



Stephens College

STEPHENS F.Y.I.



STEPHENS COLLEGE WELCOMES A NEW YEAR WITH MOVE-IN DAY AND FOUNDER'S DAY CELEBRATIONS

As summer draws to a close, Stephens College is abuzz with anticipation. **Move-In Day** for incoming students is just around the corner, filled with the familiar mix of excitement and nerves that mark the beginning of a new chapter in their lives. For many of us, it's a reminder of our own first days on campus, a time when the thrill of new beginnings met the comfort of joining a legacy nearly two centuries in the making.

This year, the excitement is doubly special as it coincides with our annual **Founder's Day** celebration. On August 24th, Stephens College will celebrate its **191st Birthday!**—a milestone that honors our rich history while looking forward to the innovations that will define our future. It's a day to reflect on the three pillars that drive our success: **Impact. Innovation. Legacy.**

In this second volume of our August Stephens FYI newsletter, we're thrilled to share news about some of our prestigious buildings on campus and introduce many of you to the **Stephens College - Iowa Campus**, which has long played home to our Okoboji Summer Theatre and will now be open to other programs under our new Block Schedule



Our two campuses are filled with more than just structures—they are the heart of Stephens College, home to memories and milestones that span generations. We are delighted to share news of their restorations, recognitions, and new opportunities with you. As we walk through our halls of history, we're also mindful of the future, blending the old with the new to shape the future of Stephens College together.

We're excited to share more details soon on how you can participate in this year's celebrations. Keep an eye out for information on how you can make an impact, spread the word, and stay connected with the Stephens community.

Let's make this year one of our most impactful yet as we continue our **journey toward the Bicentennial Celebration in 2033**. Thank you for being a part of the Stephens legacy and for helping us forge a bright and innovative future.



To read previous editions of Stephens F.Y.I. – click [here](#)

Renewing Heritage: Firestone Baars chapel renovations



In 1939, Stephens College students faced a decision at the behest of President James Madison Wood. When asked what structure was necessary to complete their expanding campus, their nearly unanimous voice championed the creation of a chapel. Responding to this call, President Wood enlisted the expertise of Eero Saarinen, a titan of architecture known for his work on the St. Louis Gateway Arch and JFK Airport's

TWA Terminal. Saarinen envisioned the chapel with elegant simplicity: slender white columns supporting a broad, overhanging roof orchestrating a captivating interplay of light and shadow. His design featured floor-to-ceiling windows that bathed the interior in natural light, with each cardinal point door adorned in stained glass depicting the colors of the seasons. Saarinen's insistence on using marble, wood, and glass—materials that naturally age with dignity—ensured the structure would withstand the test of time.

Completed in 1956, the **Firestone Baars Chapel** emerged as a historical beacon and a deeply cherished space for reflection, worship, and community gatherings such as weddings, memorials, and the venerable Vespers tradition. However, this architectural gem requires urgent renovations to preserve its historical and spiritual significance. Despite diligent efforts to maintain its original splendor, the wear from decades of community and public use has become evident.

The restoration project, priced at \$1.2 million, is comprehensive. It aims to rehabilitate the stained-glass windows, enhance the patio and foundation, and perform necessary tuckpointing and brick repairs. Additional improvements will include refinishing the pews, upgrading the roof and gutters, and enhancing the exterior lighting. This investment will preserve Saarinen's visionary design and ensure that the Firestone Baars Chapel remains a cornerstone of spiritual life for future generations at Stephens.

To support the ongoing legacy of the Firestone Baars Chapel, we invite contributions to this vital project [here](#).

Hugh Stephens Library Honored as 2024's "Most Notable Historic Property"



Hugh Stephens Library, a crown jewel of mid-century architecture, has been recognized as the 2024 "Most Notable Historic Property" by the City of Columbia's Historic Preservation Commission. The library, designed by the renowned St. Louis-based architectural firm Murphy and Mackey, epitomizes modernist architectural ideals with its clean lines and integration with the latest technologies of its era. Known for their innovative work on the Climatron at the Missouri Botanical Garden, the firm's

influence is evident in the library's design and functionality.

Constructed in 1964, Hugh Stephens Library stands at the heart of the James Madison Wood Quadrangle, serving as a central hub for academic and community engagement. The library houses the Student Success Center and the Center for Teaching and Learning, offering a range of resources from study spaces to technology labs. Additionally, the library's Penthouse provides breathtaking treetop views of the campus and downtown Columbia, making it a sought-after venue for events by students, alumni, and community members.

"Being recognized as a Most Notable Historic Property underscores the library's architectural significance and role in enhancing our academic community," stated Stephen Bybee, Chairman of the City of Columbia Historic Preservation Commission.

