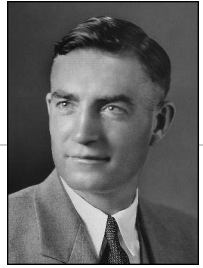


# 2010 quintas a. blackburn



## 1917 Graduate

Quintas A. Blackburn, a 1917 Brainerd High School graduate and record-making mountain climber who served as topographer and geologist on Admiral Richard E. Byrd's first and second Antarctic expeditions, has been posthumously named a 2019 BHS Hall of Fame inductee. Blackburn, who was born June 19, 1899, in Brainerd, died Feb. 9, 1981, in Boise, Idaho.

Blackburn's journey from Brainerd to his Antarctic adventures with Byrd may have been lost in local history if Terry McCollough, former *Brainerd Dispatch* publisher, hadn't discovered mentions of Blackburn's exploits in past issues of the newspaper. McCollough writes a regular "This Was Brainerd" history column in the *Dispatch*, and began finding short news stories on Blackburn in the newspaper archives. This led to extensive research, the discovery of his living relatives in California and Blackburn's nomination for induction into the BHS Hall of Fame by McCollough.

"I read about his exploits, and how many Antarctic explorers graduate from Brainerd High School?" says McCollough, who serves on the hall of fame selection committee. "I think he's one of the most remarkable people we've ever inducted."

Blackburn, the son of Thomas and Margaret Blackburn, grew up in Brainerd. His father, who was born in England, spent 53 years working at the Northern Pacific shops, retiring as head timekeeper. His parents later moved to San Diego, Calif., in 1941. Quin, as he was called, had a sister and two brothers.

While at Washington High School, Blackburn played football. He was a bright student, graduating second in his class of 53, Brainerd's largest class to that date. Blackburn was specially noted on the front page of the *Dispatch* on June 5, 1917, for having completed all four years of high school in three years.

Blackburn attended the University of Washington in 1919-1920. He graduated from University of Montana in 1923 with a degree in geology. He also played one year on the college football team and was a distance runner on the track team. He did graduate work in 1923 at Montana, and in 1926 and 1932-33 at Washington.

On Aug. 24, 1923, Blackburn made history with two other young college men while on a 10-day break from summer school at the University of Montana. In 1919, Horace M. Albright became superintendent of Yellowstone National Park and immediately began trying to revive interest in mountain climbing within the Yellowstone/Jackson Hole region, particularly the Grand Teton itself. The Grand Teton is one of the crown jewels of American mountains with a height of 13,747 feet.

The first documented climb by the well-equipped William Owen party on Aug. 13, 1908, was led by Episcopal priest Franklin Spalding. After this climb, the Grand Teton lay untouched for 25 years.

In 1923 Albright challenged the American Alpine Club and other major climbing groups in the country to send their best, and said the National Park Service would provide free transportation.

Among the first to respond was Prof. Albert Ellingwood of Illinois, whose climbing party set up base camp on the slopes of the Grand in August 1923. After Ellingwood's professional team carefully studied the routes and terrain, they did climb the Grand Teton on Aug. 27, but three college boys, including Brainerd's own Blackburn, beat them to it.

When 24-year-old Blackburn and his two college friends, Andy DePirro and Dave DeLap, rolled into Jackson Hole in a dilapidated Model T Ford they'd purchased for \$75, they had no equipment and no knowledge of the preferred climbing routes, although Blackburn had previously done a bit of climbing.

They walked into the Ellingwood camp the evening of Aug. 24<sup>th</sup> and Blackburn told them they were climbing the Grand Teton the next morning. He added that they had to do it in one day, since they had to be back at school soon. This drew amused smiles and "outright laughter" from the professional climbers. "Blackie," as his friends called him, also asked if they might borrow a rope, since they had none. Ellingwood declined to offer any equipment.

Undaunted, Blackburn and his friends set off for the Grand at 5 a.m., the next morning with water canteens, six cans of raisins, a dozen bacon sandwiches, a Kodak Hawkeye camera and Blackburn's rock hammer. They managed to reach the 13,747-foot summit at 5:55 p.m. on Aug. 25, amid cold winds and snow flurries. They wrote their names on the back of a bank deposit slip and stuffed it into the metal container left by the Owen party in 1898. They took several photographs before starting down at 6:30 p.m. After a dangerous descent in darkness, they reached the tree line at 11 p.m., nearly 18 hours after starting their climb. The next morning, they jumped into their rickety Model T and headed back to school.

A few days later, Blackburn, who had recently graduated, caught a train to his job as a timber cruiser in Washington, a job he held throughout college.

Their remarkable climb didn't receive national attention until decades later when the full scope of their achievement became widely known. Today, professional climbers have noted it was "one of the truly astounding feats in the history of American mountain climbing."

Blackburn went on to climb mountains in Antarctica on two of Admiral Byrd's expeditions. One of Blackburn's strongest attributes was his physical stamina, says his son, Thomas Blackburn, who lives in Redlands, Calif. While Blackburn was in

graduate school at Washington, he was recommended for Byrd's expedition by his mentor and geology professor, Dr. C.E. Weaver.

The first Byrd expedition left the U.S. in 1928, returning in 1930. Blackburn sent his parents back home in Brainerd a letter about his travels. Dated Dec. 9, 1928, and sent from the ship, "City of New York," sailing from Dunedin, New Zealand, Blackburn wrote of seeing many flat-top icebergs and oceanic birds, such as albatross, and snow squalls driven by 35-45-mph winds.

On March 9, 1929, the *Dispatch* printed a story of a harrowing incident where Blackburn was rescued by Byrd during a raging blizzard. Blackburn was driving one of three dog sleds that were bringing equipment and gasoline from a supply dump at the coast to the main camp at Little America. A driving wind rose up, causing white-out conditions. The other two dog sleds barely made it to Little America, but Blackburn was lost in the storm.

Byrd led the rescue effort, fearing that Blackburn would die before the storm ceased. Fortunately, Blackburn had presence of mind to stop driving and use the sled and supplies as a barrier, with the sled dogs grouped in front of him. The rescue team passed within a few yards of Blackburn but he couldn't hear their shouts during the raging storm. A final attempt on a slightly different course found him just off the trail, completely covered by a drift. He popped out of the snow and was no worse off, his near brush with death.

When the Byrd expedition made its triumphant return to New York in June 1930, his parents traveled there from Brainerd to be reunited with their son. Byrd was hailed an American hero and given a ticker-tape parade throughout the streets of New York City.

In July 1930, a documentary film entitled "With Byrd at the South Pole," played at the Paramount Theatre in Brainerd and at theaters across the country. Blackburn was featured in one of the film's most daring episodes. The 82-minute film would later win an Academy Award for cinematography.

Between expeditions with Byrd, Blackburn met Jessie O'Keefe, a nutritionist at the University of Washington, and they married in 1933. Blackburn was one of 18 men from the first trip who were going back with Byrd on the second expedition in 1933. The expedition wouldn't return until 1935.

In late 1934, Blackburn was involved in what proved to be the signature event in his days of Antarctic exploration. Setting out from the base camp at Little America, the Brainerd native led a three-man scientific team that traveled 1,500 miles by dog sled and skis to winter 180 miles at the South Pole. That was closer than any man had been since Robert Falcon Scott reached the pole in 1912, but did on the return journey. Just 210 miles from the South Pole, Blackburn discovered and photographed part of a fossilized tree, proving that Antarctica was once home to forests. They discovered Mount Howe, whose rock outcroppings, less than 300 miles from the pole, are the southernmost piece of land in the world. They also explored the Scott Glacier, with ice as clear and blue as any lake, and they climbed and named many peaks in the Queen Maud Mountains and the Transantarctic Mountain Range. A 10,745-foot flat-topped mountain in the Queen Maud Mountains is Mount Blackburn.

Blackburn received U.S. Congressional Medals of Honor for both his Antarctic explorations.

Edmund Stump, the famous Antarctic explorer, recently wrote that he considered Blackburn's three-man team his "personal heroes of Antarctic exploration." In 2011, a New Zealand university scientific team working in the Transantarctic Mountains, 300 miles from the pole, found a cache of equipment from Byrd's second expedition—perfectly preserved by the cold, dry, polar weather. The gear included skis, survey poles and metal crampons, two stamped with "QAB," the initials of the geologist who led the 88-day exploration. They left the equipment exactly as it was, but did take one crampon with them. It is now on display at the university in New Zealand.

Following his stint as an Antarctic explorer, Blackburn joined the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, working out of their Boise, Idaho, office as an expert on mineral resources and serving as an appraiser. He retired from the Bureau in 1969 after more than 30 years of service. At his retirement he was awarded the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's Meritorious Service Award.

Blackburn has two sons, Thomas and Robert, two grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. His son Thomas Blackburn says his father enjoyed gardening and introducing his children to many outdoor activities, including climbing, camping and fly fishing.

"I'm really proud of him," Allie Blackburn, of Redlands, Calif., says of her grandfather. She was young when he died so she didn't get the chance to hear his stories firsthand, but she's gotten to know him through his letters home to family and other research and artifacts she's collected about him and his travels.

"I don't think he really cared about the recognition," she explains. "He was just a simple, small-town guy with a sense of adventure and because of that, he had an amazing life."

Blackburn says she hopes his story will inspire other BHS graduates to chase their own dreams, big or small.

# steve clough

2019



## 1976 Graduate

Steve Clough, founder and co-owner of Just For Kix, a Baxter-based full-service dance company with 220 youth programs in 14 states, has been named a 2019 Brainerd High School Hall of Fame Inductee.

Cindy Clough, a 2007 BHS Hall of Fame recipient, has been the creative side behind the company since they began offering youth dance classes in 1981 in Brainerd. Steve Clough has been a constant, steady force on the business side of this fast-growing corporation.

"I typically have the ideas, but Steve was always the logic and brains behind what we do to make it work," explains Cindy Clough. "Many times, I came up with a new crazy idea, but Steve had to be the one to make sure the boat stayed afloat."

Steve Clough's work ethic developed here in the lakes area. While growing up in southeast Brainerd, Clough, the son of Bob and Kathryn Clough, attended St. Andrew's Catholic School and, in sixth grade, transferred to Harrison Elementary School after the closing of St. Andrew's. He fondly recalls his time at Washington Junior High School and Brainerd High School. In ninth grade, he was hired at the former Schaefer's Model Market in Brainerd as a carry-out boy and worked there throughout high school. Clough graduated from BHS in 1976 and attended Brainerd Community College the next fall. He graduated with an associate's degree, focusing on accounting.

He and Cindy, both 1976 BHS graduates, started dating soon after high school. They married in 1978. Together they decided to start Just For Kix in 1981 while Steve was also working at Brainerd Public Utilities. He would do all the financial work for Just For Kix in the evenings after his shift had ended.

They initially started Just For Kix so Cindy could be a stay-at-home mom and teach youth dance programs on a part-time basis. But, overnight, they had 100 students enroll. Steve dealt with all of the payments and accounting. The demand was so high that they expanded their company and hired dance instructors to keep up. They soon found their youth dance programs growing into neighboring communities, renting space from area school districts.

Within a few years, they began offering summer dance camps throughout the northern states, often loading the entire family, including their young children, Joel, Jerad, and Ali, into the car for road trips to the West Coast. Steve says those early years allowed them to spend quality time together as a family, making special memories along the way.

"Cindy and I would spend a lot of time in the car and we'd talk about our dreams," Clough explains. "The book, 'The Magic of Thinking Big,' was the catalyst for us to take it to the next level."

The Cloughs didn't truly realize what "big" meant for their company quite yet. In 1988 they started their catalog business. After referring their dance families to other dance catalogs, they saw and acted on a massive business opportunity. The Just For Kix business began to boom.

As the business grew, they discovered that ordering large numbers of costumes and accessories through vendors was often unreliable. The Cloughs began manufacturing Just For Kix costumes in 1992.

"With little experience, we began the manufacturing process by hiring sewers to help develop a successful business model," Steve explains.

Today, Just For Kix has experienced unprecedented growth that now extends beyond dance. The company has 120 full-time employees, mostly employed at the Baxter headquarters, and over 800 part-time employees.

Just For Kix trains over 25,000 dancers each year in 220 programs in 14 states. Each summer more than 4,000 dancers attend Just For Kix summer dance camps.

Just For Kix also hosts special events, including an annual bowl game half-time show in which dancers are recruited from around the country to perform for half-time and pre-game productions. They've produced shows for the Holiday Bowl, Freedom Bowl, Citrus Bowl, Orange Bowl and, currently, the Outback Bowl in Tampa, Fla. For Steve and Cindy, this means for the past 35 years they've spent every New Year's holiday hosting hundreds of dancers at numerous events.

In 2009, the Teehive was formed. Steve and his family saw another business opportunity and acted. This new business is a traditional screen printing and an embroidery company, based in Baxter. They've now added dye sublimation, which has opened up a door to new retail opportunities. The Teehive now has stores in West Fargo, Medina, St. Cloud and Rochester, and continues to grow. The business has found its niche offering customized clothing for small or large orders with a fast turnaround.

Just For Kix expanded its catalog business in 2017 with its Move U Performance Apparel and an online store. The company produces athletic apparel catalogs for cheer/dance, fishing teams, trapshooting teams, and softball teams.

Clough is responsible for all financial aspects and business development. Currently, Just For Kix is remodeling its dance studio in Lakeville and building a new dance facility in Farmington with plans to expand to Colorado, in addition to expanding the Teehive.

All three of the Cloughs' children — Joel, Jerad, and Alexandra — work at Just For Kix. The Cloughs also have four grandchildren.

"We have been a really good team," Clough says of his wife and business partner. They celebrated their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary last year. "We balance each other. She was able to focus on kids and I focused on making a viable business successful. I absolutely love it."

In 2006, the Cloughs received the State of Minnesota SBA Entrepreneur of the Year Award. In 2016, Just For Kix was awarded the Brainerd Lakes Chamber Business Excellence Award.

Clough says he's honored and humbled to be inducted into the Brainerd High School Hall of Fame. He hopes he can inspire other BHS students to dream big and put in the work to be successful.

"It's taken hard work, determination and a willingness to take risks," Clough says, of his success. "My message to young people is: believe, dream and work hard."

# kevin thesing

2019



## 1974 Graduate

Kevin Thesing, co-owner and general manager of Lakes Printing in Brainerd, has been named a 2019 Brainerd High School Hall of Fame Inductee.

Thesing, a 1974 Brainerd High School graduate, grew up south of Brainerd as the fifth child of a large farming family. Family life, farming and a sense of community responsibility blended together for George Jr. and Gert Thesing and their 10 children. Their values were passed down to Thesing, who models his life after his parents. They welcomed everyone into their country home and around their kitchen table. Their home may have been short on personal space, but it was filled with love and laughter.

"It wasn't so much a business, but a way of life," Thesing explains, of life on the family farm, where his parents raised everything from dairy and beef cattle to hogs and chickens, and also grew crops. "I felt fortunate to have so many siblings. I absolutely understand my parents scraped together a living. But we didn't know that as kids. They were bigger than life. They loved life. They were humble, unassuming people."

Thesing attended the former Edison Elementary School for one year, then transferred to Riverside Elementary School after Edison closed. He also attended Washington Junior High School. A turning point in Thesing's life occurred when he became involved in FFA at Brainerd High School.

FFA provided the highly introverted Thesing, who loves to read, with leadership and public speaking skills. He attended state and national FFA conventions and served as FFA president in 1973-74. Through these experiences, he gained confidence. He discovered that even if these skills didn't come naturally to him, he could work at them and be successful.

"It was the agriculture community that drew me in, and the leadership program that changed my life," says Thesing of his four years in FFA.

His senior year, after earning enough credits to graduate, he participated in on-the-job training at a local feed store through FFA. Most of his last year of high school was spent working full-time at the Blue Ox Coop Feed Store, as well as the local creamery and fertilizer plant.

After graduation, Thesing spent a year at the University of Minnesota in Morris. The next summer, he had an opportunity to go to California with his best friend, Bob Schultz, and drive large tomato harvesting machines, which had twenty workers on each of them. Thesing planned to return to Minnesota to earn a degree to become an FFA instructor, but when he returned, he got a part-time job at Bang Printing before classes began. He had a variety of responsibilities, and he immediately knew he enjoyed the printing industry.

"I got ink in my veins and I never left the printing world," Thesing says with a smile.

He worked his way up to sales manager after 10 years at Bang, then left for another print shop in Duluth for 1-1/2 years. Thesing was then asked if he'd start a new printing company in Brainerd. There were five partners — Thesing, Clem Maust, Paul Gropper, Denny Rothstein and Dode Pohlkamp. Lakes Printing was formed, in part, around Thesing's kitchen table in 1988. Thirty-one years later, Thesing and Pohlkamp remain partners in both their personal and professional lives. Together they have five children and nine grandchildren.

One of the core values at Lakes Printing is that the business supports the community. Not surprising, this is one of Thesing's core personal values. He has been involved in many organizations and often finds ways for Lakes Printing to assist in many community projects. The company was the Brainerd Lakes Chamber 1991 Business of the Year.

In 1990, Thesing was one of a group of Brainerd Jaycees who started the Brainerd Jaycees Ice Fishing Extravaganza. Thesing later figured out he personally logged in 2,000 volunteer hours helping to get the first contest up and running.

Thesing remains a passionate supporter of FFA. He's a current board member of the Brainerd FFA Alumni Association, an organization he's

been involved with for more than 30 years. He was awarded an Honorary Chapter degree by the Brainerd FFA. He was inducted into the Minnesota FFA Hall of Fame in 2018.

Thesing has been or is currently active in the following organizations:

- Brainerd Rotary Club, a former club president, former Brainerd Rotary Foundation president and former board member.
- Brainerd Jaycees, member of the Ice Fishing Extravaganza founding committee
- Brainerd Lakes Chamber, former board member, former board president and Brainerd Lakes Chamber leadership program graduate
- Brainerd Sports Boosters, current board member and former board president
- United Way of Crow Wing and Southern Cass Counties, former board president
- Brainerd Public Schools Foundation, former board president
- Brainerd Community Action, former board president and former chair of the Fourth of July celebration
- The Center, former board member
- Confidence Learning Center, former board member
- Brainerd Area Junior Achievement, former board member and classroom presenter for many years
- Brainerd Lakes Area Kids Voting, former member
- Brainerd Slow-Pitch Softball Association, former board member and former board president

Thesing's awards and achievements include:

- Blandin Community Leadership Program Graduate
- 1993 Minnesota Jaycees Ten Outstanding Young Men Award
- 1999 Brainerd Citizen of the Year Award
- 2006 Brainerd Sunrise Sertoma Service to Mankind Award
- 2010 Minnesota Jaycees Hall of Leadership Award
- 2010-2011 Brainerd Rotary Rotarian of the Year Award
- 2012 Community Foundation Award in Philanthropy
- 2018 Minnesota FFA Hall of Fame Recipient

Thesing strives to make a difference in people's lives. He does this through volunteerism, and helping his clients solve problems.

Thesing is honored to be inducted into the BHS Hall of Fame.

"There's not a way to put this into words, and I work with words every day of my life," Thesing says. "All of this is so humbling. The people I've met through this walk through life are just amazing. I'm living the life I want to live."

# Scott Lykins

## 2004 Graduate

As a young child, Scott Lykins would sit beneath his family's piano while his older siblings took lessons from their mother, the late Judy Lykins, a longtime Nisswa kindergarten teacher. When the lessons were over, he would play what they had just practiced. He started lessons from his mother, his first piano teacher, while in kindergarten at Nisswa Elementary School.

Lykins, an accomplished pianist and cellist, co-founded Lakes Area Music Festival, which has brought all-star professional musicians from top orchestras and opera companies worldwide to perform in the Brainerd lakes area since 2009. Because of his dedication to bringing professional classical music within Brainerd Public Schools and throughout the community, Lykins has been named a 2018 Brainerd High School Distinguished Achievement Hall of Fame inductee. Lykins is a 2004 BHS graduate.

Lykins grew up on the west side of Gull Lake, the youngest of four siblings, at his parents Roger and Judy Lykins' resort, Lykins Pinehurst Resort.

In sixth grade, Lykins joined band, choir and orchestra, playing bass. The next year, he switched to cello. By eighth grade, Lykins became one of the youngest members of the Brainerd High School Chamber Orchestra.

He and his parents attended a Minnesota Orchestra concert — the first full professional orchestra he had ever seen — his sophomore year. It was a transformative experience for the Nisswa teen.

"I was blown away," Lykins recalls, of the performance. At intermission, his father asked one of the cellists — Joseph Johnson — to come over and speak to his son. By his junior year, Lykins was traveling to the Twin Cities for private cello lessons with Johnson at Orchestra Hall. He started performing in the Minnesota Youth Symphony that same year.

But if it weren't for BHS's strong music program and the encouragement of former orchestra director Grant Wilcox, Lykins says he wouldn't have had the opportunities he had while a BHS student.

"Brainerd has a long-standing reputation as having one of the top music programs in the state," says Lykins. "It was so important to students like me to have an opportunity to be part of a good music program."

At BHS, Lykins was active in the Chamber Orchestra, Symphonic Band, All-State Orchestra (assistant principal cello in 2002 and principal cello in 2003), All-Conference Orchestra, Marching Band, Jazz Band, Wind Ensemble and Brass Quintet. He was on the swim team, serving as captain his senior year, and ran cross country. He also won the talent contest at BHS his senior year.

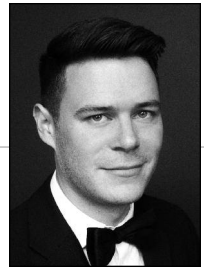
Lykins spent a year at DePaul University in Chicago, majoring in cello performance. He then transferred to Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., where he graduated with his bachelor's degree in cello performance in 2009, and his master's degree in cello performance and literature in 2011.

After he completed his undergraduate degree in 2009, Lykins returned home to Brainerd. He talked four of his musician friends from Eastman School of Music to spend the summer here, too. They would all wait tables to make money, but Lykins had another idea. They would also host a series of free concerts at area churches.

Before that first concert, they were unsure if anyone would come. But by the sixth and final concert of the summer, about 300 people were packed into Lutheran Church of the Cross in Nisswa. This concert series evolved into Lakes Area Music Festival, a non-profit organization that now brings more than 160 professional musicians to the Brainerd lakes area each summer, performing chamber music, orchestra, opera, and ballet. The concerts are free and open to the public, allowing everyone of all ages to be exposed to and enjoy classical music, regardless of socioeconomic status.

Lykins serves as executive and artistic director. Under his leadership, more than 12,000 audience members are served each year. Now in its 10th season, LAMF draws all-star musicians from throughout the music industry. LAMF has put Brainerd on the classical music map.

# 2018



"Everyone wants to be in Brainerd in the summer," says Lykins. "Our musicians enjoy their time in the lakes area for many of the same reasons — enjoying the lakes and outdoor recreation. But they also come because of the festival's reputation within the international music community for an excellent artistic experience and as a place where great people gather to create music."

