Spotlight on 1863

Building on a 150-year K-State history, college faithful reminisce…and look ahead

Biochemistry major Gillian Long in Spring Dance 2013
The Kansas State University campus is an energizing, hopeful place to be. How could it not be? It’s a community devoted to creating solid foundations for young people, building new ideas, and helping citizens across Kansas and beyond.

But in 2013, there’s an even grander sense of celebration in the air. K-State’s 150th anniversary is bringing together faculty, staff, students, and alumni and friends like you. Created during a time of tremendous struggle in our country, President Lincoln and Congress began a great experiment in higher education for the people — access and progress. It is an experiment often copied but never truly replicated throughout the rest of the world. As I have traveled around the globe sharing what we do at K-State, I recognize that we are the envy of many nations. Happy anniversary to the great experiment!

We are all reflecting on K-State’s storied history as the first new land-grant institution in the country. That’s a title we take seriously — not just as a label, but as a responsibility to uphold. It’s so important to our nation, in fact, that Jim Sherow, history professor, and Bonnie Lynn-Sherow, associate professor of history, were asked to write an essay for the 2013 presidential inauguration about Kansas State’s founding (see page 17).

This occasion is also giving us a chance to think about our personal histories and how the K-State College of Arts and Sciences has helped mold them. This issue of A&S Letters checks in with former students, such as Hershey CEO J.P. Bilbrey and “Modern Family” actor Eric Stonestreet, who have used their experiences in the college to achieve exceptional things. You’ll also read about the notable work of current K-Staters who are raising money — more than $650,000 to date — for fellow students who are struggling financially, through an extraordinary organization called K-State Proud.

“K-State’s 150th anniversary is bringing together faculty, staff, students, and alumni and friends like you.”

And you’ll see moments from the Dance program’s visually compelling Spring Dance performances...yet another way members of our college are sharing their research and creative activities with the community beyond K-State.

This year’s celebrations remind us that we are all tied together by something bigger than our individual paths and professions. We hope the stories in this magazine make you think fondly of your own connection to Kansas State University, and to the College of Arts and Sciences.

All the best,

Peter Dorhout, dean
Go Cats!
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WE ARE
K-State is known for being a school that emphasizes the dynamic of family. It’s one thing to talk the talk and another to walk the walk, but when it comes to treating peers like family, the student leaders of K-State Proud have put on their running shoes.

Kyle Reynolds, senior in public relations, and Javier Lopez, junior in history, co-chaired K-State Proud this past year. An entirely student-run organization, K-State Proud is making a name for itself across the country as a model for student philanthropy. As far as Reynolds and Lopez are concerned, K-State Proud is just one of the ways that the university and its students can live up to the legacy.

FROM IDEA TO INITIATIVE

K-State Proud began in 2006 after a group of students representing the Student Foundation attended an annual conference, where they heard stories of philanthropic initiatives on other campuses. Inspired, those students began thinking of ways they could meet the needs of their fellow classmates. After considering several ideas, they settled on what would become K-State Proud — a campaign where students help their peers afford college and remain at K-State.

Acting under the guidance of the Student Foundation, which is part of the larger Kansas State University Foundation, student leaders were recruited to form an advisory board to spread the word and drum up interest in the K-State Proud campaign.

“The first year, they made a goal of raising $3,500, and broke that in the first night of the campaign,” Reynolds said. “They then made it a $35,000 goal and still smashed that. So, it took off from the very first year.”
Since then, K-State Proud has received donations totaling over $650,000 and granted more than 320 Student Opportunity Awards. The amount varies depending on a student’s financial need, but the average award is around $1,300. Students can apply directly, or be nominated by faculty, staff, or friends. After filling out a simple form on the organization’s website — which asks why a student needs assistance and how the money will be used — and submitting a release form for financial information, members of the K-State Proud advisory board meet with the Financial Aid office to review the student’s application. According to Reynolds, if the student is chosen for a Student Opportunity Award, the best part comes next — giving the good news.

