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My stepdaughter Sophia and I are patiently waiting at Mercy Medical Center for her CAT Scan. Now that we’ve been here almost two years and are resigned to spend a few more moments before her test, we start to reflect on our now almost two-year experience in the Williston community.

Maybe because we are in the hospital, Sophia looks around, and with bright eye enthusiasm, she reflects on how quiet Williston is compared to our former home in Washington State. “It’s also safer here Dad. People spend time talking to you and don’t just rush away.”

Truck traffic enters my mind and yet, I agree. It is quieter and safer in Williston whether at the hospital, at Sophia’s school, in our home or at the college. Even with all of the changes taking place, Williston is still, by contrast, a peaceful community.

Sophia really appreciates the small town atmosphere. “People are nice to each other.” Whether from a ten year old perspective or a forty eight year old perspective, we both agree that Williston, Sophia’s school and the College are easy places to call home.

Dramatic changes are taking place in our community. Sophia is a good reminder that regardless of these changes, there are many safe havens. From our homes, to our schools, to even the hospital, Williston is, as our College motto aptly states: “Where the People Make the Difference.”

From the perspective of the College, we also are making changes. We do so with the hope of protecting our small town spirit. We do so with the intention of placing ourselves in a position where we manage change and change does not manage us. We do so to better serve our community; a community, from the perspective of a ten year old and a forty eight year old, that we are proud to call home.
Williston State College is pleased to announce that its Diesel Technology Program has achieved certification by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) in the areas of diesel engines, drive trains, brakes, suspension and steering, electrical and electronic systems, heating, ventilation and air conditioning, and preventative maintenance inspection.

“There are not too many programs out there that are certified,” said WSC Assistant Professor of Diesel Technology Rick Lund. “We are now one of the few programs in the nation, and the only one in the state of North Dakota, that are certified.”

The WSC program was evaluated according to strict standards set by the automotive industry. They were evaluated by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF) in all areas from the program’s facilities to the number of instructional hours provided.

The first step toward certification is to send an application. “You self evaluate your program and turn that in to the NATEF national office,” Lund said. “Then, if they approve your program, you get an on-site visit from four individuals and they look at everything from your application that you say you are doing.”

He said that they also visit with industry people in the area where graduates from the WSC diesel tech program are working to see how well trained they were and how they are working for the company.

According to a letter sent to WSC President Dr. Raymond Nadolny from the NATEF, the WSC program met the strict industry standards required for ASE Master Certification of the program. This is the highest level of achievement recognized by the ASE, according to Williams A. Kersten, president of the NATEF.

The instructors, Rick Lund and Chris Egge, must also be master certified technicians and must be recertified every five years. “It’s an ongoing process that we must keep up,” Lund said. He added that the program, in order to keep its certification, will be re-evaluated every five years as well.
While growing up in Minot, playing basketball was something that Stacy (Nelson) Svihovec had always loved. So when UND-Williston recruited her to play for their already hugely successful program, you could say it was a match made in heaven. “It was enticing because I wanted to continue my athletic career and yet wasn’t quite sure what I wanted in a college.”

Stacy eventually decided on UND-Williston and from 1982 to 1984 she joined the Teton’s women’s basketball team, playing under Teton Hall of Fame coach Penny Slagle. “Basketball was a big part of my life during my time at UND Williston. Myself and eleven other teammates lived in a dormitory on campus, with a housemother. There was never a dull moment.”

The same could be said for the Lady Tetons, who under coach Slagle, successfully played their way to the national tournament during Stacy’s time on the squad. Stacy also remembers playing with former All-American Julie Hendrickson. “They were my family back then. It was a great program and I had a wonderful time playing with them.”

And while a big part of her life, basketball wasn’t EVERYTHING for Stacy. As fate would have it, she ended up meeting a young man from Dickinson named Todd Svihovec, who just so happened to play basketball for UND-Williston’s men’s team. “Yes, I met the love of my life at UND-Williston,” recalls Stacy. “In fact, if I remember correctly, my first official date with Todd was decided appropriately enough over a game of HORSE, with the loser having to take the winner out for pizza.”

