

# Distinguished Achievement HALL OF FAME

The Brainerd High School Hall of Fame, sponsored by the Brainerd Public Schools Foundation, Brainerd Dispatch and Stewart C. Mills Jr., has been established to honor graduates of the high school for distinguished achievements and careers.



2019  
Quintas A. Blackburn  
1917 Graduate



2019  
Steve Clough  
1976 Graduate



2019  
Kevin Thesing  
1974 Graduate



2018  
Scott Lykins  
2004 Graduate



2018  
Mary Tornstrom  
Extraordinary Service to  
Brainerd Public Schools



2018  
Steve Lepinski  
1966 Graduate



2017  
Kelly Burnham  
1984 Graduate



2017  
Kristen (Doyscher) Williams  
1998 Graduate



2016  
Anthony Griffin  
1997 Graduate



2016  
Keith R. Keller  
1978 Graduate



2016  
Robert Gross  
BHS Above and Beyond Award



2015  
Colonel Ronald Albers  
1965 Graduate



2015  
Dr. L.J. Nickisch  
1974 Graduate



2015  
Brian Nystrom  
1977 Graduate



2015  
Branelle Cibuzar Rodriguez  
2000 Graduate



2014  
Tom Haglin  
1981 Graduate



2014  
Joshua (JP) Larue  
1992 Graduate



2014  
Nancy Pedersen  
1970 Graduate



2014  
Dennis Wolfgang Borgwarth  
1979 Graduate



2013  
Sheila Wasnie Haverkamp  
1981 Graduate



2013  
Connie Marshall-Grittner  
1964 Graduate



2013  
William Potvin  
1972 Graduate



2012  
Jill (Johnson) Wyant  
1989 Graduate



2012  
James Peterson, Sr.  
1943 Graduate



2012  
Kevin Doran  
1979 Graduate



2012  
Phil Mattson  
1956 Graduate



2011  
Brad Hill  
1969 Graduate



2011  
Basil C. LeBlanc  
1972 Graduate



2011  
Gayle Anderson Ober  
1977 Graduate



2010  
Edward T. O'Brien  
1923 Graduate



2010  
Madonna H. Meyer  
1977 Graduate



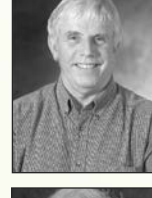
2010  
Howard "Jiggs" Blanck  
1954 Graduate



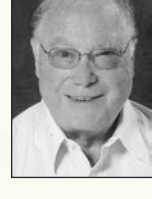
2010  
Lt. Col. William F. McCollough  
1987 Graduate



2009  
Shawn Stengel  
1977 Graduate



2009  
Michael O'Leary  
1969 Graduate



2009  
Henry C. Mills II  
1946 Graduate



2009  
Dr. Wayne Little  
1950 Graduate



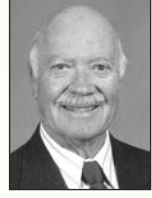
2008  
John Arnold  
1937 Graduate



2008  
Captain Wallace Lind  
1905 Graduate



2007  
Thomas G. Anderson  
1968 Graduate



2007  
Dr. Gene M. Bierhaus  
1939 Graduate



2007  
Dr. Kimberley Broekemeier  
1977 Graduate



2007  
Cindy Fryklind Clough  
1976 Graduate



2007  
Vice Admiral Howard Thorsen  
1951 Graduate



2006  
Clarence Holden  
1930 Graduate



2006  
Richard Nolan  
1962 Graduate



2006  
Cindy Jane Williams  
1985 Graduate



2005  
Marilyn J. Koering  
1956 Graduate



2005  
Jon Thorson  
1982 Graduate



2005  
Alex G. "Gene" Fremling  
1949 Graduate



2005  
Roger C. Vergin  
1955 Graduate



2004  
Duane Blanck  
1960 Graduate



2004  
Peggy Kriha Dye  
1987 Graduate



2003  
Duane Lund  
1943 Graduate



2003  
Dr. Helen Longfellow  
1929 Graduate



2003  
Jim Anderson  
1961 Graduate



2002  
Sen. Don Samuelson  
1951 Graduate



2002  
Dr. Roger Moe  
1948 Graduate



2002  
Carl Zapffe  
1929 Graduate



2002  
Hortense McKay  
1927 Graduate



2001  
Robert Anderson  
1953 Graduate



2001  
Lt. Gen. Bruce Carlson  
1967 Graduate



2000  
M. Eleanor Nolan  
1926 Graduate



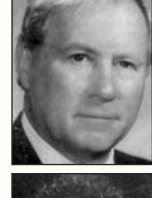
2000  
Dr. Harold Kletschka  
1941 Graduate



