

# GREAT FALLS HIGH SCHOOL WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

TREAT OTHERS THE WAY YOU  
WANT TO BE TREATED



DO WHAT'S RIGHT



DO THE BEST YOU CAN

## OFFICE INFORMATION

### \* Important phone numbers:

**Attendance:** 406-268-6251

**Counseling:** 406-268-6330

**Finance:** 406-268-6317

**Main Office:** 406-268-6250

**Records:** 406-268-6315

**Nurse:** 406-268-6332

### \* Important To-Do's:

#### • Update PowerSchool Information:

- Please remember to update phone numbers and addresses that may have changed over the summer.

#### ◦ Call or email Debbie at:

- 406-268-6337 or
- Debbie\_Munson@gfps.k12.mt.us

[Click here to read handbook:](#)



#### • Activity Participation Forms:

- If you do not want your student to participate in certain GFHS clubs and/or organizations, you need to complete the ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION form.

### \* GFHS Events and Sports Travel forms

[Click Here](#)

### GFHS TRANSPORTATION FORM

### \* **SPRING SPORTS PARTICIPATION FEES**

Sports participation fees must be paid prior to competing in any sport. Fees can be paid at the finance window next to the GFHS Main Office.

### \* Attendance Notifications:

GFHS Parents/Guardians

In order to receive attendance notifications regarding your student, you must be signed up with PowerSchool!

Call attendance for support!



| REGULAR |       |       | PLCT   |       |       | EARLY OUT |       |       | ASSEMBLY (40 MIN) |       |       |
|---------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|-------------------|-------|-------|
| PERIOD  | START | END   | PERIOD | START | END   | PERIOD    | START | END   | PERIOD            | START | END   |
| 0       | 7:00  | 7:54  | 0      | 7:07  | 7:54  | 0         | 7:24  | 7:55  | 0                 | 7:05  | 7:55  |
| 1       | 8:00  | 8:53  | 1      | 8:00  | 8:47  | 1         | 8:00  | 8:31  | 1                 | 8:00  | 8:48  |
| 2       | 8:59  | 9:52  | 2      | 8:53  | 9:40  | 2         | 8:36  | 9:07  | 2                 | 8:53  | 9:41  |
| 3       | 9:58  | 10:51 | 3      | 9:46  | 10:43 | 3         | 9:12  | 9:43  | ASSEMBLY          | 9:46  | 10:26 |
| 4       | 10:56 | 11:49 | 4      | 10:49 | 11:36 | 4         | 9:48  | 10:19 | 3                 | 10:31 | 11:18 |
| LUNCH   | 11:49 | 12:19 | LUNCH  | 11:36 | 12:06 | 5         | 10:24 | 10:56 | 4                 | 11:23 | 12:10 |
| 5       | 12:25 | 1:18  | 5      | 12:12 | 12:59 | 6         | 11:01 | 11:33 | LUNCH             | 12:10 | 12:40 |
| 6       | 1:24  | 2:17  | 6      | 1:05  | 1:52  | 7         | 11:38 | 12:10 | 5                 | 12:45 | 1:32  |
| 7       | 2:23  | 3:15  | 7      | 1:58  | 2:45  |           |       |       | 6                 | 1:37  | 2:24  |
|         |       |       |        |       |       |           |       |       | 7                 | 2:29  | 3:15  |

## Principal's Message:



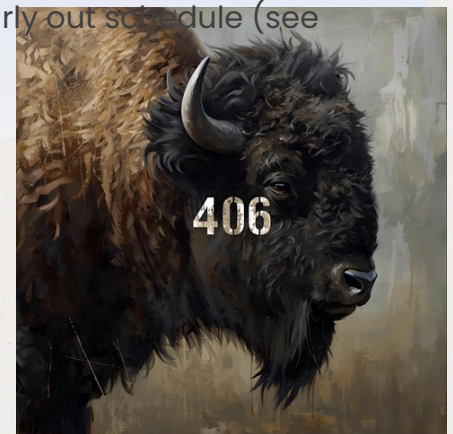
Dear Bison Family,

We just celebrated some amazing people last week. We celebrated Appreciation Days for the associate principals, tutors, aides and paras, and we also had Librarian Appreciation Day. All of those people really work hard to give the right amount of care and support to the students. We also closed out our exceptional MIOSM March!

