



Columbia Adventist Academy

Alumni Echoes

2025 Camp Meeting Edition

“Our **mission** is to provide alumni the opportunity to reconnect, encourage former students to strengthen their personal and spiritual values, and provide financial support for the future. Our **vision** is a community of alumni, strengthened through reconnecting.” - CAA Alumni

100th Vine Maple: A Century of Memories

(A Century of Memories, part 1)

For nearly a hundred years, Columbia Adventist Academy (formerly Columbia Academy) students have ended their senior year with the same ritual: sitting with friends on a blanket at the spring picnic, flipping through the yearbook, signing pages, circling favorite photos, and writing hopeful farewells. Since 1927, The Vine Maple has been a quiet but powerful witness—capturing moments that otherwise might have vanished into memory.

That’s what makes this year’s yearbook so significant. The Vine Maple will mark its 100th edition, a milestone few academies ever reach. One hundred books. One hundred years of student life, inside jokes, varsity wins, Sabbath picnics, haystacks, music tours, and handwritten notes in the margins. A century of student voices, bound and printed.

And yet, as preparations for the 100th celebration began, we realized something was missing and it was Volume 1.

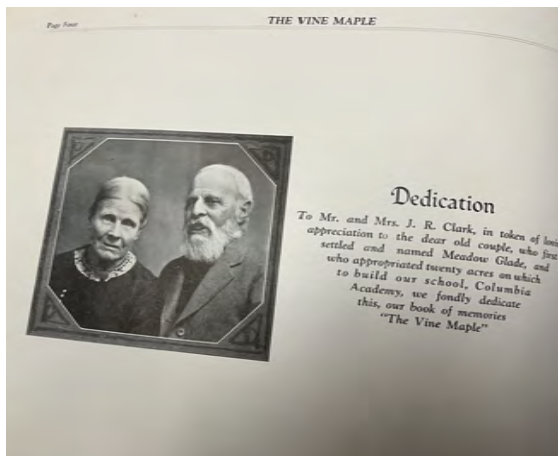
Tucked in the archives sat Vine Maple Volume 2, proudly dated 1928. But where was the first? There were no senior photos for the class of 1927. No cover. No dedication page. It was like opening a beloved family album and finding the first chapter gone.

The search was on. Notices went out on Facebook. At least in our imaginations, alumni rifled through attics, basements, and hope chests, former faculty members in many states were looking through their boxes with camporee supplies, while students’ great-aunts were mailing in all their old copies, including one, a 1929 copy—close, but not quite. We envisioned another

alumnus contacting a book dealer in Oregon who specialized in Adventist history. The whole effort began to feel like something more than archival housekeeping—it was a mission to recover the origin of a story.

The experience echoed a familiar parable: the woman who lost a single coin and lit a lamp to search every corner of the house until she found it. When she did, she called her neighbors and rejoiced. It wasn’t about the coin’s value—it was about what was incomplete without it.

And finally... we found it!



More on that beautiful discovery in another article that you’ll have to search for in this edition of Alumni Echoes. For now, we celebrate not only a century of The Vine Maple, but the community of alumni, families, and friends who helped bring the full story back together. Complete from cover to cover.

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...a converted broom closet!

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— CALENDAR —

**Columbia Classics Cafeteria/Chapel
September 6, 2025**

Alumni Reunion for all
alumni classes of
1975 and prior

**Alumni Homecoming
April 10-12, 2026**

Principal's Message

Dear CAA Alums,

Summer in the Pacific Northwest is in full swing—which means 90 degrees one day and 70 the next! As they say, if you don't like the weather, just wait—it'll change. In many ways, that unpredictability reflects the world we're living in today: fast-changing, uncertain, and often inconsistent.

But there is something here in the PNW that God has blessed us with – something we can count on—and that's **you**, our CAA Alumni.

Your steady support is what helps Columbia Adventist Academy not just survive but thrive. Because of the generosity of our Alumni, over 35% of our students receive the financial assistance they need to attend CAA. Your support also funds mission trips, life skills classes, career and college prep, dual-credit college opportunities, woodworking and metalworking, digital media, specialized math courses, and athletics.

