



Mavis Fodness photo/1003 Alumni Educators HOF 2024

Luverne School Board member Mike DeBates (at podium) with Superintendent Craig Oftedahl opens the Luverne Alumni and Educator Hall of Fame induction ceremonies Friday afternoon in the performing arts center. On stage (from left) are Thomas Getman, Mark Helling (son of Marvin Helling), Kevin Kessler, Gary Papik, Vonda Viland, Mark McClure (grandson of Harvey Eitrem, Esther Spease Frakes, Theresa Gits Borgstrom (daughter of Gordon Gits), Tom Menage (son of Elmer Menage) and Stuart Talbert (son of Dolly Talbert.)

Former students, teachers inducted into 2024 Luverne Alumni Hall of Fame and Luverne Educators Hall of Fame

By Lori Sorenson

Luverne High School alumni and educators were honored Friday Sept. 27, in the performing arts center for the 2024 Luverne Alumni Hall of Fame and the Luverne Educators Hall of Fame induction ceremony.

The Luverne Public Schools

Hall of Fame Committee inducted the first class of the Luverne Alumni Hall of Fame last year, and the first members of the Luverne Educators Hall of Fame were inducted Sept. 27.

Both ceremonies were part of Luverne Schools Homecoming celebration. The unveiling of the

Alumni Hall of Fame wall and Educator Hall of Fame plaque followed the ceremony.

Alumni Hall of Fame

According to the committee, the purpose of the Alumni Hall of

HALL OF FAME/SEE PAGE 7

Honor Roll of Alumni News contributors

Compiled by Johnna Ahrendt

During this past quarter ending Sept. 30, 2024, the Alumni News received money in the form of memorials, and gifts totaling \$1,795. In the memorial section below, the individual being memorialized is printed in bold print, followed by the individual or individuals who made the gift. Contributions given by graduates and friends follow the list of memorials. THANK YOU, READERS!

NOTE:

If you have recently made a contribution to the Alumni News and your name does not appear on this page, please let the staff know. Chances are your contribution was received after this page was compiled. Please watch for the next issue, January 2025, for additional names of Alumni News contributors.

Memorials and contributions may be sent to:
Alumni News
709 N. Kniss Avenue
Luverne, Minnesota 56156

Financial summary

Balance 06/30/24: \$41,620.10

Donations: \$1,795.00
Interest: \$591.73

Expenses:

Printing: 962.39
Postage: 2,994.12
Database: 85.00
Labels: 624.48
Paypal Fees: 6.76

Balance 09/30/24: \$39,334.08

Memorials

Mary Ann (Berning) Slagel '45
Betty Mae (Berning) Serie '52

Karla (Brummer) Tildahl '57
Paula (Gerike) Jolley '57

Sheryl (Roemeling) Remme '71
Terry '67 & Diane (Mollberg)
'67 Gonnerman

Leo Berning '47
Betty Mae (Berning) Serie '52

Duane Lammert '60
Garfield Henriksen '60
Hal '60 & Donna Paulson

Marian Braa - Friend
Barbara (Braa) Hasert '66
Bart Braa '70
Bernita (Braa) Wichmann '67
Bruce Braa '69
Burdell Braa '74

Donald Abild '52
Robert Anderson '52
The Mohr Family

Marlene (Kindt) Mann '64
Terry '67 & Diane (Mollberg)
'67 Gonnerman

Kenneth Cragoe '52
Jean Cragoe

Gregory Carsrud '66
Class of 1966

Norma Gangestad - Friend
Carol (Ossenfort) Oltmans '63

Gary Stamman '55
Harold Gramstad '56
Yvonne (Lind) Halter '55

Allan Meinerts '67
Allen Meinerts Family
Ardis (Ormseth) Mickelson '67
Judith (Steiner) Top '67

Roger VanRoekel '55
Yvonne (Lind) Halter '55

James Hamann '56
Harold Gramstad '56

Pamela (Nelson) Eastman '67
Ardis (Ormseth) Mickelson '67
Judith (Steiner) Top '67

Orland Sievert '56
Harland Sievert '52

Contributions:

Dick Cronberg '59
Jerilyn Britz '61
Jim Sanden - Teacher

Remembering our classmates

Compiled by Carol Schumacher Serie

1940 – 1949

Gordon Davis '46 of Roseville, MN, died June 11, 2021. Gordon served in the U.S. Army in Japan at the tail end of WWII. After returning from overseas, Gordon continued his education with help from the GI Bill. He attended Augustana University in Sioux Falls and then moved to the Twin Cities to attend the University of Minnesota. Gordon and his wife Eunice mainly lived in the Twin Cities where he worked in the insurance and investment fields. Outside of work, he was active in the St. Paul Audubon Society and enjoyed music, birding, and photography.