“To have those conversations with students and say, ‘Hey, we’re giving you $2,000 so you can stay at K-State, and you’re still going to be a part of this family’ — it’s an experience I wish everyone could have, and it’s by far my favorite thing I’ve done at K-State.” Lopez agrees.

“It’s unique — it’s not a common thing for students to be raising hundreds of thousands of dollars to help out their fellow students. It’s what the students believe in, it’s what the faculty stands for, it’s what the university stands for. It’s the true K-State.”

A REAL IMPACT

Mat Ellis, a junior theatre major, has always been drawn to acting. Shortly after transferring to K-State from a community college for his second year, circumstances beyond his control made him doubt whether he would be able to pursue this passion. With both parents fighting terminal cancer, Ellis just couldn’t imagine taking money for college that could be used for their treatments.

“In that situation, it’s really hard to go to your parents and ask for money… especially since they were not working at the time,” Ellis said. “But my mom really pushed me to come here and to do whatever I wanted.”

At first, Ellis was able to get by with scholarships he had received and income from a summer job, but as the months went on, it became apparent that he wouldn’t be able to afford to stay in school. Ellis talked about his worries with a friend, who in turn told him about K-State Proud. Within just a couple of weeks, he was given a Student Opportunity Award that supported him through his first year at K-State.

“There are people that can go to college, and then there are people who, unfortunately, can’t go to college. I almost became one of those people that couldn’t go,” Ellis said. “K-State Proud came in and took me out of that position I was in. They kept me at K-State, and I’ve grown so much from being able to be here.”

Ellis has certainly thrived at K-State. This past spring, he had a leading role in the university’s production of “The Heiress,” and is spending the summer interning with a theatre company in Florida. He also credits K-State Proud with motivating him to be more involved on campus. For Ellis, K-State Proud’s influence on students is about so much more than the check.

“In my day-to-day life, they’ve inspired me. It’s not just money — it’s so much more than that. It’s friendships and opportunities. They give you a lot more than what you are expecting.”

DESTINY AND A DREAM

There’s no denying that K-State Proud is working for students like Ellis. But what is perhaps more amazing is that the campaign itself continues to work in spite of its dependence on college students, who are not usually in the strongest position to give financially.

“We get contacted probably a couple of times a month by other universities trying to model a program like ours,” Reynolds said. “But for a lot of other universities it doesn’t work, because their students can’t engage like that or imagine giving money to help a fellow student.
“It’s unique — it’s not a common thing for students to be raising hundreds of thousands of dollars to help out their fellow students.”

— Javier Lopez

I think this says so much about K-State because the students genuinely care about each other.”

“It just proves that, to the students here, this wasn’t just a fad or a trend or something cool to do,” Lopez added. “They continue to support and give in such generous ways.”

The abundant success of K-State Proud has gained much-deserved praise, including national awards such as the Outstanding Tried and True Program award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), and the Generous U award from the Silberman Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy at Brandeis University.

Though the campaign is relatively young, many students at K-State have a hard time picturing the university without it.

“I just couldn’t imagine K-State without K-State Proud,” Ellis said. “I think that it was destiny for it to come to life here. It embodies K-State and what we’ve established here.”

Every year, Reynolds and Lopez — along with everyone else involved with K-State Proud — are amazed at how students continue to exceed expectations by donating increasing amounts of money to the campaign. As a junior and senior, both of them have limited time left as leaders for K-State Proud, but the generosity of their peers gives them confidence that an end for the campaign is nowhere in sight.

“As more students are educated about what the campaign is, it will grow, it will expand. I see eventually every student on campus looking at K-State Proud as a staple, as a piece of the university that’s not going anywhere,” Lopez said. “Hopefully, one day, we’ll meet the entire need of our student body — and I think one day we will get there.”

As someone who experienced the life-changing effects of K-State Proud firsthand, Ellis knows that the campaign’s power is in its ability to bring — and keep — students together.

“That’s the most important thing: keeping the family here. Making sure that everybody gets to be a part of it.”