A reminder that we don't have school on Monday of this week, and that we will have an early out schedule (see above) on Thursday.

**Go Bison!**

Geoffry Habel



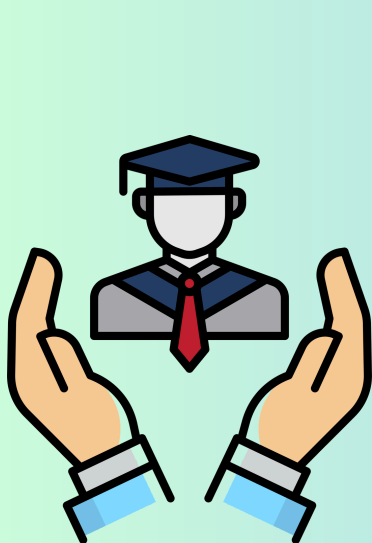
### \* **No School Monday: 4/6/26**

- School offices closed

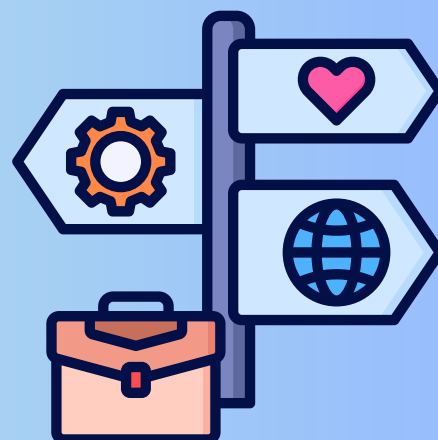
### \* **Early Out for students this Thursday: Thursday April 9th:**

- The District Music Festival will begin in the afternoon.
- School is dismissed and buses will run at 12:10.

# Great Falls High School Counselor Corner



USE THE QR CODE OR [CLICK HERE](#) FOR SENIOR CLASS NEWS



USE THE QR CODE OR [CLICK HERE](#) FOR COUNSELOR NEWS

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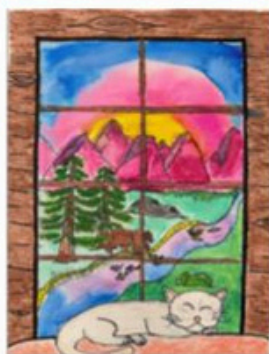


DO THE BEST YOU CAN



# GFHS Fine Arts At A Glance

|          |                          |                        |                                   |
|----------|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 3/2-3    | AA Band                  | Davidson Auditorium    | Symphonic band misses 3/2-3       |
| 3/4-7    | All-Northwest (Delphian) | Tacoma, WA             | Delphian misses 3/4-6             |
| 3/17     | Band MIOSM               | Davidson Auditorium    |                                   |
| 3/18-21  | Chamber Orchestra Tour   |                        | Chamber misses 3/19-20            |
| 3/19     | Choir MIOSM              | Old Gym                | Delphian misses per 5-7           |
| 3/23     | Spring Choir             | Davidson Auditorium    |                                   |
| 3/24     | Orchestra MIOSM          | CMR                    |                                   |
| 3/26-28  | Symphonic Band Tour      |                        | Symphonic band <u>misses</u> 3/26 |
| 3/30     | Orchestra Concert        | Davidson Auditorium    |                                   |
| 3/31     | Band Concert             | Davidson Auditorium    |                                   |
| 4/9-10   | District Music           | GFHS/CMR               | Some students miss per 5-7 4/10   |
| 4/14     | Delphian Concert         | First United Methodist |                                   |
| 4/21     | Rhapsody Recital         | First United Methodist |                                   |
| 4/30-5/2 | Spring Drama             | Davidson Auditorium    |                                   |



## Great Falls Public Schools Annual Student Art Exhibition

Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art

On View April 17 - May 20, 2026

Reception & Awards | Friday, April 17, 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.