While Lykins is proud of LAMF's success, there is a deeper reason why this organization remains important to him. He wants young people in his hometown to experience professional classical music, something that would have been a life-changing experience for him growing up in Nisswa. This is why concerts are free, so people of all ages will come and enjoy the music.

"This is more than a job for me," says Lykins. "It's a way to remain connected with my hometown and provide audiences with opportunities that wouldn't be available otherwise."

Lakes Area Music Festival has a \$500,000 annual budget. About 70 percent comes from the community and the rest is raised through grants and fundraisers.

LAMF also partners with Brainerd Community Education and hosts Explore Music!, a week-long music camp in August for students in first- through fifth-grade to experience music with professional musicians. They've recently added Explore Performance, a music camp for students in sixth- through ninth-grade to build on their stage presence and performance techniques. Throughout the school year, LAMF also brings professional musicians into area schools for education, mentoring and performances. Last year about 2,500 area students experienced these world-class musical performances through its Music Mentors program, which Lykins coordinates.

"It's offering an opportunity I didn't have when I was a music-loving student," Lykins says.

Lakes Area Music Festival also reaches out in other ways to the community, by performing and offering music workshops in libraries, parks, area nursing homes, correctional facilities, women's shelters and more.

LAMF hosted its first opera in 2012. At the time, 60 percent of audience members surveyed said they hadn't been to an opera before. Opera performances, such as Mozart's "The Magic Flute" in August, are among the highest attended LAMF programs each summer.

Lykins says the vision of Lakes Area Music Festival's board of directors is to make the Brainerd Lakes Area a national destination for classical music. The new performing arts center, approved by Brainerd School District voters last April, will help make this vision possible.

Lykins was nominated by Dr. Dave Boran, a member of the LAMF board of directors. Boran, in his nomination letter, writes "Scott is the face of the festival and is truly blossoming into a fine leader and excellent musician."

Lykins feels honored to be inducted into the BHS Distinguished Achievement Hall of Fame.

"It's a huge honor to have this recognition for what I'm currently doing from the school system that launched me into success at the beginning of my music career," he says.

Lykins splits his time between Minneapolis and Brainerd. He has performed as a collaborative pianist throughout the United States and in Europe. He's performed as a cello soloist with the Minnesota Philharmonic Orchestra, Heartland Symphony, and Northeast Orchestra. Since 2013 he has performed as a member of the South Dakota Symphony.

Lykins is also a long-distance runner and a frequent finisher of the Twin Cities Marathon. He enjoys attending concerts and theater performances and spending time on the lake.

# Steve Lepinski

## 1966 Graduate

Steve Lepinski has wonderful memories of growing up in Northeast Brainerd, playing sports and being active in various school activities.

But Lepinski, a 1966 Brainerd High School graduate, recognizes that not all children experience similar healthy and happy childhoods. Lepinski has dedicated much of his adult life helping children with social, emotional and behavioral problems find the mental health resources they need and training mental health professionals in this important field.

For his dedication and work as chief executive officer for nearly 30 years at the Washburn Center for Children in Minneapolis, a leading children's mental health organization in the state, Lepinski has been selected as a 2018 BHS Distinguished Achievement Hall of Fame inductee.

Lepinski was born in St. Cloud, but moved to Brainerd with his parents, Clarence and Anabel Lepinski, and younger brother, John, before he started kindergarten. He attended grade school at Lowell Elementary School , except for third grade which was spent at Garfield Elementary School. While in high school, basketball was his primary sport, but he also enjoyed football. He was an announcer on the student-run Pow-Wow radio show on Saturday mornings on KLIZ Radio and worked on the school newspaper as a photo editor. His other school activities included Letterman's Club, German Club, Class Cabinet, Class Officer, National Honor Society, Foreign Student Committee and Quill and Scroll. He was a Foreign Committee king candidate and was named an honor graduate with distinction.

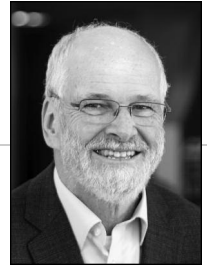
Lepinski has fond memories of spending time with friends on Gull Lake, boating around the lake and waterskiing. He also discovered at an early age that he enjoyed working with children. He served as a camp counselor at Legionville for a couple of summers and his first job was at Paul Bunyan Amusement Center.

After graduation in 1966, Lepinski attended St. John's University in Collegeville, earning a bachelor of science degree in sociology. After college, he taught in Puerto Rico for a year, a transformative experience. He also worked with developmentally disabled children at the former Brainerd state hospital, eventually working at a residential treatment center. Lepinski earned a master's degree in health administration, with an emphasis in mental health administration, from the University of Minnesota.

Lepinski spent 13 years as executive director at Storefront/Youth Action, a Twin Cities youth counseling agency before he was named CEO of Washburn Center for Children in 1987.

Under Lepinski's leadership, Washburn Center grew from a \$1.5 million non-profit organization with about 30 staff members to a \$17 million organization with 170 staff members. The organization began in the 1880s as an orphanage after a mill explosion left many children

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without parents. It has evolved into Minnesota's only stand-alone child mental health facility for children with behavioral and mental health disorders, serving about 3,000 children each year. In 2010, under Lepinski's leadership, Washburn Center launched a \$24.5 million capital campaign to build a new facility. The new building was completed in 2014.

Lepinski retired from Washburn Center in February 2017, but he continues to serve as a consultant for non-profit organizations involved in strategic planning and capital campaigns. He also coaches younger non-profit executives.

Lepinski served on the board of the Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs, the steering committee of the Minnesota Mental Health Action Group (MHAG) and co-led the development of the Minnesota Children's Mental Health Partnership. For more than 15 years, he served as a trustee for the Unemployment Services Trust, a national organization that helps non-profit organizations manage and reduce their unemployment costs in order to more effectively advance their missions.

Lepinski was honored with the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits' Transformative Leader Award in 2012 and was the 2012-2013 Executive Leadership Fellow at the University of Minnesota's Center for Integrative Leadership. In 2014 Lepinski was named in Minnesota Business magazine's "The (Real) Power 50" list which recognizes influential business professionals in Minnesota.

He and his wife, Ellen, live in south Minneapolis. They have three adult children and two grandsons, ages 7 and 10, whom they enjoy spending time with.

Lepinski was nominated for the BHS Hall of Fame by classmate John Norris. Norris explained in his nomination letter that Lepinski was not just a joiner in high school, but an active participant in activities at BHS. Later in life, Lepinski would often be the featured speaker or panelist at conferences his wife would attend as part of her job. Norris explained that this speaks to his colleagues considering him as an expert and resource in the field of youth mental health. Norris wrote that Lepinski has always been the ultimate gentleman and a caring person who views "the glass half full or full."

Lepinski was genuinely surprised when he learned he was being inducted into the BHS Hall of Fame.

"I am honored, and almost a little embarrassed," Lepinski said of being recognized alongside other BHS Hall of Fame's distinguished recipients.

Lepinski is looking forward to being in the BHS Homecoming Parade, something he hasn't done since high school.

2018

# Mary Tornstrom

## Brainerd Educator

Sixty-two years after the late Mary Tornstrom retired as educator at Brainerd Public Schools, her legacy lives on today. Tornstrom Auditorium at Washington Educational Services Building bears her name, but her indelible mark as a Brainerd educator extends beyond the performance venue.

Tornstrom, who died in 1971 at age 83, has been posthumously named a 2018 Brainerd High School Distinguished Achievement Hall of Fame inductee. She served as a teacher and principal at Washington High School from 1915 until her retirement in 1956. After she retired and until 1969, Tornstrom taught homebound students within the school district. She devoted approximately 56 years of her life to educating students.

Tornstrom is one of only two hall of fame recipients who did not attend Brainerd Public Schools. She joins former Superintendent Bob Gross, a 2016 inductee, on the distinguished roster.

Tornstrom grew up in Stillwater, one of eight children born to Swedish immigrants. Three of her siblings died at young ages, and Tornstrom was raised as one of five surviving siblings in both Stillwater and Excelsior. She graduated from high school in 1906.

Tornstrom taught for four years in Kokato and Spring Grove after her graduation from the University of Minnesota in 1911. Her 1910 college yearbook aptly offered this description of the young Tornstrom: "[She] was tired at best, pleasure in making other people happy." In 1915, she was hired at BHS, teaching courses that included English, history, German, civics and philosophy.

In 1922 she was named high school principal and started the high school yearbook, known then and now as the "Brainonian," serving as yearbook advisor. The Senior Class of 1922 dedicated their yearbook, the inaugural edition, to Tornstrom. That same year she also started and advised the high school newspaper known as the "Pow-Wow," which was part of the "Brainonian," and became the "Fifth Street Journal" in 1969.

Tornstrom was principal when, on a dark wintry night in 1928, fire destroyed Washington High School. Credible accounts of that fire reported that Tornstrom and Superintendent W.C. Cobb ran into the burning building to save student records. They managed to save them all. The fire occurred during Easter break and Tornstrom, along with other faculty, undoubtedly worked hard to find temporary classroom spaces and new textbooks so high school could resume when break was over.

In 1930, with Tornstrom continuing as principal, the new Washington High School opened for students. In the auditorium that now bears her name, Tornstrom directed the school's first play performed on the stage, Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Tornstrom not only served as high school theater director/advisor, but also was a student government advisor.

In 1938, Tornstrom's 23rd year at Brainerd Public Schools,

BPS began offering secondary educational opportunities for students beyond 12th grade. Brainerd Junior College, now known as Central Lakes College, was then locally organized and administered and opened on the third floor of WHS. Tornstrom, still WHS principal, taught German and philosophy at the junior college upstairs in the building. She also served as Dean of Women for BJC from 1940 until her retirement in 1956.

After 20 years at BPS, Tornstrom earned her master's degree from then Colorado State College. She also performed graduate work at Columbia University in New York, the University of Chicago and the University of Minnesota.

In 1949, Tornstrom received Brainerd Public Schools' outstanding teacher award. After 41 years of teaching in Brainerd Public Schools, she retired in 1956. On May 26, 1956, the former WHS auditorium was named "Mary T. Tornstrom Auditorium." That day was also declared "Mary Tornstrom Day" by the superintendent and school board members, who recognized her innovative approach to education, saying "may you continue to lend your youthful ideas and winning personality to the educational tasks that confront us."

In 1965, a formal portrait of Tornstrom was commissioned and, in 1969, was installed in the WHS library.

During retirement, she served on the citizens advisory committee which planned the present Brainerd High School building and initiated the campaign which resulted in a favorable bond vote for the current building, which was built in 1969.

Tornstrom also was active within the Brainerd community. She was a charter member of the Brainerd Zonta Club in 1954 and served as the



club's president. She was a member of the League of Women Voters, Delta Kappa Gamma and the State Deans of Women. When Minnesota celebrated its 75th anniversary, Tornstrom was named to the committee that planned the statewide observance.

In March 1966 she received the Book of Golden Deeds award from the Exchange Club of Brainerd, the organization's highest honor. In 1967 she received a Zonta award and was selected as Crow Wing County's Outstanding Senior Citizen. She was active at First Congregational Church of Brainerd, teaching Sunday school from 1929 through 1954.

For 11 years, from her retirement in 1956 until 1967, Tornstrom taught homebound students in the school district. She then sold her home near Gregory Park in Brainerd and moved to Walker Methodist Residence, a Minneapolis nursing home, in 1969. She died on October 25, 1971, in Minneapolis.

In 1972, a memorial scholarship was established in Tornstrom's name at CLC. That same year, the mayor of Brainerd proclaimed a "Mary Tornstrom Memorial Week."

Tornstrom never married nor had children, but her extended family members say she cared for her students and nieces and nephews as if they were her own. She has been described as fun, kind, outgoing and adventurous. She enjoyed going on canoe trips with family and friends in what's now known as the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. She would write about their adventures in her journals, stories that family members continue to treasure. Tornstrom also enjoyed spending time with friends at a Gull Lake cabin she co-owned with friends.

"She had a charismatic personality," explains Carolyn Tornstrom, of Caledonia, whose late husband, Ron, was Tornstrom's nephew. "You just hung on every word she said."

Margie Bosacker, of Edina, says her mother, Ingrid Tornstrom, once took a road trip with her sister-in-law, Mary, and Mary missed many of the sights along the way. She was busy writing letters to her friends. Tornstrom was a prolific letter writer, often sending notes of sympathy or congratulations to friends and others in Brainerd.

"She was always a storyteller, and she was an awesome writer," says Deb Anderson, Tornstrom's great niece who lives in Ironton. "When you read her journals, you think you are really reading a novel of these people in the wilderness. She made them comical."

Tornstrom's sister, Selma, who was Anderson's grandmother, lived just off the Deerwood shortcut. Tornstrom would take the train from Brainerd to visit them. She always had presents for her nieces and nephews. The late Ralph Blomberg, Anderson's father, spoke highly of his Aunt Mary, telling his daughter that she was the fun aunt, who always had time to play with him and the other children.

Diane Cina, of Minneapolis, says Mary Tornstrom, her great aunt, was financially generous, but she also gave of her time and attention. When Cina was 11, Aunt Mary paid for her first piano lessons because her mother, a widow, couldn't afford them. Cina became a professional musician thanks, in part, to her great aunt.

"She was a lot of fun and loved to laugh," says Cina. "People loved her. We'd travel with her to various places quite often and no matter where she went, she knew people. She was an extrovert and she was always up for conversations with strangers."

Tornstrom family reunions have been capped off with a visit and tour of Tornstrom Auditorium. Tornstrom's extended family feels honored that she is being remembered still today for her contributions to Brainerd Public Schools and the community.

"I think it's fantastic. It's very exciting. I'm happy for her," says Cina. "She was really a pioneer."

"I'm so very honored and very pleased she's had this huge honor bestowed on her. I'm sure she would be very gracious in accepting this award, just knowing how she was," adds Anderson. "She wasn't someone who wanted accolades. She was just a loving person and really did care for the children. That's why she stayed in the profession as long as she did."

John Erickson, who had known Tornstrom, extensively researched Tornstrom's life and career to support and nominate her for induction into the Hall of Fame.

Tornstrom summed up her thoughts on teaching and education at the dinner where she received the Book of Golden Deeds award, saying: "A teacher's reward is not much in tangible things, but rather in the love of the children they teach."

# Kelly Burnham

## 1984 Graduate

Before the next Minnesota Vikings home game, listen closely. You will likely hear the deep, baritone voice of its regular announcer who may be familiar to many in the Brainerd lakes area.

Kelly Burnham, a 1984 Brainerd High School graduate, is living his dream. As a young boy, he would sit in front of the television, watching the Vikings with his NFL football players' cards spread out in front of him. He'd move the cards around on the floor, as if he was coaching the players on the field.

"Honestly, I could have named every Viking on the team when I was 4 years old," Burnham recalls. "I've loved the Vikings since I can ever remember having memories."

Burnham, who is known professionally as Alan Roach, has built an impressive resume that would make any sports fan green with envy. He's been the public address announcer for Minnesota Vikings home games since 2016. He's also had a front row seat to nearly every major professional sporting event in the country and around the world as an announcer.

Burnham has been the public address announcer for nine Super Bowls; this February's game in Minnesota will mark his tenth. He's announced ice hockey during the past four Winter Olympics: Sochi, Russia, 2014; Vancouver, Canada, 2010; Torino, Italy, 2006; and Salt Lake City, 2002. He also announced boxing at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The day after the Super Bowl this winter in Minneapolis he'll fly to PyeongChang, South Korea, to announce at the 2018 Winter Olympic Games.

Burnham, who lives in Littleton, Colo., is or has been the public address announcer for the following Colorado teams:

- Colorado Avalanche (NHL) 1999 to present
- Colorado Rapids (MLS) 2010 to present
- Denver Broncos (NFL) 2000-2016
- Colorado Rockies (MLB) 1993-2006
- University of Colorado Buffaloes 2007-09
- Denver University Pioneers 2004-05
- Colorado Springs Sky Sox 1990-91

Burnham has served as public address announcer for numerous Pro Bowls, NFL drafts and Pro Football Hall of Fame enshrinement ceremonies. He's been the announcer for the NFL Pro Bowl since 2009 and the NFL International Series games in London since 2007. He's also announced five Olympic Gold Medal Hockey games and multiple NHL and MLB All-Star Games. In 2015, he announced baseball at the Pan Am Games in Toronto, Canada.

He's announced for professional soccer games, including the 2017 USA Men's National Team, 2016 USA Women's National Team, the 2015 MLS All-Stars vs. Tottenham, and the 2017 Confederations Cup in Saint Petersburg, Russia, an international soccer tournament preceding the World Cup games, which will have him back in Russia in summer of 2018. In 2009-10, he announced for the Churchill Cup, an international rugby championship.

If you've ever been at the Denver International Airport, you may recognize Burnham's voice. He's the voice of the underground train system at the airport.

"I'm so lucky," Burnham says, of his broadcasting career. "It's a dream job for anybody. It's amazing how many of the world's biggest sports events I've been sitting at a microphone for. There are people who only dream of having a ticket to such an event. I have to pinch myself a lot."

Ironically, Burnham's sport of choice at BHS wasn't football, but basketball, despite being a diehard Vikings fan. He and his family moved to Brainerd from the small farming community of Slayton, Minn., during Christmas break of his ninth-grade year when he started school at Franklin Junior High. He had been in track and football while at Slayton, but once he got to Brainerd, he opted to stick with basketball through his senior year.

"I was kind of afraid of everyone on the football team," Burnham admits with a laugh. "I look back at that now and I wish I knew differently. If you played smart, you wouldn't get hurt. I wish I would have played."

The summer before his junior year at BHS, Burnham got his first on-air radio job, which proved to be the start of a lengthy broadcasting career. He was hired at KLIZ Radio as an announcer. He worked at the

2017



Brainerd radio station through the rest of high school and after graduating from BHS in 1984. He enrolled at Southwest State University in Marshall, taking radio and television courses. He assumed he'd get his bachelor's degree there, but the summer after his freshman year, his boss at KLIZ asked him to stay on as sports director.

Burnham didn't return to college. Instead, he took the job at KLIZ. The following spring the radio station sent him to cover spring training for the Minnesota Twins in Kissimmee, Fla. It was 1986 – the year before the Twins won the World Series.

"I'm 19 years old, wandering around Twins' training camp and interviewing players," recalls Burnham. "It was the coolest thing I'd done at that point."

A year later, the radio station told him they no longer had a budget for a sports department, and Burnham left Brainerd, looking for radio work. He then took a series of radio gigs in Garden City, Kan.; Fort Dodge, Iowa; Des Moines, Iowa; and Colorado Springs, Colo., which eventually led to a job at a Denver radio station in July 1991.

He changed his professional name to Alan Roach when he arrived in Denver. While he was working in radio in Brainerd, he worked under his own name. But when he moved to Kansas, Burnham switched to Kelly Walker, an easy name for listeners to remember. Later, he decided to add an Irish flair; he worked as Kelly O'Shay when he played rock-and-roll music.

After moving to Denver, Burnham had a dilemma. There was an afternoon announcer named Steve Kelly and another announcer named Michael O'Shay. He couldn't be Kelly O'Shay.

"There's not really a good reason why Alan Roach popped into being, but it became my name in July 1991," Burnham explains. "Because of my longevity in Denver radio, now 95 percent of the people who have contact with me call me Alan Roach. Even my closest friends don't know me as Kelly Burnham. My family calls me Kelly and only a very few people I've worked with a long time call me Kelly."

Burnham worked at nine radio stations in four states before landing in Denver, where he worked at KOA Radio for 26 years. When he started as KOA's sports reporter, he would travel with the Denver Broncos doing sideline reports at their away games. He did this for 16 years. "I saw the ins and outs of a football team," Burnham explains. "Standing on the sideline of an NFL game is so different from sitting in the stands or watching it on television."

Burnham's five older siblings all still live in Minnesota. His parents, Phyllis and Dale Burnham, who lived in Nisswa, have since passed away. They both worked for many years at Grand View Lodge – as Burnham did for six years while living in Nisswa. This is why Burnham says he and his family like to stay there when they come back and visit. He and his wife Jennifer got married at Grand View Lodge in 2012. Burnham's former English teacher and student council advisor, Guy Doud, officiated their wedding.

Burnham has two children, a daughter, Katjana, 19, and a son, D'Artagnan, 15.

Burnham has fond memories of his own teenage years spent in Brainerd. He served as student council president his senior year. He was stunned when he learned he was being inducted into the Brainerd High School Hall of Fame.

"I can't wrap my head around it," Burnham says, of the honor. He says he feels humbled by being grouped with the other distinguished BHS alumni who have been inducted before him. "I looked online at the 65 people who are in there and they are teachers, doctors, civic leaders, military heroes, people who have done so much charity work and helped out children and done so much for the community. I feel a bit undeserving. I have a really, cool job and that's all I've done. I'll take it. I love it. It's a very special honor for me."

People often ask Burnham what's the greatest sporting event he's ever been involved with. It's a difficult question for him to answer.

"The Super Bowl is the single greatest sporting event – and I've done nine of them – and the Olympics is the greatest sporting spectacle of them all – and I've done five of them," Burnham explains. "It's impossible to explain how humbling it is to be asked to come back and be part of these experiences. It's unbelievable."

2017

# Kristen (Doyscher) Williams



## 1998 Graduate

When you're listening to your favorite country music artists on the radio or streaming one of their songs on Spotify, Apple Music or Pandora, it's likely a 1998 Brainerd High School graduate has played an integral role in getting their music out to the masses.

Kristen (Doyscher) Williams, Senior Vice President of Radio and Streaming for Warner Music Nashville, has been named a 2017 Brainerd High School Hall of Fame inductee. She works directly with radio stations and online streaming platforms throughout the country to get their artists' music onto playlists. She represents country artists such as Blake Shelton, Zac Brown Band, Brett Eldredge, Cole Swindell, and Hunter Hayes, to name only a few.

Today, Williams is a country music industry leader. She's also become a role model for women in the music business. But growing up in Brainerd, far from the city lights of Nashville, it had never occurred to Williams that jobs like hers even existed.

"I didn't know that there was somebody responsible for getting music played on the radio," she says. "I assumed it just happened."

Williams, the daughter of Becky and Mark Doyscher, moved to Brainerd with her family when she was 6. She's the eldest of six siblings. When she was 12, the family moved to Baxter, where she has fond memories of living on White Sand Lake.

"Growing up in Brainerd was incredibly special," Williams explains. "You take for granted a lot of things when you're a kid and you don't realize how lucky you are. I grew up on a lake and had lakes surrounding me. We lived only a mile from the nearest gas station and we'd ride our bikes to the park and grab a snack on our way home. I had a longtime summer job at Kavanagh's (Resort). I love a small town feel and that's partly because of how I was raised."

Williams jokes that she now sings only in the kitchen and shower, but she fell in love with singing and performing while a student at Brainerd Public Schools. Her first musical performance was in fifth grade when she dressed in a fish costume and sang a song about a submarine as part of the Brainerd "Windows" production. She didn't start to get serious about pursuing her musical interests until she met Diane Hauan, Director of Vocal Music at Pierz Healy High School, who had been her choir director at the former Franklin Junior High School.

