

# Governor News

A Publication of the Pierre Educational Foundation

November 2019

## Evening of Excellence Celebrates Students and Teachers

### Scholars of Excellence

Carly Bowman  
Elise Carda  
Brenna Dimmitt  
Tess Erwin  
Jade Evans  
Adam Forman  
Halle Gronlund  
Sarah Hemmelman  
Ethan Hill  
Caleb Huizenga  
Claire Hussey  
Mattie Jones  
Sabrina Kintz  
Abbigail Kitts  
Jack Maher  
Emily Mikkelsen  
Tate Mueller  
Dmitri Mutchelknaus  
Mackenzie Rath  
Ellie Richards  
Joshua Rounds  
Annabelle Simpson  
Sophia Stueven  
Sydney Theobald  
Jordan Thompson



2019 Evening of Excellence - Photo by Campea Photography

The Foundation recognized 25 T.F. Riggs seniors as Scholars of Excellence and the 16 educators they nominated as Educators of Excellence at the 2019 Evening of Excellence in May. The Evening of Excellence celebrated graduating seniors with at least a 3.75 grade point average. Additionally, the evening recognized the educators who made a difference in the education of these students, with one educator being named the 2019 BankWest Educator of Excellence.

Kelly Brandt, T.F. Riggs High School physics teacher, received the 2019 BankWest Educator of Excellence award and a \$1,500 grant from BankWest. Brandt was nominated by members of the Class of 2019 who noted his enthusiasm for teaching and the work he does to prepare students for careers in engineering, physics, science and math. Brandt's commitment to making the effort to make complex topics understandable and his genuine interest in his students made Brandt stand out among the other nominees for the Class of 2019.

According to Janelle Toman, Foundation Vice President and emcee for the event, "Pierre is so fortunate to have outstanding teachers at every level of our system. The impact that a teacher

can make on a student or a class cannot be overstated." Toman added, "It is a very difficult task to have to choose one educator to recognize each year, but it is wonderful to have so many nominees – made directly from the students – to choose between."

The same can be said of the 25 students recognized at the event. While the Class of 2019 is one of the smallest to graduate from T.F. Riggs in decades, the percentage of the class recognized as Scholars of Excellence is among the highest in the Evening of Excellence history. "The Class of 2019 may be small in numbers, but it is as impressive as any class the Foundation has recognized with the Evening of Excellence or our scholarships for students in the 20 plus years of the Foundation," according to Jennifer Stalley, Foundation Executive Director. "This is an impressive group of students and the Foundation is excited to see all the things they will achieve with their Pierre education," said Stalley.

In addition to recognizing the Scholars of Excellence and the Educator of Excellence Nominees, the Foundation also awarded its six scholarships to graduating students. These scholarships ranged in amounts from \$1,000 to \$4,000. (See pages 4-5 for the 2019 Foundation scholarship winners.)



Pierre Educational Foundation

## Pierre Educational Foundation

PO Box 94  
Pierre, SD 57501  
(605) 224-9016  
jennifer@pefgovs.org  
www.pefgovs.org

### Board Members

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Capital University Center Designee

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At Large Trustee

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At Large Trustee

#### Deanne Booth - Director

At Large Trustee

The Foundation was established in 1995 with a gift from the Cora London Estate. Cora London was a successful clothier business owner and operator for many years in Pierre. Her generosity will encourage additional grants, gifts and endowments for educational purposes.

The Pierre Educational Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, community based organization committed to academic excellence in the Pierre Public School District.

The activities of the foundation are directed by a Board of Trustees representing business, education and the community.

The funds of the Pierre Educational foundation are currently being managed and held by the community-based Oahe Foundation.

# From the President

Janelle Toman



When the Pierre Educational Foundation was created in 1995, its goal was to promote the educational development of students, staff, and graduates of the Pierre School District through delivery of quality educational opportunities and resources.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, community-based organization, the Pierre Educational Foundation's mission is to inspire academic excellence. A most visible example of that commitment is the annual Evening of Excellence held each year in early May, when the foundation honors and recognizes outstanding senior students and faculty members from Riggs High School. We also support scholarships for Riggs High School graduates, which are awarded through the generosity of families and donors with close connections to the Pierre area.

As we all consider ways to further the educational development of Pierre School District students and graduates, we also know that state and education agencies are called on to meet the growing workforce demands across South Dakota and this region.