## Shifting Layers Jules Lucero



Dahl Gallery, GFHS  
OPEN to the PUBLIC  
On View Through May 2nd, 2026

### ONGOING Student Exhibits:

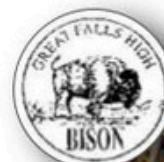
02/23/2026, 2nd floor display cases, more work added in March

02/10/2026, Art @ Buffalo Blanc

03/05-04/28/2026, GF Public Library, GFPS K-12 Youth Art Month Show

### UPCOMING Student Exhibits:

04/17-05/20/2026, GFPS K12 Student Exhibit, Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art, reception 04/17/27



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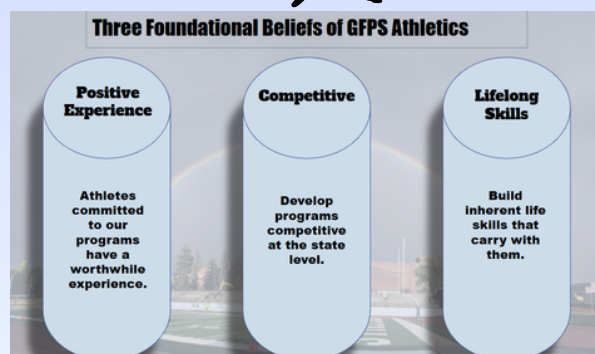
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# GFHS WEEKLY ATHLETICS

| SPORT | DAY  | DATE      | OPPONENT | LOCATION          | LEVEL               | VARSITY | JV       |          |
|-------|------|-----------|----------|-------------------|---------------------|---------|----------|----------|
|       |      |           |          |                   |                     |         |          |          |
| SB    | TUES | 4/7/2026  | GFH      | GALLATIN-VAR ONLY | BOZEMAN             | V       | 5:00 PM  |          |
| BASE  | TUES | 4/7/2026  | GFH      | BELGRADE          | OLSON/WARREN        | V-JV    | 5:00 PM  | 3:00 PM  |
| TF    | FRI  | 4/10/2026 | GFH      | FLATHEAD          | GF MEMORIAL STADIUM | V-JV    | 3:30 PM  |          |
| TE    | SAT  | 4/11/2026 | GFH      | HELENA CAPITAL    | MLCC/HURD           | V       | 10:30 AM |          |
| TE    | SAT  | 4/11/2026 | GFH      | HELENA HIGH       | CMR COURTS          | V       | 1:00 PM  |          |
| TE    | SAT  | 4/11/2026 | GFH      | HELENA JV         | HELENA              | JV      |          | 12:00 PM |
| SB    | SAT  | 4/11/2026 | GFH      | CONRAD            | GF MULTI SPORTS     | JV      |          | 12:00 PM |
| SB    | SAT  | 4/11/2026 | GFH      | GALLATIN-JV ONLY  | GF MULTI SPORTS     | JV      |          | 2:00 PM  |
| BASE  | SAT  | 4/11/2026 | GFH      | BILLINGS WEST     | BILLINGS            | V-JV    | 2:30 PM  | 12:00 PM |



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# Bison Beat

April 1, 2026

Monday April 6 - NO SCHOOL

Tuesday April 7 - Regular bell schedule

Wednesday March 8 - PLCT schedule

Thursday April 9 - Half day (12:10 dismissal)

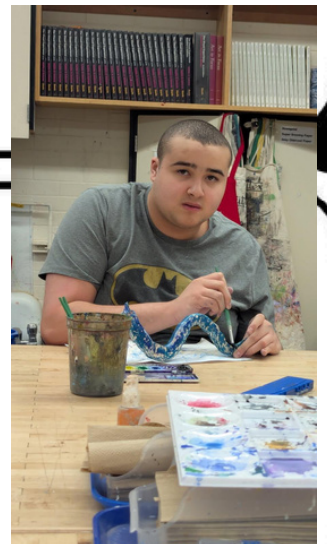
Friday April 10 - Regular bell schedule

Upcoming:

Half-day April 9



**Maker Monday** Picture of some of our finished projects are here. Mrs. Harant also made a display on the 2nd floor of the school to show off our work.