Gordon is survived by children Craig (Colette), Cynthia, and Bryce (Beth); 4 grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 63 years, Eunice.

Gail (Shelby) Palmer '47 of Towson, MD, died on January 2, 2024. Gail graduated from St. Olaf College in 1951 and married her husband, Robert Palmer, shortly after graduation. Bob's jobs took them from Pipestone to Mason City, IA, Dayton, OH, Columbus, OH, Minneapolis, Grand Forks, ND, Edina and Delano. They were married for 51 years

and had four children Kathy, Beth, Richard, and Anne. The family spent many years camping all over the country. Gail finally settled in Towson, MD, near her daughter, Anne, and close to her son, Richard. She was the last living Shelby sister. Shirley passed away the previous year.

Allen Willers '48 died July 9, 2024, in Luverne. Allen attended Mankato Business College for two years before being drafted. He married **Lillian '51** Deitermann on January 23, 1952, and they lived most of their lives on a farm near Beaver Creek. In 1952 Allen was drafted into the US Marine Corps for service in the Korean War. They moved to San Diego, CA, where they lived for several months prior to his deployment. After being released from active service, Allen served in the Marine Corps until 1960, when he returned to Beaver Creek. He farmed for 60-plus years. He also worked as a rural mail carrier, served in the Minnesota Army National Guard (20 years), served as foster parent and foster grandparent, Luverne school crossing guard, St. Catherine church eucharistic minister, and prison ministry. Allen was a member of the Knights of Columbus and served on the Beaver Creek Township

Board and Supervisor.

Allen is survived by his four children, Mark (Karen) Willers, Sharon (Tom) Wieneke, Michael (**Kristy '79**) Willers, Barbara (Regg) Glawe; 11 grandchildren; 30 great-grandchildren; one exchange student, David S. Tamex, Mexico; a foster daughter, Tammy Eugenius, Florida and dear friends, Harveen and Bruce Gluf.

He was preceded in death by his wife, **Lillian '51**; an infant daughter, Cheryl; and his brother, **Stanford 53**.

Ramona (Boisen) Beug '49, of Detroit Lakes, MN, died July 5, 2024. Ramona worked for Northwestern Bell Telephone for a short time while taking art instruction. She was a talented artist and calligrapher. Herbert Beug and Ramona were united in marriage on August 26, 1950, and made their home in Luverne. Ramona was active in church, Mrs. Jaycees, Cub Scouts, and volunteered with the Fireman's Auxiliary. In November 1969, the family moved to Detroit Lakes where she worked in their Coast-to-Coast Hardware store which later became Beug's Ace Hardware.

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Ramona is survived by sons, David (Mary) of San Antonio, TX, Bruce of Detroit Lakes, Mark (Barb) of Detroit Lakes and Greg (Jacinda) of Vail, AZ; son-in-law Gary Padrta of Detroit Lakes; 15 grandchildren; 27 great-grandchildren; sister-in-law Evelyn (Marty) Steffel of Nevis; three nephews and many friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Herb; son Chris; daughter Carol Padrta; infant daughter Pamela; daughter-in-law Corinne; sister-in-law Darlene Boisen; and brother **Jarvis '45** Boisen.

1950 – 1959

Kenneth Cragoe

'52 of Borrego Springs, CA, died on July 6, 2024. Ken joined the Army and served in the Military Police unit in Austria. He graduated from Mankato State College with a BA in business administration and economics and met his wife of 66 years at college. Ken was employed as a department manager for both Univac and Control Data, and later found a passion in real estate. Ken and Jean moved to a retirement community in 1997.

Ken is survived by his wife, Jean; sons David (Patty), Borrego Springs, CA, and Mike (Cora), Deerbrook, WI; two grandchildren; sisters Karen Buus (Charlie),

Luverne, Judy Ebeling, Eagle Lake, **Janice '66 (Jarnet 63)** Johansen, Hardwick; sister-in-law **Ma Reese '51** Cragoe, Luverne; and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his brother **Don '51**, and his brothers-in-law Vernon Buus and Arvid Ebeling.

