



DONOR IMPACT REPORT

2024-2025

A report on the extraordinary impact your support
has on Colorado Mesa University students.



FOUNDATION
COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY

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DONOR SPOTLIGHTS

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Amber Whisman
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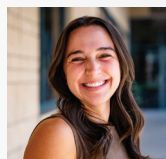
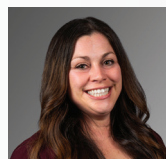
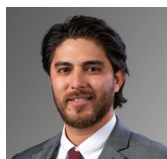
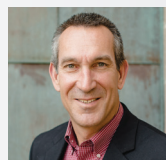
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Connie Betancourt
CMU Foundation

FOUNDATION STAFF

2025



Top left to bottom right: **Robin Brown**, Foundation CEO; **Taylor Schultz**, Foundation Finance Director; **Chenoa Jenkel**, Director of Annual Giving; **Rick Adleman**, Associate Director of Development; **Bryan Rooks**, Senior Director of Athletic Giving; **Robby Tabuchi**, Donor Development Research Director; **Carley Maher**, Scholarship Director; **Renaya Demarest**, Foundation Communications Director; **Emily Sams**, Development Associate; **Jenny Pudlewski**, Accounting Associate and Campus Stewardship Coordinator; **Connie Betancourt**, Foundation Graphic Designer and Creative Projects Manager

From humble beginnings to becoming Colorado's fastest-growing university, CMU has never lost sight of our identity as a human-scale university, a place where opportunity is truly within reach.

The past two years have marked extraordinary growth for CMU. Enrollment at CMU Tech has increased by more than 50% and last fall alone we welcomed the largest freshman class in our history. This momentum reflects our community's shared belief in the power of education. Together, we are meeting the rising demand for the trades and equipping students across every discipline to pursue their passions and shape their futures.

Now, as CMU celebrates its Centennial, we carry forward the same spirit of resilience and community that has defined our first 100 years. At the heart of this milestone is the CMU Promise, covering tuition for Colorado students whose family's gross income is \$70,000 or less, and the new Century Scholarship. Our Century Scholarship makes higher education attainable for students from Mesa County. Much like how the CMU Promise opened doors for first-generation and lower-income families, the Century Scholarship will extend that legacy by making cost less of a barrier for local students who dream of obtaining a college degree.

Every day, we see the impact that your support has on the lives of our students: bright, determined Mavericks who truly embody our values of love, dignity, curiosity, humility, resilience, courage and power. They are the living expression of what happens when generosity meets purpose. Donors, friends and alumni make it possible for students to forge their own paths through the deep connections that make our Mavily. Together, we are shaping the next century of opportunity at Colorado Mesa University.

Best,



John Marshall, President
Colorado Mesa University



Robin Brown, Senior Vice President
of Development and Foundation CEO



*Colorado Mesa University President John Marshall
and Foundation CEO Robin Brown*

MISSION

The mission of the Colorado Mesa University Foundation is to strengthen educational opportunities at Colorado Mesa University through the generation and distribution of all gift assets. The Foundation serves as the depository for all charitable gifts and acts in a fiduciary capacity as exclusive agent for donor activity.



FOUNDATION
COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY

970.248.1902
SupportingCMU.org

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Data pertains to fiscal year 2024–2025

\$17,649,236

Total dollars raised

\$69,315,454

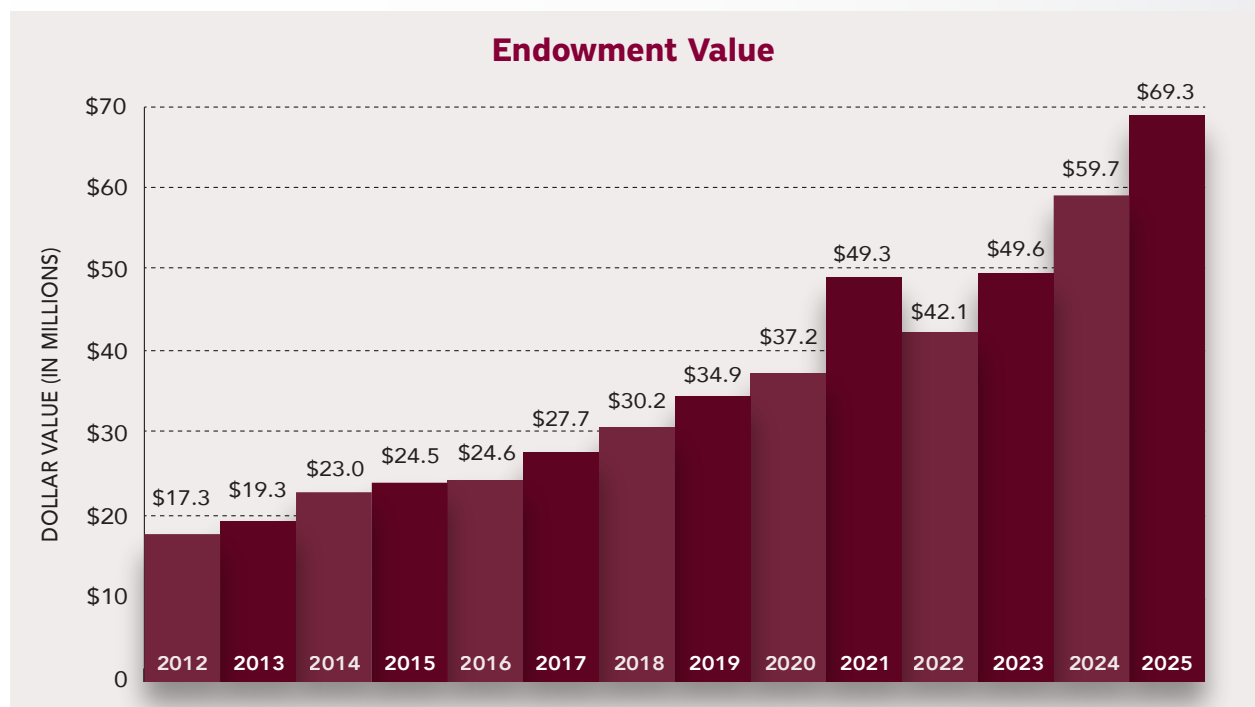
Endowment value

\$4,711,961

Scholarship dollars awarded

\$ 11,164,200

Total support to CMU



Impact by the numbers for fiscal year 2024–2025

20

New
endowments

5,214

Number of
donors

8,874

Number of
gifts received

1,551

Number of students who
received scholarships



“CMU is giving me the opportunity I need to pursue my degree in engineering, and I hope to provide representation for others so they know they belong in the field.”