Bison Beat is created by the life skills students of Great Falls High



# A NOTE FROM Your Teacher

April 1, 2026

Hello Bison Families!

This week marked the beginning of quarter 4 for this academic year. Today is the start of spring break and there is no school until Tuesday, April 7.

Mrs. Montgomery will also be out April 7 and 8.

April 9th is a half day for the GFPS district music festival, so school will be out at 12:10 pm. If your student rides a school bus, they will be picked up at 12:10.

We are looking forward to spending the next couple of months together before many of our seniors move on to the next stage of their lives.

Thanks for reading the Bison Beat.



# GET AIR



**APRIL  
25TH**

**2:00pm-4:00 pm**

2501 Brooks St  
Missoula, MT 59801

## COME HAVE SOME FUN WITH MSDB!



- Bring your children to jump, play, and make new friends.
- Connect with other MSDB families
- Meet friendly regional MSDB consultants
- Please use this **QR code** to access the **registration form** and **Get Air waiver form**, prior to attendance.

*Join us at **Get Air** for fun, connection, and support.  
**We can't wait to see you!***

[outreach@msdb.k12.mt.us](mailto:outreach@msdb.k12.mt.us)

[www.msdb.k12.mt.us](http://www.msdb.k12.mt.us)

# GFHS TITLE I STATUS

**Great Falls High** is a Title I high school, which means we receive federal support to help ensure every student has access to a high-quality education.

- Our goal is to improve academic outcomes for all students by providing the resources and support they need to succeed.
- If you ever have questions or concerns about your student's progress, please don't hesitate to reach out to their counselor or associate principal.
- We are here to partner with you and problem-solve together.



|                                      |              |              |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Paul Culbertson, Associate Principal | 406-268-6322 | Students A-G |
| Tami Faulkner, Associate Principal   | 406-268-6313 | Students H-N |
| Shianne Currey, Associate Principal  | 406-268-6314 | Students O-Z |
| Chad Getten, Guidance Counselor      | 406-268-6334 | Students A-C |
| Amy Schoenen, Guidance Counselor     | 406-268-6338 | Students D-G |
| Clint Houston, Guidance Counselor    | 406-268-6336 | Students H-L |
| Rosie Rossberg, Guidance Counselor   | 406-268-6333 | Students M-R |
| Dana Freshly, Guidance Counselor     | 406-268-6335 | Students S-Z |

## MORE STUDENT SUPPORTS:

- **Saturday School:**
  - 4/11/26
  - GFHS HUB - 8:30-11:30
- **After School Support - 4/7/26**
  - Math 3:20-5:10pm in South Campus 108
  - English 3:45-5:10 in Main Campus 211

**\*Watch here for weekly updated information**



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# GFHS TITLE I STATUS

## WE WANT ALL FAMILIES TO KNOW

- **We Care Deeply About Your Child's Success:**
  - Our teachers and staff are committed to your child's academic achievement, personal growth, and well-being, striving to help them become confident, capable, and responsible individuals.
- **We Foster Growth Beyond Grades:**
  - We focus on developing lifelong skills like problem-solving, self-advocacy, responsibility, and work ethic, preparing students for future success in and out of the classroom.
- **We Challenge and Support:**
  - We hold high expectations, pushing students to grow while providing compassion, encouragement, and individualized support to meet their unique needs.
- **We Build Relationships:**
  - Our staff strives to be trusted mentors, creating a safe and welcoming space where students feel valued, heard, and motivated to succeed.
- **We Invest Time and Heart:**
  - We work with many students daily and pour our energy, compassion, and resources into helping each child progress, even when faced with challenges.
- **We Work as a Team:**
  - Your child's success is a collaborative effort. We need your support to reinforce expectations for your child to be in class every day so we create an environment where learning thrives.