2000  
Paul Hunt  
1972 Graduate



1999  
John A. Mehaffey  
1954 Graduate



1999  
Stewart C. Mills Jr.  
1946 Graduate



1999  
Linda Eder  
1979 Graduate



1999  
C. Elmer Anderson  
1928 Graduate



Stewart C. Mills Jr.



# Three to be inducted into BHS Hall of Fame



## Brainerd High School Distinguished Achievement Hall of Fame Award Ceremony Planned May 13 at Forestview Middle School.

The Brainerd Public Schools will honor three Brainerd High School graduates for their professional career and personal achievements at the Distinguished Achievement Hall of Fame Award Ceremony on Wednesday, May 13. The annual event will be held at Forestview Middle School in Baxter. The induction ceremony will begin at 6:30pm in the cafetorium. Inducted into the 2020 Hall of Fame are Richard "Dick" Ashmun, a 1946 graduate; Jennifer (Pecarich) Carlson, a 1987 graduate; and Yen Chu, a 1989 graduate.

### Presenting 2020 Inductee **RICHARD "DICK" ASHMUN** Class of 1946 | Professor of Higher Education



Richard 'Dick' Ashmun, 2020 Brainerd High School's Distinguished Achievement Hall of Fame Inductee

The late Richard "Dick" Ashmun, a 1946 Brainerd High School graduate who spent more than 30 years as an educator, has been named a

2020 Brainerd High School Hall of Fame Inductee.

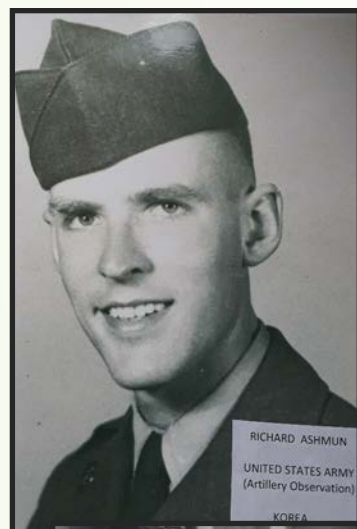
Ashmun passed away July 8, 2019, in Brainerd. He was 91. Ashmun led a life of service, from his active duty during the Korean War, to his professional career as a university professor and author, to his church and community volunteer work that he passionately believed in until the end of his life.

"He would be so honored to see that his work was appreciated," says his daughter, Mary Hamad, of Brainerd. "He would be humbled and totally thrilled that programs important to him would be getting recognition."

"He would love this," added his daughter, Karen Williams, of Brainerd. "He wanted to make a difference in Brainerd. This is such an honor."

Ashmun was born June 28, 1928, in Excelsior, Minn., to Ester Violet Rose and Olaf C. Strom. In 1940, his mother, who owned a local restaurant, married Rusty Ashmun, a jeweler, who later adopted him when he was a young adult. Ashmun went by Strom while a student at Washington High School, where he played basketball and football, served on student council, and was voted "Most Courteous Boy" by the Class of 1946. He also enjoyed hunting and fishing.

Following his high school graduation, Ashmun was among the first students to attend Brainerd State Junior College when it opened on the third floor of Washington High School. His mother wouldn't let him enlist in the military at 17, so junior college was his second choice. He took business and economic classes. He then received his bachelor's degree in economics from Carleton College. He married his childhood friend and sweetheart, Marilyn Erickson, in 1950. Their son, Richard Arden, was born in 1952 and passed away a year later of a congenital heart defect. A few weeks later, Ashmun was drafted into the U.S. Army. He served two years of active duty during the Korean War. He instructed and coordinated programs in artillery observation. He then spent seven years in the U.S. Army National Guard and Reserves.



