



PHHS FOUNDATION

The past and the present coming together for the future.

September 2020

President's Message

As I write this article in July, I have no idea whether or not our schools will open, endure distance learning or a combination of the two. However, I do know that our students and school are very important to all of us, and I hope for the best scenario for all.

Patrick Henry High School has had some of the best teachers and staff who truly care about the students and teach with passion. They have given everything in hopes of molding great contributors to society. (See the Principal's update on page 2 for more details about how the school managed through the spring phase of the pandemic.)

I am very honored to have been given the opportunity to work with the Foundation for the betterment of Patrick Henry High School. All of you have helped shape the board you see today, and I can say in total confidence that without you we would be a very different board.

We went through so much this year including COVID-19 and the pain that our city has endured. We sometimes clashed over what some might call trivial situations and some very major. Despite our disagreements, we never hesitated to have each other's backs. I consider myself lucky to have met all of you and to be part of the strong bond we have created.

I have known some of you for a long time, and others I have met more recently. I know that each and every one of you has something special to offer to the success of our high school.

Cathy Roehl Peterson, Class of '65
PHHS Foundation President

The PHS Foundation exists to enhance the learning environment at Patrick Henry and expand educational opportunities for students.

Interested in volunteering on the PHS Foundation Board?

Attend one of our monthly meetings to find out more.

Meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month, 4:30 PM via Zoom conference call. Contact a Board Member to receive an invitation to a Foundation meeting.

We do not meet in June, July, or December.

Upcoming 2020-2021 Events

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, please check with contacts listed here for the most current information and status of the event.

Class of 1958 Reunion

September 15: Pub 42, New Hope. Contact: Barb Sletten Keller 763-421-7264 or dbkeller29@gmail.com

Class of 1980 40th Reunion

October 3: Embassy Suites North, Brooklyn Center; 6 –11:30 PM. Contact: Geneva Kubal at 612-280-4539 or gkubal@aol.com

Class of 1975 45th Reunion

October 4: Elsie's Bar NE Mpls. Contact: Jim Cain

Fall Hall of Fame Luncheon

cancelled

Check the Patrick Henry High School website for up-to-date information about school events: <https://henry.mpls.k12.mn.us/home>

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PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

As a Principal, I never imagined that I would be responsible for leading a staff through a pandemic, distance learning, or an uprising after the traumatic murder of George Floyd. Perhaps one of those, but not all three at the same time. I was very impressed with how our staff at Henry High took on this challenge with me. We learned an online system that became the platform for distance learning, and we had only two weeks to prepare. It was our responsibility to teach our students and families how to use the system, and we had to work through issues. We ran up against several students who did not have the necessary technology nor the home environment to effectively engage in distance learning. This was due to a lack of resources, students and parents being essential workers who needed to work to provide for their families, or the distance learning platform itself was not conducive to how many of our students learn and engage in school. Through it all, we were able to overcome.

Our teachers made sure they communicated regularly with their students and when students did not respond, our support staff stepped in to help teachers connect with families and to help students with their needs to get onboard. This work was continuous and extremely necessary to be able to stay connected with our students and families, as some of our families were directly impacted by the Coronavirus and the murder of George Floyd. We visited many homes during this time and made invaluable connections. We had to get creative to celebrate the Class of 2020. We created lawn signs, planned and held a virtual graduation, made the diploma pick-up exciting by hosting a drive-thru parade on the football field, which may become a new Henry tradition.

Throughout the process, we all were able to clearly see the inequities in our education system and the direct impact those inequities have on our school community. Therefore, we focused on what was important: the wellbeing of our students and families. As a result, 99% of our students earned credit third and fourth quarter.

We are teaching and learning online for at least the first quarter of the 2020-21 school year. School begins for students on Tuesday, September 8th, the day after Labor Day. Despite the challenges we are facing as a school, as a city, as a nation, and internationally, we will work together, collaborating optimistically on how to best educate Henry High students during the COVID-19 pandemic while addressing racial and economic inequities. Henry staff will be addressing these challenges with a student-centered approach, always leading with students first in mind.

