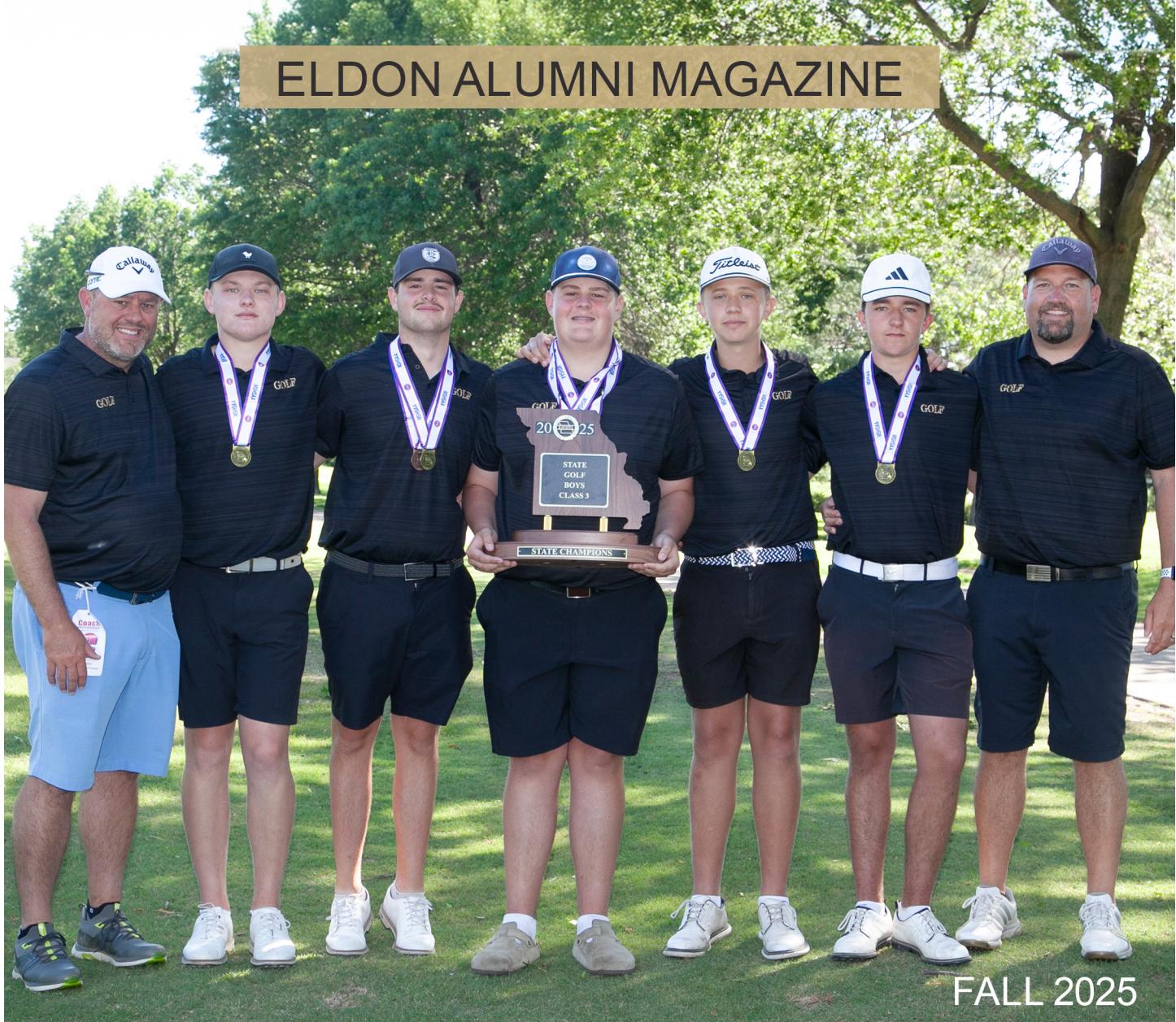


Maroon & Gold

ELDON ALUMNI MAGAZINE



FALL 2025

Eldon Mustangs Golf
STATE CHAMPS!

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- 21-22 2025 TEACHER OF THE YEAR
SEAN STEPHENSON**





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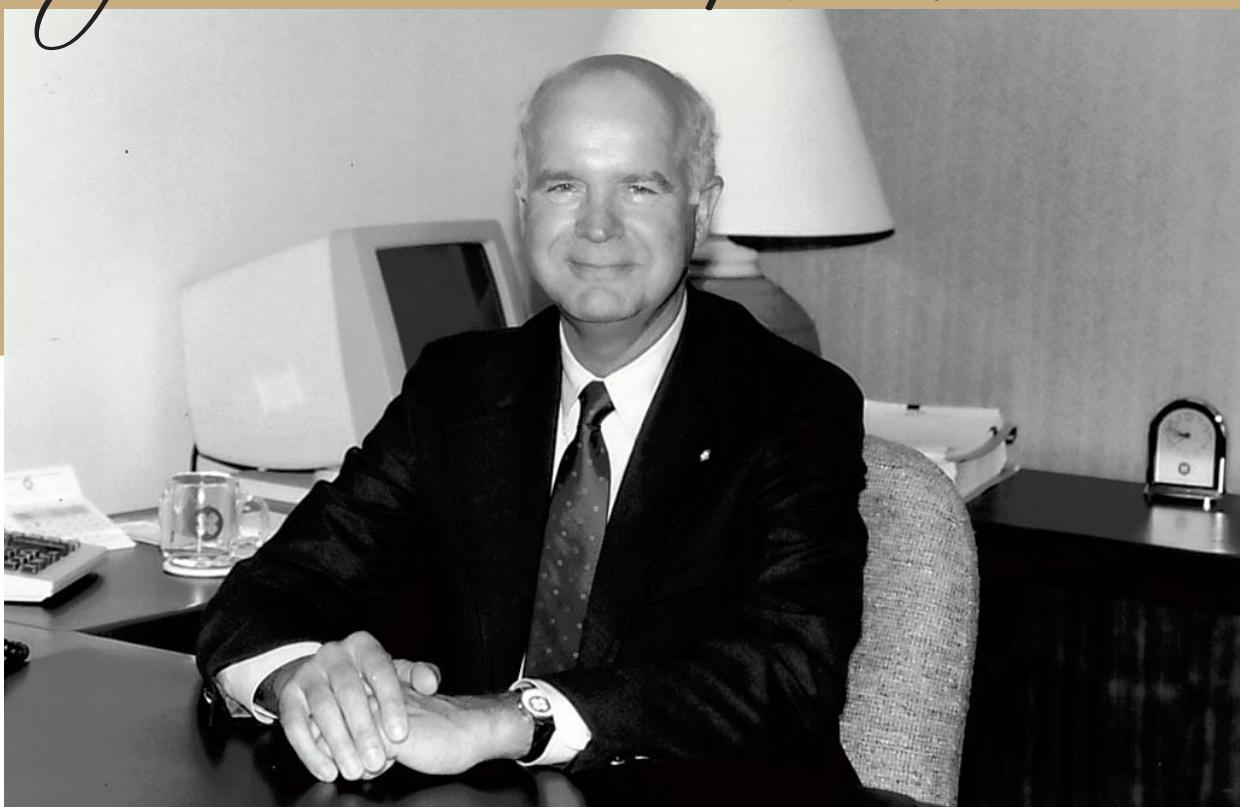
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REMEMBERING

