



Columbus Public Schools

Alumni News



Spring 2015



Ritter named Teacher of the Year

For the story, please see page 3.



Zoucha named Operations Employee of the Year

For the story, please see page 5.

Hall of Fame to induct 2015 Class

By Steve Anderson 68'

The Discoverers Athletic Hall of Fame will induct its 2015 class on September 10, 2015 at the Ramada Inn (Formerly New World Inn) in Columbus.

Ernst Auto Center/Ernst Toyota is our corporate sponsor, and they welcome this class which consists of athletes, coaches, teams and a meritorious individual. These athletes played in an era, which spans 45 years (1960 to 2005). They exhibited pride, passion, perseverance and were extremely dedicated during their playing careers. The coaches and the meritorious individual were very instrumental in contributing to the success of Columbus High student athletes.

The banquet is open to the public. Banquet tickets cost \$28 (\$12 for children under 12) and can be purchased by contacting Roger Iwansky at 4604 – 23rd Street (402-564-9676) or by contacting Landon Wietfeld, Executive Director of the School District of Columbus Foundation at 2508 27th St. in Columbus (402-563-7000 Ext. 1103).

CHS athlete inductees are: Ron Klutman – Football – Class of 1965; Bill Bomberger – Football – Class of 1966; Mike Floyd – Track – Class of 1968; Frank Higgins – Basketball – Class of 1968; Ken Bobert – Track – Class of 1973; Susie Heiser – Athlete – Class of 1974; Lynette Cattau Wagner - Athlete – Class of 1977; Dave Porter – Football and Track – Class of 1977; Kirk McAndrew – Wrestling – Class of 1978; Robert Wilhelms – Wrestling – Class of 1981; and Amanda Iwansky – Soccer – Class of 2005.

Five state championship teams will be inducted this year, which include: 1960 Boys 880 Relay Team – Dick Goc, Tom Saunders, Jeff Mills, Keith Grimes; 1963 Boys Two-Mile Relay Team – Bruce Eickhoff, Les Hellbusch, Jim McElfresh, Jack McGrew; 1984 State Champion Wrestling Team – Scott Cutler, Myron Fendrick, Brian Hitz, Dan O’Hearn, John Woodward, Chris Blaser, Craig Thalken, Charlie Sherertz, Eric Peterson, Ritch Paprocki, Ken Sliva, Mike Ostermeier, Greg Wilson, Gregg Staroscik, Coach Charlie Sherertz, and Assistant Coach Rick Benson; 1988-89 Boys State Champion Tennis Doubles Team – Eric Mueller, Cory Hunzeker; 1994 Girls State Champion Tennis Doubles Team – Megan Roth O’Connor, JoAnn Srb Haworth;

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Three generations

Meet the Brunkens

Yes, his first year with CPS was teaching English not Biology.

CPS teacher that influenced you the most? Ron Callan instilled the desire to always do my best in academics, sports and life.

Your most memorable high school experience? Starting at guard and outside linebacker on the 1964 Class A State Football Champions. Of course, dating Phyllis Svoboda who became my wife in 1967.

What would you change if you had high school to do all over again? Nothing, it was the best three years I had in school.

Where do you live now? Omaha

What are you doing now? I am

retired. I quit teaching in 2005 after 35 years in the classroom. Taught science in middle and high schools in six different towns (Laurel, Nebraska City, Stella, Silver Creek, Columbus and Omaha). I also coached for 30 years – football, volleyball, basketball and track. Currently, I have several activities that keep me busy. Grandpa's Taxi operates for the three grandchildren – school, practices and games. I help our son, Brian, with his Go Physical Therapy clinic, which is in its ninth year. I like to mow yards (5 different ones weekly). Doing crossword puzzles is my hobby. Education – Phyllis, our two children and their spouses and I have earned a total of 12 college degrees.

Phyllis (Svoboda) Brunken

Graduating Year? 1966

Favorite Class/Teacher? Jean (Dalton) Lutz – shorthand and typing.

