

2013 Distinguished Alumni Award Winners



Ernest Petersen

(Pokey Pete)

Class of 1942

Osage High School

Ernest Petersen, OCHS class of 1942, is a man who has lived a very modest simple life. He served in the military in World War II and worked as a janitor for many years at Orchard Hill School in Cedar Falls, marrying and raising a family in the area.

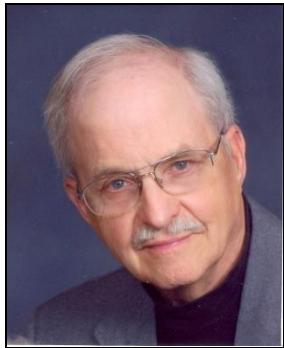
In 1968, Petersen had a big idea about a small train. He built the tractor and cars that became the little red train that he drove for over 20 years at town celebrations in northeast Iowa. "Pokey Pete", as he dubbed himself, gave nearly a million free rides to children in those years and donated the fees the cities gave him to charity. Those fees, combined with donations from Petersen's modest salary, became a mountain of giving. Petersen has receipts to show donations totaling \$370,000 to the Salvation Army; the charity he felt was best equipped to better the lives of children in this country and overseas. Through the Salvation Army, he is proud of his commitment to "do something for the children."

For 44 years Petersen also worked countless hours in other ways for the Salvation Army: 35 years as a bell ringer during the holidays and 20 years in the Waterloo Salvation Army kitchen washing dishes, bagging doughnuts or working at anything else that needed doing.

A highlight of Petersen's years was the naming of a "Pokey Pete" room at Ronald McDonald House in Iowa City when it opened in 1984. In 1989, Petersen gave his little red train to Rotary International when he was ready to retire as engineer of the train. It still operates in upstate New York.

In 2012, asked by a reporter what inspired Petersen to give, he replied, "I like a good return on my investment,..., I want happiness for children who are deserving."

"Pokey Pete" retired from his 44 years of volunteering with the Salvation Army in September of 2012 at age 87. He now lives at a retirement home in Cedar Falls.

**Richard Landborg****Class of 1951****Osage High School**

Following OHS graduation, Richard Landborg attended Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, graduating in May, 1955. He earned a master's degree (1957) and doctorate in organic chemistry (1959) from the University of Iowa. Landborg was a member of the faculty of Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, through 1979. During his 20 years at Augustana, Landborg accomplished the following:

- Taught numerous chemistry courses
- Was responsible for planning the department's share of a large, new science building
- Led student groups to Central America during several January interim terms
- Served as a Fulbright Visiting Professor to Universidad la Antigua in Panama City, Panama
- Participated in summer research projects for two major oil companies
- Took early retirement from college teaching in 1980 to pursue real estate development
- Three times elected as President of the South Dakota Multi-housing Association.
- Served a decade as a church deacon.
- Have travelled widely in Mexico, Central and South America.
- This year will close out participation in a reforestation effort in northern Costa Rica.



James Young

Class of 1963
Osage High School

James R. Young graduated from Osage Community High School in 1963 and is the son of Bob and Burnie Young. He received a B.S. from Iowa State in 1967 and M.D. from the University of Iowa College of Medicine in 1970.

Following an internship in upstate New York and nearly two years in Iceland with the U.S. Navy, he and his wife, Lauri (Laurinda Klemesrud) have lived and worked in N.E. Iowa (Cedar Falls the last 35 years). Dr. Young has practiced Family Medicine and taught medical students (100 plus) from the University of Iowa until retirement in 2010. During his career, he has received "Educator of the Year" and "Lifetime Achievement" awards from the Iowa Academy of Family Medicine.

Throughout the last ten years, Jim and Lauri have been engaged in various volunteer activities: house reconstruction in New Orleans post Katrina; local Habitat for Humanity work; medical volunteer projects in Ecuador, Peru, and most recently, Indonesian Borneo.

Jim and Lauri are proud parents of three daughters (Raina, Taya, and Caitlin) and five grandchildren. When not doing projects for family or doing volunteer work for various organizations, Jim and Lauri can be found riding their bicycles around various parts of the world.