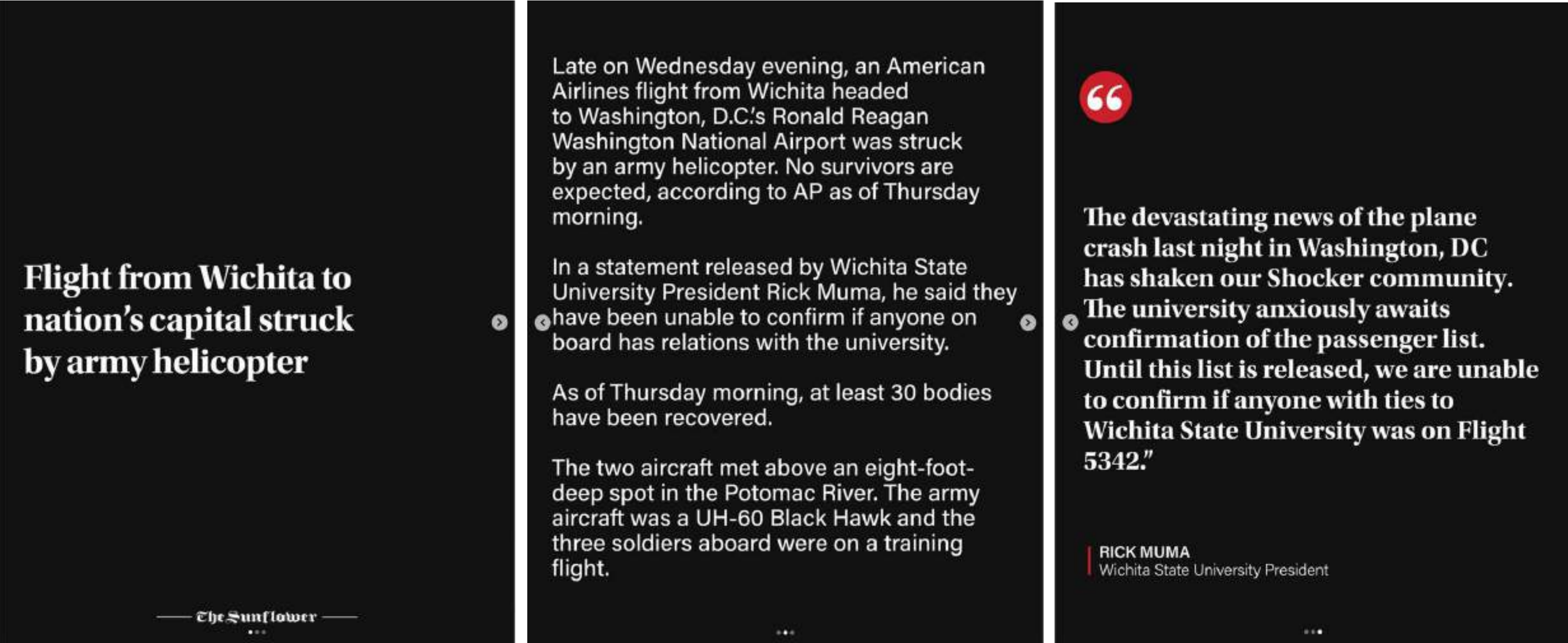


Flight 5342 from Wichita to D.C

On January 29, 2025 an American Airlines flight from Wichita headed to Washington, D.C’s Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport collided with an army helicopter. There were no survivors.

Instagram

Jan. 30, 2025



Caption: Late on Wednesday evening, an American Airlines flight from Wichita headed to Washington, D.C’s Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport was struck by an army helicopter. No survivors are expected, according to AP as of Thursday morning.

In a statement released by Wichita State University President Rick Muma, he said they have been unable to confirm if anyone on board has relations with the university.

This is a developing story and more details will be added as they become available.

To see more, visit thesunflower.com or click the link in our bio.