Stacy and Todd continued dating during their time on the Williston campus. Stacy remembers it was during these years at school where both she and Todd took many of their general courses; including a dance class where the two remained dance partners throughout the entire course. “In the end that’s what made UND-Williston such a great place for the both of us. It wasn’t just the basketball, but also the opportunity to grow during those early collegiate years and to find out what direction we wanted our education to go in.”

Stacy also remembers that it was the small campus that attracted her to UND-Williston. “Coming out of high school, the thought of heading off to college was a bit overwhelming. Williston proved to be the perfect transition for me at the time.”

Eventually Stacy and Todd would leave UND Williston, to finish both their degrees and basketball careers at Dickinson State University. Stacy went on to earn a double major in Elementary Education and Physical Education and Todd a degree in Medical Technology. Stacy and Todd were married in August of 1987. Shortly after their graduation from Dickinson State. They would go on to live in Williston and Grand Forks, with Stacy teaching and Todd finishing his Master’s degree in Chemical Engineering at UND. Soon thereafter a job offer for Todd took them to Corpus Christi, Texas. Finally, after a short stint in Wichita, Kansas, the couple moved back to Texas and the community of Kingwood, a northern suburb of Houston. Today, Todd is working as the Director of Engineering for INVISTA, one of the world’s largest integrated producers of polymers and fibers. Meanwhile, Stacy remains busy as a full-time mom to the couple’s three children, Tevin, Tristen and Tannah. She says that both she and Todd remain actively involved in their church as well as local athletic clubs.

Every couple of years Stacy says she tries to make a trip back to Williston to catch up with coach Slagle and some of her former teammates. When asked about how things have changed on campus since her time in the early ‘80’s, Stacy replies with a smile, “I just wish I could have played in a facility like they have now!” She notes that many of the buildings have changed and that technology has become even more prominent on campus, leading to new updates and growth for future students.

Stacy says that she would definitely recommend Williston State College for many of the same reasons that she and Todd first decided to attend. “It’s a great opportunity to get a start on your college career in a welcoming community and a small town atmosphere. I know that both Todd and I have worked to pass on the values and lessons we’ve learned at places like UND Williston to our children. We teach them to be a part of something, be it athletics, music, drama or debate.”

Stacy will also remember UND Williston as the place where she and Todd started their story together and looks forward to the next exciting chapter that life brings them.
Kayla Retzer is the Student Life Coordinator for Williston State College. She has experienced a variety of challenges at Williston State College. "We’re a smaller college, located in the Northwest corner of the state, and it takes a lot more for us to get noticed," Kayla is also the advisor for student government on campus and has been involved in telling the Williston State story to the legislature. "I like to get the students involved in issues that will affect them." She also sees the importance of getting the community involved with the activities on campus. "We have a growing community, and it’s nice to see the support the college receives from the community."

What would she like to see in the future? "Number one would be a student union. We’d like to offer a variety of activities every week. It would be nice to have a paid student staff to assist with the activities. Additional funds for marketing the activities would be nice, and of course we’d like to see the student population grow as a part of our efforts."

Kayla Retzer is probably the ideal choice for Student Life Coordinator. She has experienced Williston State College from every angle. First as an incoming senior, next as a student, after that she was on a larger campus, and now she has returned to share what she has experienced and learned. Add to that a great smile and an optimistic outlook and you know why the sky is the limit for student life at Williston State College.

Working hard on campus is only part of the challenge for Williston State College. "We’re a smaller college, located in the Northwest corner of the state, and it takes a lot more for us to get noticed," Kayla is also the advisor for student government on campus and she has been involved in telling the Williston State story to the legislature. "I like to get the students involved in issues that will affect them." Kayla also sees the importance of getting the community involved with the activities on campus. "We have a growing community, and it’s nice to see the support the college receives from the community."
Twenty years. A lot can happen in twenty years, and Lance Olson can certainly attest to that. “I’m from the Williston area,” he says. “I spent two years at Williston State College. At the time it was a small community college. It’s amazing the growth we’re experiencing right now.”

