



Columbia Adventist Academy

Alumni Echoes

2026 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

People and Places

"Oh, the places you'll go!" Dr. Seuss's familiar words have inspired graduates for generations. His beloved book reminds us that life is filled with adventures, challenges, opportunities, and new destinations. This summer issue, however, isn't really about the places you'll go. It's about the places you've been—and the people who helped you get there.

For many of us, those *places and people* are found at Columbia Adventist Academy. When we look back on our years at CAA, our memories often center on two things: people and places. Think for a moment about the people who shaped your experience. Perhaps it was a teacher who saw potential in you before you saw it in yourself. A coach who challenged you to persevere. A music director who taught you that excellence requires discipline. A classmate who became a lifelong friend. A mentor who quietly demonstrated what it means to follow Christ. These are the people whose influence reaches far beyond graduation day.

Then there are the places: The classrooms, the chapel, the cafeteria, or the dormitories that were once home to generations of boarding students. The shop, the music room, the library, the water tower, or the third-story gym where basketball games and couples roller skating created lasting memories, or the campus pathways where friendships deepened between classes. Every corner of Columbia holds stories that are uniquely ours.

It's remarkable how a single place can bring back a flood of memories. A familiar hallway. A classroom window. A favorite tree. A seat in chapel. Long after we've forgotten test scores or locker combinations, we remember how those places made us feel and we remember the people who shared them with us.

This issue celebrates both. As you read the stories that follow, we hope you'll remember the people who invested in your life and the places where those moments unfolded. More importantly, we hope you'll recognize that today's students are creating memories of their own. They, too, are discovering mentors, building friendships, serving others, and preparing to go wherever God leads them.

So we'd like to ask you two simple questions: **Who were the people who made a difference during your time at Columbia – and why? And what are the places on campus that still bring a smile to your face?**

The people who invested in us did so because they believed God had places prepared for us to go. Today, we have the privilege of investing in the next generation as they prepare for the places He has prepared for them to serve.

Whether your favorite memory happened in a classroom, the dormitory, the cafeteria, the third-story gym, beneath the water tower, or somewhere else entirely, we hope this issue reminds you that the true heart of Columbia Adventist Academy has always been found where *people and places* meet.

Welcome home.

-Larry Hiday, CAA Alumni Director



Aerial photo of CAA and the surrounding Meadow Glade area taken 1957

Principal's Message: It Really is all About Who You Know

Dear CAA Alums,

As I begin my tenth year as principal, I continue to be amazed by the ways God is using Columbia Adventist Academy alumni to impact their communities and expand His kingdom. It is a privilege to hear your stories and see the many paths God has led you down since your time at CAA.

Over the past nine years, one lesson has been reinforced again and again: **it's really all about who you know**. Let me explain. When I visit with alumni, it doesn't seem to matter whether they graduated one year ago or fifty years ago. The memories that have stayed with them aren't usually about a particular test, assignment, or even a championship season. They're about **people**.

You remember the Bible teacher who challenged your faith, the coach who believed in you before you believed in yourself, the English teacher who pushed you to discover gifts you didn't know you had, and the classmate who became a lifelong friend. Even the difficult memories often center around people and the lessons they taught us.

That tells me something important as the principal: **our greatest asset has never been our buildings or our programs—it has always been our people**. Every day, our teachers, coaches, staff, and volunteers invest in the lives of young people, helping them develop a deeper relationship with Jesus, pursue excellence, and discover God's purpose for their lives. Those relationships are what make Columbia Academy the school it is. Providing that kind of Christ-centered education requires more than tuition alone. It requires a community of alumni and friends who believe that the next generation deserves the same life-changing experience they received.

That is why I would like to invite you to become part of the **Sustaining Circle**. The Sustaining Circle is a community of alumni and supporters who make an ongoing monthly or annual commitment to the mission of Columbia Adventist Academy. These faithful gifts help provide opportunities that tuition simply cannot cover—from dual-credit college courses and hands-on career programs to fine arts, mission opportunities, and academic support to ensure that every student can thrive.