CPS teacher that influenced you the most? Two teachers: Jean Lutz who provided the inspiration for me to become a business teacher and attend Wayne State College. Mr. Jeffers' Modern Problems class was based on how to process the news with critical thinking skills. All of my classes provided a solid background for becoming a school library media specialist who supported the entire curriculum of the school.

Your most memorable high school experience? Most memorable experience was sharing my high school experiences with Ron, who is now my husband. These experiences included participating in musicals and theater. I was the Star Member of pep club my junior year – something about supporting the football team that Ron was on. We have great fun at our class reunions because we had the same experiences. Ron and I are looking forward to his 50th this summer.

What would you change if you had high school to do all over again? Don't rush through these years. Take time to enjoy them.

Where do you live now? Omaha

What are you doing now? I retired

in 2004 from the Educational Service Unit 7 where I was the Media/Technology Director for 20 years.

In that position, I had the opportunity to impact the education of students not only in the seven counties that ESU 7 served but also the students of Nebraska in two areas – media and technology. I worked with other ESU media personnel to develop a video library that supported their school curricula to enhance student learning. The technology area involved me training teachers how to use computers in their classrooms to support instruction, helping schools connect to the Internet and providing distance learning opportunities for their students. I taught nine years at the Nebraska School for the Visually Handicapped. There I had the opportunity to establish the first computer lab in the United States for K-12 students who were blind. Throughout my career, I have presented at local to national level conferences on the topics of school libraries, technology, and copyright. Currently, I work part time at St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church as an administrative assistant and Adult Religious Formation teacher. The family keeps me busy. With all of us living in Omaha, we are able to share in each other's lives.

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Betty (Lohr) Brunken

Graduating Year? 1941

Favorite Class/Teacher? Shorthand was my favorite class. I liked all my teachers.

CPS teacher that influenced you the most? Shorthand teacher.

Your most memorable high school experience? Singing in choir and Girls' Glee. Learning shorthand and typing.

What would you change if you had high school to do all over again? Nothing, it was all good.

Where do you live now? Omaha with my son, Ron and his wife, Phyllis.

What are you doing now? Retired.

Enjoy attending various activities with my family; music programs, baseball and basketball games, going for walks, attending church and helping my daughter-in-law with her church work. Playing with my dog, Benji. My husband, Howard, passed away in 2000. My family is small. I have one son, Ron and his wife, Phyllis, grandchildren, Brian and Amy, grandchildren in laws, Jenny and Todd and three great-grandchildren, Logan, 16, Nathan, 14, and Ellie, 7. I used my shorthand and typing for over 40 years of employment with Kosch and than Behlen Manufacturing. I was the first woman to qualify for the Behlen's 40-year Club. I also was the secretary for the Columbus Airport Authority for over 40 years using my shorthand to take all of minutes of their meetings. In the early years, I used a typewriter to transcribe the minutes and in the last years before I retired I used a computer.

Ron Brunken

Graduating Year? 1965

Favorite Class/Teacher? Sophomore English with Mr. Ron Callan.

Ritter named Teacher of the Year

Fredrick Ritter, vocal music instructor at Columbus High School, was recently named the 2015 Columbus Public Schools Foundation Educator of the Year.

"He does everything in the right way, with love in his heart and the best interest of others in the forefront of his mind. He will be greatly missed," one nomination stated. Fred will retire this year from CHS.

This award was created to recognize CPS teachers for their dedication, knowledge, and skill in the classroom; their ability to gain the respect and admiration of students, parents and colleagues; the active and useful roles they play within the school and their community; and their talent for inspiring students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn.

"The aspect I admire most about Mr. Ritter's teaching has been his constant thirst for knowledge," Jeff Peabody, CHS instrumental music instructor said. "This is a man who has been one of the most successful choir directors in Nebraska, yet he still is constantly striving to learn more and be more effective as a teacher."