Education became a driving force throughout Ashmun's life. Following his military service, he earned his B.S., M.A., and Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. He taught at schools in Pine River, Brainerd, Madison, Wis., and Minneapolis. He spent 25 years as a marketing professor and director of graduate studies at the University



of Minnesota. He authored/co-authored several textbooks, publications, and research projects. His academic recognition included the Morse Award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education at the University of Minnesota.

After retirement, Ashmun stayed active at church and in the community. He served on the boards for Brainerd Public Schools and Central Lakes College Foundations. He was active in raising funds for scholarships and other school projects. He established and financially supported scholarships given at both schools. He went out of his way to talk others into establishing their own scholarships to help local students.



Ashmun was vice president on the executive and finance committees on the CLC Foundation Board. He served on the Brainerd Technical College Foundation Board from 1982-1998. He was vice president of Brainerd Technical College in 1990 when the college merged with Brainerd Community College to form CLC.



Ashmun was deeply committed to community service. He was selected as the 1998 Crow Wing County Senior Citizen of the Year and was named Brainerd Outstanding Senior Citizen of the Year. He was honored with a Central Lakes College Outstanding Alumni award in 2014.

His volunteer work included the following organizations:

- American Association of Retired Persons, a national and county member.
- Minnesota Senior Federation-Heartland Region, charter member and first vice president.
- 194th Tank Regiment, U.S. Army, life member and volunteer. He was involved with the creation and installation of the Crow Wing County All Veterans Memorial. He received the 194th Living Legend award.
- Gatekeeper Program, coordinator and instructor from 1992-1995. He helped train 614 people over a three-year period. He also wrote the proposal and received a \$6,500 grant from the Bremer Foundation for the program designed to bring vulnerable older people into contact with social service agencies.
- Region V Council on Aging, member and vice chair, from 1990-1996.
- Crow Wing County S.A.L.T., charter member, vice chairman and chairman, from 1995-1998. Seniors and law enforcement officials working together to help seniors feel safer in their communities and more involved with enforcement personnel. Projects have included several public forums on crime prevention, the judicial system, health services and E-911.
- Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), volunteer.

Ashmun visited the homebound and shut-ins. He provided transportation for seniors, as well as yard work, dock installation, building repair and other help they may have needed. He delivered Meals on Wheels and assisted seniors with personal and financial affairs, serving as a conservator. He made sure seniors had a flag for Flag Day and the Fourth of July.



When his late wife moved into Good Samaritan Society-Bethany, they went to a weekly Bible study there together. A leader could no longer be found, so Ashmun lead the group himself for a year.



"He told us, 'I'm not a preacher, but I'm a teacher and I can do something for an hour,'" says his daughter, Karen Williams. "He was definitely a busy bee. He did not like idle time. It's probably why he lived so long."

He got involved with the Abiders Ministry at Good Samaritan Society-Bethany and -Woodland, where he would volunteer to stay by the side of dying residents. His wife, Marilyn, passed away in 2009. Ashmun told the Brainerd Dispatch in 2012 that his experience of losing his wife made him want to be an abider to families. He served as an abider for more than a dozen residents.

Ashmun kindled a special friendship with Ethel Olson, a BHS classmate, who became a cherished companion for the remainder of his life. They played bingo with veterans at the St. Cloud VA hospital.

His faith was important to him. He always carried little silver crosses in his pocket to give away to people he felt needed one. He was a member of several area churches and often would go to two church services on Sundays.

Ashmun passed away last year after a short battle with bone cancer. He was survived by his two daughters, Mary (Mike) Hamad and Karen (Michael) Williams, four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

"He finished the race well," said his daughter, Karen Williams. "He just never stopped."

If my dad were here, he would probably say, 'Be a trooper and don't ever lose your sparkle,'" adds his daughter, Mary Hamad.