No gift is too small when it is given consistently. Imagine the impact of hundreds of Columbia alumni committed to giving even a modest monthly gift. Together, we can provide a stable foundation that allows today's students to experience the same caring relationships and transformational education that have influenced generations of alumni.

The people who invested in you helped shape the person you are today. Please consider investing in the students walking the halls of Columbia now.

By joining the Sustaining Circle, you become part of the story God is continuing to write at CAA. Your generosity helps ensure that another generation will look back years from now and remember the teachers, mentors, coaches, and classmates who pointed them toward Christ and prepared them for lives of service.

Thank you for being part of the Columbia family through your prayers, your encouragement, and for considering this opportunity to invest in the future of CAA. Visit <https://www.caaschool.org/support-caa/sustaining-circle.cfm> to learn more about our Sustaining Circle.



With gratitude,

-Gene Heinrich, Principal



Join the
Sustaining Circle today!



Athletic Department's Score Report: Building Tomorrow's Memories

One of the greatest joys of serving at Columbia Adventist Academy is watching today's students create the memories that will become tomorrow's stories. Years from now, alumni won't just remember wins and losses. They'll remember bus rides, late-night tournaments, practices that built perseverance, teammates who became lifelong friends, and coaches who believed in them. Athletics has always been about much more than the final score. This past year gave us plenty to celebrate!

Our girls' volleyball program continued to grow, highlighted by an undefeated junior varsity season under Coach Alix Farnsworth ('14), while the varsity team earned a berth in league playoffs and finished fifth at the Walla Walla University Fall Classic.

Our boys' soccer team enjoyed another successful season, finishing among the top four teams at the Fall Classic and narrowly missing a district berth after a hard-fought play-in match. Just as encouraging was the leadership provided by a coaching staff that includes three Columbia alumni – Garrett Ermshar ('84), Garrett Cocklin ('18), and Nick Squires

('18), alongside veteran coach Duane Sherrill.

Girls' basketball once again reached the district playoffs, thanks to the dedication of coaches Bill Shawler, Kiff Rivinius, and Paul Guardado ('03). Our boys' basketball program enjoyed another memorable year. The junior varsity team had an outstanding season under CAA alumna Debbie Reed ('83), while the varsity team qualified for the Washington State Tournament for the second time in three years. Even more meaningful than tournament success was earning our league's Sportsmanship Award, a reflection of the character our players demonstrated throughout the season. Congratulations also go to Coach Jon Weil, who was recognized as League Coach of the Year. As Jon steps away from the program, we're grateful for his leadership and excited to welcome Jonathan Russell, Ryan Moor ('00), and Mike Larson as they guide the team into its next chapter.

Not every memorable moment happens in a tournament playoff game. Nearly 60 students participated in our coed intramural volleyball

league this year, while another 48 enjoyed kickball. These programs continue to build friendships across grade levels while encouraging every student to be active, involved, and connected.

One thing stands out as I reflect on this past year. Many of the coaches pouring themselves into our students today once wore Columbia uniforms themselves. They understand what makes this school special because they lived it. Now they're giving back by mentoring the next generation.

That's what Columbia athletics has always been about. It's not simply preparing students for the next game – it's preparing them for life. And somewhere down the road, today's athletes will return to campus, walk back into the gym, step onto the field, reconnect with old teammates, and realize they, too, were shaped by the people and places of CAA.

-Adam Dovich ('98), Athletic Director



"The Caf"

You're 14, moving into a dormitory, after leaving home for the first time and it's time to eat. My mom was a great cook and now I'm facing a line with trays of food, some recognizable and some not. The only time I had ever stood in line for food was at a summer camp. And now, apparently, it's going to be a three times a day event.

And, when you get your tray full and sit down, the odds of you knowing any of the other five people are only slightly higher than zero. And girls, oh my! They were everywhere! You'll likely be sitting by one you've never met! Now what? (More on girls and seating a few paragraphs down.)

Suffice it to say, the cafeteria was intimidating to this 94 lb. kid. It was nearly new and built to hold 250+ kids. It seemed absolutely huge! Abbreviated as "the caf" (sounds like

it's spelled), the cafeteria ultimately became one of my favorite places on campus.