Established: 2006
Total funds raised: $650,000+
Applicants in FY2012: 272
Awards given: 320+
Average award: $1,300
Advisory board students: 35
Fundraising goal (2012-13): $135,000
Raised to date (2012-13): $114,000

THE NEED:
Funding for K-State students who are struggling to afford college and have exhausted other forms of financial assistance*

TO HELP:
K-State Proud, Kansas State University Foundation, 785-532-7584
www.k-stateproud.org

VISIT:
www.found.ksu.edu/k-stateproud/donate.html

*Gifts from friends and alumni supplement student support
A dare that changed the course of one man’s entire future and ended in Hollywood fame. It’s the kind of story that is made for television, and no one could play the leading part better than Eric Stonestreet, K-State Arts and Sciences alumnus and two-time Emmy-winning actor — because it is his story.

Stonestreet’s life has been anything but predictable: from starting out at Kansas State as a sociology major and an unplanned introduction to theatre, to currently playing the part of Cameron Tucker, an eccentric and charming character on the hit television series “Modern Family.” As an actor, Stonestreet has become a household name, but underneath it all, he’s still just a guy from Kansas with a lot of heart, talent, luck…and purple pride.

A Happy Accident
Growing up just outside of Kansas City, Stonestreet had planned on becoming a warden. Or a butcher. Or a clown. Rejected by the Barnum & Bailey Circus — twice — Stonestreet ended up at Kansas State and decided to major in sociology with the plan of going into prison administration. But when a fraternity brother dared Stonestreet to accompany him to an audition for an upcoming university production, he couldn’t resist. His friend didn’t land the part — but Stonestreet did.

“The first step towards any kind of success is to follow and go towards what may frighten you,” Stonestreet said. “Following your fear is where you will find what can make you the happiest in life.”

Charlotte MacFarland is a theatre faculty member and one of Stonestreet’s former professors.

“He was one of those students that didn’t discover theatre until later, but once he discovered it, it was all he did.”
Not only did Stonestreet go on to play major parts, both comedic and dramatic, in K-State productions, but he also set himself apart through his dedication to his craft, according to Marci Maullar, managing director of K-State Theatre and another former mentor to Stonestreet.

“He was completely immersed — he got to do a little of everything and threw himself into each thing. I remember during his last semester, all he was doing was working on honing his acting skills. Every week, he would come in with new stuff. It was so obvious that he was ready to go out and find the right things and do the right things.”

Making the Big Time
After graduating in 1996, Stonestreet moved to Chicago as a first step to pursuing his acting dreams. He spent two years studying with ImprovOlympic (iO) Chicago and The Second City — in addition to working in television commercials — before moving to L.A. to further his career. There, Stonestreet began winning small parts on TV sitcoms and dramas before eventually scoring a recurring role as Ronnie Litre, the documents tech on the original “CSI.”

Then, in 2009, Stonestreet was cast in the role that would catapult his career to the next level. To date, his portrayal of the eccentric half of a pair of adoptive fathers on “Modern Family” has earned him two Emmy awards among other accolades. But the major signifier of his success?

“When people start saying, ‘I want an Eric Stonestreet type,’ you know you’ve arrived,” Maullar said.

Giving Back
K-State Theatre — and the university — couldn’t be prouder of Stonestreet, but not just because of his successful career. As an alumnus, Stonestreet continues to impress with his willingness to do anything he can to help promote the university or lend a hand to his friends and mentors in K-State Theatre.

“It’s where I figured out I wanted to be an actor,” Stonestreet said. “I have happy memories in Manhattan and would like as many people as possible to know how great the community and its people are.”

“He came back two years ago for several days...and he gave his all,” Maullar said. “He reaches back and helps people. He’s so open to helping anyone, anytime, anywhere.”

Not only does Stonestreet try to be a role model to the theatre students by holding workshops and giving real-world advice, but he has also shown how to give back on a larger level to the university. An avid sports fan, Stonestreet’s pride for K-State was in full swing as he participated in television commercials with his “Modern Family” costar, Ty Burrell, promoting the 2013 Fiesta Bowl game between the Wildcats and the Oregon Ducks. Stonestreet also comes back to Manhattan regularly to attend sporting events and visit with his fraternity and friends from the K-State Theatre program. What has impressed his mentors the most is how, despite growing so much as an actor, his character has remained the same.