Kendra K. Lemons

- Senior, Civil Engineering Major
- Hometown: Colorado Springs, CO
- Plans to serve in the military

CMU'S HUMAN SCALE APPROACH TO FUNDRAISING

How Rick Adleman helps donors make an impact, no matter the contribution

By Amber Whisman

Rick Adleman has spent 24 years working at Colorado Mesa University, primarily with the CMU Foundation to help donors turn their generosity into life-changing opportunities for students. As a CMU graduate and western Colorado native, he knows firsthand how access to education can shape lives and he's passionate about making sure students in the region have every chance to reach their full potential.

For Adleman, fundraising is about relationships, trust and helping people share their assets in meaningful ways. That people-first approach is at the heart of the CMU Foundation's philosophy — which Adleman refers to as human-scale giving, meaning everyone has the power to make a difference.

"You don't have to be a billionaire to make a big impact," said Adleman. "With smart planning, the average person can create an endowed scholarship to live forever."

To him, the relationship between CMU and its donors is a lot like the lightsaber displayed neatly on his desk.

"CMU is the lightsaber. The donors are like Luke Skywalker. They're the ones providing opportunities for our community. We're their tool, and my job is to help them achieve their goals," he explained.

This is a reality he witnesses every day. At donor events, in meetings and through countless emails and calls, he sees the tangible impact of giving. Through the donors' efforts, with his help, students succeed, donors are fulfilled and the community is strengthened.

The phrase "sharing kindness," is one Adleman uses frequently when describing what donors do at CMU. He first heard it from donor Joyce Owens and he's carried it with him since.

"It's a shared relationship rather than a giving and receiving transactional relationship. It's about leaving a legacy, helping students and making the world a little better," said Adleman.

Even after more than two decades, Adleman's commitment hasn't disappeared. He continues to expand his knowledge with certifications, courses and seminars to stay current. Adleman is one of the few fundraisers in



Staci and Rick Adleman



Rick Adleman with Alumnus and Donor Kelly Reust

the Grand Valley with some of the top certifications in the field, holding a Certified Fundraising Executive (CFRE) certification and a graduate certificate in Charitable Financial Planning from Texas Tech University.

"My motivation wasn't to have letters behind my name," he said. "It was a way to make sure I'm always doing the best for the university and for the donors."

Looking ahead, he sees limitless possibilities for both students and donors.

"Our endowment has grown tremendously, and the generosity of so many people is making a difference every day," Adleman said. "It's rewarding to know we're helping people share their kindness and shape the lives of students." •

Want to make an impact? Connect with Rick at radleman@coloradomesa.edu or call him at 970.248.1871 to learn more.

NEWLY ESTABLISHED ENDOWMENTS

Fiscal Year 2024–2025

Alan H. Oldland Endowed Scholarship

The Alan H. Oldland Endowed Scholarship was established by Janice Oldland in honor of her father. Alan was a proud veteran of the U.S. Navy and a graduate of Meeker High School. After his service, Alan went on to graduate college, becoming an aerospace engineer.

Andy Smith Memorial Scholarship

Andy Smith exemplified what it means to be a Maverick, focusing on the community even through his last moments. After his diagnosis of terminal brain cancer, Smith persevered to graduate college. This scholarship honors his legacy, highlighting his resilience and love for CMU. The scholarship is awarded to first-generation students from Mesa County.

Ann J. Sanders Shopbell Dance Scholarship

The Ann J. Sanders Shopbell Scholarship endowment supports Mesa County students enrolled in CMU's Dance Program. Honoring Professor Emerita Ann J. Sanders – founder of the program and a lifelong champion of the arts – this fund carries her legacy forward by investing in the next generation of performers.

Catherine (Katy) Smith Thorpe Scholarship

Catherine “Katy” Smith Thorpe was in her forties when she decided to follow a passion for nursing. Being a recipient of scholarships, she was able to attend CMU alongside her sons. She established this endowment to pass her kindness on to future generations of nursing students.

Dick and Gaylene Thompson Endowment Fund

As strong believers in higher education, Dick and Gaylene Thompson established their endowment to help support Mesa County residents through their educational journey. They aim to help students who are the first of their families to graduate college.

– continued on page 8



“ I love the constant positive environment around campus, and the success culture that's instilled by faculty and students.”

Kushal Basnet

- Freshman, Business Major
- Hometown: Grand Junction, CO

Jo Ann Colosimo Click Scholarship

The Jo Ann Colosimo Click Endowment honors her lifelong dedication to advancing occupational therapy in Grand Junction. A 1955 Mesa College graduate, Colosimo Click pioneered Occupational Therapy programs locally and in Denver, shaping care and education with compassion and expertise. This scholarship supports students who share her commitment to service, learning and patient-centered care.

Juanita and Bob Moston Endowed Scholarship

Juanita and Robert “Bob” Moston are proponents of higher education and established this scholarship to provide resources to non-traditional students. Juanita attended CMU as a non-traditional student and graduated in 1990 with a Bachelor of Arts.

Lance Balding Clifton Community Fund

The Lance Badling Community Fund was established by the Clifton Community Hall Committee for scholarships and other philanthropic purposes. Recipients of this scholarship must be residents of Clifton, CO and demonstrate financial need.

Low Goodhart Memorial Scholarship Endowment

This scholarship was established to provide support to non-traditional students pursuing a health sciences degree from CMU or CMU Tech. The scholarship prioritizes Mesa County residents demonstrating financial need.

Louis Buescher Memorial Scholarship

In honor of Louis Buescher, this scholarship supports students in the Davis School of Business. A lifelong businessman and dedicated community leader, Buescher generously served on the CMU Foundation Board and shared his expertise in investing and asset management. His legacy lives on through this endowment, empowering future business leaders for generations to come.

Montrose Permanent Fund

Established through a partnership between CMU, the CMU Foundation, the City of Montrose and Montrose County, the Montrose Permanent Fund creates a lasting source of support for students pursuing higher education. The fund primarily strengthens medical education programs at CMU Montrose, helping expand access and opportunity for students in the region. This endowment reflects a shared commitment to investing in the future of Montrose.