It turns out the food was nearly always good, and sometimes, great! Think of home-baked pecan pie and hot orange-glazed doughnuts! There was plenty of it and all of us newbies quickly moved past our nervousness and came to look forward to the thrice daily trek across the campus (if you were a guy, the girls lived right next door).

The only complaint we regularly heard was that the menu was etched, if not in concrete, at least in very hard wood. If it was Tuesday, it was rice pudding for dessert! (See Scene 4)

And who did we have to thank for this never-ending supply of tasty nutrients? Mrs. Wallman! She had other support at times, but she ran the caf like a beneficent major general. She seemed to have only two expres-

sions, a scowl that would terrify the most obstreperous hoodlum and, much more often, a grin that would melt the heart of the above-described reprobate!

Working with a staff of teenagers, she turned out meals for hundreds every day. And even more amazing, she managed it all while keeping a lid on the energy (mostly) and creativity of the 250 teenagers for the 45 minutes it took for them to get served, seated and fed...an achievement I still marvel at!

However, stuff happened! There are likely hundreds of stories about the events that made history (or at least, legends) there. Here are several from my time collecting my nutrition in that ongoing reality show, the caf!



Mrs. Marion Wallman
Matron

Scene 1-Peace in a Troubled Land

It was a particularly noisy day in the caf venue, and my friend Don Pate needed a little peace. He moved some utensils out of the way and then stood up on the table and shouted, "Can I have your attention, please?" It took a few moments for everyone to quiet down but soon you could hear a pin drop!

He raised his head and quietly said, "Thank you," climbed off the table and sat back down and finished his lunch. Almost as fast as the room had gone quiet, it was back to full volume and then some, but he had his mo-

ment of peace!

Scene 2-Lessons in Statistics

There were two food lines, one for the girls and one for the guys and the building was designed so that one line could not see the other. And this design was not unintentional. The goal was to provide co-ed seating without allowing budding romances to bloom brighter during lunch!

Even if me sitting with my "special friend" was a totally random event, they (Mrs. Wallman, Mrs. Rodrick and the "hosts" who guided us to our table for the day) figured we were counting tables, sort of like counting

cards! We were firmly reprimanded and seated at another table. I'm still not sure who kept track of all the "relationships" and the inevitable high school churn, but they did...and with remarkable accuracy!

Scene 3-Lessons in Aeronautic/Hydraulic Physics

It was just a normal breakfast, pancakes, dry cereal, and milk (likely some kind of canned fruit for the health oriented). Because it was breakfast, there were squeeze bottles of honey and a number of full glasses of milk.



Dennis Warner, sitting at one end of the table, with Don Pate at the opposite end (yeah, not only was he a good friend, but he did also seem to star in many of my academy hi-jinks memories) were settling down to eat when Don asked Dennis to pass the honey. Dennis decided to "airmail" the honey. It sailed in a perfect arc and landed directly in Don's glass of milk. The combination of air speed and fluid dynamics drove the milk high enough into the atmosphere, it ended up drenching the rest of us at the table!

Scene 4-Reinforcing Life Lessons

Once a year, the Washington State Police presented an assembly in a valiant attempt to improve highway safety. Usually this involved a uniformed officer with holstered gun and baton sharing with us the need to drive reasonably. They were relatively tame presentations, except for the inevitable 15-minute film on the dangers of drunk driving. Yeah, I know, Adventists don't drink. But apparently the cop knew something we didn't?

The film spared nothing in its mission to scare us into abstinence! And every year the film ended with footage of some poor soul actually dying in the car. Inevitably, as the victims expired, they turned a very deadly shade of purple. (Remember, it was 50+ years ago and a different era!)

This presentation somehow, always occurred the one day a year

when the rice pudding dessert had been colored purple. The point was well made, even if it was completely coincidental. And the braver of those amongst us, got to enjoy several servings of dessert that day... however, the prevalent skin shade of the diners was gray/green.

Scene 5-You Don't Know How Good It Is Until...

Once or twice a year, the SDA academies in the conference would load their band or choir in a bus and head out on a tour of churches and schools in the conference. One year, it was Milo Academy. They did their performance for vespers and then joined us for supper.

