

2004 Distinguished Alumni Award Winners

Gerald Leeman

Class of 1941

Osage High School

Gerald Leeman, one of the greatest wrestlers ever developed by Osage High School and Iowa State Teacher's College, brought fame to his hometown when he won a first team assignment on the United States Olympic Wrestling Team. Leeman represented the U.S. in the 125.5 pound division in the 1948 Olympics in London.

Leeman started his wrestling career under Coach R.T. Mitchell in Osage, where he was a three time state champion and won the national AAU title as a high school wrestler. He continued his mat exploits at Iowa State Teacher's College where he was undefeated for three years. He was the NCAA 128 pound winner and "outstanding wrestler" in the 1946 collegiate national tournament and was a Silver Medallist in the 1948 Olympics.

Leeman took over as the head coach of Lehigh University in Bethlehem, PA in 1953. Prior to that, he was the two-year apprentice to Lehigh's Bill Sheridan. Leeman coached at Lehigh for 18 years. At Lehigh, his record was 161 dual meet wins against only 38 losses and four draws. He placed twelve teams in the top ten of the NCAAs and four in the top five. His teams captured six EIWA team crowns and none ever placed lower than third in the title tournament. Leeman owns Lehigh's best all-time dual meet win-loss percentage (.803).

Leeman was inducted in the Hall of Fame in 1961, the same season that he tied Lehigh's record, set in 1918, by crowning six individual champions. In addition, Lehigh's newly remodeled arena, which opened in the fall of 2003, Leeman-Turner Arena, was named in part for Gerald Leeman. Gerald and his wife Darlene are retired and live in Florida.

Dean R. Goplerud

Class of 1947

Osage High School

Dean Goplerud's education began at Rock #1 rural school and continued at Osage High School, where he enjoyed science, played in the band and sang in the school chorus. He and his family were active at Our Savior's Lutheran Church. After graduation, he pursued Chemistry and pre-med studies at St. Olaf College (1951), followed by an MD at the University of Iowa in 1955, internship in St. Paul, MN and two years in the Army at Ft. Riley, KS.

Goplerud has devoted his career to treating cancer patients and teaching medicine. After completing a residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology in Iowa City, he started his teaching career at West Virginia Medical School, where he became interested in the treatment of cancer. This interest led to a fellowship at Roswell Park Memorial Institute in Buffalo, NY and ultimately to the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond in 1973, where he was Professor and Director of Gynecologic Oncology until retiring in 1996. Board certification in Gynecologic Oncology was obtained in 1974.

Retirement is busy with volunteer work, family and travel. He is still involved with the medical school as Professor Emeritus and teaches in the Medical Ethics program. He also volunteers at the Massey Cancer Center Library, the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden and tutors math at a local elementary school. Dean appreciates the continuing love and support of his family, especially Shirley, his wife of 52 years, their three children, Jan, Christopher and Tim, and his granddaughter, Natalie. He also appreciates the example his parents John and Mildred Goplerud set, instilling in him a strong work ethic, belief in education, church, and a love of the family farm near Osage, where he returns as often as he can.

Mary Bonoff Kluesner

Class of 1952

Osage High School

Mary Bonoff Kluesner graduated from Iowa State University in 1956. The following 25 years were dedicated to raising a family and moving to ten large cities as a corporate wife. Those years were spent in community activism, political advocacy and volunteer work in her children's schools.

The family has lost two adult children to suicide, Amy in 1985 and Michael in 1997. Mary helped form a grassroots non-profit organization named SAVE (Suicide Awareness Voices of Education). It was the first of its kind in the country. Now a national organization, SAVE has become a clearing house for information. The organization follows a public health model for primary prevention and focuses its work on awareness and education. It therefore conducts public awareness campaigns and conferences devoted specifically to suicide prevention. SAVE's signature awareness program is the national posting of billboards relating specifically to depression and suicide prevention.

Many of SAVE's programs and campaigns were developed by volunteers under the leadership of Mary Kluesner. She presently dedicates most of her work to speaking and writing about suicide prevention.

Mary resides in Edina with her husband, Al. Their two married sons and five grandchildren also live in Minnesota.