Martha (Shelby)

Meinerts '53 of Lakeville, MN, died July 10, 2024. Martha took classes at Augustana College and married Lowell Meinerts on June 4, 1960, in Luverne. They made their home on a farm near Luverne. Martha was employed at Tri-State Insurance, Dr. Verlyn Johnson, DDS, General Mills, Luverne Hospital, Lakeville Target, and the Minnesota School of Beauty. She founded the family business, Riverview Kennels, and raised AKC-registered puppies for 25 years. Martha and Lowell moved to Farmington in 1997 and after Lowell's death, Martha moved to The Fountains of Hosanna in Lakeville.

Martha is survived by her children, **Merlyn '79** (Lisa) of Lakeville, **Marita '83** (James) Albinson of Wayzata, and **Rebecca '92** (Rich) Faatz of Maple Grove; 7 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren; sister **Ruth '54** Huisman of Ellsworth;

and many other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Lowell.

James McClure

'55 died August 2, 2024, in Fridley. Jim graduated from the University of Minnesota School of Business and was employed by Honeywell Aerospace & Defense Systems for 33 years. Jim gave back to his community in many ways: Civil Defense Captain for 8 years, Brooklyn Center Volunteer Fire Department for 35 years, scoutmaster for 6 years, producing several Eagle Scouts, including his sons. In retirement he was elected president of Inlet Village, Hutchinson Island, FL.

Jim is survived by his wife, **Barbara '56**; children Mark (Ann), Steve (Tara), David, Carolyn (Brendan) Smith, and Michael; 6 grandchildren; and 6 great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by an infant brother.

Patricia (McClure)

Ladd '59 died July 30, 2024, in Sioux Falls, SD. Pat attended Worthington Community College and married **Roger '60** McClure on March 5, 1960, in Luverne. Pat held various jobs including Luverne

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High School office, Connell Car Care and later Schoon Motors. After she retired, she became an antique dealer. Roger died in 1982. Pat married **Francis '61** Ladd on July 17, 1983, in Luverne. They opened an antique shop due to their shared love of antiques.

Pat is survived by her husband, **Francis '61**, Luverne; two daughters, **Cathy '79 (Ron '83)** Honken, Leota; and **Melissa '86** McClure, Omaha, NE; four grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her first husband, **Roger '60**.

1960 - 1969

Duane Lammert '60 died on September 5, 2024, in Sioux Falls. Duane moved to Sioux Falls and worked for Elliott & Anderson floor covering until he retired in 2002 after 42 years. He was united in marriage to Nikky Wendt on January 11, 1964. In January 1966 Duane enlisted in the Minnesota Army National Guard and served until he was honorably discharged in September 1970. On May 2, 1980, he was united in marriage to Peg Driscoll. Duane was a floor covering instructor at Southeast Technical Institute.

Duane is survived by his sister, **Marilyn '55** Galvin, Sioux Falls; daughter Jane

(Tom), Fort Wayne, IN; son Mark (Juedi), Minnetonka, MN; stepson Mike (Jackie), Sioux Falls; 8 grandchildren; and 6 great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife Peg, and his brothers **Marvin '57** and **David '66**.

Dr. Michael Smith '62 died July 27, 2024. Dr. Smith was a distinguished surgeon who devoted his career to the care and betterment of his patients. He served honorably in the U.S. Navy, carrying forward a legacy of service and commitment to his country.

Dr. Smith is survived by his wife, Laura; his daughter, Jennifer (Bob) Hicks, son, Matthew (Jennifer) Smith; stepdaughters, Mollye Poston and Kary (Timothy) Blanchard; brother, **David '60** Smith; and six grandchildren.

Joan (Dibbern) Mayer '62 died July 28, 2024, in Rochester, MN. Joan married Len Mayer on August 16, 1969, in Luverne. She was a special education teacher in Rushford and then in the Lewiston-Altura Schools for 43 years. While raising her family, Joan earned her master's degree in education. Joan and Len traveled around the U.S. and had a love of camping.

Joan is survived by

four sons: Jon (Angie), Doug (Wendi), Patrick (Erica), and Mark (Annie); nine grandchildren; siblings **Walter '66 (Donna '70)**, **Della '67 (David '65)**, and **Harlan '69 (Renee '72)**; and many other family members.

She was preceded in death by her husband Len, nephew **Kris '88** Mulvihill, and niece **Shannon '99** Dibbern.

Carlos D. Meinerts '62 died February 25, 2024, in Weatherford, TX. Carlos joined the U.S. Army as a young man and in his travels met his wife, Norma Jean. Carl served 27 years, retiring as Sergeant Major, receiving several awards, including the Meritorious Service Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters.