There are five phases that Henry High will move through during the coronavirus pandemic as directed by MPS and the state of Minnesota. **Phase 1** provides distance learning only with no access to school buildings. With **Phase 2**, all learning is done through distance learning, but students will be provided with support such as tutoring, technology and mental health care at certain school buildings. We are starting this fall with **Phase 2**. During **Phases 3 to 5**, students will begin to attend school in buildings to increasing degrees and with the appropriate health and safety practices in place on buses and in classrooms, cafeterias, gyms, athletic fields, playgrounds and other school spaces.

Throughout this process Henry High staff will look at each individual student to determine how to best meet his/her needs, focusing on ways that individuals and technology can create a positive and productive academic climate while connecting with families. There will be some opportunities for school staff to meet with students in person at our building. Letter grades will be issued; however, "No Credit" will replace the "F" grade. A "No Credit" on a student's transcript does less harm because it does not lower the GPA. Teachers are being directed to provide weekly feedback on student progress.

Looking at the total student, we must consider the emotional and social needs as well as academic needs of each individual. Henry staff are exploring ways to connect students to each other and ways to communicate towards the goal of creating a Henry family. There will be common virtual places for the whole school to interact with each other. Henry High has the reputation of being a high school with a phenomenal number of clubs and interest groups. Clubs will be active on-line. We are exploring avenues with community partners to provide virtual "after-school activities." As you may already know, football and volleyball sports teams will be postponed until Spring. Girls tennis, swimming, cross-country and soccer teams started meeting on August 17th.

Yusuf A. Abdullah, Principal
Patrick Henry High School

On May 29, 2020, a team of educators from one of Patrick Henry's citywide programs visited the homes of their graduating seniors to deliver a small gift and well wishes. Knowing that these seniors missed many memorable moments due to COVID-19 pandemic school closures, the team wanted to do something special to recognize this important milestone in their lives.

A sincere thank you to the PHHS Foundation for providing the financial resources for this memorable event. Students and their families were very appreciative!



2020 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, we will not be hosting a fall luncheon to honor our newest inductees into the Hall of Fame. However, we will take this opportunity to announce and introduce this year's inductees. They will be honored at a future event when we can all gather to celebrate and honor their selection.

This year's inductees include a NASA research engineer Thomas J. Horvath and two career educators Wesley Anderson and Michael J. Skavnak. This article will merely highlight a small peek into the many accomplishments of these inductees. A full picture of their very full life stories may be accessed at [PHHSFoundation.org](https://phhsfoundation.org) under the Hall of Fame tab along with all previous inductees.

Wesley Anderson will be fondly remembered by many as he spent thirty years bringing Social Studies and American History alive to numerous Patriot students. Anderson was born in Buffalo, MN and unfortunately lost both of his parents at an early age to tuberculosis, after which, he moved to Minneapolis to be raised by an aunt and uncle. After graduating from Minnehaha Academy, he joined the U.S. Navy and was active during World War II and the Korean War. After serving seven years, he enrolled at the University of Minnesota and earned his B.A. in Education. He started teaching at Patrick Henry in 1955. After his military and education careers, he took on the duties of maintenance for his church. As a lifetime active church member, Anderson was merely taking the next step in his life of service to others. Wes will celebrate 70 years of marriage to his wife this fall.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration research engineer **Thomas J. Horvath** is a 1980 graduate. After graduation, Horvath earned a B.A. in Physics from Ripon College, followed by a M.S. degree in Aeronautics from George Washington University. He is now in his 33rd year working with NASA. Besides his research work, Horvath has been published in over 100 agency, conference and journal publications. Please check the website as his awards are too numerous to list here. Most significant is his contributions to the understanding of Space Shuttle Orbiter aero thermodynamic phenomena which was critical to the Columbia Accident Investigation and the subsequent safe entry of Discovery's Return-to-Flight mission. Thomas and his wife and daughters are very involved in their local church coordinating the children's service as well as finding time to be a community volunteer.

