

CROWLEY'S RIDGE COLLEGE

THE INSIDER



FALL 2025

NEW FACES. BOLD VISION. ONE MISSION.

Record Enrollment for Fall 2025, p. 2
CRC Introduces New Campus Minister, p. 4



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The Insider is the feature magazine for Crowley’s Ridge College, developed to inform and connect our alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends. It is published twice a year, during the spring and fall semesters. You may suggest changes, send letters to the editor, and other comments to: nharrell@crc.edu



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UPCOMING EVENTS

October 10-12
Family Weekend

October 15
Faith & Business Success Symposium

November 4
Basketball Home Opener vs. Rust

January 12
Spring Semester Begins

February 14
Homecoming

April 12
Lectureship Kickoff (Youth Night)

April 12-16
CRC Lectureship

April 23
Project ReachOut

May 9
Commencement

June 14
CRC Day

Scan the QR code below to view the complete Pioneer Athletics calendar.



Dates are subject to change. Please visit the www.crcpioneers.com or www.crc.edu for updated information.

Around Campus



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



A YEAR OF RECORD GROWTH, STRONG FAITH, AND BOLD VISION

by DR. RICHARD JOHNSON, President



As we begin another remarkable academic year at Crowley’s Ridge College, I am overwhelmed with gratitude to God for the blessings He continues to pour out on this campus. From record enrollment to new academic opportunities, from exciting campus improvements to generous gifts of land and financial resources, including adjoining acreage to our campus and church property with a few acres in central Arkansas. Every milestone reflects His providence and your steadfast support.

Historic Enrollment and Academic Momentum:

This fall, CRC reached the highest enrollment in our 61 year history. Our official 11th-day headcount stands at 299 students, a 23% increase over last fall and the sixth consecutive annual increase since 2020. Our full-time equivalent rose to 190, and the number of residential students increased to 114, strengthening campus life and community. We are equally excited about the 124 high school students, a jump from 74 in Fall 2024, now earning college credit through our growing concurrent enrollment program through partnerships with schools in Central and Northeast Arkansas, and the West Memphis area. This surge affirms our commitment to offering a Christ-centered education that meets students where they are.

Academically, CRC received a ten-year reaffirmation of institutional accreditation through 2034-35 from the Higher Learning Commission. The review team commended CRC for strong governance, leadership, having implemented a successful, detailed annual zero-based budgeting process, fundraising successes, and for already implementing some of their recommendations to make other improvements to push the college forward as we navigate the challenging field of higher education. Let me add here that operating as a Christian college also provides other challenges but fantastic opportunities that CRC is blessed to undertake.

We also celebrated new academic pathways. Our 2+2 articulation agreement with Black River Technical College provides a seamless transfer for students pursuing business administration and marketing degrees. In addition, the HLC approved a new Associate of Science in Business Administration without additional cost or conditions. These initiatives help students stay

close to home while earning degrees that prepare them for meaningful careers. Other exciting academic opportunities are being considered at this very moment!

Facilities: Preparing for Future CRC Students:

Physical growth on campus continues to move forward. This summer, CRC has nearly completed all major upgrades to our wastewater system by installing lift stations at every building and new lines throughout campus. Next, we will decommission the sewage pond, which has been in use since the 1960s. The cost of this expansive project is approximately \$1 million and ensures reliable infrastructure for decades to come, which is crucial to the College’s continued growth. Thanks to strong local and political partnerships, CRC secured low-interest funding, which we are in the process of trying to replace with grant funding so that this large debt is no longer on the College’s books.

With that critical step behind us, we now turn to the construction of our new \$3.5 million state-of-the-art Science Building. Approximately \$1.5 million is needed before I can move forward with the contractor to begin construction on this new facility. Would you be one of the donors that helps us raise the \$1.5 million as illustrated in this table?

# Donors	Gift Amount	Totals
2	150,000	300,000
4	100,000	400,000
6	50,000	300,000
10	25,000	250,000
25	10,000	250,000
47		\$ 1,500,000

Are you open to a visit so that we can tell you more about this new facility and the degree programs it will support, leading to careers in the mental health and wellness fields, as we partner with Harding University, Freed-Hardeman University, high schools, and the local community? We would love to begin construction in early 2026 and start using the new facility as soon as it is completed and ready. Having this new state-of-the-art Science Building will position CRC to expand science programs and attract future generations of students.

Fundraising Strength and Lasting Legacy

The generosity of CRC’s extended family continues to amaze me.