**Our mission is to enhance opportunities for quality academics, arts, activities and athletics for the students of the Brainerd Public School District through sustainable grants, scholarships and direct gifts.**

Jessica Gangl - Executive Director | Amber Schlegel, Foundation Coordinator  
804 Oak Street, Room 209A, Brainerd, MN 56401 | 218.454.6921 | www.bpsf.org | info@bpsf.org



**Presenting 2020 Inductee**  
**JENNIFER (PECARICH) CARLSON**  
 Class of 1987 | Professor of Higher Education



Jennifer (Pecarich) Carlson, 2020 Brainerd High School's Distinguished Achievement Hall of Fame Inductee

Jennifer (Pecarich) Carlson, Professor at Hamline University in St. Paul, has been named a 2020 Brainerd High School Distinguished Achievement Hall of Fame Inductee.

Carlson, a 1987 Brainerd High School graduate, is the daughter of John and Paula Pecarich of Baxter. Danceline was her sport of choice throughout her formative years and something she participated in year-round while a BHS student. She was a member of the first group of Just for Kix dancers in Brainerd, a national dance program started by Cindy (a 2007 BHS Hall of Fame recipient) and Steve (a 2019 BHS Hall of Fame recipient) Clough.

"Brainerd Kixters helped shape some of my life choices," she explains. "Being part of a team and learning how to be competitive, be respectful and to set goals, both personal and as a team, I learned from Cindy Clough and her staff. She was always very good about building relationships with individuals on the team and I'm sure she continues to do that. She was just a really good role model."

Carlson was a member of the Brainerd Kixters when the team took top honors as the 1985 and 1986 State Danceline Champions, as well as the 1987 State Danceline Runner-Up her senior year. She also participated in band from 1984-1985.

Former BHS English teacher Andre Lamourea was her high school advisor and one of her favorite teachers. Carlson enjoyed reading and writing, and Lamourea was easy to talk to, she says.

"I've always loved school. I still love school," Carlson explains. "I love learning and constantly researching and reading."

Carlson attended Brainerd Community College, where the late instructor Joe Plut became one of her greatest influences in her decision to pursue teaching.

"He taught me the importance of building relationships with students," Carlson says. "I think most every person who took his class knew he cared about them. He made you feel you were really liked, that you could do it, and he saw you as a person."

After graduating from BCC with her Associate in Arts degree in 1989, Carlson transferred to Winona State University where she earned her Bachelor's degree in Secondary English Education, Middle School Licensure and 6-12th Certification in 1991. Her plan was to be a high school or middle school English teacher and coach danceline.

"I didn't do any of those things," Carlson says with a laugh.

Carlson starting teaching middle school communications and, three months later, although she enjoyed the students and course content, she felt she needed to do something different.

She enrolled in the master's program at Minnesota State University-Mankato. Dr. Peg Ballard, a young professor in the reading literacy program, encouraged Carlson to continue in her education and earn her Ph.D. It was something that Carlson hadn't considered.

"I think sometimes people plant a seed and think you'll be good at something and that's all it takes," she says.

She decided to go for it. After graduating with her Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction from Mankato in 1994, she enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and earned her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Literacy and Children's Literature in 2001.

Carlson was full-time teaching in the undergraduate program at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls from 2000 to 2006. She's been a full-time professor at Hamline University since 2006, serving in multiple roles within the School of Education. She was chair of Assessment and Accreditation for three years. She also was a principal investigator in a Bush Supplemental Grant Teaching Effectiveness Initiative from 2015-2019, a partnership with Mound View Public Schools. She served as interim director of the Office of Clinical Experience in 2016, facilitating the change to year-long field experience placements for student teachers. She currently serves as a lead in the partnership with Sourcewell for Education/Region 5 Service Cooperative on the development of a program to recruit teachers to Sourcewell region districts.

Carlson currently develops and teaches courses for graduate and doctoral students, supervises student teachers and serves as a mentor and advisor for graduate candidates within four different programs: Education Doctorate, Master of Arts in Literacy Education, Master of Arts in Teaching, and Reading Licensure program. She also chairs and serves on capstone and dissertation committees. She has written and published several articles and research papers. In 2010, she coauthored an educational textbook.

"I enjoy working with aspiring teachers and practicing teachers," says Carlson. "Every student has different goals. They have a lot of experiences to share and they learn so much from each other. I really like the diversity."

Carlson says her academic experiences in Brainerd cultivated her love of learning.