Ritter has been working for CPS since 1989, where he began teaching Show Choir, but then switching his emphasis to Vocal Jazz in 1994. In doing this, Fred took on a daring challenge, as Vocal Jazz was almost non-existent in music education in Nebraska. With hard work and dedication, Ritter had initiated through the Nebraska Choral Directors Association, a vocal jazz festival at Columbus High. This festival has served to begin similar programs for the past 10 years across the state.

Fred has also increased the participation at CHS. When Ritter started, he had 70-80 students involved in vocal music. It is currently holding steady at around 300. Not only does he teach vocal music, but he also has been teaching guitar lessons to

approximately 90-100 students each year.

Fred can be found throughout the community organizing the Columbus Area Praise Choir Christmas Program, the National Day of Prayer Praise Choir, and Crusin'. Fred was also named Doane College Music Educator of the Year, Nebraska Choral Director Association Music Educator of the Year, President of the Nebraska Choral Directors Association, North Central American Choral Director Association Vocal Jazz Repertoire and Standards Chair, Nebraska Music Education Association Chair of Choral Affairs, and Director of over 100 choral festivals across the Midwest in his 36 years of teaching.

"Being recognized for your efforts by those you work with on a daily basis is special," Ritter said about the award. "I know the quality of the staff at CHS and many of the other schools in the district, and I feel humbled to be recognized in such a way. Columbus High School has been my home away from home for the past 26 years. I will always cherish my time spent at CHS, and all those I've worked with."

Fred has a bachelor's degree in Music Education, from Doan College and master's degree in curriculum with emphasis in Music from the University of Nebraska Lincoln. Although he is retiring, Fred will be staying active as President elect, President, and Past President of the Nebraska Music Education Association for the next 4 ½ years. As a member of this board, he will be working closely with state, regional, and national music education issues.

Fred received an engraved clock from the Columbus Public Schools Foundation, and a \$1,000 sponsored by the Columbus United Federal Credit Union. He will also be featured on the CPS Wall of Fame in the district administration building

Kimberly Ek, teacher of alternative education at CHS, was awarded the 2015 Educator of the Year Runner-up.

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Hall of Fame inductees from front page

The **Meritorious inductee** is Calvin Mustard who is a long time employee of the Columbus Public Schools District. Not only is he an avid sports fan, but he also takes pride in making sure the facilities at Columbus High School are in outstanding condition.

The Coach inductees will be: Ron Callan, a longtime head and assistant coach with 40 years of service; Jack Johnson, who's 1972 basketball team won the State Championship and Charlie Sherertz who had four State Wrestling Championship Teams.

If you would like to nominate someone (or a team) as a

Anderson paintings on display

The late Larry Anderson's paintings will be on display at the Columbus Art Gallery in the lower level of the Columbus Public Library from May 11 through the end of June. Anderson taught English and Senior Comp. at Columbus Senior High from 1966 until he retired in 1998. He began his hobby of painting around 1990 and painted for the last 22 years of his life, especially after he retired. He would spend from four to six hours a day painting many different subjects with acrylics on Masonite. He always felt that his use of color was his strongest asset.

Anderson died of a brain aneurysm in 2012 and at that time he had over 250 paintings. About 40 of these will be included in this exhibit. He was never interested in promoting his work, so when he finished a painting, he would just add it to his collection.

potential inductee for future Discoverer Athletic Hall of Fame classes please visit <http://www.columbuspublicschools.org/> and click on Alumni/Athletic Hall of Fame.

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President Robert Cruise, CHS Class of 1986

Zoucha named Operations Employee of the Year

Doug Zoucha, a Columbus Public Schools district wide information technology associate, was selected by his peers to be awarded the 2015 Operations Employee of the Year.

This award was created to recognize district employees, who excel in their service to the teachers and students at Columbus Public Schools, for the contributions that they make to the betterment of the quality and the advancement of CPS.

Doug received nine nominations for honor.

Some of the nominations read. "Smiling and happy.... that's how one could describe him." "He is always willing to help with whatever tech thing you may have with no complaints. He is always friendly and has a smile on his face." "Most of all, I appreciate his humble attitude."