Our third inductee is a 1956 graduate, **Michael J. Skavnak**. Skavnak earned his education degree from the University of Minnesota Duluth in science and physical education. After graduation, he and his wife both began their teaching careers in Princeton, MN. Our honoree spent 35 years teaching science and coaching, and served another 12 years as a substitute teacher. He coached football, baseball and hockey, but still found time to work games as a referee, umpire, timer or score keeper. Michael has been the humble recipient of numerous Lions Club awards, as well as a frequent volunteer at his church. He enjoys wood working and has used his skills as a Habitat for Humanity volunteer.

A quote from Michael Skavnak that seems to apply to all three of this year's inductees: "I believe in paying back for all blessings I have received in my life." ***Congratulations to our 2020 Hall of Fame Inductees!***

Pictured from left to right: Wesley Anderson, Thomas Horvath, Michael Skavnak



Hall of Fame applications are currently being accepted for 2021 nominees. Please visit our website at phhsfoundation.org for more information about the Hall of Fame recipients, and to view or download a nomination form.

DONATIONS & ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

\$2000+

Arnie Wodtke '72

In memory of Jan (Longerbone) Wodtke '72

\$250 - \$499

Linda (Wolter) Lonn '83

\$100 - \$249

Janice Hanson Aiken '71

Designated to Media Center

Christine (Frey) Anderson '67

In memory of Ronald Frey & Raymond Frey

Paul Andreen '52

Lynn Bollman '63

Neil Brodin '64

In memory of brothers John '60 & Rodger '58

David Chose '66

Deana (Anderson) Colton

In memory of Homecoming with John To bash

Jim Danko '59

In memory of John Danko '64, Jack Hansen '60, Larry Olson '56

Richard Dorr '60

In honor of class or 1960

Al Durand '65

In memory of Tim Paurus, Denny Stangel '65

Anne Green '68

Designated for Band

Joyce Holt

In memory of husband Alain Holt '57

Jack Hopps '49

In memory of Joanne (Olson) Hopps '51
In honor of Jay Hopps '48

George L. Jackson '56

In memory of Harris L. Jackson '54

Todd & Mary (Lunzer) Jacobson '64

Warren Kaari '60

In memory of Ann Kaari '60

Patricia Kolosky '67

Geneva (Sorensen) Kubal '80

In memory of Frances Mary Ann Enger LaFrance '58

Marty Lerum '69

In memory of John "Shooter" Thorvilson '47
and Martin Lerum '44

Guy Milliren '71

Philip Musgrave '65

In memory of Greg Musgrave '66 & Jim Jacobsen

Tom & Cathy (Roehl) Peterson '65

Linda Allison Rarick '61

In memory of Donald Baker '48

Jim Roehl

Designated to "We Share Solar" student project

Ray & Barb Seguin

Betty (Anderson) Tetzlaff '67

In honor of Class of '67

Robert Wetherille '68

\$50 - \$99

Charles Berger '52

\$50 - \$99 (cont.)