**We are a Second Home:** Our school is more than a place for learning—it's a community. We are here for our students and families from 7:00 a.m. until late in the evening, offering support, connection, and care.



## HAPPENING THIS WEEK:

### Week of 04/05-04/11/26

|                         |          |           |                 |               |
|-------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------------|---------------|
| No School/Spring Break  | 04/06/26 | Monday    |                 | All Day       |
| Pre College Advisory    | 04/08/26 | Wednesday | HUB             | 10:30-12:00pm |
| District Music Festival | 04/09/26 | Thursday  | GFH - OG/AUD    | 1:00-9:00pm   |
| MTRANG Recruiting Table | 04/09/26 | Thursday  | Learning Stairs | 11:45-12:30pm |
| Early Out               | 04/09/26 | Thursday  |                 | 12:10 PM      |
| District Music Festival | 04/10/26 | Friday    | CMR             | 1:00-9:00pm   |
| Saturday School         | 04/11/26 | Saturday  | HUB             | 8:30-11:30am  |



# ParentSquare

### PARENTSQUARE INFORMATION:

ParentSquare is the new district communication tool.  
Click on the links below for more information:

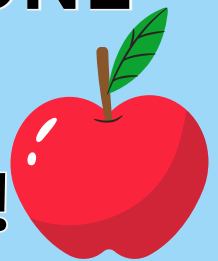
[GFPS District Letter](#)  
[Getting Started Guide](#)



Free and Reduced paperwork makes  
a HUGE difference FOR EVERYONE  
connected with GFH.



Please [CLICK HERE](#) to apply!



## CONNECT WITH US!

### Social Media

- GFH Website: <https://gfhs.gfps.k12.mt.us/>
- Instagram: @greatfallshighbison
- Facebook: @GFHBISON

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LIBRARY



HAVE YOU FINISHED A BOOK FROM THE GREAT FALLS HIGH  
LIBRARY THIS MONTH THAT YOU WANT TO SHARE WITH THE  
SCHOOL?

Complete a "Student Recommendation"  
card to be placed by the book you read.

**Include:**

- Author
- Title
- A brief description of the book (we have examples)
- Why you recommend this book

**On the Back:**

- Your Name
- ID Number

When you complete the card, your name is put in a drawing to win a \$10 gift card from Big Dipper Ice Cream, a \$10 gift card to [MacKenzie River Pizza](#), and a \$20 gift card from [Cassiopea Books](#). The drawing will be at the end of each month.



# GFHS PROFILE OF A LEARNER

LEARNER TRAITS, SKILLS AND CHARACTERISTICS (9TH – 12TH GRADE) THAT WE BELIEVE WILL MAKE EVERY STUDENT BETTER:

GREAT FALLS HIGH SCHOOL IS COMMITTED TO TAKING STEPS EVERY DAY TO INSTILL THESE QUALITIES INTO OUR STUDENTS:



## **CRITICAL THINKER**

- Investigate a question with an open mind
- Evaluate sources of information for reliability
- Integrate different viewpoints
- Synthesize information to take action

## **STRONG COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

- Articulate ideas to a targeted audience effectively
- Use conflict resolution strategies effectively
- Actively listen for understanding
- Collaborate with others
- Reflect on their communication with others

## **WORK ETHIC**

- Persevere to complete difficult tasks
- Understand how to balance time and priorities
- Use interpersonal skills and seek resources to help complete tasks
- Complete activities to the set standard and show pride in work
- Integrate academic skills with workplace skills to demonstrate readiness for life beyond high school

## **PROBLEM SOLVER**

- Integrate other points of view into the problem-solving process to generate an optimal solution
- Evaluate information and compromise to reach a solution
- Identify healthy risks and take them when needed

## **INTEGRITY**

- Behave empathetically to others
- Self-regulate
- Follow through
- Consider the good of the whole and act accordingly
- Do the right thing while demonstrating grace, pride, and kindness, even when it is difficult
- Apply talents to better their community



# Great Falls High School Historical Article Of The Week

## Tribune article from Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008

### Ian Davidson: Building a company for a half-century

By **PETER JOHNSON**  
Great Falls Business Writer

Ian Davidson was 26 and brimming with ideas when he joined his father's two-person brokerage firm in February 1958.

