

Past Graduates of Distinction

Gerwyn Jones	Class of 1928	Barbara Johnson	Class of 1967
Claro E. Bergevin	Class of 1941	James K. Hayner	Class of 1968
Harold R. Frank	Class of 1941	Bruce T. Bjerke	Class of 1968
Thomas L. Copeland	Class of 1942	Karen E. Glover	Class of 1968
Charlotte Wirth	Class of 1944	Eric Johnson	Class of 1968
Gordon S. Riess	Class of 1944	Jill A. Largent	Class of 1968
Neil Follett	Class of 1944	Michael Maiden	Class of 1968
Gene Frank	Class of 1946	Greg Ralston Pepin	Class of 1968
Gordon L. Jaynes	Class of 1946	Daniel J. Hess	Class of 1968
James F. Aylward	Class of 1946	Dr. Richard K. Knuth	Class of 1969
Dr. William C. Dement	Class of 1947	Michael M. Murr	Class of 1969
Dr. George C. Williams Jr.	Class of 1947	Jeanne Parker-Miller	Class of 1969
Val Jensen	Class of 1947	Paul H. Schniedmiller	Class of 1970
Richard P. Neher	Class of 1949	Mary Jane Towner-Glaser	Class of 1971
Wilber Pribilsky	Class of 1951	Vickie Anderson VanZandt	Class of 1972
Edward N. "Ned" Lange	Class of 1952	Mark Anderson	Class of 1973
Robert I. Brunton	Class of 1953	AnnRene Joseph	Class of 1973
H. Eugene Blattman	Class of 1954	Carol M. Barker	Class of 1974
R.F. "Dick" Monahan	Class of 1958	Megan Ferguson-Clubb	Class of 1974
Gretchen Miller Kafoury	Class of 1959	John E. (Jack) Pelo	Class of 1974
Ned Shafer	Class of 1961	Daniel Reid	Class of 1974
Judy B. Holloway	Class of 1962	Dr. Philip Phillips	Class of 1975
Philip N. Lane, Jr.	Class of 1962	Jeffrey Ray	Class of 1978
John P. Folsom	Class of 1962	Tim Donaldson	Class of 1979
Carol Santa	Class of 1962	Irene Gonzales	Class of 1980
Richard "Dick" Moeller	Class of 1963	Craig Nelson	Class of 1981
Stephen Hayner	Class of 1966	David Wagner	Class of 1993
Daniel DeSiga	Class of 1967		

Walla Walla Public Schools

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Board of Directors

Derek Sarley
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Walla Walla Public Schools is an Equal
Opportunity Employer and complies
with all the requirements of the ADA

Help find the next Graduate of Distinction

Who may nominate? Anyone interested in Walla Walla Public Schools.

Eligibility for nomination

1. Must have graduated from high school in the Walla Walla Public Schools at least 10 years prior to nomination.
2. Need not be a current resident of Walla Walla.
3. Need not be present to accept the award, but will make a concerted effort to be present or send a representative to accept the award.

How to nominate

- Forms: Fillable PDF nomination and supporting letters forms are available online at: www.wwps.org (Graduates of Distinction page) or in hard copy at the District Office, 364 S. Park St. - Walla Walla, WA 99362

- Mail or hand deliver the completed hard copy nomination form and three supporting letters by March 15 to:
Walla Walla Public Schools (Attn: Mark Higgins, Director of Communications)
364 S. Park St. - Walla Walla, WA 99362

Graduates of Distinction

Excellence in Every Classroom

2015-2016 School Year

Walla Walla Public Schools Graduates of Distinction program provides an avenue for recognizing high school graduates of Walla Walla Public Schools.

These outstanding graduates have distinguished themselves in their communities and professions. This award also provides a platform to honor Walla Walla Public Schools staff members who were the most inspirational their lives.

Our Graduates of Distinction continue to give of themselves to society and bring honor to the district. Thank you!



Our Core Values
are more than mere words;
they're our business!

