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Dave & Jan Johnson
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Fostering Education: Dave and Jan Johnson 'All in' on Supporting Alma Mater *Keeley Meier*

Jan (Hovey) '75 and Dave Johnson '74 were close together yet worlds apart for more than two decades until the two Augustana alumni met, built their success stories and began to make an impact on their communities and alma mater. The Johnsons grew up just 10 miles from each other — Jan in Bruce, South Dakota, and Dave in Estelline, South Dakota. Although they shared a Lutheran parish growing up and their years at Augustana overlapped, the couple didn't meet until 1977.

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COMMUNITY EVENTS



Tea Area students on a tour of the bank



Reliabankers serving lunch at St Francis House in Sioux Falls



Wish Kid Emmett was all smiles when he received his camper



Celebrating Estelline Alumni/Rodeo Days



Celebrating during Hartford Jamboree Days



Handing out freebies to local students during field day



Sponsor of Estelline Alumni golf tournament

COMMUNITY EVENTS



Reliabankers participating in Teapot Days parade



Sponsor of Watertown Artwalk
“Nibbles” by Mark Hall



Grilling for staff and students at
Watertown Rangeland & Soil program



Reliabankers volunteering to
assemble beds for Sleep in
Heavenly Peace



Reliabankers team clean-up
day in Watertown



Annual Shred Event raised \$1,825
for Sleep in Heavenly Peace



Helping Sleep in Heavenly Peace with
delivery of a bed for a local child

COMMUNITY EVENTS



Making dreams come true for the amazing children who become Wish Kids



Tea Teacher of the Year Award to Kevin Clark



Independent Living Choices tour of Watertown North



Reliabank team members cleaning up our communities in Hayti and Sioux Falls



Supporting Watertown Boys & Girls Club at the Camel Derby Race



Reliabank team members in Estelline cleaning up the town on a beautiful day



Sponsor of SF Sculpture Walk "Be Kind" by Joe & Terry Malesky



A stellar group of Reliabankers who make the tournament a success every year!

Make-A-Wish®
SOUTH DAKOTA & MONTANA

The 8th Annual Reliabank Make-A-Wish tournament raised an impressive \$8,700 this year, bringing our total fundraising to well over \$40,000 since we began the tournament.

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“I was singing at her cousin's wedding in early December,” Dave said. “I had come home from a European trip where I blew out my MCL (medial collateral ligament). So, I had a cast on from my hip to my ankle. After the wedding, she comes up to me and says, ‘What happened to you?’”
“I am not very forward,” Jan interjected. “In fact, I’m very shy.”



After Dave told her about his skiing injury, Jan asked when the cast would be coming off. “I said, ‘Jan. 11,’” recalled Dave. “She said, ‘Jan. 11 — that's my birthday. Maybe we should celebrate.’” He agreed to a celebration more than a month away. “This was before cell phones, and I didn't get her phone number, so there was no contact whatsoever,” Dave said. “But, five or six weeks after we had our first meeting, we both showed up (for the date).” A year later, they were married.

Although the Johnsons never met while students at Augustana, they both credit the institution with providing them a solid educational background for their success. Dave was drawn to Augustana through the influence of three of his older siblings who attended — Paul Johnson ‘59, Harriet (Johnson) Scott ‘59 and Cyndi Johnson ‘69. Dave, an economics major, sang in the Augustana Choir under the direction of the late Dr. Olaf Malmin, and spent his junior year abroad in Germany and England.

Jan had always loved English, literature and writing, and when it came time to think about college, she had only heard excellent things about the Augustana English Department. When she arrived at Augustana, she solidified English as her major and joined the English club and Kappa Delta Pi, the international honor society of education.

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Following Augustana, Dave attended graduate school at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. In 1975, back in South Dakota, Dave's father was ready to sell his bank, so Dave made the decision to give banking a shot. Just a few months after returning home, Dave's father passed away unexpectedly, and Dave took over management of the bank, now known as Reliabank, at just 23 years old. "Dave became a banker by fire," said Jan.