Since 1998, the commission has celebrated local heritage by recognizing properties at least 50 years old, located within Columbia's corporate limits, and displaying significant architectural or historical merits contributing to the city's cultural and aesthetic landscape. The Hugh Stephens Library joins the ranks of other esteemed campus landmarks such as the Stables (2010), Firestone-Baars Chapel (2002), Lela Raney Wood Hall (2000), and Historic Senior Hall (1998) that have previously been honored.

In a related accolade, the South Campus Historic District, encompassing Historic Senior Hall, Wood Hall, Columbia Hall, and President's Home, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2005, further cementing our architectural history.

We invite all Stephens alumni and friends to visit and explore the Hugh Stephens Library as a place of learning and a testament to Stephens College's rich historical and architectural heritage.

Women Veterans Recognition Day



Every year on June 12, our nation honors the anniversary of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, signed in 1948. This pivotal legislation solidified the role of women in America's military, opening doors to enduring careers and equal opportunities. In 2023, thanks to significant efforts by **Elizabeth Herrera**, Stephens' Executive Director for the **Mission**

Promise Kept Program, Missouri recognized this date officially as Women Veterans Appreciation Day, joining 13 other states in this commendation.

This year marked both the 76th anniversary of the Act and the 1st-anniversary celebration of Women Veterans Appreciation Day in Missouri. Stephens College paid tribute to our women veterans' remarkable achievements and contributions through a special event, the Women Veterans Appreciation Day Dinner. During this event, we celebrated two outstanding advocates for veterans: **Representative David Tyson Smith**, who championed the 2023 Missouri bill, and **Valerie Sisson**, a dedicated social worker and Director of the Columbia Vet Center. Ms. Sisson's exceptional leadership at the Vet Center ensures that veterans receive crucial support for PTSD, substance use disorders, and other mental health challenges.

Through these recognitions, Stephens reaffirms its commitment to honoring the service and sacrifice of our women veterans and their ongoing contributions to our community and nation.

Celebrating 66 Seasons at Okoboji Summer Theater



As we close the curtain on the 66th season at the **Okoboji Summer Theater** (OST), we reflect on a summer of significant firsts and exciting expansions.

This year, OST launched the **Boji Bantam Broadway Bootcamp**, a musical theater intensive that took place in July. Designed for individuals aged 12 and above,

this weeklong workshop provided training in musical theater, acting, and movement, culminating in a showcase that allowed participants to show off their newfound skills. Led by seasoned professionals, the program aimed to not only enhance talents but also foster a passion for the performing arts in a nurturing environment. Thanks to our generous community, scholarships were available, ensuring access for all aspiring performers.

Our commitment to growth extends beyond our seasonal programming. Plans are underway to expand our Northwest Iowa campus, including more tiny homes, a learning center, and conference space. These new facilities will support the campus's use throughout nine months of the year, extending far beyond the traditional 9-week theatrical season. This expansion will also benefit the College's new block program, allowing various academic programs to utilize the space in the off-theatre-season. Possible initiatives include collaborations between Stephens' Doris Spiegelberg School of Health Sciences and Okoboji's Lakeside Laboratories and a writers' retreat hosted by the College's MFA in TV + Screenwriting and undergraduate English + Creative Writing programs. These endeavors promise to make OST an even more valuable asset to the College, enriching the educational experiences of many more students and faculty.

"Iowa Campus - Stephens College" operations will continue under the experienced leadership of **Ruth Ann Burke '86**, serving as Director, and **Michael Burke '86**, serving as Director of Campus Operations.

For those looking to contribute to the ongoing success and growth of the Okoboji Summer Theatre, please consider visiting [here](#). Your support helps sustain this cherished institution and ensures that it remains a beacon of learning and creativity in the arts.

Our campus is evolving, honoring both the past and the future. But the heart of Stephens College lies with our people. In the final part of this series, we'll share inspiring updates on our faculty, staff, and, of course, our amazing students. You won't want to miss it—coming soon!

While You're Away

- Join [Stephens Connect](#)
- Shop at [Susie's](#) and sport your Stephens Gear
- Travel with alums: [Stephens Alumni travel opportunities](#)
- Stay tuned to [Giving Day](#) opportunities
 - Founders Day, August 24! Happy 191st Birthday Stephens College!
- Refer Students and Spread the News about [The Stephens Promise](#)
- Follow our social media sites curated especially for Alums:



When You're On Campus

- See a show: [77th Performing Arts Season](#)
- Catch a game: [Athletics Schedules](#)
- Plan a mini-reunion with your friends: [Contact us!](#)
- Bring a prospective student for a [campus visit](#) or [preview day](#)

GIVE. CONNECT. RECRUIT.

Thank you for staying connected to Stephens!