Over the last several years, agencies representing postsecondary education, workforce development, and labor have been talking about statewide attainment goals. One that the state of South Dakota took particular interest in was a goal that 65 percent of South Dakota citizens, ages 25 to 34, hold some type of postsecondary credential by 2025. This goal addressed a wide range of educational attainment—from technical certificates and apprenticeships to associate,

bachelor, and graduate degrees.

The 65 percent goal was based on projections from the Center on Education and the Workforce that roughly 65 percent of all jobs in South Dakota would require some level of postsecondary education by 2020. This has been an important starting point for discussions among higher education providers, policymakers, community advocates, and business leaders.

I think we can all agree there is a need to educate more South Dakotans to higher levels for a knowledge- and service-based economy. The 65 percent goal is ambitious, and it will likely take us longer than 2025 to reach it. The Pierre Educational Foundation stands ready to partner in the educational development of our community's most precious resource: our children.

Thank you for supporting our mission: Inspiring Academic Excellence.

## Alumni News

The Pierre Educational Foundation would like to hear about marriages, births, and remembrances of alumni who have passed away. We will also be printing information about upcoming class reunions, so please keep us informed so we can help keep your classmates informed.

Please send your news to our offices at PO Box 94, Pierre, SD 57501, or via e-mail to [jennifer@pefgovs.org](mailto:jennifer@pefgovs.org).



# Class of 1979 Celebrates 40th Reunion



Photos courtesy of the Pierre Class of '79 Facebook page.

## 11/13/19 5:13 PM



# 2019 Foundation Scholarships Winners

The Pierre Education Foundation awarded six scholarships this year. These scholarships are awarded on behalf of families who have given endowments to the Foundation so Pierre students can continue their education at the next level with financial support. Each of these donors has selected specific areas of post-secondary education to support with their donations.



**Jordan Thompson**  
*James and Gertrude Mueller  
and Schliessmann Family  
Scholarship Recipient*

## James and Gertrude Mueller Scholarship

The James and Gertrude Mueller Scholarship is offered to a T.F. Riggs High School graduating senior planning to enroll in an accredited college or university who intends to pursue a career in the medical field. This scholarship is in the amount of \$3,500. Jordan Thompson received the 2019 Mueller Scholarship. Thompson intends to pursue a career in medicine, possibly genetic research.

Thompson maintained a 4.0 grade point average while being active in a number of extracurricular

activities, including being a member of the National Honor Society, the Spanish Club, and Future Business Leaders of America. Thompson was the track and volleyball manager and attended Girls State and YBA. She served as a page for the state legislature and volunteered at the Discovery Center and the Gov to Gov store during high school.

Thompson's passion for pursuing a career in healthcare is driven by her own medical challenges.

## Schliessmann Family Scholarship

The Schliessmann Scholarship is offered to a T.F. Riggs High School graduating senior planning to enroll in an accredited college or university to pursue a career in a science, technology, engineering or mathematics. While academic success is considered, the scholarship's purpose is to support a student with a high likelihood of success in a field. This scholarship is in the amount

of \$1,000 and is renewable for up to 3 years, for a total award of \$4,000. Jordan Thompson received the 2019 Schliessmann Scholarship. Thompson has a rare health disease. She overcame complications from the disease to excel in her academic career and motivate herself to pursue a career in medicine, possibly genetic research.



**Frank Becker**  
*Charles "Lindy" and Shirley  
Feeney Scholarship Recipient*

## Charles "Lindy" and Shirley Feeney Scholarship

The Charles "Lindy" and Shirley Feeney Scholarship is offered to a T.F. Riggs High School graduating senior who is in need of financial assistance to further their education beyond high school. The purpose of this scholarship is to assist a dedicated track athlete in his/her higher education costs. This student must have participated in track & field for at least three years, and must be accepted to an accredited college, university or technical school. This scholarship is \$1,000.

Frank Becker received the 2019 Feeney Scholarship. Becker will attend Black Hills State University in the Fall to pursue a career in healthcare.

Becker was a member of the varsity track team. He worked hard to overcome injuries in his track career and to continue to compete at the highest level. While his accomplishments on the track were impressive, his personal story and plans for the future are especially compelling.

Becker came to TF Riggs via an orphanage in Uganda, shortly before beginning his high school career. He worked hard in learning a new culture, a new language and settling in a new home. His strong work ethic, kind spirit and commitment to his community made him an excellent member of the track team and an outstanding member of the Class of 2019.