Dave is the CEO & chairman of family-owned Reliabank. Jan is also involved in the family business — serving on the Reliabank Board of Directors, IT Committee and will eventually succeed Dave as chair of the board. "I never would have dreamt back when I was 21 years old that I would become a banker ... never in my wildest dreams, but I have," said Jan.

While learning the banking industry, Jan also taught high school English for 28 years in Estelline and four years in Watertown, South Dakota. "Then, my dream job landed in my lap, which was teaching composition at Mount Marty College (now University) in Watertown," Jan said. "I did that for 12 years before I retired."

Between banking and teaching, the Johnsons welcomed their sons, Reid and Ethan, who both work for Reliabank. Despite their busy schedules as bank owners and, now, grandparents of seven, the Johnsons have never lost sight of their passions — incorporating each of them into the way they give back to their community and alma mater. The couple's generosity was recognized in September when they were named the state's 2023 Outstanding Philanthropists by the South Dakota Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

"It stems from our ELCA Lutheran faith," Dave said of their desire to give back. "The writer of Luke challenges us saying, 'To whom much is given, much is required.' We've taken that to heart." "We have been very fortunate in our lives," added Jan. "We feel that we have many gifts that have been given to us, so it's really important to us to give back to things and places that mean a lot to us. And, Augie gave us a really good start."



Pictured accepting the Outstanding Philanthropists Award are Ethan, David, Jan, Jessi & Reid Johnson

Throughout the years, the Johnsons have been faithful supporters of Augustana — sponsoring the Jan, Reid & Ethan Johnson Jumping Pit within the Larson Track & Field Complex and a nursing office in the Froiland Science Complex. The Johnsons were also a major supporter of Old Trails and New Roads in South Dakota History, published by Augustana's Center for Western Studies (CWS).

In 2022, Dave and Jan gave a transformative gift to the School of Music, designated for the purchase of new pianos. Augustana received its first shipment of 31 state-of-the-art Yamaha pianos in the spring and summer of 2022.

Hamre Recital Hall, faculty studios and the Pederson-Homan Center Keyboard Lab were the first to receive new pianos. The second phase, set to begin in 2026, will include the large-ensemble rehearsal rooms, recording studio and practice rooms in the lower level of the Fryxell Humanities Center.

Johnson's most recent philanthropic endeavor with the university has been supporting the Augustana Hockey Program and Midco Arena. Dave and Jan are sponsoring the Reliabank Classroom, which will be located inside Midco Arena on Augustana's campus. "Education is very important to us, so a classroom in a sports facility is right up our alley," said Jan. And, it's education they always come back to when the Johnsons consider what's important and where it all started. "Augustana gave both of us a really good background to be successful in our respective careers," Jan said.

"As we're ending our careers, we're able to go back to Augustana and give back so that the next generation has the same opportunities we had. It's just so important to foster education, and if our dollars can help do that, we're in."



Ask a banker for details!



2024 Scholarship Recipients!



Rylan Konrad
Tea Area



Brody Torgerson
Watertown



Austin Reuter
Tri-Valley



Karli Olson
Homeschool



Jordyn Padgett
Watertown



Sabastian Rosenthal
Great Plains Lutheran



Madalene Williams
Estelline



Dominick Heier
Tea Area



Sloan Johannsen
Watertown



Kelsey Vockrodt
West Central



Noah Wallenmeyer
Watertown



Grace Opdahl
Hamlin



Jaren Heil
Harrisburg



Macy Bocek
Willow Lake



Connor Miller
Watertown



Nataley Ebbers
Estelline



Emily Everson
Hamlin



Alyza Atkins
West Central



Benjamin Peterson
Watertown



Sadie Brown
Lincoln



Paige Mahaffy
Castlewood



Boaz Raderschadt
Watertown



Jessen Wiebenga
Tea Area



Garrett Weibenga
Tea Area



Kate Hulscher
Florence



Caden Ching
Estelline