

CANDY BECHER'S
journey through
Columbus Public Schools
truly comes full
circle — continuing
a **LIFELONG**
COMMITMENT to
learning, community
and the place that will
always **FEEL LIKE HOME.**



FULL CIRCLE

Story on **PAGES 4-5**

 **The
Anchor**
WINTER 2025



1969

Discoverers
OF
DISTINCTION
FULL LIST **Inside**



2025

Linking the Past, Present and Future



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Past, Present, Future

On The Cover: (1968) Columbus High School students, including Candy Dickenson Becher select assignments for the student newspaper. Becher, recalled her journalism teacher, Mr. Lacey, sparking her interest in current events. "He fostered my voracious appetite for the news," she said. Read more about Candy's journey on Pages 4-5. **(2025)** Two students from the Columbus High Striv team, announce a varsity game from Bradshaw Park during the 2025 softball season. The Striv team broadcasts live sporting events and activities for Columbus High. The Columbus Middle school also broadcasts events each year.

Stay in Touch



@CHSAnchorAlumni
www.cpsanchor.com



The Columbus Public Schools Foundation wants to help link the past, present and future alumni and students by keeping in touch. Check out our Facebook page and website for an easy way to stay connected.

Latest Hall of Fame inductees announced ahead of event

The Columbus Public Schools Academic Hall of Fame honors alumni and those who have positively impacted Columbus Public Schools. We hope that from our inductees current students will take inspiration for their own education and adult lives.

The goals of the Columbus Public School Academic Hall of Fame are:

- To provide positive role models for the students of Columbus Public Schools.
- To recognize achievements of CPS alumni.
- To recognize those who have positively impacted Columbus Public Schools.

This year's event will take place on Thursday, April 16, 2026 from 5:30-8:30 p.m. at the American Legion. Tickets may be purchased online at www.cpsanchor.com/news-events/event-calendar.html/event/2026/04/16/discoverers-of-distinction-induction-ceremony-/545442.



LEGACY INDUCTEES

CHRISTIE HASENKAMP FREDERICK
 CLASS OF 2003

DR. BOB LOHR
 CLASS OF 1968

JUDGE TERRY MICHAEL
 CLASS OF 1976

JIM AND CONNIE HELLBUSCH
 CLASS OF 1964 - CLASS OF 1966

HONORARY INDUCTEE

RON CALLAN
 RETIRED CHS SCIENCE TEACHER

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR PREVIOUS INDUCTEES VISIT:
WWW.CPSANCHOR.COM/WHAT-WE-DO/DISCOVERER-ACADEMIC-HALL-OF-FAME/INDUCTEES.HTML.

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A HEART FOR Home and Education

For Candace “Candy” Dickenson Becher, Columbus has always been more than just home. It’s where her love for learning, teaching and community has flourished for decades.

A proud Columbus High School graduate from the Class of 1969, Candy went

on to dedicate 35 years to Columbus Public Schools, teaching English and advising the school newspaper before retiring in 2012.

Her story weaves together deep roots, lifelong friendships and a passion for education that continues to shape future generations of CHS students.

"ENJOY YOUR TIME in school because it passes too quickly!

You have to ‘adult’ for the rest of your life ... **SLOW DOWN AND LIVE** in the moment.”

— CANDY BECHER

FULL CIRCLE

FROM STUDENT to Teacher

After graduating from CHS, Candy began her college journey at Platte Junior College during its first year, later transferring to the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and earning her degree from the

University of Nebraska at Omaha.

While she initially dreamed of becoming a journalist, a humanities professor at UNL inspired her to pursue teaching—a career that allowed her to share her enthusiasm for literature and writing. ●●●

●●● Candy began her teaching career in a small Nebraska town near the Wyoming border.

“It was almost in Wyoming,” she laughed! “I taught all 9–12th graders, was the cheerleader and pep squad advisor, directed the school play and acted

as librarian.”

Missing her hometown, she soon returned to Columbus, ready to pour her energy into the same school that has shaped her.

“It was a baptism by fire for a first-year teacher, but it prepared me for everything that came next.”

A TEACHER WHO Made a Difference

During her 35 years at CHS, Candy taught college preparatory literature and writing to juniors and advised the school newspaper. She also helped develop interdisciplinary courses like Humanities and American Studies, collaborating with colleagues from the English, history and art departments.