James T. Herfurth



A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

James (Jim) Herfurths' life was defined by integrity, service, and an enduring commitment to improving the community around him. A 1955 graduate of Eldon High School, Jim played forward for the Mustangs' state-winning basketball team in 1954-55. One of Jim's favorite stories from his playing days involved a fiercely competitive game against School of the Osage. Jim was an underclassman and found himself facing off against senior Jim Mead. The game came down to the wire—Jim went up for a layup and was fouled by Mead. The missed free throw cost Eldon the game, and the two Jims teased each other about it for de-

cades. It was that kind of rivalry—spirited, personal, and deeply tied to the community—that Jim cherished. The Herfurth and Mead families shared a long history of friendship—Jim's father, Ted Herfurth, and Jim Mead's father, Johnny, were close friends, as were their families across generations. Eldon High School wasn't just a place of education for Jim; it was a central thread in his life.

Another favorite memory came from his time under the watchful eye of his aunt, Geraldine Haldiman, who served for years as EHS's music teacher. She encouraged him to play the trumpet—a request Jim dutifully

tried to honor, though without much musical success. On one occasion, she asked him to play the trumpet during a basketball game's quarter break. Reluctant to step off the court and onto the music stage, Jim had a teammate "accidentally" bump him in the jaw—just enough to get him out of the gig. That was Jim: dutiful, good-humored, and always quick with a clever solution.

His drive and leadership, evident even in his youth, carried through a lifetime of service. He went on to earn a degree in Banking and Finance from the University of Missouri in 1959 and a commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Artillery. His military career would span his adult life, rising to the rank of Colonel in the Missouri National Guard, exemplifying his lifelong devotion to duty and country.

Jim began his professional journey with IBM in Kansas City before joining Central Trust Bank in Jefferson City in 1964. His steady rise through the ranks led him to the role of President and CEO of Central Bank of Lake of the Ozarks, where he served until his retirement in 2004. Under his leadership, the bank grew alongside the community, and Jim never lost sight of the people and values that mattered most.

His impact extended far beyond the banking world. A passionate advocate for infrastructure and community development, Jim founded and chaired the Lake of the Ozarks Transportation Council and served as President of the Missouri Transportation and Development Council. As chairman of several transportation committees, he was instrumental in securing improvements to Highway 54 through Osage Beach—efforts that helped shape the region's growth.

Jim's list of civic contributions is long and varied: Co-Chair of Camdenton School bond drives, Chairman of the HK Charity Hospital Golf Tournament, and Chair of the Lake Regional Auxiliary Hospital Ball. He served with

organizations like United Way, the YMCA, Boy Scouts, the Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, Dogwood Animal Shelter and more. His exceptional service was recognized in 1995 with The Director's Cup from the Lake Area Chamber of Commerce.

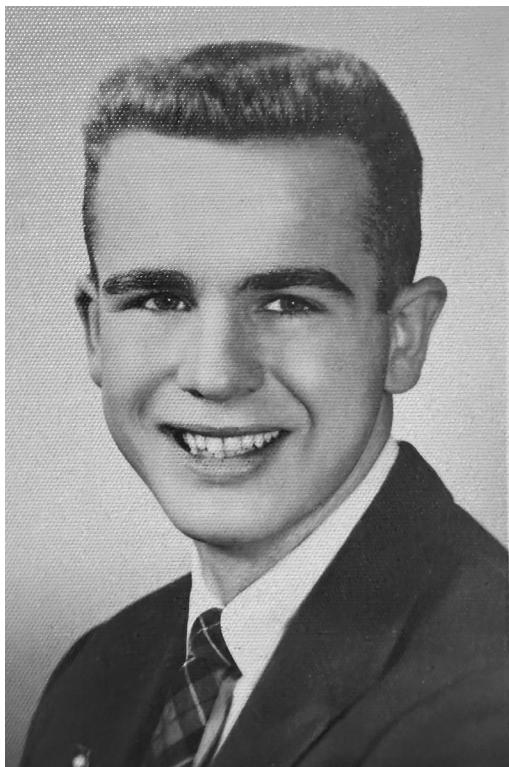
Yet it was Jim's character—steady, sincere, and selfless—that earned him the deep respect of all who knew him. He gave generously of his time, talents, and heart, working tirelessly to make his community a better place.

Jim is survived by his loving wife, Marjorie M. Herfurth; his children, Kimberly Herfurth Ayscue and J. Matthew Herfurth (Jeane); his grandchildren, Michael and Andrew Boyle, Abbey and Grace Herfurth; and his stepson, Eric Maylee (Rachel), and their daughter, Grace. He was preceded in death by his parents, Theodore and Mathilda Herfurth, and his sister, Barbara Herfurth Moffitt.

Outside of his professional and civic life, Jim cherished time with his family and friends—whether golfing, skiing, or enjoying the sunshine in Palm Springs and Tucson. But no matter where he traveled, his heart was always with the lake area. He lived a fruitful 86 years on this earth, making a mark that lives on through his family members and his major contributions in the community.



Jim's Army basic trainin photo- the start of his service journey.



Jim's senior photo.

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The Eldon High School Choir performed at the 2025 State Wrestling Championships.

