

Distinguished Achievement HALL OF FAME

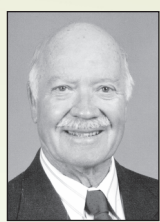
BRAINERD HIGH SCHOOL DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT HALL OF FAME



2015
Colonel Ronald Albers
1965 Graduate



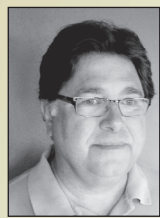
2011
Brad Hill
1969 Graduate



2007
Dr. Gene M. Bierhaus
1939 Graduate



2003
Dr. Helen Longfellow
1929 Graduate



2015
Dr. L.J. Nickisch
1974 Graduate



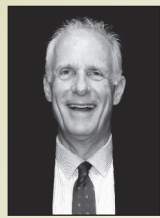
2011
Basil C. LeBlanc
1972 Graduate



2007
Dr. Kimberley Broekemeier
1977 Graduate



2003
Jim Anderson
1961 Graduate



2015
Brian Nystrom
1977 Graduate



2011
Gayle Anderson Ober
1977 Graduate



2007
Cindy Fryklind Clough
1976 Graduate



2002
Sen. Don Samuelson
1951 Graduate



2015
Branelle Cibuzar Rodriguez
2000 Graduate



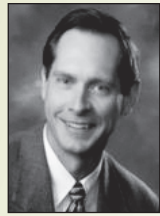
2010
Edward T. O'Brien
1923 Graduate



2007
Vice Admiral Howard Thorsen
1951 Graduate



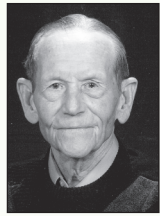
2002
Dr. Roger Moe
1948 Graduate



2014
Tom Haglin
1981 Graduate



2010
Madonna H. Meyer
1977 Graduate



2006
Clarence Holden
1930 Graduate



2002
Carl Zapffe
1929 Graduate



2014
Joshua (JP) Larue
1992 Graduate



2010
Howard "Jiggs" Blanck
1954 Graduate



2006
Richard Nolan
1962 Graduate



2002
Hortense McKay
1927 Graduate



2014
Nancy Pedersen
1970 Graduate



2010
LtCol William F. McCollough
1987 Graduate



2006
Cindy Jane Williams
1985 Graduate



2001
Robert Anderson
1953 Graduate



2014
Dennis Wolfgang Borgwarth
1979 Graduate



2009
Shawn Stengel
1977 Graduate



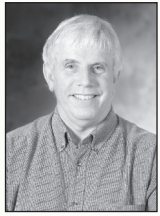
2005
Marilyn J. Koering
1956 Graduate



2001
Lt. Gen. Bruce Carlson
1967 Graduate



2013
Sheila Wasnie Haverkamp
1981 Graduate



2009
Michael O'Leary
1969 Graduate



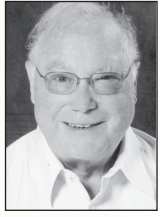
2005
Jon Thorson
1982 Graduate



2000
M. Eleanor Nolan
1926 Graduate



2013
Connie Marshall-Grittner
1964 Graduate



2009
Henry C. Mills II
1946 Graduate



2005
Alex G. "Gene" Fremling
1949 Graduate



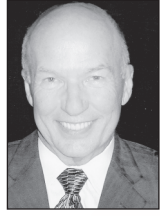
2000
Dr. Harold Kletschka
1941 Graduate



2013
William Potvin
1972 Graduate



2009
Dr. Wayne Little
1950 Graduate



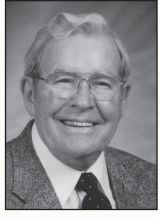
2005
Roger C. Vergin
1955 Graduate



2000
Paul Hunt
1972 Graduate



2012
Jill (Johnson) Wyant
1989 Graduate



2008
John Arnold
1937 Graduate



2004
Duane Blanck
1960 Graduate



1999
John A. Mehaffey
1954 Graduate



2012
James Peterson, Sr.
1943 Graduate



2008
Captain Wallace Lind
1905 Graduate



2004
Peggy Kriha Dye
1987 Graduate



1999
Stewart C. Mills Jr.
1946 Graduate



2012
Kevin Doran
1979 Graduate



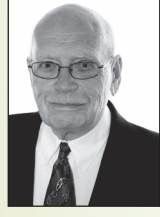
2007
Thomas G. Anderson
1968 Graduate



2003
Duane Lund
1943 Graduate



1999
Linda Eder
1979 Graduate



2012
Phil Mattson
1956 Graduate



1999
C. Elmer Anderson
1928 Graduate



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



Three to be inducted into BHS Hall of Fame



The 2016 Brainerd Public Schools Hall of Fame inductees and their backgrounds are as varied as they are accomplished. From the technology mecca of Silicon Valley to the upper echelons of U.S. military and diplomatic service to the halls of Brainerd Public Schools, each of this year's inductees has demonstrated tenacity, leadership and above all, a willingness to take advantage of opportunities for growth and development which led them down paths of great success.

