



The Anchor



2013



BOB MARKHAM:
CELEBRATING A
LEGACY OF PRIDE,
PERSEVERANCE
AND CONNECTION

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2016

Linking the Past, Present and Future



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Past, Present, Future

On The Cover: (2013) Long before Zoom calls and Facetime were common place, students at North Park Elementary got a special treat when they were able to Skype with Santa in this December 2013 photo. **(2016)** West Park students are decked out in Christmas attire as they square dance during the school's holiday activities in this December 2016 photo.

Stay in Touch



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The Columbus Public Schools Alumni Association wants to help link the past, present and future alumni and students by keeping in touch. Check out our pages for an easy way to stay connected daily.

Alumni Spotlight

Celebrating a Legacy of Pride, Perseverance and Connection

Class of 1976 graduate shares memories, life journey, and enduring CHS

Graduating from Columbus High School (CHS) in 1976, Bob Markham embarked on a path rich in tradition, community, and lifelong learning.

Now retired, he reflects on how CHS shaped his values, career, and lasting ties with the CHS community.

INFLUENCES AT CHS

Reflecting on his time at CHS, Bob recalls how influential teachers, like Jean Fox, the journalism instructor, sparked his early interest in journalism, while Jon Trabert, though not one of his teachers, indirectly inspired him to pursue a business major in college. These mentors left a lasting impression, guiding his path forward.

FAVORITE MEMORIES:

RIVALRIES AND FRIENDSHIPS

A favorite memory from high school was the spirited rivalry between Columbus and Fremont. "The rivalry was intense," Bob says. "We even had a goodwill visit between the newspaper staffs of both schools. I'm not sure if it worked, but it was a

memorable experience."

Today, these memories remind him of the camaraderie and passion that fueled CHS spirit.

LESSONS LEARNED:

PERSEVERANCE AND FLEXIBILITY

"The biggest lesson I learned at CHS was perseverance and flexibility," Bob shares. "Things don't always go as planned, but learning to adapt and press forward has shaped who I am."

These qualities would later guide him through his college years, his career, and his community involvement.

FINDING BELONGING AND PRIDE

Though his pride for CHS grew most after he left, Bob has always felt a strong connection to the school and community.

Lifelong friendships with classmates, as well as alumni from other classes, enrich his life today.

A recent Columbus-Fremont football game, with its lively alumni pep rally hosted by the CPS Foundation, offered a perfect chance to reconnect.



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"Be active, whether in sports, arts, or other interests. What interests you in high school may not end up being your career path, but always try new things and stay curious."

BOB MARKHAM'S, CHS 1976 graduate, advice for students



Bob Markham, class of 1976 and CPS Foundation Board President poses at the Anchor outside CHS.

A LIFE OF SERVICE TO CHS AND COMMUNITY
Since graduating, Bob has maintained an active role in the CHS community.

In the 1980s, he joined the CHS Alumni Basketball Tournament committee, where he served for over 20 years.

Later, he became involved with the CHS Alumni Board and, in 2004, joined the Columbus Public

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Features



Bob Markham, second from right, poses for a photo outside Memorial Stadium in Lincoln.

Spotlight: Markham gives back, stays true to his roots

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Schools Foundation, where he currently serves as President. “The Foundation has been a wonderful way to stay connected, not only with CHS but with the entire CPS community,” he notes. To give back, Bob and his wife established an annual award through the CPS Foundation to honor a Classified Staff Person of the Year.

“These are the unsung heroes of our school district,” he says, emphasizing how deeply he values supporting those who contribute to students’ success.

PATH TO BUSINESS AND FAMILY LEGACY

After CHS, Bob attended Kearney State College (now UNK), earning a B.S. in Business Administration in 1980. He returned to Columbus to work alongside his father at Gembols Motel, which they ran until the late ‘90s. Following a career in insurance, he now manages the family farms.

