

We proudly salute our...

Graduates of Distinction 2009

These Walla Walla Public Schools graduates
have distinguished themselves in their
communities, professions, and careers.

They continue to give of themselves to
society and bring honor to the district.



2009 Graduates of Distinction



Greg Ralston Pepin
Class of 1968

Greg Ralston Pepin was raised in Walla Walla, completed all of his education here and graduated from Walla Walla High School in 1968. He attended West Point, earning a degree and beginning a 26-year military career in 1973. A majority of his assignments were in Turkey, where he became fluent in the language and grew to love the country and its people. During the first Gulf War, "Desert Storm," he served

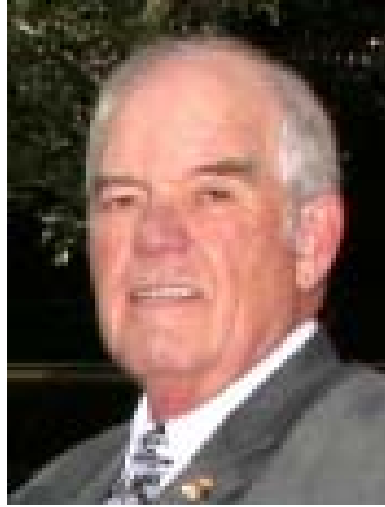
as a military spokesman for daily media briefings and also performed artillery duties during operations to liberate Kuwait.

Pepin joined Boeing as the company's director of Turkey in 1999. His current position is vice president of Boeing International and president of Boeing Turkey, where he is responsible for all military and civilian sales in a country of more than 70 million people. He recently was invited to be part of President Obama's historic visit to the country.

According to his nominators, Pepin has a keen interest in helping the Turkish people. With Boeing sponsorship, he has undertaken more than 50 education and civic projects, building schools, funding computer and science labs, donating library books and providing both sports and medical equipment. He visits Walla Walla frequently and intends to move here when he retires. To keep connected with his hometown, Pepin is helping raise money for new playground equipment at Blue Ridge Elementary School.

He was nominated by his mother, Joan Pepin, who still resides in Walla Walla. In her nomination, she mentions a phrase that Greg likes to quote: "The first time you help somebody, it's because you want to help. The second time you give, it's because you care."

Inspirational Staff – James "Jim" Chubb, Teacher and Principal at both Pioneer and Garrison Middle Schools



R.F. "Dick" Monahan
Class of 1958

As a high school student, R.F. "Dick" Monahan was a leader on and off the football field. Following his 1958 graduation, he attended the University of Idaho, where he earned his initial degree in 1962 and then graduated law school in 1968. He returned to Walla Walla to practice with the Minnick and Hayner firm, formed a law partnership with Bill Roach in 1976, and recently joined his oldest daughter Bridie in their own family

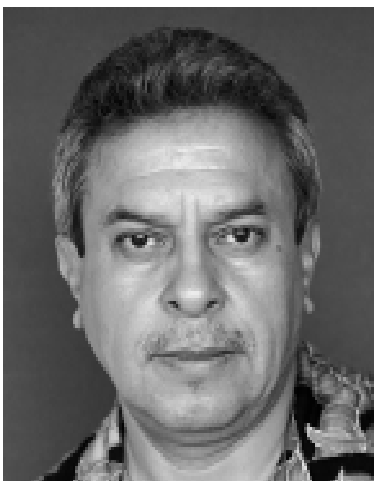
practice. He has earned numerous awards for his legal work, including a pair of Pro Bono Attorney of the Year awards from the Blue Mountain Action Council, recognizing his many hours of work for people who don't have the resources to hire an attorney but need legal services.

Monahan's second career began as a hobby, according to his daughters. He and his wife Brenda started with several quarter horses and moved into breeding and racing under the colors of Triple M/E Stables. Monahan worked his way through various committees of the American Quarter Horse Association and was invited to join the Executive Committee in 2007. In 2011, he will assume the office of Association president.

Civic and community involvement are important to Monahan, who has served on the YMCA board of directors for more than 37 years and been active in many capacities with Walla Walla Fair and Frontier Days since 1975. He served on the United Way board for five years and was president in 1975. His nominators say he is an "enthusiastic supporter" of Big Blue Boosters who attends most home football and basketball games. In addition, the Monahans opened their home to three foster children of whom two have stayed close to the family into adulthood.

Mr. Monahan was nominated by his daughters, Bridie Monahan-Hood and Casey Monahan, who summed up their nomination by writing: "He is a leader, a father, a husband and a friend. First and foremost, Dick is our father."