🔪 Story by Owen Prothro

🎨 Design by Emma Wilks

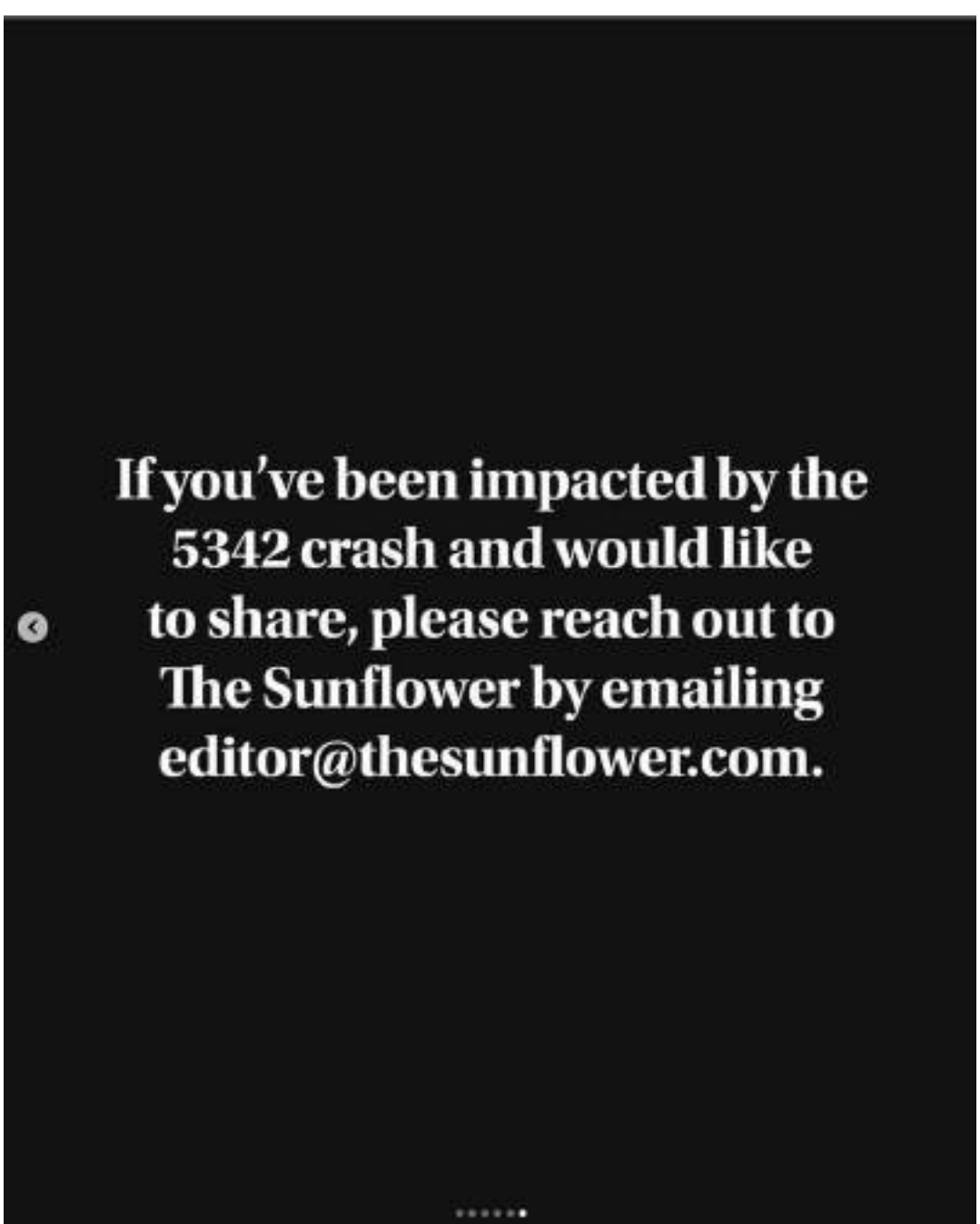
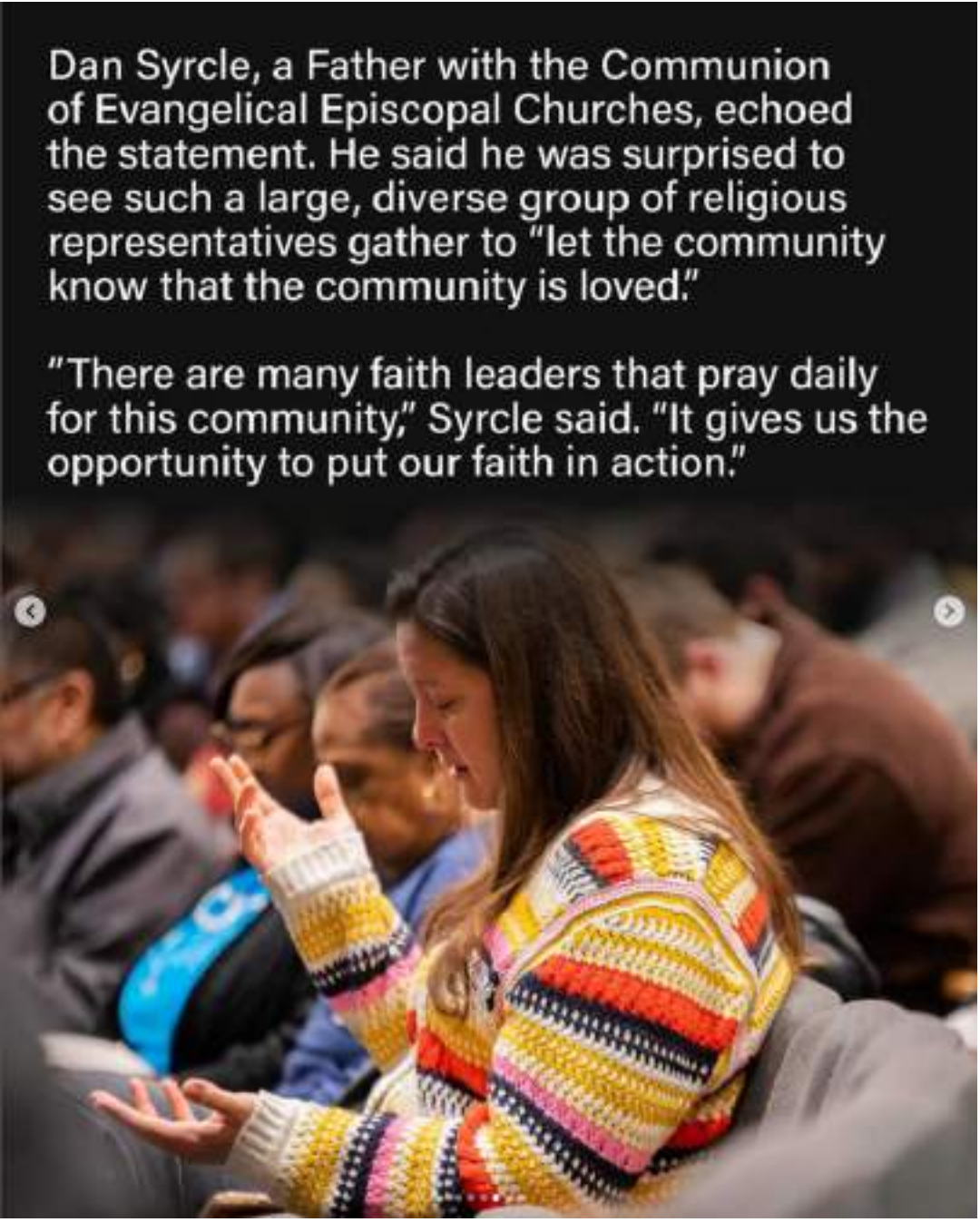