After Olson’s two years at WSC, he transferred to the University of North Dakota where he received his degree in Geology. “My teachers at WSC really helped point me in the right direction for my education,” exclaims Olson. “However, I managed to get my degree right when the oil boom busted so I went back and got my teaching degree.”

After taking some time off to tour around Australia and to teach in Hallock, Minnesota, Olson returned to WSC to teach. “It’s amazing the changes that have taken place since I’ve been teaching at the college,” he says. “I’ve especially seen changes in our online and distance education options. The changes in technology have made it possible for us to offer more programs to our students. We want our online and distance education to be strong, but we also want to keep our on-campus presence strong, too.”

Williston State College is doing just that through the building expansions that are taking place on campus. “Our new 171 bed residence hall will be completed in the fall of 2011,” says Olson. “It’s going to be a wonderful addition to our campus. With the current housing shortage and increasing rental rates, it will give our students the housing they are currently having a hard time finding and affording.”

Along with the 9.8 million dollar residence hall, Olson says a 5.2 million dollar expansion project for their trades programs will be completed this spring, and an addition to their science department is currently awaiting legislative approval. “It’s a crazy time here in Williston,” he says, “but we’re trying to stay ahead of the wave of changes that are happening. The school expansions will really help us move forward with providing more and more opportunities for our students. We’ve also been very lucky to have Dr. Raymond Nadolny. He has a wonderful vision for our school, and he’s working very hard to put it all in place.”

As far as current enrollment goes, Williston State College is holding its own. “A lot of high school seniors see all the job opportunities that are out there with the oil boom and many decide to go straight to work instead of into college. I hope they don’t close the door on college all together,” Olson says. “With our expansion projects, online and distance education programs, and the growth of our on-campus opportunities, Williston State College is able to offer more than ever before.”

“With our expansion projects, online and distance education programs, and the growth of our on-campus opportunities, Williston State College is able to offer more than ever before.”

Lance Olson  
Math and Science Chair  
Williston State College
Community Education

2011 Spring Classes

- Conversational Spanish II starting Feb. 28
- eBay 101 March 7 & 8
- Watercolor Painting starting March 7
- Inter. eBay March 21 & 22
- White Wine Tasting March 24
- Beg. Photoshop CS5 March 28 & 30
- Beg. PowerPoint ’07 March 29 & 31
- Beg. Excel ’07 April 12, 13, 14
- Inter. Excel ’07 April 19, 20, 21
- Inter. Photoshop CS5 April 25-28
- Wire Jewelry April 11 & 18
- Adult CPR/First Aid April 11
- Red Wine Tasting April 7
- Beer Tasting April 14
- Digital Photo April 4, 6, 11
- Obedience Training starting in May

For more information 701.774.6236 or kim.wenko@willistonstate.edu
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WNBA Sparks Have Local Ties

Carla Christofferson

The two friends are Carla Christofferson and Kathy Goodman, and they are now majority owners of the Sparks, and have been for over four years. Carla is from Tolna, North Dakota where she played basketball and softball and ran track. “Had there been volleyball back when I went to school, I would have played that too,” Carla shared in a recent interview. She left the town of Tolna and headed west to Williston State College, then UND-Williston, to start her post secondary education and to play basketball. She had two sisters living in Williston at the time, and their husbands worked in the oil fields. It was the mid 80’s, and Williston was feeling the effects of an oil boom. It was convenient for Carla to stay with her sisters during summer basketball camps at WSC. It was also economical for her to live with one of them when she attended college at WSC for two years. “The transition to Williston (WSC) was very easy, I graduated from a class of 13, so I was used to smaller classes.” Many of her friends would make the jump to UND or NDSU and would find themselves overwhelmed by larger classes and the college life. Carla gives credit to the excellent teachers at WSC for giving her a great foundation on which to build her college education, an education that would end with a degree in law from Yale University. “The teachers at WSC prepared me extremely well for my next step. I never felt that I couldn’t succeed at the next level.” The campus life also fit Carla well as she arrived on campus and immediately found friends. “It’s the North Dakota way, we all kind of came from smaller towns and we are quick to meet people and make friends.”