"She was the first person who told me that I had a true instrument in my voice," Williams says of Hauan. "She really taught me how to sing. She worked with me through private lessons and helped me recognize I had a real talent in my voice."

In Hauan's letter of recommendation to Brainerd Public Schools Foundation, she wrote that Williams' character, work ethic and genuine personality made her a fitting match as a Hall of Fame recipient.

"Kristen, as a student, had a radiating smile and an incredible vocal talent. Even at such a young age, she could 'sing circles' around most people. More than that, Kristen was and is a fantastic person. Her ability to succeed in everything that was placed before her, transcended into her adult life."

At Brainerd High School, Williams met former BHS choral director Mike Smith, who helped further develop her vocal talents. She participated in a Capella Choir, Concert Choral Women's Chorus and Windfall Ensemble. Music wasn't her sole interest while at BHS. Williams had a 4.0 GPA, was a member of Class Cabaret and a multi-sport athlete, serving as captain of both her tennis and softball teams.

Williams graduated from BHS in 1998 and left the Brainerd lakes area for the College of Saint Benedict's in St. Cloud. She initially planned to pursue a teaching degree, but the dream of pursuing a vocal career persisted. During her senior year, she had a conversation with Mike Smith, which she vividly recalls.

"I told him I was going to be a teacher and he said, 'If you don't use your voice, it's a shame,'" Williams remembers. "It always stuck with me." Following her freshman year at Saint Benedict's, Williams packed her bags and moved to Nashville in August 1999 at age 19. She transferred to Belmont University, known for its music business program. She did later return and graduate from Saint Benedict's with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Accounting at St. Ben's in December 2002.

As she pursued her dreams in Nashville, her parents also reminded her that she needed a back-up plan. While studying business administration/music business at Belmont, she took an internship as a promotions coordinator with Dreamcatcher Entertainment from 2000-2001, where she worked with acts like Kenny Rogers and Diamond Rio. She realized after some time in Nashville that a singing career wasn't something she wanted to do long-term. A career path within the music industry seemed like a great fit.

Her internship led to a job at Warner Music Nashville in 2003, where she continues to work today as a music executive with a staff of 23 employees in her department. The country music industry is starting to experience an uptick in revenues after years of declining profits in recorded music and physical products sold in stores. Williams says that streaming music is helping to drive that increase. Last October she was promoted to Senior Vice President of Radio and Streaming as part of an internal restructuring process to focus more on streaming services.

"In the country genre, we still recognize that radio is the No. 1 driver for new music discovery, but streaming is catching up with other genres like pop, rock and urban," Williams explains. "We restructured our department to give more assets to those dealing with streaming partners. With that, we're trying to be a driver of some of that change."

Williams never thought she'd end up living in Nashville after college, but it is home now. She met her husband, Bo Williams, soon after moving to the city. They live in Gallatin, Tenn., with their daughter, McKenna, 9, and son, Eli, 7.

Some of Williams' career achievements and honors include:

- Billboard's 40 Under 40 (recognizing the music industry top executives under 40 years of age)
- Billboard's Top 100 Power Players (recognizing the music industry top influential power players)
- Elected to Country Radio Broadcasters Agenda Committee and most recently the Country Radio Broadcasters Board
- Voted as one of Country Aircheck's "Power 31" Industry Leaders
- Nominated for Country Aircheck's SVP-VP/National Promotion Executive of the Year
- Selected by GAC, in partnership with Hershey's Chocolate, for a television spotlight on working mothers

Williams is a member of the Country Music Association, Leadership Music, Warner Music Group Top Line and Country Radio Broadcasters.

Her achievements and honors in community service include:

- Selected and volunteers as Chamber Panel Contributor for Women in the Industry
- Selected and volunteers as Country Radio Seminar Panel Contributor for Women in the Industry
- Partnered with Uber for "Big Break," giving aspiring country artists the chance to play for Warner Music Nashville

Under Williams' leadership, Warner Music Nashville has achieved:

- Six No. 1 singles and eight weeks spent at the airplay chart with Blake Shelton, Brett Eldredge and Cole Swindell in 2016 plus four No. 1 singles and 6 weeks spent at the airplay chart in 2017 year to date – with Blake Shelton, Michael Ray, Dan + Shay
- Three CMA and ACM New Artists of the Year: Hunter Hayes, 2012 CMA New Artist; Brett Eldredge, 2014 CMA New Artist; and Cole Swindell, 2015 ACM New Artist
- Chart share growth has increased 2.5 times since 2010, from 3.8 percent in 2010 to 10.2 percent in 2014
- WMG Nashville on the whole went from 4 percent to 16 percent between 2010-present; Williams now oversees 16 percent share of the chart
- Over 5 billion audience impressions across all Warner Music Nashville promoted singles in 2016, and another 2 billion audience impressions in 2017 to date alone
- Five gold albums, seven platinum albums, 21 gold singles, 16 platinum singles and six multi-platinum singles
- 33 No. 1 singles topping the charts for more than 51 weeks since 2010

When Williams isn't working, she and her family enjoy spending time at the lake, on the baseball field or at a campground. Her daughter is now at the age where Williams was when she discovered a love for singing.

Life has come full circle for this BHS graduate.

"She's developing that love of music as well, and she's starting to recognize that she has a voice," Williams says of her daughter, McKenna. "It's fun to see that same love happening in her as she goes into fifth grade where it started for me, as well."

Williams was stunned and humbled when she learned she was being inducted into the BHS Hall of Fame.

"It's humbling. It's such an honor, and I don't use those words lightly," Williams says. "I don't necessarily see myself worthy of that honor. It's really fun for me to look back where I came from and where I started and truly be grateful for everything that everyone did for me along the way."



2016

# Robert (Bob) Gross



## BHS Above and Beyond Award

Bob Gross never intended to be an educator. Even at Valley City State Teacher's College, Bob didn't intend to major in education. He became a college wrestler, excelled at the sport and, through that experience, became interested in coaching. "Teaching was a natural byproduct of that", said Bob.

Natural is a word to describe Bob's leadership abilities. After only two years teaching in Wauburn High School near Detroit Lakes, his first teaching job out of college, Bob's peers requested he fill a new principal vacancy. Bob exemplified what the teachers and staff wanted, and he accepted the position recognizing "it's not your supervisors that get you the promotion, it's the people you're expected to lead".

After four years in Wauburn, Bob became assistant principal of the new Brainerd Senior High School, and so began his 31-year career with Brainerd Public Schools. After five years between the role at BHS and that of principal of then Washington Junior High, Bob was appointed assistant superintendent in 1974 and then, in 1981, superintendent of Brainerd Public Schools, where he served for 18 years. During the early 1990s, Bob was awarded Minnesota Regional Superintendent of the Year as well as the American Library Association's National Superintendent of the Year.

Education wasn't all Bob excelled at in Brainerd. He also served on and lead boards of directors for St. Joseph's Medical Center, the Brainerd Area YMCA, Brainerd Area Salvation Army, Brainerd Area Chamber of Commerce, and Kiwanis Club. In 1987, Bob was named Brainerd's Citizen of the Year.

After 31 years with Brainerd Public Schools, Bob opted for a new challenge and left Brainerd to lead the Singapore American School in Singapore. While there, Bob was awarded International School Superintendent of the Year.

Bob spent eight years in Singapore before taking on the role of Regional Education Officer for the Office of Overseas Schools for the US Department of State, after which he transitioned back into school administration as the interim director for the American Community School of Abu Dhabi in

the United Arab Emirates. He stayed there for one year before filling a one-year term in the American International School of Vienna in Vienna, Austria. In 2014, upon finishing his term in Austria, Bob was ready to retire from education. Or so he thought.

In 2015, after less than a year in the position, Brainerd's superintendent submitted his resignation. That's when new retiree, Bob Gross, received a call from Brainerd Public Schools asking him to be interim superintendent, giving the district time to find the right candidate for the long-term position. His love for the Brainerd community was so wide and deep, so he couldn't say no. "This community has been so good for me. Most people need to move to advance their career, and I had the advantage of being able to do that here".

Soon Bob was back leading the district he loved. Up until his last day, Bob was involved in every aspect of the district, even helping hire teachers he will never supervise. But hiring good talent is a skill of Bob's, and as a district, "we want to give parents the assurance this is the best person we could hire, and we're making sure top talent is found".

During Bob Gross's tenure as superintendent of Brainerd Public Schools, Brainerd was recognized as one of the top school districts in the state with college entrance exam scores exceeding the state and national averages. That tradition of excellence has continued through the teachers and administrators Bob hired and those hired today, most recently evidenced by all six of Brainerd's elementary schools receiving National Blue Ribbon awards for 2014, a previously unprecedented accomplishment by a single school district.

With all he accomplished in his years as an educator, Bob could have kicked back and enjoyed his retirement. Yet when the call for help came from Brainerd schools, he couldn't resist the pull. When explaining why, Bob said, with his well-known warmth and smile, "[ISD] 181 blood is running through me. It's like I had an infusion."

2016

# Keith R. Keller



## 1978 Graduate

For as long as Keith can remember, he's always wanted to be an aerospace engineer, preferably in the US military. Moving to Brainerd as a sophomore, Keith graduated from Brainerd High School as valedictorian in 1978. He then earned his bachelor of science degree in aerospace engineering and mechanics from the University of Minnesota in 1982 and went to work for General Dynamics Convair in San Diego, Calif. as a systems engineer and test conductor for the nuclear Ground Launched Cruise Missile program, and as an aerospace engineer for advanced ballistic missile and space development programs. After two years there, Keith began graduate school at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). While working on his master of science degree in aeronautics and astronautics, Keith was recruited by the United States Air Force (USAF).

After attending Officer Training School in Texas in 1985, he finished graduate school at MIT and was assigned to the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization's (SDIO's) Space Surveillance and Tracking System program office at HQ Space Systems Division. He led the design team that conceived the revolutionary small satellite surveillance system called Brilliant Eyes, for which he won the USAF Engineering Excellence Award. He was then selected in a USAF-wide competition for the Air Force Engineer and Scientist Exchange Program to be an Exchange Officer at Deutsche Aerospace in Munich, Germany from 1992 – 1994, where he worked in the space surveillance and reconnaissance systems division on joint cooperative space experiments between the US and Germany.

Upon his return from Germany, Keith was appointed to the Office of Space & Technology, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Space, with duty at the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) in the Washington, D.C. area, where he worked as a systems engineer for a next-generation Signals Intelligence Satellite program, and director for Special Imagery Intelligence systems. In 1999, he was assigned to the Defense Intelligence Agency's (DIA's) Defense Foreign Liaison office at the Pentagon, where he served as

the Department of Defense's Foreign Liaison Officer for 30 countries in central and eastern Europe.

In 2003, he was selected by the Air Force and the DIA to return to Europe as United States Air Attaché to Austria and Slovenia at the US Embassy in Vienna, Austria, responsible for bilateral Air Force relations with these two countries. Subsequently, he served as Chief of Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) in the International Relations Division at HQ US Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, responsible for USAFETSC strategy and plans for 92 nations in Europe and Africa. From 2009, until his retirement from the USAF in the rank of lieutenant colonel in 2013, he served as deputy chief, Missile Defense Division, at HQ US European Command (EUCOM), in Stuttgart, Germany.

After his retirement from the USAF, he worked as a government civilian at HQ US Africa Command (AFRICOM) in Stuttgart as a Theater Strategy Development Specialist, responsible for development of strategy and plans for AFRICOM's basing posture in 53 nations on the African continent. In August 2014, Keith was recruited by NATO to serve as a civilian officer on the International Staff at NATO HQ in Brussels, Belgium in the Defense Investment Division, Strategy Directorate, Capability Delivery Section, where he assesses the application of emerging technologies for future capabilities of, and risks to, the Alliance.

While Keith has achieved so much in the years since graduating from Brainerd High School, he still fondly recalls his influential teachers at BHS and credits the "top notch" educational system in Brainerd for preparing him well for his career.

As Keith sees it, "In order to achieve your dreams, you need to set your long-term goals, and then make conscious educational and career choices along the way that prepare you to seize opportunities when they arise. BHS was very instrumental in helping me do this."

2016

# Anthony(Andy) Griffin



## 1997 Graduate

Going from local academic all-star to college at one of the most prestigious institutes of technology to successful Silicon Valley software engineer may give some people a big head. But not Andy. Instead he says, "You can't take credit for everything that happens to you, because so many other people are involved". While he has a lot to be proud of, the "it takes a village" concept is certainly true regarding Andy's success in Brainerd Public Schools.

Andy's exceptional aptitude for learning was recognized early on by his Whittier Elementary kindergarten teacher, Jeanne Larson. "She saw me as someone who should be fostered, and talked with my parents, Ray and Deb Griffin, about the [district's] enrichment program at Lowell". By third grade, even with the advanced learning provided by the enriched (now called Area Gifted And Talented Education, or AGATE) program, Andy needed more than was offered in the classroom. This time Andy's education was augmented by community members who taught him more of the sciences he was so curious about and developed his growing skills.

The summer after third grade, Andy's mother, a teacher in Pillager schools, checked out a district computer to bring home for the summer. That Apple IIe became Andy's playground where he was able to explore and learn basic computer programming. His passion for computers continues to this day.

By sixth grade Andy was leaving middle school to take math and science classes at the junior high, and in seventh grade, Andy walked from Washington Middle School to Brainerd High School for the first of his 13 Advanced Placement (AP) classes: Computer Science. At the end of his senior year at BHS, Andy had completed 13 AP classes. "If there was an AP version of a subject I was studying, I took it." That motivation led him to graduate in 1997 with the highest GPA of his graduating class and in BHS history. As a high school junior in 1996, Andy scored a perfect 1600 on his SAT

college entrance exam, one of only a few in the country to do so. Starting with Jeanne Larson in kindergarten, Brainerd Public Schools worked to ensure Andy's success. "When they saw someone with potential, they fostered it rather than shrugging it off saying, 'We don't know what to do.'" In addition to his other academic opportunities through Brainerd Public Schools, Andy said, "It's great that Brainerd invested so heavily in the AP program. It really laid the groundwork for me getting to Caltech."

Graduating from California Institute of Technology with a degree in Engineering and Applied Science helped Andy land his first job at Green Hills Software in Santa Barbara, Calif. During his 13 years with the company, he established himself professionally and became known as someone who "got stuff done." That reputation later helped Andy secure a job with the most iconic technology company in the world.

After spending his childhood poring over an Apple IIe, Andy is now a Senior Software Engineer for Apple in Cupertino, Calif. Andy said working for Apple is incredible, and it's "amazing working on things half a billion people use". While "you certainly feel the pressure of everyone watching the company, I try not to think about it, or it would be a little intimidating".

It's hard imagining someone as accomplished as Andy Griffin feeling intimidated by anything, but that humility is what makes him so relatable to those who haven't experienced all he has. When asked what advice he would give others, he said "If you're interested and passionate, be interested and passionate. Don't let anybody say, 'that'll never happen', because it can. Just dive in and go." Words to live by from someone who has certainly embraced his passion and interests, and with the help of a great school system and community, dove in and found success.

# 2015 Colonel Ronald Albers



## 1965 Graduate

With more than 6,900 hours of flight time with the United States Air Force, Colonel Ronald L. Albers' travels have taken him to Thailand, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, Dubai, and France – just to name a few. However, his heart and service, have remained allegiant to his community and home.

Col Albers was born December 9, 1946 in Brainerd and graduated from Washington High School in 1965.

During high school, Col Albers participated in countless extra curricular activities, including Brainonian and the Pow Wow, the school paper.

"One of my guidance counselors had told me I didn't try hard enough. But, I just wasn't competitive. I wasn't a straight A student. I didn't care about my grades."

But what he lacked in academic perseverance, he more than made up for in activity involvement.

"I was involved in just about everything. I was editor-in-chief and photographer for the Brainonian, an officer in the American Field Services. I had more stuff after my name in the yearbook than anyone in high school. I was in National Quill and Scroll Society, the National Honor Society..."

After graduation, Col Albers opted to explore the world beyond Brainerd. Following extensive travels alone throughout Europe that summer, he returned to attend Brainerd State Junior College, graduating with an Associate of Arts degree in 1967. He then attended the University of South Florida in Tampa, receiving his Bachelor of Arts Degree in English in March 1969.

Just two short days following graduation, Col Albers entered Officer Training School and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant on June 30, 1969. In mid-July of 1970, he received his pilot's wings upon graduating from UPT at Columbus Air Force Base. His entire active duty career was spent in the 301st Air Refueling Wing (32nd Air Refueling Squadron) at Lockbourne AFB as a combat crewmember in the KC-135 aircraft.

During the Southeast Asia conflict, he flew 111 combat sorties and served three different tours from bases in Thailand, including flying operational missions covering the span of both Linebacker I and Linebacker II – the 1972 summer and Christmas bombing of North Vietnam. He separated from active duty in July 1974 as a captain and immediately joined the Ohio Air National Guard.

For more than 20 years, Col Albers was a traditional guard member with full-time employment in downtown Columbus, Ohio as a Safety and Human Resources Manager. His duties in the Guard included Instructor Pilot, Chief of Command and Control, and Flight Commander. During Desert Shield and Desert Storm, he flew operational sorties as both a volunteer and an activated member of the 160th Air Refueling Group for more than four months. In 1994, the 160th ARG was deactivated and the personnel, and aircraft, from the 145th ARS were merged into the 121st Air Refueling Wing. In January 1995, Col Albers became a full-time Air Guard technician and served as the 121st ARW Chief of Safety until June 1996 when he became commander of the Operations Group. In January 2001, he was appointed to the position of Vice Wing Commander.

Col Albers' last assignment was between May 2002 to October 2002, as Commander of the 16th Expeditionary Operations Group at LeTub Air Base 125 near Istres, France. During the six-month period, he was responsible for all personnel, aircraft and material used for aerial refueling support of Operation Joint Guard. Shortly after his return from France, he retired as both a military member of the USAF as well as technician from the Ohio Air National Guard.

Since retirement, Col Albers has remained active in the National Guard Association of the United States, Ohio National Guard Association, Ohio National Guard Enlisted Association, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Motts Military Museum. He is also a member of the Ohio Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., American Legion and Military Officers' Association of America.

His list of military honors is equally impressive to his tireless service. Decorations include the USAF Legion of Merit, USAF Meritorious Service Medal, USAF Air Medal with four bronze oak leaf clusters, USAF Aerial Achievement Medal, USAF Commendation Medal, Distinguished Presidential Unit Citation, USAF Outstanding Unit Award with four bronze oak leaf clusters, Combat Readiness Medal with one silver and two bronze oak leaf clusters, National Defense Service Medal with one bronze service star, NATO Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with three bronze service stars, Southwest Asia Service Medal with two bronze service stars, Armed Forces Service Medal, USAF Overseas Short Tour Ribbon, USAF Expeditionary Service Ribbon with three bronze oak leaf clusters, USAF Longevity Service Award with one silver oak leaf cluster, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with one hourglass device, Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon, Air Force Training Ribbon, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Ribbon, Kuwait Liberation Medals from both the Saudi Arabian and Kuwait government, Ohio Commendation Medal with one bronze oak leaf cluster, and the Ohio Faithful Service Ribbon with three bronze oak leaf clusters.

Col Albers and his wife Rebecca live in Gahanna, Ohio and are parents to grown sons, Michael and Oliver.

While honored to receive the award, Col Albers said it belongs to his wife as much, if not more, than he; noting her dedication to their family while he was overseas and, while maintaining the household, she continued to attend law school full time.

"I was absolutely shocked," he said upon learning of his nomination into the Hall of Fame. "I have just about all fond memories of my school days there."

Col Albers said, when looking through school mementos, he came across a paper he wrote when he was in fifth grade about what he wanted to be when he grew up. He wrote he wanted to be a mechanical engineer, living by the beach that surfed and drove a hot rod.

While those plans didn't quite come to fruition, Col Albers is quite content with the honorable life he has lived.

2015

# Dr. L.J. Nickisch



## 1974 Graduate

Specializing in a field not many individuals can even begin to understand or grasp, Dr LJ Nickisch credits the stirring of his interests in math and science to several of his teachers at Brainerd High School.

Dr Nickisch currently serves as Senior Scientist and Vice President of NorthWest Research Associates, and is primarily known for his work in electromagnetic wave propagation in plasmas, especially the ionosphere. He is considered to be the world's expert in this field.

Dr Nickisch graduated from Brainerd High School in 1974 and was active in band, football, Brainonian staff and National Honor Society. Brainerd educators including Bill Matthies and Gary Fitch have been attributed to propelling Dr Nickisch's scientific dreams through a Masters and Doctoral program and into a continuing career as a theoretical physicist.

"I was very involved in the band program and particularly learned a lot from Dean Trzruc," Dr Nickisch noted. "He was good at inspiring excellence.

Dr Nickisch also noted teachers at both the junior high and high school level that initiated passion in the science field.

"My memories from Brainerd High are very good. We had world-class teachers and many of them specialized in many different areas. They truly provided enthusiasm toward learning and made learning fun."

Following high school, Dr Nickisch attended the University of Minnesota –Minneapolis and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Physics, the University of Wisconsin – Madison with a Master's of Science and Ph.D in Physics.

He also did undergraduate work at the University of Minnesota Institute of Technology and graduate work at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. Following receipt of his Ph.D., Dr Nickisch moved to California to work as a defense contractor in the area of electromagnetic wave propagation physics.

Dr Nickisch is also noted for his work in the study of quantum vacuum fields, leading to the development of his theory of connectivity for which he was the recipient of the Outstanding Paper Award by the Institute for Space and Nuclear Studies for "Review of Experimental Concepts for Studying the Quantum Vacuum Field."

Dr Nickisch's work has been published in over 25 peer-reviewed journals and conference proceedings. Though his work is of the highest level and is recognized around the world, he is also known for his ability to affably engage with others in a way that is inclusive and that communicates clearly even the most difficult of concepts.

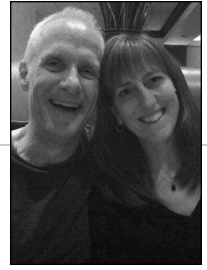
Dr Nickisch said he returns to the Brainerd Lakes Area at least twice a year to visit his father who still lives in the area, as well as his sister, Lauren.

Regarding his induction into the BHS Distinguished Achievement Hall of Fame, Dr Nickisch considers it quite the mark of distinction.

"I think it's an honor. I was very pleased. It's also a chance for me to come back and see the school and talk to some of the students; maybe inspire students to enter the field of science. I'm looking forward to that part."

2015

# Brian Nystrom



## 1977 Graduate

Brian Nystrom has dedicated his personal and professional life to helping others. His strong family values, faith and commitment to community have continuously been a true testament to his character.

His resume also lends further proof to his passion for the well-being of others. Nystrom has served 35 years in the mental health field. In 1991, Nystrom founded Nystrom & Associates, Ltd., as well as several other mental health related divisions, which now has over 750 employees and clinical interns. The Brainerd/Baxter clinic was added in the mid-1990's moving to its new location in the Baxter medical campus in 2014.