“To be able to finally have your break on a great show that you can be proud of — we are very pleased for him,” MacFarland said. “He’s just a nice person. Always kind, always humble, and very grounded.”
As president and CEO of The Hershey Company, J.P. Bilbrey stands watch over the global, multibillion-dollar company and its piles of easy-to-love products — from Reese’s and Hershey’s Kisses to Twizzlers and Jolly Rancher. (For the record, Bilbrey has two favorites: the classic Hershey’s with Almonds bar, and the PayDay bar.)

Bilbrey seems very much at home in Hershey, Pa., at the helm of one of the biggest businesses in the country. But it might surprise people to know that Bilbrey, in fact, graduated from Kansas State in 1978…with a degree in psychology.

“I’d always been interested in the interactions of people and behavior,” Bilbrey said. “I think it’s really served me well, because I’ve been in consumer products for the last 34 years. I think having a base in psychology has always made me inquisitive around how consumers behave and think, and how you meet their needs.”

In Good Company
On the Kansas State University website, Bilbrey is listed among famous College of Arts and Sciences alumni including Bill Porter, E-Trade founder; Pete Souza, chief White House photographer; and Lynn Jenkins, Kansas congresswoman. To put it mildly, Bilbrey is in good company.

Yet he didn’t set out with the goal of earning the fancy title. “I never sat down in the beginning and said, ‘OK, I have a perfect vision of how this will all play out.’ I was always just a naturally inquisitive person,” Bilbrey said.

“I was always of the mindset, ‘How can I improve? How can I get better?’ Then, all of a sudden, you’re producing results. I was always the guy raising his hand, saying, ‘Why couldn’t you do it this way?’”

World Traveler
Bolstered by a broad-based education at K-State, where he “learned how to learn,” Bilbrey went full-steam ahead into business post-graduation. He spent 22 years working his way up at Procter & Gamble, followed by stints at Danone Waters of North America and Mission Foods. He finally settled in at Hershey in 2003.

Bilbrey, his wife, Teresa, and their four kids (three of whom attended K-State) have lived in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Taiwan. The kids have visited 35 countries, and Bilbrey has personally done business in 50.
“It was more of a lifestyle than a job. So if I wanted to go to the Louvre, I could go to the Louvre. If I wanted to see an art exhibit in Asia, I could do it when I was in Asia. I always tried to take advantage of being in different and interesting places. Creating this balance between your work and travel really makes it a satisfying and fulfilling journey.”

K-State Loyal

When asked about the people who made his K-State experience a valuable one, Bilbrey recites name after name — among them, Mark Barnett, Department of Psychological Sciences professor, and Jerry Frieman, professor and former department head.

“They were probably far more memorable to me than I was to them!” Bilbrey said with a laugh. “But when I was back and I was talking to some of the faculty, I hope it was meaningful to them, because I was able to say, ‘You guys played a big part in helping encourage me.’”

The sentiment wasn’t lost on Frieman, Bilbrey’s one-time professor. The two reconnected when Bilbrey visited campus in February 2012.

“The greatest reward of being a faculty member is seeing your students be successful. And he is one of the most successful,” Frieman said.

“If we do our job right, our students will develop what I like to call ‘habits of mind’ — ways of thinking about human behavior — that they can use in lots of different places, including the business world.”

Frieman says the Department’s graduates work in a host of fields, including higher education, social services, government, medicine, law, and the military. That’s likely why the study of psychology has endured at K-State, where the first course was offered in 1880. A psychology degree can take students anywhere and everywhere…and Bilbrey is proof positive of that.

“I think education is one of those life places where we all can make a difference,” Bilbrey said of why he gives to the Department. “When I was in school, there were people who probably saw something in me that I didn’t recognize in myself. They provided me with opportunities that opened doors, and those were things that were invisible to me. You never know when you’re going to touch somebody that way.”
Living in the information age, it is easy to take for granted what technology puts at our fingertips on a daily basis. But what is even easier to take for granted is that behind almost every study, every report, every cluster of information — is a statistician.