Carlos is survived by his children, Carla (Wade) Allred, Douglas (Sandra) Meinerts, and Sherry Meinerts; 6 grandchildren; 5 great-grandchildren; brothers and sisters, **George '58**, **John '56**, **Louise '60** Wylie and Allan, Sandra Ammons and family; numerous nieces, nephews and extended family and friends.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Norma Jean; brother and sisters, Lowell Meinerts, **Clarice '54** Phillips, **LylaMae '50** VandenBerg and Enola Kortlever.

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Marlene (Kindt) Mann '64 died July 24, 2024, at her home in Luverne. Marlene worked for a short time at Terrace Dairy and then Tri-State Insurance. On December 10, 1965, she was united in marriage to **Gary '63** Mann. Marlene began working in the library of Luverne High School and then transitioned to the Superintendent's office where she stayed until her retirement on July 31, 2021, after 54 years of service. She was a 4-H Leader while her daughter was a member of the Blue Mound Climbers and was honored to receive 4-H Leader of the Year award.

Marlene is survived by her husband, **Gary '63**, of Luverne; her daughter, **Michele '84** (Richard) Cofell of Brookings, SD; two grandchildren; sister-in-law Beverly Kindt of Jasper; and other relatives and friends.

1970 - 1979

Sharyl (Roemeling) Remme '71 died August 7, 2024, in Sioux Falls, SD. On September 18, 1971, Sharyl was united in marriage to **David '69** Remme in Luverne. Sharyl worked at the Good Samaritan Society-Mary Jane Brown nursing home from 1970 to 1976. From 1994 to 2014 she was employed with the Luverne Community Hospital (Sanford) until her retirement. Sharyl was very involved in

the community as a hospice volunteer and in 2017, she was named Hospice Volunteer of the Year.

Sharyl is survived by her husband, **David '69**, of Luverne; children **Eric '90** (Charron) of Sioux Falls, **Troy '97** of Worthington; two grandchildren; siblings **Harold '65** of Kennewick, WA, **Vicky '74** Ykema of Kuna, ID, and Debra (Gary) Den Besten of Fort Collins, CO.

She was preceded in death by a brother, Terry and an infant brother, Loren.

Lori Boelman '72 died August 16, 2024, in Sioux Falls, SD. Throughout her life, Lori, possessed a wonderful gift of remembering the details of what she read. She was a proud worker for many years at Rock County Opportunities in Luverne and delighted in socializing with her housemates and staff.

Lori is survived by her brothers, Wendell, of Pipestone and **William '71** (Gloria) of Aberdeen; sister Beverly Soladay of Oceanview, DE; and other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her siblings and their spouses, Delmer (Rusty) Boelman, Ecko Boelman Jr. of Hardwick, and Donna (Dave) Herman, and a brother-in-law, Robert Soladay of Albuquerque, NM.

Jean (Renes) Whitefeather '74 died June 13, 2024, in Sioux Falls, SD. Jean graduated from Bemidji State University in 1979 with a double major in elementary education and vocal music K-12. She was employed by Red Lake School District, teaching music, second grade, overseeing the in-school suspension program and was dean for students/principal for 18 years, marking a total of 34 years serving the school district, before retiring in 2012. Jean was married to Vernon Whitefeather on August 8, 1981.

Jean is survived by her son Kyle; four grandchildren and their mother, Holly Schuster; four siblings, Glenda Renes, Medina, WA, **Kate '71** Vasbinder, Port Orchard, WA, twin sister **Jane '74** (Galen) VerSteeg, Hartford, SD, and **Dave '81** (Linda) Renes, Sioux Falls; and her late husband's siblings, Bobby (Peggy) Whitefeather; sisters Donna Whitefeather and Eunice Whitefeather; and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Vernon; a brother-in-law and niece, Kip and Megan Vasbinder; and a brother-in-law, Melvin Whitefeather.

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Nancy M. Navara

'74 died on September 10, 2024, in Worthington. Nancy transitioned to independent apartment-style living at the Atrium Hi-Rise in Worthington. It was there that she began working for the Nobles County DAC. In May 2019, Nancy became a resident at the South Shore Care Center in Worthington. She was always happy and made many friends both where she lived and worked.

Nancy was preceded in death by her parents.

She is survived by her extended family and the residents and staff at South Shore Care Center.

2020 – 2029

Hunter Cope

'24 died September 15, 2024, at his home. Hunter entered the Heavy Equipment Operation program at Northwest Iowa Community College in Sheldon, IA after high school. He enjoyed his interest in trucks, trailers and heavy equipment, but most enjoyed spending time with his friends. Hunter will be remembered for always being happy, kind and considerate to everyone.