Murray Swindell Endowment

The Murray Swindell scholarship was established to provide opportunities for students interested in environmental engineering, hydrology or geoscience. As a firm believer in education, Swindell hopes to foster the next generation of scientists.

Norbert Braeuer, MD, Endowed Scholarship

After a distinguished career as a radiologist and professor in Texas, Norbert Braeuer, MD, committed to helping Western Slope juniors and seniors complete their degrees in health sciences and music. His endowment includes both an initial gift to immediately impact students, and a future gift through a beneficiary designation as part of the Maverick Legacy Circle, honoring his lasting commitment to student success.

Players and Friends of Bob Cortese Scholarship

The Coach Bob Cortese Endowment celebrates his record-setting legacy as Mesa's most successful football coach. During his nine years at the helm, his teams reached six NAIA playoff berths and twice competed in the national championship. This scholarship supports student athletes who continue his tradition of excellence on the varsity football field.

Presbyterian Single Parent Scholarship

This endowment was established to open new doors for single parents who delayed pursuing higher education because of single parenthood. The Single Parent Scholarship is awarded to CMU or CMU Tech students in health sciences and teacher education.



“The experience that I've gained at CMU has over-prepared me to enter my career field confidently.”

Sada Bond

- Senior, Sports Management Major
- Hometown: Albany, GA



“ I love CMU because of its amazing opportunities and the community. I’m excited to continue my degree in business administration.”

Kameron Wison

- Sophomore, Business Administration Major
- Hometown: Grand Junction, CO

ProSpace+ Interiors Men’s Wrestling Scholarship

The ProSpace+ Interiors Men’s Wrestling Scholarship was established by Dave Huerkamp, President of ProSpace Interiors to support western Colorado students on the men’s wrestling team. ProSpace Interiors is a proud family-owned business, having successfully operated for 50+ years in Grand Junction, Colorado. ProSpace Interiors is establishing this endowment because of their dedication to being a positive trendsetter on the Western Slope now and well into the future.

Richard and Muriel Saunders Family Endowed Scholarship

Anne and Paul Saunders established the Richard and Muriel Saunders Family Endowed Scholarship in memory of their late parents. Inspired by the Saunders’ lifetime of service, the scholarship enables first-generation students to pursue an education in nursing, physician’s assistant programs, engineering, science or pre-med.

Saccomanno Higher Education Endowment

This endowment honors the legacy of Geno Saccomanno, MD, and Virginia Saccomanno. Dr. Saccomanno was a well-known physician and cancer researcher who dedicated his life to developing lung cancer early detection techniques. The fund supports scholarships and other research, scientific and educational purposes that benefit CMU students.

Tuohig Family Endowed Nursing Scholarship

An excellent education in nursing equipped Gail Tuohig, PhD, to save lives across the globe as a military veteran, researcher and collegiate educator. Now, she and her husband, Barry, are helping shape the next generation of nurses through the new Tuohig Family Endowed Nursing Scholarship.

William I. Spencer Endowed Scholarship

This scholarship honors the legacy of William (Bill) Spencer by easing the financial burden of higher education for Guardian Scholars. Scholarships made it possible for Spencer to attend Grand Junction State Junior College during the Great Depression, and he was later recognized as a CMU Distinguished Alumnus in 1988. That early support sparked a lifelong commitment to giving back through mentorship and philanthropy. Established by one of those whom Spencer mentored, Don Remey, this endowment ensures future generations have access to the same opportunity.

GREG FREEMAN AND LAURA ATKINSON: SMART GIVING IN ACTION

How thoughtful planning can create a lasting impact at CMU

By Amber Whisman

Giving and philanthropy are often thought of as acts reserved for the wealthiest of individuals. But when done with intention, they can become a way for anyone, regardless of their wealth status, to extend their values, honor their legacy and shape the future. For donors at the CMU Foundation, that approach is known as smart giving, and it's contributing to the university's vision of a Human Scale University.

With smart giving, gifts aren't always cash. It can involve donating appreciated assets like stocks, bonds and real estate. It can also mean planning gifts in a will or donating tax-smart gifts from retirement accounts like IRA's or life insurance policies.

"Smart giving lets you make a significant difference no matter who you are," said Associate Director of Development Rick Adleman.

CMU's approach to smart giving, known as Human Scale Giving, mirrors the university's approach to creating a Human Scale University, which means to create a model of the world we want to see: a place where future leaders, innovators and changemakers come together, learn from one another and build understanding across differences. Just as CMU builds an environment where individual voices matter and relationships thrive, smart giving allows donors to make a tangible, personal impact with whatever type of gift they want to share. Gifts can be tailored to reflect values, honor loved ones or support specific programs that help students flourish.

For Greg Freeman and Laura Atkinson, smart giving became a way to honor the life of their only son, Paul, who passed away in 2023. Freeman and Atkinson chose to turn the estate Paul would have inherited into a planned gift to CMU.

"We were talking about our wills and getting everything set up for when I die or he dies, because we don't have anybody to leave it to," Atkinson said. "Pauly was our one and only. One of the things we can do is continue Paul's smile by giving it to young people," Freeman added.

Through their gift, they're establishing an endowment that will fund scholarships and educational opportunities for



Generous donors Laura Atkinson and Greg Freeman

students. Every dollar will go directly to students, helping them reach goals that Paul never had the chance to achieve.

"He always wished he would have continued his education. That's how we started talking about giving it to CMU," Atkinson said. "When we talked to CMU, 100% goes to the kids," Freeman explained.

Smart giving also offers practical benefits. Bequests, gifts through wills or living trusts, and retirement plan designations allow donors to give without affecting their current finances. These strategies provide flexibility, security and peace of mind while creating a meaningful legacy.

For them, the gift is about more than planning. It's a way to extend Paul's legacy into the future, and let his spirit live on in the students who will benefit from the endowment.

"We're still alive, so this gift is going to be down the road. But if you knew Paul, he would want what we're doing," Freeman said. "His life continues, his legacy continues. If you knew him, you would have loved him," Atkinson added.

By embracing smart giving, donors like Atkinson and Freeman are shaping futures, supporting students and carrying forward legacies that will endure for years. •

To learn how you can honor a loved one or make a difference through smart giving at Colorado Mesa University, contact **Rick Adleman at 970.248.1871 or email radleman@coloradomesa.edu**.

