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LEGACY LEDGER

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER OF LEGACY NAFC ALUMNI



A Message from the NAFC Education Foundation

Sherri McKeen, Alumni Coordinator

School is back in session, and we could not be more excited!

We are proud to announce that starting this year, our educators can apply for up to $750 in funding through Great Classroom Grants, an increase from years past. This means more support for the tools, supplies, and creative ideas that make a real difference in our classrooms. Our teachers pour so much into their students every day, and this extra funding helps them do even more. None of it would be possible without the generosity of our donors. We are grateful to be a part of a community that invests in our schools.

We want to wish all of our New Albany Floyd County educators, students (and parents), and staff a phenomenal 2026-27 school year! Here is to a year full of reasons to celebrate.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Amanda Beam, Guest Contributor

“Justice has nothing to do with what goes on in a courtroom; justice is what comes out of a courtroom,” defense attorney Clarence Darrow once said. Our alumni this month know a thing or two about serving the greater good.

From her childhood dream of becoming a lawyer to leading the law department for the City of Lawrence, **Amber Finley (NAHS ’02)** has built her career around improving her community. As a former president of both the Marion County Bar Association and Junior League of Indianapolis, her civic leadership has also earned her numerous honors. Through it all, Amber thanks those who have contributed to her success, and, in turn, is helping to mentor the next generation.

Matt Schad (FCHS ’86) has spent his life looking out for others. A longtime trial lawyer, he has built a distinguished legal career, a highlight of which was winning Floyd County’s largest-ever verdict. Outside the courtroom, Matt carries on his family’s tradition of community service, demonstrating his belief that you can’t be a spectator when others need help.

Thanks to all the attorneys, judges, clerks and legal assistants who work to make our communities safe and strong.

Standing on the shoulders of giants: Amber Finley (NAHS ‘02)



Whether she’s speaking to a civic organization or being inducted into the New Albany High School Hall of Fame, attorney and civic leader Amber Finley makes a point of honoring those who came before her. To do so, she often borrows the words of Sir Isaac Newton.

“If I have seen further,” Newton once wrote, “it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants.”

The Finley family’s roots in Floyd County stretch back to 1828. Because of their farm’s remote location and its proximity to the Ohio River, evidence suggests her ancestors assisted those traveling the Underground Railroad. In more modern times, her grandfather William “Bill” Finley, Sr. graduated from what was then known as Scribner High School, and her mother Lisa Finley graduated from NAHS. Her uncle William “Bill” Finley, Jr., also an NAHS graduate, played on the school’s 1973 boys basketball state championship team.

“Who I am is because of all the amazing people in my family and so many others who have poured into me,” Amber said. “I’m standing on their shoulders in the things that I do.”

“Who I am is because of all the amazing people in my family and so many others who have poured into me,” Amber said. “I’m standing on their shoulders in the things that I do.”

And, oh boy, has Amber done a lot academically, professionally and personally. Along the way, she’s made it a priority to lift others up, creating opportunities for the next generation to stand on the shoulders of giants, too.

A 2002 NAHS graduate, Amber knew she wanted to be an attorney since first grade.

“(Becoming an attorney) was just one of those things that you feel like it’s just destined to be,” she said.
Alongside excelling in the classroom, Amber participated in the Radio/TV program at NAHS under the direction of beloved longtime director and teacher Lee Kelly. Throughout her entire K-12 education, she never missed a single day of school.

But what would be the next step in her educational journey? A college prep program at NAHS started by June Huggins helped Amber find the answer. On a tour of Tennessee State University, she knew the college was for her. She graduated in 2007 with a degree in political science.

It was after college that one of her mentors, Floyd County Superior Court 3 Judge Maria Granger, entered her life.

Amber’s grandmother, Doris Finley (a Jeffersonville High School graduate who has resided in New Albany for over 70 years), shared a newspaper article with Amber about the Indiana Conference for Legal Education Opportunity (ICLEO) program. Amber was very interested in participating in the program and meeting the attorney from New Albany who was a longtime supporter and board member of ICLEO. That attorney happened to be Judge Granger. At the suggestion of her grandfather Bill, Amber attended an event later that year and was able to meet Judge Granger. The aspiring attorney applied to the ICLEO summer program and to law school and was accepted to both.

Following her first year at IU Robert H. McKinney School of Law, she also interned for the judge.

“So, I came home for the summer, worked with her, and learned so much. That was my first year of law school and her first year as judge. She’s been a great mentor, a great friend to me all these years now,” Amber said.

In 2011, Amber earned her J.D. from IU Robert H. McKinney School of Law. She passed the New York bar exam that same year and the Indiana bar exam in 2013, both on her first attempt.

From there, Amber built a career spanning both the public and private sectors.

In her current role as corporation counsel for the City of Lawrence, Amber leads the law department for the Indiana city of about 50,000 people. Before that, Amber was associate general counsel at The Health & Hospital Corporation of Marion County. She also worked at Eli Lilly and Co. (Lilly), where she negotiated clinical trial contracts, including contracts supporting the development of COVID-19 therapies during the global pandemic. Prior to her time at Lilly, Amber served as a deputy attorney general in the Office of the Indiana Attorney General.

“Relationships have been so important in my life,” Amber said when asked what advice she’d give to students. “Advancing from one opportunity to the next … it was based on building genuine relationships with people who know your skill set and will speak your name in rooms when you’re not even there.”

Her leadership roles in community organizations are equally impressive.

Amber has served as president of both the Marion County Bar Association and the Junior League of Indianapolis, both with more than a century of impact in the Indianapolis community. The renowned attorney continues to sit on the IU McKinney School of Law Board of Visitors and the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites Board. And next year, she'll assume the presidency of the Indianapolis Bar Foundation.

