

Walla Walla Public Schools
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Eleanor Roosevelt



'The future belongs to those who
believe in the beauty of their dreams.'

Walla Walla Public Schools



Graduates of Distinction

2002

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.



We proudly salute our...

2002 Graduates of Distinction



With the Graduates of Distinction Program, Walla Walla Public Schools wants to recognize and honor the distinguished achievements of our high school graduates. In addition, we want to pay tribute to school staff members who provided positive school experiences, and were inspirational in the lives of these graduates. Our Graduates of Distinction will serve as positive role models for current and future students. It is important for students to see how impressive their future accomplishments, both personal and professional, can be to our community and society. As we celebrate with our distinguished graduates and staff members, we also bring honor to Walla Walla Public Schools. Quality education is our past, present and future.



Robert I. Brunton – Class of 1953

Respected Physician
Surgical Missionary
Church and Community Volunteer

Following his Walla Walla High School graduation, Robert Brunton attended Whitman College and was president of his 1957 senior class. He continued his studies at the University of Washington and earned an M.D. in ophthalmology. After interning and then working at USPHS hospitals in San Francisco and Seattle, Brunton opened a one-man practice in Olympia that evolved into a well-known Puget Sound eye clinic when he retired 30 years later in 1998. Brunton also organized and led several surgical lens implant missions to the Kingdom of Tonga.

Despite a demanding medical career, Brunton found time to work with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Thurston County, Whitman College Alumni Board and Board of Overseers, and the St. Peter Hospital Foundation. Brunton has stayed active in St. John's Episcopal Church in Olympia. One of his nominators said "Bob works with a quiet self-confidence and assurance." Another added that "he is a living testimony to the excellent teachers in Walla Walla Public Schools."

Inspirational Staff Member:
Paul Reed (deceased)



James K. Hayner – Class of 1968

Well-Respected Attorney
Honor Student
Civic Volunteer

Graduating at the top of Walla Walla High School's class of 1968, James Hayner attended Washington State University, where he was honored at graduation as a Phi Beta Kappa with a 3.83 G.P.A. Attending Stanford University, he served on the editorial board for the Law Review and earned his law degree in 1975. Hayner then returned to Walla Walla to practice at the Minnick-Hayner law firm. He is currently the firm's senior full-time partner.

Hayner's focus and efforts have led him into community leadership roles, serving as president of the Walla Walla Chamber of Commerce, board member of the YMCA, and president of the Walla Walla County Bar Association. With a total 15 years of service, Hayner is currently the longest-standing member of the Whitman College Board of Trustees. One of his nominators remarked that "Jim has distinguished himself in his chosen profession, in his career, and in the Walla Walla community." Hayner also serves as trustee for several important local foundations, such as the Stubblefield and Braden Trusts.

Inspirational Staff Member:
James Chubb



Charlotte Wirth – Class of 1944

Inspirational Coach
Women's Sports Pioneer
Respected Community Member

Charlotte Wirth has devoted her life to teaching and caring for others. After graduating from Washington State University, she returned to Walla Walla and began teaching at Garrison Middle School in 1956, moving to Walla Walla High School, her alma mater, in 1964. During the 1960's and early 1970's, Wirth developed girls sports clubs in volleyball, basketball, track, tennis, and badminton. She made her own arrangements for practice, competition, equipment, uniforms, and travel. When Title IX became law and girls' sports were mandated, Wirth's teams were ready to go. Girls' volleyball and basketball teams under Wirth's capable direction quickly became regulars at state tournaments.

Wirth is a widely respected and celebrated coach, earning the Blue Mountain Coach of the Year award in 1978. According to one of her nominators, Wirth believed in the "Head and Heart Theory" of coaching. Many of Wirth's players have followed in her footsteps and become coaches themselves. These women attribute their success to Wirth's emphasis on discipline, drive, and dignified sportsmanship. Although Wirth retired in 1978, she continues to stay active in the Walla Walla community and to inspire the women she has coached.

Inspiration Staff Member:
Lucille Casey (deceased)

Past Graduates of Distinction Recipients

2001 Graduates of Distinction

Vickie Anderson VanZandt	<i>Class of 1972</i>
Jeanne Parker-Miller	<i>Class of 1969</i>
H. Eugene Blattman	<i>Class of 1954</i>
Edward N. "Ned" Lange	<i>Class of 1952</i>
Gordon L. Jaynes	<i>Class of 1946</i>

2000 Graduates of Distinction

Bruce T. Bjerke	<i>Class of 1968</i>
Dr. William C. Dement	<i>Class of 1947</i>
Philip N. Lane, Jr.	<i>Class of 1962</i>
Gordon S. Riess	<i>Class of 1944</i>
Wilber Pribilsky	<i>Class of 1951</i>

1999 Graduates of Distinction

James F. Aylward	<i>Class of 1946</i>
Karen E. Glover	<i>Class of 1968</i>
Eric Johnson	<i>Class of 1968</i>
Michael M. Murr	<i>Class of 1969</i>
Richard P. Neher	<i>Class of 1949</i>