For the record, Saturday night was the worst meal of the week. Every effort was made to keep the Sabbath labor for the students to a minimum,



so Saturday supper was basically a sack lunch on plate...canned spaghetti, I'm sure you all remember the brand, a piece of fruit, a bag of potato chips and a candy bar. Columbia natives would usually grab the potato chips, the apple and candy and head back to our rooms.

That night, in order to be hospitable, we stayed. We had a couple of Milo kids at our table, and they were blown away by "how good the food was." Suffice it to say, we were stunned. It wasn't until years later that we came to understand, truly, what it took to keep us fed. But even then, we silently said another blessing for getting to eat regularly at OUR caf!

-Warren "Butch" Nelson ('70)



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224181 | CAA - Cafeteria Refresh - Concept Plan
03.20.2025

Rendering of the proposed cafeteria update

Notes from the Music Department

CAA's Music Department had another fun and successful year. Our four ensembles, Choir, Chorale, Handbells, and Orchestra, performed locally for churches and schools, as well as in Oregon and California. And yes, I did mention orchestra! This is our first year having an orchestra instead of just a band. We've had a few string players in our ensembles in the past, but we doubled from previous years and had enough to round out the full orchestra. This new depth to our ensemble allowed us to perform a wider variety of music and we even featured the strings for a few pieces.

Our big highlight of the year was our San Francisco Music Tour this past spring. We took 33 kids and 8 chaperones. We visited the campus of Pacific Union College and our kids got the opportunity to have masterclasses with their professors. We performed for local schools and churches, drove across the Golden Gate bridge, and took a ferry to Pier 39 and explored Fisherman's Wharf. It is always a pleasure to take these tours as they are a great blend of music, mission, bonding, and fun.

-Randy Wiedemann, Music Director



Thoughts from the Chaplain's Office

As we reflect on the past school year, we are filled with gratitude for God's abundant blessings and for the faithful support of our alumni and friends. The year began with an inspiring Week of Prayer led by Pastor Paddy McCoy of Crosswalk Church in Gresham, Oregon. His messages challenged our students to deepen their relationship with Christ and set a spiritual tone that carried throughout the year.

One of the highlights of the year was our largest-ever attendance at Oregon Conference Bible Camp, where more than 100 Columbia Adventist Academy students participated. During camp, three students made the life-changing decision to be baptized. Later in the school year, two additional students were bap-

tized, bringing the total to five student baptisms. We also witnessed remarkable student engagement in worship and spiritual leadership. Sixty-seven of our 135 students participated in public speaking opportunities, with most sharing their faith through worship services, chapels, and other ministry events. Our annual Student Week of Prayer was another tremendous blessing, as eight students courageously shared personal testimonies about their walk with God and the ways He has been working in their lives.

Spring break provided another powerful opportunity for service and spiritual growth. Fifty of our 135 students participated in mission trips organized by CAA, serving in Palmer, Alaska, and Honduras. Through

these experiences, students were able to share Christ's love in practical ways while growing in their own faith. As we look back on this school year, we celebrate not only the events and numbers, but the transformed lives behind them. Thank you for your continued prayers, encouragement, and support of Columbia Adventist Academy's ministry. Your partnership helps make these life-changing experiences possible, and we are deeply grateful for your investment in the spiritual growth of our students.

With gratitude,

-Pastor Aaron Payne, Chaplain

Looking Ahead Together

For more than five years, Alumni Association President Will Hamby ('08) has helped lead an organization committed to strengthening the bonds between Columbia Adventist Academy and the generations of students who have called it home.

Looking forward to the coming year, Will's vision is simple: bring more alumni actively back into the life of the school. Whether through the annual Thanksgiving Celebration, Homecoming, Camp Meeting activities, or class reunions, he hopes to see more graduates reconnecting with classmates and investing in the next generation of CAA students.

That vision extends beyond attendance. The Alumni Board is working to improve communication by building a more complete alumni database while also recruiting additional board members who share a passion for serving their alma mater. Every updated address, every volunteer, and every returning alumnus strengthens the CAA family.

Reflecting on the past several years, Will points to two accomplishments that stand out. The return of the Student Talent Show has provided a fun and memorable tradition for students and alumni alike, while careful stewardship has significantly improved the financial position of the Alumni Association, creating greater opportunities to

support school programs and alumni events.