Amber's leadership and contributions to the legal profession have also earned numerous honors, including the Indiana Lawyer Leadership in Law Up and Coming Lawyer Award (2021), the Indianapolis Business Journal Forty Under 40 Award (2022), Junior Achievement of Central Indiana's Indy's Best and Brightest Award, Overall Winner in the Law Category (2023), and the Marion County Bar Association Outstanding Service Award (2024).

For Amber, her commitment to helping others remains the same.

"One thing that will always continue throughout my life is I'm going to be there to support and uplift others," she said. "Just growing up and seeing my mother and father, grandparents, and others in the community always giving back, always there, supporting other people, it really put that on my heart to be of service to others. That's your legacy."

Amber is no stranger to the Legacy Ledger. We first shared her story in our November 2020 issue, and six years later, her impact continues to grow.

The G.O.A.T. who looks out for others: Matt Schad (FCHS '86)



Matt Schad has always been the guy who watches out for those around him.

Take high school. When severe storms threatened the area, Matt roosted on Floyd Central High School's roof, walkie-talkie in hand. As a member of Mr. Endris's Tornado Watchers Club, the Greenville native learned from the earth science teacher how to identify threatening cloud formations.

If he spotted a suspicious cloud, he'd radio down to the group's headquarters.

"That was basically the warning system," the 1986 FCHS graduate said. "We tornado watchers were up there keeping you guys safe, and you didn't even know."

Throughout his legal career, Matt has continued helping others weather storms. The trial lawyer has practiced in Southern Indiana for more than 25 years, and the $22 million verdict he secured in a child toxic exposure case remains the largest in Floyd County history.

Add in his dedication to local nonprofits, and it's easy to see why Matt is a G.O.A.T. of Floyd County.

But, long before his courtroom victories, he cared for some different goats on his family farm in the knobs. Here, he grew up in a log cabin that had neither heat nor air conditioning.

Farm chores might have filled his childhood, but his father, attorney Larry Schad, helped shape the career that followed. As a city court judge, Larry created one of the first drug and alcohol programs in the state. He also gave back to the community through serving on different governmental and nonprofit boards.

"My dad was my hero growing up," said Matt. "I just learned by example from him. He told us all at work and at home that when you've been lucky and you've had a lot of favor in your life, that's just part of it to help out. He was real good about that."

Another person who had a dramatic effect on Matt's life was his Latin tutor, Alice Ranck. Starting in eighth grade, he started taking private Latin lessons with the NAHS teacher. Her rigorous standards helped prepare him for university and beyond.

"It was just the most intellectually brutal thing that you could ever do," said Matt. "Miss Ranck was so sweet, but very demanding, and you just wanted to please her. You did not want to let her down."

Studying Latin in high school also influenced Matt's college interests. At Indiana University, the Highlander graduated with separate degrees in Latin, Ancient Greek and Ancient Civilizations.

"My feeling back then was that is the same education that Thomas Jefferson had and Winston Churchill had … it just trained your mind," Matt said. "Law school seemed pretty easy compared to that."

Following college, he went on to receive his J.D. from Florida State University College of Law in 1994.

After graduating, Matt joined the Army as a JAG officer, eventually becoming its chief military prosecutor in Central and South America.

In 1998, Matt returned to the area and started to practice law with his father. While Larry passed away in 2021, Matt's brother Sam and two of his children work at the firm, continuing the family's legal legacy.

"It was just a kind of a natural fit, and I'm so glad I did it," said Matt. "Practicing with him (my father) and Sam, in the family business, it's been so incredibly rewarding."

In his free time, the local attorney enjoys traveling in his camper out West and playing the guitar. He's a member of several local bands, including- you guessed it- The GOATS, which donate their time and tunes to various nonprofits.

"As a lawyer, you see so many people who just go through terrible things… The natural thing to do is to help out," he said. "You can't be a spectator. You have to put some time back into people."



Great Classroom Grants Kick Off the 2026-27 School Year

This August, the NAFC Education Foundation awarded the first round of Great Classroom Grants for the 2026-27 school year: **74 educators, $54,036 invested** in NAFC classrooms. Thanks to the continued generosity of our donors, the per-educator grant limit has grown to **$750**, giving even more resources to educators so they can bring their ideas to life.

Here are just a few examples of your investment at work this month:

- **Georgetown Elementary**: hands-on manipulatives for kindergarten literacy and math centers
- **Slate Run Elementary**: class sets of high-interest books for an independent reading and Lunch Bunch Book Club program
- **Scribner Middle School**: sensors and connectors for the school's brand-new Honors Robotics class
- **Floyd Central High School**: supplies to maintain the classroom aquariums and terrariums that have given students hands-on biology experience for more than a decade
- **New Albany High School**: durable percussion hardware for Concert Band, Marching Band, and Percussion Ensemble
- **Prosser Career Education Center**: professional baking and cake decorating equipment for Culinary and Hospitality students

And this is only the first round. From reading programs and robotics to classroom animals and career training, these grants are already making a difference for students across NAFC schools.

Thank you to every donor who makes Great Classroom Grants possible. Your generosity means teachers can spend less time worrying about supplies and more time doing what they do best: teaching.



JOIN US ON FACEBOOK!

Stay updated on your Floyd County classmates, discover thrilling events in your NAFC school community, and learn firsthand about the NAFC Education Foundation by connecting with us at facebook.com/LegacyNAFCAlumni.

The New Albany Floyd County Education Foundation is a not-for-profit organization that works in conjunction with NAFC Schools to provide privately funded supplemental resources and programs to students, teachers, and schools. Legacy NAFC is the official alumni support group of the NAFC Education Foundation and New Albany Floyd County Schools.

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www.NAFCEdFoundation.org/alumni

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