After Yale University her next step was Los Angeles, and as Carla explains she, like most other law students, was looking for a job for a year. When she was being interviewed, the judge inquired as to where she was from. When she answered Tolna he asked about the proximity of her town to Michigan, ND. As it turns out, his mother was a Lamb from Michigan. Immediately Carla began to use her North Dakota roots to her advantage and of course, got the job. Her North Dakota ties would benefit Carla once more, as Warren Christopher was a partner in the law firm she joined. Mr. Christopher spent his early years, until he was 13, in Scranton, North Dakota.

Carla is currently the managing partner of the O’Melveny & Myers Los Angeles office, where she has spent the last 20 years as a trial lawyer, specializing in energy, accounting, and contract disputes. But it was her North Dakota entrepreneurial spirit that allowed her to go out on a limb and purchase the Sparks from the Los Angeles Lakers. “I never planned to own a basketball team or any sport franchise.” According to Carla, “we just had an opportunity and convinced a banker to give us the money. It really wasn’t whether the team was successful or not, I have lived without money in my life, and certainly could have done that again. I am a practicing attorney so I knew money would not be a problem. It was more of a belief in the emergence of women’s sports.” Carla likens the WNBA today to the NBA of 40 years ago. “All it will take is something charismatic, say an LA Lakers-Boston Celtics rivalry, or a player like Michael Jordan and the WNBA will move to the next level,” adds Carla. “We already have shown some success. We went from averaging 4,000 in attendance to over 10,000. Her goal would be to sell out the arena, 13,500, every night. But to Carla an even more important trend is the sale of team sponsorships. “In the past two years our sponsorships have increased, even with a down economy. Now that the economy is improving we feel we are on the cusp of some great things.” Carla would suggest much the same path for students like her today. “I have a nephew who is attending Lake Region before he transfers. You need the basics, and a smaller setting in smaller classes is a good way to go. You feel comfortable and accepted and it’s a whole lot easier to make friends.”

Carla and her husband Adam have an 18-month-old son who, according to Carla, “already has an amazing jump shot, because he’s been around basketball so much.”

We think that the quote from Carla’s bio probably says it best. “As she enters her fifth season as co-owner of the Sparks, she continues to lead the organization in a direction that Los Angeles and the WNBA have not seen before. Christofferson has a wealth of understanding to improve the experiences of Sparks’ fans and to strengthen the Los Angeles community. Her enthusiasm for the team, paired with her creative mind, has already elevated the team to new heights.”

So next time you wonder who owns these professional sports teams? Think of North Dakota’s own Carla Christofferson, a small town basketball player with Los Angeles style vision.
For many students looking to enter college, a certain amount of uncertainty and apprehension seem to be the norm. With so many choices and decisions about what school to choose and what major to study, it’s no wonder that many students feel overwhelmed about how college can help prepare them for their futures. For Williston State College alumni Rusty Halvorson, his journey from college campus, to current Farm Director for the American Ag Network, took him in different directions. However, he credits the time he spent on Williston’s campus as being instrumental in shaping where he is today.

Like many students who grew up and attended high school in Williston, Halvorson faced the decision to either leave for one of the larger state schools, or stay close to home with Williston State College, then known as the University of North Dakota Williston.

“I chose to attend UND Williston because it not only made sense financially for me at the time, but it also allowed me the opportunity to stay close to my family and the fantastic hunting I had grown up around.”

Halvorson attended UND Williston from 1992 until 1994, where he studied Pre-Veterinary Science.

“I remember my classes back then were heavy on both the math and science ends.” Halvorson also recalls the help he received from his professors. “They were a great group of people, always willing to help and it made for a great learning environment.”