Dan Ganley '65

Scott R. Jacobson '79

In memory of Susan Pearl Hable '79

Jeff Jackola '65

In memory of William "Bill" Lew Gordon '65

Robin (Boldt) Johnson '71

Richard K. Jones

Mercelia C. Murphy '46

In memory of Mercedes Peterson (twin) '46 and of Lorraine Clock (sister) '44

M.G. Mutch

Jeanne Carlson Myklebust '48

In memory of Robert Myklebust - Jan. '48

Jeff Nelson '77

Dennis O'Connell '52 & Laurie O'Connell '68, Brian Olson

In memory of Colleen (O'Connell) Olson '63

Laurie O'Connell '68

In memory of son Brian Olson

Charlotte (Kelch) Ostrom '52

In honor of classmates of '52
In support of choir/theater

Kathleen F. (Kolosky) Pederson '68

In memory of Virginia L. (Kolosky) Winter '69

Cathy Mumm Peterson '71

Jean Johnson Picard '70

Sharon Hill Ross '59

Michael Skavnak '56

In memory of deceased classmates '56

Jack & Jaon Westerlund '53 & '58

\$25 to \$49

Lawrence Goga

Allan Gulden

Kathy Davis Jacobsen '62

Barbara A. Jordan

In memory of Eileen Jordan, PHHS teacher,
and Barbara Schaer '50

Susan (Krez) McCormack '62

In honor of Monte Miller 5th hour class

Richard S. Malikowski '71

In memory of Coach Swanson

Larry Okeson '52, Patty Okeson '47

In memory of brother Curtis Okeson '57

Arleen Olson

Mary Rice '54

In memory of Wayne Brademan '54

Doug Roy '52

Leonard C. Young '61

In honor of Class of '61

Up to \$25

Gary Ehn (AKA Sunrise) '66

Steve Skjold '56

In memory of Tony Skjold

PHHS teachers, staff, students and Foundation Board are very grateful for your support. Now more than ever, your generosity is needed and appreciated!

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Scott Jacobson, Class of 1979

What career did you choose after graduation?

I sought a career in aviation. First as a pilot attending University of North Dakota. Then, after my eyesight limited my options, in the Air Force.

Who was your favorite teacher and why?

Tough question, hard to pick one so I'll pick two. Mr. Olson, principal at Olson, got me started in flying through extracurricular activities. Mr. Carlson, science teacher at Henry, made science fun and taught critical thinking.

Which high school class or activity benefited you most in your career or life?

For me it was the aviation internship offered through HEN (Henry Edison North) program. I took classes at MSP airport and was able to interact with aviation professionals at a number of airlines and aviation activities there.

Dan Hegstrand, Class of 1980

What career did you choose after graduation?

Realtor

Who was your favorite teacher and why?

Mr. Tauring, who taught wood shop, was a great teacher and pretty laid back and easy going. He let us get away with a lot, but also taught us how to work the different tools and machines in the classroom. I learned things back then in his classroom that I still use to this day.

Which high school class or activity benefited you most in your career or life?

I would say wood shop again. I have used that knowledge on rehabbing homes and with my rental properties.

FORMER TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

CONNIE BLOM

Most of us can remember several of the teachers we had. Little did we know how much of an impact they really made. **Connie Blom** was one of many teachers who have instructed youth from the north side of Minneapolis. I consider myself fortunate to have had her for a few classes.

Connie Blom was born in Shawano, WI. Her family lived in the country; her father was a Lutheran pastor of two rural congregations. Her parents raised two children in this rural community: a boy and Connie who was three years younger. Unfortunately, Connie's mother died when she was twelve years old. As hard as it was to lose a mother at a young age, Ms. Blom maintains she had a wonderful childhood.

Ms. Blom attended Memorial High School in Eau Claire, WI. The family moved to Chippewa Falls, WI between her sophomore and junior years. She recalls class sizes around 25 students per teacher. Connie graduated from Chippewa Falls Senior High. Her class had about 220 graduates the year she received her diploma.

One teacher made a lasting impression on Connie. Mrs. Patterson, whom the students called "Mrs. Pat," was incredibly influential. She was Connie's speech teacher and also a speech/debate coach. It was because of her that Ms. Blom chose to double major in Speech and English. Connie loves to learn. As a young child she would hold classes for anyone who was willing to sit long enough to listen – and if necessary, used her dolls as students. When Connie entered post high school education, there were not a lot of career choices for women; she considers herself lucky that she enjoyed teaching and this occupation was a good fit for her.

Ms. Blom's Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree is from St Olaf College in Northfield, MN. In addition to a double major in Speech and English, she minored in Education. She received a Master's Degree in Rhetoric and Public Address from the University of Washington in Seattle. In the fall of 1966, Ms. Blom became a teacher at Patrick Henry where she would put in 32 years before moving to St. Mary's University for three years to teach in their Masters of Arts program for educators and four years at Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC) in the Communications department.

Her first day of teaching at Patrick Henry was a bit of a shock. When she was hired, she didn't realize grades 7 – 12 were all housed in the same building. She was assigned two 7th grade English classes and three 9th grade English classes. "When I looked at my 1st class of 7th graders after training to teach high school age students," Ms. Blom said, "it was a huge adjustment." This experience gave her an incredible admiration for middle school teachers. She knew she was more suited for older students. Ms. Blom strongly petitioned the department head to teach classes for grades 9 and above. In her second year she was far more prepared for the students and classes she was assigned.

