

Marion's Proud History in Supporting Education

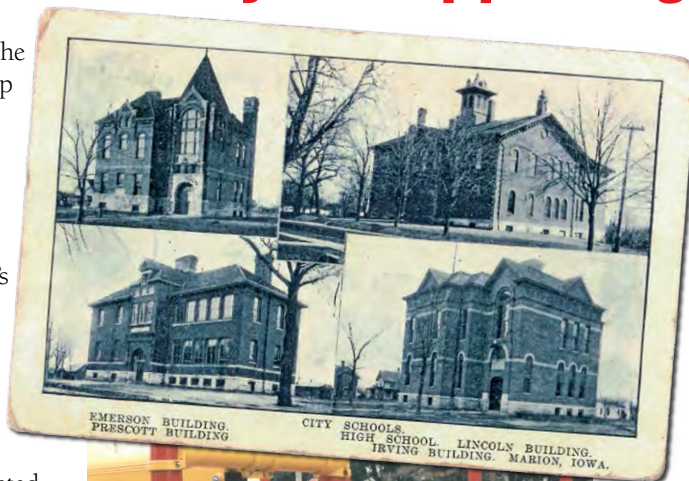
It all started over 170 years ago when the first school opened in Marion Township in 1841 on the north side of Seventh Avenue. It was a simple log building surrounded by tall prairie grass with Mr. Higbee as the sole teacher. A four-room, two-story Union School opened 13 years later in 1854 and was Marion's first public school offering primary, elementary, and secondary classes. In 1860, Marion Independent School District was formed as the fourth school district in the state of Iowa.

It wasn't until 1872 that Marion graduated its first high school class of three female students. Those ladies came back together five years later to hold the first class reunion on May 24, 1877. Established by Superintendent J.W. McClellan, the newly registered Marion Alumni Association hosted a reunion with 70 alumni at Jaquith Hall on May 28, 1879 and became the first alumni association in the state of Iowa.

Over the past 140 years, the Alumni Association has been a source for historical information and provides a way for alumni to stay connected. The Alumni Association maintains a database that includes nearly 12,000 records of graduates dating back to that first class in 1872.

In 1988, at the request of Superintendent Harold Hulleman, a group of MISD supporters began researching how to form a school foundation. The goal was to provide opportunities for students not typically funded by a school district. Under the leadership of Greg Hapgood, thirteen community members signed their names on November 15, 1989 to become the first trustees of the Marion Independent School Foundation & Alumni Association. The first projects were small, but thanks to the financial support of generous donors the Foundation began to grow.

In 1994, the Foundation's Board of Trustees hired its first executive director to lead the charge in raising \$300,000 for Project CONNECT. The goal was to focus efforts on one large fundraising campaign to support education at Marion. Technology and its use



(Left) Postcard ca. 1900 picturing four Marion public school buildings – Lincoln (1868) which also housed the high school, Irving (1888), Emerson (1891) and Prescott (1892).

(Below) In 1994, Bob Hoyt, MaryAnne White, and then Marion Mayor Victor Klopfenstein were key players in a project called *Making Marion a Better Community*.

in education was emerging and Marion wanted to be on the forefront of this movement.

The goal of Project CONNECT was to install a fiber optic network in all school buildings, and thus enable classrooms to connect to the Iowa Communication Network.

This campaign was extremely successful, both in raising the necessary funds and in developing awareness in the community of the Foundation and its mission.

Capitalizing on public awareness, the Foundation grew from focusing its efforts on specific fundraising projects to supporting a variety of projects aimed at enhancing the educational experience of Marion students.

Areas of support grew with a number of scholarships and educational funds being established by alumni, parents and community groups. Included was the Jay White Educational Enhancement Fund, which has funded dozens of projects and programs.

In 1999, the Marion Fund was created to provide an internal granting program for teachers. During its first year, \$25,000 was distributed throughout the district to support expanded curriculum and technology. As time went on, grants have also been distributed to support summer camps, programming for at-risk students, and much more.

A pivotal moment came in 2006 when John Nelson, a 1935 graduate of Marion High School and life-long Marion resident, left the largest gift in the Foundation's history. Foundation vice president Greg Van Gorp (MHS 1978) remembers, "That gift was a game-changer because it came with no strings attached. Since then, it has allowed us to fund a wide-range of projects at all grade levels."