- CRC Day 2025 gifts totaled a record amount of \$141,518 and were given by 60 different congregations of the churches of Christ and their members. 100% of CRC Day funds are used for preacher training and Bible educational materials, Bible major field trips, including the Restoration Tour, and attending Lectureships at Harding University and Freed Hardeman University, costs for CRC’s annual Bible Lectureship, furnishing multiple Bible classes for all students, and our Campus Ministry program, the Ridge Connection.
- The Vernon and Betty Midgett Bible Scholarship Fund was created July 30, 2025, through the generosity of their daughter, Tracy Tidwell, and her husband, Mark, to provide Bible scholarships. Tracy and Mark encourage others who knew her parents to contribute to this endowment fund if they are interested in supporting Crowley’s Ridge College and honoring her parents, Vernon and Betty Midgett.

These types of gifts are laying the groundwork for a stronger future through planned giving while facilitating endowment growth. Several friends are exploring charitable gift annuities and estate gifts, ensuring that CRC can support scholarships, faculty, and facilities for generations. I invite each of you to consider including CRC in your will or estate plan. Tim Wooldridge and I will be happy to visit with you in your home at your convenience to discuss these types of gifts in person. I often help individuals plan their estate, provide for their heirs, while avoiding paying taxes, or to understand the benefits of a charitable gift annuity, which can provide you, or you and a spouse, a payout rate for life of up to 9.9% or more, depending on age(s).

Strengthening Leadership and Stewardship

CRC is blessed with a committed and capable Board of Trustees. These Christian men and women have been extremely valuable partners and such wise counsel and friends to me. At the quarterly meeting in June,

Carie Samuel was unanimously elected Vice Chair following the retirement of long-time trustee Dan Newsom, whose encouraging and wise advice has blessed CRC for many years. The Board also adopted a new conflict of interest and confidentiality policy along with a new board orientation training manual, further strengthening CRC’s governance. On the financial front, the Board approved a modest tuition increase to \$530 per credit hour beginning fall 2026, along with careful budgeting analysis to support operations, while keeping CRC among the most affordable private Christian colleges in the nation.

Looking Forward in Faith

As we celebrate these achievements, we keep our eyes on the road ahead.

- The Faith and Business Symposium in October will draw business leaders and students to explore how Christian faith transforms the marketplace.
- CRC’s new strategic plan for 2026–2030 is in the works. A name will be decided soon. This new strategic plan will help guide CRC to new levels of impact over the next five years. More on our new strategic plan will be posted on our website and in a future edition of The Insider.

Each blessing tells a larger story: God is at work on the Ridge. He is using your prayers, your gifts, and your advocacy to make CRC stronger academically, spiritually, and financially. I am humbled to serve alongside such dedicated faculty, staff, trustees, alumni, and friends. Thank you for believing in the mission of Crowley’s Ridge College. Together, we are ensuring that CRC remains a place where students encounter Christ, excel in their studies, and prepare to serve in a challenging world. More CRC students shining their light is just what this world needs.

With gratitude and hope,

Richard

“You will be enriched in every way so that you may be generous on every occasion, which is producing through us thanksgiving to God.” 2 Corinthians 9:11

CRC'S NEWEST CAMPUS MINISTER

MEET JOSH AND LAURA LAZZARINO

by NATALIE HARRELL, Editor

Crowley's Ridge College is excited to introduce Josh Lazzarino as its new Campus Minister, alongside his wife Laura. Together, the Lazzarinis step into this role with both deep humility and joyful anticipation, carrying a vision to help students not only deepen their faith but also to live it out in bold and missional ways.

"The college years are some of the most formative when it comes to faith," Josh shared. "Our work is simple: the maturation and discipleship of CRC's student body. We are working to not only develop faith, but develop a missional lifestyle in the students here."

For Josh and Laura, ministry is personal. Being students themselves, their goal is not to provide students with just another program or event, but to walk with them hand-in-hand as they grow in Christ. "Our goal for this ministry is to disciple college-aged students into a real, intimate relationship with Jesus," Josh explained. "Our churches, this country, and the world is in dire need of people who passionately follow Jesus with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength. Therefore, our place is to walk alongside the students here and empower them to be kingdom workers. We desire to 'equip the saints for the work of ministry' (Eph. 4:12)."

One way the Lazzarinis are pursuing this vision is through this year's Ridge Connection theme: "Encounter." Each week, students are diving into biblical accounts of people whose lives were transformed by meeting Jesus. The Lazzarinis hope this will inspire a community at CRC where students seek to encounter Christ daily—not just as Savior, but as Sustainer. This discipleship-driven theme is more than a study series; it's a lifestyle. "We work toward this theme by a tireless effort towards discipleship," Josh said. "That means students constantly in our home, meals together,



prayers together, and life together. We encounter Jesus by engaging Him together."

