



Brett Gardner - 2013 Columbus Distinguished Graduate

By Sandra Martin

"Communications is the best course I've taken at Columbus because I learned a very important skill that I will use the rest of my life—how to talk and communicate with others. It also builds your confidence when you speak in front of audiences all the time." **BRETT GARDNER Columbus Class of 1985 (Taken from the 1985 Columbus Wildcat Yearbook)**

The Columbus Community 2013 Distinguished Graduate Brett Gardner was originally scheduled to graduate in the year 1984, but instead found himself forced to sit out a whole year because of injuries suffered in a moped wreck at the end of his 8th grade year. When he finally was able to enroll in high school, Brett was ready to "do it all." He had many achievements throughout his high school career. He excelled in basketball, golf, baseball, and bowling. Singing and dancing came so easily to him, that Brett is often remembered for his ability as a Chanteur. Dramatic talents were as natural to Brett as breathing. Speech and dramatic pursuits gave him great recognition.

However, the one asset that Brett seemed to take with him wherever he went was his ability to relate to others. Brett never knew a stranger, and those people who could have been strangers quickly became friends through his outgoing personality. The image of Brett wearing the Homecoming King's crown with a crooked smile that seemed to say, "Do I really have to wear this?" pays tribute to his humility and his general regard for all his peers.

High school was a world that Brett conquered very easily, but he graduated with very few plans and no real goals. He was really lost in a sea of questions about his future, so he turned to his area of greatest expertise and traveled to Chicago to interview to be able to attend the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in California. Approximately ten to twelve thousand students interviewed, of whom only 160 were actually chosen. Brett was accepted

into the program and moved to California.

He speaks about the culture shock of moving from Iowa to southern California. After a year of acting study, 40 were invited back to the second year, which consisted of play productions. Brett was one of the 40 and continued his education there. The third year involved technical aspects of production and only 20 were invited back. Although Brett was asked to return, he chose not to. Instead he moved back home "...with little direction in my life...no real purpose."

Looking back, he comments, "My time in Southern California opened my eyes to diversity in a totally different way. It was a great experience, but it still did not seem to be what I wanted."

When his parents moved from Iowa to Tennessee, Brett went with them, still finding little purpose. He married and worked third shift in a factory, but the only fulfillment seemed to be feeding his family. With his dad's urging, he returned to school, enrolling in Middle Tennessee State University. "Dad was a great proponent of getting an education, and I had decided that I didn't want to be a blue collar worker the rest of my life." Taking classes nights, weekends and summers, he was able to graduate with a BS in speech communications and organizational business communications. Brett states, "With speech comes a little bit of wisdom. I was beginning to realize that investment in people-to-people relationships was the most important thing I could do."

Human resources provided him an area of challenge. He took a position with Black and Decker as a site manager where he used his talents. At that time in his life, family commitments and maturity gave him new focus and a sense of wanting to expand his skills. He returned to education, enrolling in Trevecca Nazarene University to pursue his master's in organizational management.

Having been exposed to educators throughout his lifetime, he still

wasn't content. "Everything goes back to learning no matter what the environment." His studies were organized into a curriculum environment consistent with Christian principles. Uppermost in his goals at this point in his life was serving others. He was employed for a time by RPS, a company that was acquired by FedEx. His position involved recruitment and public relations. "I was fortunate to be a part of that transition." Brett was recruited to work for Dell Computer Corporation in the late 1990s in a high velocity, very aggressive market. Working 70-80 hours a week and making "good" money, Brett felt his family growing away from him. "I decided I didn't want to be an executive in the corporate world where the average white male in upper level management lives to be 59.8, while the same white male in education lives to be 74.8. I was never a math major, but that wasn't hard for me to figure out what I really wanted."

He resigned from Dell to attend Vanderbilt for his Ph.D. During his doctoral studies, he also worked for Edgenet, INC., as the Vice President of HR, a software group in Brentwood, TN. His doctoral studies centered around human behavior: What motivates people? His studies tied education and business to build a bridge between people within these environments.

Since earning his Ph.D, Brett has found fulfillment teaching at Bethel University in Nashville, Tennessee. He especially enjoys teaching ethics classes. He spoke about a theme he uses in class: **Is partial disclosure being dishonest?** He believes that intent is most important. "The only thing that I have control over is myself: my behavior and my intentions. Do not let other people's weaknesses affect you. How can you leverage whatever situations occur for the good? The ability to manage relationships is of the utmost importance." Brett works with many non-traditional students, especially those who have reached mid-life and have realized they want more from their lives.