KATHERINE KYLEN: HONORING THROUGH THE ARTS

Side by Side: A love for performing arts inspired a lasting legacy at CMU's Asteria Theatre

By Alexandra Shimalla

With a deep passion for performing arts, Katherine Kylan moved from Chicago to Grand Junction 50 years ago. At the time, Mesa College was celebrating its 50th anniversary. Now, Kylan and Colorado Mesa University are celebrating a new milestone together: the first-year anniversary of the Asteria Theatre.

"I feel the value of the performing arts can't be minimized. Our human need for music, dance, joy and laughter is divine and integral to who we are, and I think the Asteria Theatre can help fill that longing we have," said Kylan.

Her late sister Irene Stoesser shared that same passion. Stoesser was a performing artist and a teacher of children with special needs. She was dedicated to her students and budding artists in Chicago. She even created a performing arts program for children with disabilities.

After Stoesser passed away from COVID-19, Kylan began looking for a way to honor her sister's legacy. Around that same time, she read about the construction of the Asteria Theatre and how community members could contribute. The opportunity to sponsor dressing rooms stood out to her the most.

The idea of having her sister's name tied to a dressing room — a sacred place where performers can prepare for their shows before "doing what they love, entertaining people" — seemed like a wonderful tribute to her sister's legacy.

"My sister died before she could personally contribute to some of the things that were her intent. She was a benefactor and supporter of the arts...and I wanted to carry on her tradition, her legacy in that," said Kylan.

On opening night, Kylan attended the reception and unveiling of the dressing room with her other sister, Barbara Jean Mengarelli, a retired occupational therapist. Kylan pulled Rick Adleman, Assistant Director of Development, to the side and asked if the second dressing room was still available. He said it was, and Kylan asked if it could also be sponsored by her.

The Barbara Jean Mengarelli Dressing Room officially opened on August 28, 2025, when Kylan surprised her sister with a special ribbon-cutting ceremony. Moments before the ribbon was cut, Mengarelli expressed her

disappointment that the dressing room had been sold and her desire to sponsor the room in Kylan's honor.

"I'm really proud of the contributions that my two sisters made during their lifetimes, and I think their memory deserves to be preserved," said Kylan.

"Katherine has lived here for about 50 years, so it is her community now," said Adleman. "What a great way to immortalize the memory of her sister, Irene, and do good at the same time."

As children, Kylan and her sisters listened to a song called "Side by Side," and now her sisters can remain "side by side" forever.

Just as Colorado Mesa University and Grand Junction are deeply intertwined, so too is Kylan with the university. In the five decades that Kylan has called Colorado home, she and her family, including all three sons and three granddaughters, have attended CMU for a class, certificate, program or degree. They've gone to performances and been invested in the success of the university.

In addition to the dressing rooms, Kylan has established scholarships in honor of both of her sisters. The Flourish in the Footlights scholarship is dedicated to Stoesser's memory and is meant for a student who has a disability and is enrolled in theatre arts, dance or music. The Barbara Jean Mengarelli Transforming Challenges into Triumphs scholarship is awarded to a graduate student enrolled in the master's program in occupational therapy. Mengarelli served as an occupational therapist in the Chicago area for 25 years.

"CMU has provided entertainment and educational opportunities for my whole family. It's just an integral part of our lives," said Kylan. •



Katherine Kylan, the late Irene Stoesser and Barbara Jean Mengarelli

STURM FAMILY: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Support from the Sturm Family, ANB Bank and Kiewit made CMU Tech's welding lab expansion possible

By Amber Whisman

Colorado Mesa University through the CMU Tech campus is doubling its capacity to train the next generation of welders with the expansion of the Sturm Family Manufacturing Center. On August 26, 2025, the school celebrated this milestone with a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the newly expanded facility. Due to continued interest from students and growing demand across the region, CMU Tech's welding program has experienced rapid growth in popularity and has reached its enrollment capacity in recent years.



Susan Sturm at the ribbon cutting of the CMU Tech Sturm Family Manufacturing Lab expansion.

The Sturm Family and ANB Bank have been longtime supporters of CMU and CMU Tech. Their generosity has advanced facilities and programs while opening doors for students across western Colorado.

"One of the things I've always appreciated about CMU Tech is that they've looked at what the community needs and what opportunities there are, then they give the community great opportunities right here," said Susan Sturm. "I hope this gives students an idea of what they can do if they keep dreaming big. They can always try to improve their skills and take that leap into something new and different."

For Sturm, the project also continues the legacy of her late husband, Donald, who believed in the value of education and the trades.

"One of the reasons I care about the trades is that it's really important for the construction industry, where Don spent so much of his career," said Sturm. "Education and learning in the trades is what gets so many kids started in their lives. My husband, Don, benefited from access to

education. If that wasn't available, his life would have been radically different."

Industry support has been equally critical to this expansion. Kiewit Engineering joined the effort to ensure training keeps up with real-world demands. The company's investment reflects both the area's practical workforce needs and a genuine belief in CMU Tech's ability to produce top-tier graduates who are ready to work in the welding industry upon completion of the program.

"We wanted to have an avenue to bring more folks in, get them through the door, and then from there provide them the opportunities for a career," said Doug Glaser, Executive Vice President of Kiewit. "The trades are a tremendous part of the success of our industry and this is a way to provide opportunity, training and development."

After the ribbon-cutting, donors and industry leaders toured the expanded space and viewed the welding and mechatronics mobile learning labs. For Glaser, the visit confirmed that CMU Tech is building something extraordinary.

"After touring the facility today, I think it's a world-class facility," Glaser said. "The demand for the trades today is as high as it's been in my 34 years in the industry. Looking at the space that's been added, it wouldn't surprise me if, in a year or two, they come back to expand onto it. I'm truly impressed with everything they have here."

Thanks to the generosity of the Sturm Family and ANB Bank and Kiewit Engineering, CMU Tech is expanding its impact by advancing the trades and expanding opportunities for growth in the region. •



Vance Wagner, Susan Sturm and Doug Glaser

LOUIS BUESCHER: A FAMILY LEGACY

**Shaping Grand Junction through
business, generosity and education
for over 80 years**

By Alexandra Shimalla

The Buescher family has been a pillar of the Grand Junction community since 1939 when Ernie Buescher moved to town and purchased the Pepsi-Cola bottling plant. His son Louis left to attend college, but he came back after graduation and began working at the family plant. While traveling the Western Slope repairing vending machines, Louis became deeply entrenched in the community.