Researchers, especially in the sciences, need methods for decoding large amounts of data supplied by today’s technology. Statisticians act as translators, turning the foreign language of data into information that is meaningful. Such translation occurs daily at Kansas State, where the Statistics Department’s interdisciplinary research — from medicine to agriculture to marketing — knows no bounds.

A Vital Role

The Statistics Department has been an integral part of the university’s land-grant mission since it opened the Statistical Consulting Laboratory in 1946 and became its own department in 1959. For over 50 years, researchers across campus — particularly in the biosciences — have relied on the consulting lab, its faculty, and students to evaluate large sets of data, develop methods to interpret it accurately, and enhance real-world applications of research.

Nora Bello, assistant professor, came to K-State in 2010 for the thrill of participating in research across an array of fields.

“Every scientific discipline that collects data needs statistics because statistics is the science of learning from data,” Bello said.

“On any given day, we might be talking genetics in the morning, and food safety in the afternoon. Ecology of tallgrass prairies, novel vaccines, beef cattle grazing — many different problems come to us with opportunities for getting statistics involved.”

The explosion of technology in the last few decades has resulted in complex layers of information that take many fields of expertise to decipher. Now more than ever, statistics plays a vital role in helping researchers make informed decisions from messy data and take action.

Zhining Ou, a statistics graduate student from China who works in the consulting lab and alongside Bello, knows firsthand that the statistical methods she and her colleagues provide to the larger university are valuable.

“We provide a bridge from numbers to human understanding. That’s why we are here — to be able to translate
“I want to know what other scientists are doing to make the world better, and I want to help them as well.”
— Zhining Ou

Data With Significance

In keeping with tradition, the Statistics Department’s recent projects have involved collaboration with researchers all over campus, from veterinary medicine to crop science to cancer research. A critical foundation for these interdisciplinary efforts is Beocat, a high-performance computing cluster run by the K-State College of Engineering’s Computing and Information Sciences Department. Beocat is the largest computing cluster in Kansas and allows statisticians to efficiently process massive amounts of data in hours, rather than the weeks or months it would take with a normal desktop.

Currently, Bello and Ou are collaborating with researchers at Michigan State University on a project that deals with whole-genome selection, which refers to modern breeding and genetics. In particular, Bello and Ou are developing methods for assessing the environment’s role on the genetic basis of agricultural traits. These statistical methods can be applied, for example, to dairy production systems, with the ultimate goal of breeding dairy cows that produce milk more efficiently in the presence of environmental stressors (like extreme heat or drought). Such progress could help farmers continue to be profitable in the face of climate change.

According to Bello, this research has broad implications for agricultural production, both livestock and crops.

“The world population is growing exponentially and is expected to reach 9 billion by 2050. To feed a population that is increasing at a faster rate than food production, we’re going to need to become more efficient at producing that food. Genetics is one approach to increase efficiency.”

Prime Time

2013 has been named the International Year of Statistics by the American Statistical Association and other partnering organizations, and in Bello’s opinion, there has never been a more exciting time in the field. As the university celebrates a milestone anniversary, the Statistics Department looks forward to a future filled with potential.

“Statistics is uniquely poised to play a key role in making K-State a top 50 public research university,” Bello said. “There are many exciting opportunities to make a difference by doing relevant interdisciplinary research that addresses large-scale, complex problems. It’s a good time to be a statistician at K-State.”

STRENGTHEN STATISTICS

THE NEED:
Funding to support student and faculty travel to conferences, for opportunities to present research on a larger stage

TO HELP:
Ryan Kenney, development officer, ryank@found.ksu.edu, 800-432-1578

VISIT:
www.found.ksu.edu/give/statistics/
Every year, Kansas State University’s Dance program showcases the captivating work of faculty and students alike during its Spring Dance and Winter Dance events. Held April 5 and 6 in McCain Auditorium, Spring Dance 2013 was packed with ballet, modern, jazz, West African, and tap dancing. The event featured breathtaking choreography by students, as well as faculty members Julie L. Pentz, associate professor and director of K-State Dance; David Ollington, associate professor; Neil Dunn, instructor and production coordinator; and Laura Donnelly, assistant professor.
DONATE TO DANCE

