

The Chagnon hall of fame

Written by Skylar Miller

The first bell of the day rings at 8 a.m., but, for the Chagnon family, their day started hours ago. Each lunchbox is packed and lesson plans are finalized. Across each generation and grade level, from the Spanish classroom to special education, this lineage of kindhearted and inspirational people continues to populate the school's halls with their bright smiles and extraordinary stories. The Chagnon family has grown to be a notable presence in the Gretna High School community, with deep roots in education and a commitment to inspiring future generations.

Sarah Chagnon began her journey in education as a student at Norris High School in Firth, Nebraska, from 1992 until 1995. During this time, technology in schools looked quite different; the internet was still new. This was a time when the N64 and floppy discs were still all the rage.

"We didn't have cellphones. We also didn't have laptops or iPads," Sarah Chagnon said. "All of our assignments were paper and pencil, so were tests and quizzes. We researched things in the library using encyclopedias and other books. Typing class was on actual typewriters, and passing periods were only three minutes. I took all of the same required classes, had some electives, homecoming, prom, pep rallies, homework and had some amazing teachers."

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-ZOE CHAGNON

After completing her studies, Sarah Chagnon embarked on her teaching career, and, even though it was just over two decades ago, she found herself back where her passions for teaching all began, even if it was at a different school.

The Chagnon family moved to Gretna 17 years ago when Sarah got a job as a teacher at Thomas Elementary School. This is where she enrolled her three children, Zoe, Alex and Drew. Her close involvement in their education was perhaps a catalyst for their tight familial bond. As her children learned to navigate their schooling, Zoe became the first of the Chagnon children to experience the halls of Gretna High School.

Zoe was a key member of the Dragons cheerleading team and developed a deep-rooted passion for foreign languages, which her own teachers inspired.

"Señora Muhs and Señora Miller inspired me to become a Spanish teacher! I wouldn't want to teach anywhere else! Gretna is incredibly important to me, and I want to give back to the school that has shaped me into who I am," **Zoe Chagnon** said. "It has always been my dream to return to GHS and have the opportunity to inspire students just as my teachers inspired me."

As she completed her senior year and graduated in 2021, Zoe committed to Northwest Missouri State to pursue a career in education. During this time, she spent a year abroad in Spain where she learned the country's culture and environment so she could better enhance her teaching skills.

Last year marked Zoe's first year as a teacher at Gretna High School. Zoe and Sarah also achieved remarkable success as they led the cheer team to the UCA Nationals in Orlando, Florida, where they returned home rocking a title of third place in the nation. This achievement has marked a significant milestone in both of their careers. Sarah also began teaching at GHS this year.

"I love getting to work with my mom, she is my best friend," Zoe said. "I also love that I get to make connections with students who already know my brother (Drew.) It gives us something in common."

This close family dynamic provides freshman Drew with a unique support system as he navigates his high school experience, although he still believes he's just like any other kid.

"I feel like nothing really changes for me. I go to my classes and everything," **Drew Chagnon** said. "It's just a lot of kids know my mom and sister are teachers and coach the cheerleaders."



Drew, Sarah and Zoe Chagnon.
Photo courtesy of Oliver Schrock

"I have become a more involved person," said Colin Taylor, 26