The Ridge Connection ministry is also building new bridges and deeper roots this year. A close partnership has been established with the Center Hill Church of Christ, a congregation that has long welcomed CRC students into its community. Now, through intentional collaboration, students are not only receiving hospitality but are becoming more fully connected with the life of the church.

In addition, Ridge Connection is investing in student leadership through a newly formed ministry team, comprised of student leaders Hayden Robinson, Daisy Kennon, Noah Dahnke, and Georgia Spinks. This team is already helping shape the ministry's direction—discipling one another, assisting with events, engaging in weekly Bible studies, and soon launching their own discipleship groups across campus.

Looking ahead, Josh and Laura dream of Ridge Connection becoming a spark for something greater. That dream is already beginning to take shape. "There is a movement on campus beginning—young people are choosing to follow Jesus!" Josh stated. "We are so blessed to be a part of what God is doing in the lives of the students at CRC."

As the Lazzarinis lead CRC students in this new season of Ridge Connection, they carry with them both a deep reverence for the work ahead and an infectious hope for what God will do.

Please join us in welcoming Josh and Laura to the CRC family and in praying for their ministry as they walk alongside our students, guiding them to encounter Jesus in transformative ways.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS:



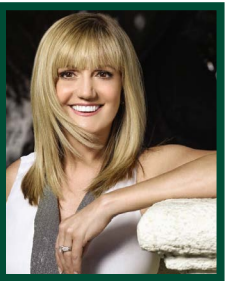
Jay Lyles '13 holds a Bachelor of Arts in Biblical Studies from Crowley's Ridge College. He is the preaching minister at the Slicer Street Church of Christ in Kennett, Missouri. Jay was recently recognized as CRC's July 2025 alumni spotlight.



Misti (Jones) Meredith '00 is a first grade teacher at Crowley's Ridge Academy in Paragould, Arkansas. She received her Associate's degree from CRC in 2000 before going on to finish her degree in Early Childhood Education. Misti has spent her entire career in Christian education, teaching music and first grade. She was recently recognized as CRC's August 2025 alumni spotlight.



Gabriel Chaffin '06 received his Associate's degree from Crowley's Ridge College and went on to serve in the United States Marine Corps, where he retired in April 2022. Gabriel is currently working to complete his Biblical Studies degree in May 2026 and serves as the Youth Minister at the Long Beach Church of Christ in Long Beach, Mississippi. He was recently recognized as CRC's September 2025 alumni spotlight.



Cecilia (Leite) Stoll '83 of Edmond, Oklahoma is the Executive National Vice President for Arbonne International and CEO of Cecilia Stoll Enterprises. After attending CRC, she finished a degree in Psychology from Oklahoma Christian University in 1986. Cecilia says that she believes we were created by God for a purpose, and that her business has been "an incredible vehicle for us to become what we were created to be." Leaders in her business have helped underdeveloped countries in many areas, built orphanages, shelters, and even churches. She was recently recognized as CRC's October 2025 alumni spotlight.



ATHLETIC HIGHLIGHTS

PIONEER ATHLETICS

by WILSON TEAGUE, Sports Information Director

Crowley's Ridge College student-athletes are off to a strong start for the 2025–26 seasons with the Ridge roaring back to life as three programs—Volleyball, Cross Country, and Golf—begin their seasonal campaigns. With new leadership across all three programs, early victories, and players earning recognition, Pioneer Athletics is charging into the new year with confidence, talent, and purpose. As the seasons unfold, all signs point to another year of growth and achievement on and off the field.

Lady Pioneer Volleyball

Leading the way this fall is Pioneer Volleyball, already deep into its 2025 season with eleven matches completed. The team stands at 3–8 overall and 2–0 in conference play, under the leadership of Head Coach Carol Brotman, now in her first full season, and Assistant Coach Laura Holcomb, who joins the staff for her inaugural year. After making a historic appearance in last year's American Midwest Conference (AMC) Tournament, the Lady Pioneers are pushing for a return—and early signs show they're on track. The team was preseason ranked 4th in the AMC and has begun to live up to that billing through their grit, growth, and determination. Despite a tough start with a challenging road schedule, the Pioneers are gaining momentum, winning three of their last four matches. These key wins hint at the team's growing potential and resilience as the season progresses. Three Lady Pioneers have already earned AMC Player of the Week honors this season: Junior Transfer Amiyah Saxton (Attacker of the Week), Junior Mallory Hollis (Defender of the Week), and Junior Jillan Glasgow (Setter of the Week). With this kind of talent and momentum, the future looks bright for the Lady Pioneers.

