

# Jamestown College

## Emblematic of School Pride



Upon graduating from a college or university, showing pride in your alma mater can be displayed through the emblematic merchandise you wear as an alumnus.

Whether wearing a T-shirt with the school logo proudly beaming to all who can see it, or a school's team logo emblazoned on a coffee cup or across a bumper sticker, this type of merchandise allows alumni, as well as students, to show their school pride to all around them.

Building alumni support for a college bookstore can be a challenge. Jamestown College, a four-year liberal arts college in Jamestown, N.D., hopes to increase alumni patronage of the bookstore by using a radio campaign.

Jamestown offers students and alumni a wide range of emblematic merchandise, said Bookstore Manager Tanya Ostlie. In fact, these items are so popular on campus that three-quarters of the approximately 4,000-square-foot bookstore is devoted to them, with the other space devoted to textbooks.

### ATHLETIC SUPPORT

Part of the appeal of this merchandise is related to the school's team name, the Jimmies, and the folklore associated with that name. "It has to do with the James River, which runs through North and South Dakota, and Sir James the Knight riding on top of a horse, which is our logo," Ostlie said.

Although there are certain times of the year when these items are most popular, such as graduation, Ostlie said the student body is somewhat unique in that they support the Jimmies by wearing emblematic apparel whether the teams win or lose.

"Students are very good to support the Jimmies, win or lose," she noted. "We've seen that there is a minimal effect when the teams aren't that good."

Recently, the basketball and football teams have been very successful, as has wrestling, which includes not only a male program but a female program also.

Having been at the school for the past four years, Ostlie said, "I've never seen a college like this. Our students support our teams no matter what."

Although the store has a huge assortment of emblematics, its textbook section — roughly one-quarter of the store, at about 1,000 square feet — is dedicated to textbooks only, and features no emblematic items.

### ROUGH WEATHER

North Dakota's rough weather has been well documented. In the depths of winter, temperatures usually do not rise much above zero degrees Fahrenheit during January, and even during the warmer months, temperatures often do not reach 70 degrees Fahrenheit.

With the weather being as harsh as it is, Ostlie related that hooded sweatshirts are the store's top seller. Other emblematic apparel that does well includes outdoor jackets, sweats and even shorts and T-shirts.

"Apparel is our top-selling emblematic merchandise, and we also sell gift idea types of things," she said. "Cups and mugs sell, but they sell more sporadically."

The emblematic assortment has been very successful in the store, and new items have recently been added to the selection, including car mats. Also, a number of laser-engraved

items — the school logo is etched on each item — are now being offered by the store, including picture frames, business card holders, pen and pencil sets and a framed pen and keychain set.

### BUILDING ALUMNI SUPPORT

Although there is alumni support of the store, the student body is what makes the store's emblematic assortment as popular as it is.

"We're a smaller college, and we don't spend too many dollars on advertising," Ostlie explained. "Without the advertising, alumni don't realize that they can come on campus and buy this merchandise at our store. They just never think to come up here."

The store is trying to gain more alumni shoppers by marketing itself with a smattering of radio ads.

"I haven't really seen a huge difference in sales as a result of these ads, but I would like to see more alumni doing their shopping here," Ostlie said. "I think it might take a few years to change their habits, but the way things are right now, we are doing pretty well." —CSE



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