This year, as we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the *Vine Maple* yearbook, we're really celebrating **you**—the Alumni who continue to show up, stay engaged, and make a lasting impact. In a volatile world, your faithfulness gives us hope, strength, and a firm foundation.

From all of us at CAA: thank you for being a constant in a changing world.



Blessings,

Gene Heinrich, Principal

Shop Teachers, Influencers and Mentors of Doug Schmidt (see article—next page)



Above, Mr.
Doug Dietrich



Above, Mr. Reavis
Belin



Left, Mr. (&Mrs.)
Herb Waters

CAA HIGHLIGHTS

New Class and New Partnership: Forensics is now being taught by Hector Alvarez and dual credit (high school and college) is happening with several classes through a partnership with George Fox University.

Columbia Classics: CAA had approximately 50 alumni on campus in the fall for a day of community beginning with breakfast, continuing with songs and stories, and ending with tours of campus after a sumptuous potluck lunch.

Thanksgiving Event: Tami Congleton was our keynote speaker for our worthy student fundraiser that brought in over \$170,000 in addition to an anonymous donor's philanthropic gift.

"Pouch the Phone": CAA has gone cell phone free for students, so every morning the Yonder pouches come out and the phones go in. Students have shared that it isn't as bad as they thought it would be and they don't have to worry about checking them constantly.

Career Day goes Online: Due to snow on Friday the 13th (Feb), the first Career Day in thirteen years went from over 50 in person presentations to 20 online presentations for an e-learning day.

Plans continue to evolve: Our cafeteria is in need of renovation and we now have an updated concept plan and hope to move forward on making the plans a reality.

Mission Trip and Reformation Tour to Europe: Students had a choice of planned trips to choose from as around 30 students headed to Europe to learn more about the history of Christianity and the Reformation and another 20 headed to Puerto Rico to help the community.

The Joy of Creating

There's a deep joy in creating something with our hands and shaping raw materials into something lasting and useful. Each cut, weld, and joint reflects effort, patience, and intention. Building lets us see ideas take shape, offering not only a sense of accomplishment and creativity, but also a deeper connection to God, the ultimate Creator.



I was fortunate to discover this joy as a student at Columbia Adventist Academy many years ago. The teachers who nurtured my love for working with my hands were Mr. Doug Dietrich, Mr. Reavis Belin, and Mr. Herb Waters. Their classes were the highlight of my day. Mr. Dietrich taught me how to weld and work with both hand and machine tools for woodworking. Mr. Belin showed me how to tear down and rebuild a car engine. And Mr. Waters taught me the skills and precision needed to build houses.



Today, CAA's shop classes continue that legacy. Students learn to safely use tools and machines to build projects from both wood and metal. Hands-on learning

combined with creativity helps students grow practical skills, problem-solving abilities, and pride in their craftsmanship—preparing them for both careers and life. Most importantly, they're discovering the joy of working with their hands.

This past year, we added blacksmithing equipment, a plasma cutter, and a CNC plasma cutter. Combined with our MIG welders, woodworking tools, laser cutter, and 3D printer, these upgrades give students even more ways to bring their ideas to life.

Looking ahead, we're seeking funding for a dust and fume collection system and a CNC router table. But above all, our goal remains the same: to help every student at Columbia Adventist Academy connect more deeply with Jesus — who, as a Carpenter, knew firsthand the joy of building something good.

-Doug Schmidt ('80), Shop Instructor

Message from the Alumni Board President

I can't say that I have written one of these before nor was I ever particularly good at writing. Both Mrs. Moller and Mrs. Byers can attest to that. Still, it falls on me to inform you about this Alumni Board, what we do, and, if you're interested, how you can help.

When I was asked to serve on the board, it was down to less members than officer positions. This wasn't anybody's fault as people tend to come and go. In fact, the board is supposed to have one representative from each honor year, which means that a healthy board would be gaining and losing someone from the 10-year, 20-year, 25-year, and 50-year. That's a lot of turnover and difficult to manage at times. Fortunately, I've had the honor to work with our long-time VP Curtis Paulson, as well as bringing in new blood Mike Morauske as Spiritual VP, Lindsey Earl as Secretary, and Garret Ermshar as treasurer.