“By establishing the Jay White Educational Enhancement Fund through the Foundation, I was able to accomplish two important goals – provide additional educational benefits for Marion students, and preserve the memory of my son Jay and the things that were important to him.”

MaryAnne White

Marion Independent School
FOUNDATION
& Alumni Association

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Foundation Staff

Erin Steffen, Executive Director
(319) 377-4691 x1110
esteffen@marion-isd.org
Jeff Kost, Alumni Relations Director
(319) 377-4691 x1106
jkost@marion-isd.org
Jill Law, Volunteer

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The Mission of the Foundation is to maintain, develop, increase, and extend the facilities of the Marion Independent School District, and to provide broader educational service opportunities to its students, staff, faculty, and the residents of the geographical area which it serves.

Memories of a Teacher and Coach

Over the course of his 7-year tenure at Marion, Dr. Robert Thurness had an impact on hundreds of kids as he helped shape and transform high school students into young men and women, preparing them for the future.

In the community, Dr. Thurness, "Thurny," is remembered for his role as Varsity football coach and for leading the 1980 football team to the school's only 3A State Football Championship. Vaughn Klopfenstein, 1980 Football Team Captain, remembers Coach as "having a very distinctive and gruff voice, but was always very caring. He always set the bar high, for himself, for the team, and for everyone as an individual both on the field and in academics."

Dr. Thurness passed away on October 13, 2018 and will be remembered by many including his loving family. In honor of Dr. Thurness, his family is establishing a scholarship fund in his name to be awarded annually to a graduating senior of Marion High School. Donations will also be used to place a memorial bench at the front of the high school.

For those interested in making a contribution, they can be directed to the Marion School Foundation for the Thurness Memorial Fund.



Coach Thurness is honored as parade marshal during the fall 2017 homecoming parade.



MHS Class of 1953 together for their 65th class reunion.



MHS Class of 1973 gather at the caboose for a group picture.



Members of MHS Class of 1998 in the Uptown Marion alleyway.

Class Reunions

Twelve classes from as far back as 1958 met over the summer and fall to celebrate their accomplishments since high school and share stories from years ago.

Organizers are already working hard to plan reunions for class years ending in 4 or 9. Visit www.marion-foundation.org/reunions for details and updates regarding these class reunions:

Class of 2014 (5 years)

Saturday, July 13
Katlyn Hardecopf - katlynhardecopf@gmail.com
Facebook: Marion High School Class of 2014

Class of 2009 (10 years)

Drew Clark - drew.clark.5050@gmail.com

Class of 1999 (20 years)

Saturday, June 22
Brooke (Ryther) Kensinger & Sandy (Bulman) Naughton
Facebook: Marion High School - Class of 1999

Class of 1994 (25 years)

Jill (Wilson) Ackerman - jill@marioncc.org

Class of 1989 (30 years)

Brad Simanek - bsimanek@lifebase.com

Class of 1979 (40 years)

Saturday, July 20 - A Touch of Class Banquet Hall
Janeen (Machen) Crowley - jamcrowley13@gmail.com
Dawn (Moser) Gerlich - dawngerlich@yahoo.com

Class of 1969 (50 years)

Laura (Martin) Mattison - lmatt51@mchsi.com

Class of 1964 (55 years)

Saturday, September 28 - The Longbranch Hotel
Claudia Young - (319) 377-0111

Class of 1954 (65 years)

Joyce (Kolda) Hutchins - hjhutch54@gmail.com
(319) 550-4948

Class of 1949 (70 years)

Onalee (Paul) Arnold - onaleepa1@gmail.com
(319) 440-1235


Spear-It of Influence


Your Gift Matters



The Spear-It of Influence is an annual campaign that allows alumni, the community and local businesses to make a lasting impact on Marion schools.

All contributions support the mission of the Foundation & Alumni Association. Nothing to sell, nothing to buy, just an easy way to give back and inspire students. Gifts received during the school year are recognized in our annual Spear-It of Influence Honor Roll.

You can designate your gift to almost any project, program or school, or make a general gift that will be used to make a difference over the course of this next school year. With committees consisting of parents, district staff, alumni and community members who care, your gift will be put to good use.

Check out the stories featured in this newsletter to see examples of the great projects gifts like yours have provided.