Doug has been an employee of CPS since May of 2006. Technology is constantly changing and is playing a huge part in everyday teaching lessons. Technology is truly great, but can be very frustrating at times. With the increasing use of technology, it takes a person like Doug to make sure district equipment runs smoothly in all classrooms.

With this being said, Doug's day is committed to resolving technical problems, while trying to reduce downtime of equipment for teachers and instructional personnel.

"I really appreciate that he is available to me, as a classroom teacher, to help keep my classroom running smoothly," one nomination stated.

Another nomination agreed.

"It is so great to have a wonderful team member like him on my side."

When asked what was most rewarding about his job he responded, "To see the satisfaction and relief of the persons I just helped. Also, giving them the knowledge and encouragement of how to side step or eliminate the problem form occurring again."

After receiving the award, Doug expressed, "I am very humbled to have won. There are many employees on a daily basis that are deserving of this award, and I am proud to work with them as well."

Doug received an engraved clock from the Columbus Public Schools Foundation and a \$500, sponsored by Bob Markham (CHS Class of 1976) and his wife, Chris. He will also be featured on the CPS Wall of Fame in the district administration building.

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What's New (job, degrees, comments, suggestions etc.) _____

I/we would like to become an annual member(s) for the year 2015.

_____ Annual Single \$10 or _____ Annual Couple \$15

or

I/we would like to become a lifetime member(s).

_____ Lifetime Single \$200 _____ Lifetime Couple \$300

Return to: Columbus Alumni Association * 2508 27 St. * PO Box 947 * Columbus, NE 68602-0947



Meet the Brunkens

From Page 2

Brian Brunken

Graduating Year? 1989

Favorite Class/Teacher? Mr. Ron Callan.

CPS teacher that influenced you the most? Mr. Ron Callan and Mr. Chris Dixon.

Your most memorable high school experience? Playing football for the Discoverers and Coach Luebbe.

What would you change if you had high school to do all over again? Volunteer more.

Where do you live now? Elkhorn, NE

What are you doing now? I am a physical therapist and owner of Go Physical Therapy in Omaha.

I earned my OCS (Orthopedically Certified Specialist) of which there are only a few in Nebraska. I am married to Jennifer (Bosak) Brunken, and we have Ellie, who is a first grader at Skyline Elementary where Andy Luebbe (small world) is the principal. I am the past president for the Southwest Omaha Rotary Night Club and the chairperson for the Practice and Management Committee for the Nebraska Physical Therapy Association.

Jenny Bosak Brunken

Graduating Year? 1989

Favorite Class/Teacher? Biology, Mr. Callan.

CPS teacher that influenced you the most? Mr. Callan.

Your most memorable high school experience? Winning all-class gold medal at State Track Meet.

What would you change if you had high school to do all over again? Study more.

Where do you live now? Elkhorn, NE

What are you doing now? Married to Brian Brunken, working at First Data Resources as a Business Systems Analyst. Enjoy caring for our 7-year-old daughter, Ellie, and playing with our labradoodle, Cubby.

Amy Brunken Armbrust

Graduating Year: 1991

Favorite Class/Teacher? Math and Art

CPS teacher that influenced you the most? All of my teachers contributed to my learning.

Your most memorable high school experience? Received the first scholarship awarded by the Columbus Alumni Association and cheering at the state basketball championship game in 1989.

What would you change if you had high school to do all over again? I would have spent more time with my girl friends.

Where do you live now? The Millard part of Omaha.

What are you doing now? I am a physical therapist at the CHI Lakeside Clinic. My husband, Todd, and I have two sons, Logan, 16, who in addition to his AP high school classes at Millard West, plays the violin and baseball, and Nathan, 14, attends Russell Middle School and plays soccer, basketball and baseball. In the future, I would like to teach physical therapy classes at the graduate level.



Columbus Public Schools FOUNDATION
"Optimizing the future of all Discoverers"



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 The School District of Columbus Foundation is a qualifying 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are deductible as allowed by law.