Hunter is survived by his mother and step-father, **Dawn '94 Cope**

(Tony Fluit) of Luverne; father, Rob Cope (Corene) of Statesboro, CA; three sisters, Cheyanne of Jefferson, SD, Nisha and Liliann Cope both of Luverne; maternal grandma, **Deb '73 Hanson** of Luverne; maternal grandpa, Jim Hanson of Adrian; paternal grandparents, Bob (Sue) Cope of Craig, NE; step-grandparents, William Fluit and Dennis Frazer (Shirley) of Rushmore; special people, Daniella, Sarah, Lucas, John and Erika; and other family and friends.

He was preceded in death by his brother Levi.

Luverne Schools Hall of Fame inductions/continued from page 1

Fame is to “honor former students and graduates who distinguished themselves and contributed to the vision of District 2184: Learn, Live, Lead.”

Qualifications for selection to the Alumni Hall of Fame include the following at a local, regional, state, national, or international level:

- Excellence in their profession.
- Exceptional service, volunteerism or contributions to community.
- Excellence in personal endeavors.
- Exceptional contributions to education.

Five new members of the Alumni Hall of Fame were chosen for 2024.

Thomas Getman, Class of 1959, for his work on humanitarian causes.

Thomas Getman has a master's degree in theology and served from 1963 to 1976 as Young Life director in Philadelphia and New England where he guided city and education officials in desegregating Boston schools.

As a Congressional legislative director, Getman worked in African foreign policy and helped draft the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1985 after participating in legal

sanctions against Rhodesia and Uganda.

Getman helped negotiate protocols with the presidents of Uganda and Zambia and guided warring African factions in their peace negotiations. He also was an adjunct speechwriter for regional and national political figures, including President Gerald R. Ford.

Getman served for 12 years as director of government relations and special assistant to the president of World Vision United States and later founded World Vision's office in Washington, D.C.

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Luverne Schools Hall of Fame inductions/continued from page 7

He interpreted U.S. government policy, pressed for needed foreign assistance, and advanced human rights, relief and development concerns with Congress and the White House.

From 1997 through 2001, Getman directed World Vision's programs in Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip where he worked with Palestine, Israel and Jordan to and advocate for peace and justice.

As World Vision's director for international relations, he managed liaison activities with the UN and the World Council of Churches.

Today he is president of a private consulting group for international, United Nations and non-governmental affairs working on UN Reform and humanitarian interagency partnership building.

Marvin (Whitey) Helling, Class of 1941, for statewide leadership in high school sports

At Macalester College Helling was co-captain of the 1947 MIAC Champion Football Team, an All-MIAC selection at fullback, and honored as the Athlete of the Year.

He graduated from Macalester with a BA and MA in Education, and he taught and coached at several high schools before becoming head football coach at the University of North Dakota from 1957-1967. He led the team to three North Central Conference Championships and two post-season bowl victories including the NCAA Midwest Regional Championship in 1966.

Following his coaching career he was associate executive director of the Minnesota State High School League, where he developed the Minnesota State High School Football Playoff system, football overtime rules, and the Prep Bowl.

He was also tournament manager for the Minnesota State High School Hockey Tournament and National Rules Committee Chairman for Ice Hockey and Swimming and Diving for the National Federation of State High School Associations.



Mavis Fodness photo/1003 Alumni Educators HOF 2024

Medals were given to the inductees into the Luverne Alumni Hall of Fame.

Coach Helling received numerous awards including induction into the Minnesota Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame, Charter Membership in the Macalester College Athletic Hall of Fame, the University of North Dakota Athletic Hall of Fame, and the Minnesota State High School League Hall of Fame.

Kevin Kessler, Class of 1993, for his leadership in music education

Dr. Kevin Kessler earned his B.M.E. from South Dakota State University where he studied trumpet and conducting. He earned his M.M. from the American Band College or Southern Oregon University, and a D.M.A. in Band Conducting with a minor in Music Education from the University of Iowa.

Kessler is the Director of Athletic Bands and the Lecturer of Music at SDSU, where he directs the Pride of the Dakotas Marching Band, Pep Bands, Concert Band, CommUniversity Band, and the Tube/Euphonium Ensemble. He teaches Instrumental Methods and Materials, Supervision and Administration of School Music and serves as a clinical mentor for student teachers.

Kessler is an active arranger and marching band drill designer.