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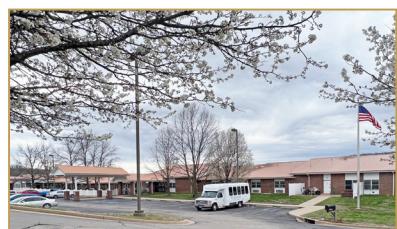
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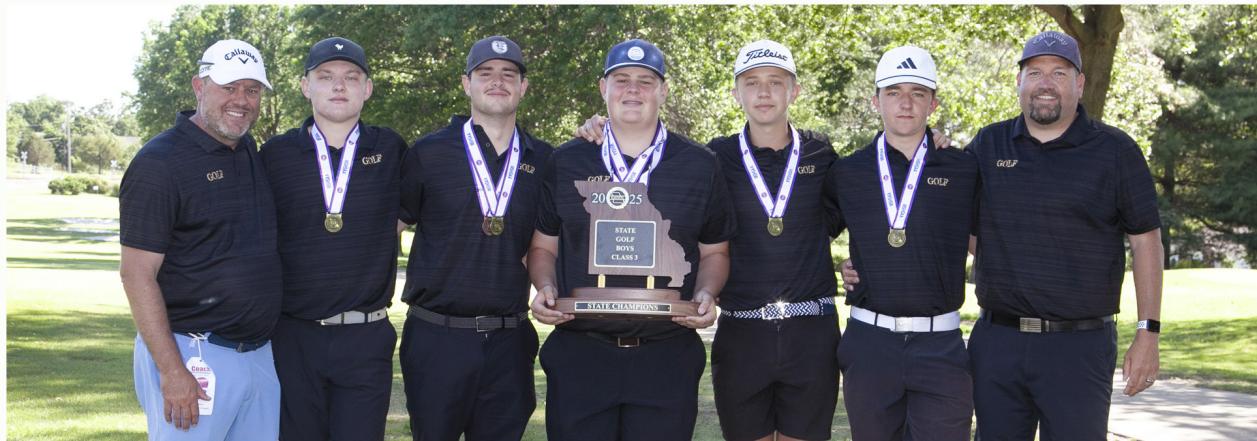
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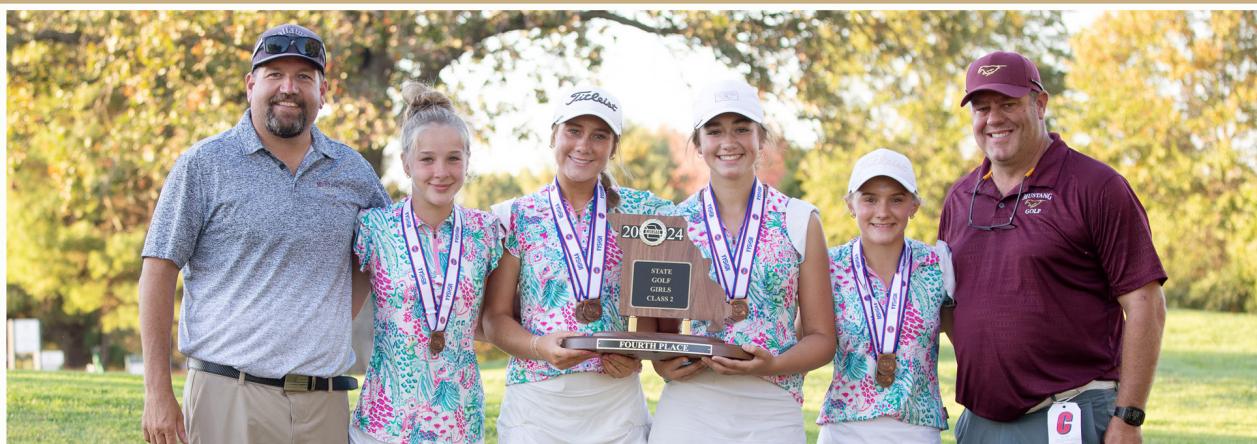


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GIRLS STATE GOLF - FOURTH PLACE

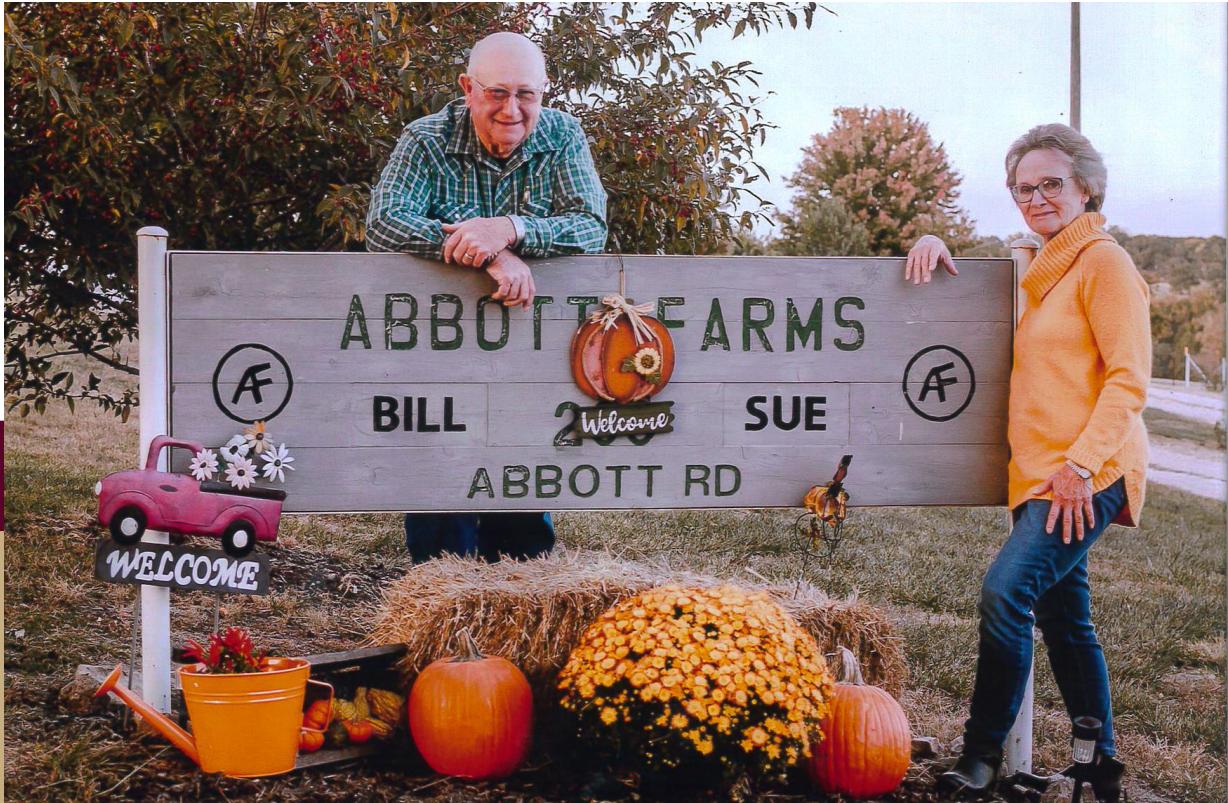


CLASS 3, DISTRICT 8 CHAMPIONS
STATE VOLLEYBALL - FOURTH PLACE



Bill & Sue Abbott

A LIFETIME OF SERVICE AND DEDICATION



Bill Abbott and Sue Maher Abbott, both members of the Eldon High School Class of 1965, grew up walking the same halls and cheering for the same Mustangs, but their love story didn't begin until a little later. They knew each other in high school but never dated. After graduation, Sue attended Central Missouri State University in Warrensburg (now UCM). One evening, she sent word through a friend asking Bill to come to a dance with her. Bill said yes, and just six months later, the two were married—beginning a life together deeply rooted in Eldon.