“Local business was the core of what shaped our family’s legacy,” explained Brett Buescher, who graduated from CMU with a degree in graphic design in 2013. “For decades, the Buescher family has been rooted in entrepreneurship and community-driven enterprise in Grand Junction.”

Over the years, the Buescher family has extended their generosity and attention to giving back to Colorado Mesa University in numerous ways. Ernie purchased and installed the original scoreboards at Saunders Fieldhouse and the Bus Bergman Sports Complex. Louis donated his time by serving on the CMU Foundation Board and acting as a member of the Investment Committee — responsible for selecting managers and monitoring investments — for six years.

“My dad would often say, ‘Knowledge is power,’” recalled Brett. “Donating to CMU and investing in the next generation was one of the many ways he gave back.”

The entire family has spread their kindness with the university and future business leaders. The Buescher’s



Louis Buescher



Ben, Brett, Louis and Jon Buescher

have created four scholarships to help Davis School of Business students: the Blanche Buescher Business Endowed Scholarship Fund, the Ernest D. Buescher Memorial Scholarship, the Kristopher Buescher Memorial Scholarship and, more recently, the Louis Buescher Memorial Scholarship.

When Louis passed away in 2024, his family asked for contributions to CMU rather than flowers. This homage reflected Louis’ strong belief in the impact of CMU on Grand Junction, especially when the institution became a four-year university.

“He believed CMU’s growth was key to the city’s success and economic development...and he was absolutely right. The transformation from Mesa State College in 2007 to what CMU is today is incredible,” said Brett, whose brothers Ben, ’09, and Jon, ’18, also attended CMU.

Entrepreneurship and business acumen were part of Louis’ DNA. After decades working in the Pepsi-Cola bottling business, Louis turned to the aircraft industry. He co-founded West Star Aviation, a maintenance, repair and operations company, and grew it from 35 to 330 employees. It was sold in 2004 as a nationally recognized business.

“At the heart of that success was business education: the ability to lead, manage, innovate and treat every employee like family. That’s why the business school at CMU means so much to us. It reflects the values that built our family and continues to shape the next generation of leaders in the Grand Valley,” said Brett, who is co-founder of a competitive skateboarding app, Street Kingpins.

This fall, a classroom in the Davis School of Business will be renamed in honor of Louis and his dedication to CMU. Brett remembered when a classroom was named in honor of his grandfather, Ernie, and how proud Louis was of the distinction.

“It’s beautiful to see my dad receive the love and appreciation he deserves,” said Brett. “Not many people leave behind a legacy that’s recognized by the community. It reminds me of how fortunate my brothers and I were to have him as a father. I know this honor would mean the world to him.” •

JAMIE HAMILTON: THE HEART BEHIND THE DIAMOND

A lifetime of giving back through leadership and service earned Jamie Hamilton a lasting tribute

By Amber Whisman

Jamie Hamilton first stepped onto the baseball field as a Maverick in 1975, where he was a young second baseman with a passion for the game. What followed was a career as a professional Minor League Baseball player and a lifetime of giving back to Colorado Mesa University in every way he could.

When the university needed leadership in athletics, Hamilton stepped in as the Athletic Director without pay. His volunteer service created stability for the athletic department and helped expand opportunities for student-athletes.

"He's poured back into this university in every conceivable manner as our Athletic Director, as a coach, as a trustee. He has been there at every turn and literally at every role he could, often times when no one was looking," said CMU President John Marshall.

Hamilton's influence also shaped the broader baseball community. For 21 years, he chaired the Junior College



Mesa baseball team in 1975

Baseball World Series (JUCO) committee, guiding the event through periods of growth and innovation. His efforts secured a streaming partnership with ESPN+, brought national attention to Grand Junction and extended JUCO's contract to remain in the city.

For Hamilton, it was never about titles or recognition, but about creating memories and opportunities for others. His decades of service represent what human scale giving is all about: investing what you have, whether it's time, talent or funds, to make a difference.

"The idea of paying it forward, my mom and dad taught me that," Hamilton said. "They told me stories of people that helped them out, and they lived their lives making sure they took care of the next person who needed help. They instilled that in me."

Those values came full circle when CMU officially renamed its ballpark The Diamond at Hamilton Ballpark on April 25, 2025. The renaming honored Hamilton's nearly 50 years of service to the university.

"What a fitting way to recognize him here at The Diamond," said Marshall.

The newly named Hamilton Ballpark, part of the Bus Bergman Sports Complex built in 2022, reflects both CMU's growth and the generosity of those who made it possible. With modern locker rooms, training facilities and plenty of fan seating, it stands as a symbol of how giving, whether through philanthropy or service, creates lasting opportunities.

On dedication day, Hamilton threw the ceremonial first pitch surrounded by family, friends and the community he has uplifted for decades. The Mavericks capped the day with a 9-2 victory, a fitting celebration of a legacy that continues to shape CMU. •

Read more and watch a video of the ballpark dedication on CMUnow: coloradomesa.edu/now



Jamie Hamilton at the ribbon-cutting of The Diamond at Hamilton Ballpark.

JAC KEPHART AND JACK PORTER: A CAMPUS COLLECTION

The friendship that left its mark on CMU's art and architecture

By Alexandra Shimalla

No one can recall exactly how Jack Porter met Jac Kephart, or how Kephart met Porter. These things just happen in a small town. What is certain is that Porter became a respected architect and Kephart a celebrated artist, and the two remained lifelong friends. In fact, each imagined himself in the other's shoes. Porter had aspired to be an artist, while Kephart once dreamed of becoming an architect. Their wives remember countless hours of conversation about the two professions that shaped their lives and their friendship.

Jack Porter was born in Grand Junction in 1929 and attended Mesa State College as a basketball player. As an architect, his ideas were baked into Lowell Heiny Hall, the World War II Veterans Memorial Bell Tower, the Saunders Field House and the vocational building. Beyond the university, he was the primary architect for projects around Grand Junction, including Walker Field Airport, Coors Porcelain, the Grand Junction Library conversion and so many more.