Nystrom & Associates is a licensed outpatient mental health and chemical dependency clinic with twelve offices in Minnesota and Seattle, Washington. In 2014, alone, Nystrom & Associates programs provided over 30,000 face-to-face services per month to 42,000 unique annual patients.

In 1977, Nystrom graduated with honors from Brainerd High School. Much of his junior and senior year was spent taking classes at Brainerd Community College. He was also active in his church during this time.

Following graduation, Nystrom received a Bachelor of Arts degree, Cum Laude, in Social Work and Behavioral Science from Bethel University as well as a Master of Social Work degree with a specialization in mental health from the School of Social Work at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. Nystrom is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker.

Out of the gates, Nystrom put his knowledge and passion to work. In 1978 he volunteered at the Women's Center of Mid-Minnesota; participated in and presented at various seminars regarding marriage and family and domestic violence; and, from 1979 to 1981, served on the Board for the Alexandra House,

originally the Anoka County Task Force for Battered Women, raising over \$50,000 through grant writing to help provide startup funds for a shelter. Additional community service has included involvement with the Minnesota Chapter of the National Association of Christian Social Workers, New Life Homes and Family Services, Open Arms, Society for Hospital Social Work Directors, Steps of Success Group Home, Christians for Biblical Equality, Behavioral Health Care Providers Credentialing Committee and Quality Improvement Program Committee, Anoka County Adult Mental Health Advisory Committee, and the Anoka County Mental Health Director's Network.

During his professional career, Nystrom has received high honors and achievements, including four governor appointment from 1992 to 2008 to the Minnesota Board of Marriage and Family Therapy, serving as Chair of the Board, Disciplinary Panel, Chair of the Internet Therapy Committee and Chair of the Supervision Committee. In 2001 he authored "Ordinary People, Extraordinary Marriages". From 1998 to 2001, he served on the State Board of the Minnesota Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers and received the Health Central Innovator's Award in 1984 and 1985.

"Not only does he strive to better himself, his staff and his company" reads his nomination letter, "he also supports other agencies and community resources so they, too, can make a positive impact in people's lives."

Nystrom met his wife, Mary Ann in 1977 when they were both students at Brainerd Community College. They have been married for 36 years, have four adult children and 12 grandchildren, and divide their time between their homes in Minneapolis and Nisswa.

2015

# Branelle Cibuzar Rodriguez

## 2000 Graduate



Even as a young girl, Branelle (Cibuzar) Rodriguez dreamed of joining the U.S. Space Program. The Brainerd native's passion and desire to work on the cutting edge of space exploration has never wavered throughout her academic and professional careers. Fueling that passion from the beginning were her parents, Shellie and the late Alan Cibuzar, who continuously encouraged and supported her, not only through academics, but by providing her opportunities to be fully immersed in the Space Program from an early age.

Rodriguez graduated from Brainerd High School in 2000 with honors. She was a three-sport athlete, Academic All-American, seven-time Letter winner and captain of the BHS soccer team.

Still today, Rodriguez said she looks back fondly on her years at Brainerd High School.

"I have so many wonderful memories from my time at BHS; from taking part in the Alpine State Meet, early morning bus rides to ski meets, winning the first ever Warrior Girls Soccer game and celebrating that win with my team, challenging myself in AP classes, adventures with friends, and the coaches and teachers that left that lasting impression. I am incredibly thankful for my time at BHS!"

Upon graduation, she continued her education at the University of North Dakota. Following her freshman year of college, Rodriguez had the opportunity to be a Space Camp Counselor at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center over the summer and share her passion for space with the next generation.

During the course of her collegiate career, Rodriguez was a member of the Society of Women Engineers, American Society of Mechanical Engineers, and Alpha Chi Omega sorority. Rodriguez completed cooperative education tours at Dow Chemical Company in Midland, Michigan, and NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. She graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering in 2005.

She began her career at NASA's Johnson Space Center, immediately after graduation, in the Crew and Thermal Systems Division - Life Support and Habitability Branch as a Project Manager developing space flight hardware for the International Space Station (ISS). In her first few years, Rodriguez led several projects that are currently in flight on the ISS today, including the Station's Crew Quarters where astronauts live and sleep and the Urine Monitoring System.

Additionally, she led several research projects that looked at advanced technologies for exploration missions, such as the Electrochemical Disinfection system and the

Urine Receptacle Assembly. She was the lead for "Crew Systems and Outfitting for the Advanced Exploration Habitation Demonstration Unit and Multi-Mission Space Exploration Vehicle" designing waste collection and habitation systems. More recently, Rodriguez led the team of engineers tasked with changing the philosophy for fighting fires in microgravity by developing and designing a fine water mist fire extinguisher for the ISS.

In 2010, Rodriguez received her Masters in Engineering, majoring in Engineering Management, from the University of Texas. She has also authored and published numerous technical papers on environmental control and life support systems.

During her first 10 years at NASA, Rodriguez has received numerous exemplary contribution awards. Her most significant was in 2013, when she received the NASA Agency Early Career Achievement Medal for her 'significant contributions to the Space Station Program in leadership and management of life support system hardware projects.'

In 2014, Rodriguez was promoted to the position of ISS Mission Evaluation Room Manager. Here, she leads teams of subsystem and technical discipline engineers to resolve real-time on-orbit anomalies. She is responsible for all phases of ISS flight including maintenance tasks, daily operations and anomaly resolution, coordinating with international partners, logistics, flight operations planning, payload facility sustaining and on-going development projects.

In 2010, Rodriguez married Scott Rodriguez; and, in October of 2014, they welcomed their daughter, Samantha, to the family. She continues to have a passion for NASA and space exploration and hopes to make further contributions to the U.S. Space Flight Program's goals and objectives for many years to come, perhaps even as a member of the Astronaut Corps, someday.

No matter where her travels and career take her, Rodriguez said her heart will always belong in the Brainerd Lakes Area, and attributes her success to the education she received at BHS.

"I am extremely humbled and honored to receive this recognition. Brainerd has always been 'home' for me, and I cherish the moments that I am able to come back and spend time with family and friends. I have always been proud to be a graduate of Brainerd High School, and always will. The educational opportunities I was able to have are a significant contributor to where I am at now. No words can truly express my gratitude and appreciation I have for all those that have guided, taught and supported me through the

2014

# Tom Haglin



## 1981 Graduate

On Tom Haglin's desk is a coffee mug that reads: "Vision is the gift to see what others only dream."

As insignificant as a coffee mug may seem, that particular message has developed into a mantra of sorts that Tom has chosen to live, and lead, by.

After graduating from Brainerd Senior High School and Central Lakes College, Tom went on to earn his Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management, Management and Finance from the College of St. Scholastica. His career grew from sales and, latter, plant manager positions with Acrometal Companies; to founding LINDAR Corporation in 1993 along with his wife Ellen. Through the years, their company has earned many awards and much recognition for innovation, growth and outstanding business practices. His company holds several patents, specifically for the food packaging industry, and has received the "Blue Chip" award from the US Chamber of Commerce Enterprise, as well as the 2009 Business of the Year award from the Initiative Foundation.

LINDAR – a custom plastics manufacturer – has steadily grown over the years and has acquired three other businesses along the way. In 2012, Tom and Ellen purchased Lakeland Mold Company; and, currently, their companies employ over 200 people from the community.

"If those before me did not contribute and grow our community, then likely today I would not have the same opportunities as I do. I truly enjoy building relationships with our community members and school staff. If we all give back whenever we can in some fashion, we will all benefit from it. It is also my hope that our children will recognize the contributions both my wife and I make to our community in whatever ways, so they too will volunteer in some fashion as they get older."

Tom takes community activism seriously as he continues to work and support the community by serving on multiple boards and organizations. His involvement has included membership with the

boards of the Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce, Mid-Minnesota Federal Credit Union, Tri-Parish and St. Andrews Church board, and current service on the Essentia Health board.

Coming from a large family of nine children where both parents and some siblings have worked as educators, it instilled in Tom the value and importance of public education, which is why he also serves as a current school board member for Brainerd School District 181.

"I've always been surrounded by the education system," he noted. "It wasn't until about 10 years ago that I started thinking about being involved with the school board, hopefully bringing my experiences to the board to assist in any way possible. It has been a true pleasure that I was provided the opportunity to serve these last five years on the board."

Tom is most proud of his wife Ellen, and children Garrett, Connor, and Alissa. He enjoys spending time with family at their lake home, and attending the many functions their children are involved. With his family, he has spent many trips vacationing and enjoying the sites of our country. Known for his gift of vision to see what others only dream, Tom continues to seek other opportunities as far away as Brazil to provide opportunity to the local community, economy, and school district.

"I see what our District can be like in five years, 10 years, and further; therefore, I strive to challenge and push our leadership team to reach beyond standards and following others. I prefer that we take the lead and carve our own path to greater accomplishments. In my personal life and businesses, I think often about how we can continue to transform our companies into leaders within our industry. To follow only allows us to be nearly as good as others, but to lead puts us ahead, and we must have vision in order to be a leader."



2014

# Nancy Pederson



## 1970 Graduate

It was during high school, Nancy Pedersen discovered a love for life abroad. Calling it “both fascinating and a valuable experience,” she spent all of 1969 as an AFS, formerly American Field Service, student in King Williams Town, South Africa, and returned to Brainerd High School in the middle of her senior year.

While a BHS student, Nancy recalls involvement in an “alternative” school paper, an untraditional graduation ceremony, and being a part of BHS history.

“When I returned from being an AFS student, Jack Arnold, Mike Lundeby, Bonnie Volkl and I started an ‘alternative’ newspaper called the Bandicoot. I recall that rather than having a classic graduation ceremony, we – Jack, Mike and I – put together a collage of pictures and recordings of voices of classmates. Because I was away for a year, when I returned I had to catch up on English and Civics and History, so I missed being able to take some of the classes I had preferred to take, like finishing chemistry and taking physics. We were also one of the first classes to attend all three years in the new BHS building. It was exciting.”

Following graduation in 1970, Nancy earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of Minnesota, graduating Magna cum Laude; then earned her Master of Arts and PhD in Psychology and Behavior Genetics from the University of Colorado.

“I started off as a pre-med and psychology major at UMD and heard from a statistics teacher that Behavior Genetics was a really hot field, so when I transferred down to the U in Minneapolis, I started taking a lot of genetics courses in addition to psychology. And then I applied to graduate school in Colorado where they had an Institute for Behavior Genetics.”

While in Colorado, Nancy had the opportunity to work for a summer in Hawaii as a research assistant on the Hawaii Family Study of Cognition. This was her first opportunity to study how genetic factors can influence our health and behavior. Halfway into her graduate studies, Nancy was sent to Sweden to work on a twin study regarding smoking and alcohol use. While there, she and her colleagues made the discovery there were an astounding number of twin pairs in the Swedish Twin Registry that had been separated at an early age and reared apart – potentially as many as 961 pairs, both identical and fraternal.

After finishing her PhD in 1980, she returned to Sweden to start up the, now famous, Swedish Adoption Twin Study of Aging (SATSA), which was

designed to follow-up the reared apart twins to study aging. Those twins were examined at regular three-year intervals over 30 years, and as a result, researchers have gained a better understanding of the interplay of genes and environments during aging. The SATSA study led to the Study of Dementia in Swedish Twins, a twin study of Parkinson’s disease, and numerous other twin studies of health and well being.

Nancy’s research has demonstrated how genetic influences decrease in importance late in life for some cognitive abilities whereas genetic influences for Alzheimer’s disease remain substantial. Her current research efforts are focused both gene-environment interplay in healthy aging as well as on the cause of chronic diseases of the elderly including dementia, Parkinson’s disease, late onset depression and other diseases with neuropsychiatric components in midlife such as chronic fatigue. In addition, she is currently identifying the mechanisms by which changes in patterns in the brain and blood are reflected in cognitive decline, dementia and cardiovascular disease. Nancy has co-authored over 520 scientific publications and has mentored 21 PhD students and 14 post-docs.

Although she didn’t imagine that she would stay permanently in Sweden, the opportunities for research and her love of Sweden were so great that she is still there, a permanent resident.

“Sweden just felt like home,” Nancy said, “with much the same nature – birch trees and pines, and numerous opportunities for sailing and skiing.”

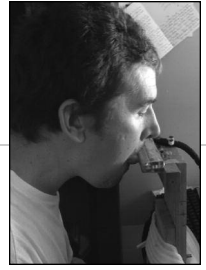
She has been at Karolinska Institutet, Sweden’s medical university, for 34 years and is a Professor of Genetic Epidemiology there. She also has an affiliation as a Research Professor of Psychology at the University of Southern California, but has never lived in California. She has served as head of the Swedish Twin Registry, the largest twin registry in the world, as the vice chair and chair of the Department of Medical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, and as the vice dean of research at Karolinska Institutet.

“I usually get back to the US about twice a year,” Nancy noted. “I have a conference that is usually just before thanksgiving, so I make a point of attending that and then visiting family.”

Nancy has a sister, Sue Lindstam, and brother, Rich Pedersen, who still reside in the Brainerd Lakes Area. Two other sisters live in Arizona and California.

2014

# Joshua (JP) LaRue



## 1992 Graduate

While a typical senior in high school spends their year looking forward to college decisions and weekend plans, Josh LaRue was learning to communicate all over again.

It was during the winter of his senior year that Josh suffered a severe asthma attack that left him blind, unable to move and unable to speak. Josh missed much of the school year while recovering, but was able to meet his requirements and graduate along with the Class of 1992 from his wheelchair.

"I think I was a pretty average student for the most part," Josh replied, only after a disclaimer that he doesn't enjoy talking about himself. "My interests back then were fishing and kayaking."

Following graduation, Josh participated in rehabilitation at the Courage Center in the Twin Cities for a year, learning how to walk and talk again and gain the independence any 19-year-old would desire.

"The accident I suffered left me blind, unable to use my hands and with very impaired speech," Josh explained. "I was very frustrated not being able to communicate. I had to use my mind to find a solution to the problem. There was nothing available for someone in my condition. So, with some help, I invented a device that allowed me to write and communicate using Morse code."

Josh created Virtual Morse, a communication device that consists of a small 10-button keyboard that resembles a harmonica. Each button has a different function and is operated with the user's tongue. Based upon the Morse Code alphabet, this genius invention has not only allowed Josh to send email, but also to attend college and write – and publish – several books. In fact, Josh was profiled in 'Ripley's Believe It or Not! Strikingly True' for this method of transcription.

On his Facebook page, dedicated to his work with Virtual Morse, Josh writes, "Not being able to speak for months after my accident. The doctors telling my parents I would be a vegetable if I ever woke up.

When I think about that and all the stuff I had to go through just to write anything, I had to invent a whole new method of communication in order to express my ideas, thoughts and feelings. Trust me; I never want to be silent again."

The fact that Josh has now written and published five books, including "My Last Breath," proves that life may have stolen his ability to speak, but will never take his voice.

"Every man dies. For that is the nature of mortal man," reads the prologue of 'My Last Breath.' "We are all owed a death. I was seventeen years old when death found me, and my life was changed forever. I do not claim to have the answers. I can only tell you, the reader, what I went through and hope it helps in some way. Now, most of you reading this no doubt have seen movies and TV shows where people died, and were supposedly brought back after seeing a bright light. I don't doubt the validity of those claims. I think each person's death is different, just as each experience changes the person having it. I will try to tell you who are reading this what I saw and felt during that time after taking my last breath, and what followed after. My name is Josh LaRue and here is my story."

Today, Josh lives alone in Ohio where he continues to work on his writings and a cooperative project to bring his book "My Last Breath" to life as a documentary with Minnesota filmmaker Cy Dodson.

Despite setbacks and the challenges life has thrown his way, Josh continues to persevere. He continues to be an avid outdoorsman and enjoys teaching others to hunt. He also hopes his writings will inspire others.

"Everyone has challenges. That's part of life. I do my best to overcome them. Part of it is not ever feeling sorry for myself. Do not let others try and crush your dreams or let them tell you something is impossible. It is more fun to prove them wrong."

2014

# Dennis Wolfgang Borgwarth

## 1979 Graduate

Even at an early age, Hanspeter and Gisela Borgwarth knew their son Dennis was destined for greatness.

Sandwiched between three sisters, Dennis was as comfortable running a sewing machine as he was rebuilding engines.

Sitting around the dining table at their Gull Lake home, the Borgwarths lovingly recalled the life of a brilliant man that was cut much too short for reasons not even they can explain.

"One of his first pictures, he was six or seven, and he had a little workbench with hammers and tools," recalled Gisela of her young boy. "Once, I left the kids alone when our oldest was 12. I had the sewing machine out where the toys were. We were maybe gone two hours. And he had sewed and stuffed a baseball with the sewing machine. He was able to just look at a chair and draw it exactly as it was. Everything we threw away, he had to take apart first to understand what made it work."

During his years at Brainerd High School, Dennis participated in choir and played the trumpet in the band. With the help of a rusty bike, thoughtfully hidden in the bushes by the public library, Dennis would leave school occasionally during the day to play Taps at military funerals at Evergreen Cemetery. While in the Boy Scouts, he played the bugle. Dennis continued to round out his interests and abilities. Equal to his musicality was his mechanical skill.

"He would take people's junk – discarded lawnmowers, bicycles – restore them and sell them," reminisced Gisela. "We liked to have as many family meals as possible, and he always had physical questions about how things worked."

Following graduation from Brainerd High School in 1979, Dennis attended Central Lakes College where he was later inducted into the Hall of Fame; and also earned a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, Physics and Mathematics from the University of North Dakota, graduating as Valedictorian of his class. He also earned degrees and certification in Business, Graphic Arts, Welding and Machine Shop.

Dennis and his family lived in Andover; and for 28 years, he was employed as a Senior Staff Engineer at British Aeronautical Engineering, formerly known as United Defense. There, he worked in a highly classified environment for the United States Department of Defense; developing the Railgun, and over 17 various patents for his work.

The March 2014 issue of *The Economist* published a piece regarding the 'Electromagnetic Railgun Launcher,' noting it 'uses a form of electromagnetic energy to hurl a 23-pound projectile at speeds exceeding Mach 7.'

Paging through a variety of articles regarding work they believed their son was an integral part of, the Borgwarths are amazed at the capacity of knowledge and fortitude their only son possessed and are saddened knowing the immense pressure he must have been under regarding the ambiguity of his work.

On January 25, 2014, Dennis passed away. The Borgwarth's best explanation for their son's death: "He succumbed under tremendous job pressures and an environment of top security clearance."

At a memorial service to celebrate the life and work of Dennis, individuals who worked closely with him, and possessed some of the inside knowledge, could only testify

to the strength of character and immense intelligence he possessed and shared on behalf of bettering his country.

"He just grew into it and we didn't know anything about it," Gisela said of her son's abilities for matters of national significance and delicacy.

"It was a heavenly force," agreed Hanspeter.

"It seems he was a go-to man if there were ever any questions," Gisela noted, adding his coworkers had shared that Dennis had accomplished more in his 53 years of life than many of them had done in all their years combined.

In 2010, Dennis was honored at the United States Library of Congress in Washington D.C. with the Golden Chairman Award for Innovation" in the national defense industry.

Following his death, the Borgwarths received a handwritten card of sympathy from United States General John Vessey and wife Avis, sharing their heartfelt condolences.

"We thank God for his life and important work," the Vessey's wrote. "We and our Nation will be safer because of it."

The Borgwarths said their son found respite and release in working during his off time in his garages rebuilding and restoring motorcycles salvaged from wrecks. He founded and was the Chief Executive Officer of Hot Metal Engineering, a labor of love involving extreme metal fabrication. Here, he developed metal-shaping tools used all over the world. Again collecting a number of patents on his work, he built street rods, custom motorcycles, aviation sheet metal, restoration parts and more.

"Designing new products for great companies and turning motorcycle and car concepts into real life vehicles. I am living my American Dream," Dennis was once quoted as saying.

Beyond his professional achievements, Dennis always believed in giving back to his community. He volunteered countless hours in high school classrooms, speaking of engineering as a career choice. As an Eagle Scout, he helped young Scouts earn various merit badges. When a local 4-H group needed help to build a Solar Electric Vehicle, Dennis invited the club to his home shop and donated time and materials.

Dennis had a passion for waterskiing and interests in ancient history, math, physics and the arts.

In recognition of Dennis' life, brother-in-law Joe Telega wrote a tribute befitting the man who dedicated his life skill to serving his nation and community.

"In a word... extraordinary! I choose this word because an ordinary person buys an automobile. Dennis built them. Ordinary people use scissors or a knife to cut something, not a plasma torch. Ordinary people use skis to ski on water. Dennis used his bare feet. Ordinary people ski on snow in the winter. Not water. That's why I say 'extraordinary.' Does anyone else have a word to share? Because if Dennis did, I would have to look it up in the dictionary."

"I am very proud of every product I'm involved with," Dennis was once quoted as saying in an article featured in a British Aeronautical Engineering publication. "We don't build widgets in the defense industry. We build products to protect the country, to protect liberty and to protect the lives of our soldiers. I believe we owe it to our troops to build the best possible products for them to do their job. I can't



2013

# Sheila Wasnie Haverkamp

## 1981 Graduate

Sheila (Wasnie) Haverkamp's life has been one of what many inspirational movies are made of – the girl raised by an ideal family, but later faced with obstacles, only to overcome them and rise above to pave the way for others in similar situations.

Sheila attended Baxter Elementary from kindergarten to sixth grade, the eldest of five children. From seventh through ninth grade, she went to Franklin Junior High School, until moving on to Brainerd High School. She was involved in athletics, including gymnastics and basketball. She had good friends and kept busy with after school jobs.

But during her junior year, Sheila's world changed. In the midst of her high school career, she discovered she was pregnant. Dropping out of school to have, and raise, a child was not an option to this forward-thinking young woman. Instead, she enrolled in the Alternative Education Center in the spring of her junior year, continued with classes through the summer and into the fall. Her son, Joseph, was born as she entered her senior year and thanks to her motivation and the assistance of teachers and staff, she graduated with her high school diploma in 1981.

After graduation, Sheila said she opted to go directly into the workforce and forego a post-secondary education. After all, she was a teen mother with responsibilities and a mouth to feed.

"I came from a traditional family and I got used to a certain quality of life," she recalled. "However, after beginning to work, I realized if I wanted to have those same opportunities for my family, I needed schooling. It became clear to me that I needed an educational background to reach a career path that could support my son and allow us to live the way I wanted."

In order to best balance her situation, Sheila enrolled at Brainerd Community College, graduating with an Associate's Degree in 1985; then transferred to Minnesota State University- Moorhead where she graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration in 1987 with concentrations in finance, management and marketing. During college, she also interned with the U.S. Small Business Administration and worked for Norwest Bank.

"I didn't follow the traditional path and it was not always a perfect life, but what I think is most important was that I had the courage to move forward with the challenges I faced."

After college, Sheila returned to Brainerd to work with a relatively new economic development organ-

ization, the Brainerd Lakes Area Economic Development Corporation or BLAEDC. The organization began operating just a year earlier after local business and community leaders recognized the need for a concerted effort to create jobs and diversify the area economy. It was an incredible opportunity for an ambitious young professional to display her leadership skills. Sheila took full advantage of the position to develop her expertise in economic development.