In 1969, just a few months before their son Joe was born, Bill and Sue

moved to what they lovingly call "The Farm," which remains their home today. It has been the center of countless family memories, a place where hard work, faith, and love have always been lived out daily.

Careers

Bill started his career with Holsum Bread, where he worked for five years before moving into railroad work. He spent 17 years with Rock Island Railroad and then Katy Railroad. When his job required relocating, Bill chose to stay in Eldon. That decision led him to a new role as a bus driver for Eldon Schools, where he safely transported generations of students for more than

20 years before retiring in 2009.

Bill also played an important role in the agricultural community, helping to establish the Young Farmers Group in conjunction with FFA. This group worked hard to raise funds for the construction of FFA's current building—a legacy that continues to impact students today.

Sue returned to school and earned her degree in Elementary Education from Lincoln University in 1985. She began teaching in the Eldon School District, where she dedicated 17 years to her students before retiring in 2004. More than teaching lessons, Sue made sure every child in her classroom had what

they needed—pencils, paper, crayons, coats, shoes, or whatever was missing. Her kindness and compassion left a lasting impression on generations of students.

Both remembered their COE teacher Walter Mooney fondly, as well as Mr. Guilford and Mr. McCreery, who made lasting impressions on their lives. Sue was Student Council President and went to Girls State, while Bill was involved in COE.

Raising a Family

Together, Bill and Sue raised four children—Bryan (Class of 1986), Joe (Class of 1988), David (Class of 1992), and Beth (Class of 1998). All four participated in sports and FFA, carrying on their parents' values of hard work and commitment. Each of them earned their State FFA Degree, with Bryan becoming the first student from Eldon to serve as a state FFA officer.

Family has always been Bill and Sue's greatest joy. Sue was one of 12 Maher children, raised by Raymond and Virginia, and the importance of family has been a constant in her life. To this day, spending time with her siblings and caring for her loved ones remains one of her most important roles. Joe sums it up best when he says, "To me, there are no better examples of kind, selfless, and humble people in the world."

Life Today

In retirement, Sue continues to enjoy reading—an avid reader with a book always nearby—while Bill can usually be found on the farm, happiest when he's working outdoors. Their days are filled with simple joys: family, faith, and the rhythms of country life.

Their story is one of love, dedication, and devotion to both family and community. From high school classmates to pillars of their family's legacy, Bill and Sue Abbott's lives reflect what it means to call Eldon home.



Derek & Brittany Abbott, Dianne Purdom-Abbott, Emma Abbott-Caswell, Tucker Caswell, Bryan Abbott, Amanda Abbott-Ormsby, Cora and Jake Ormsby. Front row: Lila, Nora, and Braxton Abbott, Warren, & Cooper Ormsby.



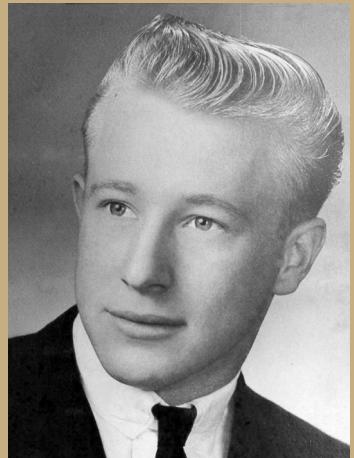
Left to right: Jake, Joe, Sherry, Mya, Toni, and Blake Abbott.



Rhett, Jeremy, Beth and Brant Bashore



Billie, Scott, Tommie, David, Cole and Stetson Abbott



Sue & Bill's senior photos.

Greg Evers

HOMEGROWN HEART

For lifelong Eldon resident and 1975 graduate Greg Evers, there's no place like home. Aside from two years spent at Linn Tech after high school, Greg has proudly called Eldon, Missouri, home for his entire life. It's where he grew up, raised his family, built life-long friendships, and continues to make a difference in the community he loves.

During his time at Eldon High School, Greg was active in athletics and always enjoyed the excitement of game days. He played on both the football and basketball teams and loved attending all athletic events, hanging out in the hallways, and spending time with friends. He fondly remembers several teachers who made an impact on him, especially June Brunner, Jim Guilford, and Charley Vaughn.

After graduation, Greg attended Linn Technical College before returning home to Eldon. He went on to work for the State of Missouri, retiring in 2022 after a dedicated career. But retirement didn't slow him down—Greg had already begun



Greg and Cindy

driving a school bus part-time for Eldon in 2011, and once he retired, he made it his full-time job. He proudly says he has "the best bus route because of all the great kids on my bus." His wife Cindy jokes that Greg bribes his riders with snacks, but he laughs and insists, "No, I reward them for being good!" That sense of humor and big-hearted approach to life are what make Greg a favorite among the students and families he serves.

Greg and Cindy have been married for 28 years. He has three sons — Aaron, Nick (deceased), and Seth — and Cindy has one son, Daniel Gaunt. Together they share a large, loving family that includes 13 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren. Family is at the heart of everything Greg does.

When he's not behind the wheel of a school bus, Greg enjoys golfing and fishing. He's also a dedicated member of the Knights of Columbus, an organization

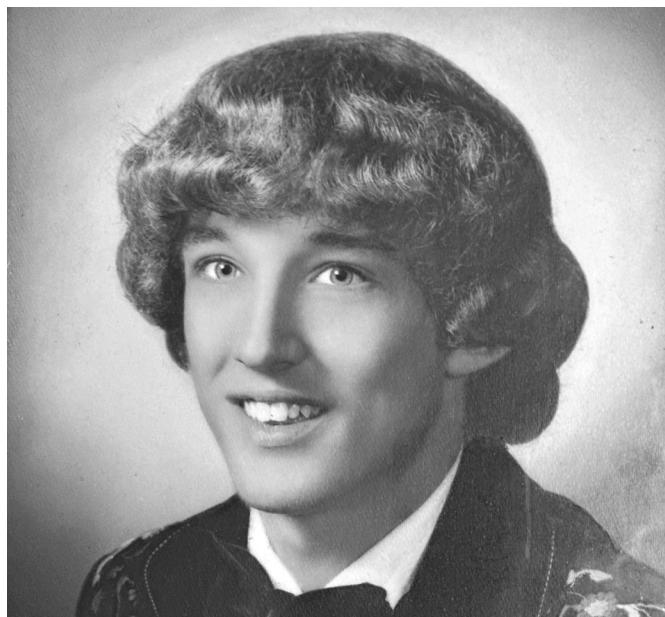


Hatley, Janelle, Haven, Aaron, Greg, Cindy, Seth and Stiles Evers.

guided by the principles of charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism. Greg actively supports the Catholic Church and the Eldon community through programs such as Coats for Kids, Camp Wonderland, Gateway Industries, Cardinal Glennon Hospital for Children, and volunteering at the local food pantry.