CHS/Kramer Class Challenge

By Shelly Schmidt
 Alumni Association President

Last September, we challenged all classes to see which one could produce the most Alumni Lifetime members. We will issue the results of this challenge in the September 2015 issue of this publication.

It is now up to those of you who are not lifetime members to write your tax deductible checks (\$200 for singles/\$300 for couples) to the Columbus Alumni Association, PO Box 947, Columbus NE 68602-0947. Current lifetime members should use any means necessary to encourage their fellow classmates to accept this challenge and help their respective class win the title. The money is used to publish this newsletter and keep you informed as to what is going on with your alma mater.

The Class of 1970 currently has a slim lead. The Classes of

1953, 1959, 1960, 1965, 1968, 1969 and 1972, aren't too far behind. Every class has a chance if you spread the word. Do not delay, write your check today!

Which class will be the champion?



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If you would like someone to contact you about including the CPS Foundation in your estate plans, please call Landon Wietfeld at 402-563-7000 Ext. 1103 to set up an appointment. The role of the Foundation is to provide the students of CPS with as many educational opportunities as possible by filling gaps created in the regular school district budget from funding shortfalls or regulatory constraints. The Foundation helps optimize the future of all Discoverers by creating funding for grants, after school programs, alternative educational opportunities, scholarships for current and graduating students, and recognition awards.

Please make checks payable to the CPS Foundation.

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Columbus Alumni Reunion Plans for 2015 & Beyond

1935 - Local class members meet every 4 months for lunch (Oct., Feb., Jun.). All '35 grads welcome.

1937 - Meets 1st Wed., every 4 months (March, July, Nov.).

1946 - '46 locals meet the first Friday of each month for lunch.

All classmates welcome. Contact: Ruth Olson Babka, 402-564-5991 or Laura Eller Stuefer, 402-564-2057.

1949 - Locals meet the first Monday of the month for breakfast at Picket Fence Cafe. All classmates welcome. Contact: Rosella (Blaser) Norris for info. 402-564-7498.

1956 - Meets at 10 a.m. the first Wed. of every month at Stack & Steak for morning coffee. All classmates welcome.

1955 - 60th Reunion - August 28 and 29, 2015. Friday - 4 p.m. meet at the home of Sandra Knox for a Pizza Picnic. Saturday - Kapel's Last Resort (near Creston) for dinner. Contact is Joanne Mueller Siefken.

1958 - Class lunch the first Wednesday of every month at noon at Maximus. All classmates and spouses welcome.

1959 - Meets the second Thursday quarterly (January, April, July and October) at Stack n' Steak at 11:30 a.m. for lunch and conversation. Classmates and spouses are welcome.

1962 - Meets the first Friday of every month at 8:30 a.m. at Picket Fence. All classmates and spouses are welcome.

1965 -50th Reunion - Save the date. June 5-7, 2015. For more information or to make a suggestion, please look us up on Facebook at Columbus Nebraska High School Class of 1965. More information at a later date.

1970 - 45th Reunion - August 14-16, 2015. August 14 - in the evening at Applegate's home; August 15 - in the evening at Dusters; August 16 - Possible brunch at Dusters. For more information, please contact Leta Oppliger Greene at 402-563-1640.

1975 - 40th Reunion - August 14-15, 2015. Friday night at the races (table by the finish line) and Saturday night downtown for Columbus Days. For more information, Contact Roger Iwansky at 402-562-9024.

1985 - 30th Reunion - June 26- 27, 2015 -June 26 - Social 7 p.m. at Maximus (Appetizers/drinks); June 27 - Social 6 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m. at Wunderlichs. For updated info, go to <https://sites.google.com/site/chs1985grads/> or on Facebook: Columbus Senior High School Class of 1985 Reunion.

1990 - 25th Reunion - June 18, 2015. Matt Moore Memorial Golf Tournament at noon at Quail Run. Maximus Bar at 6:30 p.m. For more information, contact Mitch Slusarski at 605-484-6409. In the future, more details will be made available on Facebook.