THE NEED:
Support for Dance Excellence Fund scholarships

TO HELP:
Sheila Walker, director of development, sheilaw@found.ksu.edu, 800-432-1578

VISIT:
www.found.ksu.edu/give/dance

K-State Dance Numbers

Dance Degree Established: 1977

Years of Spring and Winter Dance: 29

Winter Dance 2012 Students: 50
Spring Dance 2013 Students: 68

Dance Majors: 20
Dance Minors: 40

For news on upcoming performances, visit:
www.k-state.edu/dance
On July 2, 1863, as darkness descended on the second day of the battle of Gettysburg, an enthusiastic crowd gathered a thousand miles to the west in Manhattan, Kansas, to celebrate the opening of the nation’s first operational Land Grant school, Kansas State Agricultural College (KSAC). The war had brought violence and hardship to a nation, but it also provided opportunities. Legislation long stalled by sectional disputes found new life in a Congress changed by secession. Signed into law by President Lincoln on July 2, 1862, the Morrill Land-Grant College Act provided states with 30,000 acres of public land per each representative and senator to establish state colleges to “benefit the agricultural and mechanical arts.” Under the provisions of the act, twenty-six men and twenty-six women arrived at the former Blue Mont College building on September 2, 1863. Although KSAC president Joseph Denison heralded the arrival of “full educational privileges,” and enrollment was open to all students regardless of gender, race, or creed, it took another generation for the first African Americans, George Washington Owens and Minnie Howell, to receive their KSAC diplomas in 1899 and 1901.

The desire to promote rural prosperity motivated Vermont representative, and later senator, Justin Morrill’s support of scientific education in agriculture and the mechanical arts for the hardworking sons and daughters of the soil. Morrill believed this innovation in education was crucial for national prosperity. Without the benefit of higher education, the nation’s farmers were forced to glean their knowledge “from the crevices between labor and sleep. They grope in twilight.”

Following the war Congress strengthened Morrill’s Land Grant mission. The Hatch Act of 1881 established a network of agricultural experiment stations that enabled researchers to share their findings. The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 provided county agents who proved to be invaluable in meeting the challenges of World War I and the Great Depression. The passage of the G.I. Bill of Rights in 1944 and modern student loan programs further expanded federal support for higher education. Such expansions brought Land Grant schools closer to the Jeffersonian ideal of the “diffusion of knowledge . . . for the preservation of freedom and happiness.” As KSAC president George Fairchild advised the class of 1893, “The bulk of good work in the world—discovery, invention, government, philosophy . . . is brought about by those who learn to think by study.”

As the war-torn year of 1863 began, only one young man in fifteen hundred attended any American college. Today, more than 4.5 million students attend sixty-nine Land Grant schools. In many states public colleges are a mainstay of the economy. Nationally, two-thirds of all federal funds for research are awarded to faculty in public universities. Federal support for higher education has remained true to the belief that an educated populace is the safeguard of a true democracy.

A century and a half after Congressman Morrill’s wartime plea for “useful knowledge . . . in order to enlarge our productive power [and] give intelligence to those who will esteem it,” Land Grant schools endure as one of the principal achievements of the Congress of the Civil War.
You could say Jim Haymaker, ’69 B.S. economics, B.A. modern languages (French and Spanish), found three great loves at K-State: his wife, Kathy; the field of economics; and the world abroad, where he would spend his decades-long career in international business.

Haymaker, 2013 College of Arts and Sciences alumni fellow, took his first economics course as a sophomore — and was instantly enamored. Just one semester later, he left for a study-abroad year in Paris, “a defining experience” in his life.

“While I was in France, it became clear to me that I wanted an international career. I found the study of the language, the progressive ability to speak it, the interaction with the people to be fascinating. I was comfortable making those transitions into those other cultures, and I decided I would like a lifetime of that.”

With his mind for business and his command of French, Spanish, and German, Haymaker spent 38 years with Cargill, at times being stationed in Minneapolis, Germany, and Spain.