In addition to being an architect during the 1950s through the 1970s, Porter was a thespian, booster club member and president of the Scholarship Foundation. Porter even played an instrumental role in Mesa State College transitioning to Colorado Mesa University.

Jac Kephart was a fine arts artist, who also attended Mesa State College. He explored art of every medium during his career — from oil paintings to large sculptures. His art

was exhibited at galleries in Colorado and across the west. From 1970 to 1997, Kephart and his wife, Patricia (Pat) ran Jac's Flowers in Grand Junction. The entrance to the store contained beautiful bouquets and florals, while at the back of the store there existed a quasi-art gallery where paintings could be found amongst the flowers.

While Porter's impact at CMU can be seen on the outside, such as the buildings that he helped create, Kephart's influence is found on the inside. In his lifetime, Kephart donated more than 40 pieces of art to CMU. His collections can be viewed in Houston Hall, Wubben Hall & Science Center, Lowell Heiny Hall, the University Center, Dominguez Hall, Confluence Hall and the Health Science Building.

In 2021, CMU's fine arts building donned Kephart's name, becoming the Jac Kephart Fine Arts Building. The university also created a self-guided tour of his artwork, called the Kephart Campus Collection Tour, which includes a dedicated gallery in The Art Center of Western Colorado.

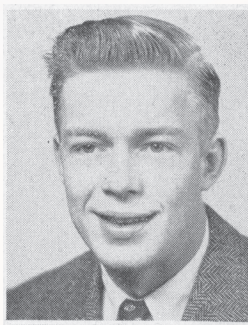
While both men have passed, their wives continue their friendship, ensuring the legacy of Kephart art does not fade.

"I want everybody to see Jac's art," said Pat.

Porter and his wife, Pauline, were great admirers and buyers of Kephart's art. Pauline's home contains dozens of paintings, though it now lacks the one she "regretfully" parted with.



Jac Kephart, 1959



Jack Porter, 1947

Decades prior, when the Porters resided in Arizona, They remodeled their kitchen and wanted to include his office space in the kitchen's alcove. A discussion ensued about how unsightly the cluttered office would look right next to the new, modern kitchen.

Ever the innovator, Porter came home a few days later with four doors. He was going to simply close off the alcove behind the doors. Shortly after he showed Pauline the doors, Kephart walked in. He listened to their situation and asked if he can take the doors: He had an idea.

A few months later, Kephart returned with the doors — only now they've been transformed into Kephart art.



Jac Kephart's artwork in Asteria Theatre's event space.

Pauline recalled seeing her husband standing on the road, crying, as he looked at what Kephart had done. He'd created a masterpiece that represented their friendship.

Since her husband's passing, Pauline has moved into a smaller home, still adorned with Kephart art, but had no place to hang these doors, which spanned 10 feet when combined. So, she donated the art to CMU. The doors now hang in the event space in the Asteria Theatre next to other pieces of Kephart's work. The doors serve as a symbol of the friendship and the mutual respect between both Jack Porter and Jac Kephart, a tangible piece of their shared creativity.

"I walked into the room, having grieved about the fact that I'd given it away — I did grieve — and it's beautiful there. It's a signature piece," said Pauline. "I'm just thrilled. The fact that the room will be used by people, not just people from the university, makes it that much better for me. I haven't lost it. I can visit any time I want to."

Both Pat and Pauline recall Kephart's thirst for art — his passion, obsession and drive for "the next great thing."

As an artist he was never satisfied, but that fueled his creativity and interest in multiple mediums, including oil painting, watercolor, collages and sculptures.

"The driving purpose in his life was to be an artist and keep exploring. He was very experimental, and he did a lot of different types of work. It was an obsession," recalled Pat.

"He was an artist who was trying to do something that had never been done before," echoed Pauline about Kephart's devotion to his craft.

Kephart related that drive to the rungs of a ladder, where he kept getting better and better with each medium, each piece. The wives described Kephart's art as periods, marked by the type of art he was trying at the time.

"He's probably off painting the clouds now," mused Pauline.

Art and architecture, professions of innovation, were topics that Porter and Kephart never tired of discussing. Theirs was a friendship bound by creativity and the beauty they created is ever present on CMU's campus. •



Jac Kephart



Jack Porter

JOE HIGGINS: THE CENTURY SCHOLARSHIP

A Community Promise for the Next 100 Years

By Amber Whisman

When Joe Higgins retired from a 34-year career with the Partners Program, he thought his days of advocating for young people in Mesa County were winding down. But as he watched too many promising students put aside their college dreams for financial reasons, Higgins realized he had one more project left to start.

"I always knew that the further we can get those young people along the line of education, the better their futures would be," Higgins said.

In 2017, Higgins launched the Mesa Scholarship Initiative (MSI), which is now known as the Century Scholarship in honor of CMU's 100th anniversary this year. Its purpose was to help more local students access a college education at Colorado Mesa University, regardless of family income.

The need was obvious. Across Colorado, about 70% of high school graduates go on to attend some form

of higher education. In Mesa County however, the figure lagged well behind, closer to 48%. On average, only a quarter of students from families earning between \$20,000 and \$61,000 per year from Mesa County enroll in college.

"I remember talking to my granddaughter's soccer teammate," Higgins recalled. "She was a straight-A student and a good athlete, but she said, 'I can't afford to go to college. I have three younger siblings, and my folks told me I can't do it.' That broke my heart. Talent is everywhere, but opportunity is not."

From those early conversations the Mesa Scholarship Initiative was created. Higgins, Rick Adleman CMU Foundation Associate Director of Development and President Emeritus Tim Foster invited community leaders to campus lunches, where they listened to students share how scholarships had changed their lives. Within the first few years, the program raised \$5 million in endowed funds.



2025 graduates

In 2025, the program was renamed the Century Scholarship to align with CMU's centennial celebration. Today, the endowment stands at \$7 million, with the goal of reaching \$10 million to ensure that future generations of students can continue to thrive.

The stories behind the numbers are what keep Higgins motivated. He recalls two young women he first knew through the Western Colorado Conservation Corps, a youth program he helped start. Both had dropped out of high school but earned GEDs, enrolled at CMU with the help of scholarships and eventually graduated. One now serves as a district ranger with the Bureau of Land Management and the other became a high school teacher.

"That's the kind of stuff that makes me proud and happy," Higgins said. "They turned their lives around and now they're making a difference in their communities."



