



*Third Annual*

***Hall of Fame***

*Induction Banquet*

*September 29, 2012*

*Pillager School*

## Menu

Chicken or Ham  
Au gratin Potatoes  
Green Beans  
Coleslaw  
Dinner Roll  
Coffee, Lemonade  
Brownie and Ice Cream

catered by Ted and Jen's of Aldrige

Nominations are open for inductees for future years.

### Who May Be Nominated?

- Nominations will be accepted for outstanding alumnus in Business, Athletics / Entertainment, Military, Entrepreneurial, or Community Service.
- Nominations will also be accepted for persons who are not alumni but have made a significant contribution to Pillager High School and who serves as a role model for current and future Pillager High School Students.

### Criteria for Nomination?

- The candidate must have been a graduate of Pillager High School for a period of at least 20 years, or,
- if not a graduate, must have made a significant contribution to the school for at least 10 years.

### How to Nominate Someone?

- Application forms are available online at [www.pillager.k12.mn.us/HOF.html](http://www.pillager.k12.mn.us/HOF.html) or from the office.
- Applications are accepted year round, but must be postmarked or submitted by July 1 to be considered for the current year. If a nominee is not selected, the nomination will be held for one additional year's selection process. Nomination papers may be modified prior to the next round of selections.

Thank you to the current Hall of Fame board, Pillager School Community Ed, Lakes Printing and the Pillager Family Center for making this event possible.



### 2010 inductee Elzie Gerrels

It's a long way from Pillager, Minnesota to the moon. To most people in 1934, when Elzie and his twin sister Elwanda were born, it seemed a lot farther, maybe even impossible. Yet little did anyone know then that a central Minnesota boy from Pillager, Elzie Gerrels, would be influential in landing an American on that far away place in 1969.

Elzie's early life around his dad's small Standard Oil station in Pillager was simple: doing chores, waiting on customers and servicing cars, going to church, and learning as much as he could in school. Dad's gas station started a love of cars and Elzie drew numerous futuristic cars for his imaginary *Ellsworth Motor Car Company*. At ages 14 and 15 he designed and built two model cars for a Fisher Body Craftsmen's Guild design contest, sponsored by General Motors. Although no national prizes came his way, an Honorable Mention Award planted the seed of his future career, engineer/designer. (The switch from cars to space stations came later.)

School was easy for Elzie, and he graduated as Valedictorian of his class despite the fact that he "rarely had to do homework." However, pre-engineering courses at Macalester College in St. Paul forced Elzie to return to the hard work ethic he learned at the gas station and around the house back home in Pillager. Transferring to the University of Minnesota after two years, Elzie graduated in 1957 with a degree in Mechanical Engineering and an option in Nuclear Engineering.

Job offers came in from both General Motors and Chrysler, but an offer from General Electric peeked Elzie's interest the most, allowing him to work in different engineering areas and in different parts of the country, especially California and the western U.S. His first assignments were in terrestrial nuclear power

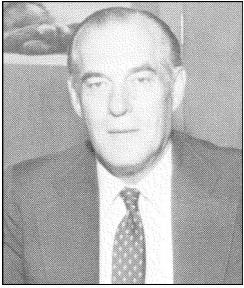
development, in nuclear powered airplane development, and in America's hydrogen bomb project. (Here's where the switch from cars to space stations really got its start.)

The nation's space program was beginning, and Elzie, along with other engineers and scientists, took advantage of the first-of-its-kind astronaut/space courses offered at UCLA which led to his position as Systems Engineer on the development and testing of the Atlas and Thor missile programs. Elzie was involved with the launch crews of many of the U.S.'s first missile launches in 1958.

The rest of Elzie's 38 year career reads like a history of America's space program. In 1963, Elzie and wife Esther headed to Florida to work on the Apollo program, where Elzie helped with the design and checkout of the Apollo Command Module and the 18-hour countdown of the Saturn V launch. After the U.S. landed its first astronauts on the moon eight years later, it was on to Philadelphia where Elzie worked with Dr. Wernher von Braun's design team on a manned Mars project to land 12 men on Mars. This work also included work on orbital space stations and unmanned flights to Mars and other outer planets.

In the 1970s, focus turned to the space shuttle and in the 1980s Elzie spearheaded an advanced nuclear reactor power system for the "Star Wars" defense system and manned Mars projects which were both terminated when the "Berlin Wall" came down and the "Cold War" with the Soviet Union diminished.

From chopping wood and checking oil to moon landings and space exploration, some constants remain in Elzie's life: hard work and faith in God. Besides spending time at his easel painting and playing a little golf, Elzie travels the world speaking to various groups on "God and Space" or "A Case for Intelligent Design," speaking as often as five times a day in the U.S., Russia, Poland, and the Far East. Elzie has come a long way from that Standard Oil station in Pillager, Minnesota by remembering what he learned there.