“It was the best teaching experience of my career,” she said. “Students who took those classes still point to them as mind-opening opportunities.”

For Candy, the most rewarding part of teaching has always been the relationships with students, fellow teachers, and the community.

“It’s not just a job, it’s a passion. You have to give your best to students even when it’s difficult, because you are helping to shape the future.”

LOOKING BACK and Forging Ahead

When asked to describe CHS in three words, Candy’s answer is simple and heartfelt: “Feels like home.”

That sense of belonging, of giving back to the place that shaped her, defines her legacy.

Her advice to today’s students and young educators is equally timeless. “Enjoy your time in school because

it passes too quickly! You have to ‘adult’ for the rest of your life ... slow down and live in the moment.”

From the classroom to the community, Becher’s story is a reminder of what makes Columbus Public Schools special — a place where learning, connection and home truly come together.

Story by:
Shayna Cepel
Class of 2011

Candy Dickenson Becher’s Journey With Columbus Public Schools

HIGH SCHOOL MEMORIES and Lasting Lessons

When Candy reflects on her CHS days, her memories are filled with friendship, music and creativity.

“We had dances at the City Auditorium at least a couple times each month with live rock bands — it was fantastic,” she said with excitement.

Although sports opportunities for girls were limited at the time, she stayed busy with the school newspaper, choir, musicals, Thespians and Pep Club.

Her favorite teacher, Goldie Hagenbuck, nurtured Candy’s love for literature, while her journalism teacher, Mr. Lacey, sparked her interest in current events.

“He fostered my voracious appetite for the news,” she said. That same curiosity later shaped her approach to teaching, encouraging her students to think critically and connect the classroom to the world beyond it.



Son and daughter-in-law
Blake and Leigh

A LIFETIME OF Growth and Connection

Candy has seen many changes in education since her own CHS days. She points to Title IX as one of the most transformative milestones.

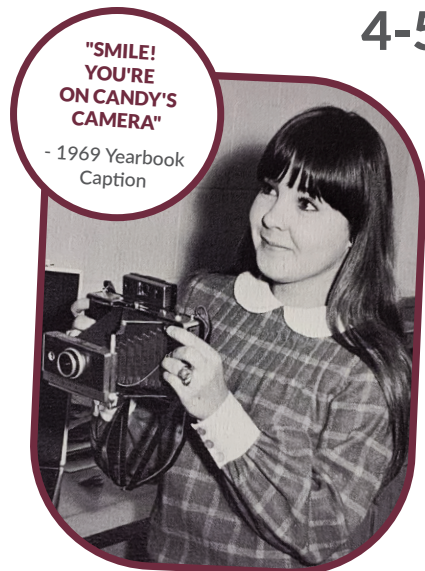
“When I was at CHS, girls sat in the bleachers cheering for male players. Today, they’re players, too. I wish those

opportunities had been available for me,” she reflected.

Even in retirement, Candy hasn’t slowed down. She continues to teach college composition to CHS seniors as an adjunct instructor for Central Community College, serves on the CPS School

Board, and stays active in three book clubs and several community organizations.

She also enjoys spending time with her son, Blake (CHS Class of 2006), her daughter-in-law Leigh Cerny Becher (also a CHS alum), and her beloved pets.



"SMILE!
YOU'RE
ON CANDY'S
CAMERA"
- 1969 Yearbook
Caption

Snapshot CANDY BECHER

CHS Class of: 1969

Taught at CHS: 1977–2012

Subjects: College preparatory literature and writing; Humanities; American Studies, Newspaper

Current Roles: CPS School Board member; Adjunct instructor for Central Community College, Columbus

Favorite Columbus High

Memory: Laying out the school newspaper and attending dances at the City Auditorium

Three Words to Describe CHS:
Feels like home



Jasper Owens

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6 Announcing 2026 Athletic Hall of Fame Inductees

Event will take place in conjunction with the first Friday night home football game in the fall of 2026. Dates will be released in March of 2026.

Individuals

- **Dick Goc**
1960 Track - State
Runner Up 100 yard dash
- **Jon Cole**
1971 Track - State
Champion 880 yard run
- **Stuart Bullington**
1970 Football - All State 2nd Team
- **Linda Svoboda**
1980 Track - State
Runner Up long jump
- **Tara Went**
1988 Track - State Champion
300 meter low hurdles
- **Austin Carmichael** 2007 State
Wrestling Champion 140 lbs &
2008 State Champion 145 lbs.