Complete the form below or donate online at Marion-Foundation.org

GIFT AMOUNT

- \$25 \$250
- \$50 \$500
- \$100 \$ _____

GIFT DESIGNATION (optional)

PLEASE RETURN TO

Marion School Foundation
777 S. 15th Street
Marion, IA 52302

DONOR INFORMATION

Check (payable to Marion School Foundation)

Credit Card

My company may match my gift. I work at _____

The Marion Independent School Foundation & Alumni Association is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

“Marion’s Proud History...” continued from page 1

Long-time trustee Doreen Zumwalt (MHS 1982) and mother of two MHS graduates knows first-hand the important role of the Foundation & Alumni Association. “Having raised more than \$2.1 million for the district over the past thirty years has made a significant impact on our students and community. It is exciting to think of the many ways additional support can advance our students.”

That is why at the start of this year, the Foundation expanded its grant offerings in the district. The Foundation will continue to keep its largest pool of funds available for classroom needs with an annual spring application process, but has added three new grant areas with funding that is available year-round.

One of those grants is for staff professional development. Foundation Trustees saw the benefit of this type of funding when sponsoring a portion of the MISD Summer Institute, a two-day district-led training in August that was open to all staff. The Grant Committee will consider applications for conferences and trainings that the district hosts internally as well as those hosted outside the district.

The other grant applications include options for field trip and guest speaker requests, and funding of school groups or clubs. All grant applications will continue to be reviewed by a Grant Committee consisting of former teachers, alumni, parents and community members. Grant requests also require the approval of building and district administrators.

Executive director Erin Steffen stated, “The Foundation is so grateful to the MISD community for the continued support over



Marion High School class of 1875.

the past thirty years. These new grant opportunities are a way for us to continue to move forward supporting education in Marion.”

The Foundation first announced these new grant opportunities to staff at a welcome-back-to-school event on August 17. Teacher Jennifer Fairbanks has taken early advantage of the new Professional Development grant program, receiving funding to attend a Toddler, Kid, and Teen Yoga Teacher Certification class to bring the concept of yoga, meditation, and mindfulness to her classroom at Francis Marion Intermediate. Fairbanks also plans to share her new knowledge with other teachers and students

throughout the building.

According to a *Beyond the News* article on the topic of yoga in the classroom, “There’s real science behind mindfulness. Yoga and breathing help a person shift their thinking from the more emotional part of the brain, the amygdala, to the more strategic prefrontal cortex.” Yoga practices have been integrated to some degree at Starry Elementary with success.

Marion High School science teacher Madi Ramaecker’s grant was recently approved to take thirty female students in 9th and 10th grade to a one-day conference at Iowa State University this spring. “Taking the Road Less Traveled” is an opportunity for girls to learn more about STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) college majors through a series of hands on activities and presentations.

Questions regarding grant programs can be directed to Erin Steffen at 319-377-4691 x1110 or esteffen@marion-isd.org.

M Marion Builds Opportunity

Projects Showing Signs of Progress



Crews have sectioned off part of the high school parking lot for construction of the new press boxes. Work is quickly wrapping up on the baseball, softball, and soccer press boxes before the Iowa winter sets in.

Dump trucks have hauled away outdated equipment and structures while contractors and the district’s maintenance team are working hard to complete a list of updates to the Marion High School Auditorium and Les Hipple Athletic Complex.

For the auditorium, a portable ADA-compliant chair lift for the stage is on its way, new fire-resistant doors were installed at each of the four entrances, the stage received a facelift, and a new digital sound system has been put to use for fall performances. Most of the work was completed over the summer so the auditorium could be usable for students once school began.

When asked what he is most excited about that will improve his day-to-day, high school choral director Jonathan Dyrland comments “Hands down the new sound board. It is all digital and connected to an iPad, so the Sound Manager could be sitting in the seats and make audio adjustments while not even in the booth.”

Work continues at the athletic complex as crews have removed the joint baseball/softball press box and are constructing a new press box for each behind their respective home plates. The soccer field is also getting a new press box that overlooks the entire soccer field. The detailed work of running the required electrical, laying tile to allow for proper drainage, and building a sturdy concrete base will allow the completed press boxes to be around for many years to come.

Over the course of the project, \$176,000 was raised by the Foundation thanks to donations from alumni, parents, local businesses and other supporters. Even the 2018 graduating class made a contribution. The MISD Board of Education committed an additional \$274,000 towards the campaign so upgrades could be completed.



1980 Varsity Football Cheerleaders: (front) Lisa Busse, Kelly Grishaber, Leslie Gibson, Linda Freilinger, Judi Luse. (back) Lisa Hauser, Leslie Holm, Kris Larson, Tracy Ensley, Tracy Evans.