The purpose of this board is to promote the welfare of CAA and its students, both past and present, as well as to encourage and advance the pursuit of excellence. Alumni Weekend is the main, if not only, event people are aware of. However, we initiated and sponsor the talent show,

scholarships of excellence, Alumni gatherings at Walla Walla and Loma Linda, and continue to support the Sustaining Circle, Career Day, and the Columbia Classics reunion.

Hopefully, it's clear that we are an involved group. Volunteers are always welcome at any event, and of course, donations to the Alumni Association would help facilitate and grow what we can do.

-Will Hamby ('08), CAA Alumni Board President



There Goes My Medical Career!

(There Goes My Medical Career!, part 1)

From my earliest days, when I understood the notion of education, I wanted to be a doctor. From the age of 10 or 11, I spent time reading science books and biographies of scientists and dreamed of some day wearing that wonderful white jacket as I strode the halls of the hospital, stethoscope dangling from my neck.

Then, my junior year at CAA, 1968-1969 (we only had one "A" in our school name back then!), I decided to take Filmmaking from Jan Doward. Thus ended my aspirations of becoming an MD. I disappointed my parents deeply and probably saved the lives of thousands by NOT becoming a doctor!

The only prerequisite for the class was that each student had to own or

have ready access to a film camera for some kind. It turns out that this requirement moved my grandpa to give me his Bolex 16mm camera. I still have it sitting in an honored place on my "museum" shelf in my home office!

With our cameras in hand, we embarked on a trip down the rabbit hole of film making from writing scripts, learning the rudiments of photography, from composition to film stocks and how they reacted with light, to shooting the film and then editing it. In order to get a feel from the process, we watched dozens of documentaries and analyzed everything from the times between edits, the way music was used and on and on!

By the time I graduated two years later, I had already begun getting

paid work for using my film skills... heady stuff for an 18 year-old.

Not only did Jan change the direction of my career with this amazing course, he continued to mentor me for years after both of us had left CAA. I worked as a camera person for him on several films during the course of my college career and the last film I shot, directly the result of a recommendation from him, was one that began the first of numerous trips around the world. And, that film also got me hired by It Is Written, then domiciled at the Adventist Media Center in Thousand Oaks, CA.

It's hard to find someone, other than my parents, who had a stronger impact on my life. What a gift!



Cover of the Seattle Times Magazine Section. Barry Ganson ('70) running the skiploader, Warren Nelson ('70) filming with his grandpa's camera.



Barry Ganson ('70) and Warren Nelson ('70) shooting a stop-smoking commercial that ran on Portland stations.

The Rest of the Crew

(There Goes My Medical Career!, part 2)

I want to say, off the top, that not all students liked the same teachers. These were my top picks.

Ron Reed was my math teacher and became a friend when I worked for him reading algebra papers. His willingness to explore new ideas and to let us pick our topics for advanced math studies was very unusual and great fun! His ability to inspire me was a highlight of my time as a student. In fact, he's the reason I finished my senior year in college by taking a calculus class, which I had dropped my freshman year.

Richard Worley taught me English and history AND I got kicked out of his class every year (a long and fun story for another time)! His style of teaching prepped me for college like none of my other teachers. And we are great friends, still! In

fact, three years ago, when I was 70 and he was 80, we ran and finished the Portland Marathon!

Don Murray was the boy's dean for my last three years and I worked for him as a resident assistant for two years. We had our ups and downs but, again, I became great friends with him and his wife, Susan.

And then there was Mrs. Walman, the matron of the cafeteria. I was never a buddy of hers but she's still one of my heroes! She delivered some of the best "mass produced" food I've eaten to this day. She was tough and grumpy but showed her love for us three times every day, feeding us meals that were the envy of any other board-

ing school that sent ambassadors to CAA! And she did it with student labor!

And last but not least was Gladys Robinson, our choir teacher. I took voice lessons from her the summer before my freshman year and sang in her choirs every year thereafter. Some of my all-time best memories from CAA are the amazing sounds she got out of a bunch of adolescent kids! She remained a friend for decades!

-Warren "Butch" Nelson ('70)



Warren editing in a converted broom closet!