"It had been ingrained in me to create job opportunities for people to have the quality of life that they want for themselves and their families. BLAEDC was not only a career opportunity, but also a path to allow me to impact other people's lives the same way I once wanted my own life impacted."

Throughout the past 25 years, Sheila has devoted her life to improving the economic vitality and health of our Brainerd lakes area. She is currently the executive director of BLAEDC and is certified as an economic development finance specialist while being recognized by her peers across the region and state for her knowledge and positive attitude in the field. Her professional affiliations include Positively Minnesota, Economic Development Association of Minnesota, Minnesota Association of County Economic Developers, the Brainerd Lakes Chamber, and Brainerd Rotary.

"I truly hope that I can inspire others," she said, noting that it was during her time at Brainerd Community College that an instructor shared the paper *The Courage to be Imperfect*, a work that Sheila said impacted her beyond measure.

"I was more critical of myself than anyone else could be. I wanted to succeed and be respected by myself and others. So I would always have high expectations of myself. But I learned that it's okay to be imperfect and believe in yourself."

Sheila also added a supportive family has also helped pave the way to the woman she is today. Her husband, Gene, is also a Brainerd High School graduate. Her oldest son, Joseph, also a Brainerd High School graduate, still lives in the area with his four children. Son Nicholas is a BHS grad and is currently in his second year of college at Central Lakes College. Daughter Megan is a senior at BHS and enrolled as Post Secondary Enrollment Option student at CLC.

"Education was always an important part of my upbringing," Sheila said, adding the pride she feels knowing she has raised three children who will also call Brainerd High School home. "It's a family tradition and we're all very proud of it!"



# 2013 Connie Marshall-Grittner



## 1964 Graduate

The same year Connie Grittner graduated from Brainerd High School, the United States Congress approved the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution after North Vietnamese torpedo boats allegedly attacked U.S. destroyers. While it may sound like nothing more than a page from a history book, the irony is that the same girl who despised history later went on to lead multi-million dollar projects to purchase research and development goods and services for the Navy and the Joint Services, including electronic warfare, radar, and surveillance equipment.

Connie was born in Brainerd at St Joseph's Medical Center. She grew up in a home on the north side of Brainerd and attended Whittier Elementary School through the third grade. When her family moved north of town to Cinosam Road, she then attended Nisswa Elementary until sixth grade; then busen to Franklin Junior High School and Brainerd High School.

Connie explained that her mother was a long-time educator at Nisswa Elementary, and while she wasn't sure what she wanted to pursue post-graduation, she knew she didn't want to be a teacher.

"I was a teenager," she laughed. "I know I didn't like history. But now, that's all I do is research and write history. Things really take a change when you get a little older. You become more aware of how important history is."

During her years at BHS, it's safe to say Connie enjoyed the social scene.

"I made it through high school and college. I wasn't a straight 'A' student but I wasn't a straight 'C,' so I guess I was somewhere in between. But, you know, when you're in high school, some things aren't as important; and class work wasn't number one."

Connie was a cheerleader throughout her three years at BHS. During her sophomore year, she cheered on the "B" squad, then moved up to the "A" squad her junior and senior years. Cheerleaders typically cheered for both football and basketball during that time. She also recalled being involved in other extra curriculars and being named to the National Honors Society.

Connie said her best memories of high school were her peers and the memories they created, especially surrounding football games.

"That was a fun time. On Friday nights, one of my girlfriends would have a potluck before the game. Then we'd go to the games and dance after the game. There were always dances after home games. Those were fun times. If we had an out of town game, we'd get back into town afterward and everybody would put their quarter in a pool and we'd go over to the pizza house on South Sixth Street, across the street from the old train depot. They don't make pizza like that anymore. You'd take a bite and the grease would run down your arm."

Another notable memory from high school was meeting her future husband, Gary. He was a student at Crosby High School, but attended junior college in Brainerd. Gary was a year ahead of Connie and would come to the high school

for lunch – like other junior college students would do. Connie and a girlfriend had signed up for a Personal Typing class; but due to the large number enrolled, they were forced to take it over lunch hour, so they ate lunch an hour earlier – the same time Gary came.

"He had a crush on my girlfriend," Connie said. "So, that's how I knew who he was."

But a couple of years later, they officially met and started dating. When she went away to school at St Cloud State University and Gary attended North Dakota State University, she would come home on the weekends to work shifts at Thrifty Drug, and Gary would stop in to take her out for a Coke.

But it wasn't until after graduating from college did he propose.

"I'm sure he wanted to make sure I was worth it first and that I had my college education paid for," Connie joked. "In those days you would work your way through college. If I could do it, anybody could've done it."

Following a Bachelor's Degree in business from SCSU and a Master's in public administration from the University of Northern Colorado, Connie spent more than 25 years in the Department of Defense as part of the Cold War effort. At the age of 50, she took early retirement and began an era of volunteering. She builds Habitat for Humanity homes; serves as the treasurer of the Verendrye Museum and helped organize three successful trail rides to raise funds for the museum; serves as the treasurer of the 'Bring it Home' project to return the old railroad depot to Fort Pierre, South Dakota; reads with the third graders at her local grade school; is active in the Oahe Yacht Club; volunteers at the South Dakota State Cultural Heritage Center; paid the tuition, books and fee costs for a neighbor girl who was the first in her family to attend college; and is active in South Dakota politics.

After retirement, Connie and Gary also bought a home in Florida, and had previously purchased property in Fort Pierre, South Dakota, where they are currently building a pheasant wildlife habitat.

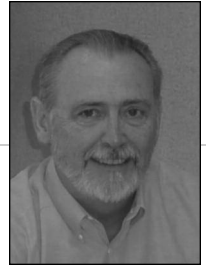
"We just fell in love with South Dakota," she said. "We have a house right on the river. It's a sportsman's paradise. If you're into any kind of sporting activities, this is it! Fishing, hunting, we've got it all."

Each summer for the past five or six years, the BHS Class of 1964 meets at the American Legion in Nisswa. Connie said about 25 classmates and their spouses attend, allowing them an opportunity to keep in touch in a less formal capacity.

The Grittners are also passionate in regard to philanthropy and recently announced a \$1 million dollar gift to the South Dakota Community Foundation to support history and gifted education. In addition, they have offered to donate a fort to Fort Pierre, and regularly donate to educational institutions including Central Lakes College, St. Cloud State University and the Cuyuna Range Educational Foundation.

2013

# William Potvin



## 1972 Graduate

It likely would've been hard for an 18-year-old Bill Potvin to imagine that a sports analogy would correlate to the business world some 40-years later. But it is exactly that mindset that has made Bill such a tremendous, and well-respected, leader not only in his field but also throughout this community.

In 1961, Bill and his family of five sisters and two brothers (three more sisters and a brother were born after arriving in Brainerd), moved to the Brainerd area when his father was transferred with the Minnesota State Highway Patrol from New Brighton to become the local district's captain. He was just entering the second grade at the time and enrolled at St Francis of Assisi, which he attended through the eighth grade.

As he completed junior high at Franklin Junior High School and entered the Brainerd High School as a sophomore, it's safe to say, Bill was a well-rounded and very active young man. Among his involvements were choir, student council, letterman's club, foreign student club and National Honor Society. He was also a multi-sport athlete, participating in football, basketball and baseball.

On the Warrior football team, Bill was a tight end. He received Player of the Week honors during his senior year and helped to "upset a very good Crosby-Ironton team." He recalls that highlight of his football career when he caught two touchdown passes and two extra points for the team.

Bill played at the State championships for basketball in 1971 and 1972, splitting his time as a guard and forward. In the spring, he transitioned to starting third baseman on the Warrior baseball team.

"I was very active in high school in lots of extracurricular activities," he recalled. "For some reason, I just kept getting involved and found that I enjoyed being involved."

It was while he was in choir that he met his future wife, Cindy Schilling. The couple hit it off during a choir tour and married in 1975, while Bill was a junior in college. Following graduation from high school, he attended Brainerd Community College for one year, then transferred to Bemidji State College, where he finished in only two years with his degree in accounting. He took generals during the first quarter of his senior year, then accepted an internship at Johns and Lampi Certified Public Accountants. After completing his three-month internship and then graduating, Bill was offered a job with the CPA firm's Staples office. In 1982, Bill and Cindy moved to the metro area where he worked for Long Froehling and Associates in Excelsior as a manager in their tax department. In 1984, they returned to Brainerd where he began work with Donald H. Engen and Associates in Pequot Lakes, and was responsible for quality and growth within the tax practice. He opened an office in Brainerd in 1984 for Engen and began growing and devel-

oping the Brainerd market. In 1988, D.H. Engen and Associates was sold to Larson, Allen Weishair and Company. Now known as CliftonLarsonAllen LLP in Baxter, Bill was named partner at the organization in 1988, and is now the Partner in Charge of the Brainerd and Alexandria locations. In addition, he manages the tax practice for the Northern Minnesota offices of CliftonLarsonAllen, which include Brainerd, Alexandria, St. Cloud and Buffalo. His areas of expertise include tax preparation and planning, succession planning, business consulting and financial reporting with a current focus in the industries of construction and real estate, and working with dealerships and the hospitality industry.

The Brainerd office of CliftonLarsonAllen has grown from 10 employees in 1988 to 50 in recent years. He has trusted the gifts, talents and vision of the teams he has assembled, and allowed and encouraged his employees to take risks and learn from successes and failures while always looking for a new and better way of doing things.

"As a Partner-in-Charge of an office, I have to be able to recognize the strengths of everyone that works within the office. You then have to be able to draw on those strengths and maximize them to the benefit of your clients and the office; but, most importantly, for that individual, so they have a satisfying career experience."

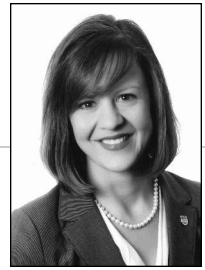
"As I share with my staff, everyone in this office is extremely important to our success. CliftonLarsonAllen has offices of many different sizes. The large ones are very important, but we have smaller offices like ours that are equally important. Our CEO once shared with me that an office like Brainerd proved how important a smaller location can be to the success of our firm due to the successes we have right here." Bill is also able to draw on experiences from his days of high school sports to lend to his leadership toolbox today.

"I will say that I was never the star athlete but I was able to participate at a high level and contribute to the success of the team. This experience gave me a better understanding of the role everybody can play on a team. You don't have to be a star, but you do have to play hard and give your all. I've been very lucky. I've always been surrounded by individuals who have strived to make things better and they never say it can't be done. They just figure out a way and do it. The thing is, in business, just like in the sporting teams, everybody has a part to play and if they do it well, the team will have success."

Bill and Cindy have three children, Brent, Natalie and Allison, all residing in the Brainerd area. Like their parents, all three graduated from BHS. Brent and his wife Traci have the next generations of Potvins which will be beneficiaries of the great Brainerd schools, their sons Cade and Jace.

2012

# Jill (Johnson) Wyant



## 1989 Graduate

Jill Wyant Johnson is currently Senior Vice President and General Manager of the Food & Beverage (F&B) Americas business for Ecolab Inc., a Fortune 500 company that provides water, hygiene and energy technologies and services for customers in more than 160 countries around the world. As leader of this \$700 Million business, Wyant is responsible for serving the dairy, brewing, beverage and food processing industries in some of the industry's largest and fastest growing global markets.

Wyant joined Ecolab in 2009 as Vice President, Global Strategic Planning, where she was instrumental in developing the global water, energy and waste growth strategy for Ecolab. This strategy work culminated in the company's \$8 Billion acquisition of Nalco, the world's largest sustainability services company focused on industrial water, energy and air, in 2011. Prior to joining Ecolab, Wyant spent twelve years at General Electric where she gained broad senior management experience, including sales, marketing, Lean Six Sigma quality, product development and customer service.

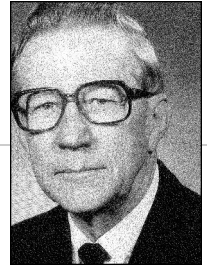
After graduating from Brainerd Senior High School in 1989, Wyant attended the University of St Thomas, and graduated summa cum laude with degrees in International Marketing and Japanese Studies. She completed her undergraduate international program at Osaka Gakuin University in Osaka, Japan. Wyant earned an MBA with Highest Honors from the University Of Chicago Booth School Of Business in 2002.

In addition to her Ecolab responsibilities, Wyant serves on the Leadership Cabinet of the Greater Twin Cities United Way and will help raise nearly \$90 Million in support of Minnesota communities this year. In 2011, she served as Executive Chairperson of Ecolab's Community Giving Campaign which raised over \$1 Million, a company record. She and her family also volunteer as a "Big Family" in the Big Brothers, Big Sisters program. Her professional and philanthropic achievements were recognized by Profiles in Diversity Journal magazine when she was named one of their "Women Worth Watching" in September 2011.

Jill and her husband, Pat, have one son, Jacob, and reside in St. Paul. Jill enjoys spending time with her family, running, biking, and reading. She credits her success to the strong work ethic she learned from her parents, the support of her husband and son, and the tremendous mentoring provided by teachers in the Brainerd School District (especially David Stark and Stuart Lade).

2012

# James Peterson, Sr.



## 1943 Graduate

James (Jim) graduated from Washington High School in 1943 and the Brainerd Junior College in 1948. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota Duluth in 1949 and his master's degree from the University of Minnesota Duluth in 1955. Jim served in the U.S. Army Medical Corps during World War II and the Korean War.

Jim taught in Eau Claire, WI and Duluth, MN prior to returning to Brainerd in 1951. He taught at the Lowell and Whittier Elementary Schools for two years before being appointed an elementary principal. For several years, he was the acting principal of three schools simultaneously.

As an elementary school principal, Jim worked hard to ensure that his students and staff received the best possible care. Jim strongly believed in the power of positive reinforcement. Jim is known for implementing the "Principal's Treat Jar" system into the Brainerd school district. Jim sent a personalized letter of congratulations along with a pass to the treat jar to students who showed improvement in their coursework. The students received a candy bar and, more importantly, heard words of praise from Mr. Peterson.

Jim worked for the Brainerd School District for 35 years until retiring in 1986.

James was the epitome of a good man. He devoted his time to his wife, children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, as well as the students and staff within the Brainerd school district. He earned several terms of endearment during his lifetime including, Jim, Peter, little-man-with-a-big-voice, 1st SGT, Mr. P, Prin, Dad, PapaShan, Grandpa, Bumpa, Bumpie, Mawka, Papa Ross, and SP.

He was a member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, American Legion Post #225, Deep Portage Foundation, REAM, R.P.T.P., Crow Wing Historical Society, and the Northland Arboretum.

James passed away March 31, 2012 and is survived by his wife of 63 years, Marjorie, son James Jr., and two daughters, Deborah Johnson, and Tamara Holland.



2012

# Kevin Doran



## 1979 Graduate

Since graduating from Brainerd High School in 1979 Kevin Doran has been living at the pace of the daily news as a Broadcast Journalist. He has been the face and the voice of the news for millions of people in thousands of newscasts over his career. Mr. Doran has earned several journalism honors, including two Emmy Awards from the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, an Edward R. Murrow Award from the Radio Television Digital News Association for excellence in electronic journalism, the National Anna Quindlen Award from the Child Welfare League of America for excellence in journalism on behalf of children and families, plus awards from the Associated Press for his reporting on education issues and his anchoring.

Kevin got his start in 1985 working as a Producer and News Photographer at KCMT TV in Alexandria, now known as KCCO TV. He met his wife Teresa while working as an Anchor and Reporter at KTTC TV in Rochester, Minnesota. To gain experience he moved to WSAZ TV in Huntington, West Virginia and then on to WRTV 6 in Indianapolis, Indiana. He has been the evening News Anchor and Managing Editor at both WROC TV News 8 and WUHF TV FOX in Rochester, New York since 2000.

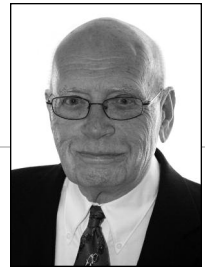
Kevin is a graduate of St. Cloud State University. At Brainerd High School he was President of both his Junior and Senior Classes. Growing up he played football, basketball and baseball and he was a member of the A cappella Choir in High School. Kevin is the son of Tom and Marguerite Doran. His brother Mike and sister Kathy Barta both live in the Brainerd Lakes area with their families.

Today Kevin and his family live in Victor, just outside of Rochester, in New York's beautiful Finger Lakes region. The Doran's have two daughters, Emma and Eva, and they are active members of St. Patrick's Catholic Church. They volunteer their time with many local charities. As recognition for their efforts Kevin and Teresa were named Victor's Citizens of the year in 2003.

Regardless of where Kevin is or whatever story he is reporting, Brainerd is always in his heart. He says the values of hard work, honesty and fairness he first learned from his parents and then from his teachers and others in his hometown have given him the perfect foundation for his work as a journalist.

2012

# Phil Mattson



## 1956 Graduate

As a student at Washington High School, Phil Mattson was at times given keys to the school building to practice piano. In the world of choral music, the practice time afforded to Mr. Mattson seems a great investment. Mr. Mattson is internationally known as a conductor, arranger, pianist and teacher. Twice nominated for Grammy Awards with his group, The P.M. Singers, his success in training young musicians for professional careers led to the establishment of The School for Music Vocations at Southwestern Community College in Creston, Iowa.

Phil Mattson has served as Director of Choral Activities at Foothill College in California and Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA. He has taught at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, WA and at The Phil Mattson School in Spokane, WA. His undergraduate studies in music and philosophy/religion were done at Concordia College, Moorhead, MN, graduating summa cum laude. His graduate degrees in choral literature and conducting were completed at the University of Iowa as an NDEA Fellow.

Mattson has published more than 100 works for choir and vocal jazz ensemble. The Manhattan Transfer, The Real Group, Chanticleer, The Four Freshmen, The Dale Warland Singers and Beachfront Property are among groups who have commissioned his arrangements.

Mattson has conducted honor choirs and clinics throughout the United States, Canada, Europe and the Far East. He served as ACDA National Repertoire and Standards Chair for Vocal Jazz and annually conducts the Carnegie Hall Vocal Jazz Festival. During the summer, Phil Mattson Vocal Jazz/Choral Workshops are presented on campuses in the United States, Canada and Europe. His ensemble, Phil Mattson and Voices Iowa, was honored as "Vocal Jazz Group of the Year" by Downbeat Magazine.

Mattson lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota and is an active musician. He leads the Phil Mattson Singers, a nationally known six-voice vocal jazz ensemble and continues to arrange music for many choirs and vocal jazz ensembles worldwide. He is an accompanist for several leading Twin City singers and recently completed a CD of Duke Ellington compositions with singer Dorothy Doring. He teaches a number of voice, piano and arranging students, and this fall began teaching part-time at The MacPhail Center for Music. He enjoys his six children and eleven grandchildren as well as being a serious bicyclist and long-distance Harley-Davidson motorcycle rider.

2011

# Brad Hill



## 1969 Graduate

Brad Hill graduated valedictorian of Brainerd High School in 1969. Known as an extremely intelligent and inquisitive young man, he went on to study both Economics and Special Education at the University of Minnesota, eventually earning a Master's degree in Special Education.

Summer employment at the Brainerd State Hospital inflamed in Brad a passion for better treatment and training of residents. It was not surprising that his intelligence and his inquisitiveness took root in the development of a professional assessment test for developmentally disabled individuals. Known as the Scales of Independent Behavior, the SIB was co-authored by Brad, Dick Weatherman, Richard Woodcock, and Robert Bruininks, 15th President of the University of Minnesota. The test is widely mandated by school districts and Departments of Public Health & Education in nearly all the states. It was also adapted, with Brad's help, for use in Spain. Brad was busily engaged in consulting and training these SIB users through the years.

Mr. Hill is most remembered by friends and family as a caring person and as an 'oasis of calm.' He was the stability that neighborhood people looked to, and the tutor, mentor, and foster home to numerous youth. No less fortunate, less capable, or yet to be educated individual had a more fearless advocate or better teacher than Brad. Brad served on the Minneapolis United Way Board and received the United Way "Unsung Hero Award" in 1997 for out-

standing volunteer achievement in service to the people of the community.

Brad traveled extensively, to some 100+ different countries. He never lost touch with his University contacts from around the world. Planning and traveling with him was a delight and an education. No place was too exotic or too far off the beaten path. Brad taught himself Spanish, becoming fluent for travel, consulting and to teach reading to the neighborhood immigrants. His diverse library covered many book cases, including two sets of many children's books, used for teaching reading. Reading was a special passion, and he developed his own program to teach it.

In a letter to the family shortly after Brad's untimely death, President Bruininks wrote: "We are proud to be able to claim your son as an alumnus...His research and devotion to the deinstitutionalization of people with developmental disabilities improved lives throughout the world....your son made his brilliance and compassion a gift to society, and his work left an enduring legacy of tremendous importance."

Known as selfless, kind-hearted, and humorous, Brad is believed to have constructed one of the first BHS Class of 1969 websites for the benefit of friends and classmates at BHS. Though he succumbed to complications related to a genetic condition called Marfan Syndrome too early in life, friends, classmates, and family will forever remember Brad Hill.

2011

# Basil C. LeBlanc



## 1972 Graduate

Basil LeBlanc graduated from Brainerd High School in 1972, and immediately went on to graduate Magna Cum Laude from Saint Olaf College in 1976 and later from the University of Minnesota Medical School in 1993.

Commissioned in the United States Army in 1988, he was eventually promoted to Colonel in 2004 and served as State Surgeon for the Minnesota Army National Guard 2006-2010, and continues to serve in the Guard. He has

been deployed overseas several times, once to Kosovo, twice to Iraq, in addition to humanitarian missions to Central America. Closer to home, Dr. LeBlanc volunteered for 15 years at Camp Needlepoint, a summer camp for children with diabetes. Throughout his military and civilian life, Dr. LeBlanc has used his talents to care for people in need and donated his “time, skill and energy to those less fortunate and to those in need.”

2011

# Gayle Anderson Ober



## 1977 Graduate

Gayle M. Ober is a 1977 graduate of Brainerd High School whose achievements in music and in non-profit foundation management are exceptional.

After leaving Brainerd, Gayle Ober went on to study and earn a bachelor's degree in vocal music performance at the University of Minnesota as well as a master's degree in non-profit management from Hamline University.

Ms. Ober's musical career beyond university spans over twenty years, including singing with the Minnesota Chorale (1985-1995) and with the Dale Warland Singers (symphonic engagements 2002-2004). Even as she lead the planned closing of this prestigious and acclaimed choral group, Ms. Ober's involvement in non-profit work and the arts rose to dramatic heights.

Gayle Ober has served as the Director of Arts, Culture, and Entertainment for the City of Saint Paul under Mayor Randy Kelly. Later, Ms. Ober became the Managing Director of Classical Music Programming and Partnerships for American Public Media and

Minnesota Public Radio. She was responsible for management and leadership of national and regional programming, including programs such as *Classical 24*, *Saint Paul Sunday*, *Pipedreams*, and *Performance Today*.