Grishaber Gift to Help Graduates

Kelly Grishaber was a freshman at Marion High School in 1979 when she was diagnosed with leukemia. Through her courageous battle to fight the disease she continued to attend classes and school activities. This included her enthusiastic participation and devotion to the cheerleading squad highlighted by the MHS football class 3A 1980 State Championship. Kelly lost her battle in May 1981.

To honor her memory, Kelly's parents, Jerry and Charlotte Grishaber, established a scholarship which recognizes graduating seniors that have participated in exemplary acts of volunteer service and demonstrated uncommonly positive character. The Grishabers were proud to make another sizeable donation to the scholarship fund this year to allow the recipient to receive a \$1,000 scholarship to continue their education after high school. Jerry & Charlotte are happy that this memorial will continue to carry the memory of their enthusiastic Marion student.

College for Kids

Grant Wood Area Education Agency's College for Kids is a summer program offering advanced-level academic and fine arts courses in a college setting. Students eligible to attend are those who participate in the Talented and Gifted (TAG) program and have completed 6th, 7th or 8th grade.

The Marion Foundation provided \$50 scholarships to each of the 24 students from Vernon Middle School who chose to attend College for Kids last summer: Ella Bartels, Brody Bingham, Abby Boggs, Addyson Bulicek, Ezekiel Calhoun, Logan Frye, Elsie Hartwig, Zach Hill, Selah Hill-Dale, Blake Hines, Mason Kinney, Wesley Logan, Lysie Lusk, Allison McNamer, Anna Meyer, Lydia Moore, Emily Mortiz, Ray Redondo, Rebeckah Regennitter, Joy Ringwald, Mia Utsinger, and Elyse Ward.

"I really liked my last class where we got to make hot air balloons and then fly them outside using the power of gas. One of them even caught on fire and we had to put it out!"

Logan Frye



Families participating in this fall's FAST at Longfellow Elementary during their last night of the program.

Supporting Family Programs All Year Long

The Foundation partnered with District Social Worker Michelle Wilson and a committee of volunteers to plan the third annual Start School Right event held on August 15.

The Foundation sought out and received \$7,500 in funding that was used to purchase school supplies, bedding, toiletries, breakfast food, and clothing. Businesses who provided funding through the Foundation include ACT, ALDI, International Paper and Farmers State Bank. Substantial donations were also received from United Healthcare, Marion-East Cedar Rapids Rotary Club and Marion Cares, in addition to a number of other community partners.

The number of items and the types of items available this year grew considerably thanks to the

community's generosity. Also available for no cost were dental, hearing and vision screenings, and haircuts.

"Going back to school is expensive for families, with school supplies, clothing and more. It's so important that an event like this exists in our community so students can get the support and tools they need to start the school year off on a positive foot."

*Patty Webster
Foundation Trustee and
Start School Right Volunteer*

Wilson continues her important work with MISD families during the school year by coordinating the FAST (Families and Schools Together) program. FAST is an internationally-acclaimed program that encourages communication between schools and families. FAST

(and its sister program FASTWORKS) were able to continue this school year thanks to a grant the Foundation received from The University of Iowa Community Credit Union. Any families interested in the January/February FAST program at Vernon Middle School can contact Michelle Wilson at mwilson@marion-isd.org to learn more.



Peyton Memorial Bench

Marion resident Philena Peyton donated funds for the purchase of a new bench in honor of her husband Norman Peyton, who passed away last April. In addition, a contribution was made toward the construction of the new soccer press box. Her grandson, Thomas, graduated in May 2018 and played soccer. Philena and Norm's sons also graduated from MHS in the 1980s. Students and staff are honored by these caring gestures and to know that MHS meant so much to the Peyton family.

Fall Fundraising Highlights

The Foundation is grateful to have the support of many community members and local business owners to host a series of fall fundraisers. Through these events, the Foundation is able to grow grant programs that provide support for teachers and their students, maintain an annual scholarship program, assist alumni with class reunions, and give substantially to programs like Start School Right and College for Kids.



This returning joint event of the Marion School Foundation and Linn-Mar School Foundation had 16 participating restaurants.

While everyone enjoyed their meals, the restaurants kept busy as they donated 10% or more of sales for the day to the two school foundations. The September event raised just over \$5,000.