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LUVERNE SCHOOLS ALUMNI & EDUCATOR INDUCTION CEREMONY

Friday ~ September 27, 2024 ~ 4 pm ~ Performing Arts Center

The Luverne Alumni Hall of Fame was established in 2022 to honor former students and graduates who have distinguished themselves and contributed to the District 2184 vision:

LEARN, LIVE, LEAD.

We are honored to induct five outstanding individuals into the second class of the
LUVERNE ALUMNI HALL OF FAME.

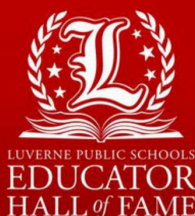
THOMAS GETMAN ~ LHS 1959

MARVIN "WHITEY" HELLING ~ LHS 1941

DR. KEVIN KESSLER ~ LHS 1993

GARY PAPIK ~ LHS 1969

VONDA VILAND ~ LHS 1984



The Luverne Educator Hall of Fame was established in 2023 as a way of maintaining the rich heritage and tradition of successful academic, extra-curricular, and operation of Luverne Public Schools and the effect educators have on the community in general.

We are honored to induct five outstanding educators into the first class of the
LUVERNE EDUCATOR HALL OF FAME.

HARVEY EITREIM

ESTHER SPEASE FRAKES

GORDON P. GITS

ELMER MENAGE

DOLLY TALBERT



Luverne Schools Hall of Fame inductions/continued from page 8

Prior to his appointment at SDSU, he served as a band director for 14 years in the Brandon Valley, South Dakota School District, where his concert and marching bands consistently earned top rankings and ratings at regional and national contests.

On February 9, 2024, Phi Beta Mu of South Dakota, an international honorary fraternity for band directors, awarded Kessler the 2024 South Dakota Phi Beta Mu Outstanding Bandmaster Award at the South Dakota In-Service Music Conference held in Brookings.

Gary Papik, Class of 1969, for his leadership in business and community building

Gary Papik studied business at Bemidji State University and Minnesota State University and returned to Luverne to run the Oldsmobile business when the owner fell ill.

He later negotiated the sale of that business to

Schoon Motors, where he worked alongside his mentors Warren Schoon and Arnie Tofteland. Papik purchased the dealership in 1990 and five years later built a new operation near I-90.

The company now includes dealerships in Rock Rapids and Sibley in Iowa and employs more than 70 people full- and part-time.

In 2013 Papik was honored with the TIME Dealer of the Year Award among 17,000 dealers nationwide, and he was chosen as a representative with the Minnesota Automobile Dealers Association.

Papik was a founding member of Luverne Initiatives for Tomorrow and is now vice president. He's been a leader in many large community-driven commercial projects such as: GrandStay Hotel & Suites, Take 16 Brewing Co., Luverne

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Mavis Fodness photo/1003 Alumni Educators HOF 2024

Gary Papik, LHS Class of 1969, receives the Luverne Alumni Hall of Fame medal from Luverne Hall of Fame Committee member Mike DeBates.

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Trolley LLC, the Arcade Building and the meat market.

He supports hundreds of community functions (such as serving as a mentor for the Southwest CEO program) and fundraising events not only with time and energy but with financial resources.

Vonda Viland, Class of 1984, for her work in education

Vonda Viland led the Morongo Unified School District's (California) alternative program for at-risk students for seven years, working with students who had been disenfranchised from the traditional school system.

About 90 percent of her student body lived below the poverty level, with many struggling with abuse, neglect, parenthood, depression, anxiety and addiction. She and her staff developed an individualized program where they worked to educate the child, not just teach the curriculum.

Viland's book, "Lessons from the Bad Kids,"

and workshops center on the award-winning documentary, "The Bad Kids," which offers a model for public education to address and combat the crippling effects of poverty in schoolchildren.

As a secondary English teacher for 16 years, Viland received the Commitment to Excellence Award from the California Middle School Foundation and Partnership and was recognized as Teacher of the Year for the California League of Middle Schools Region 10.

After earning her Master's Degree in School Administration from Cal State, she worked as a site administrator at the elementary, secondary and continuation levels. She wrote and led a successful Distinguished School application and three successful Model School applications.

Viland has presented numerous staff development programs, including California Middle School Symposium trainings on portfolio

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“The Educator Hall of Fame emphasizes the tremendous impact educators have made on the lives of students throughout the years and also the impact educators have on the community.”

— Luverne Superintendent Craig Oftedahl said this summer when 2024 inductees were announced



Mavis Fodness photo/1003 Alumni Educators HOF 2024
Herb Huhnerkoch of Fort Myers, Florida, takes a picture of his sister's name, Esther Spease Frakes, included in the 2024 Luverne Educators Hall of Fame on the second floor of the Luverne Middle-High School commons. Frakes' brother-in-law, Gerald Geiger, is in the background.

development and integrated instruction and district trainings on rubric development and utilization.