Currently, Gayle Ober is the Executive Director of the George Family Foundation, a Minnesota-based foundation which awards grants to qualified non-profits in the areas of Integrative Health, Spirituality, and Leadership.

She is responsible for leadership and management of all aspects of the foundation's work, and serves as the first point of contact to the community; the George Family Foundation grants approximately \$2.6 million annually to other non-profit organizations.

In 2007, Gayle M. Ober was honored as a Distinguished Scholar by the Hamline Graduate School of Management.

Gayle lives in Mendota Heights with her husband Tim and has two children, Daniel and Analise.

2010

# Edward T. O'Brien



## 1923 Graduate

Edward Thomas O'Brien died at the age of 76 in 1982. He was the youngest of thirteen children of Con O'Brien. He graduated from the Washington High School in 1923 and went on to receive degrees from the University of Minnesota, Georgetown and Harvard.

He served in the Red Cross during World War II. He owned the Brainerd Greenhouse, Brainerd Broadcasting Co. including Muzak and his mother's name is still the call letters of KLIZ which he loved to call her.

He was part owner of O'Brien Merc.,

O'Brien Properties and O'Brien Mineral Company. He was the Mayor of Brainerd, served on the school board, was a charter member of Crow Wing Power and the executive board. Past President of Brainerd Rotary and served as District Governor.

He taught himself to play the piano. Tom never married but loved his nieces and nephews and his summer home on Clearwater Lake where he did a lot of entertaining. Pete Humphrey once said of Tom "He would dine with royalty one day and have an ice cream cone with me the next."

2010

# Madonna H. Meyer



## 1977 Graduate

Madonna Harrington Meyer graduated from Brainerd High School in 1977 and has gone on to teach and do research in gerontology, social policy, health, and gender. Graduating from Hamline University in 1981, she later earned her Masters in 1987 at the University of Minnesota and a Ph.D. in sociology in 1991 at Florida State.

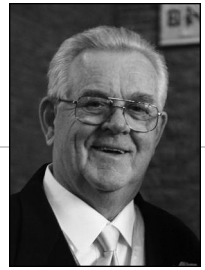
Today, Harrington Meyer is a Professor of Sociology, and a Senior Research Associate in the Center for Policy Research, at Syracuse University. She is the former Director of the Syracuse University Gerontology Center and was both Assistant and Associate Professor at the University of Illinois in Urbana.

Her contributions to gerontology and social policy are numerous. She is editor of *Care Work: Gender, Labor, and the Welfare State*, Routledge Press 2000.

More recently she co-authored, with her graduate student Pamela Herd, *Market Friendly or Family Friendly? The State and Gender Inequality in Old Age*, Russell Sage 2007, for which she was awarded The Gerontological Society of America Richard Kalish Publication Award. She is also author of dozens of scholarly articles and chapters on US old age economic and health policy. She is currently writing a book on grandmothers who are employed and also caring for their grandchildren.

Madonna Harrington Meyer currently lives in Skaneateles, NY, with her husband Jeffrey Meyer, a Mathematics Professor at Syracuse University, and their three children, Ellen, 20, Maureen, 17, and Samuel, 15.

# Howard “Jiggs” Blanck <sup>2010</sup>



## 1954 Graduate

Howard “Jiggs” Blanck graduated from the Washington High School with the class of 1954, attended Brainerd Junior College and also attended Bemidji State College and St. Cloud State College. He was a U. S. Army Veteran.

Mr. Blanck worked in the newspaper industry for a number of years, including serving as the Business Manager for the Brainerd Dispatch. In recent years he was self-employed in the ad specialty business with Brown and Bigelow of St. Paul.

Mr. Blanck was very civic minded as evidenced by the various boards he served on over the years. He has served on the Brainerd Parks and Recreation Board, Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Commission, Brainerd Transportation Commission, Brainerd Charter Commission and he was on the Brainerd City Council from 1974-1979. Mr. Blanck was also a charter member of the Brainerd High School Distinguished Achievement Hall of Fame Committee where the committee repeatedly sought and received the benefit of Jigg’s great knowledge of local history.

Mr. Blanck was a very active supporter of the Brainerd High School, University of Minnesota, and was a Chair of the Camp Confidence Celebrity Classic. In 1987, Jiggs and others were asked to serve on the Board of the newly formed Brainerd Public Schools Foundation, and he served on that Board until 2009.

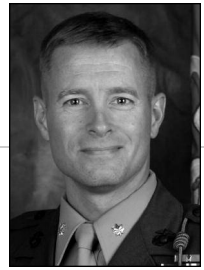
Mr. Blanck was strong in his faith, a strong family man and loyal to his friends. When Jiggs committed to taking on a project, you could count on it being completed with the full measure of his energy and devotion, qualities we have admired throughout his lifetime of service to our community.

In an editorial written in the Brainerd Dispatch, they state “Though he was strong-willed and opinionated, Blanck listened to others and sought common ground. He wanted Brainerd to move forward. He wanted its high school athletes to succeed. He gave the impression of a man who couldn’t understand why a person wouldn’t be an active booster of the Brainerd area. Blanck was a booster in the best sense of the word. His love for all things Brainerd was strong and sincere.”



# LtCol William F. McCollough

2010



## 1987 Graduate

LtCol McCollough was born and raised in Brainerd, Minnesota. He graduated summa cum laude from Norwich University, was nominated for a Rhodes Scholarship, and was commissioned in May 1991. After completing The Basic Officers' Course with honors, he was assigned to the Infantry Officers' Course. His first posting was to 2d Bn, 3d Marines where he served as Platoon Commander and Executive Officer, Company E, and Assistant Battalion Operations Officer.

In 1995, Lt McCollough reported for duty with Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team Company where he commanded the 2d Platoon, the 5th Platoon, and served as the Executive Officer. Deployments included to the Mid-Atlantic to interdict a Chinese freighter during Operation MARATHON, and to CENTCOM in support of Operation DESERT THUNDER and Operation SOUTHERN WATCH. In 1998 he received orders to Amphibious Warfare School, where he graduated with honors.

Capt. McCollough then reported to 3d Bn, 5th Marines where he served as Weapons Company Commander and Bn Operations Officer and deployed to Idaho for Operation WILDFIRE. His subsequent assignment was as the Assistant Operations Officer, G-3, 1st Marine Division, where he worked on the 1st MarDiv response plans after the September 11th terrorist attacks.

In 2002 Maj McCollough reported to the Officer of Legislative Affairs for duty as a Congressional Fellow. In 2003 he became the Deputy Marine Liaison to the U.S. House of Representatives.

In 2005 he reported back to 3d Bn, 5th Marines for duty as Executive Officer, and was later assigned as the Team Chief for Military Transition Team 131. He deployed to Al Anbar, Iraq where he advised 1st Bn, 3d Bde, 1st Iraqi Division during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. In Oct 2006, he was promoted to LtCol and assigned as the Operations Officer, 1st Marine Regiment. He then deployed to Iraq with Regimental Combat Team 1 where he served as the Tribal Engagement Officer and Executive Officer.

Upon return from Iraq he assumed command of 1st Battalion, 5th Marines. In May 2009 he deployed to Afghanistan where his Battalion seized the Nawa District of Helmand Province, participating in Operation KANJARI.

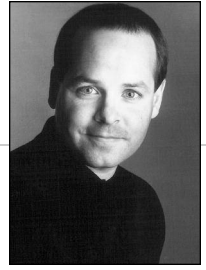
After returning from Afghanistan he lectured widely on Counterinsurgency theory and practice at numerous military schools across the United States, as well as in Great Britain, Canada, and Denmark. He is currently a student at the Marine Corps War College in Quantico, VA.

LtCol McCollough's personal decorations include the Bronze Star with "V" device, the Purple Heart, The Meritorious Service Medal with one gold star, and the Combat Action Ribbon with one gold star.

He is married to the former Caroline Sims of Columbia, TN and has two sons, Jack and Hunter.

# Shawn Stengel

2009



## 1977 Graduate

Shawn's distinguished and varied career in show business is firmly rooted in his upbringing in Brainerd. Whether singing in the choir at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, putting on shows in the basement with a willing troupe of siblings, relatives and neighborhood kids, taking piano and trumpet lessons, or attending Brainerd public schools, Shawn was always "in rehearsal" for a career in performing arts.

Shawn and his family (Casey, & Doris, brother Randy, sister Wendy) moved to Brainerd in the early 60's and he started school at Lowell. The next year, the family moved to South 7th Street, a block from Edison Elementary. There, Shawn's notable achievements included Fastest 1st Grade Boy (repeatedly beating fastest 1st Grade girl, Nancy Kunde, in the To-The-Fence-And-Back Race), Mrs. Koepfel's 2nd Grade Rat's Nest Desk Award, getting glasses, and playing (with minimal negative effect) on the undefeated 6th Grade basketball team.

A quick 3-year waltz through Washington Junior High and it was off to high school. Shawn was one of only a few students to be selected for both the Symphonic Band and Acappella Choir as a sophomore. During his BHS years he also played trumpet in the marching band, pep band and was the winner of the Louis Armstrong Jazz Award for his work in the Stage Band. Shawn was named Principal Trumpet in the Minnesota All-State Orchestra after his junior year. In addition to touring Europe during the summer of 1976 with the choir, Shawn also sang with the Madrigal Singers, helped name and performed with Windfall, served as tenor section leader, and was Acappella Co-Most Valuable Member his senior year. During junior year, Shawn added drama to his activities. He appeared in leading roles in several productions, eventually being honored as Best Supporting Actor.

During his high school years Shawn also sang with the Minnesota All-State Lutheran Choir, played the organ and sang in the senior choir at Bethlehem Lutheran, and appeared in musical productions during the summer at Brainerd Community College (now Central Lakes College). He was also a member of AFS and the Stengel family hosted two foreign exchange students, Carlos from Bolivia, and Beatrice from Ghana, Africa.

Shawn attended the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis and graduated with degrees in Music Education and Music Composition. He was a member of the "U" Marching Band performing at Golden Gopher football games, the wildly popular Indoor

Marching Band concerts at Northrop Auditorium and internationally in Winnipeg, Canada and for the president of Mexico in Mexico City. He studied trumpet privately with Dr. David Baldwin and Ron Hasselmann of the Minnesota Orchestra. In addition to playing with the Brass Choir and the Pleasant Street Brass Quintet, Shawn was a member of Dr. Benciscutto's elite Wind Ensemble, performing on campus and Orchestra Hall, recorded for national broadcast on MPR's St. Paul Sunday Morning program, featured at Carnegie Hall, and touring the People's Republic of China in 1980, breaking ground as the first amateur performing group to perform on the mainland since 1949.

A move to Los Angeles in the mid-80's led to some interesting hobnobbing with the stars while working at the exclusive Hotel Bel-Air. Shawn was also involved with the L.A. Songwriter's Workshop, took film scoring classes through UCLA, and music directed his first professional show, RED, WHITE & ROSIE. Shortly thereafter, Shawn auditioned and was hired for the L.A. production of PUMP BOYS & DINETTES. Just a few weeks later, he was "traded" to the Chicago production of PUMP BOYS and he amassed over a thousand performances in that record-breaking run.

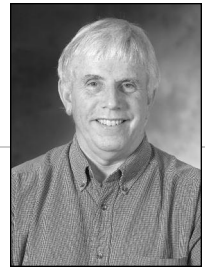
Based in Chicago, Shawn's musical theatre career took off, literally, as he spent the better part of the 90's on the road as a musician and conductor touring first with Cathy Rigby as PETER PAN, then with the national tour's of Kander & Ebb's AND THE WORLD GOES 'ROUND, CRAZY FOR YOU (which included a 3 month run in Berlin, Germany), and finally CATS. In between tours, he performed on stage across the country in regional productions of PUMP BOYS and OIL CITY SYMPHONY.

Over the last 25 years, Shawn has worked on productions at most of the theatres in Chicago, including the world premieres of Stephen Sondheim's BOUNCE and Kander & Ebb's THE VISIT starring Chita Rivera, both at the Goodman Theatre. He was Associate Conductor of WICKED for over 3 years at the Oriental Theatre, and he recently directed a production of PUMP BOYS & DINETTE at the Drury Lane Theatre that is transferring to the Mercury Theatre in Chicago for an open-ended commercial run.

Shawn continues to live in Chicago where he continues to direct and perform in addition to running three businesses with his partner Tony.

# Michael O'Leary

2009



## 1969 Graduate

From our streets and our schools we send forth change agents of the first order. Dr Michael O'Leary, who graduated from the "new" Brainerd High School in 1969, is such an agent, serving the needs of humanity worlds away from his roots in our community.

O'Leary's interest in international life and work was kindled when he spent a high school year as an AFS student in Mbabane, Swaziland. He lived with the Glen family during part of his junior year, returning to BHS in January 1969 to finish high school and graduate with his classmates. He spent the next 8 years at the University of Minnesota, gaining a BA in anthropology and his MD, followed by a medical residency program at the University of Hawaii. After three more years of training and board certification in Internal Medicine, he attained also an MPH in International Health in Hawaii, and completed a second residency in Preventive Medicine. He practiced clinical medicine in Hawaii for 4 years.

O'Leary joined the Commissioned Corps of the US Public Health Service (PHS), and in 1984 he entered the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC Atlanta) Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS), a 2-year training program in epidemiology and public health. He spent most of this time in Seattle, as EIS Officer at the Washington State Department of Health, where he focused on infectious diseases and outbreaks of disease.

By 1986 he began a career in international public health. For nearly 20 years his work focused on epidemiology, infectious diseases, and international public health surveillance and response, in the Federated States of Micronesia

(4 years), Papua New Guinea (4 years), Fiji (8 years), and Guam (3 years). For 12 of those years he was detailed from CDC to the World Health Organization as a WHO Medical Officer. In 2005 O'Leary retired from the PHS after 23 years of service, at the rank of O-6. During this time he made more than 150 international duty trips to about 25 different countries, authored or co-authored more than 40 scientific articles and papers, investigated many disease outbreaks, taught hundreds of medical students and health care workers, was a founder of the Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network, and was awarded several USPHS medals including the Outstanding Service Medal.

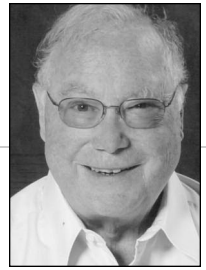
In November 2005 O'Leary returned to WHO, now as a senior manager in the post of WHO Representative in Cambodia, overseeing a staff of 50, including 25 international professional staff from 16 different countries. WHO in Cambodia provides technical support to the Ministry of Health across a full range of health programs, as well as leadership for collaboration among Government, international donors, NGOs, and other key stakeholders in health.

In September 2009 WHO reassigned Dr O'Leary to Beijing, to head its country office in China. He and his staff are involved in efforts to control and prevent a litany of health problems, from HIV to influenza to environmental hazards.

Michael O'Leary and his wife Pakawan, a pharmacist and Pilates instructor, were married in 1990. They have one son, Sean (1994), set to graduate from high school in 2012 at the Western Academy of Beijing, China.

# Henry C. Mills II

2009



## 1946 Graduate

Henry C. Mills II graduated from Brainerd High School in 1946 after attending Whittier Elementary and Franklin Junior High, where he was Winter Snow King. At Washington High School he was Sophomore Class President. He graduated in 1948 from Brainerd Junior College, attended the University of Minnesota in 1949, and graduated in Business from Hamline University in 1951.

Mr. Mills served with the 194<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion in the National Guard and was stationed at Forts Leonard Wood, Sheridan, Riley, Leavenworth as well as Camps Kilmer, Ripley and USERA Headquarters in Heidelberg, Germany. His service extended from 1946 until the early 1960's.

Henry is part of the Mills family, whose business started in 1955 with his brother Stewart C. Mills, Jr. and his father

Stewart C. Mills, Sr. From his days as a sixth grader working at Lively Auto doing clean-up and showroom jobs, Mr. Mills interest and passion has helped to develop what we know today as a group of enterprises know as the Mills Companies, of which Henry is Co-President.

Henry is the Co-President of Mills GM Brainerd, Mills Ford and the Bodyworks Brainerd, Mills GM Willmar, Mills Ford Willmar, Mills Parts Distribution Willmar, Mills Supply Company, Crow Wing Oil Company, and Mills Properties. Incorporated. AS well as Mills Fleet Farm locations throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota and Iowa.

Henry and his wife Nancy maintain residences in Appleton, Wisconsin and here at Gull Lake, Minnesota.

2009

# Dr. Wayne Little



## 1950 Graduate

Dr. Wayne Little's contributions to the business and education fields are coupled with a history of service and commitment to the Brainerd Community.

Wayne began his professional preparation at Brainerd Junior College where he earned an Associate in Arts Degree in 1952. He then completed a Bachelor of Arts at Hamline University in 1954 followed by service as a member of the Army Security Agency. Before being transferred to reserve duty he was presented an Outstanding Service Award. Later he earned a Bachelor of Science (1957) and a Master of Science (1962) degree from the University of Minnesota. Dr. Little completed his PhD in Marketing from the University of Minnesota in 1972.

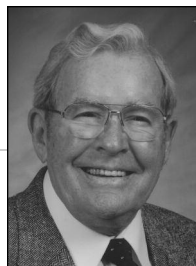
Dr. Little's early teaching and administrative assignments were as a marketing instructor, business department chair and administrator in various Wisconsin and Minnesota Technical Colleges. At St. Cloud State University he held positions as Associate Dean and acting Dean of the College of Business. Dr. Little also served as Director of Business Graduate Studies,

Student Services, and Internships. Prior to his retirement in 1992 Dr. Little was Director of the College of Business Research and small Business Development Center. He has authored or co-authored eleven textbooks and contributed to numerous other publications. Aside from his University responsibilities Dr. Little has spoken at numerous business and professional gatherings and has held memberships and offices in such organizations and societies as Beta Gamma Sigma, Phi Delta Epsilon, Twin Cities Insurance Personnel Directors Association, United Way Business Division Director and others.

Since retirement Dr. Little has made a lasting impact in community service. For six years he was President of the Board of Directors for Camp Confidence and was a Central Lakes College Foundation Board Member. He has been President of the Brainerd Rotary Club and Governor-Elect of Rotary District 5580. Wayne and his wife Jo live in the Brainerd Lakes Area and have four adult children (Claire, Brian, Wendy & Wesley) and six grandchildren.

2008

# John Arnold



## 1937 Graduate

Demonstrated in both his personal and professional life, John Arnold was synonymous with Minnesota nice and central Minnesota hospitality.

Arnold was born and raised in Brainerd, graduating from Brainerd High School in 1937. He received a bachelor of science degree from the University of Minnesota, majoring in business and education. During World War II he served as a captain in the US Marine Corps.

Arnold spent 10 years as an employee of Northwest Airlines' Food and Passenger Service divisions, stationed in Anchorage, Alaska; Tokyo, Japan; and Minneapolis. This culminated with the position of Director of Food Service.

Returning to Brainerd in 1957, he accepted an opportunity to become a partner of Jack and Jim Madden at Maddens Resort. During the period from 1957 to 1996, he was also active in hospitality industry associations and served as president of the Minnesota

Hotel Association and the Minnesota Resort Association. For 14 years he was Minnesota's delegate on the board of directors of the American Hotel and Motel Association. In 1984 he was Minnesota Resorter of the Year, and in 1988 he was voted Director of the Year for the American Hotel and Motel Association.

Locally, Arnold was a director of Brainerd Savings and Loan for 28 years. He also served as a director of the Brainerd Chamber of Commerce, the Central Lakes College Foundation, St Joseph's Medical Center, and the Benedictine Health Service Foundation. He was a Rotarian, a Shriner, and a member of the First Congregational Church.

Upon retirement in 1996, Arnold and wife Lovelle spent winters in Florida and summers in Brainerd. They have four sons - Jack, Craig, David and Jim. John Arnold died on January 27, 2008 at the age of 87 in Delray Beach, Florida.

# Captain Wallace Lind

2008



## 1905 Graduate

As part of the graduating class of 1905, it's likely Wallace L. Lind never imagined he'd be immortalized. But that's exactly what happened when the U.S.S. Wallace L. Lind was launched on June 14, 1944.

Lind was born June 18, 1887 in Brainerd and graduated in 1905. On June 30, 1905 he was appointed a midshipman in the U.S. Naval Academy by Congressman Lindbergh of Little Falls. In September 1915 he arrived at the United States Naval Academy for a post-graduate course in steam engineering, following which he attended Columbia University for special instruction.

During World War I he served on a number of ships including the U.S.S. President Lincoln. He was awarded the Navy Cross for service during the war with the following citation:

“For distinguished service in the line of his profession as executive officer of the U.S.S. President Lincoln (naval trans-

port) in so efficiently organizing, instructing and drilling the crew of that vessel that everything possible was done to save the ship after she was torpedoed on May 31, 1918.”

From 1935 to 1938, Commander Lind was assigned to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington D.C. During this period he received his promotion to captain. Following the war, Lind served as an officer on a number of ships, eventually being appointed commanding officer of the U.S.S. Omaha with the American Mediterranean Fleet in 1938. In 1939, he returned to the Navy Department as budget officer and died on April 12, 1940.

The U.S.S. Wallace L. Lind was named after him four years later - laid down on February 14, 1944 by the Federal Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co., Kearny, N.J.; launched on June 14, 1944; sponsored by Mrs. Wallace L. Lind; and commissioned at the New York Navy Yard on September 8, 1944.

2007

# Thomas G. Anderson



## 1968 Graduate

Tom Anderson graduated from Brainerd High School in 1968 with honors. During high school he excelled in academics, athletics and activities – from lettering in three sports, to being named a member of the National Honor Society to his involvement in student newspaper and the Letterman's Club.

Upon high school graduation, Anderson attended Bemidji State University and also attended Manchester College (part of Oxford University) as an exchange student for one year, participating on the Oxford University boxing team. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree with distinction from the University of Minnesota, where he also gained honors as a member of the Beta Gamma Sigma honor society, a member of the dormitory council and a student representative.

Anderson worked as a Certified Public Accountant with Arthur Andersen, and later as a financial manager with Jostens, Carlson Companies and Midwest Vision Center. He was employed by Universal Pensions, Inc. for over 20 years including nine years when he served as the company's president and chief operating officer. The company grew from 12 to 500 employ-

ees during his time with UPI. Anderson then joined Hunt Technologies in Pequot Lakes as their Chief Operating Officer and is now part owner and the Chief Executive Officer of Minnesota Thermal Science with offices in Baxter and Plymouth.

His civic involvement includes serving on a number of Boards including the Brainerd Lakes Area Development Corporation, Brainerd Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce (president in 1990), St. Joseph's Medical Center, Benedictine Health Care System, Brainerd Lakes Area YMCA, Brainerd Lakes Area Community Foundation, and the Independent School District 181 Foundation. Anderson is currently a member of the Brainerd Rotary and in the past has been a member of Sertoma and the Elks.

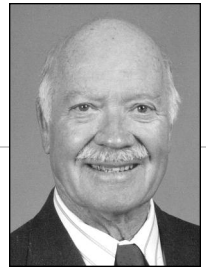
In 1986, Anderson was named an Outstanding Young Man in America. He has also served as a coach of youth baseball and basketball and as an advisor with Junior Achievement.