The **Marion Foundation Golf Classic** continues to be the Foundation's largest fundraiser. This year's 16th annual event had record-breaking attendance and raised more than \$24,000. The golf tournament was held the last Friday in September at Gardner Golf Course and was a fun addition to Marion Swamp Fox Festival activities.

Event Sponsor
John K. Castle
MHS Class of 1959



The Freeze's third annual fundraiser for the Foundation was a great success with 950 ice cream cones sold over three days. There was an additional \$1,300 in donations received from those attending. The owners of The Freeze and the Marion High School students who work there are proud to continue this tradition, closing out their season by showing support for our local schools.



Alumni Spotlight

Alisabeth Von Presley

What started with a music teacher offering a first grader the chance to sing in front of her class during lunch turned into a life of music. Alisabeth Von Presley (MHS 2005) has turned her passion of singing and creating music into a career. During high school and college Von Presley performed in many theater productions, eventually becoming a contestant on American Idol in 2014.

One of Von Presley's favorite high school memories was attending the state competition for Future Business Leaders of America with first-year coaches Corby Laube and Scott Fruehling. She recalled, there was confusion amongst coaches and players on all that was required

at the competition, including one student needing to give a business speech. Von Presley was able to quickly write a speech while sitting in the lobby and eventually won the entire category.

Von Presley is currently in a rock band called Four Star Fate, releasing multiple music videos, creating three different albums of original music, and touring the country. "The road... a guitar... and a room full of strangers waiting for you to impress them. The challenge and the reward are more incredible than I could have ever imagined. It's where I belong," says Von Presley.

Von Presley plans to be out on tour again this spring. Information about her upcoming shows and her albums can be found at www.alisabethvonpresley.com.



MISD Technology Team Meeting Their Goal

The vision of getting a computer into the hands of every student is nearly completed. This fall, when students returned to school, the district handed out more than 1,500 Chromebooks to students in grades 5-12.

This vision began a few years ago with a desire to prepare all students with essential skills they need in high school, college, and the workplace. The district leadership team, technology team, and School Improvement Coordinators, overseen by Superintendent Dyer, have created a program at MISD that enhances learning opportunities to never-before seen levels for the students as well as the teaching staff.

Before students were given the laptops, teachers attended blended

learning workshops at the MISD Summer Institute. This training focused on how to best meet students' needs by allowing them to learn at varying paces, receive differentiated instruction, and engage with students based on their individual needs.

Peggy Murphy, District Technology Integration Coordinator, is tasked with integrating technology into classrooms in ways that are impactful for teachers and students. Murphy says, "The 1:1 Chromebook program will enhance our already progressive, world-class education by challenging learners to believe in their power to embrace learning, to excel, and to own their future."



Superintendent's Report

We have opened the school year and are already enjoying tremendous individual and team successes. We are settling into the second quarter,

having watched our students and teachers begin anew with enthusiasm and delight. The summer facility work continues as the vision to update the Hipple Complex nears completion. The "Pride" that Marion displays in our Hipple Athletic Complex, in each of our schools' new playgrounds, and in our Arts Programs' auditorium is evidenced by setting high standards to complement our excellent academic programs.

The work that our teachers and building leaders have undertaken since August was ambitious and the results outstanding. This work began with a two-day Blended Learning Professional Development session for teacher and teacher associates. The infusion of critical thinking and problem solving learner habits is well underway. The integration of our critically focused standards based curriculum and expectations for increased student

achievement is on-going. Our increased student enrollment for school year 2018-2019 attests to the brightness of the learning at Marion.

The Professional Learning Community Culture is proceeding with teacher led teams making a daily impact on learning for ALL. "We are at a point in time where teams are recognized as a critical component of every enterprise – the predominant unit for decision making and getting things done... Working in teams is the norm in a learning organization." (Senge, et. al. The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook) The daily tempo of Marion learning accelerated with one-to-one Chromebooks issued to each student in 5th to 12th grades. Our ever expanding Wi-Fi capacity, and the use of audio visual learning systems, expand learning resources and stimulate student engagement and focus.

The new outdoor messaging board to announce MISD community events is on 15th Street. The expanded use of the internet and Facebook tells our stories. We do want to pause and reflect our congratulations to all our student musicians for a 9th consecutive year achieving a Division 1 Marching Band Distinction! Marion hosts superbly competitive teams

in all Fall Sport programs. Also it is appropriate to acknowledge our Boys Cross Country WaMaC Championship.