Luverne Educator Hall of Fame

The Luverne Educator Hall of Fame will induct its first class this September.

The Educator Hall of Fame is intended to “maintain the rich heritage and tradition of successful academic, extra-curricular, and operations of Luverne Public Schools,” according to the committee.

“The Educator Hall of Fame emphasizes the tremendous impact educators have made on the lives of students throughout the years and also the impact educators have

on the community,” Luverne Superintendent Craig Oftedahl said this summer when 2024 inductees were announced.

To be selected to the Educator Hall of Fame, the teacher or administrator must have been a full-time educator in the Luverne Public Schools for at least eight years.

They must have “distinguished themselves by demonstrating exceptional leadership, character, and achievement during his/her tenure in the Luverne Public School District.”

Nominees must also be retired from or not working in the district for a minimum of five years.

The candidates are also considered for their significant

and/or long-term contributions to Luverne Public Schools and the Rock County community.

“I’m hopeful this type of program will help restore the nobility of the profession to our younger generations and also honor some wonderful people who left their mark on the Luverne Public School system and the entire community,” Oftedahl said this summer.

The inaugural class of the Educator Hall of Fame includes five honorees.

Harvey Eitreim, longtime superintendent

Harvey Eitreim was a teacher, principal, and superintendent. He came to Luverne in 1943

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to serve as principal of Luverne schools. When the superintendent resigned, Harvey succeeded him and held the post for over 25 years until his retirement in 1978.

During his early years as superintendent, there were 65 different school districts in Rock County, most operating out of one-room school houses. Following school consolidations, the number of ungraded elementary districts had been reduced to 16 by the early 1960s.

Eitreim took the lead in planning for the new Luverne High School building that was completed in 1956. The west wing was then completed in 1965 and the northeast addition in 1973. When vocational education was integrated, Eitreim gave the necessary direction that led to the formation of the Blue Mound Cooperative Center.

He worked closely with the Minnesota State High School League and was elected as the league's president in 1964. He developed a number of personal philosophies about people, education, and administration, including "Education only has one purpose: to make boys and girls better than if they had never gone to school," and "Whatever you do, make hasty decisions slowly."

Esther Spease Frakes, German and English teacher

Esther Spease Frakes was a German and English teacher in Luverne Public Schools for 35 years, from 1964 to 1999.

Luverne was her first and last teaching job. Being in her German classes was not a requirement, but an experience.

Early in her career, "Frau Spease," as she was known to generations of LHS students, was selected as one of 45 teachers to participate in a German immersion program.

She turned the LHS German program into a four-year course of study students can transfer into college credits.

Frau had a sign above her door that said, "Through this door go the best students in the world."

In 1975 she took students on the first of many trips to Germany.

Frau Spease was the coach for the first LHS girls' golf team for one year with a perfect season for the girls.

She was a prom adviser for 25 years, the intramural bowling coach for 20 years, and she led the German Club for all her years of teaching.



Mavis Fodness photo/1003 Alumni Educators HOF 2024
Large glass apples were given to the five Luverne Educators Hall of Fame selections Friday afternoon in an induction ceremony in the performing arts center. The apples were made by glass artist Tom Maras, an LHS Class of 1989 graduate.

Frau Spease was the 1984-85 Luverne Teacher of the Year.

Following her retirement, Spease Frakes was elected to the Luverne City Council in 2004 and served for 12 years before retiring from public service in 2016.

Since Fall 2004 she continues to work as proofreader for the Rock County Star Herald and also continues as a volunteer for Hospice in the Cottage gardens and at St. John Lutheran Church in various capacities.

Gordon Gits, English teacher

Gordon P. Gits was most widely known as the energetic Luverne High School English teacher who was quick to correct his students' grammar and for his Friday vocabulary tests.

Gits taught in the Luverne Public School system for 34 years, from 1955 to 1989. He felt "the reward of being a teacher was to actually see a kid learn."

During his teaching career, he was named "Outstanding Young Educator" by the

Luverne Dollars for Scholars ... Did you know?

Here's how students apply for their Dollars for Scholars scholarships

Scholarship application season is upon us once again! The Luverne High School Class of 2025 is busy working on their scholarship applications. They will be evaluated on the following criteria: academic performance, scholastic aptitude, work experience, school activity and community involvement.