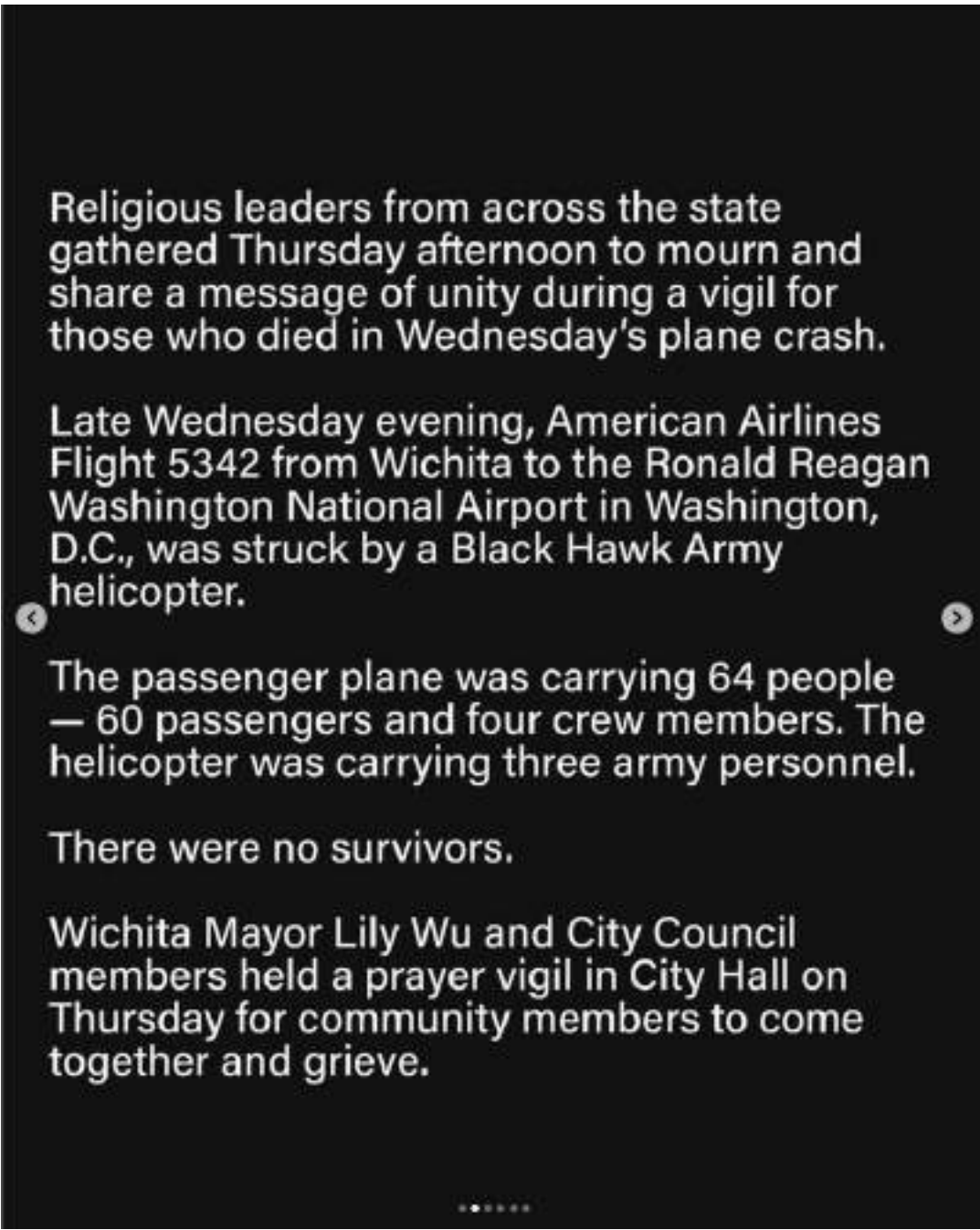
Facebook