Through his service, generosity, and dedication, Greg Evers embodies what it means to be a true Mustang — loyal, hard working, and deeply committed to faith, family, and community.

As Greg reflects on his hometown, he sums it up simply: “Eldon is a great community with a great school system and is a great place to raise a family.”



Greg's senior photo.



Greg (left) before a football game in 1974.



Greg (back row far right) with his first grade class

Dwain Banner

FAITH, FAMILY AND LEGACY



Trina and Dwain at their home in Bolivar.

Growing up in Eldon, Missouri, Dwain Banner was shaped by his family, faith, growing up in the church, friendships, sports, and the mentors he encountered at Eldon High School. A proud member of the Class of 1985, Dwain looks back fondly on playing football, basketball, and running track, as well as the relationships he built with teachers and coaches. “Sports teach so many life lessons,” he reflects. “How to fail, how to succeed, how to respond when life gets hard, and to be thankful for what the Lord has given.”

Dwain’s foundation of faith and community was strongly influenced by his parents, Charlie and Mary Kay Banner—both proud Eldon alumni. Mary Kay graduated from Eldon in 1962, and Charlie in 1955. Mary Kay worked as the Day Director at Eldon First Baptist Church from 1969 to 2008, while Charlie operated Banner and Sons Feed and Fertilizer Store for 31 years before driving for Freightways Trucking in Eldon for 13 years. He also served two terms (six years) on the Eldon School Board. Both Charlie

and Mary Kay were deeply involved in the life and ministry of Eldon First Baptist Church, where their commitment to faith and service left a lasting impression on their family and community.

After graduating from Eldon High School, Dwain attended Southwest Baptist University, where he continued his love for basketball as both a player and later a coach. He earned his degree in Math and Physical Education in 1990 and went on to teach middle school math while coach-



Dwain, Trina, Mary Kay, Charlie, Darin & Kristen Banner



Dwain and Trina with their children and grandchildren



Dwain and Trina enjoying their grandchildren



Creator Designs Production Facility

ing girls' basketball at Fair Grove for 10 years.

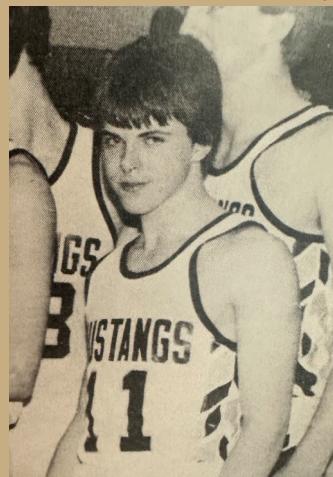
In the summer of 1991, Dwain launched what would become a lifelong venture. What began as a small screen-printing project, Creator Designs, quickly grew into a thriving business. By 2000, Dwain retired from teaching to dedicate himself fully to the company. Today, Creator Designs employs around 30 people and has grown from \$30,000 in sales in its first year to \$5.2 million in 2024.

Dwain's entrepreneurial spirit expanded in 2015 when he and his family opened Creator Delights, a candy store and coffee shop in Bolivar, Missouri. Despite his busy schedule, Dwain enjoys time on the farm, running cattle, hunting, fishing, and being outdoors with his family. Coaching has remained a central passion—he coached youth baseball for 18 consecutive years, leading to his induction into the Bolivar Baseball Hall of Fame, and he also coached his boys in basketball and baseball.

Family has always been at the center of Dwain's life. He and his wife, Trina, were married in 1996 and have been blessed with four sons—Deacon (25), Boaz (22), Jakin (20), and Chapel (16)—as well as three daughters-in-law and three grandchildren. Dwain treasures time with his growing family and the opportunity to share life's joys alongside them.

Above all, Dwain's life reflects his deep faith. He serves as an elder at Wellspring Baptist Church and on the board of Hopegivers International, living out his desire for others to know and experience the forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ and to give their lives to Him. "I want to finish this life well," he says, "leaving a legacy of Christian faith."

And when he's not working or serving, you can often find him cheering for his favorite team—the Kansas City Chiefs.



Dwain in his basketball uniform in 1984.

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LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

I am so glad you are reading the twelfth 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 & 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 & Gold!

Matt Davis
EHS'95

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

Matt & Tabby Webery

SMALL TOWN, STRONG ROOTS



Kenzie, Tabby, Matt and Callie Webery

For Matt and Tabby Webery, the story of love, family, and community began in the heart of Eldon, Missouri. Both born and raised in Eldon, these high school sweethearts from the Class of 1995 (Tabby completed high school in 1999) have built a life full of dedication—to each other, to their family, to their faith, and to the community that shaped them.

On June 23, 2001, Matt and Tabby said “I do,” and just recently, they celebrated 24 years of marriage. Together, they’ve raised two daughters: Kenzie, 19, and Callie, 16. As a Christian family who strives to live by biblical principles, they attend 9th St. Christian Church and credit their faith as the foundation of their marriage, parenting, and

daily lives. Their story is one of deep roots, small-town values, and a shared passion for hard work, service, and community support.

Building a Life in Eldon

After graduating from Eldon High School, Matt got right to work. During his junior and senior years, he was employed at Banners Feed Mill in Barnett and Orscheln Farm & Home in Eldon. He spent six years at Eldon Furniture, followed by seven years with a sign company in Jefferson City. In 2008, Matt took a leap of faith and opened Envision Signs & Wraps in Eldon. Today, his business continues to thrive, specializing in commercial and fleet graphics and a wide variety of signage solutions.



Throwback to Matt and Tabby's Prom night, 1995



Matt and the Envision Signs and Wraps team giving a fire truck a fresh new look..



Tabby's Daycare

Tabby's journey in education began after she graduated from Eldon High School in 1999. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Education from Lincoln University, and later a Master of Administration in Education from William Woods University. She taught for the Eldon School District for five years, and during that time, she founded Lil' Discovery Learning Center in 2007—a state-licensed daycare facility that celebrates 19 years of serving the families of Eldon this year. "I love seeing the kids I had in daycare grow up in our wonderful small town and do great things," Tabby shares.