Today, he and his wife Chris, married over 40 years, split their time between Columbus and Lincoln, close to their two sons and growing family of grandchildren. His family legacy at CHS continues with siblings including his brother Jack (Class of 1960) and sister Judy (Class of 1967).

WORDS OF WISDOM FOR CURRENT CHS STUDENTS

Looking back, Bob encourages current students to explore and embrace every opportunity at CHS. “Be active, whether in sports, arts, or other interests,” he advises.

“What interests you in high school may not end up being your career path, but always try new things and stay curious.”

He emphasizes the wealth of resources now available, such as internships and specialized programs that didn’t exist in his time, offering even more avenues for growth.

CHS IN THREE WORDS: PRIDE, TRADITION, AND RELATIONSHIPS

As an alumni leader and longtime supporter, Bob embodies the spirit of CHS, which he describes as full of *pride, tradition, and relationships*. His lasting connection to CHS and its community shines as an example of the lasting impact of a high school education and the friendships forged along the way.

FUN FACT: A CIRCUS SURPRISE

One fun memory from childhood that few may know: at age 10, Bob was “volunteered” to be part of a Shriner’s parade float when the circus came to town, wrapped in gauze and ace bandages for the role!

In retirement, Bob enjoys concerts, Husker sporting events, and a little golf. He remains a steadfast fan of the St. Louis Cardinals, Green Bay Packers, Cornhuskers, and UNK Lopers.

FOREVER A DISCOVERER

From his days as CHS’s Music Editor compiling hit song lists to his current work honoring CPS staff, Bob stays true to his Columbus roots. His life’s story is one of commitment, pride, and connection, and he encourages all alumni to stay engaged and give back. As he says, “*Go Discoverers!*”



Bob Markham awards a prize during the 2022 Trunk or Treat event which, as Foundation president, he judged.






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LIGHTING OF THE ANCHOR

HOME for the HOLIDAY

Tuesday, Dec. 3rd
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

- At Columbus High School (3434 Discoverer Drive)
- Holiday classics performed by our K-4 Students;
- Get your photo with The Big Guy!

Yes it's ¹Santa!

Alumni performances return
DECEMBER 4TH!

Watch [@CHSAnchorAlumni](#) on Facebook as we announce our participating alumni!



Lillian Hudnall - Class of 2024

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Often times there is a misconception that gifts to the CPS Foundation need to be large in order to make an impact for our students.

When thinking about giving a gift consider this:

\$5 can buy a paperback book for a classroom.

\$10 can buy replacement supplies for a lesson in the STEM on the GO trailer that serves our K-6 students.

\$20 can help to sponsor a student in need to attend 1 STEM summer enrichment camp.



The CPS Alumni Association has strength in numbers. Just think what a donation by each of us could do to help fill the gaps in funding that the School District cannot meet. Together we as Discoverers can make a significant impact.

If you would like to give a gift you can at www.cpsanchor.com/get-involved/donate.html or by sending a check made payable to the:

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Time to mark you calendars! Upcoming Reunions

60th Class Reunion

965 - Save the date for 60th Class Reunion for June 6 and June 7, 2025. More details will be announced as the date nears. Class members are encouraged to join our Facebook group page "Columbus Nebraska High School Class of 1965". Updates will be posted there. If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact Carol Loshbaugh Syslo at carolsyslo@yahoo.com or Terry Miller at tez-toad1146@gmail.com.

Class of 1981 - 45th Reunion

45th Reunion Planning Committee is planning a reunion for 2025. More information to follow.

1956 - Meets at 10 a.m. the first Wed. of every month at Stack & Steak for morning coffee. All classmates welcome.

1958 - Class lunch the first Wednesday of every month at noon at Maximus. All classmates and spouses welcome.

1959 - Meets the second Thursday quarterly (January, April, July and October) at Stack n' Steak at 11:30 a.m. for lunch and conversation. Classmates and spouses are welcome.