Also, when asked about what his favorite class was, Halvorson went on to explain, “I remember a livestock judging class with Roger Halvorson, (no relation) where myself and two or three other students traveled to a fairly prominent ranch in eastern Montana to witness a calf sale. We hopped in a suburban and away we went. I had been to auction houses before, but never to an actual farm auction with all the sights and sounds. It was a great environment and a fun day.”

Halvorson also recalls some of the more recreational classes he participated in during his time on the Williston campus. Besides math and science, I, was also involved in archery, guitar, and even bowling for fun.”

During his years on campus Halvorson devoted the majority of his time to his studies, however he also had a part time job at 660 KEYZ Country, where he worked as a weekend and evening radio announcer.

“I come from a family of radio announcers. My father, (Lee Halvorson) has been a long time radio broadcaster and play-by-play announcer, so I just gravitated towards radio work.”

Halvorson would eventually go on and earn his Associate of Science degree in Pre-Veterinary Medicine. He then turned his sights to North Dakota State University where he planned to finish his studies. And finish he did; however, instead of becoming a veterinarian, his attention turned to his long-time love for radio. “In my heart, I knew that I always wanted to be in radio.”

In 1996 Halvorson graduated with a Bachelor’s Degree in General Agriculture from NDSU, adding a minor degree in media communications as well. Soon thereafter he applied for a job at the American Ag Radio Network and was hired as the Associate Farm Director under Ag Network pioneer and Farm Director Lyle Romine. Fourteen years later, Halvorson is now Farm Director himself and making the most of his dream career.

“I absolutely enjoy what I do for a living. I love being able to distribute the information that farmers and ranchers need. It’s truly satisfying to be able to do that for people and always gratifying to hear positive feedback from the agricultural community. It’s humbling, very humbling.”

When asked if he would recommend Williston State College Halvorson is quick to answer. “Yes, I would. Especially to those students who are not 100% prepared to go to a four-year school. I looked at my time in Williston as a transitional period that not only helped prepare me academically, but also helped me mature mentally as a young adult.”

Halvorson also cites the many friendships he made during his time on Williston’s campus as an important part of growing up.

“I had great friends, some from high school and other new individuals from all over who I met during my time on campus. I am happy today to still call them my friends and remain in contact with many of them.”

Indeed, Halvorson successfully made the most of his time on the Williston campus and would encourage other young students to look at Williston State College when it comes to their own education.

“Number one, you have an excellent staff. Combine that with lower tuition and that can make for a great start to any college career. Set your game plan and go from there. In my opinion Williston State helped lay the groundwork for me to become successful at NDSU and beyond.”

By John Gorman
Missing Alumni

If you find your name in this list, please contact us so we can keep you updated on anything that is happening around WSC.
On behalf of the board of directors, I want to thank outgoing directors, Ken Heen (immediate past president), Donn Hoffelt, and Greg Everson for their many years of dedicated service. It was a pleasure to serve with them.

Now, as president-elect, I am very excited to welcome incoming directors, Kim Hennessy, Tammy Sogard, and Jon Ellefson. They will contribute valuable skills and talents to the foundation.

I believe Williston State College has a bright future in this growing community. Dr. Nadolny, faculty, and staff of the college are working hard to make Williston State the college of choice in this region. The foundation wants to do everything it can to reinforce that effort. We take our positions very seriously and do our best to make the wishes and desires of the donors come true.

In addition, the foundation aims to do a better job of “Bringing Communities and College Together.” We strive to make decisions that will help improve Williston State College and ultimately improve the quality of life for everyone in the region. Your ideas can help us achieve this goal. We would love to hear from you. Contact our executive director, Terry Olson, at 701-572-9275.

Best regards,

Jerry Zuch, President
Williston State College Foundation

We are forever grateful to donors and their families - THANK YOU! The generous donors of this region have always shown a strong desire to provide quality, affordable education for the students of Williston State College. As a foundation, we have a duty to be good stewards. We take our positions very seriously and do our best to make the wishes and desires of the donors come true.

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Best regards,

Jerry Zuch, President
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