Joe Higgins



Students at the Donors and Scholars celebration.



Joe Higgins and students at Donors and Scholars.

The ripple effects are clear. Students who receive support through the Century Scholarship often go on to contribute locally, filling critical jobs in health care, education, law enforcement and business.

At a recent Donors and Scholars event, Higgins sat down with eight students to hear firsthand stories about the impact of the initiative. Four of them said plainly that without the Century Scholarship and the CMU Promise that they wouldn't be in college at all. Six of the eight also said they planned to stay in Mesa County after graduation.

"That just made me so proud," Higgins said. "Half of those students wouldn't have been sitting at that table if it weren't for this program. And most of them want to give back right here in our community. That's the impact."

From the beginning, Higgins has been clear that the Century Scholarship is a shared initiative between the community and the university.

"This is us as a community investing in our future. It's the 163 donors who stepped up in the first few years."

That community spirit is still alive and well as CMU grows at a record pace, having recently welcomed two of its largest freshman classes in history and expanding programs to meet workforce needs. For Higgins, seeing this momentum makes the \$10 million goal feel inevitable.

"When we get there, it will mean we're doing the right thing," Higgins said. "It will say to me that people are making good, sound investments in our students and in our community. Once we hit \$10 million, we'll keep going. Because this work doesn't end."

As CMU looks back on its first century, it also continues to look ahead. The Century Scholarship represents both a promise and an invitation that no student should be denied opportunity because of financial barriers and that everyone in the community can play a role in opening those doors.

"I think any investment in CMU, and particularly in Century Scholars, is changing the future for young people and their families," Higgins said. "It's a worthwhile investment." •

GIVE TO THE CENTURY SCHOLARSHIP

Support Mesa County students at CMU
by giving to the Century Scholarship.
Your gift will be matched dollar-for-dollar.



cmucentury.com

THE MAVERICK LEGACY CIRCLE

A new honor to recognize those who leave a lasting legacy through estate giving

By Alexandra Shimalla

A person's last will and testament is a sacred thing. The people included in this document are often family members and close friends. When a nonprofit or college, for example, are listed as an estate beneficiary, it says a lot about the person and their connection to that entity.

"Being in someone's estate plan is a very special gift," said Rick Adleman, Associate Director of Development at Colorado Mesa University.

To celebrate the university's 100th year in 2025, the Colorado Mesa University Foundation created the Maverick Legacy Circle, an honor given to individuals who include CMU as part of their estate.

"It's important to recognize these donors for the kind of impact they're making on our students' lives," said Adleman.

Norbert Braeuer didn't attend CMU. In fact, he has no connection to the university other than he's lived in Grand Junction for 20 years. A retired, board-certified radiologist and 10-year United States Army veteran, Braeuer didn't have immediate family to gift, so he decided to support the local community.

"I became impressed with CMU," said Braeuer, who donated his retirement fund to endowing two scholarships. "I thought I'd give it to the community and educate some of these important people in the radiology sciences and those in musical entertainment."

Braeuer's scholarships are for CMU students who are pursuing a degree in radiologic sciences or are studying within the Department of Music.

He picked up a clarinet in grade school and fell in love with classical music.

"Music has never left me," he said.

While Braeuer was pursuing his medical degrees and certifications, and even during his time in the Army, music remained an important component of his life. He's even sponsored concerts and programs, including the ballet, in Grand Junction.

Since CMU and CMU Tech offer such a breadth of opportunities for students, the key to helping donors like Braeuer lies in the conversations.

"This is all about the donor's journey," explained Adleman. "I want to have personal conversations about guiding them in a way that brings them the most value."

The CMU Foundation believes in the concept of "smart giving" and have conversations with donors to figure out the best possible method for achieving what they have in mind.

"These conversations create a more valuable impact," said Adleman. "Everyone likes to help, so my job is to find out what they're interested in."

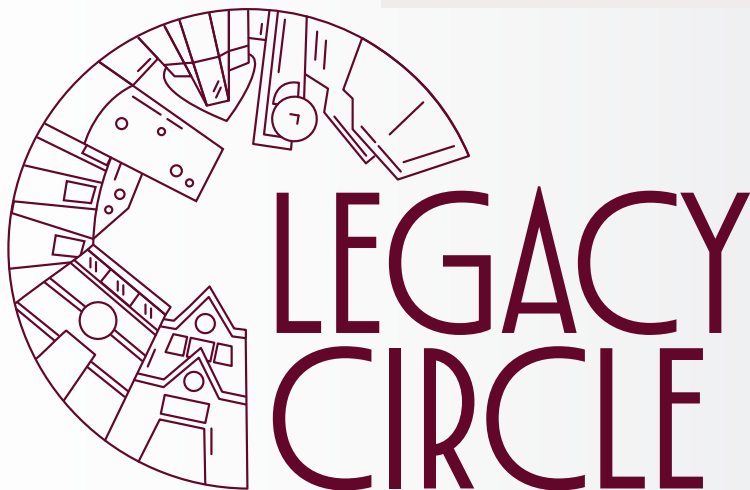
Estate gifts can establish endowed scholarships and support student experiences such as field trips, geology field camps and other hands-on learning opportunities. They can cover the expenses of students who participate in the guitar ensemble or establish a scholarship for first-generation students. One donor has supported CMU Tech to such an extent that the tuition was lowered by 40%.

"Some donors just want to support the students of CMU and let us use the gift where it's needed most at the time we receive it," explained Adleman, who believes the point of his job is to "help donors experience joy from their gifts."

In addition to the donations from Maverick Legacy Circle members, CMU has a "Legacy Match." Once CMU is officially designated as an estate beneficiary, the Foundation can contribute a 10% addition to the endowment so that the kindness can be shared sooner •

Explore smart ways to give through the Maverick Legacy Circle.

Contact Rick Adleman at 970.248.1871 or email radleman@coloradomesa.edu.



DECADES OF DEDICATION

Recognizing our donors who have given consecutively for 10 years or more.

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Alpine Bank
Rob and Cathy Altholz
ANB Bank
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Jake and Jennie Aubert
Charles and Velda Bailey
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Suzanne Quamme

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Donors with their scholarship recipients at the annual Donors and Scholars celebration.

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continued

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Donors with their scholarship recipients at the annual Donors and Scholars celebration.



COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY
FOUNDATION

In 1925, Colorado Mesa University was founded, signifying an important milestone for the institution. To emphasize the significant role that endowments play in scholarship support for students, the Foundation created the 1925 Society to celebrate the individuals with the foresight and generosity to establish endowed funds of \$25,000 or greater. Such donations benefit generations to come, providing permanent funding and scholarship opportunities to CMU students. Funds are invested and the generated earnings go to support an area of CMU as directed by the founder.

∞ Indicates a contribution to the endowment in fiscal year 2024–2025.

- ∞ Ted and Maxine Albers Scholarship
- Arbaney Family Endowed Scholarship
- ∞ Wayne N. and Julie E. Aspinall Foundation Endowment
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COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY
FOUNDATION

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- ∞ Richard E. Tope Memorial Scholarship
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- ∞ Tuohig Family Endowed Nursing Scholarship
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- ∞ S. Victor Wagler Scholarship
- ∞ Kevin Wagner Memorial Endowed Scholarship Fund
- ∞ Carl and Betty Wahlberg Partners Scholarship
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Dr. Russ Walker Memorial Environmental Science
Endowed Scholarship
Wells Fargo MSI Endowment
- ∞ Wenzel-Miller Endowed Theatre Arts Scholarship
Western Colorado Energy Scholar Endowment
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Western Colorado NAWIC Scholarship
- ∞ Walter White Endowed Football Scholarship
Whitewater Building MSI Endowed Scholarship
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Warren Winiarski Viticulture and Enology Scholarship
John B. Wolf Scholarship
- ∞ Selma Wolk LPN Endowed Scholarship
WSCOGA Energy Athlete Scholar Award
- ∞ Gary L. Zancanelli Jr. Endowed Scholarship
Dr. Henry H. and Margaret Zeigel Fund
Mark Zoppel Memorial Scholarship

A CENTURY OF GIVING

CMU's 9th Annual Day of Giving

April 10, 2025, marked the 9th annual Day of Giving and CMU's 100th birthday, where 1,107 donors gave an impressive \$234,104.66 to over 60 student-led campaigns.

As campus organizations and sports teams spent the day raising funds, a little friendly competition helped incentivize active fundraising, sponsored by Commerce Trust. Throughout the day, \$10,000 was awarded to challenge winners.

Donor challenges and winning campaigns:

Noon Power Hour Challenge: Engineers without Borders — \$1,000. Awarded for raising the most money during both Thursday and Friday's Noon Power Hours.

Last Hour Power Hour Challenge: Iron Mavericks Barbell Club — \$500. Awarded for having the most donors during Monday's final Power Hour. Donations supported CMU powerlifters' first-ever Collegiate Nationals competition.

100th Birthday — 100th Gift Challenge:
First-Generation Student Support Initiatives — \$1,000

In honor of CMU's 100th birthday, this challenge recognized the first campaign to receive 100 gifts. With first-generation students comprising 45% of CMU's student body, this program ensures students receive critical guidance and resources to thrive.

Most Student Donors: Engineers without Borders — \$500. Awarded for engaging the most student donors, including gifts of \$5 or greater.

Most Donors Overall: Engineers without Borders — \$2,500. Honored for having the most overall donors throughout the fundraising event.

Engineers without Borders completed the donor challenge hat trick, winning three of the eight Commerce Trust Challenges. All donations support the organization's project to bring clean water to the community of Runashitu, Ecuador.

Largest Single Gift: Mesa Motorsports — \$2,000. Awarded for receiving the largest gift by a single donor.

Most Money Raised: Mesa Motorsports — \$2,500. Received for raising the most money throughout the fundraising event.

Mesa Motorsports was a shining star during the 9th annual Day of Giving. The campaign earned two Commerce Trust Challenge prizes and took first place in Timberline Bank's Shark Bank competition, where student group had 60 seconds to pitch their campaigns. In total, Mesa Motorsports raised an impressive \$16,482.69, far exceeding their \$3,000 goal. Donors were eager to support the collegiate engineering program's Formula SAE (FSAE) design and business competition, a prestigious competition hosted by the Society of Automotive Engineers.

Athletic Challenge Sponsored by Home Loan State Bank and Home Loan Insurance:

The football team won \$4,500 for winning four of the five athletic challenges, including the Final Power Hour, Most Student Donors, Most Donors Overall and Most Money Raised. Additionally, Men's Lacrosse won \$500 for winning the Thursday Power Hour Challenge.

Thank you to our sponsors:

Thank you to Timberline Bank for donating \$9,000 through the annual Shark Bank competition and supporting the most campaigns; to Home Loan State Bank and Home Loan Insurance for awarding \$5,000 in our athletic challenges; and to Commerce Trust for providing \$10,000 in challenge funding.



Day of Giving

April 10

Happy 100th Birthday

Colorado Mesa University!
#celebrate100



CENTURY PROJECT

Celebrating 100 Years in the Making

The CMU Century Project began on April 10, 2025 – CMU's 100th birthday. This yearlong celebration highlights the university's history, growth and vision for the future.

SAVE THE DATE

Throughout the 2025-2026 academic school year, there will be numerous opportunities to be part of history.

DENVER CELEBRATION: CMU'S CENTURY

FEBRUARY 1-8, 2025

Join us as we bring the CMU Century Celebration to Denver!
A special week honoring 100 years of Maverick spirit.

BECOMING CMU SERIES

JANUARY 27, 2025

FEBRUARY 10, 2025

FEBRUARY 24, 2025

Join President Emeritus Tim Foster for a three-part series on the history of CMU.

CMU CENTURY GALA

APRIL 10, 2026

Celebrate CMU's 101st birthday at our Day of Giving and a party of the decades.

GIVE TO THE CENTURY SCHOLARSHIP

Support Mesa County students at CMU by giving to the Century Scholarship. Your gift will be matched dollar-for-dollar.

For details on CMU's century celebration and more events visit [CMUcentury.com](https://cmucentury.com)



cmucentury.com



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YOUR GIFT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Thank you for supporting CMU!

Your generosity fuels more than just programs; it shapes lives. Your support empowers Mavericks – students and faculty alike – to experiences that go beyond the norm, fulfilling our vision of being a Human Scale University. Together, we are building a model of the world we want to see.

No matter how much you give, your generosity makes an impact – today, tomorrow and for generations to come.



MAKE AN IMPACT

Visit SupportingCMU.org today