Inspirational Staff: Felix Fletcher, P.E. Teacher and Football Coach (deceased)



Daniel DeSiga
Class of 1967

Daniel DeSiga is the child of migrant workers who moved from Texas to the Walla Walla Valley as part of the braceros program to provide workers during World War II. As a young boy, he toiled in fields with his family and experienced the culture that has become the artistic focus of his life's work. He enlisted in the Army following his 1967 graduation from Wa-Hi and served for two years. He attended the University of Washington in the early

1970's and graduated with a degree in fine arts in 1975. During this time, he received the Governor's Award (and scholarship) for Academic Excellence.

Following graduation, DeSiga's journey and career took him through California, New Mexico, Texas and then back to Southeastern and Central Washington. After working as an art instructor and freelance artist, he became graphic artist and exhibition designer for the Fresno Metropolitan Museum from 1985-88 and then worked as set and costume designer for the San Antonio Opera. In the early 1990's he set out for Santa Fe, where he worked three years with Amado Maurilio Pena, a major name among contemporary Western artists. This association gave him an avenue to more recognition for his own artwork which is now known throughout the United States.

Since his return to the Pacific Northwest and gallery opening in Toppenish, DeSiga is probably best known for his murals, including six in the Toppenish and Yakima area. His subject matter is drawn from personal experience, as he said in a 2004 interview: "These are the sights, sounds, and smells that are in me." DeSiga is an honorary member of the Rebel Chicano Art Front, an artistic collective based in Sacramento with a mission to provide a bilingual/bicultural arts center where artists could come together, exchange ideas and provide artistic, cultural and educational programs for the public.

DeSiga was nominated by members of the Walla Walla High School Latino Club as a "statement and testimony to the value of education and how it can affect the future of Latino farm worker children." The nomination continues that "Through his work, he has helped not only paint images of our experiences, but he has become a person who can inspire us to seek out the possibilities of higher education."

Inspirational Staff – Ed Moser, Wa-Hi Art Teacher (deceased)



Dr. Philip Phillips
Class of 1975

After graduating from Walla Walla High School in 1975, Philip Phillips went on to attend Walla Walla College, earning degrees in both chemistry and mathematics in 1979. He completed his graduate work in physical chemistry and received his Ph.D. from the University of Washington in 1982. He was selected for a Miller Research Fellowship at the University of California at Berkeley. The Fellowships are intended for young men and women of "great promise" who are

completing work for a doctoral degree and they provide opportunities to pursue research on the Berkeley campus. All Fellows are selected on the basis of academic achievement and the promise of their scientific research.

Dr. Phillips served on the faculty of the Department of Chemistry at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for nine years and moved to his current position as Professor of Physics at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, in 1993. As a theoretical advanced matter physicist, Dr. Phillips has earned an international reputation for his work and research in solid state physics. He has published numerous articles over the years and, according to nominator Jan Eyestone, has written textbooks in which he makes physics concepts much more comprehensible.

In addition to his work as scientist and researcher, Dr. Phillips has been the advisor of many Ph.D. candidates and postdoctoral fellows, by whom he is regarded as both mentor and friend. Fellow Professor of Physics Eduardo Fradkin says Dr. Phillips "has been very active in attracting minority students to Physics in general" and to the University of Illinois Ph.D. program in particular.

He was nominated by his friend Jan Eyestone of Walla Walla. In summing up his nomination, she states "he is a most deserving graduate of distinction who serves as an impressive role model for Walla Walla youth."

Inspirational Staff – Duane Kusler, Wa-Hi English Teacher (deceased)

Past Graduates of Distinction

Gerwyn Jones	Class of 1928	Ned Shafer	Class of 1961
Claro E. Bergevin	Class of 1941	Philip N. Lane, Jr.	Class of 1962
Harold R. Frank	Class of 1941	Stephen Hayner	Class of 1966
Charlotte Wirth	Class of 1944	Barbara Johnson	Class of 1967
Gordon S. Riess	Class of 1944	James K. Hayner	Class of 1968
Neil Follett	Class of 1944	Bruce T. Bjerke	Class of 1968
Gene Frank	Class of 1946	Karen E. Glover	Class of 1968
Gordon L. Jaynes	Class of 1946	Eric Johnson	Class of 1968
James F. Aylward	Class of 1946	Michael Maiden	Class of 1968
Dr. William C. Dement	Class of 1947	Michael M. Murr	Class of 1969
Dr. George Cole Williams Jr.	Class of 1947	Jeanne Parker-Miller	Class of 1969
Val Jensen	Class of 1947	Vickie Anderson VanZandt	Class of 1972
Richard P. Neher	Class of 1949	Mark Anderson	Class of 1973
Wilber Pribilsky	Class of 1951	AnnRene Joseph	Class of 1973
Edward N. "Ned" Lange	Class of 1952	John E. (Jack) Pelo	Class of 1974
Robert I. Brunton	Class of 1953	Jeffrey Ray	Class of 1978
H. Eugene Blattman	Class of 1954	Irene Gonzales	Class of 1980
Gretchen Miller Kafoury	Class of 1959		