Jan. 30, 2025



Instagram

Feb. 4, 2025



Religious leaders from across the state gathered Thursday afternoon to mourn and share a message of unity during a vigil for those who died in Wednesday's plane crash.

Late Wednesday evening, American Airlines Flight 5342 from Wichita to the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport in Washington, D.C., was struck by a Black Hawk Army helicopter.

The passenger plane was carrying 64 people sixty passengers and four crew members. The helicopter was carrying three Army personnel. There were no survivors.

To see more, visit thesunflower.com or click the link in our bio.

✍️ Story by Allison Campbell and Maleah Evans
📸 Photos by Allison Campbell and Maleah Evans
🎨 Design by Emma Wilks

Instagram

Feb. 6, 2025



'She didn't hesitate': Kiah Duggins' lasting impact on Wichita State and beyond

— The Sunflower —

When Kiah Duggins was an undergraduate student at Wichita State University, Bobby Gandu, who heads enrollment and admissions at WSU, said she pushed herself and those around her to be the best versions of themselves.

"She would challenge us here at Wichita State and ask us, 'How can we be better? How can we better serve underrepresented students?'" Gandu said. "Or if she saw something that she didn't agree with and she wanted to push for something better for her campus, colleagues and students, she didn't hesitate."

Duggins was among the 67 victims of the Flight 5342 plane crash last week in Washington, D.C. Duggins, a Wichita native and Wichita State alumna, was returning home to D.C. after visiting her family while her mother underwent surgery.

Wichita State staff and faculty remembered Duggins as an ambitious scholar, an advocate for her fellow students and a funny, uplifting person.

After graduating with her undergraduate degree from Wichita State, Duggins went on to Harvard Law School. Post-graduation, she worked as a civil rights lawyer for the Civil Rights Corps.

Her advocacy carried into other projects she worked on at Wichita State, including the establishment of the Shocker Food Locker — now the Shocker Support Locker — a place for WSU students, faculty and staff to get free groceries donated by the community.

"(It) wasn't that long ago that it got started through the work of Kiah and many of her peers, but now it is an incredibly important resource for our current students," Gandu said.

Jessica Newman, an assistant educator at WSU's Elliott School of Communication, said she encourages others to "keep the Duggins family in their prayers and in their thoughts."



"

I think Kiah and her legacy is a testament to her family, and my heart has been breaking for them, you know, in such a big way because they were all so impactful to our community."

JESSICA NEWMAN
Assistant educator at WSU

When Kiah Duggins was an undergraduate student at Wichita State University, Bobby Gandu, who heads enrollment and admissions at WSU, said she pushed herself and those around her to be the best versions of themselves.

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To see more, visit thesunflower.com or click the link in our bio.