Throughout his travels, Haymaker maintained ties to the college. And in 2012, he and Kathy set up five Department of Economics scholarships — including one named for each of their sons.

“We’re hopeful that these scholarships will be the pivotal point for some people in deciding either to come to Kansas State, or to pursue an education in economics if that is what they’d really like to do.”

“I was comfortable making those transitions into those other cultures, and I decided I would like a lifetime of that.”

— Jim Haymaker

Patricia Solís

Patricia Solís, Ph.D. — ’94 B.S. physics and B.A. German, ’96 M.A. geography — is living a thoroughly international life, and she wouldn’t have it any other way. Since 2003, Solís has worked for the D.C.-based Association of American Geographers as director of outreach and strategic initiatives. She’s designed research and education experiences for nearly 4,000 students and teachers in 35 countries, on issues such as climate change and the global economy. All while making her home in Panama with her husband, Dario, and their two sons.

According to Solís, 2013 College of Arts and Sciences alumni fellow, her love for all things international took root during her senior year, on a K-State College of Arts and Sciences fellowship to Zurich, Switzerland.

“It was a really wonderful experience to go someplace completely new and challenge yourself. I was looking for different courses I could take in the physics program, and I ran into the geophysics department there,” she said. “Geography was really this place that I was looking for — a place where I could pull all of my skills together.”

Upon returning to K-State for a master’s in geography, Solís began coordinating K-State’s international service teams — a hands-on introduction to the work she does today. Those transformative experiences have everything to do with why she gives back.

“I was the recipient of many scholarships and awards. Somebody somewhere in the past did that for me. Now that I’m later in my career, that’s the role I need to play.”

Anita (Grant) Hiller, New Albany, Indiana, '50 B.S. English, retired in 1994 after 30 years teaching junior high school English. She has four children, nine grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.


Robert L. Willmeth, Jewell, Kansas, '52 B.S. physical sciences, is retired after a career in teaching. Following his graduation from K-State, he earned an M.S. from Emporia State University. He has three kids, and his siblings, Francis and Eva, also graduated from K-State.

Robert Parker, El Dorado, Kansas, '54 B.S. physical education and '60 M.S. physical education, is retired and living with wife Rea.

Gary Haynes, San Francisco, California, '57 B.S. journalism, is semi-retired and moved from Illinois to California in 2011.

Donald Lancaster, Cathedral City, California, '57 B.S. radio/television, is retired, but he still manages a 1,300-acre farm in Kansas. In his free time, he enjoys traveling and going on cruises.

Jerry L. Kintigh, Potomac Falls, Virginia, '61 B.S. feed science and management, is retired. After graduating from Kansas State, he earned an M.B.A. from the University of Nebraska.

Louise (Berry) Bogart, Salem, Oregon, '64 B.A. modern languages, earned her M.Ed. from College of Notre Dame, and earned her Ph.D. from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Today, she is a professor emerita.

Sharon (Lady) Evers, St. Joseph, Missouri, '67 B.A. modern languages, retired in 2007 after 38 years with U.S. Bank. She is a board member and trustee for the KSU Foundation, as well as a former K-State Alumni Association chair. She is married to K-State alumnus Richard Evers, '69.

Barbara (Waltz) Hamm, Benicia, California, '72 M.A. English literature and '79 Ph.D. English literature, is an instructor at Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill, California. She is also the music minister at Community Congregational Church in Benicia. She published a collection of hymns with Abingdon Press, and she now has hymns in three denominational hymnals.

John R. LeBow, Springfield, Oregon, '72 B.S. pre-medicine, is a family physician.

LaDonna (Lonberger) Sanders, Kansas City, Kansas, '72 B.S. social science, earned her M.P.A. from the University of Kansas in 1992. She retired in 2009, and is a volunteer DJ on KKFI community radio in Kansas City.

Roger A. Beaumont, Bryan, Texas, '73 Ph.D. history, is a retired history professor. He and his wife, Penny, coauthored the book “Imperial Divas: The Vicerines of India.” He also serves as a board member for Brazos Valley Counseling Services.