He has many online students. He tells the story of an image etched in his mind that causes him to believe in the importance of his vocation. Seated at graduation, Brett watched a 45-year-old lady who had struggled through one of his classes, spending extra time after a night class asking him questions. She walked across the stage with her diploma to be met by her husband and children. Time seemed to stand still while the husband took her picture with her children. The pride evident in all their faces, as well as the realization of the impact that this lady will have on the lives of her family, her neighborhood, and her community, remains a motivating factor for him. "The classroom is the place I want to stay."

Brett currently lives in Murfreesboro, Tennessee; he has 3 incredible and talented children: Jarred (22 years old) attends Middle Tennessee State University, Taylor (20 years old) attends the University of Tennessee, and Cambrie (12 years old) is a seventh grader at Blackman Middle School in Murfreesboro.

He sums up his position in life this way: "Daily I have the phenomenal opportunity to help other people and make other people better through my education and my experience. I can impact families and communities. I am fortunate to feel that I have found some way to make others' lives better."

Colonial Manor receives new addition to staff

By Donna Carpenter

There's a new face at Colonial Manor, Briana Bowen, the new Admission Liaison at the facility. Briana's duties include going out into the community and promoting awareness of the services provided at Colonial Manor, ensuring the psycho-social well-being of residents, and addressing the residents' concerns, question, and needs to ensure optimal, quality care.

Prior to joining the Colonial Manor team, Briana worked at

care facilities in Des Moines, Washington, and Williamsburg. She has worked with the intellectually disabled, brain injured, and chronically, mentally ill, as a case manager.

She's a graduate of Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA, with a B.A. in Sociology, also acquiring a Master's Degree from the University of Iowa, in Social Work, with an end of life concentration.

As her father was in the Navy, Briana has lived many places, having been born in Iowa City and

moving to Jacksonville, Florida when she was six weeks old. She lived on the East Coast for several years, as well as living in Puerto Rico for four years. Briana's parents Lee and Jill Bowen live in Columbus Junction, and she plans to move here this week.

Briana stated, "Although I'm new to Columbus Junction, I greatly look forward to becoming an integral part of the community."

We welcome Briana to the community and look forward to getting to know her.



It's as Easy as 1-2-3 as a new siren comes to town



Both Alliant Utilities and Musco Lighting trucks pulled into town on a beautiful sunny morning this past Wednesday, in order to dig a hole, place and set the pole for the new siren. It was interesting to watch the workers complete their tasks with such ease. It takes lots of teamwork.

The first picture shows the Alliant crew digging the hole, while the second one pictures Musco Lighting workers placing the pole. Finally, the pole is in place.

Washington County Riverboat Foundation accepting grant applications

The Washington County Riverboat Foundation is pleased to announce another round of Mini Grants. WCRF will give out up to

\$100,000 in grants for various projects. The application is a simple one-page application and is catered to small non-profits who would like to do a special project.

The application and instructions are available on their website

www.washingtoncountyriverboatformation.org listed under Mini Grants. The deadline for the applications is June 20, 2013 and the winners will be announced at a special meeting at the Riverside Casino and Golf Resort at 6:00 p.m. on July 17, 2013. The WCRF is the non-profit li-

cence holder for the Riverside Casino and Golf Resort, which provides all it funding.

The WCRF may be contacted at 319-653-3588, by email at wcrf@iowatelecom.net or on the web at www.washingtoncountyriverboatformation.org.

Briefly -

Columbus Alumni Banquet schedule

The Columbus High School Alumni Banquet will be held on Saturday, June 8, 2013, at the Roundy Elementary School. Registration and social hour at 5:30 p.m., followed by the meal and program. Advanced tickets may be purchased at both local banks. The 50-Year Class of 1963 and the 25-Year Class of 1988 will be honored. The 50-Year Class will be touring the new school facilities at 4:00 p.m. Other alumni attending the Banquet may join the tour by meeting at 4:00 p.m. in the High School parking lot.

Legion asks for return of equipment

American Legion Post #100 is asking anyone who has borrowed our medical equipment (wheelchairs, walkers, canes, etc) and is finished using the equipment, that they please return these items to our Legion Post. We have continued requests for equipment, and we need to have unused items returned. Contact Marvin Prior, Kenny Martin, Sam Bell, Warren McConahay or any other Legion member for arrangements to return these items.

Memorial Day Flag Schedule

Flags at the Columbus City cemetery will be put up for Memorial Day on Saturday morning, May 25th at 7:00 a.m. and they will be taken down on Wednesday, May 29th at 5:00 p.m. (weather permitting). All volunteer help will be greatly appreciated.