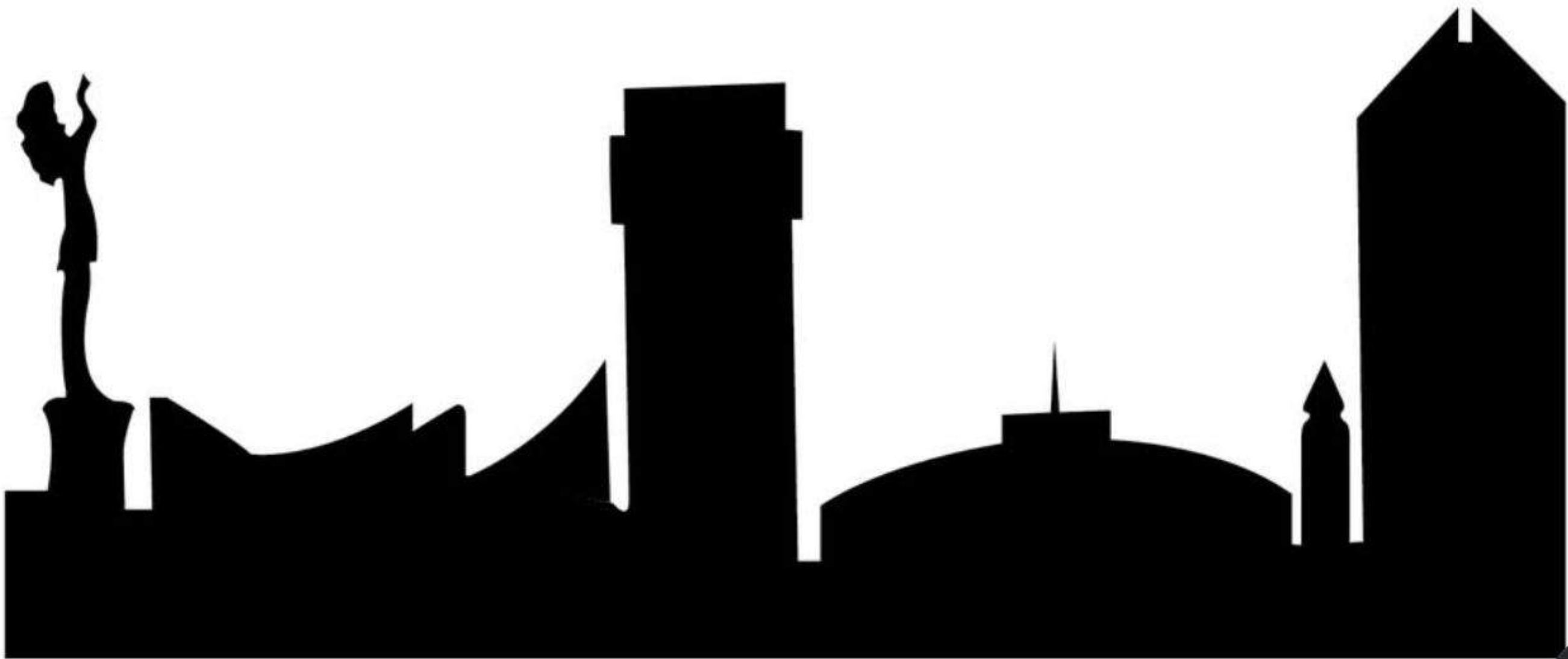
✍️ Story by Ainsley Smith
📷 Photo courtesy of Bobby Gandu
🎨 Design by Emma Wilks



The Sunflower

February 8 · 🌐

"We remind everyone that through these difficulties, we have the opportunity to come together as a community to lift (up) others," The Sunflower staff wrote in this editorial about the Flight 5342 crash.



THESUNFLOWER.COM

EDITORIAL: Flight 5342 reminds Wichita of a familiar grief — and even more familiar resilience



Maleah Evans, Mya Scott and 3 others

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Feb. 10, 2025



Former colleagues, students remember the life and impact of Lindsey Fields

The Sunflower

Lindsey Fields joined Butler Community College (BCC) as a professor of biology in 2014. Eleven years later, she was the chair of the biology department at BCC and the president-elect of the National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT).

Her rapid rise to prominence exemplifies what her coworkers and students described as a strong work ethic and innovative approach to education, a passion for biology, and most importantly, a kind heart that cared for everyone around her.

"She was so vibrant," said Martha Sager, a professor of general biology at BCC. "She was a force of nature, in the best way to use that terminology."

According to the NABT, Fields was traveling to Washington, D.C., on Jan. 29 "to represent the NABT community and advocate for excellence in life science education." She booked American Airlines Flight 5342 to ensure she wouldn't miss a single biology class.

She died when the flight collided with an Army Black Hawk helicopter, leaving behind a void in the BCC and biology community that won't be replaced.

Fields, who was 40 years old, is survived by her husband, Mark, and 3-year-old daughter, Avery.



Everyone's heartbroken. If you knew her, your heart's broken, and it's just a weight you can't explain, and a measurable loss."