**Miranda Cerdillo**  
*Mortenson Family Scholarship  
Recipient*

## Mortenson Family Scholarship

This Mortenson Family Scholarship is an award of up to \$1,600.00 to a T.F. Riggs High School Native American senior who will be attending college / university or technical school. The recipient must demonstrate academic achievement and desire to pursue a post-secondary education.

Miranda Cerdillo received the 2019 Mortenson Family Scholarship. Cerdillo plans to pursue a

career in teaching or filmmaking. She volunteered for MOPS and the Discovery Center during high school, helping children learn in a variety of venues. She is also an accomplished photographer. She participated in the Crazy Horse Summer Program to kick off her college career before her official start as a student at Black Hills State University.

*(continued on page 5)*

# 2019 Scholarships Awarded

(continued from page 4)

## Spilde Family Scholarship



**Annabelle Simpson**

*Spilde Family Scholarship Recipient*

The Spilde Family Scholarship is a \$1,000 scholarship offered to a T.F. Riggs High School graduating senior who is in need of financial assistance to further their education beyond high school. The scholarship is renewable for a second year, making it a \$2,000 scholarship. The purpose of this scholarship is to assist a dedicated student in his/her higher education costs.

Annabelle Simpson received the 2019 Spilde Family Scholarship. Simpson is planning to attend South Dakota State University to pursue a degree in pharmacy so she can work as a pharmacist in a hospital in South Dakota.

Simpson was an active leader in her class. She is a member of the Future Leaders of America and National Honor Society. In addition to her outstanding academic achievements, she was active in student government, a long-time member of the Pierre Swim Team and 6 year veteran of the Pierre Golf Team.

## Herbert and Irene Emde Family Scholarship



**Ellie Richards**

*Herbert and Irene Emde Family Scholarship Recipient*

The Emde Family Scholarship is awarded to a T.F. Riggs High School graduating senior who is pursuing a degree in education. The intent of the \$1,000 scholarship is to support a student's efforts to become a teacher in an elementary, middle school, high school or university setting. The recipient should model characteristics of honesty, trustworthiness, caring of mankind, and a passion for teaching.

Ellie Richards received the 2019 Emde Scholarship. Richards plans to attend the University of South Dakota to major in elementary education.

In addition to her academic achievements, Richards volunteered for a number of community organizations, including the United Way, Children's Miracle Network, the Community Banquet and Relay for Recess during high school. She wanted to be a teacher since she was 4 years old and spent countless hours working with children ahead of her college plans.

*Pictured right:* Foundation funds supported the creation of a sensory path on the playground at Jefferson Elementary. The Sensory Path provides a colorful, creative and playful way for kids to build connections in the brain that are responsible for sight, touch, sound, etc., which enable kids to complete complex, multi-stage tasks, while having fun.



## Foundation Funded Projects

The Foundation recently awarded almost \$5,000 to teachers for innovative projects in their classrooms.

Funding went to:

### Commission for Riggs Chamber Choir

**Rodd Bauck**

*T.F. Riggs High School*

Funds will support commissioning a composer to write song especially for the Riggs Chamber Choir.

### Display Panels for Art Club and Art Department Art Shows

**Jill Kokesh**

*T.F. Riggs High School*

Funds will purchase a portable display panel for the Art Club and Art Department to display art work at state competitions, exhibitions, and displays.

### Gov to Gov Be Kind Project

**Terri Johnson**

*T.F. Riggs High School*

Funds will support the Gov to Gov program creating a mentoring and leadership video on kindness and teaching tolerance and respect.

### Garden Ramsey – Growing Sustainability Awareness Through Farm to Table Labs

**LaKisha Jordan**

*T.F. Riggs High School*

Funds will provide the materials to start and sustain a herb garden for students to grow herbs for various food courses.

### Little Engineers

**Karen Pogany**

*Buchanan Elementary*

Funds will provide materials to be used for kindergarten students to have hands on science time during play time with engineering and STEM related items.

### Professional Development Book Study: Relentless

**Jackie Richey & Jennifer Nedrebo**

*Districtwide*

Funds will support purchasing books for District staff taking part in a Book Study on the book "Relentless."