"I had a great experience in Brainerd Public Schools," she explains. "I had a great relationship with teachers there, otherwise I wouldn't have wanted to become one. We may not realize how much a teacher in small ways can have such a positive impact on the decisions we make and how we interact with others."

Carlson says she was an average high school student and didn't excel academically until she got to college. This is why she feels it's so important to advocate for students of all abilities.

"Sometimes it just takes a kind word and pointing out that there's something we may be good at. It just takes a spark," she says. "When we find our passion areas, it just takes off and it doesn't feel like work."

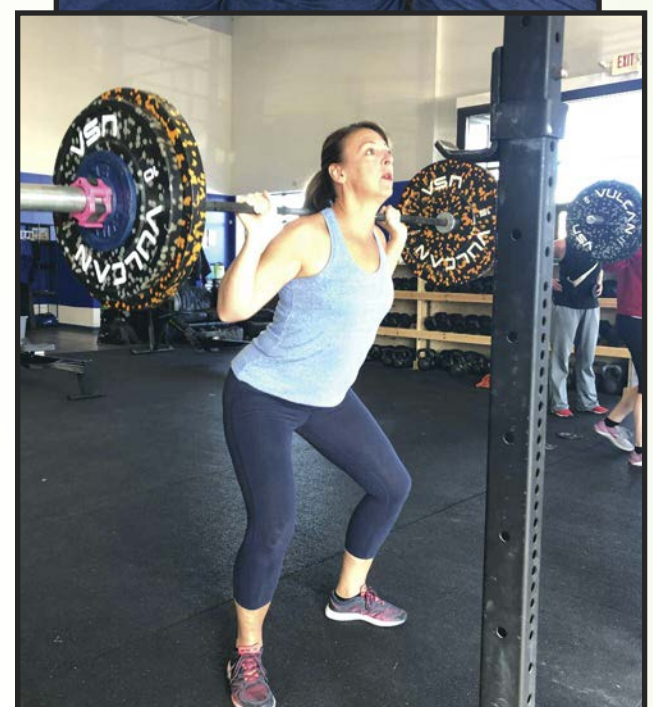
One of her favorite parts of her job is to visit schools and observe innovative teachers and administrators in action.

"It influences what I'm doing in my own teaching and connecting with students," she says.

Carlson feels honored to be inducted into BHS Hall of Fame.

"It's surprising, and I'm happy, honored and amazed," she says.

Carlson and her husband, Pete, live in Blaine. They have a son, Tait, 23, and a daughter, Claire, 21. In her spare time she enjoys reading and doing CrossFit.



Proceeds benefit the Brainerd Public Schools Foundation and the Warrior Nordic Ski Team



SAVE THE DATE

> SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2020 <

BEGINNING AT  
**KIWANIS PARK**

**10K at 9:00 A.M.**  
**5K at 9:15 A.M.**

BEGINNING AT TRACK  
**DON ADAMSON FIELD**

**1k Family Fun Run**  
**at 10:00 A.M.**



REGISTER AT  
**BPSF.ORG**



CONTACT KARMA RACE MANAGEMENT FOR FURTHER DETAILS  
 KarmaRaceManagement@gmail.com / Kara: 218.330.6102



## Presenting 2020 Inductee

**YEN CHU**

Class of 1989 | Law



Yen Chu has been named a 2020 Brainerd High School Hall of Fame Inductee.

Chu, a 1989 Brainerd High School graduate, emigrated to the United States with her family from Vietnam when she was 4 years old. On April 30, 1975, the day that Saigon fell, signaling the end of the Vietnam War, Chu; her parents, Son

Chu and Van Nguyen; her sister; the family's housekeeper; and her grandfather, a prominent Vietnamese writer, narrowly escaped on a ship that was bombed as it left Saigon's harbor. The bombing killed many on the ship, including her grandfather, and it left her and her family critically injured. Chu and her family were treated at a hospital in the Philippines before being taken to a refugee camp in Arkansas.