The 2016 distinguished inductees to the Hall of Fame are Andy Griffin, academic prodigy, Class of 1997; Keith Keller, U.S. military leader, Class of 1978; and Bob Gross, the man behind the past three generations of Brainerd students' successes.

Written by Amy Gray

Presenting **ANTHONY (ANDY) GRIFFIN** 2016 Inductee **Class of 1997 | Software Engineer**



One of the first things you notice when talking with Anthony (Andy) Griffin is his humility. 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's mind 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. It was that computing experience that really directed his focus and helped shape his future. Despite the numerous accomplishments achieved in different academic disciplines, Andy says, "Computers have always been my first love."

In the fifth grade, Andy was connecting with junior high and high school students to discuss computing and design a game. It provided an outlet for Andy to share his interests with like-minded students as well as for him to develop a new peer group, one based on passion rather than academic grade. 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. Andy was also offered advanced com-

puting and educational opportunities, which provided a "real growth moment" for him. While being a seventh grader mixing with high school students would be intimidating for most, Andy said, "I was a tall kid, so I didn't stand out as much as I could have."

By 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. In 1997, he was also a Minnesota State AP Scholar and National AP Scholar. 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."

While Andy was flattered to be accepted by several top schools across the country, when it came to the California Institute of Technology, or Caltech, with its lush Southern California campus and beautiful surroundings, not to mention world-class education, "if you get a chance to go, you kind of can't not go". The SoCal environment made working hard all year a bit easier for Andy, plus it's a "great school with great people." Being at a top school in California also put Andy in the right networks. Caltech graduates, said Andy, "have a good track record of being people you should hire, which is a great leg up when you're coming out of school and trying to make your way in the world."

Coming out of Caltech 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 was able to develop technical leadership, and he felt what he accomplished there mattered. After several years with the company, Andy, always looking for new challenges, began tinkering evenings and weekends on a new idea he had. His superiors were impressed and let him develop his project as part of a larger product line, overseeing the project from beginning to end providing Andy an opportunity to "really sort of own the product category", which was one of his proudest professional moments. Around that same time he was establishing him-

self professionally and becoming 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.



Presenting **KEITH R. KELLER** 2016 Inductee **Class of 1978 | U.S. Military Leader**



When he graduated as valedictorian of the Brainerd High School class of 1978, Keith Keller was a relative newcomer to Brainerd Public Schools. Moving from South Dakota after the 9th grade, Keith relished the opportunity to forge a path for himself at Brainerd High School.

Coming from a small town to his new, much larger

school, "afforded me an opportunity to broaden my horizons and pursue more individual interests", said Keith. During high school, Keith ran track and field and took advanced classes in math, physics, biology, and chemistry, which helped prepare him well for his university education as an engineer and scientist.

For as long as Keith can remember, he's always wanted to be an aerospace engineer, preferably in the US military. After earning his bachelor of science degree in aerospace engineering and mechanics from the University of Minnesota in 1982, he worked 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. Keith spent two years in southern California before executing his plan to attend graduate school at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). While working on his master of science degree in aeronautics and astronautics, which he received in 1986, Keith decided to pursue a career in and 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 moved to Los Angeles, where he 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. Satellite systems developed and deployed in space by the NRO help the Nation "keep an eye" on our adversaries. 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. At the DIA, he was liaison between U.S. and foreign defense attachés and the DIA Director, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and Secretary of Defense. Keith was in the Pentagon when the

plane hit on 9/11, and it was a life-changing experience for him. That event, and his desire to build on his international experience in the service of the US, motivated Keith to go back overseas to contribute to the US fight against terrorism, from an international relations and political-military perspective.

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 USAFE TSC 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. In that position, he was responsible for strategy, plans and policy for the deployment of US Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) systems in Europe, and served as EUCOM Lead for international BMD policy, strategy and plans war-games and exercises with NATO Allies and Partners in Europe, the Middle East and the Pacific.

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, and in Minnesota, including the U of M, and the Midwest as a whole, which he believes "is among the best in the Nation", for preparing him well for his career. In his view, "The teachers at BHS in the advanced classes set a standard of excellence and encouraged us to achieve our full potential, while allowing highly motivated, very competitive students to define and pursue their individual interests. This, together with the strong Midwestern work ethic, prepared us well to realize and succeed in our life-long goals."

