

Waconia High School Hall of Fame – Class of 2008

Class of 2008: Mary Jo Gothmann, Tracy Johnson, Phyllis Lehrke, George Peoples, Brook Peterson and George Wemeier

Mary Jo Gothmann:

A 1981 graduate of Waconia High School, Mary Jo began taking piano lessons at age 6 from Bill Niebuhr, studied piano from Beverly Briggs in Waconia, and studied at the MacPhail School of Music in Minneapolis during her high school years. She was a student of Ron Larson's and participated in choir, pop group, madrigal, theatre, band, all state band, and marching band.

After graduating from WHS, she went to St. Olaf and graduated with a major in Piano Performance in 1985. She then went on to graduate school at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston and earned a master's degree in Piano Performance. She received a 2nd Master's in Collaborative Piano from the University of Minnesota, where she studied with renowned pianist Margo Garrett. She has worked with the Metropolitan Opera (Met) in New York City. Mary Jo has also worked at Santa Fe Opera, Minnesota Opera, Berkshire Opera, Lake George Opera and Central City Opera. She has performed with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, EOS Orchestra in New York City, the Taos Chamber Music Group and the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra.

Currently, she works with young singers at the Minnesota Opera, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and is principal organist at Zion Lutheran Church in Anoka. She lives in Shoreview with her husband, Brian, and 6 year old daughter, Amelia.

Tracy Johnson:

A 1989 graduate and three-sport standout student athlete. Tracy excelled in track & field earning 5 Varsity letters; setting school records in 100 meter high hurdles, 300 meter hurdles and shot put. She was a 3-time All-State hurdler and finished as 2-time Class A State 100 meter high hurdles Runner-up. As a senior, she was named to the AAU All-American Honorable Mention team and was inducted into the Waconia HS Track Hall of Fame in 1993.

On the Volleyball court, Tracy was the Middle Hitter on the 1988 Region 5A Runner-up team and was selected to the All-Conference team that same year. Tracy's basketball career began when she earned the starting point guard spot as an 8th grader. Over her career, she became a 5-year letter winner and was named team captain her sophomore, junior and senior year. She finished her career as the Boys & Girls School's All-Time leading scored (1,134 points), which has since been broken.

She continued her outstanding athletic career by playing basketball at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota where she received a full ride scholarship. She was the starting point guard for four years. In her freshman season, the Augustana Women's Basketball team

reached the NCAA Division II National Tournament for the first time in school history and also reached the Elite Eight her senior season.

After college, Tracy returned to Waconia to become the Head Girls' Basketball coach, and worked as the Community Education Youth Enrichment Coordinator. Tracy currently resides in Cold Spring, MN where she continues to work with the Rocori school district girls's athletic programs.

Phyllis Lehrke:

Call it what you will: home economics, consumer management, or family dynamics, Phyllis Lehrke taught it all at Waconia High School full time from 1965-1997. Her personal philosophy that, *"education is an investment that no human being can take from one"* was evident in her commitment to students in order that they gain the most they could from their education.

Phyllis was also a strong proponent of student involvement outside the classroom. The Future Homemakers of America, a home economics extracurricular in the 60's, quickly became the Future Leaders of America under her direction. What once had been an organization appealing to only a limited number of students became a program emphasizing personal growth in public speaking, organization, and parliamentary procedure that drew large student participation. Creating opportunities for children to have a better life was Phyllis' purpose. After 44 years of classroom experience, Phyllis continues to assist to this day children and adults with parliamentary procedure activities, both locally and nationally.

George Peoples:

George was not an exceptional athlete during his high school career but it was, instead, his quiet leadership, congenial manner and hardworking "can do" attitude that made him a real stand out. In high school he was a 2 year letter winner in football and was awarded the team "Mr. Hustle" award 2 years in a row: 1993-94. He participated in baseball, lettered his Senior year, and received the "Chief" award 2 years in a row, and award given more for character than athleticism.

Besides participating in athletics, he enjoyed singing and was a member of choir and pop group, achieving superior ratings for solos in 1993 and 1994 and All State Choir in 1994. George represented the student body as a Student Council President 1994.

Today George's influence continues in the classroom. Since 2001, he has been teaching 6th grade at Chaska Middle School West. He has been coaching as an Assistant Varsity Softball Coach at Chaska High School since 2000. The Team took 2nd in the State Tournament in 2007.

Brook Peterson: (1935-1986)

Brook came to Waconia in the fall of 1959 as a teacher of social studies and English. His assignment also included the directing of drama for the high school. He served in that capacity for 3 years. During that period, it quickly became evident that Brook was indeed a

special educator. He was named Minnesota Teacher of the Year in 1960 at age 25, and was one of 9 finalists for National Teacher of the Year. In 1961, the nationally syndicated *Look Magazine* named him one of the top 8 outstanding teachers in the nation.

After receiving his M.A. from the University of Minnesota in 1962, he was appointed Principal of W.H.S. and remained in that capacity until his death in 1986. To his fellow educators, Brook was known as a leader, a fellow teacher, and a friend to all. He had a real vision for quality education in Waconia and wasn't afraid to seek out and try new methods to bring it about. Brook expected the best from his students and staff and led by personal example and personal contact – a real people's person. He was the face of Waconia High School, serving actively in many organizations, including: the Lions, the Waconia Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and the Carver County Mental Health Board. Trinity Lutheran Church found him a strong committed member. The name Brook Peterson continues to this day to represent the best of Waconia High School.

George Wemeier:

A 1948 Waconia High School graduate, George lettered all four years here in baseball, basketball, and football. He lettered 4 years in football and one year in basketball at Macalaster College. He taught at Braham, Henry, and Washburn High Schools. At Washburn, his coaching led the football team to 8 conference titles and 4 state championships, winning 60 games without a loss. He was also an assistant football coach for 9 years at the University of Minnesota.

He has received many prestigious awards: 4 time City Coach of the Year, Region V Coach of the Year, MN. High School Football Coach of the Year, Macalaster College Distinguished Citizen's Award, Hall of Fame inductee at both Washburn High School and Macalaster College.

George has served on numerous athletic councils and as a delegate to the American Football Coaches' Association. He has served on numerous committees – from high school committees for student integration to community Halloween party chairman.

Today he enjoys a little more time with his family, Sue, his wife and 2 adult children Peter and Ann.