Anderson currently lives in Baxter with his wife, Beth, and has two adult children – Josh and Kirsten (Kirk).



2007

# Dr. Gene M. Bierhaus



## 1939 Graduate

It was during his time as an athlete, and co-captain of the Warrior football team, at Brainerd High School where Gene Bierhaus earned the nickname the "Battering Ram."

Bierhaus excelled in Brainerd athletics, participating in football, basketball, track and golf. It was his all-state football honor that helped him earn a scholarship to the University of Minnesota where he played football from 1939-1942 and was a member of the 1940 and 1941 national championship teams. He was also the Big Ten light heavyweight boxing champion. He went on to letter in football three years at the U of M and was drafted by the Green Bay Packers, though he opted not to play in the NFL.

After receiving a degree in education, Bierhaus joined the United States Marine Corps where he served as a lieutenant during World War II, namely in the Battle of Iwo Jima. He won the Marine Corps Boxing Championship while completing the Platoon Leaders Class and a Purple Heart after being wounded twice in battle.

Following the war he returned to college on the G.I. Bill to earn his doctor of veterinary medicine degree and then establish the Brentwood Small Animal

Hospital in Denver, Colorado. He became the veterinarian for the Colorado State Racing Commission in 1957 and his work in horse racing drug regulation brought him national and international recognition as the ultimate authority in horse racing medication issues. He held this position until his retirement in 1981 and provided consulting for several years afterwards. During his veterinary career he was the president of the Colorado Veterinary Medical Association and in 1972 he was the first veterinarian ever to be honored as The Man of the Year by the Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association.

In the early 1990s, Bierhaus returned to the lakes area, enjoying his retirement years on Gull Lake. He was a charter member of the Brainerd Warriors Hall of Fame (1985) and a member of the Brainerd Dispatch All-Century Football Team.

Bierhaus died unexpectedly in Lake Shore on October 11, 2006. He was preceded in death by his wife of 47 years, Jeanne. He is survived by two daughters: Kristy Bierhaus of Denver and Susy Nettleton of Hopkins; granddaughter Molly McAdam of Hopkins; and Mills family cousins in Brainerd.

2007

# Dr. Kimberley Broekemeier



## 1977 Graduate

A 1977 graduate of Brainerd High School, Kimberly Broekemeier was the valedictorian of her class and had a 4.0 GPA. She was a National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist and National Honor Society member. Throughout her high school years, she was involved in several extracurricular activities. She was President of the American Field Service, an organization involved in supporting student exchange with foreign countries, and played flute in the BHS Symphonic Band, receiving star ratings in Minnesota solo competition. She was a three-year letter winner in track and basketball and competed in the regional meet in the long jump.

Broekemeier attended St Olaf College where she was an honor student, received the Allis Scholarship for Chemistry Majors, and was a recipient of the Edolph A. Larson Scholarship. She graduated magna cum laude in 1981 with a chemistry major. While at St Olaf she also participated in organ lessons, flute, and Norseman (freshman) band. She was a three-year letter winner in track and was the 1980 State Pentathlete Champion, MAIAW, Division III.

After college, Broekemeier worked at the Hormel Institute in Austin, Minnesota as a lab technician where she became interested in pursuing a scientific research career. After three years, she returned to school at the University of Minnesota, enrolling as a graduate student in the Department of Biochemistry. She received a Ph.D. in Biochemistry in 1990 with an emphasis in physical biochemistry and finished with a 4.0 GPA.

She returned to the Hormel Institute as a postdoctoral fellow and began a career in basic biochemical research, working to further the understanding of how healthy tissues and cells function. Her primary areas of

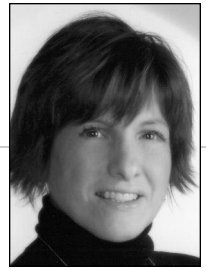
research have been “the regulation of membrane permeability in mitochondria” and “the lipid metabolism associated with this intracellular organelle.” Advances in these areas impact numerous physiological and pathological processes, including embryo development and cell damage caused by ischemia. She has several scientific articles published in *Biochemistry* and *The Journal of Biological Chemistry*, two premier journals for scientific publications in the field of biochemistry. Her main contributions have been “elucidation of the mechanism and regulation of the mitochondrial permeability transition,” with results published in *The Journal of Biological Chemistry* in 1989 and discovery of a uniquely regulated phospholipase, a lipid-metabolizing enzyme, in mitochondria, with results published in *Biochemistry* in 2002.

Broekemeier’s career advanced to a position as senior research scientist at Ohio State University. In 1998, she accepted a tenure tract assistant professor position in the chemistry department at Ohio Northern University in Ada, Ohio, a four-year private undergraduate college rated as one of the top five regional schools by US News and World Report. Broekemeier is currently a tenured associate professor and teaches biochemistry and advanced biochemistry courses as well as supervises the biochemistry lab course. She is continuing her research on the “mitochondrial permeability transition” as well as conducting a research project on the regulation of the mitochondrial phospholipase  $A_2$ . She has served as mentor to 13 undergraduate researchers, has participated in writing at least 10 successful grant proposals, authored 17 publications, 14 abstracts and/or conference presentations and sits on/and or chairs several influential University committees.

Above all, Broekemeier continues to be a “traditional mother” to her daughter.

# Cindy Fryklind Clough

2007



## 1976 Graduate

Cindy Fryklind Clough's career has been *kicked* into overdrive since graduating with the class of 1976 from Brainerd High School.

Clough has served as coach of the Brainerd High School Dance Team, "The Kixters," since the 1976-1977 season. Since her involvement, the team has won eight state championships, has advanced to the state finals 26 times, and won the National High Kick Championship in 1987 in Florida.

She is cofounder (1981) and past president of the Minnesota Association of Dance Teams and has served on the MADT board for 12 years. She was a member of the steering committee responsible for having dance team allowed as a Minnesota State High School League activity in 1995. She has served on the Minnesota State High School League Advisory Board and the Dance Spirit Magazine Advisory Board.

During her career, Clough has choreographed over 20 major collegiate bowl game half-time shows, including the Holiday Bowl in San Diego, the Freedom Bowl in Anaheim, the Orange Bowl in Miami, the Citrus Bowl in Orlando and the Outback Bowl in Tampa. Her most memorable experience came when representing the United States with The Kixters and the US Military Band from Washington DC upon the opening of the Tokyo Dome in Japan.

Clough and husband, Steve, began the Just For Kix (JFK) organization, starting

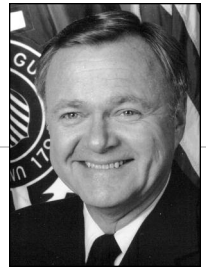
from a children's program in Brainerd and growing to a 164 community-strong business with 20,000 dancers participating annually in states from North and South Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Illinois and Minnesota. JFK has also expanded to include a mail order catalog division (1989) with over 900,000 catalogs mailed each year, as well as the JFK Manufacturing division, which produces costumes for dancers in the JFK youth programs. The Clough's employ approximately 500 people annually.

An author of dance and drill-coaching manuals and a keynote speaker at numerous state and national conventions, Clough also holds the following accolades: induction into the Minnesota Dance Team Coaches Hall of Fame (1987), Minnesota Dance Team Coach of the Year (1987), Let's Cheer Magazine's Hall of Fame (1988), North Dakota Drill Team Association Hall of Fame (1991), Brainerd High School Athletic Hall of Fame (1995), Minnesota Dance Coach of the Year (1999), voted as one of the top five directors in the Midwest (2000), Brainerd's Young Citizen of the Year (2001), recipient of the Breaking Barriers Award presented at the State Capitol for contributing significantly to women's sports in Minnesota (2004), and recipient of the State of Minnesota's SBA Entrepreneur of the Year Award (2006).

Clough and husband, Steve, live in the lakes area and have three children – Joel, Jerad and Alexandra.

2007

# Vice Admiral Howard Thorsen



## 1951 Graduate

VADM Howard Thorsen, USCG (Ret) completed a distinguished 36 year career in the United States Coast Guard, during which he had extensive experience in coordinating U.S. inter-agency and foreign activities, primarily related to national security issues. As Commander, Atlantic Area, he was the commander of two-thirds of all Coast Guard forces, with responsibility for Coast Guard operations east of the Rocky Mountains, including the Great Lakes, Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea. While in that assignment, he was "double hatted" as Commander, U.S. Maritime Defense Zone, Atlantic; a Navy command, reporting directly to CINCLANTFLT. Prior to that: he served in Headquarters as the Coast Guard's senior policy official for defense operations and security matters; held a major field command; and headed the Coast Guard's R&D program, with a \$20M annual budget.

Admiral Thorsen's assignments prior to flag rank were primarily associated with Coast Guard aviation, as both fixed and rotary-wing pilot at five air stations, with a specialty of aircraft maintenance. He commanded Air Station Corpus Christi, and was Chief of Aeronautical Engineering in CG HQ. He served one

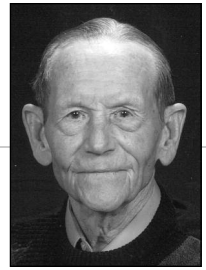
tour as an instructor, and later was Commandant of Cadets, at the Coast Guard Academy.

His 'second career' has covered a broad range of experiences. For the past ten years, he has served as an Outside Director on the Board of Directors (currently chairman) of a corporation providing information technology equipment and services to federal government agencies, primarily associated with classified security programs. He consults on maritime issues and is a Senior Fellow at The Center for Naval Analyses. In 1999, he co-founded The Foundation for Coast Guard History and serves as chairman of the Board of Regents. Admiral Thorsen is a graduate of the United States Coast Guard Academy and is a Distinguished Graduate of The Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

Howard and his wife, Marlyn, were married the day after he graduated from the Academy. After moving 23 times during his Coast Guard career, they returned to their home in Alexandria, Virginia. They have two daughters, Tracey and Suzanne, and three grandchildren.

# Clarence Holden

2006



## 1930 Graduate

A prominent businessman and philanthropist in the Brainerd area for more than 50 years, Clarence Holden was known as a quiet and humble man who made great contributions to the community he lived in.

Born July 9, 1912 in Brainerd, Holden graduated from Washington High School in 1930 and from the University of Minnesota in 1936.

Holden worked for Mills Motors in high school before he joined the U.S. Army and fought in Italy and North Africa during World War II. He ran Standard Auto Parts with stores in Brainerd, Little Falls and Crookston.

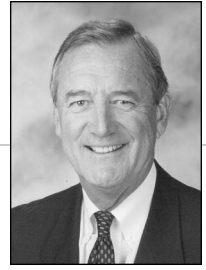
Holden and his wife, Fran, have been benefactors to a variety of organizations, including Camp Cuyuna, a camp for Boy Scouts; the Central Lakes College Foundation; the Nisswa Community Children's Library; and the Brainerd Family YMCA. Their \$2.1 million contribution to the YMCA jump-started contributions for a \$4.3 million expansion for the YMCA.

He was a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, the Elks Club and the American Legion.

Holden died on October 7, 2005 at his home in Baxter.

# Richard Nolan

2006



## 1962 Graduate

Richard Nolan's life experiences include work in education, government and business.

In the field of education, Nolan, a 1962 Washington High School graduate and, later, University of Minnesota graduate, taught high school, directed Head Start and Adult Basic Education programs and continues to lecture regularly at schools, universities and community events on the subjects of global trade, international business, government and politics.

In government, Nolan served two terms in the Minnesota House of Representatives (elected as Minnesota's youngest legislator in 1968), two years on the staff of US Senator Walter F Mondale and three terms in the United States House of Representatives (selected as one of the "most respected" members of Congress by syndicated columnist Jack Anderson's Congress Watch). He has served as Vice Chair of the State DFL Party, a member of the Democratic National Committee and a delegate to numerous democratic state and national conventions.

In business, Nolan worked as administrative assistant to the President of Fingerhut Corporation, president of an export management and general trading company, US Export Corporation, finding overseas buyers and partners for American companies.

He was founder, chairman of the board, and president of the Minnesota

World Trade Center Corporation. He worked and lived in Abu Dhabi as an investment advisor to the Royal Family of Abu Dhabi, UAE and as owner/president of Emily Forest Products in Emily, Minnesota.

Nolan's related international experiences include serving as a US Congressional Delegate to the European Parliament Exchange, creating and serving as a member of a special congressional committee on refugees, successfully negotiating with President Fidel Castro for the release of American prisoners of war held in Cuba, and brokering one of the world's largest off-shore drilling ventures in the Arabian/Persian Gulf. Nolan also served as a member of the World Trade Center's International Association Board of Directors and chairman of the International Association's Trade Policy committee.

Nolan is now semi-retired on a small farm east of Crosslake and remains active in community affairs as chairman of the Mission Township Planning Committee, member of the Central Lakes College Foundation Board, board member of the Pelican Lake Property Owner's Association, regular lecturer at the Initiative Foundation and involved in numerous other community initiatives.

Nolan is married to Mary Wieland-Nolan and has four children and 9 grandchildren.

# Cindy Jane Williams

2006



## 1985 Graduate

Since graduating from Brainerd High School in 1985, Cindy Williams' career has taken her to the far reaches of the world and in the face, literally, of internationally known stars.

After graduating from Brainerd High School and Central Lakes College, Williams moved to Los Angeles, California in 1989 where she attended cosmetology school at Santa Monica Community College. Her first break came in 1991 when she was hired by 20th Century Fox Chairman Joe Roth as assistant make up artist on the film "Hot Shots" with Charlie Sheen. After working on a few films, she was named head of make up for the feature film "Jungle Book." The job took her to India where "working in 118 degree heat and in a country suffering from so much poverty, was a life altering experience," she said.

Her next overseas job was filming with actress Catherine Zeta-Jones in "The

Haunting." That same year, Williams earned an Emmy for best make up for her work on the television series "The X-Files."

Another notable highlight of her career was working on the Oscar winning film "Chicago", again with Ms. Zeta-Jones. She also had the opportunity to spend time with her family in Europe during the filming of "Oceans Twelve" in 2004.

"While my work has taken me many interesting places, one experience I will always remember was coming back to Minnesota to film the 1996 feature "Beautiful Girls," Williams noted.

Williams credits her success to the strong work ethic she learned from her parents as well as the teachers in the Brainerd School District. She currently makes her home in Los Angeles with her husband, Rob, and sons Grant and Garrett.

2005

# Marilyn J. Koering



## 1956 Graduate

The values taught and practiced during her education here in Brainerd as well as the examples set by its residents gave her a foundation that has carried her through her years of higher education followed by a most rewarding career. There were "bumps" in the road that were made less traumatic by her numerous mentors who both believed in and supported her.

After a superb liberal arts education at the College of St. Scholastica and excellent graduate training at the University of Wisconsin (Madison) in research in primate reproductive biology, she joined the faculty at the George Washington University Medical School teaching medical and graduate students. At the same time she was a guest scientist at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda where she conducted certain aspects of her research. She also obtained her own research funding and was a member of (NIH) research grant study sections. These selected groups evaluated other scientist's research proposals and she was often the only female member. In addition, her research results led her to conduct studies at the Primate Research Center in Oregon, at the respected

California Institute of Technology and at the Jones Institute for Reproductive Medicine (first "in vitro" fertilization center in USA) in Virginia. Her research data and papers are now part of the Carnegie Collection at the National Medical Museum where they are available for use by other scientists.

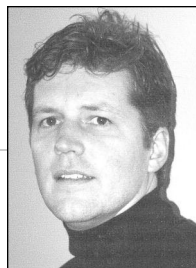
She has taught over 5,000 medical and graduate students in semester long classes over her 34 years on the University faculty. This was a most enjoyable time to be part of their educational process for those students would be able to assist to the needs of so many people in the world. She received the life-time Distinguished Teaching Award in 1996 from the students and faculty.

Aside from these academic activities, she taught second grade Sunday religion classes where she says that she found the students quite similar to the medical students in their enthusiasm. Her life in Washington D.C. could not have been more enjoyable by participating in the many cultural events, bicycling around the monuments and realizing how fortunate most Americans are!



2005

# Jon Thorson



## 1982 Graduate

Jon Thorson - BHS Class of 1982: Jon received his B.A. degree in chemistry (1986) from Augsburg College and a Ph.D. degree in organic chemistry (1993) from the University of Minnesota with Professor Hung-wen (Ben) Liu. Following his graduate work, Thorson held a postdoctoral appointment as a Merck Postdoctoral Fellow of the Helen Hay Whitney Foundation (1993-1996) at the University of California, Berkeley with Professor Peter Schultz. From 1996-2001, Jon was an assistant member of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and assistant professor of Sloan-Kettering Division, Joan and Sanford I. Weill Graduate School of Medical Sciences, Cornell University, during which he was named a Rita Allen Foundation Scholar (1998-2002) and Alfred P. Sloan Fellow (2000-2002). Professor Thorson joined the School of Pharmacy in the summer of 2001 and since moving to UW has been awarded the American Society of Pharmacognosy Matt Suffness Award (2004) and selected as a H. I. Romnes Fellow (2004). Thorson was promoted to full Professor in 2003 and has recently taken on the position of vice chair of the Pharmaceutical Sciences Division in the School of Pharmacy.

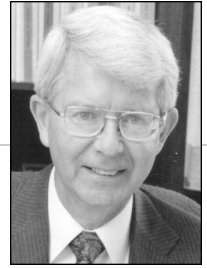
Jon's research interests include understanding and exploiting microbial biosynthetic pathways, mechanistic enzymology, mechanisms of resistance to highly reactive metabolites, enzyme engineering and evolution to generate

novel catalysts and the development of chemoenzymatic and chemoselective ligation strategies for natural product glycorandomization. Thorson is most recognized for establishing the field of glycorandomization and his lab has successfully demonstrated the broad utility of glycorandomized natural product libraries as drug discovery platforms for new antitumor, antibiotic, antifungal and antiviral therapeutics. The glycorandomization technology platform developed in the Thorson laboratory was recently licensed and is being commercialized by zuChem (Chicago IL) where Thorson serves as a key scientific advisor. In addition, Jon serves on the scientific advisory boards of Kosan Biosciences (Hayward, CA) and eMetagen (Madison, WI). During the last year Professor Thorson and his collaborators in the UW School of Pharmacy and the UW Comprehensive Cancer Center were also instrumental in establishing one of only four prestigious NIH-supported natural products-based National Cooperative Drug Discovery Groups (NIH NCDDG) which will provide \$6 million of research support over the next five years to focus upon the identification and preclinical evaluation of novel anti-cancer leads.

He and his wife, Danielle, have one daughter, Cristina, and one son, Luca. They currently live in Middleton, WI. Jon's parents are Dale and Karen Thorson.

2005

# Alex G. "Gene" Fremling



## 1949 Graduate

Alex G. "Gene" Fremling was the co-valedictorian in the class of 1949. The class vice president, he was voted Most Studious Boy and Most Likely to Succeed.

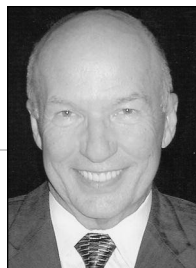
He graduated from Carleton College in 1953 cum laude with a bachelor's degree in government and international relations. He graduated with a master's in political science from the University of Minnesota in 1957 and served in the Army from 1954-55. He attended one semester at Washington University

School of Law in St. Louis before being drafted.

He started working in programs with the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission and successor federal agencies in 1957. His career with the energy department included services as manager of the Richland, Wash., operations office from 1973-1984. He retired in 1996 after working in several executive positions with the Electric Power Research Institute in Palo Alto, Calif.

2005

# Roger C. Vergin



## 1955 Graduate

Roger C. Vergin grew up in an apartment above his parent's Economy Auto Supply store in downtown Brainerd. He earned his first nickel at age five selling newspapers at the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> and Laurel. He attended Brainerd's Lincoln Grade School and Franklin Junior High and graduated from Washington High School in 1955.

Roger was senior class president, co-valedictorian with a 4.0 GPA, and voted Most Likely to Succeed and Best Writer. He began college at St. Olaf and obtained a bachelor's degree in business administration and industrial engineering from the University of Minnesota in 1959. He went on to earn a master's degree in industrial management in 1962, followed by a Ph. D. in business administration in 1964, also from the U of M.

Dr. Vergin's first academic appointment was as Assistant Professor of Business Administration at the University of California-Berkeley in 1963. He became Associate Professor at the University of Washington in 1966, then Professor at Simon Fraser University in 1971.

Dr. Vergin's academic research was in the fields of production management, organizational planning, finance, and entrepreneurship. He wrote over fifty research articles and published textbooks in production and operations management.

In a wide departure from his academic career, Roger served as financial adviser / business manager for actor Marlon Brando in 1973-74, a full-time position that included building a resort on Brando's island of Tetiaroa near Tahiti. The story of this experience is described in Roger's 1997 book, "Brando – with his Guard Down."

While a professor, he undertook several business ventures, leaving the academic world to pursue an entrepreneurial career fulltime in 1985. He built houses, apartments, and commercial buildings in Washington State.

Other ventures included creating childcare centers, manufacturing businesses in electronics, motorized swimming pool covers, and drilling machinery, and the processing of gold mine tailings in California.

Dr. Vergin returned to the academic world as Professor at Pennsylvania State University in 1990 and his subsequent academic career primarily involved university administration. At Penn State, he was Chair of the Department of Management and Director of the Master of Business Administration program. Under his leadership, the MBA program grew from 180 to 600 students, becoming the largest of the university's 151 graduate programs.

After leaving Penn State University for a short retirement period, Dr. Vergin became Vice President and Chief Academic Officer at the twelve-campus Heald College, headquartered in San Francisco, and later served as Executive Vice President of The American College in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. He retired from the academic world in 2005 and returned with his wife, Dr. Rosemary Rainbolt, to Washington State to be near his three sons.

While Roger practiced long and hard to achieve athletic success in the Brainerd school system, his athletic accomplishments in high school were limited to lettering three times in golf and being in the last cut from the 1954 basketball team that went on to win the state championship.

At the age of 71, he discovered the world of masters track and field and set out to prove that it is never too late for athletic glory. Since then, he has won hundreds of gold medals in competition, set numerous state records in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Hawaii in the sprints and jumps, and won several USA Track & Field national championships. He has earned USATF All-American honors in thirteen different events and been ranked #1 in the USA in his age division in the long jump, triple jump, and

2004

# Duane Blanck



## 1960 WHS Graduate

An impressive five page resume is proof of Duane Blanck's long standing history and commitment to community involvement in the lake's area and beyond.

Blanck has served as the Crow Wing County Highway Engineer since May of 1975. He has been heralded in Better Roads magazine as "Engineer of the Month" and has been honored for various achievements including "1990 Outstanding County Engineer" by the Minnesota County Engineers Association and "1991 Rural Engineer of the Year" by the National Association of County Engineers.