Students are also required to write an essay describing their future aspirations as well as seek a recommendation from someone, whether a teacher or an adult who has worked with the student. These applications are due each year around February 15. All applications are submitted through an online student profile application located on the Luverne Dollars for Scholars website.

Once all of the information is compiled, the selection process begins. Each application is assigned a number. The Luverne High School counselor verifies each students' class rank, GPA and ACT scores.

Only the application number, not the applicant name, is seen throughout the rest of the scoring. Each essay is read and scored by a group of DFS board members. References, work experience, school activity and community involvement are cross checked against the computerized score assigned each applicant.

Not all applicants receive a scholarship. Applications that do not reach the minimum score do not qualify for a scholarship award. None of the scholarships are based on financial need.

Good luck to the Class of 2025! We look forward to awarding your hard work over the past four years.

If you would like to contribute to Luverne Dollars for Scholars, or receive more information, please write:

Luverne Dollars for Scholars
PO Box 822
Luverne, MN 56156

Email: luvernedfs@gmail.com
Call: 507-227-4030 (Johnna Ahrendt)
Or visit: www.luverne.dollarsforscholars.org

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*If so, please call Patti Pierson at 507-669-2371 or email her at piersonprp@alliancecom.net with the correct postal and email address of your children.
Thank you*

Attention snowbirds:

If you are not going to be at the address that you got your July issue during the months of October, January, April issue if you could email me your alternative address I would appreciate it and will change it back and forth according to what month you will be gone so that we can save some money on the "temporary away" returns....thank you...

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or 1562 201st ST Hardwick MN 56134



Mavis Fodness photo/1003 Alumni Educators HOF 2024

Esther Spease Frakes, who taught at Luverne High School from 1964 to 1999, delivers her acceptance speech at the Luverne Educators Hall of Fame induction ceremony

Luverne Schools Hall of Fame inductions/[continued from page 12](#)

Luverne Jaycees in 1967 and in 1968 he received the “Teacher of Excellence” by the Minnesota Teacher of the Year program.

Gits was a volunteer on many projects and played an integral role in launching the Luverne Alumni News.

He served on many civic commissions, boards, and committees.

He was a Luverne city councilman for 12 years, and in 1986 he was elected mayor of Luverne for three terms and served from 1986 to 1992.

Elmer Menage, athletic director, coach, and physical education teacher

Elmer I. Menage arrived in Luverne in 1967. He taught

physical education and driver’s education, was head football and track coach, and later became Luverne’s athletic director.

In high school Elmer excelled in football, basketball and track. He was then a running back and kicker for the Morningside College Chiefs.

Menage taught and coached generations of students and treasured the relationships he had with each student, parent and colleague.

He received many accolades during his educational career.

These included Morningside College Alumni Coach of the Year in 1984, District 8 Football Coach of the Year in 1974, Region 2 Football Coach of the Year in 1974, and Region 3A

Activities Director of the Year in 1992.

He entered the Minnesota Football Coaches Hall of Fame in 2000 and the Minnesota Athletic Director Hall of Fame in 2015.

Menage retired in 1998 after teaching for 31 years in Luverne.

Dolly Talbert, music teacher, choir director

Dolly A. Talbert taught 23 years in Luverne Public Schools where her passion for music became a career.

She maintained contact with students by serving as an accompanist for choirs and vocal and instrumental soloists at

Luverne Schools Hall of Fame inductions/continued from page 14

Luverne and Hills-Beaver Creek schools and teaching piano lessons. Another joy for her was reading to elementary classes.

During her teaching years, Talbert was a member of several professional organizations. She was the 1989 Luverne Teacher of the Year and the 1992 Minnesota Choral Director of the Year. Her love for making music found her directing and accompanying not only school choirs, but also church and community vocal and bell choirs for over 50 years.

She directed community Christmas cantatas and also “The Has Beens,” a group of male teaching colleagues.

Talbert also wrote several hymns using lyrics written by her church pastors.

Her profound impact on the legacy of music in the Luverne schools and community will live on for generations.

This information originally appeared in the Sept. 26 Rock County Star Herald.



Mavis Fodness photo/1003 Alumni Educators HOF 2024

Members of the Luverne Alumni Hall of Fame have their names engraved into a black granite block located under the canopy on the east side of the Luverne Middle-High School. Hall of Fame committee member Mike DeBates revealed the names of the Class of 2024 Friday afternoon after the induction ceremony. The 2024 inductees include Thomas Getman, Marvin Helling, Kevin Kessler, Gary Papik and Vonda Viland.

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Alumni News

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