Eldon High School Memories

Matt and Tabby look back on their time at Eldon High School with immense fondness. Both were active members of FFA, and they credit the program—and especially teachers Willard Haley and Matt Biddle—with creating lasting memories and life lessons. "They made it fun and a club you wanted to be a part of," they recall. "EHS has grown so much and offers so many great opportunities to the kids in our community now."

A Love for Eldon

The Webery's are proud to call Eldon home and remain deeply connected to their community. "We love this small-town community and the support it pours out," they say. "If there's a new business, if someone is sick—this town steps up. It's like we are one big family."

That strong sense of unity, strengthened by their Christian faith, drives both their personal and professional lives. Whether it's through Matt's work providing eye-catching signage for local businesses or Tabby's passion for nurturing the youngest members of the community, their roots in Eldon run deep.

Making Memories as a Family

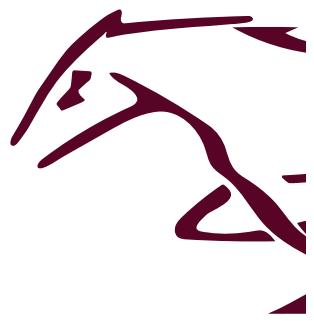
When they're not busy running their businesses, Matt, Tabby, Kenzie, and Callie can be found camping, ATV'ing, swimming, boating, or heading out on a family vacation to make memories. They prioritize quality time together, embrace all that life in a close-knit community has to offer, and strive to reflect their values in the way they live and serve others.

Their journey from high school sweethearts to pillars of the Eldon business community is a story of perseverance, partnership, faith, and pride in their hometown. Matt and Tabby Webery embody what it means to grow up in Eldon, live by Christian principles, and give back to the place that gave them their start.



Tabby & Matt enjoying some time away together

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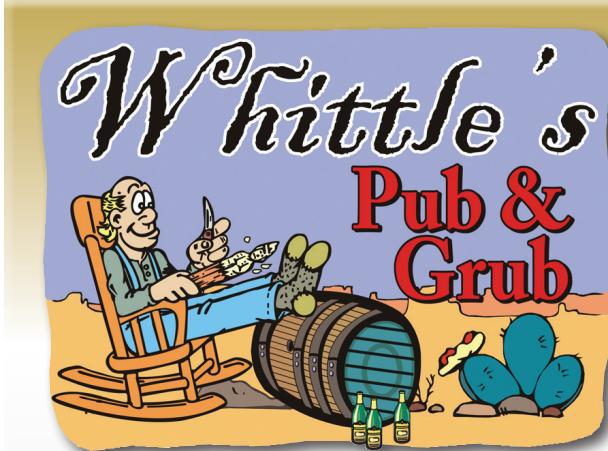
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GOLF - 15TH



WILL RICHARDSON
HIGH JUMP - 2ND



JESIAH SIMMONS
WRESTLING
STATE CHAMPION
POLE VAULT - 6TH



AVERY WELLS
GOLF - 7TH





*Jeremy with his wife Meridith and their three children
Kaiden, Kyler and Krew*

Jeremy Haley **ROOTED IN ELDON, GROWING ACROSS MISSOURI**

For 2005 Eldon High School graduate Jeremy Haley, the answer to “Where are you from?” is always the same—no matter where life has taken him. “I’m from Eldon, MO,” he says without hesitation.

Jeremy’s parents, Willard and Jerri Haley, are both longtime residents of Eldon and deeply invested in the school district and community. Willard taught Agriculture at Eldon for 27 years and later served as Director of the Eldon Career Center for 7 years. Jeri taught business at the Eldon Career Center for 20 years, after beginning her teaching

career in Pilot Grove. Today, Willard Haley continues to serve the community as an American politician in the Missouri House of Representatives, representing Missouri’s 58th district since 2021.

After graduation, Jeremy attended the University of Missouri, earning his undergraduate degree in Agricultural Education Leadership in 2008, followed by a Master’s in Public Policy in 2010. His career began in agricultural finance, where he dedicated over a decade (2011–2023) to serving rural and agricultural communities as a loan officer with FCS Financial.



In the summer of 2023, he joined the Bank of Old Monroe, where he now serves the Greater St. Louis area, expanding his commitment to supporting local businesses and communities.

Outside of his professional life, Jeremy has built a full and joyful home with his wife, Meridith, whom he married in 2014. Together, they're raising three energetic boys—Kaiden (7), Kyler (4), and Krew (8 months). As a family, they enjoy traveling, camping, cheering on Mizzou Football, and spending as much time outdoors as possible. They currently reside in Hawk Point, Missouri.

Jeremy's long - term dreams are rooted in the same agricultural passion that shaped his career. He hopes to one day retire on a 100+ acre farm, raising 20 head of registered Herefords and cultivating an acre of elderberries for winemaking—ideally with no other house in sight. But even more important to him is watching his sons grow and pursue whatever passions inspire them.

During his time at Eldon High, Jeremy was active in basketball, cross country, FBLA, and FFA. His favorite



Jeremy shooting a basket at an EMS basketball game.



Willard and Jerri along with their children and their grandchildren enjoying the Governor's ball

classes still stand out two decades later—accounting (“I still use it every day”), chemistry (“Kids always complained the teacher was a jerk, but we learned”), and greenhouse management (“When else was I going to get to propagate Creeping Charlie?”).

Over the years, Jeremy has called Nevada, Columbia, and now Hawk Point home, and while he has spent more of his life with a non- 65026 zip code than in Eldon, his roots remain firmly planted in the community that shaped him.

Much like his parents, who devoted their careers to education, leadership, and public service, Jeremy’s path reflects the same values of hard work, community investment, and a love for agriculture. Their legacy of dedication continues to influence the way he approaches both his career and family life—ensuring that no matter where he goes, Eldon’s impact goes with him.

Sara Rhine

SOARING FROM ELDON TO THE WORLD STAGE AND BACK AGAIN



Sara ready for students in her classroom in Eldon

Sara Rhine's journey is one of perseverance, passion, and purpose—an inspiring reflection of the values instilled at Eldon High School. A 2015 graduate, Sara was the definition of a student-athlete, excelling both in the classroom and on the court. She graduated in the top 10% of her class with a perfect 4.0 GPA, earning four varsity letters each in basketball and track. Most notably, Sara became a four-time state champion in the high jump—an achievement few athletes ever accomplish.