MARTHA SAGER
Professor of general biology at BCC



Joseph LaForge arrived at Fields' general biology class in 2016 as an English major who didn't care much about science. He left having changed his major to biology, inspired to go on and become a professor of biology at BCC — a position he holds today.

"Her teaching style was so engaging," LaForge said. "She always gave time for the students to put in their input and also to work together in small groups. She just really knew how to work the room and keep everybody awake and active."

LaForge compared Fields to a phoenix that springs forth every 10,000 years, rising to the top and making a difference everywhere she went.



In the aftermath of Fields' death, an impromptu memorial was set up at her office door in Andover. People left flowers, notes and seeds.

Last week, a campus-wide moment of silence was held in her honor. Sager said a group handed out commemorative pins. So many students wanted one that they ran out and had to make more.

An "Empower Future Scientists" scholarship was established in Fields' honor. Simpson said many professors plan to donate to the scholarship's GoFundMe. As of Monday afternoon, more than \$53,000 had been raised.



Letters and notes left outside Lindsey Field's office door at Butler Community College.

Lindsey Fields joined Butler Community College (BCC) as a professor of biology in 2014. Eleven years later, she was the chair of the biology department at BCC and the president-elect of the National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT).

Her rapid rise to prominence exemplifies what her coworkers and students described as a strong work ethic and innovative approach to education, a passion for biology, and most importantly, a kind heart that cared for everyone around her.

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To see more, visit thesunflower.com or click the link in our bio.

Story by Jacob Unruh
Photos by Garima Thapa and courtesy of Butler Community College
Design by Emma Wilks

Instagram

Feb. 13, 2025



Finding deliverance despite difficulty: Faith community mourns loss of Grace Maxwell

— The Sunflower —

Grace Maxwell's family was reunited on Jan. 28 at their Wichita church under sad circumstances — to mourn the loss of her grandfather, Charles Winter. The next day, the family was again struck by loss when the plane on which Maxwell was flying back to college on collided with a helicopter as it prepared to land.

On Feb. 2, members of the Maxwell family's church prayed on behalf of the grieving household, who were away visiting the crash site in Washington, D.C. Lead Pastor Josh Black shared a message rooted in the family's Evangelical faith: that Maxwell's loss wasn't a tragedy, but something to find gladness in alongside the pain of her death.

"In light of that day, there is reason to praise. There's reason to be sad, but there's even greater reason to be glad ... It is appropriate (to grieve), but as believers, we do not grieve as those without hope," Black said during his Sunday sermon. "If we die in Christ, we, even now, will be present with the Lord, as Grace Maxwell is."



For Grace, her life on this Earth was tragically ended, but that's not the end of her story ... There is a happy ending. The chapter has already been written by God himself.

JOSH BLACK
Lead Pastor

GRACE MAXWELL

Born and raised in Wichita, Kansas, Maxwell was a devout member of the First Evangelical Free Church where her father, Dean, is an operations director. After graduating from high school, Maxwell enrolled at Cedarville University, an Evangelical college. According to a statement published by the university, the 20-year-old junior was studying mechanical engineering and was "deeply committed to using her skills to help others."



CHURCH'S SUPPORT

Through the eyes of those connected to Christ, Black — the lead pastor at First Evangelical Free Church — said there is an understanding that Maxwell's death wasn't a tragedy, at least not in the true sense of the word.

"This was not a tragedy for Grace Maxwell," Black said. "Dare I say that her story is a comedy — not in the sense that we are made to laugh ... but a comedy in the sense that this death, though tragic, is not the end of her story."

"A true tragedy has a tragic ending, but in a comedy, the tragic event in the middle of the story gives way to a surprising victory at the end."

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"The Cedarville University community is mourning the loss of Grace Maxwell, a junior whose kindness, faith and passion for serving others touched countless lives," a statement from Maxwell's college in Ohio read.

To see more, visit thesunflower.com or click the link in our bio.

-  Story by Allison Campbell
-  Photos courtesy of Cedarville University
-  Design by Emma Wilks