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.

- Scott Lydnes, 2004 Graduate
- Marc Tormoehlen, Extraordinary Service to Brainerd Public Schools
- Steve Lepinski, 1966 Graduate
- Kelly Barnsma, 1984 Graduate
- Kristen O’Dwyer, 1998 Graduate
- Anthony Giffen, 1997 Graduate
- Keith R. Keller, 1978 Graduate
- Robert Crow, BHS Above and Beyond Award
- Colonel Ronald Albers, 1945 Graduate
- Dr. L.J. Nickisch, 1974 Graduate
- Brian Nyhstrom, 1977 Graduate
- Brialette Chastain Rodriguez, 2000 Graduate
- Tori Haiglin, 1981 Graduate
- Joshua (JP) Laras, 1999 Graduate
- Nancy Pederson, 1970 Graduate
- Dennis Wolfgang Borowicz, 1979 Graduate
- Sheila Warner Hoverkamp, 1983 Graduate
- Corrin Marshall-Geitner, 1994 Graduate
- William Peterson, 1972 Graduate
- Jill Johnson Wyard, 1989 Graduate
- James Peterson Sr., 1943 Graduate
- Kevin Dore, 1979 Graduate
- Phil Mattson, 1996 Graduate
- Brad Hill, 1989 Graduate
- Basel C. LeBlanc, 1972 Graduate
- Gayle Anderson Over, 1977 Graduate
- Edward T. O’Brien, 1985 Graduate
- Madeleine H. Mayer, 1977 Graduate
- Howard “Topp” Blanche, 1974 Graduate
- Shawn Shangel, 1977 Graduate
- Michael O’Leary, 1969 Graduate
- Henry C. Mills II, 1946 Graduate
- Dr. Wayne Little, 1960 Graduate
- Peggy Shafran, 1987 Graduate
- Daune Lamle, 1943 Graduate
- John Arnold, 1937 Graduate
- Captain Wallace Lind, 1905 Graduate
- Thomas G. Anderson, 1968 Graduate
- Dr. Gene M. Bierhaus, 1939 Graduate
- Dr. Harold Longfellow, 1929 Graduate
- Dr. Roger Munson, 1948 Graduate
- Lt. General Bruce Carlson, 1967 Graduate
- Robert Anderson, 1953 Graduate
- Carl Zapffe, 1929 Graduate
- Hortense McKay, 1927 Graduate
- Dr. Helen Longfellow, 1929 Graduate
- Jim Anderson, 1961 Graduate
- Sam. Don Samuels, 1931 Graduate
- Dr. Roger Munson, 1948 Graduate
- Lt. General Bruce Carlson, 1967 Graduate
- Robert Anderson, 1953 Graduate
- M. Eleanor Nolan, 1926 Graduate
- Lt. Col. William F. McCollough, 1987 Graduate
- Dr. H. Redondo, 1977 Graduate
- Van Alden Howard Thon, 1991 Graduate
- Dr. Robert Anderson, 1993 Graduate
- Brian Nyhstrom, 1977 Graduate
- Dennis Wolfgang Borowicz, 1979 Graduate
- Sheila Warner Hoverkamp, 1983 Graduate
The Brainerd Public Schools Foundation will honor three Brainerd High School graduates for their professional career and personal achievements at the Distinguished Achievement Hall of Fame reception on May 22 at Forestview Middle School in Baxter. The induction ceremony will begin at 5 p.m. in the cafetorium with a reception to follow in the library. Inducted into the 2019 Hall of Fame are Quintus A. Blackburn, a 1917 graduate; Steve Clough, a 1976 graduate; and Kevin Thesing, a 1974 graduate.

Quintus A. Blackburn, a 1917 Brainerd High School graduate and record-making mountain climber who served in the Army, Navy and geologist on Adams Peak in Ceylon, was born June 19, 1899, in Brainerd, died Feb. 9, 1981, in Boise, Idaho. Blackburn's journey from Brainerd to his adventure with mountain climbing began in 1917, when he left for the University of Montana three years after earning his high school diploma. During his stint as an Antartic explorer, Blackburn joined the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, working with the Boise, Idaho, office as an expert on mineral resources and serving as an appraiser. He retired from the Bureau in 1935 after more than 30 years of service. At his retirement he was awarded the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's Meritorious Service Award.

Edmund Strong, the famous Antarctic explorer recently wrote: "I think that the Brainerd Public Schools Foundation would be well advised to consider Blackburn's three-man team his "personal heroes of Antartic exploration." In 1917, a New Zealand university scientific team working in the Tranternic Mountains, 300 miles from the pole, found a cache of equipment from Blackburn's second expedition—presumably protected by the cold, dry, polar weather. The gear included skis, survey poles and mule carpents, two stamped with "QB," the initials of the geologist who led the 80-day expedition. They left the equipment exactly as it was, but did take a mule carpent with them. It is now on display at the University in New Zealand.