We continue to plan for the major internal improvements to Starry and FMI for this summer and major reroofing of our Marion High School. These future projects provide the potential to bring air conditioning next year to all our elementary schools. Shortly, we will convene a Vernon Study Group to plan the outdoor facilities design south of Vernon Middle School. We continue to invest in our classroom learning processes, in our staff's professional development, and in our facilities to ensure the quality of Marion's learning for all student remains high.

Please visit with us over the upcoming holidays to see the new Emerson Learning Center and Longfellow facilities. Join us for our students' winter arts and sports programs. We invite you to watch our talented children enjoy the holistic learning environment that allows Marion's children to grow in a uniquely special environment. See you on Campus!

Respectfully,
Chris Dyer

Marion Grants in Action

In its 18th year of providing grants, the Foundation is proud to fund more than a dozen projects so far this school year. Grants were announced in the spring and are being implemented this fall.

Handwriting Curriculum

With the continued need to improve students' writing skills, funding from a Foundation grant provided the district an opportunity to purchase new handwriting curriculum for grades K-2. Students are now being taught from the same type of curriculum as they progress through grade levels. This is providing consistent language and letter formation practice resulting in better writing fluency. Longfellow Principal Nicole Harmer stated, "We are building the foundation from year to year with this new material and consistency that we haven't had before. The students carry these skills with them from Kindergarten to 1st grade to 2nd grade."



SmartMusic

The 280 band students at Vernon Middle School are using a web-based program called SmartMusic to enhance their learning. The program allows students to receive immediate feedback by playing into a microphone during at-home practice sessions. Fifth grader, Kate S. said, "SmartMusic allowed me to learn my first trumpet notes and understand how loud I need to play."



Students benefit from the tracking features, playback ability, and color coding system that provides a visual for note accuracy. Parents appreciate the ability to better assist their children with assignments. Megan G., a seventh grader, noted that, "SmartMusic allowed me to practice my flute solo at home and hear the correct notes."

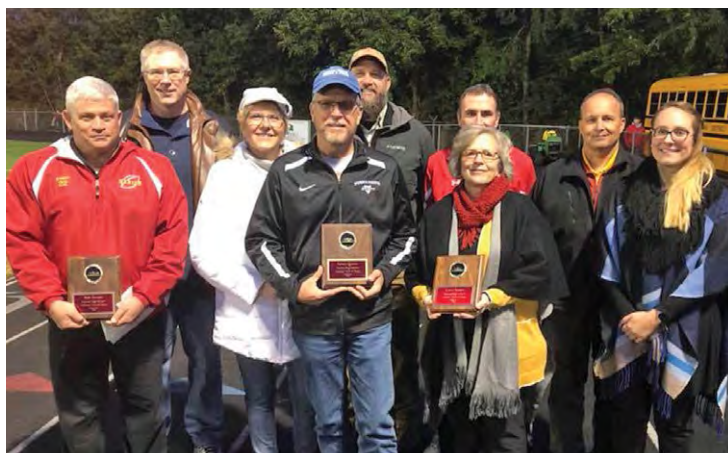
In addition, this software gives band directors accurate student achievement data, consistent feedback for monitoring student progress, and help determining what areas need further attention in class.

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2018 Athletic Hall of Fame Inductees

The Marion Independent School District Athletic Hall of Fame honors former athletes and coaches for their achievements while at Marion High School, and community members for their support for Marion's athletic programs. The Hall of Fame began in 2001 and induction of new members takes place during half-time of the Homecoming football game each fall. Nominations for the Athletic Hall of Fame and Performing Arts Hall of Fame may be submitted to Marion Activities Director Corby Laube for consideration by the committee. Congratulations to this year's Athletic Hall of Fame inductees – Ron Knapp (Community Member, MHS 1984), Bruce Weisinger (Coach), Scott Immerfall (Coach), Jim Simpson (MHS 1968), Eric Huhndorf (MHS 1982), Mike Lembke (MHS 1982), Kelsey (Labs) Quinn (MHS 2009), and Kasey Semler (MHS 2011).

Scholarship Applications

The Foundation oversees many scholarships to benefit Marion High School graduates pursuing postsecondary education. This spring, more than \$40,000 in scholarships will be awarded to Marion graduating seniors and former Marion graduates.

Applications are due February 1 with recipients announced at Honors Night in May. The scholarship application is available online at www.marion-foundation.org/scholarships.



Seniors in Scott Fruehling's Business Economics class this fall include Matthew Brase (left) and Morgan Kunkle.