



North Cedar Community School District
ALUMNI AWARDS

Alumni Awards honor graduates of North Cedar High School or one of the former districts that now make up North Cedar. Awards are given to alums in recognition of their professional achievements, service to non-profits, community impact, fine arts accomplishments and/or athletic excellence. Nominees are reviewed and recipients are selected by a committee made up of school and community representatives.

2020-21 Alumni Award Recipients

Alumni Community Impact Award

Linda Coppess

Alumni Achievement Award

Jon Gadelmann

Alumni Service Award

William Hensch

Alumni Achievement Award

Jen Neubauer

Alumni Achievement Award

Stephen Thien

Alumni Community Impact Award

Linda Coppess



Linda (Gutwiler) Coppess is a 1980 graduate of Lincoln High School where she was a four-year volleyball and basketball player. She was also a member of the National Honor Society and involved in marching

band color guard and drama.

She graduated from American Institute of Business, Des Moines, in 1982. Linda has lived in the Lincoln and North Cedar districts most of her life and has served the communities of Stanwood and Mechanicsville during this time.

Since graduating from Lincoln, she has spearheaded the planning for her class's reunions. Linda belonged to the Stanwood Laetitians, serving as the organization's president, organizing the blood drives they sponsored, making new resident welcome baskets and assisting with other activities. Through the years, she organized the Stanwood Fire Department breakfasts and dinners.

Linda has been very involved with the Stanwood Union Church, including serving as a Sunday School teacher and superintendent, Vacation Bible School coordinator and teacher, church board member and chairperson, endowment committee member and church dinner chair. She also used her talents to design the church's website. Currently, Linda continues to serve on the church board, is an EMT for both

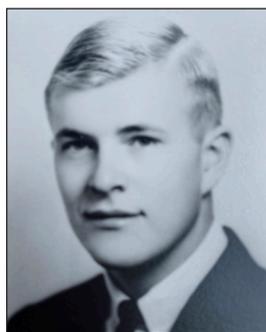
Mechanicsville and Stanwood and is a trustee for Fremont Township.

In addition to her volunteering, Linda has worked as the city clerk for Stanwood and is currently the city clerk for Mechanicsville, a position she has held since 2002. In her capacity as city clerk, Linda has assisted with the Christmas lighting contests, soup suppers, Halloween trunk-or-treat, softball and baseball complex food stand and many other activities.

Linda and her husband, Dennis, live near Mechanicsville. They have two sons and three grandchildren. Besides working alongside her husband on the family farm and for the cities of Stanwood and Mechanicsville, Linda was previously employed by Merchants National Bank and McCleod USA in Cedar Rapids. Her parents are Sharon and the late Pat Gutwiler.

Alumni Achievement Award

Jon Gadelmann



Jon Gadelmann was a 1962 graduate of Clarence High School. While in high school he was involved in student government, drama and managed the basketball team. He also graduated valedictorian of his class.

He earned his bachelor's degree in farm operations from Iowa State University, Ames, in 1966. He went on to complete graduate studies, including his Ph.D., in plant breeding from ISU in 1970.

For two years, he served as assistant professor of statistics at ISU.

Jon missed the outdoor activities of plant breeding and his farmer's heart was still calling. In 1972, he accepted an offer to join the Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics at the University of Minnesota, St. Paul, as assistant professor of plant breeding and leader of the corn breeding project. For the next 15 years, he advised M.S. and Ph.D. students of plant breeding and conducted research in corn breeding. One of his greatest professional joys and accomplishments included working with and helping to train graduate students during his tenure at the university.

In 1976, Jon was contacted by Ron Holden, then president of Holden's Foundation Seeds, and asked to consult for their expanding corn breeding programs. Over the next 11 years, he continued to expand his knowledge of applied corn breeding with Holden's growing group of breeders. In 1987, he joined the team at Holden's Foundation Seeds full-time as plant breeder, where he worked to develop Holden's cooperative biotechnology programs and grew their international efforts in Europe, South America and Asia. He remained with Holden's until his retirement in 2001.

Jon was the recipient of many academic and professional awards and honors, including the 1999 Crop Science Society of America Genetics and Plant Breeding Award for Industry. He served on national and international plant breeding committees and was associate and technical editor for the Crop Science publication.

Jon passed away in July 2008 and is survived by his wife, Lynn, two children and five grandchildren. During his retirement, he produced many creative toys and inventions. He enjoyed spending time with family and friends at his beloved northern Minnesota cabin on Horseshoe Lake and his home in Roseville, Minn.

Applications for the 2022-23 North Cedar Alumni Awards are due Sept. 15, 2022. The nomination form is available at www.north-cedar.org

Alumni Service Award William Hensch



William Hensch is a graduate of Lowden High School. While in high school he played baseball and was in band, choir and drama. Originally set to graduate in 1961, but due to a bout with pneumonia, he had to retake

his sophomore year.

Following graduation in 1962, he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and became a flight engineer at Chanute Air Force Base, Rantoul, Illinois. He later was stationed in Vietnam and was a crew member on a C7a cargo plane. He flew 210 combat missions, and they transported everything imaginable, including a live water buffalo. As a result of his service, he was awarded The Distinguished Flying Cross for saving a soldier's

life. It wasn't until 47 years later that he received the medal at his nephew's military retirement ceremony.