100th Vine Maple: A Century of Memories

(A Century of Memories, part 2)

Meet Terra Wiest:

Office Manager Extraordinaire

If you've been around Columbia Adventist Academy for the last two years, chances are you've been helped, fed, encouraged (or gently organized) by our office manager, Terra Wiest.

Though single, Terra radiates a motherly kindness that extends to everyone who walks through the office door. Maybe it's her ever-present and lovable bernadoodle, Willow, who serves as both a gentle greeter and unofficial therapy dog. Or maybe it's just Terra's nature: she's the kind of person who shares snacks, lends an ear, helps students unlock stuck lock-

ers, and quietly steps in to assist anyone from colleagues to community members, when needs arise.

One of Terra's defining traits is her love of order. She delights in organizing everything from laptop carts and cell phone pouches to the mysterious cabinets housing "who-knows-what." Her happy place is turning chaos into calm, one bin or binder at a time.

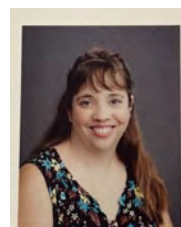
And it was during one of those classic Terra clean-up missions that history was uncovered.

While sorting a rarely used storage area, Terra came across a forgotten stack of old yearbooks. As she flipped through the pile, there it was: a well worn but complete copy of The Vine Maple

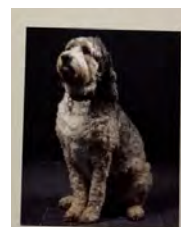
Volume 1, 1927. The long-lost first edition. The missing cornerstone in CAA's 100-year tradition.

Thanks to Terra's thoroughness and heart for this school, the story of The Vine Maple can finally be told in full — from the very beginning.

And now, as they say, you know the rest of the story.



Terra Wiest



Willow Wiest



Opening pages of 1927 The Vine Maple and unique covers of some of the yearbooks through time

Thoughts from the Chaplain's Office

Dear Alumni,

One of my favorite sounds on campus is the music rising from chapel each week—led by students, filled with heart, and sometimes featuring something familiar: the CAA school song. Though not sung every week, its words still resonate deeply, reminding us of who we are and the foundation we stand on.

That foundation is spiritual, and it runs deep. You can see it captured in the pages of our yearbooks over the years—students in prayer circles, mission trip photos, retreats, and baptism days that tell the story of God moving on this campus.

This past year was a strong one. Our Fall Week of Prayer brought a guest speaker to challenge and encourage our students, while our

Spring Week of Prayer was entirely student-led—testimonies, messages, and worship shaped by our young people themselves. Weekly chapels continue to be a spiritual anchor, and the student-led music each week remains a powerful highlight.

Mission trips continue to play a pivotal role in shaping hearts and building leaders. Alumni may remember Don Keele and his leadership in the Appalachia trips years ago. He returned to speak for a Week of Prayer, as did Pastor Urijah Saenz more recently, just two of many connections that keep alumni and current students linked through shared purpose.

And how many of you remember starting the school year with dedication chapels? Moments like those

helped define spiritual identity for generations.

This year, four students made the decision to be baptized. We're grateful. And we're especially thankful to our alumni community—your prayers, support, and encouragement make this ministry possible.

Want to help? You can sponsor a mission trip, fund a chapel speaker, support spiritual retreats, or simply pray. Every gift strengthens this legacy.

With gratitude,

-Pastor Aaron Payne
Chaplain

A Yearbook Reimagined: How Innovation Transformed CAA's Publication Process

Over the past three years, the yearbook program at Columbia Adventist Academy (CAA) has undergone a remarkable transformation, reshaping how the student-led team creates, designs, and publishes the annual book. Through a series of intentional improvements, the CAA yearbook has become a professional, inclusive, and comprehensive documentation of student life and achievement.

One of the most impactful changes came with the switch to a new printing company. This upgrade allowed the yearbook to grow by an additional 40 pages—opening space for more student features, deeper event coverage, and expanded visual storytelling. The new printer also offered a later submission deadline in early May, a significant improvement from the previous mid-March deadline. This shift enabled the team to include major spring events that were previously excluded, such as the music tour, mission trips, Student Association (SA) events, and intramural sports.

