short of heartfelt. "I enjoy rekindling relationships with friends from my high school years" Jeff says. "It still amazes me how I can run into an old friend and it seems our relationship and care for each other hasn't missed a beat, even though we may not have seen each other for over 30 years." Even though the cave allows many new relationships to be built, the relationships made from the beginning are the ones most prominent in Jeff's memory.

Although he spends an abundance of time at the caverns, Jeff is also a man of many

talents. He and his wife, Amy, have two teenage kids - Jackson and Katie - and in his words, "I am blessed with a wonderful family." Being a former sports player himself, Jeff's main priority has been to "spend as much time supporting them and their sporting activities as possible - before they leave home." Jeff also spends an abundance of time serving his community through leadership and board positions, philanthropic entities, and education related initiatives, playing tennis, and working out. Although Jeff and his family feel that Eldon is a special place, they do not live here full time. Part of their year is spent living on a ranch in the beautiful state of Colorado.

Just as Eldon has left an impact on Jeff and his business, they too have left an impact on the town. From a small job in high school, to eventually owning the business himself, Jeff has been blessed beyond measure by the opportunities our town has provided him and the



Stark Caverns Visitor Center

Hargroves cont.



Hargroves family in the directory of 9th St. Christian Church, 1979.


caverns. In return, Eldon gets to continue to be the home of a beautiful piece of history and benefit from the many doors the caverns have opened. Our small town and its residents have a way of bringing people together, no matter how long it's been, or how far you go - you always find a way back home.




Onyx Falls at Stark Caverns



Hanging Gardens at Stark Caverns



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TRI-COUNTY CONFERENCE CHAMPIONS
TEAM PLACED SECOND AT STATE**



LADY MUSTANGS TRACK & FIELD 2022

2021-2022 STATE QUALIFIERS

 <p>AUTUMN ALLEN GOLF</p>	 <p>LUKE BARCHENSKI GOLF</p>	 <p>CAROLYN BECKMANN TRACK & FIELD</p>	 <p>HEATHER BRADFIELD TRACK & FIELD</p>	 <p>DANIELLE CLIFTON GOLF</p>	 <p>JASPER DEGRAFFENRIED TRACK & FIELD/WRESTLING</p>
 <p>EMILIE GUTHRIE TRACK & FIELD</p>	 <p>HEATHER HARBISON TRACK & FIELD</p>	 <p>TEAGEN HULL GOLF</p>	 <p>NICKY MARTONFI TRACK & FIELD</p>	 <p>ZOE MARTONFI TRACK & FIELD/XC</p>	 <p>DELANEY MCGHAY TRACK & FIELD</p>
 <p>PJ PATTON TRACK & FIELD</p>	 <p>GRACIE PETET GOLF</p>	 <p>NATE REYNOLDS TRACK & FIELD/XC</p>	 <p>JESIAH SIMMONS WRESTLING</p>	 <p>AVERY WELLS GOLF</p>	

Grow Your Own

A Champion in the Classroom

2015 Alumna Morgan Frogge Kirkweg.

Research done by Tammy Witherspoon

What a wonderful surprise it was for Eldon Middle School teacher Morgan Kirkweg to be chosen as the Central Region Middle School Teacher of the Year. The size of the honor sinks in when you realize the Central Region Missouri State Teachers Association has 96 public school districts to choose an honoree from. Last spring the Eldon Middle School students and staff gathered at a surprise assembly as MSTA Representative Erica Price presented Kirkweg with the award. She was then formally recognized at the MSTA 2022 spring banquet.

Kirkweg grew up in Eldon. She is the daughter of Michelle and Andrew Frogge. Her grandparents are Lori and Roy Ellis. Kirkweg is married to Jarred Kirkweg and the couple have two children, a son, Dean, and daughter, Charlotte. After graduating from Eldon High School, she attended Missouri State University, Springfield. She earned a bachelor's of science degree and was certified to teach fifth through twelfth grade English language arts. She was excited to work for the Eldon School District because it was close to her family where she desired to be and because of her pride in the mission and vision of the Eldon Mustang school district. With school spirit she boasted, "Once a Mustang, always a Mustang!" Kirkweg says she knew she wanted to be a teacher from the first grade. "I even have a copy of our classroom book that we all created a page for where I talked about wanting to be a teacher," she explains. "I had various teachers influence me as I made my way through the Eldon School system," she says. "Rex McCargar (band), Sean Stephenson (art), Kristi Arends (yearbook), and Misty Wilson (ELA) were the teachers that were always in my corner and helped

me to love school and learning."

Other role models outside of the school system helped form who she is today. "My mom and grandma have played key roles in shaping me and encouraging me to be the best I can be. "My husband has been there for me through many stages of my life and we have made some hard decisions together. My best friends now are some of the best I have ever had and encourage me in helping to shape and mold my



Kirkweg's daughter, Charlotte, runs up to give her a hug during the assembly.

values as I learn and grow into the woman I am meant to be."

Kirkweg finds teaching to be a rewarding career. She loves the subject matter of the classes she teaches, "With TEAM or Teen Employment and Academic Mentoring class, I get to see students succeed who don't normally get the spotlight. I get to be there for those kids through tough moments and help them learn how to communicate effectively, search for future careers, manage money, and interview/apply for a job. With ELA I get to recommend books and watch my student's love of reading grow in my classroom. Those are the things that make this teacher's heart happy," she explains. She dedicates many hours to teaching, but when she gets time to relax she practices the art of mindfulness, spends time reading, exercising or enjoying her friends. "I love to journal and practice gratitude. I love to read. Give me a fantasy series or a great nonfiction book and I could have my nose in a book for days. I also enjoy going to garage sales, lunch dates with my friends, practicing yoga, and training for marathons."

Her future goals are also centered around furthering her education and living life to the fullest in her dear hometown. "I would like to become a certified librarian, to take on more TEAM classes in the district, pay off my debt, be an ally to those that are not as privileged as I am, buy land in the area and build a house and to be a lifelong learner."

Lastly, Kirkweg ponders on a quote from the great Rita Pierson, 'Every child deserves a champion, an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection, and insists that



Kirkweg's family was contacted and asked to attend the assembly as a surprise. She is pictured above with her parents, Andrew and Michelle Frogge, grandmother Lori Ellis, husband Jarred Kirkweg, and children Dean and Charlotte.

they become the best that they can possibly be. I am lucky enough that I get to walk into Eldon Middle School each day and get the chance to be someone's champion."



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