When Ms. Blom started teaching, girls still were required to wear dresses to school. Women teachers, of course, could not wear pants. Class sizes were very large. The enrollment at Henry was high; there were even portable classrooms outside the building. Very few students were bused to school and there was little diversity in the student body. The Viet Nam war was raging. The civil rights movement and race riots were in the news. Men were still basically in charge.

After the Viet Nam war and the assassination Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., monumental changes occurred. The student body became more diverse, work programs for students who were not college bound became part of the curriculum and Minneapolis started closing high schools. By the middle of her career, Ms. Blom had the opportunity to start teaching speech classes and coaching the speech team, which were very positive aspects in her career.

Near the end of her time at Henry, the school had become an International Baccalaureate (IB) school. Ms. Blom became the Coordinator of the program. The IB program was a very positive addition to the school and working with IB students was incredibly gratifying for Ms. Blom and other teachers. As her IB coordinator responsibilities grew in her last seven years, Connie gradually left the classroom. In her last year at Henry, she was not teaching any classes. Ms. Blom stated "This was a unique and helpful transition to retirement."

When asked what her favorite part of teaching was, Connie stated "Without question interaction and relationships with students. Getting to know students beyond the classroom, seeing students succeed – especially those who struggled or maybe didn't really like English and yet they had success, learning from my students, realizing the hard work was paying off. Also, the relationships and friendships that formed with my colleagues."

Connie Blom found herself saying many times over the years how particular students were her favorites. Many of her students influenced her during her tenure at Patrick Henry. However, there is one student from her first 7th grade class that has become a lifelong friend. For that she feels truly blessed.

When asked if she had any regrets, Connie stated "Only knowing I could have served some of my students much better than I did." She defined not meeting the needs of students as the most difficult part of being a teacher. It saddened her to think she failed some of her students. Conflict with a student was also painful. On a lighter note, she felt overwhelmed by all the papers that needed to be read and graded.

These days Connie keeps herself busy with volunteer work. She is active in her church, serving as worship coordinator for many years. She has been the chair of the finance committee in the building where she lives. Ms. Blom also volunteers at food shelves, Global Health Ministry and schools where she would read to first graders until COVID-19 put a stop to that. Her hobbies include travel, reading, cooking/baking, entertaining, movies and knitting. Ms. Blom has done a lot of international travel and some domestic travel because it is fun to see new places. Connie is an avid reader who enjoys fiction, especially those written by Steinbach. However, in recent years, she is reading more biographies and memoirs.

When asked what advice she would give to someone who is thinking about becoming a teacher Ms. Blom stated "This is a hard question to answer because teaching is so different in this era than it was when I was in the secondary classroom. I would advise a person to be prepared to give his/her all, to expect extreme highs and extreme lows, and to seek out help and advice. Also, wash your hands regularly!!"

At the end of our interview, Connie told me she was an introvert. This claim did not seem like a trait a teacher would have, knowing her days would be filled with students and faculty. She responded that teaching was her passion, but when it was time to go home, she thoroughly enjoyed her time alone to rejuvenate for the next day. Connie Blom is a true gem in my mind and I am sure the minds of many PHHS alumni.

Thank you, Ms. Blom, and to all teachers for their gifts to us and our families.

Submitted by Geneva Kubal

PHHS FOUNDATION INFORMATION

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Donations: Please mail check donations to the attention of PHHS Foundation at Patrick Henry High School. You may make donations via Pay Pal or credit card on the PHHS Foundation website. We will be working with Principal Abdullah and PHHS staff and teachers to determine the best way we can support the school during the upcoming school year as they adjust to more distance learning. ***We appreciate any support you can give to help the school!***

Communications: If you are aware of anyone who is not receiving the newsletter, please ask them to send their contact information to the PHHS Foundation (info@phhsfoundation.org). To help us reduce postage expenses, please request to receive the newsletter via email instead of a paper copy.

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PHHS Foundation

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