



Now boarding for Nicaragua

If you ask Jes (Norman) Adams '08 when she knew Carthage was the right choice for her, you'll see her eyes light up.

On a campus visit with her dad, she met then-president F. Gregory Campbell. He asked some basic questions of each prospective student.

"When we were getting ready to leave on our tour," she remembers, "President Campbell stopped my dad and me and said, 'Don't go with your assigned person; go with Becky here instead. She is a neuroscience major from Minnesota, and, since you are also from Minnesota and want to major in biology, that would be a better fit.'"

Ms. Adams says she immediately felt important, and that it didn't matter how far away from home she would be or that she didn't know anyone going to Carthage. She knew it would be a great place to get a liberal arts education while harboring long-lasting relationships.

She made many friendships and connections while at Carthage. One teacher in particular, Professor Pat Pfaffle, who taught many of her biology classes, made a huge impact on her.

"He was always there to answer my questions, even at 2 in the morning!" laughs Ms. Adams. "He instilled in me the importance of research, and taught me to strive for those things farther than what I'd usually reach for."

Prof. Pfaffle also co-leads the popular J-Term study tour Biology and Geography of Nicaragua. As a student, Ms. Adams really wanted to go on this excursion. However, she was already attending Carthage on a fairly large scholarship package and the tour was financially out of her reach.

"I listened to my friends who went on the trip talk about what they learned from it, how it influenced their futures, and even how it helped them in their jobs once they were out of college, and I regretted missing out on the opportunity," she says.

In 2015, after experiencing success in her career as a senior consultant at Nordic Consulting Partners Inc., Ms. Adams reached out to Prof. Pfaffle about setting up a scholarship program so students with limited financial means could travel during J-Term. As a result of her generosity in 2016, three students were able to experience the class in Nicaragua.

She also set up an endowed scholarship. Ms. Adams is slowly building it up over time so one day it will be able to pay out.

"I've done well for myself," she says. "Now it's time for me to pay it forward the way others made it possible for me to attend Carthage. I'm excited about building a lasting memory for a college that provided me with lasting memories."

Reinvesting career dividends

In 2000, when Derrick Collins '05 was selected to represent his high school at Badger Boys State, a Wisconsin civic leadership program, he had no idea how much it would impact his future.

While there, he met Gary Williams '96, M.Ed. '02, a former Carthage faculty member, advisor, coach, and administrator.

"Gary was so inspiring," Mr. Collins says, "I found myself wanting to learn more about the college where he worked."

Mr. Collins researched more and took a campus tour.

"I immediately loved the campus and the people," he remembers. "I knew Carthage was the place for me."

Once accepted, he was fortunate to receive some scholarships for his grades and test scores. However, it simply wasn't enough, especially when some unexpected family challenges arose. Mr. Collins met again with his admissions counselor, and together they found additional funds to make it work.

His college years as a business administration and marketing major had many highlights.

"I always had professors who cared about me," he says. "I thrived on the personalized attention, and I learned the things I needed to be successful in life."

While at Carthage, Mr. Collins joined a fraternity, worked in residence life, became active in Black Student Union and Student Government, and worked on the annual phonathon fund drive run by the Office of Institutional Advancement.

That's when Mr. Collins says he realized he wanted to do something more than improve a business's bottom line for a career. Working in the advancement office, he regularly got to interact with some of Carthage's most loyal alumni, the College president, and others who weren't from his normal social circles.

When Mr. Collins graduated, he got a job in higher education and has never looked back. Today, he's the senior director of annual giving at St. Mary's University in San Antonio and is married with one child.

"As a student, when I worked in the phonathon, I started making donations to Carthage," says Mr. Collins. "I knew that, even though these donations were small, when combined with other gifts, they were helping future students to be able to have the same opportunities I was having."

"Now, as an alum, I continue to give annually. The amount I give varies based on where I am in life, but I still always manage to make a donation. I feel strongly about this, because Carthage helped make me the person I am today – so I now feel compelled to help lift up the future generation of Carthaginians. It is important to me to see Carthage and its students continue to be successful."





One family's educational engine

When you talk to Andy Palmen of Palmen Auto Stores about his family history, it's hard for him not to include Carthage in the conversation.

Andy's parents, the late Ronald '61 and Kathy Palmen '62, met at the original Carthage campus in Illinois.

In 1990, Ronald died unexpectedly at the young age of 51. Andy, along with his mom and siblings Suzanne and Jon, decided to honor his memory by setting up a Carthage Athletics endowment fund.

Since then, the Palmen family has been a major sponsor of the annual Red Men/Lady Reds Open golf outing, the program's main fundraiser. Andy and his wife, Jane, also made a donation to have a classroom in the new Science Center named after his dad.

Carthage took on an even greater significance for the Palmen family in 2011, when Andy's youngest son, Jack, became a student. Jack enrolled two years after he was diagnosed with an arteriovenous malformation (AVM), an abnormal connection between the arteries and veins in the brain.

"I can't say enough positive things about Carthage," Andy says. "All of Jack's professors, as well as the faculty and staff, embraced Jack's unique situation. They realized there might be some communication challenges with him initially but that it wasn't an intelligence issue. Everyone at Carthage became Jack's advocates, and they were all willing to do just about anything to help him succeed.

"No one on campus ever had an attitude that they were too busy to help Jack. I truly believe Carthage was the best higher education environment for him to be in."

"When you look at Carthage and what it does for those in our community, in addition to its tie to our family, I can't think of a better place to donate to."

—Andy Palmen
Trustee

During the time Jack was a student, Andy also joined the Carthage Board of Trustees and had the distinct honor to hand his son his college diploma in 2016. Jack graduated with a self-designed major in sociological entrepreneurial studies.

"That was truly a special day I will never forget," Andy says. "It was such an accomplishment for Jack and a proud moment for our family."

Andy adds, "Our family has been blessed, in many ways because of Carthage. Education is such an important part of our society, and something our family values highly."

His dad taught for years before entering the family auto business, and both Jane and Suzanne are teachers.

"Our family believes the best thing you can do long-term for our society is to educate people at all levels," Andy says. "We support Carthage because it prepares its students for the world. It's a neat place because of its liberal arts focus and how it teaches students to make critical decisions.

"When you look at Carthage and what it does for those in our community, in addition to its tie to our family, I can't think of a better place to donate to."