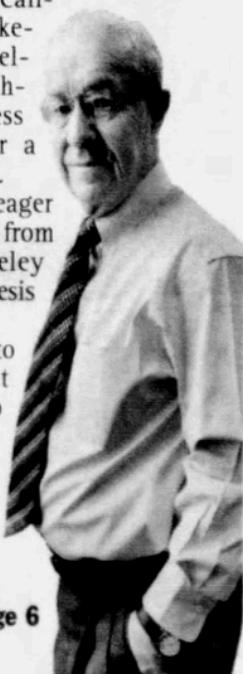
He was not enthusiastically welcomed at first.

"My father, David A. Davidson, and his female aide were operating a small, often unprofitable, business and weren't used to making changes," Davidson said. They greeted his ideas with trepidation when he joined the firm, then called Gibson Associates.

The younger Davidson earned an accounting degree from the University of Montana, audited defense plants in the U.S. Air Force, earned a master's degree in business administration from University of California Berkeley and relished teaching business classes for a year at UM.

He was eager to try ideas from his Berkeley master's thesis that amounted to a blueprint of how to grow a small firm into a regional company.

See IAN, Page 6



**IAN DAVIDSON**  
**GFHS CLASS OF 1949**



### Growing strong for 50 years

Growth of Davidson Companies, and its predecessor D.A. Davidson Co., during Ian Davidson's five decades of leadership.

|             | Net Worth       | People | Retail<br>Offices | Locations |
|-------------|-----------------|--------|-------------------|-----------|
| <b>1958</b> | \$35,000        | 3      | 1                 | 1         |
| <b>1968</b> | \$480,000       | 40     | 4                 | 4         |
| <b>1978</b> | \$2.6 million   | 105    | 8                 | 8         |
| <b>1988</b> | \$16.2 million  | 240    | 12                | 12        |
| <b>1998</b> | \$19.1 million  | 450    | 24                | 26        |
| <b>2008</b> | \$124.8 million | 1,005  | 41                | 66        |

## Ian: Company weathered tough times in early years

From Page 1

The plans turned out to be more successful than he envisioned, recalls Davidson, now the semi-retired board chairman celebrating his 50th year.

Davidson Companies, as the holding company has been called since 2000, is the largest financial services company based in the Rocky Mountain-Pacific Northwest region.

Its growth has been impressive:

- From revenues of \$17,000 in 1957 to \$225 million in 2008.

- From no profit in 1957 to about \$26 million this year.

- From a net company worth of \$35,000 in 1958 to \$125 million.

- From a small office in what's now the lobby of the Great Falls Davidson Building to almost filling two multi-story buildings in Great Falls, plus 55 locations in 17 states.

- From three employees 50 years ago to just more than 1,000 this fall, including 407 in Montana, 245 who work in Great Falls.

Davidson's father, a junior officer at two banks that failed, opened a small branch office of a Butte brokerage firm in 1935, smack in the Great Depression.

"They were tough economic times and he just hung in there making small profits or losses for 23 years," Ian Davidson said. "I never felt we were poor growing up, but my mother, an energetic grade school teacher, probably earned more than my father."

"Dad was a detail person who spent most of his time posting stock

quotations on a chalkboard rather than seeking customers."

### Matching the competition

Ian Davidson was more of a doer. Too slight to play varsity sports, he was team manager of football, basketball and track four years before graduating from Great Falls High in 1949.

The elder Davidson was at a competitive disadvantage because his firm was too small to own a stock exchange seat. Instead it made trades through a bigger Salt Lake City firm that claimed the sales commissions. He tacked on a small fee to cover expenses.

The situation became untenable when another firm with an exchange seat opened a Great Falls office; it could buy stocks more cheaply for customers.

But Ian Davidson had a plan, including joining a regional stock exchange and adding branch offices. As he proved himself, his father agreed to the changes.