Quality | Integrity | Accountability | Respect

Courtesy | Innovation | Diversity

2016 Graduates of Distinction



Jerry Zahl
Class of 1962

According to his nominators, Jerry is passionate about his beliefs and has a zest for life characterized by his giving attitude and empathy for people. The second of seven children in a farming family, he was very active in student government and FFA during his high school days. Jerry attended Oklahoma State University, graduating in 1966 with a degree in Agriculture and a commission as Second Lieutenant, U.S. Army. In the early 1970's, Jerry returned to Walla Walla to work for Copeland Farms prior to becoming a Crop Advisor for the Walla Walla Farmers Coop. He retired in 2012, one year before his son, Andrew, graduated from Wa-Hi and earned a full-ride scholarship to his father's alma mater.

Post retirement, education has become a mission for Jerry. He has served on the school district Facilities Task Force, the Whitman College Farm Committee through Blue Mountain Area Foundation and volunteered at Lincoln High School. After serving as a judge for Wa-Hi Senior Presentations, he was so inspired by student stories that he challenged his former classmates at their 50th reunion to help start a scholarship fund by donating the amount of their graduation year (\$19.62) on an annual basis. In 2013, the first students were awarded scholarships from the fund that now totals more than \$50,000. More recently, Jerry has led a committee to plan and raise funds for a local World War II memorial.

Jerry's nomination was coordinated by his friend and classmate, Judy B. Holloway, with help from Lawson Knight, Pete Reid, Tristan Renz and Garth Lindsey. Jerry chose **James McKay**, Wa-Hi Agriculture instructor, as his most inspirational staff person because James always had time to help students achieve at higher levels with well-spoken words of gentle encouragement.



Gary Hanson
Class of 1976

In addition to playing in the band and being an active member of the Key Club, Gary also was a three-sport athlete while attending Wa-Hi. He was captain of his baseball team and earned the Church Anderson Memorial Award as most valuable defensive player in football. Following graduation, he attended Eastern Washington University and earned a degree in Business. Many in Walla Walla know him as long-time employee and then co-owner of Abajian Toyota. Gary's nominators praised his strong sense of community and active roles in many civic and sports organizations. His long list includes both leadership and membership in the Exchange Club, Wa-Hi Big Blue Boosters, Walla Walla Valley Little League

as a coach, and the Walla Walla Country Club Board of Directors.

In 1999, he and his wife Terri chaired a successful Sharpstein School Bond Campaign. Through his leadership, the community chose to preserve the look of the structure while making important interior changes. The \$11 million bond issue was the largest Walla Walla community members had ever approved for an elementary school.

Gary's nomination was coordinated by his daughter Megan Watts, with help from Joanne Martin, Phil Oberg and Kathy Small.

Gary chose Glen Mitchell, Wa-Hi Band Director and instructor, as his most inspirational staff member, citing the fact that he appreciated Glen's very unselfish attitude that made it possible for him to participate in sports and music at the same time.

Mark Kajita
Class of 1987

Another native Walla Wallan, Mark graduated from Walla Walla High School in 1987 and earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Washington. He worked for Ernst and Young in Seattle until moving back to Walla Walla in 1994 to work for Thompson and Krietzberg.

In 2000, he went to work for Whitman College as the Director of Planned Giving. In 2003, he joined Baker Boyer Bank and worked his way from portfolio manager to the position of Wealth Management Division Head. In 2015, he became only the third non-family President/CEO upon the retirement of Megan Clubb.

Mark was praised by his nominators for "having his heart in the community" and finding a strong balance between family and career. He is on the Board of Overseers for Whitman College and a board member for the Downtown Walla Walla Foundation. Recently, he worked with congressional leaders, the Port of Walla Walla and other civic organizations to review the need for strengthening the infrastructure of the Mill Creek channel as it passes through the downtown area. He remains very involved with faith and family and was described as someone who is always "willing to listen and mentor."

Mark's nomination was coordinated by Susie Columbo, with help from Megan Clubb, Michael Fredrickson and Mark Hess.

Mark chose both Bill Jordan and Phil Rolfe as his most inspirational staff members. In describing them, he said they helped with his transition from College Place School District to Garrison Junior High School and "went out of their way to help me adjust, learn some life lessons and later succeed in life."



Selection Committee

Selection Committee

We would like to thank our Selection Committee for their diligent and thoughtful work this spring.

Committee members are:

- Dondi Cortinas
- Tera Davis
- Dr. David Hampson
- Art Griff
- Dan Hess
- Peggy Sanderson
- Dr. Ellen Wolf
- Mark Higgins, Chair