Another key enhancement is the move to a full-book submission

model. Instead of submitting sections in staggered deadlines, the entire book is now submitted at once. This allows students to continuously refine all pages throughout the year—making room for design updates, content changes, and additional quality checks. The result is a more polished and cohesive final product.

To ensure all students are represented, the team implemented a tracking and directory system, guaranteeing that every CAA student appears in at least two sections of the book. This commitment to inclusion has made the yearbook more personal and meaningful for the student body.

On the design side, the team shifted away from using templates and pre-packaged layouts, embracing Adobe InDesign for all page creation. Adobe Illustrator is used to craft original graphics from scratch, and students also edit photography using Adobe Bridge and Lightroom—mirroring industry-standard publication practices. This not only raises the quality of the work but provides students with hands-on ex-

perience in professional design tools and workflow.

Student designers are thoughtfully assigned roles based on their prior experience in photography, writing, or graphic design. This structure allows them to build on their strengths while still contributing across multiple aspects of the book. By focusing on skill development and specialization, students gain meaningful, hands-on experience that prepares them for future creative roles. Being selected for the yearbook team is seen as both a privilege and a recognition of the hard work students have already put into their craft.

CAA's yearbook is no longer just a school keepsake—it's a student-led publication grounded in professionalism, creativity, and community representation.

-Scott Knight, Yearbook Teacher



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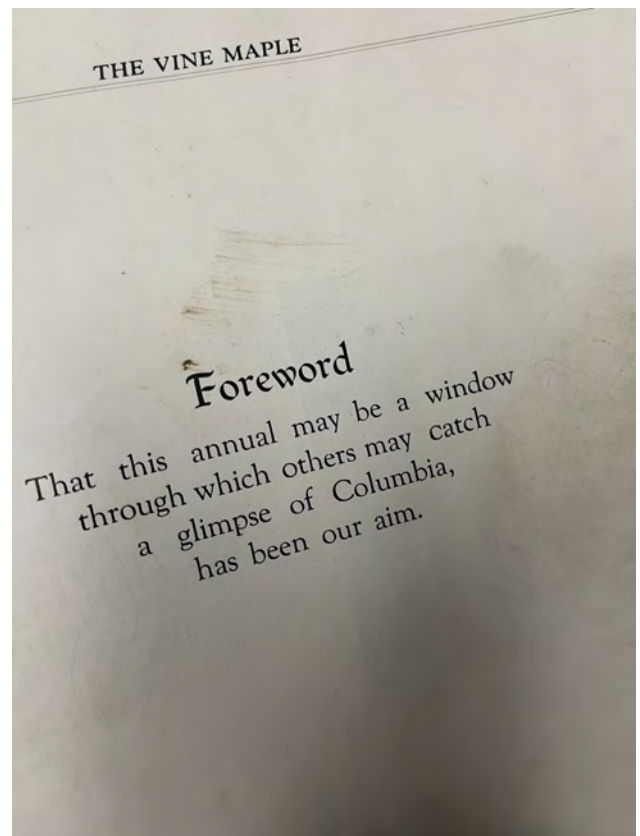


Image and Foreword from The Vine Maple 1927

COLUMBIA ADVENTIST ACADEMY ALUMNI HOMECOMING WEEKEND APRIL 10-12, 2026

We will be honoring the alumni trailblazer group—the class of 1966 and prior.
Alumni Weekend will also celebrate the honor the classes of
1966 & 1976, 1986, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2016, 2026

If you are interested in helping to coordinate your class reunion,
please contact Larry Hiday at CAA at (360) 687-3161 or hidala@caaschool.org.

The weekend schedule will be as follows:

Friday Evening Vespers	<i>Presented by the Class of 2016</i> in the CAA forum
Sabbath School	<i>Presented by the Class of 2006</i>
Church	<i>Presented by the Class of 2001</i>
Sabbath Afternoon Program	<i>Presented by the Class of 1976</i>
Saturday Night Event and Basketball Games	in the CAA gym

All weekend meetings except Vespers will be held in the Meadow Glade Church.
Registration will be in the school forum

Columbia Classics (Classes of 1970 and prior) Sabbath Event

September 6, 2025 in the CAA Cafeteria and Chapel
All are welcome to join us for breakfast, fellowship, music and more!