First Davidson got a ticker tape installed and watched for blocks of stock to buy outside regular exchanges. He'd buy maybe 1,000 shares and sell directly to customers to garner the commission.

Then he talked his way onto a seat at the Pacific Coast Stock Exchange for just \$2,500.

"We were profitable within six months," Davidson said. "It just kind of went up from there."

Continued on next page

Articles courtesy of:  
The GF Tribune and  
Newspapers.com



# Great Falls High School Historical Article Of The Week

## Tribune article from Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008

### BUSINESS PROFILE

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#### From the previous page

First he had to convince his father to dismiss the inept bookkeeper who caused severe accounting problems that Ian had to rectify afterwards.

The Davidsons continued to pay her salary, but Ian recruited Johan Miller, a good number man, to head up finances.

Davidson has made a point since to have top financial, information technology and other operations in the Great Falls offices. He said it's much easier for company branch offices to get information than it is for rivals to get answers from New York bureaucracies.

#### Building the business

Next he came up with a novel way to build clients for the firm, renamed D.A. Davidson & Co., or DADCO, in 1959 after his father.

Few Americans understood or invested in the stock market in the late 1950s, he said.

Davidson, who'd taught an investment class at the University of Montana, got permission to teach adult education classes in Great Falls.

"I taught two classes a week of 50 to 75 students for 10 weeks at a time and we had to limit the sign up because of the lecture hall size," he said. "I wasn't pitching D.A. Davidson sales but general principles. Still, we must have picked up hundreds of customers in the few years I taught."

Davidson opened the company's first branch office in 1959 in Helena. His thesis research showed the city had no full-service brokerage and was close enough to Great Falls to service easily.

He cautiously added six more Montana brokerage offices over the 20 years.

#### Missteps vs. real tragedy

Davidson was a serious businessman who once was given a Mickey Mouse watch by co-workers to remind him to lighten up once in a while.

But, despite meticulous planning, DADCO had a few missteps, including two branch offices that faltered and two real estate ven-

tures that didn't pan out.

"You are just not going to be right all the time," Davidson said, adding the real estate efforts convinced him to "stick to your knitting," or specialty areas.

The most crushing blow came because of a tragic accident, not a business decision.

A company plane crashed after takeoff from the Great Falls airport on Nov. 8, 1994, killing three top company executives and the pilot.

"That was a real tragedy, the worst day in my life," Davidson recalled. "Family men in their mid-40s to early 50s were taken."

He gratefully remembers the support employees received from community members, ministers, crisis counselors and employees of rival investment firms.

#### Keeping on the leading edge

Specializing in financial investments didn't mean avoiding growth or shifts to related areas.

At one point, DADCO had 14 buying specialists on Pacific Stock Exchange trading floors in Los Angeles and San Francisco. The regional stock exchange since has been replaced by electronic trading networks.

Davidson served as vice-chairman of the Pacific Stock Exchange in the early 1990s, the highest non-paid executive, and became the first person west of the Mississippi to serve as chairman of the association that runs the NASDAQ stock market.

His securities industry leadership helped boost the company's reputation on Wall Street.

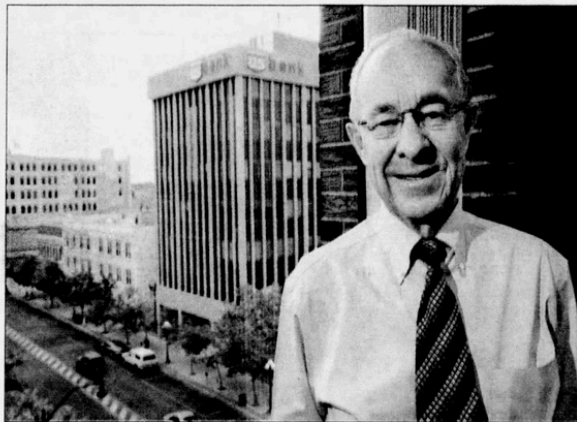
The company also made successful acquisitions that expanded its horizons, Davidson said.