Pioneer Cross Country

Pioneer Cross Country kicked off its season on August 30th at the City Auto Memphis Twilight Classic, hosted by Christian Brothers University. Under new leadership from Head Coach Phoenix Beal, the men's and women's teams are already making strides—literally and figuratively. Their second meet, the Lyon College Invitational on September 5th in Batesville, AR, brought home early success. Two runners medaled in the 5K races:

- Arthur Johnson (Senior, Jackson, MS) – 13th place, Men's Division
- Madison Prysock (Freshman, Slater, MO) – 12th place, Women's Division

The American Midwest Conference Meet is set for Thursday, November 6th at Willmore Park in St. Louis, MO.

Pioneer Golf

The third and final Pioneer program to kick off its season is led by yet another first-year head coach, as Pioneer Golf transitions from veteran coach Adam Meeker to the up-and-coming Brady Flynn. Flynn is no stranger to CRC, having been part of the Men's Basketball program for the last three years, serving under Athletic Director and Head Coach Chris Perkins. Flynn and the new and reformed team, including Freshmen Slayde Barker, Maverick French, Christopher Riddle, and Christian Walls, Sophomore Blake Brothers (pictured left), and Seniors Kyle Russell and John Wilson embarked on their season opener on September 15th at the Williams Baptist Fall Invitational in Kennett, MO. Walls finished 17th overall with a score of +6 and Riddle finished 26th overall, scoring +11. The Pioneers placed 9th and they look forward to the remainder of their Fall schedule, which is as follows:

Sept. 29th: Lyon College Fall Invitational, Batesville, AR.

Oct. 6th: Missouri Baptist Fall Invitational, Alton, IL.

Oct. 13th: Central Baptist College Fall Invitational, Conway, AR.

Honor Roll of Donors

Crowley’s Ridge College is blessed with a generous family of supporters.The next few pages are **CRC’s “Honor Roll Listing of Donors”** followed by those giving **“Memorial & Honor Gifts”** for special friends and loved ones.This listing represents gifts from February 27 - September 18, 2025. CRC would not be possible without generous support of our donors. **Thank you friends for making this wonderful Christian ministry possible and helping us to bless our students each day.**

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February 27-September 18, 2025

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Gerald and Linda Burrow
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Carolyn Cason
Coburn, Juanice
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Virginia Lucille “Liz” Miller
Morgan, Boyd
Jim and Kay Gowen
Morgan, Gerald & Emma Lou
Teresa Johnson
Neblett, Luther
Kenneth and Kay Monroe
Parker, Charles
Phyllis Parker
Peel, Paula Jeanne
First Community Bank - Batesville
Riddle, Sheila
Randy Riddle
Rowe, Brian
Mark and Anne Rowe
Rowe, Chester and Virginia
Mark and Anne Rowe
Seay, Paula
Roy Seay
Seay, Ronald Wayne
Roy Seay
Singleton, Pat
Leola Atchison
Gerald J. Butler
Jeanette Hoskins
Richard and Andrea Johnson
Ken and Melyssa Kinnear
Smith, Dora Frances
Rebecca Redman
Smith, Dr. Mark
Logan and Natalie Harrell
Smith, Fran
Jeanette Hoskins
Smith, Sue
Rebecca Redman
Stayton, Glenda and Johnny
Leon Stayton
Trent, Carroll
Darrell and Rose Fears
Vinson, Stan
Linda Vinson
Wallace, Renee
Shelia Wilkerson
Wilkerson, Phil
Darrell and Rose Fears
Shelia Wilkerson
Wilson, Donald Ray
Roy Seay

Honors

February 27 - September 18, 2025

Crum, Bernie

Janice Crum

Furby, Spencer and Melissa

Kelly and Christy Phipps

Furby, Spencer, Melissa, and Abby

Frank and Diann Reddick

Johnson, Richard and Andrea

Chuck and Donna Conley

Josey, Elizabeth

Geraldine Hartman

Lazzarino, Josh and Laura

"Congratulations on your marriage!"

Zach and KristyAnn Grimes

Macon, Nickie

Kelly and Christy Phipps

McGowan, Trent and Tori

"Congratulations on your marriage!"

Zach and KristyAnn Grimes

Osborn, Brian and Lesa

Carolyn Wood

Phillips, Kyzer

Adam Lyles

Pierce, Jeremy

Chuck and Donna Conley

Zach and KristyAnn Grimes

Pillow, Joe and Karen

Carolyn Wood

Richardson, James

Zach and KristyAnn Grimes

Smith, Art

"Art Smith Bible Endowment"

Roy Seay

Summitt, Marta

Chuck and Donna Conley

APPLY TODAY!



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Paragould, AR 72450

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THE FINAL SHOT: Sophomore Garett O'Dell quickly tries to return the rope swing to his Pioneer Day teammates (September 18th). Pioneer Day is one of the longest standing traditions at CRC.