In late 1934, Blackburn was involved in what proved to be the signature event in his days of Antartic exploration. Setting out from the base camp at Little America, the Brainerd

Three to be inducted into BHS Hall of Fame

Brainerd High School Distinguished Achievement Hall of Fame Reception Planned May 22 at Forestview Middle School

Presenting 2019 Inductees

Class of 1917 Antarctic Explorer

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Presenting 2019 Inductee
STEVE CLOUGH
Class of 1976 | Business Entrepreneurship

Steve Clough, founder and co-owner of Just For Kix, a Baxter-based full-service dance company with 220 youth programs in 14 states, has been named a 2019 Brainerd High School Hall of Fame Inductee. Cindy Clough, a 2007 BHS Hall of Fame recipient, has been the creative side behind the company since they began offering youth dance classes in 1991 in Brainerd. Steve Clough has been a constant, steady force on the business side of this fast-growing corporation.

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

Steve Clough’s work ethic developed here in the lakes area. While growing up in southeast Brainerd, Clough, the son of Bob and Kathryn Clough, attended St. Andrew’s Catholic School and, in sixth grade, drew’s Catholic School. In ninth grade, he was hired at the former Schaefer’s Market in Brainerd as a carry-out boy and worked there throughout high school. Clough graduated from BHS in 1976.

Elementary School after graduating with an associate’s degree, focusing on accounting. At-home mom and teach youth dance programs on a part-side of this fast-growing corporation.

They initially started Just For Kix so Cindy could be a stay-income for Just For Kix in the evenings after his shift working at Brainerd Public Utilities. He would do all the financial work for Just For Kix and act on a massive business opportunity. The Cloughs didn't truly realize what “big” meant for their company quite yet. In 1988 they started their catalog business. After reining their dance families to other dance catalogs, they saw and acted on a massive business opportunity. The Just For Kix business began to boom.

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

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

Today, Just For Kix has experienced unprecedented growth that now extends beyond dance. The company has 120 full-time employees, mostly employed at the Baxter headquarters, and over 160 part-time employees.

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

Just For Kix also hosts special events, including an annual bow game half-time show in which dancers are recruited from around the country to perform half-time and pre-game productions. They’ve produced shows for the Holiday Bowl, Freedom Bowl, Citrus Bowl, Orange Bowl, and currently, the Outback Bowl in Tampa, Fla. For Steve and Cindy, this means for the past 15 years they’ve spent every New Year’s holiday hosting hundreds of dancers at numerous events.

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

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

Clough is responsible for all financial aspects and business operations. He has been the man of his wife and business partner. They celebrated their 40th anniversary last year. “We balance each other. She was able to focus on kids and I focused on making a viable business successful. I absolutely love it.”

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

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

“It’s taken hard work, determination and a willingness to take risks,” Clough says, of his success. “My message to young people is: believe, dream and work hard.”
Kevin Thesing, co-owner and general manager of Lakes Printing in Brainerd, has been named a 2019 Brainerd High School Hall of Fame Inductee.

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

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

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

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

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

His senior year, after earning enough credits to graduate, he participated in on-the-job training at a local feed store through H-2b, as well as the FFA. Most of his last year of high school was spent working part-time at the Blue Ox Coop Feed Store, as well as the local creamery and fertilizer plant.

After graduation, Thesing spent a year at the University of Minnesota in Morris. The next summer, he had an opportunity to go to California to assist in many community projects. The company was the Brainerd Lakes Chamber 1991 Business of the Year.

In 1990, Thesing was one of a group of Brainerd Jaycees who started the Brainerd Jaycees Ice Fishing Extravaganza. Thesing later figured out he personally logged in 2,000 volunteer hours helping to get the first contest up and running. Thesing remains a passionate supporter of FFA. He’s a current board member of the Brainerd FFA Alumni Association, an organization he’s been involved with for more than 30 years. He was awarded an Honorary Chapter degree by the Brainerd FFA. He was inducted into the Minnesota FFA Hall of Fame in 2018.

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

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

Thesing’s awards and achievements include:

- Blandin Community Leadership Program Graduate
- 1993 Minnesota Jaycees Ten Outstanding Young Men Award
- 1998 Brainerd Citizen of the Year Award
- 2006 Brainerd Sunrise Serivosa Service to Mankind Award
- 2010 Minnesota Jaycees Hall of Leadership Award
- 2010-2011 Brainerd Rotary Rotarian of the Year Award
- 2012 Community Foundation Award in Philanthropy
- 2018 Minnesota FFA Hall of Fame Recipient

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

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

“Theres not a way to put this into words, and I work with words every day of my life,” Thesing says. “All of this is so humbling. The people I’ve met through this walk through life are just amazing. I am living the life I want to live.”

Distinguished Achievement
HALL OF FAME
Wednesday, May 22, 2019
Award Ceremony 5 PM | Reception to Follow
Forestview Middle School

Stewart C. Mills Jr.