In 1975 it bought Financial Aims Corp. of Minneapolis, now Davidson Investment Advisors, a professional money management company.

In 1986 it obtained Trust Corp of Montana, now Davidson Trust, a trust and wealth management company.

In 1992 it bought Travel Bug Agency, now Davidson Travel, which plans travel for Davidson staff and the public.

In 1998, it acquired Jensen Securities, a 20-person Portland research and institution-



GREAT FALLS BUSINESS PHOTO/STUART S. WHITE

Ian Davidson's office overlooks the heart of downtown Great Falls.

al firm. That opened the door to growth in investment banking and research.

In 2005 the company bought Kirkpatrick Pettis from Mutual of Omaha. The purchase added 86 employees and boosted Davidson's fixed income business, especially in public finance.

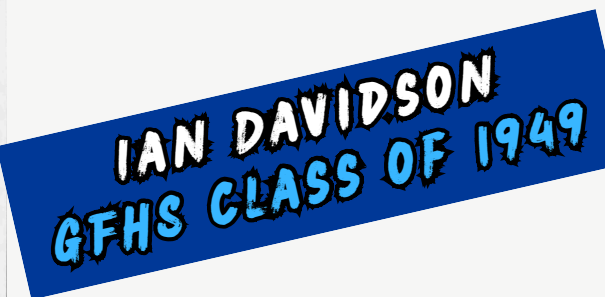
#### Downtown headquarters

As Davidson Cos. grew, it became more visible in downtown Great Falls.

In 1965 Ian Davidson purchased the one-story Steele Building. In 1969, with insurance companies seeking office space, he added four stories and renamed it the Davidson Building.

In 1998 the company expanded into the Liberty Center building purchased by Ian Davidson across Third Street North. The half block was closed for a courtyard with a Kid

Continued on Page 8



PAGE 8 • NOVEMBER 2008 • GREAT FALLS BUS

#### From Page 7

Russell statue. A glass skywalk connected the two buildings. To the west of the Davidson Building in an amphitheater and landscaped parking lot.

"We've probably done more indirectly for the downtown than anybody," Davidson said. "We've got two nice buildings, a beautiful courtyard and circle and the city's first skywalk. And we have 245 well paid professional who volunteer in community efforts."

#### Company culture

Retaining Great Falls as headquarters has been one key to the company's growth, which Davidson believes is tied to its culture, region and conservative philosophy.

"We enjoy a positive culture in our company because we treat each other with respect, applaud each other's achievements and support each other when problems surface," said Davidson, who still sends flowers and a personal card to each employee on his or her birthday.

The company operates primarily in the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Northwest states, he said, calling it a beautiful region to which it's easy to recruit top folks tired of working in the Northeast.

And, he stressed, the company always has operated with a conservative investment philosophy.

Davidson announced in 1999 he was stepping down as chief executive.

After decades of 12-hour work days, Davidson said he's now "semi-retired, with the emphasis on 'semi.'"

He and wife Nancy spend two-and-a-half months in the summer at their Flathead Lake home.

"We manage a resort entertaining family and friends," he joked.

They also winter two-and-half months in Rancho Mirage, Calif.

Davidson keeps in regular phone and Internet contact with the company while vacationing, and is at his office each work day the other seven months a year.

He is chairman of the Davidson Cos. board, which meets quarterly, and its executive committee, which meets monthly.

While he's no longer involved in daily operations, he visits daily with Bill Johnstone, current CEO.

Johnstone said Davidson remains "a key advisor and consultant offering valuable insights about the business and markets."

"Ian's leadership is invaluable," Johnstone said. He enjoys being a "caretaker of our company culture" by interacting with employees and stressing the importance of ethics, integrity and making clients a priority.

He marveled at Davidson's "vision and pragmatism" for envisioning how to build a regional investment firm in his thesis.

Davidson says he "absolutely did not anticipate," his ideas leading to such a large, far-flung company.

"My only goal was to build a successful brokerage firm in Montana and compete effectively against firms like Piper and Dain," he says.

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