## Evening of Excellence Sponsors

**Presenting Sponsor**  
BankWest

### Supporting Sponsors

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Michael and Linda Rush

## Evening of Excellence Celebrates Students and Teachers

*The Foundation hosted its inaugural Evening of Excellence on May 2nd to recognize the top students of the senior class and the educators who had an impact on their lives.*



*PEF President Janelle Toman with scholarship recipient Jordan Thompson.*



*PEF Treasurer Nick Marso with scholarship recipient Frank Becker.*



*Kelly Brandt, T.F. Riggs High School science teacher, was selected as the BankWest Educator of Excellence and received a \$1,500 award from BankWest.*



*PEF Board Member Deanne Booth with scholarship recipient Annabelle Simpson.*

**Mark your calendar for  
Evening of Excellence  
2020  
May 7, 2020**

*Photos by Brandon Campea,  
Campea Photography*



*Ellie Richards receives her scholarship.*



*Miranda Cerdillo receives her scholarship from Thomas Allerdings.*

## 2019 Educator of Excellence Nominees

Kim Bierle, T. F. Riggs High School  
Mackenzie Blake, Buchanan Elementary School  
Karla Blemaster, Kennedy Elementary School  
Kelly Brandt, T.F. Riggs High School  
Vasthi Gibson, T.F. Riggs High School  
Brittany Green, Brandon Valley High School  
Guy Hunter, Georgia Morse Middle School  
Teresa Johnson, T. F. Riggs High School  
Mackenzie McKeithan-Jensen,  
T. F. Riggs High School  
Brianna Postma, T. F. Riggs High School  
Jay Schwartz, T. F. Riggs High School  
Adam Spoehr, T. F. Riggs High School  
Christina Staskewich, T. F. Riggs High School  
Elizabeth Vogt, T. F. Riggs High School  
Becky Walsh, St. Joseph Elementary School  
Paula Weeldreyer, Jefferson Elementary School

# Thank You

The following is a list of donors to the Pierre Educational Foundation from January 1, 2019 - October 31, 2019. Every effort was made to ensure accuracy of the donor list. If your name was omitted or misspelled, please accept our apologies and contact the Foundation with corrections at 605-224-9016 or via e-mail at [jennifer@pefgovs.org](mailto:jennifer@pefgovs.org).

John "Jack" Barnes	In Honor of Mary E Leonard, D. Barnes and Jean Zigler Gomez	Barbara & Monte Hillestad	In Memory of Bob Parlman, Margret Ruckdaschel, Jo Chandler and Susan Mollison
Ruth Beck	In Memory of Mr. B Parlman	Jaime Huizenga	Foundation Fund
Janice Bergeson	In Memory of Donald & Gertha (Floyd) Berseson and Shane Cronin	Craig Kjar	Foundation Fund
Dean Borth	Foundation Fund	Karen Michels	In Memory of Dr. BO "Lindy" Lindbloom
Matthew Brakke	Foundation Fund	Jerry Morrissey	Foundation Fund
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Thomas Evans	In Memory of Vernon Trimble, 1958	Rosemary Rounds	In Memory of Marlin Scharborough
John "Jack" Gilbert	In Memory of Robert E. Rawlins	Margery Scherschligt	In Memory of Jack Peters
Mary (Murphy) Gillette	In Memory of John T. Murphy	Ann & Jay Schwartz	In Honor of the Class of 2019, Amber Stout, and Teachers of Team Denali
Anne Gormley	In Memory of Bob Parlman	Gaytha TenEyck	In Honor of Daughter and Grandchildren
Mary Greenfield	In Honor of Chuck Woods, Patricia Woods Roger, Tom Woods and Connie Woods	Fred & Joan Tweet	Foundation Fund
Steve Gregory	In Honor of the Class of 68 Track & Cross Country	Carol (McIlravy) Van Roedel	Foundation Fund
Laurie Grondlund	In Memory of John Stengle	Joyce Williams	In Memory of Terry Peterson
Betty Hanson	In Memory of A. Doscher	BankWest - Charles Burke III	Foundation Fund
Karen Hasek	Foundation Fund	Stulken, Petersen, Lingle, Walti, & Jones LLP	Foundation Fund
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## Pierre Educational Foundation Contact/Donation Form

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Maiden Name (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_ Riggs Grad Year \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Riggs Grad Year \_\_\_\_\_

News or Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

This gift is in: ☐ memory of ☐ honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Designated toward: ☐ General Donation ☐ New Teacher Welcome Program

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☐ Evening of Excellence Event

**Please make checks payable to Pierre Educational Foundation. Thank you!**

**Mail to: Pierre Educational Foundation, PO Box 94, Pierre, SD 57501**



**Pierre Educational Foundation**

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