When asked what he wishes every alumnus knew about Columbia Adventist Academy today, Will doesn't hesitate. He believes students are receiving an exceptional education that extends well beyond the classroom – strong academics paired with outstanding opportunities in music, industrial arts, visual arts, and targeted support for students needing additional academic assistance.

What stands out most to Will is the dedication of the faculty and staff, meaningful mission trips, community service opportunities, and the wide range of academic experiences available to students across every ability level. He is especially appreciative of how these programs prepare young people not only for college and careers but for lives of service and purpose.

Will's invitation to alumni is heartfelt: Return to the place that shaped you. Attend an event. Reconnect with classmates. Share your current contact information so we can keep you informed. Consider serving on the Alumni Board. Together, we can continue strengthening the programs that make Columbia Adventist Academy such a special place.

The next generation is writing its own CAA story—and alumni have an important role in helping shape the chapters still to come.

-Will Hamby ('08), Alumni Association President

Why We Keep Coming Back

Every family has a reunion. For Columbia Adventist Academy alumni, that reunion is Alumni Weekend. While every year is a little different, one thing never change – the opportunity to come home.

I still remember looking forward to Alumni Weekend as a student. My first one was in November of 1974, when alumni returned to campus for Sabbath worship, lunch in the cafeteria, basketball games on Saturday night, and plenty of time to reconnect with classmates, teachers, and friends. In the 1980s, the event moved to the spring to avoid conflicting with Boys Club Weekend at Walla Walla, but the purpose has remained the same: bringing the Columbia family back together.

As members of the Alumni Board, that's exactly what we hope to continue each year.

My class, the Class of 1979, experienced one of the most significant transitions in the school's history. We enjoyed dorm life during our freshman and sophomore years before Columbia became a day academy. By our junior and senior years, the dormitories had closed, and a few years later they were gone. Along with them disappeared the dairy, Harris Pine Mills, and many of the campus jobs that once helped students earn their tuition. I was fortunate to work at Naturecraft alongside classmates, creating memories that have lasted far longer than

the products we made.

Campus has continued to change. Today's academic building and gymnasium are beautiful facilities that serve students well, yet many alumni still smile when they remember the old buildings. Those places were more than brick and mortar – they were where friendships were formed, lessons were learned, and lives were shaped.

And the story isn't finished. The next chapter includes plans to remodel the cafeteria, another place where countless conversations have been shared, friendships strengthened, and memories revisited over a meal.

I'm proud to be a Columbia alumnus, and I'm honored to serve on the Alumni Board as we work to make every Alumni Weekend memorable. Whether it's your first time back in years or you've never missed one, we'd love to welcome you home.

Even more, we'd love to welcome your ideas. The Alumni Board is always looking for graduates who want to help preserve our traditions while creating new ones for future generations. If you have a passion for Columbia Adventist Academy, we'd love to hear from you. After all, every reunion becomes memorable because of the people who come back.

-Curtis Paulson ('79), Alumni Board Treasurer

Columbia Adventist Academy

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Aerial photo of CAA and the surrounding Meadow Glade area taken circa 1990

Columbia Classics (Classes of 1977 and prior) Sabbath Event

September 12, 2026 in the CAA Cafeteria and Chapel

All are welcome to join us for potluck lunch, fellowship, music and more!

Thanksgiving Event

An annual fundraiser and an event to celebrate the generosity of our community
Please contact Larry Hiday for details (360)687-3161, larry.hiday@caaschool.org

Columbia Adventist Academy Alumni Homecoming Weekend

April 2-4 2027

We will be honoring the alumni trailblazer group—the class of 1967 and prior
Alumni Weekend will also celebrate the honor the classes of
1967 & 1977, 1987, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2017, 2027

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 2017 in the CAA forum</i>
Sabbath School	<i>Presented by the Class of 2007</i>
Church	<i>Presented by the Class of 2002</i>
Sabbath Afternoon Program	<i>Presented by the Class of 1977</i>
Saturday Night Event and Basketball Games	<i>in the CAA gym</i>

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