Blanck's leadership dates back to his days at Washington High School as vice president of his class of 1960, an honor graduate, athlete, and member of the yearbook staff and the National Honor Society. He went on to graduate with an Associate of Art's degree from Brainerd State Junior College in 1965; a Bachelor of Science degree (cum laude) in Civil Engineering from the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, in 1968; and a Master of Science degree (magna cum laude) in Civil Engineering from the University of Missouri, Columbia, in 1969.

His commitment extends to his coun-

try, as Blanck served with the United States Marine Corps from 1960 to 1963; reached the rank of Corporal; was assigned to the Communications Battalion, working in security and counter-intelligence; was awarded the American Spirit Honor Medal and Good Conduct Medal; and was honorably discharged.

His professional affiliations and appointments span from local and state to national associations and committees. Despite a busy schedule, Blanck also makes time for community involvement, including serving as congregational chairman of his church; charter member of the Nisswa Lions; member of the Nisswa American Legion-Billie Brown Post; member of the Brainerd Sports Boosters; 1997 co-chair (with wife Carolyn) of the Crow Wing County United Way drive; and past involvement with the Cub Scouts, school PTA, summer youth baseball program, Nisswa Transportation Action Plan Committee, and ISD #181 School Site Selection Committee.

Blanck and his wife, Carolyn, currently live in Nisswa and are parents to sons Daren and Dawson and daughter Danae.

2004

# Peggy Kriha Dye



## 1987 BHS Graduate

Since making her debut with the San Francisco Opera in the summer of 1996, Peggy Kriha Dye has been acclaimed internationally for captivating audiences with her rapturous soprano voice.

A 1987 graduate of Brainerd High School, Kriha Dye received her undergraduate degree in music from St. Cloud University, her Master's degree from the Manhattan School of Music, and spent two years as a member of the Juilliard Opera Center.

Following her performances as Stella in the San Francisco Opera's world premiere of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Kriha Dye has appeared there as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Pousette in *Manon* and Lauretta in the company premiere of *Betrothal in a Monastery*. The former Adler Fellow made her San Francisco Opera debut in 1996 as Musetta in *La bohème*, subsequently appearing with the company during the 1996-97 season in *Die Fledermaus*, the west coast premiere of *Harvey Milk*, and *Salome*. She also portrayed Kate Pinkerton in the San Francisco Opera's new staging of *Madama Butterfly*, appeared with the company during the 1997-98 season in *Death in Venice* and *Le nozze di Figaro*, and was seen as Damigella in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*.

Kriha Dye was most recently praised for her performances as Musetta in *La bohème* with the Shanghai International Arts Festival; Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* with the Tulsa Opera; Drusilla in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* and the First Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* with Opera Atelier; among countless others.

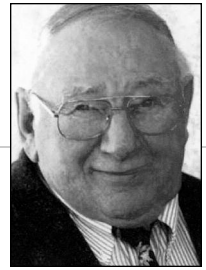
"Kriha's performance was a constant delight," said the San Francisco Chronicle of her 1993 performance in *Die Fledermaus*. "She sang with an unfurced brilliance that made her music sparkle."

Winner of a prestigious scholarship grant from the Liberace Foundation, Kriha Dye was a participant in the 1993 Merola Opera Program singing the role of Nanetta in *Falstaff* and Adele in *Die Fledermaus*. In 1995, she appeared as Barbarina in the Merola Program staging of *Le nozze di Figaro*, and sang Barbarina and Susanna on the subsequent Western Opera Theatre tour.

Kriha Dye is married to husband Matthew and is mother to daughter Anna and adopted son, Nicholas. The family currently lives in Morris Plains, New Jersey. She is the daughter of George Kriha and Carol Bombardier, both of Brainerd.

2003

# Duane Lund



## 1943 Graduate

Dr. Duane Lund's leadership reach extends far outside of the lakes area.

Lund received his BA degree from Macalester College and his MA and PhD from the University of Minnesota.

He has been a senior consultant to the Blandin Foundation of Grand Rapids since retiring after 25 years as superintendent of schools in Staples. Prior to that, he served as chief of staff to United States Senator Edward J. Thye in Washington D.C.

Lund is the author of 35 books, including "Lessons in Leadership," "Early Native American Recipes and Remedies," "The Historic Upper Mississippi," "Lake Superior, Yesterday and Today," "Our Historic Boundary Waters," "The Indian Wars," "White Indian Boy," "Youngest Voyageur," as well as a variety of cookbooks. He was named Minnesota Author of the Year in 1985 by the Minnesota Association of Librarians and Media Specialists.

Lund served two terms on the National Advisory Council for Vocational Education by presidential appointment

(Nixon), and was appointed by the Secretary of the Interior to the National Advisory Council on Trails. He was appointed by Vice President Walter Mondale to the White House Conference on Education and by Minnesota governors to the Boundary Waters Advisory Committee, the Minnesota Manpower Commission and the Minnesota Professional Teaching Practices Commission. He also served on task forces for the National Academy of Science and the National Institute of Education.

He was a consultant on vocational education to the Washington D.C. school district and to the U.S. House of Representatives. He was awarded an honorary American Farmer degree by the Future Farmers of America. He served on the People to People missions to China and Cuba and was a member of a team of educators studying education in western Europe.

Lund is currently active in his church, Rotary and serves on the Rosenmeier Board at Central Lakes College. He has also served on several University of Minnesota committees.

# 2003 Dr. Helen Longfellow



## 1929 Graduate

From the medical field to local nonprofit organizations, Dr. Helen Bane Longfellow has made her mark on life in the lakes area.

Longfellow graduated from Washington High School in 1929, then followed up her education by earning a bachelors degree and medical degree from the University of Minnesota. She was one of only four women among 125 enrollees during her first year of medical school.

After serving a residency and short term practitioner stints in New York, Maine and Wisconsin, Longfellow returned to Brainerd as a family practitioner and surgeon from the mid 1940s until retirement in 1981. Her medical career was often a solo practice, but she served several terms as Chief of Staff at St. Joseph's hospital and worked closely with Dr. Fitzsimmons.

Her compassion for poor families resulted in untold low budget services. A common reference to her was "free baby deliverer."

As co-founder of the local Zonta Club, she participated regularly for 50 years. The Toastmistress Club, Salvation Army Board and Trustees Board of First Congregational Church all benefited from her leadership.

Retirement from full time medical practice in 1981 opened her schedule to new avenues of service as a volunteer for Crisis Line and Literacy Tutoring.

Longfellow and husband, Judge Henry Longfellow, have three children who also graduated from Washington High School and Brainerd High School.

2003

# Jim Anderson



## 1961 Graduate

Jim Anderson is a man with a humble nature and a huge heart.

Anderson is the sole owner of Anderson Brothers Construction, a growing Brainerd lakes area business. The number of employees has grown from 12-15 in 1962 to approximately 180, with projected continued growth.

Anderson has served on and been president of many boards in this area and in the State of Minnesota. His involvement has included: past president of Brainerd Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce; past board member of Minnesota Chamber of Commerce; past board member St. Joseph's Medical Center; board member Bremer Bank since 1977; past chairman National Infrastructure Division of Associated Builders and Contractors of America; past board member Central Minnesota Chapter of Boy Scouts of America; past board member St. Cloud State University Foundation; past board member Brainerd Community College Foundation; past president

Minnesota Asphalt Pavement Association; past board member Minnesota Transportation Alliance; recipient of the City of Brainerd "Tower Award"; and was co-chair of the Governor's Fishing Opener on Gull Lake.

In addition to his sole ownership of Anderson Brothers Construction, Anderson is the owner and/or partner in a number of other area businesses. He has also contributed financially to many organizations through "in kind" contributions and with outright gifts of money over the years.

Anderson's own words sum up his charitable giving: "I'm kind of a private person when it comes to this stuff and don't need a lot of noise when it comes to being involved in something that needs to be done."

Anderson and his wife, also a 1961 Washington High School graduate and homecoming queen, have homes both in Florida and the lakes area.



2002

# Sen. Don Samuelson



## 1951 Graduate

The name Don Samuelson speaks for itself. Samuelson has become synonymous with the political process in Minnesota for 33 years, all the while working to improve the quality of life for the very people he grew up with.

A bricklayer by trade, Samuelson's first election win came in 1960 as an officer of his union where he continues today as a union representative and business manager. In 1968, Samuelson was elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives. In 1982, he was elected to the State Senate where he is currently serving his sixth term as Senator for District 12.

Staying true to his roots, Samuelson was instrumental in helping secure \$23 million for the Central Lakes College addition after the merger with the Brainerd Technical College.

Despite the occasional frustrations of a legislative career that spans three decades, Samuelson says he enjoys his work as a lawmaker.

"I take the job seriously," he told a Dispatch reporter in May of 2000. "I enjoy it. I've got to admit that I truly love working there."

Samuelson is a frequent member of conference committees where House and Senate leaders hammer out the final agreements on bills that will be heard before both houses. He describes himself as a tough negotiator on issues he believes in, attributing that trait to his background as a union representative. Some of Samuelson's special legislative concerns include finance, health care and insurance.

Samuelson's appointments to the many committees and commissions reflect his passion and spirit. In April, he was appointed to the conference committee to oversee progress of the Northstar Corridor commuter rail system.

Samuelson lives in Brainerd with his wife Nancy.

2002

# Dr. Roger Moe



## 1948 Graduate

A survivor of prostate cancer since 1986, Dr. Roger Moe has devoted his life to the very sciences that strive to save others facing life-threatening disease.

Dr. Moe, professor of surgery at the University of Washington Seattle, remains a very active part-time surgeon and recently led the development of the East Side Specialty Clinic to better serve patients in the suburbs of Issaquah, Woodinville and Factoria, Wash.

Dr. Moe graduated from the University of Washington with a bachelor of science degree in 1952, M.D. in 1959 and completed residency in 1964. He left Washington in 1963 for a one-year appointment as Assistant in Surgery at the University of Amsterdam. He began his academic career at the University of Washington in 1967 as Instructor in Surgery and rose through the ranks of assistant professor in 1968, associate professor in 1971 to full professor in 1994.

A colleague once described him as "the classic image of caring, a knowledgeable, gentle surgeon doing whatever is required to provide first-rate care."

Dr. Moe has been at the forefront in the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer. This is demonstrated by noting a few of the many honors and awards he has achieved. In 1993, he received the Recognition Award for Teaching from the graduating chief residents of the University's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. In 1995, he received the Golden Tennis Shoe Award from U.S. Sen. Patty Murray for major contributions to the citizens of Washington state. In 2001, Dr. Moe was chosen for a Distinguished Alumnus Award in his department.

In a regional listing of peer-selected physicians with a reputation of being the best at caring for patients, Dr. Moe was cited in *The Best Doctors in the American-Pacific Region* in 1996 and again in 1997; and *The Best Doctors in Seattle* in 1999 and 2000.

"Concerning his legacy, I think that it is in large part due to him that we have developed one of the premier breast study programs in the nation," commented another colleague.

Dr. Moe currently resides in the Belvue/Seattle area.

2002

# Carl Zapffe



## 1929 Graduate

Born in Brainerd, Carl Zapffe made great strides in the world of science and history throughout his 82 year life.

Zapffe died December 8, 1994 at his Baltimore, Maryland home, but left behind a legacy not soon to be forgotten.

Zapffe was a registered professional engineer and a nationally certified chemist with both a consulting office and laboratory in Baltimore. He had four degrees from Michigan Technological University, Lehigh University and Harvard University, including doctorates in both research and engineering. He was the inventor of fractography, both term and technique, now in universal use for fracture analysis; originator of the magnetospheric M-space concept in cosmology and relative physics; also the geohydrothermodynamic model for Earth-Moon evolution and the Great Ice Ages; and was a recognized expert and author in fields of fur-trade history and the American Indian. His biography is carried in 11 national and four international listings.

Zapffe was also the discoverer of hydrogen as the cause of numerous defects in both forged and cast steel and was the

author of some 200 scientific papers, four of which received national awards; and eight books plus four technical movies. As a principal American authority on stainless steel, his book published by the American Society for Metals, when translated into Japanese in the late 1950s, played an important part in lifting that nation to its position of world supremacy in the production of stainless steel. He was a charter fellow and honorary life member of the American Society for Metals, an honorary life member of the American Welding Society, and emeritus member of the American Chemical Society and a member of other professional organizations such as the American Geological Society, American Geophysical Union, American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, and the American Institute of Physics.

He was past director and president of the Baltimore Rotary Club; commodore of the Gull Lake Yacht club and served as historian for the Historic Heartland Association, Inc. in Minnesota from 1971.

At the age of 13, Zapffe also set a national record in Scouting by making the rank of Eagle Scout the same year he entered the troop.

2002

# Hortense McKay



## 1927 Graduate

The quote accompanying Hortense McKay's graduation photo in the 1927 Brainonian couldn't have been closer to the truth in characterizing her life's work and contribution: "All can see in me an emblem of true purity."

Following graduation in 1927, McKay attended the Saint Cloud Teacher's College then worked for one year in a rural Crow Wing County school before attending nursing school, where she earned her nursing degree in 1933.

After joining the Army in 1936, she was eventually sent to the Philippines and survived the heavy bombing of Clark Field, and heroically served the wounded on Corregidor and later at a primitive hospital in Bataan. Although she did not take part in the infamous march, she is said to be one of the last

nurses to leave the wounded.

Evacuated by submarine to Australia, McKay voluntarily served three more years in New Guinea and the Philippines. Her name is included on a monument in the Philippines as one of the 104 "Angels of Bataan." She earned the Bronze Star and is the subject of a historical work *Jungle Angel: Bataan Remembered*.

In 1949, McKay earned a bachelor of science degree in nursing from the University of Minnesota and continued her Army nursing career, rising to the rank of Lt. Colonel, and retiring in 1960 after three posts as Chief Nurse in overseas and domestic Army hospitals.

McKay died in 1988.

2001

# Robert Anderson



## 1953 Graduate

Anderson, a resident of Paradise Valley, Ariz., graduated in electrical engineering in 1963 from the University of Minnesota. He was with Honeywell on the Apollo Moon project until 1966 when he joined Medtronic, starting his lifelong career in the field of medicine.

In 1969 he founded Valley lab, a Boulder, Colo., firm that became a world market leader in electrosurgical systems. Valley lab went public in 1972 and was purchased by Pfizer in 1983. Anderson served as chief executive officer until 1985 when he became chairman and also became president of Health Care Ventures, a wholly owned subsidiary of Pfizer whose mission was venture capital.

Over the years he has served on more than 20 corporate boards. He holds numerous patents in the medical field.

He retired in 1996, giving him more

time for his hobby of collecting and driving vintage automobiles. He drove the Tour de France in 1995 and the Tour of Morocco in 1999. He also is a pilot, a link to his boyhood days of flying model airplanes with his father.

Anderson and his wife, Sydney, have four children. Robert is the son of Ida and the late Kenneth Anderson. He was raised in Brainerd. His mother remembers that his inventiveness came at an early age. During the summers in Fairmont with his aunt and uncle, Anderson worked in the Green Giant canning factory. He rigged up an easier way to monitor the flow of the vegetables using a mirror so he would have time to read before he had to dump the hopper. His mother also said he showed he was "very conscientious and responsible" as a Harrison School pupil because of his job delivering newspapers.

2001

# Lt. Gen. Bruce Carlson



## 1967 Graduate

Air Force Lt. Gen. Carlson is director for force structure, resources and assessment for the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Pentagon. He also serves as secretary of Joint Requirements Oversight Council where he coordinates joint staff actions for the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and represents the interests of commanders of combatant commands in requirements, acquisition and the Department of Defense's planning, programming and budgeting system.

Carlson lettered in track, cross country and swimming at Brainerd's Washington High School. He was also a sports writer on the school newspaper.

He graduated cum laude from the University of Minnesota-Duluth in 1971 with a degree in accounting and in 1980 was awarded a master of arts degree in management, with honors,

from Webster University and a second master's in strategic studies when he graduated with distinction from the U.S. Naval War College in 1989.

He began his Air Force career in 1971 as a distinguished graduate of the UMD Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps program. He has more than 3,000 hours of flying time. His assignments in his military career have included flying the F-4 Phantom, the OV-10 that he flew in a combat operation in the evacuation of citizens from Cambodia A-10 Thunderbolt, the F-16 and F-117 stealth fighter. He was promoted to lieutenant general on Feb. 1, 2000.

He and his wife, Vicki, have one daughter, Jani, and two sons, Bryan and Scott. They live in Springfield, Va. His parents are Cliff and Helen Carlson of Brainerd.

# M. Eleanor Nolan

2000



## 1926 Graduate

After a career as an attorney, judge and civic leader, Ms. Nolan died in 1965. Her nephew, former Congressman Rick Nolan spoke about her at the dinner. And a sister, Betty McGowan, accepted a plaque at the induction ceremony along with other family members.

Eleanor was a rather extraordinary person," Rick Nolan, a 1962 BHS graduate, said. "She had a commanding presence. She would have enjoyed this evening very much."

Nolan recalled that his aunt, in a time before there was harmony between Protestants and Catholics, agreed to serve as chair of the YMCA fund drive

even though her Catholic pastor said she would be excommunicated if she took the post.

"Well, I'll just have to find a new church," she said, Nolan recalled.

The YMCA was built, filling a need for Brainerd youths. And, as an aside, Nolan noted that he was told that the Catholic pastor was quick to call the YMCA to ask it would be OK for the nuns to swim in the pool after hours.

"She had a great passion for law and a great passion for life," Rick Nolan recalled of his aunt.

# Dr. Harold Kletschka

2000



## 1941 Graduate

Kletschka cited what he called the cooperative spirit that helped people pull through the Depression. “There was a priceless value that was placed on life then,” said the doctor who was a pioneer in the development of a permanent, totally implantable artificial heart.

He noted that his sister, Barbara, was one of his first patients for the artificial heart blood pump. He said many of his innovations would not have been possible in today’s regulatory climate.

Kletschka also spoke of the role of his high school teachers. In particular he praised Ralph Squires, who taught him the scientific methodology that he has used in his career.

Kletschka’s hope is that students of the future will “recapture that appreciation of life that existed in the 30s. If they do that — whether there’s a plaque in the hall or not — they all will be members of the hall of fame.”



# Paul Hunt

2000



## 1972 Graduate

Hunt and his wife, Lynn, co-founded Hunt Technologies, the Pequot Lakes firm specializing in the Turtle system that transmits electric meter readings over power lines to receiver sites for information processing at an electric utility office computer.

Hunt showed at an early age he was an inventor. As Jim Hunt, 2000's hall of fame committee chair and former high school principal, noted at the ceremony, Paul blew up his parent's kitchen with rocket fuel components.

Paul Hunt noted that he was a sophomore just as students entered a new Brainerd High School building.

"Not all the locks worked perfectly," he said with a twinkle in his eyes. "It didn't take us long to get in any room in the place."

Referring to his high school days as a television production student, Hunt said that by "carrying a camera and a microphone you could go any place you wanted to go in the building. We were into all sorts of tunnels and ceilings here."

Hunt credited the high school for fostering his inventive spirit.

"This was a good place to learn things. The staff let us try new things."

1999

# John A. Mehaffey



## 1954 Graduate

John A. “Jack” Mehaffey graduated from Brainerd High School in 1954. He attended the Minnesota School of Business under the Star Tribune’s college scholarship program.

Jack began his lifelong career in newspapers as a Brainerd newsboy in 1944. He pioneered the networking of pre-printed advertising to be inserted into newspapers.

In 1976 he was selected by the American Heritage Research for inclu-

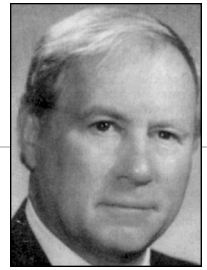
sion in the Library of Human Resources in recognition of professional and civic achievements.

His firm, Communications Service Company Inc., is based in the Chicago area.

The Mehaffeys are benefactors of the Right Friends organization and they host an annual outing for vulnerable handicapped adults in the lakes area. He makes his home in Naples, Fla., and has a summer home in Brainerd.

# Stewart C. Mills Jr.

1999



## 1946 Graduate

Stewart C. Mills Jr., who graduated from Brainerd High School in 1946, also attended Whittier Elementary School and Franklin Junior High School. He graduated from Brainerd Junior College in 1948, attended the University of Minnesota from 1948-49 and attended Hamline University from 1949-51, graduating with a major in business administration.

He is part of a family that has lived in the Brainerd area since the 1800s. His mother, Helen K. Mills, still lives in the Gull Lake area. He was the son of the late Stewart C. Mills, His grandparents were Casper H. and Mae E. Mills, early residents of the area. His cousin is another noted BHS alum, Dr. Gene Bierhaus.

Stewart C. Mills, Jr. was a member of the 194th Tank Battalion, Minnesota National Guard, just after World War II. He graduated from several Army schools, including the NCO Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kan., in 1953.

With his twin brother, Henry C. Mills II, he is co-owner of Mills Supply Co., Mills Fleet Farm, Mills Automotive, Mills Properties Inc., Lively Auto Co. and Crow Wing County Oil Co. He is a past president and director of Mid-States Distributing of St. Paul, 1960-70, which includes 500 stores nationally. He was the first recipient of the MW Kiesau Achievement Award presented by Mid-States Distributing in 1972.

1999

# Linda Eder



## 1979 Graduate

Linda Eder, a member of the BHS class of 1979, is not expected to attend the Hall of Fame ceremony because of her busy singing career. After recently appearing in a public television special, she is a featured performer in the Broadway production ‘Civil War.’

Her husband, Broadway composer Frank Wildhorn, wrote her hit single, “Something to Believe In,” which has been selected as the WB Television Network theme song.

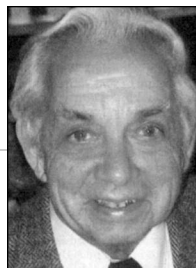
She performed at Carnegie Hall in

1998 as part of “My Favorite Broadway — The Leading Ladies” concert with Julie Andrews, Liza Minnelli, Chita Rivera and Jennifer Holliday.

She married Wildhorn last May (1998). His credits include “Jekyll & Hyde,” in which Eder starred. She is scheduled to star in “Havana,” a Broadway musical comedy in 2000. Production is scheduled to begin this fall. “Havana” is a vehicle written for Linda by her husband, who received a record advance for the 1940s-era musical. She will play the daughter of a Mafia boss.

1999

# C. Elmer Anderson



## 1928 Graduate

C. Elmer Anderson, a 1928 graduate of Brainerd High School, died on January 22, 1998. He was represented at the hall of fame ceremony by his son, Clyde.

Anderson attended school in St. Mathias Township and Brainerd. He was able to skip two grades, once because of lack of enrollment in his class and the other because of a junior high equivalency exam.

He attended two quarters at the University of Minnesota as a pre-med major. He worked for the Service News Agency

and bought the company in 1934.

At age 26 he was elected Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota in 1938. He was re-elected Lieutenant Governor in 1940, 1944, 1946, 1948 and 1950.

Anderson became governor on Sept. 27, 1951, when Gov. Luther Youngdahl resigned to take a federal judgeship. C. Elmer was elected governor in 1952 and served until January 1955. He was elected mayor of Nisswa in 1961 and 1963. He was elected mayor of Brainerd in 1975 and served until 1986.