

Park University Announces Top 10 Events, Stories from 2023

PARKVILLE, MISSOURI, USA, January 19, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Park University celebrated another noteworthy year in 2023 as the University and its students, employees and alumni garnered international media attention, and earned a variety of honors.

Park's Office of Strategic Communications compiled the University's biggest events/stories of the year, and asked three members of the University's staff and two Kansas City public relations professionals to pick their top 10 moments from 2023. The voting was tight as only two of the 29 events/stories on the poll were named on all five ballots and two others appeared on four ballots. In fact, 25 of the 29 events/stories received at least one vote.

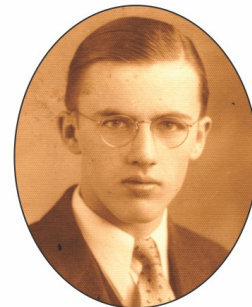
The top 10 Park University stories/events from 2023:

1. — The release of the blockbuster biographical film "Oppenheimer" over the summer put Park University and its Frances Fishburn Archives and Special Collections in the [spotlight in Kansas City region news outlets in late July](#) and early August. Three Park University alumni were connected to the Manhattan Project — a research and development program in World War II that produced the first nuclear weapons — a main feature in "Oppenheimer." Joseph McKibben, '33, Ph.D., Hugh Richards, '39, Ph.D., and John Cory, '42, participated in the Manhattan Project, two of whom played significant roles.

<https://www.park.edu/news/crows-nest-september-7-2023/>



JOSEPH MCKIBBEN



HUGH RICHARDS



JOHN CORY

Photos courtesy of Park University

Park University alumni Joseph McKibben, Hugh Richards and John Cory were a part of the Manhattan Project.

2. — Park University's flagship Parkville (Mo.) Campus, and specifically, iconic Mackay Hall, was the subject of [stories that appeared in Kansas City region news media on April 10](#). Mackay Hall's clock tower was struck by lightning during a morning storm, prompting numerous fire and emergency crews to be summoned to the scene.

3. — An article authored by Matt Harris, Ph.D., associate professor of political science, was [published in The Conversation on July 24](#). The article, which was also picked up by media outlets around the globe, was titled

"The Taylor Swift Official State Sandwich: Politicians Understand that Swifties are a Key Demographic."



Iconic Mackay Hall on Park University's flagship campus in Parkville, Mo.

4. — Park University received a \$108,758 grant from U.S. Trust: Victor E. Speas Foundation in January in support of the Sport and Exercise Science and Nursing programs. The grant allowed the Sport and Exercise Science program to purchase a portable metabolic analyzer — a multipurpose laboratory and research-grade medical testing device with health, fitness and sport-specific testing applications. For the Nursing program, the grant allowed for the purchase of two clinical skills simulation mannequins, which are designed to meet educational requirements for clinical nursing skills from task training through advanced patient care scenarios, as well as for two hospital beds for the mannequins. The grant amount includes equipment, accessories, shipping/handling, staff time and training.

<https://www.park.edu/news/crows-nest-february-3-2023/>

5. — Park University held its Kansas City Area Commencement at Cable Dahmer Arena in Independence, Mo., for the first time. The May event included 705 students eligible to participate in the ceremony. Cliff Illig, principal owner of Major League Soccer's Sporting Kansas City franchise and retired co-founder of Cerner Corp., presented the keynote address.

<https://www.park.edu/news/kca-commencement-2023/>

6. — Claude English, retired director of athletics and former men's basketball head coach at Park University's flagship Parkville (Mo.) Campus, was a part of the 2023 class of inductees into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame.

<https://www.park.edu/news/crows-nest-april-6-2023/>

7. — Zackery Fritz, a sophomore nursing major and a member of Park University's Parkville (Mo.) Campus esports team, was tabbed as the Heart of America Athletic Conference's first-ever

Esports League of Legends Player of the Year on Oct. 26. Fritz helped lead Park University to the HAAC tournament championship on Oct. 28 as the Pirates, the No. 4 seed in the tournament, pulled off two upsets to win the title.

<https://parkathletics.com/news/2023/10/26/LoL102623.aspx>

8. — Matt Harris, Ph.D., associate professor of political science, participated in two live interviews that aired on KCBS-AM in San Francisco on Dec. 6 and on 630 CHED (Edmonton, Canada) / QR Radio (Calgary, Canada) on Dec. 8 related to an article Harris authored originally in July 2023 for The Conversation about Taylor Swift being a political influencer (see No. 3 above).

<https://www.audacy.com/stations/kcbsradio/shows/kcbs-radio-midday-news-741ad/episodes/a5b3fe226e0c>

https://dcs.megaphone.fm/CORU9856769456.mp3?key=1ffaef2b91384169a030ff08ded84806&request_event_id=01810e1d-c7af-4668-b9b8-ab48034de413

9. — Steve Youngblood, associate professor of communication arts and director of the Center for Global Peace Journalism, was selected in May as a 2023-24 Fulbright Scholar by the U.S. Department of State and the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board for the third time in his career (2001 and 2007). During the 2023-24 academic year, Youngblood is teaching at Moldova State University in the capital city of Chisinau, working on peace journalism and a project to counter misinformation.

<https://www.park.edu/news/youngblood-named-fulbright-scholar/>

10. — (tie) The documentary “More Than A Medal,” which explores the work of the Valor Medals Review Project by Park University’s George S. Robb Centre for the Study of the Great War, was placed on availability on YouTube, CuriosityStream, HistoryHit and Vimeo. The 30-minute film, produced by Lane Deer Films in cooperation with the Robb Centre, interweaves the efforts of the researchers working against time, untold heroic stories of courage on the battlefields of France, on the seas and in the air, and the experience of modern-day descendants as they maintain cautious hope that family members will be recognized.

https://youtu.be/JKISrbMa_uM

10. — (tie) The Park University Parkville (Mo.) Campus men’s volleyball team came away with five of the six major awards announced by the Heart of America Athletic Conference in March. Leading the way was junior outside hitter Joao Friedrich, who was selected as the HAAC Player of the Year and Attacker of the Year. Freshman setter Eduardo Faquin was tabbed as the Setter of the Year, while Samuel Essilfie, opposite hitter, was named Freshman of the Year. Mike Talamantes, Park’s director of volleyball and men’s/women’s volleyball head coach, was named Coach of the Year.

<https://www.heartofamericaconference.com/sports/mvball/2022-23/releases/20230324jbg1yl>

— @ParkUniversity —

Founded in 1875 in Parkville, Mo., a suburb of Kansas City, Park University is a nonprofit, private

institution that is a national leader in higher education. In 2000, Park achieved university status and currently serves more than 6,600 students at 25 campuses in 17 states and online, including Parkville, Independence and Kansas City, Mo.; Lenexa, Kan.; Gilbert, Ariz.; Barstow, Calif.; Columbus, Ohio; Austin and El Paso,

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