Colonial Manor Remembrance Service

You are cordially invited to attend the Colonial Manor Remembrance Service, officiated by Pastor Al Coffin, on Wednesday, May 22, 2013, at 3 p.m. in the Activity Room. Those being remembered are: Imogene Bailey; Vern Ball; Venita Boyd; Vesta Carey; Dorothy Drinkall; Alton Griffin; Virginia Grimm; Dorothy Grings; Nancy Hidelbaugh; Grenyth Lake; Geraldine Leonhard; Kathrin Lieberknecht; Vera Mewhirter; Faithe Mincer; Ralph Morrison; Rowland Rees; Joan Smith; Bud Speth; Joseph Wood.

Early Childhood Board to meet

The Early Childhood Iowa Area Board Des Moines/Louisa Counties will be meeting today, May 15, 2013, at 10:00 a.m. at the First United Presbyterian Church, 801 Middle St., Mediapolis, IA.

Flood Reunion date set

Save the Date - The Columbus Firemen are scheduling a flood reunion for the community. The proposed date is set as Saturday June 15th. If you have any unique photos that you would like to share let the firemen know. More information will follow in later issues.

Letts Fest scheduled

The City of Letts will be holding its second annual Letts Fest on June 29th. The community is looking for vendors, and participants in the parade and car show. If interested, please contact Jake Shoppa at 563-571-4561; Monica Bieri at 319-212-1613; or Joy Murphy at 319-330-6063 and 319-726-3052.

Letts Memorial Day schedule

The Letts Cemetery Memorial Day Service will be on Monday, May 27th at 8:30 a.m. If it is raining, it will be at the Letts Community Center. In the program: Presentation of Colors - Columbus American Legion #100; Raising of Flag - Boy Scouts; Star Spangled Banner - Margaret Englert; Pledge of Allegiance - Everyone; Service Prayer - Rev. Marsha Gerot; Reading of Letts Service Men - Jim Thompson; Recognition of Service Men (buried at Letts) by Family Member; Speaker - Jim Braden; Release of Patriotic Balloons by Family Members; Taps - Kelsey Chapman. We will have limited seating for those attending so bring a lawn chair if possible.

L-M PTO sponsors teacher tea

Louisa-Muscataine PTO will be sponsoring a retirement tea for 4 long-time employees of the Louisa-Muscataine CSD today, Wednesday, May 15 beginning at 4:00 pm in the Elementary Cafeteria. Those leaving us include Kindergarten teacher, Cindy Stineman-Miller, with 35 years; Kathy Clevenger, First grade with 22 years; a former sixth grade teacher turned Curriculum Director Peggy Colton with 37 years; and Willie Weston, Industrial Education Teacher with 31 years. This totals 125 years of valuing, challenging, and preparing students of Louisa-Muscataine. We are sorry to see them leave, but we do wish them the best in the coming years.

Columbus Pool opens on May 25

Columbus Community Pool will be open on May 25, 2013 and close August 18, 2013. The admission rates will remain the same as last year. There will be an "early bird" sign up period for season passes. If a season pass is purchased before May 25th, the single season will be \$45 and the family season will be \$95. They can be purchased in the high school office. Arrangements can be made for swimming lessons by calling the swimming pool office at 319-728-2233.

Blood Checks at Senior Center

Tami Nichols, R.N. from Colonial Manor will be available at the COLUMBUS SENIOR CENTER on Wednesday, May 22nd from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. to perform blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol checks. This is a free community service. We hope to see you there!

Shellbark Club to meet

Shellbark Club will meet Thursday, May 16th at 11:30 a.m. at Salvatore's in Muscatine. Please meet at Weber and Huston parking lot at 10:45 a.m. to carpool.

Louisa Live: at the Races

Louisa County Extension invites youth in 6th-12th grade to join us in creating videos about an evening at the races. Activity details: Friday, May 17th, 5pm-8:30 pm and Saturday, May 18th, 10am-Noon (Rain date: June 14th and 15th.) On Friday, youth will design their story idea and shoot a video (with a supplied iPad). On Saturday, youth will edit their footage to create a 3-minute video story and then show their videos at 11:30. We will meet at Fairgrounds Secretary's Office in Columbus Junction. Registration Required. Space is limited - No fee. To register, call Louisa County Extension Office, 319-523-2371 by Thursday, May 16th.

Farmers' Market Schedule

Farmers Market Fridays 4:30 to 6:30 The Columbus Junction Farmers Market is held every Friday, rain or shine, at the American Legion parking lot, 99 Second St. If you or your organization would like to be a vendor please contact Mallory at 728-7971 or CDC@columbusjunctioniowa.org.