Golden Era Award

- **Arnold Oehrich**
1923 Football All Nebraska 3rd Team
- **Roy Houdersheldt**
1923 Track State
Champion 440 yard dash &
State Runner up 880 yard run
- **Llewellyn Watke**
1924 State Runner Up Pole Vault
- **Ward Diederich**
1943 State Champion Mile Run,
All Class Gold
- **George "Nick" Rambour**
1948 Track - State Runner Up Discus
- **Herman Person**
1949 Track - State Runner Up 120 yard hurdles

Coach

- **Andrea Smejkal**
Girls Soccer, 2005 State Runner Up

Discoverer Award

- **Discoverer Sports
Booster Founding
Members**

Members: Doug Williams, Tom Hunt, Prent Roth,
Larry and Susie Kobus, Marv Zoucha, Chuck Francis,
Bill Ingold, Jerry Brockmeier

- **Steve Heiser**
1st Academic All
American Football Player from CHS
- **Dave McNair**
2022 World Masters Athletic Championships,
Gold medal sprint hurdles, silver medal 300 hurdles.

Teams

- **1975 Girls Golf**
State Runner Up

Members: Cathy Curry, Karin Saalfeld
Leatherberry, Denise Thomsen, Joan
Olsen; **Coach** Denny Bargaen.

- **1976 Wrestling Team**
State Runner Up

Members: Wayne Wong, Jim Sackett, Ken
Ryba, Mike Bartholomew, Mike, Quinn,
Jamie Ferguson, Mike Henggler, Kirk
McAndrew, Rudy Glur, Craig Person, Collyn
Florendo, Tim Arlt, Craig Marsh, Scott
Ferguson; **Coaches** Kevin Nolan and Lanny
Neese.

- **1982 Boys Swimming**
Medley Relay - State Champion

Members: Barry Whitney, Chris Van
Dyke, Pete Hoffman, Steve George;
Coach Hal Wetherford.

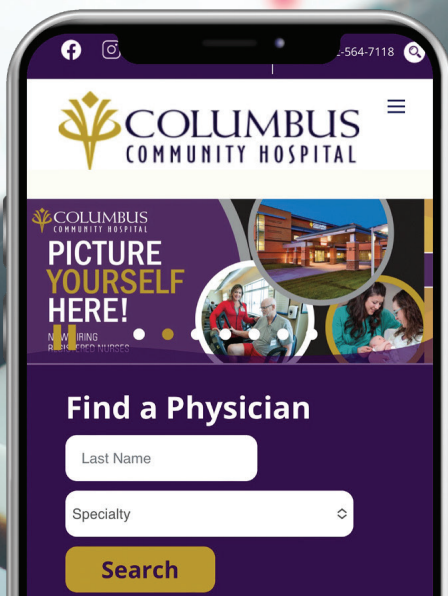
- **1996 Boys Basketball**
State Runner Up

Members: Chris Richardson, Darren Ivy,
Josh Svoboda, Jeff Bures, Nate Warner,
Ward Behlen, Kelly Berglund, Nathan
Blessen, Dan Kolder, Bruce Zabel, Eric Pre-
ister, Marc Modelski, Jeremy Frazer, Troy
Watchorn, Mike Schaefer, Ross Wurde-
man; **Coaches** Bob Hopp and Tom Nelson.



LET'S GET SOCIAL

We're ready to connect with you!



Time to mark you calendars! Upcoming Reunions

Class of 1971 - 55th Reunion

CHS Class of 1971 55th reunion will be held August 14th and 15th, 2026. The group will be enjoying both evenings at Riverland RV Park. The agenda is TBD. Contact Marjorie Koefoot (Siems) at mkoefoot@gmail.com.

Class of 1976 - 50th Reunion

1976 - 50th Reunion will be on August 1, 2026 meet at 7:00 p.m. for cocktails and hors d'oeuvres at Eagles Club in Columbus. More details to come. Our Facebook page is "1976 CHS Class Reunion." Please update changes of address there or contact Linda Krumland at fatcatz@neb.rr.com or 402-270-2060. There will be more information to come by mail.

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.

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