After Vietnam, he found work as a mechanic. In 1970 he was accepted as an Illinois State Trooper where he policed the Illinois Tollway in central Illinois and retired honorably in 1993.

Bill is a 45-year member and commander of the Sidney, Illinois, American Legion Post 433. He is also a 40-year member and president of the Sidney Lions Club. He recently retired after 45 years of service as a volunteer firefighter, including eight years as chief, and EMT. In addition to other community involvement, he served on the Board of Trustees for the Village of Sidney. He continues as secretary/treasurer of the Sidney Fire Protection District. He is also active in church activities at Countryside United Methodist Church and remains active in other community activities.

In 1965, Bill was set up on a blind-date with his soon-to-be wife, Shari, and they have shared 55 years of marriage. Their family consists of two sons, with extensive careers in firefighting, their wives and four grandchildren. Bill has a true love of God, family and his country.

Alumni Achievement Award Jen Neubauer



Jen (Wendt) Neubauer graduated from Clarence-Lowden High School in 1989. She was active in high school as a four-sport athlete, involved in fine arts and a member of the National Honor Society. As a

member of the local 4-H clubs, she enrolled in a child development project creating her own research tracking physical and cognitive development in a group of local children. There was no doubt she was destined for a career in education.

Jen went on to attend Wartburg College, Waverly, graduating in 1993 with a B.S. in K-12 physical education and health education. During college, she was president of the education honor society, one of the first intramural student directors, awarded the NASPE Physical Education Major of the Year and was the first student to graduate with a K-12 health education major. Her first teaching job was at Urbandale High School.

In 1995, Jen was awarded a graduate teaching assistantship at Iowa State University, Ames, where she gained valuable teaching and collegiate coaching and recruiting experiences, interned as assistant general manager of the

Iowa Blizzard professional volleyball team, completed her thesis on occupational stress of Iowa high school athletic directors, received the Helen LeBaron Hilton Graduate Teaching Excellence Award and earned her master's degree in exercise and sport science.

She then went to Kenosha, Wis., where she helped plan and design an integrated PE/health course for a college preparatory high school being built without a gymnasium. Upon returning to Iowa, she taught at Linn-Mar Middle School, Marion. Coe College, Cedar Rapids, was next on the journey where she taught PE and health courses. That was followed by an opportunity with PE4life, as one of three people to lead an expansion across Iowa. She has also taught at Des Moines' Drake University where she authored and taught a nationally recognized graduate course focusing on middle school PE for their distance learning program.

Throughout her career, Jen has designed and implemented health and wellness curriculum, organized wellness fairs and acquired grants and support for new and innovative programming. She shares her experiences and leadership skills through involvement in professional organizations. She was recognized with the IAHPERD Middle School PE Teacher of the Year for Iowa and as one of 10 teachers across the nation to be awarded the first ever AAHPERD Hoops for Heart national grant for her work with the American Heart Association.

Since 2014, she has been teaching PE at Alexander Elementary in the Iowa City Community School District. Jen and her husband, Keith, live in Shueyville. They have two children. Her parents are Steve and Becky Wendt, Clarence.

Alumni Achievement Award Stephen Thien



Stephen Thien graduated from Clarence High School in 1962. While in high school he was a four-year basketball player and twice selected for the Eastern Iowa All Star team. He also lettered for four years in base-

ball. He served as class president and was active in 4H.

Following graduation, he enrolled at Iowa State University, Ames, and received a degree in agronomy. There he served in the Student Agronomy Club as a vice-president and competed on the National Soil Judging Team. He continued his education at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Ind., receiving M.S. and Ph.D. degrees with studies focused on the biochemistry of root and soil interaction during nutrient uptake. Thanks to experiences with two top teaching professors at Purdue, he knew he was called to university teaching.

Out of graduate school, in 1970, he joined the faculty in the Department of Agronomy at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kan. There he was a teacher and researcher specializing in soil and environmental sciences. There he developed a love to shape the minds of learners to reach high crop production levels using environmentally conscious conservation practices.

While at Kansas State he was recognized with all five of the top national awards in his profession and received the Distinguished Teaching Scholar Award from his peers. He initiated the campus-wide Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences program and was its director. He also served as assistant head for teaching in the agronomy department. He served as lead advisor for the national agronomy student club and numerous other student groups on campus leading study groups on trips throughout the U.S., Mexico, South America and Europe. He retired from Kansas State in 2014 and was granted emeritus status.

Along with his teaching career, he maintained a research program focused on best soil management related to agriculture production, golf course construction and use and soil resilience to intensive military training exercises. He also published a textbook and numerous professional articles. On why he chose to become an educator and scientist, he said it is all about understanding the world around him and helping others do the same.

Steve is married to Maureen Robinson, a 1963 Clarence High School graduate. They have a son and daughter along with their spouses and five grandchildren. He continues to be involved in church life in Manhattan and maintains a gardening hobby which includes cross breeding daylilies where he grows 600 plus different daylilies with half being his own hybrid creations.

THANK YOU to the North Cedar Education Foundation for financially supporting the Alumni Awards and Reception.