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."

Presenting **ROBERT (BOB) GROSS** 2016 Inductee **BHS Above and Beyond Award**



Bob Gross never intended to be an educator. Growing up in the small agricultural community of Napoleon, North Dakota, he expected to follow his father into farming. But a chance encounter with a Valley City State Teacher's College student led Bob to consider college where he eventually applied and was accepted. There he started down the path of a career full of unexpected twists and turns.

Even at Valley City State Teacher's College, Bob didn't intend to major in education, as there were other academic opportunities available. The college wrestling coach recruited Bob, strong and agile from his days on the farm, to join the team. Bob 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, Minnesota, his first teaching job out of college, the school principal left. Already a well-respected teacher and coach, Bob's peers requested he fill the vacancy. At only 23 years of age, Bob felt someone with more tenure would be a more obvious choice, but 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".

In 1968, after four years in Wauburn, an opportunity arose for Bob to become assistant principal of the new Brainerd Senior High School, and so began his 31-year career with Brainerd Public Schools. After a mere five years between the role at BHS and that of principal of what was then Washington Junior High, Bob's leadership skills paved the way for his appointment to assistant superintendent in 1974 and then, upon the 1981 retirement of Elliot Whoolery, superintendent of Brainerd Public Schools, where he served Brainerd 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 was also civically-minded, serving on and leading the 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. Bob's participation in "extra curriculars" was something he supported for students as well, as non-academic activities gave all kids an opportunity to excel in different areas. "Achievement and recognition motivates us", Bob said, which was something he wanted all students to be able to benefit from. The Brainerd community benefited as well and, in 1987, Bob was named Brainerd's Citizen of the Year.

After 31 years in the Brainerd Public Schools, Bob decided he was up for a new challenge and left Brainerd for an opportunity to lead the Singapore American School in Singapore. During his time there, Bob continued to build his reputation as a leader in education, only this time on an international stage. Once again Bob was recognized for his leadership skills and was awarded International School Superintendent of the Year.

Bob spent eight years in Singapore before continuing his international experience in a different format, Bob took on the role of Regional Education Officer for the Office of Overseas Schools for the US Department of State. Through this position he had the opportunity for extensive travel as he called on and supported international schools in Western and Eastern Europe. Five years later Bob 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 new superintendent submitted his resignation. Less than one year of going through the extensive hiring process for a new superintendent following Steve Razidlo's departure to lead a school overseas, the school district was back at square one. That's when new retiree, Bob Gross, received a call from Brainerd Public Schools asking him to be the interim superintendent, giving the district time to find the right candidate for the long-term position. After teaching in private schools, Bob didn't think he would ever return to public school. But his love for the Brainerd community was so wide and deep, and he thought he could be helpful, 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". So he and his wife left their home in Minneapolis and rented a home in the Brainerd area so they could reintegrate into the community.

And reintegrate they did. Bob was back leading the district he loved: meeting teachers

one on one, getting on the floor to interact with elementary students, and having lunch in the district cafeterias to get to know the current staff and systems. 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".

Doing so is done by "hiring for character and training for skills", according to Bob. You can teach a person to do a job, but you can't teach the character that person brings to the job.

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."

While it is impossible to encapsulate in a single article everything these Hall of Fame inductees have accomplished, it is possible to get to know the people behind the success at this year's Hall of Fame dinner at 5 p.m. October 7th at the Norway Center at Grand View Lodge. There you will have an opportunity to learn more about these champions of Brainerd Public Schools as well as provide the support which enables current and future students to make their mark on the world in the most impactful ways possible. For more information and to reserve tickets, please visit www.bpsf.org or contact Amber Schlegel at 218-454-6921.



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Distinguished Achievement
HALL OF FAME

Friday, October 7, 2016

Social 5:00 PM | Dinner 6:15 PM

Norway Center, Grand View Lodge

To attend, call [218-454-6921](tel:218-454-6921). Complete information at www.bpsf.org



IT'S A WARRIOR THING

WARRIOR Homecoming Run

5K 10K

BPSF
Brainerd Public Schools Foundation

Brainerd Warriors Nordic Ski Team

STARTING AT KIWANIS PARK

OCT. 8TH
8:15 AM

WarriorHomeComingRun.com

CONTACT KARMA RACE MANAGEMENT FOR FURTHER DETAILS
Kara Schaefer or Henry Praska | karmaracemanagement@gmail.com | 218.330.6102

SAVE THE DATE: The Big Event, Saturday, February 4, 2017
NEW LOCATION - Cragun's Legacy Pavilion



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
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