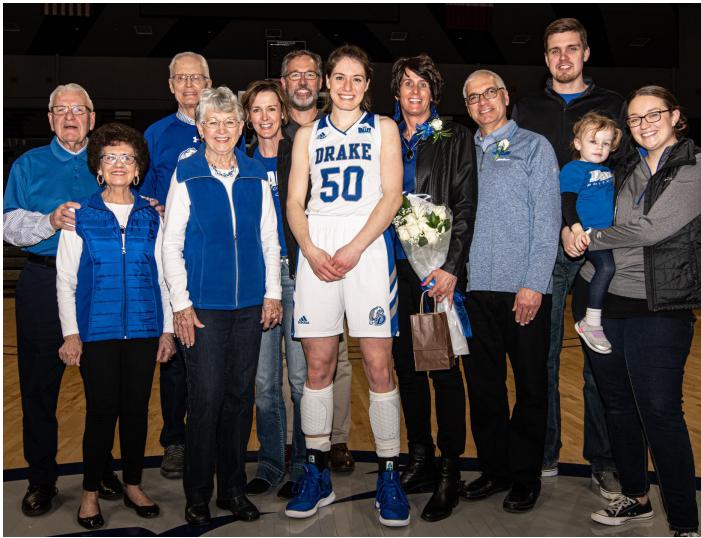
After high school, Sara took her

talents to Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, where she majored in Elementary Special Education and joined the Drake Women's Basketball Team. Her collegiate athletic career was impressive and spanned five years, during which she balanced the demands of Division I basketball with her academic pursuits. After completing her undergraduate degree in 2019, she began working toward a Master's of Science in School Counseling at Drake.

Sara's dedication to basketball didn't end at graduation—she

went on to play professionally for a season in Bembibre, Spain. After returning stateside, she spent a year giving back to her hometown, teaching second-grade special education at Eldon South School. She then returned to Des Moines, where she completed her master's degree in school counseling in December 2024. Today, she serves as a K-5 Special Education teacher, impacting young lives with the same dedication she showed as a student and athlete.

Reflecting on her time at EHS, Sara fondly recalls the spirit of



Sara celebrating with her family after a big win for Drake women's basketball



Sara after receiving her Master's at Drake

homecoming weeks—hallway decorating, float building, and getting creative with themes. She cherishes the laughter-filled bus rides with teammates and the shared victories, especially having her mom by her side as her track coach during all four years of high school. Winning state in high jump remains one of her sweetest memories.

Outside of the classroom, Sara continues to pursue personal growth and wellness. She loves reading—especially with a warm cup of coffee in hand—and enjoys baking cookies for coworkers. An avid runner, she is currently training for a marathon she'll run with her mom, blending fitness and family into one of her newest hobbies. She's also passionate about nutrition and how lifestyle and environmental factors affect long-term health.

Sara is thriving at her current school in Des Moines, surrounded by supportive administration and a strong teaching team. While she plans to remain in her role as a special education teacher for now, she envisions one day transitioning into a school counseling position. And though it may be down the road, she's also considering returning to graduate school again—this time to explore the world of nutrition science.

Sara Rhine's path from Eldon to international basketball and back to the classroom shows what's possible when talent meets tenacity. Her story reminds us that no matter how far we go, the roots of home and the lessons of Eldon High stay with us—lifting us higher, one leap at a time.



Sara & her mom Tanya celebrating their medals after the Bagnell Dam half marathon



Sara in action during the high jump at an Eldon's 2015 track meet

MUSTANG LEGACY CONTRIBUTORS

Visionary

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Rita Bass
Eldon Quarterback Club
Jonathan Grantham
Cole Hamels
Kent Kehr
Carl Mosher
E.J. Pyle

Cornerstone

\$2,500 and up

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Peter & Barbara Gattermeir
Jeff & Amy Hargroves
Scott & Lisa Harrison
Ingrid Haas & John Groves
Jim & Judy Lincoln
Nates Concrete Pumping LLC
Tony & Renee Pace

Heritage

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James & Melanie Bennett
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Blanche & Mary Laffey
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James & Catrice Roseblock
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Maroon

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Bales Construction
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Ty & Janice Brewer
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Class of 1960(in memory of
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Class of 1961
Class of 1964

Class of 1965
Class of 1966
Class of 1968
Class of 1972
Class of 1974
Class of 1981
Class of 1982
Class of 1983
Class of 1985
Class of 1988
Class of 2001
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Dale & Pauline Currence
Devine & Ass. Real Estate
Travis Dinwiddie
Jay & Stacey Dunham
Kirk & Robin Earleywine
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Eldon Lions Club
Eldon Warriors
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Friends of Eddie Winters
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Bethal Cotton-Coffman
Burnell & Linda Crain
Diane Crismon-Simpson
Tyrus Czeschin
David & Rose Marie Dishman
Dayle & Nancy Dunstan
Arden Eilers
Grace Eilerts
Brandon & Amy Frank
Connie Clark-Freise
Donna Gilreath
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David & Ruth Woolley



Sean receiving his award at the Eldon High School Staff Awards and Appreciation Banquet

Sean Stephenson

TEACHER OF THE YEAR: A LEGACY IN COLOR

Though not an Eldon graduate, Sean Stephenson has become a name synonymous with creativity, mentorship, and dedication in the halls of Eldon High School. This year, his unwavering commitment to students and the arts was honored with the title of Eldon Teacher of the Year, a recognition that reflects more than two decades of influence and inspiration.

Born in Beaufort, South Carolina and raised in Earle, Arkansas, Sean moved to Houston, Missouri, in 1991, where he graduated from Houston High School in 1995. His journey into education began

at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, where he earned a degree in K-12 Art Education in 2000. Shortly after graduation, Sean accepted his first teaching job at Eldon High School, beginning what would become a lifelong impact on the community.

Sean briefly moved to the elementary school in 2001 but returned to the high school in 2008, where his influence truly blossomed. That first year in Eldon brought not only a new career but also a new chapter in his personal life—he met Amy, who worked with the school social worker. The couple married in

2002 and have been partners in life and love ever since.

When asked what he loves most about working in Eldon, Sean doesn't hesitate: "I love the community, both the town and the school community. I've lived here longer than anywhere else. It's home." He speaks with pride about the friendships he's made and the many students he's mentored—some of whom have gone on to become art educators themselves, including Jennifer Halderman, Leah Stichler, and Harley Potucek. "I hope one of my students comes back to take the high school art position when I retire," he says with a smile.

Sean's classroom is more than a place to learn techniques—it's a space where creativity thrives, students feel seen, and young artists find their voice. Outside of school, you'll likely find him tinkering with Jeeps, riding his motorcycle, or working on a project from Amy's ever-growing "honey-do" list.

As for the future, Sean isn't rushing toward retirement, but he is beginning to imagine what life might look like beyond the classroom. "I want to keep making



Sean helping a student with her paper mache project



Sean & Amy

art," he says. "There are still years to go, but I want to keep creating and coming up with new ideas. When the time comes, I look forward to more time with Amy and the pups—but until then, I'll keep building this art program into one of the best."