1966 - Meets the 2nd Wednesday of every other month (always on odd months) at Pizza Ranch at 11:30 a.m.

You, Alumni, are Essential to Our School District's Success ⁷

Involvement, support enhance education, foster community pride.

Alumni play a crucial role in the success and vitality of a school district, often serving as its most valuable players (MVP).

Their impact transcends graduation, influencing the community, current students, and the overall reputation of the district. Former Discoverers also help foster a sense of community and pride within the school district by participating in events like our Discoverers of Distinction and Athletic Hall of Fame Banquet, reunions, and outreach programs like our Booster Club.



DR. CHIP KAY
Superintendent

We appreciate how this effort strengthens relationships among our various stakeholders—teachers, parents, and local businesses—creating a supportive network that benefits everyone involved.

CHS alumni serve as role models, demonstrating the long-term value of education by sharing their success stories and career achievements.

This inspires current students to aspire to their goals and pursue higher education, military, or vocational paths.

Additionally, alumni have provided mentorship opportunities, internships, and job placements, directly connecting students with the professional world.

CPS is so fortunate to have gracious alumni who often contribute financially through donations, scholarships, and fundraising efforts, that have enhanced our educational programs, improved facilities, and provided resources that benefit current students.

Our alumni are indispensable to CPS's growth and development, embodying the lasting impact of education and reinforcing the importance of community engagement.

I can't say thank you enough for how your involvement and contributions continue to help ensure that future generations receive the best possible educational experiences.



The full strategic plan is available online on the **SCHOOL DISTRICT WEBSITE**. The District will provide a detailed update of progress every six months.

2024-2029 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Columbus Public School District **will commit** to developing and maintaining programming to meet the needs of our students.

The Columbus Public School District **will strive** to provide campuses that create safe learning environments and address the growing needs of our community.

The Columbus Public School District **will invest** in the resources and efforts necessary to support staff engagement, development, and retention.

The Columbus Public School District **will be dedicated** to the engagement of school and community partners for the purpose of fostering connections and building relationships.

DISTRICT COMPLETES NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

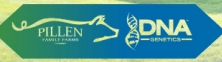
Following seven months of data gathering, meetings, and studying results the School Board approved a new strategic plan to guide Columbus Public Schools through 2029.

The plan created identified four

strategic priorities along with focused goals.

The strategic priorities are identified in all board meetings, district and building meetings, and any initiatives requiring a fiscal investment.

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8 **Success:** District addresses potential solutions, program enhancements

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COMMUNITY MEETING ON GROWTH

On November 6th, Columbus Public Schools held a community meeting focused on addressing the capacity and enrollment challenges facing elementary schools in the district.

The agenda included a review of current enrollment data, ongoing residential and commercial projects, projections for future enrollment, and potential solutions to accommodate growth.

The discussion highlighted a significant expected increase in K-4 enrollment over the next few years due to large single-family residential developments with a planned 800 doors and outlined various options for managing this growth, including boundary changes and expansion of existing schools.

The meeting emphasized a collaborative approach to explore potential solutions and programming enhancements.

With the Middle School currently at capacity, additional discussion will include research on a combined solution for K-8.



Dr. Chip Kay, Columbus Public Schools superintendent, presents at a November 6th community meeting on capacity and enrollment.

What are the projected enrollment numbers for the next few years at the elementary schools?

The projected enrollment numbers for K-4 over the next few years are as follows:

Columbus Public Schools expects their enrollment to grow by 640 students in the next three years, to a total of 4,745. A similar growth spurt occurred from 2014 to 2019.

What options were presented to address the capacity issues at elementary schools?

The options presented included:

- Option A - changing boundaries with no expansion;
- Option B - expanding existing schools;
- Option C - constructing a new elementary school.

How does the CPS cost per student compare to the state average?

The CPS cost per student is \$9,519, which is significantly lower than the state average of \$11,419, placing CPS 235th out of 244 districts in spending per student.



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