Robert Burgdorfer, Downers Grove, Illinois, '74 B.S. journalism, is a copy editor with Reuters.

Stephen Larkin, Lake Ridge, Virginia, '75 B.S. political science, '77 M.A. political science, and '81 M.A. history, is the chief of real estate and facilities management learning and education staff for the IRS. He also serves as chairman of the Robert D. Linder Scholarship Fund for K-State’s Department of History.

Thomas R. Spilker, Monrovia, California, '75 B.S. computer science and geophysics, retired from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in July 2012, and started a consulting company. His wife, Linda, works at JPL as the project scientist for the Cassini mission, whose spacecraft is currently orbiting Saturn.

Mary (Brighton) Funk, Mission, Kansas, '78 B.A. English and '82 M.A. English, is an adjunct professor of English at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park. She is also a great-grandmother, and serves as a rose groomer for the Kansas City Rose Society, leader of the JCCC Cavalier Quilters, and a member of the Starlight Quilt Guild.

Rebecca J. (Wynn) Crockford, Hutchinson, Kansas, '81 B.S. recreation, is retired from the YMCA. She now works as a K-12 substitute teacher for USD 313. She has been a 4-H volunteer for 25 years,
and a Red Cross volunteer for 30 years. In her free time, she works at her church; is a master gardener; and enjoys being a wife, mother, and grandma.

Judith (Helmke) Fitzgerald, Manitou Springs, Colorado, '81 B.S. history, is retired. Her husband, David W. Fitzgerald, passed away in May 2011.

Jerry Foropoulos, Jr., Los Alamos, New Mexico, '82 Ph.D. chemistry, retired in April 2012 after more than 26 years at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Larry C. Burns, Abilene, Kansas, '90 B.S. history and '94 A.T. computer information systems, retired in May 2011.

John Steenbock, Springboro, Ohio, '91 M.S. industrial/organizational psychology, is director of manpower and personnel for the Air Force Material Command.

Margaret (Buck) Kohl, Lincoln, Nebraska, '92 B.S. journalism and mass communications with an emphasis in public relations, works as a senior legislative aide.

Kristi Humston, Shawnee, Kansas, '93 B.S. journalism and mass communications, is marketing and communications manager with Lake Quivira Country Club.

Tonya (Deters) Holthaus, Ozawkie, Kansas, '97 B.A. advertising, is a pharmaceutical account manager with Lundbeck, Inc.

Aaron Otto, Roeland Park, Kansas, '98 B.S. political science with minors in business administration and leadership studies, is city administrator for Roeland Park. He is also serving as the national president of the K-State Alumni Association for 2013-2014.

Emily (Mihelcic) Wilson, Topeka, Kansas, '08 B.A. journalism and mass communications, is the communications coordinator for the Kansas Association for Justice in Topeka. She is married to Jared Wilson.

Kristi Konda, Topeka, Kansas, '10 B.A. political science and conflict resolution certificate with a minor in international studies, is a legal assistant at Topeka law firm Bryan, Lykins, Hejtmanek and Fischer. In her free time, she is part of the Junior League of Topeka, and the Topeka Area Catbackers.

Andrea (Barth) Conrad, Richmond Hill, Georgia, '11 B.S. psychology, women's studies, and nonviolent studies, is a field coordinator at the Democratic Party of Georgia.

2010s

Watch the Kansas history documentary “She Told Me Stories,” featured in the Summer 2012 issue:
www.k-state.edu/artsci/stories

Andrew Zender, Manhattan, Kansas, '05 B.A. mass communications (advertising) and modern languages (Spanish), works as editor of the K-Stater magazine at the K-State Alumni Association.

Amanda (Hoffman) Cebula, Wichita, Kansas, '07 B.S. communication studies with minors in music and leadership studies, is a program associate for the Kansas Leadership Center.

2000s

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Eisenhower Circle of Excellence Celebration

Who: Anyone who gave the college $250 or more in fiscal year 2013
When: Evening of Thursday, October 24, 2013
Where: K-State Alumni Center Ballroom
Why: To show our appreciation for your support!
Invitation to follow