She and her family came to Brainerd after they were sponsored by Trinity Lutheran Church. Through the generous efforts of the church, her parents learned English and were able to find housing and employment. Chu learned to speak English in Brainerd Head Start and she and her three siblings, Tracy, Daniel and Catherine — the youngest two were born in Brainerd — were active in Brainerd school activities and sports. She attended three different elementary schools — Harrison, Lowell and Lincoln — and was active in high school. She took many rigorous AP courses, was on the



the generosity in kind. Those in the Brainerd community who embraced and helped my family have inspired me to be an advocate for the underrepresented. Today, I am passionate about advocating for diversity and inclusion in the legal profession and the workplace in general, advocating for women's rights and being a mentor for those who are underrepresented. I wouldn't be where I am today if someone hadn't helped me learn English or helped my family assimilate culturally. I have a responsibility to pass on that generosity of spirit and help someone else."

Chu credits her Brainerd teachers for encouraging her academic success, especially her AP instructors Stu Lade and Charles Smith, who she says pushed her academically. She enrolled as an engineering major at the University of Minnesota since she was strong in math and science. However, one semester spent in New York City changed the trajectory of her life. She was one of 30 college students selected across the nation as part of the National Collegiate Honors Council to spend a semester in Manhattan, where she visited the United Nations and volunteered for human rights organizations. She returned to Minnesota and switched to an International Relations field, later applying to law schools in New York.

Chu earned her undergraduate degree, summa cum laude, in International Relations from the U of M in 1994, and then attended Columbia University Law School where she was named a Justice Harry A. Blackmun Scholar. She met U.S. Supreme Court Justice Blackmun, who died in 1999, and they shared stories about their Minnesota ties. In law school she pursued interests in international, public interest

and financial transactions. She and her RL legal team were also responsible for corporate social responsibility and philanthropic initiatives.

For the past three years, Chu has worked as senior vice president and chief legal officer for Equinox Holdings, a global lifestyle company focused on fitness, health, and wellness. The company's portfolio of brands and business interest includes Equinox Fitness Clubs, Equinox Hotels, SoulCycle, Blink Fitness, and Equinox Media/Variis (a new digital wellness platform).

Chu dedicates her time to mentoring, advancing and empowering women, people of color, first generation students and other underrepresented groups, particularly in the legal profession. Chu serves on the Board of Directors of the Columbia Law School Association and is a mentor/workshop advisor for Columbia First Generation Professionals. She does a lot of speaking on these issues and recently was honored, along with Chief Judge Sri Srinivasan of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit, for a leadership award from the Asian American Bar Association of New York.

"I believe in giving back to community, whether that community is in Brainerd, Minn., or a community-at-large. I'm a firm believer in paying it forward," says Chu.

Chu and her husband, Roblin Meeks, a university dean and professor who taught at Harvard and Princeton, have a son, Mercer, 16, and a daughter, Quynh, 14. She enjoys international travel, learning about other cultures, volunteering at non-profits, and listening to her talented children play music. She has returned to Vietnam on both personal and professional trips. She credits her success to her parents — her father Son Chu and her late mother Van Nguyen — for always modeling strength in the face of adversity.



varsity tennis team and participated in art club. She was valedictorian of her graduating class.

Chu is grateful for the community support she and her family received as she grew up in Brainerd.

"So much of who I am today has been shaped by my formative years in Brainerd," says Chu. "The generosity of those who initially helped my family has always inspired me to give back. While it started with necessities, it is the opportunities that were offered to us that were even more valuable than the things that were actually given to us. The generosity in spirit has had a longer lasting impact on me than even



and gender law. She served as editor-in-chief of the Columbia Journal of Transnational Law, graduating from law school in 1997.

She started her legal career at the law firm of Simpson Thacher & Bartlett where she spent nine years representing private equity firms, financial institutions and public and private companies. She then served as senior vice president and associate general counsel at Ralph Lauren Corporation for 11 years where she worked with Ralph's Board of Directors and senior executives on corporate governance and global regulatory compliance issues, as well as global trade



# *Distinguished Achievement*

## HALL OF FAME

### Wednesday, May 13, 2020

### Award Ceremony 6:30 PM

### Forestview Middle School



**Brainerd Public Schools**

*Opportunity. Innovation. Success.*



**BPSF**

Brainerd Public Schools Foundation



**BRAINERD DISPATCH**

**Stewart C. Mills Jr.**

A proud BHS Graduate of the Magnificent Class of 1946