With brush in hand and passion in his heart, Sean Stephenson continues to leave a vibrant mark on Eldon. Teacher of the Year is more than an award—it's a testament to a career spent shaping futures, one masterpiece at a time.



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MUSTANG EXCELLENCE 2025

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The Eldon School District is proud to present a year of outstanding achievements! Join us as we celebrate the remarkable accomplishments of our students, staff, and community in academics, athletics, fine arts, and community engagement. Go Mustangs!

Mustang Excellence

- **48th Best District in the State** – A testament to our commitment to quality education.
- **36th in State for ACT Scores** – Reflecting our students' academic prowess.
- **\$1.7 Million in Scholarships** – Awarded to our outstanding seniors
- **Democracy Day** – 1st in the State for the 10th consecutive year, 2nd in the Nation
- **Transportation Department** – Total Fleet Excellence Award
- **Eldon FBLA Achievements:**
 - * Service Season & Champion Plus Awards – Champion Chapter Program
 - * Gold Level Chapter of the Year
 - * Administrator of the Year
 - * 1 Student earned the Leader Award for the Business Achievement Award Program
- **Eldon FFA Achievements:**
 - * 2025 Model of Innovation Winner – Strengthening Agriculture Division
 - * Ranked 9th Best Chapter in the State
 - * 17 State FFA Degree Recipients
 - * 3 Students Selected for HYMAX Academy
 - * 3 SAE Grant Winners
 - * 2025 Area 8 Star Finalist in Agriscience
- **State Champions:**
 - * SkillsUSA Health Knowledge Bowl
 - * Veterinary Science Team
 - * Agriscience Research – Animal Systems
 - * Equine Science – Placement Proficiency Award
 - * Industrial Technology
- **Scholar Bowl Success:**
 - * Participated in district and regional competitions, with multiple students qualifying for state-level events
- **Industrial Technology:** 14 District Champions and 1 State Champion
- **Veterans Project:** Seventh graders interviewed veterans for a newspaper project, placing 3rd in the state and 3rd at national levels
- **Robotics Teams:** FLL and FTC both competed at the state level.
- **College Credit Earned:** Over 1,633 credit hours earned
- **Mustang Ridge Development:** One house a year is built by high school students
- **2025 Missouri Teacher of the Year Semifinalist:** Sarah Tillinghast
- **Regional ISEF Science Fair:**

- * 3 – 1st Place Division Winners
- * 5 – 2nd Place Division Winners
- * 3 – 3rd Place Division Winners
- * Audrey Ison received the OSHA Award for Biologics

Athletic Excellence

- **Boys Golf:**

- * State Champions
- * 2 All-State Golfers – Eli Cummings, Brody Rader
- * 1 Golfer earned 2nd Place individually – Eli Cummings
- * District Champions

- **Girls Golf:**

- * 4th Place at State Tournament
- * 3 All-State Golfers- Avery Wells, Haven Evers, Lily Henley
- * District Champions
- * 1 District Champion Golfer – Avery Wells

- **Volleyball:**

- * 4th Place in State
- * 1 All-State Player – Audrey Dinwiddie
- * 5 All-District Players
- * 3 All-Conference Players
- * American Volleyball Coaches Association Team Academic Award

- **Wrestling:**

- * Girls Tri-County Conference Champions
- * Boys State Champion – 113lbs weight class – Jesiah Simmons
- * Girls 5th Place – 120lbs weight class – Mallori Edwards

- **Track and Field:**

- * Boys and Girls Teams – District Champions
- * 14 State Medalists – Corin Davis, Ali Byrd, Heather Bradfield, Haven Evers, Mikala Huckabee, Landon Beanland, Jesiah Simmons, Colin Brisbin, Hugh Beanland, Jalen Beckman, Andrew Beanland, Brody Beanland, Will Richardson, and Josiah Gozho
- * Multiple school records broken

- **Baseball:**

- * District Runner-Up
- * 1 All-State Player – Kyle Hinds
- * 4 All-Conference Players
- * 4 All-District Players

- **Football:**

- * 4 All-District Players
- * 8 All-Conference Players

- **Softball:**

- * 2 All-District Players
- * 3 All-Conference Players
- * Recognized for sportsmanship and performance at regional tournaments

- **Basketball:**

- * 1 Male and 1 Female earned All-District honors

- **Archery:**

- * MO State Bullseye: 14 students competed at the competition
- * MO State 3D Tournament: 6 students competed at the competition
- * **Marena Tellman:**

MO NASP State Bullseye Tournament 3rd Place high school girls
NASP Eastern Nationals Tournament 14th place high school girls
NASP Championship 3rd place high school girls

- **Trapshooting:**

- * Every senior has been offered a scholarship to shoot at the collegiate level
- * \$150,000 awarded in scholarships over the last three years

Fine Arts Excellence

- **Eldon High School Marching Band:**

- * Grand Champions at the UCM Homecoming parade
- * In class 4 competition, earned a second place on the street, third place on the field, and a third place in the indoor color guard competition

- **Eldon High School Concert Band:**

- * Performed at District and State Music Festivals, with numerous students excelling in solos and small ensembles
- * Exemplary Rating at State Music Contest
- * Several students earning All-District honors

- **Eldon Middle School Concert Band:**

*Both 7th and 8th Grade bands competed at the Central Methodist Music Contest and earned Exemplary Ratings (the highest score)

- **Eldon Jazz Band:**

- * Performed at Drury Jazz Festival
- * One Student selected to All District Jazz - Ethan Hanks

- **Eldon High School Choir:**

- * Performed at State Wrestling and State Basketball Championships
- * Select students auditioned for Missouri All-State Choir, with several earning All-District or All-State honors
- * Chamber Choir earned Exemplary Rating at the State Music Contest

- **Eldon Middle School Choir:**

- * Competed in district music festivals, showcasing emerging vocal talent
- * Contributed to school-wide performances, promoting musical education
- * 7th and 8th grade choirs competed at the CMU Music Festival and each received Exemplary Ratings

- **Theatre:**

- * Successful fall and spring play performed, earning positive community feedback for student performances

- **Visual Arts:**

- * Art students' works selected for regional exhibition, with several earning awards for creativity and technique

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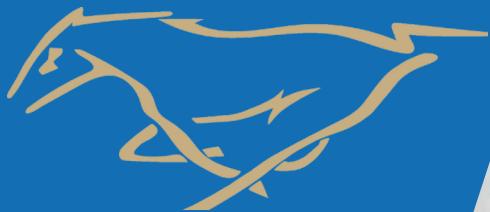


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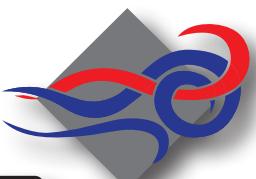
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