**2010 inductee**  
**Filmore Z.**  
**Pfeifle**

As stated by fellow Hall of Fame inductee Lowell Scearcy, Fil (as most knew him) was “Pillager’s biggest fan.” Fil served as Pillager’s Principal for six years and as Superintendent for twenty (1962-1982). However, even after his tenure as Superintendent, Fil was never far away from Pillager, its school, or its people. Whether “coaching” from the stands at the most football games, shuttling “release time” kids to the Baptist church, or volunteering for a play or other activity at the school, Phil remained connected to the Pillager school and community.

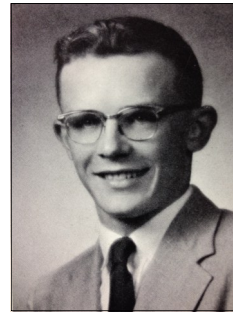
It was easy to see Fil as a respected figure, an imposing man with a booming voice that could silence a gymnasium filled with boisterous students and faculty in an instant. Yet here was a man who also made you realize that he really cared. Fil had the unique ability to discipline sternly yet make you think that you probably had it coming and that he was a pretty good guy who really liked you.

Most who knew him have a “Fil story” to share, and as an avid story teller himself, he would be the first to start the sharing. Most of those stories are humorous, yet all are respectful of the man who encouraged so many students (and adults as well) to do better, play harder, go to college, or just get “you 8-balls” to straighten up! Fil was proud of every one of the over 1000 students he touched, and twenty plus years after his retirement could still tell you where most of them were and what they were doing.

Under Fil’s twenty-six year guidance, the Pillager School District went through many good times and, of course, some pretty tough ones. Fil was involved with numerous building, remodeling, and addition projects to the school. Projects in 1963, 66, 69, 73, and 78 appear to be the longest string of major changes done under Fil’s watchful eye. The most notable physical changes during his time were the “new” high school gymnasium, music room, and commons area complex (open for business in 1970) as well as the “shop,” “home ec.,” art and “business” rooms a few years later.

Fil also fought his way through some tough times as well. From portable classrooms burning and low funding cycles, Fil fought every day to keep Pillager a successful school district. Declining enrollment at times was an issue; the class of 1962 graduated only 11 students. During those tough funding years, forced closure or consolidation was always a threat, but as always Fil promoted Pillager and found a way to keep this small school independent and graduating topnotch students.

One of his teaching staff told us that to Fil “not much mattered except ‘the kids’; if it was good for ‘the kids,’ it was going to get done, somehow.” It was that attitude that endeared Fil to his school, his staff, and his students. Fil was always loyal to Pillager. Lowell Scearcy recalls Fil this way: “Every year I’d ask him how the Pillager football or basketball team was doing and I always got the same reaction. Fil would wag his finger in the air and say, ‘we’ve got a **crackerjack** team this year!” The 1996 All-school Reunion Committee posed this question to attendees, “Who is the single most recognizable figure in Pillager school history?” The overwhelming name that came up at that time was Filmore Pfeifle. Win, lose, or draw, Fil was Pillager’s biggest fan.



**2012 Inductee**  
**Donald**  
**Bergstrom**  
**Class of 1958**

Being a graduate of a small school like Pillager never stopped Don Bergstrom from following

his dreams, and his dreams and passions led him to jobs around the world.

Valedictorian of the class of 1958, Don was a well-rounded Pillager student, active in football, track, and the Letterman’s Club; Annual Staff, Paper Staff, Science Club, and Dramatics; as well as being Student Council President his senior year.

It was after graduation when Don began to prove that being from a small, central Minnesota school was no reason not to go after your dreams. Don struck out for Arizona State University in Tempe to obtain a Bachelor of Science degree in engineering.

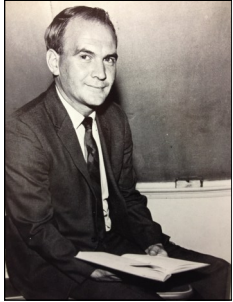
The US Air Force beckoned next, and from 1965-1970, Don served as an Operations/Engineering Officer. He was the test director for low orbit military satellite programs throughout forty-two missions that involved three different generations of orbital vehicles. He specialized in directing orbital operations utilizing support teams comprised of military personnel, subcontractors, and consultants working as one unit. He is credited with personally saving one mission by his correct assessment of conflicting data. Based on Don’s actions during this mission, the General in charge ordered Don to be present at all subsequent launch and recovery operations. After leaving the Air Force, Don worked for various national and international companies from 1971- 1976. Duties with these companies ranged from Management Consultant to Project Manager to Project Coordinator/Expediting Supervisor at locations from Chicago to Phoenix to Sao Paulo, Brazil. In all of these roles, Don was responsible for timely

and cost-effective construction projects and deliveries that all his employers depended on. In 1976, Don began a twenty-six year career with General Electric Company. His first job was as Principal Project Engineer for a nuclear generating station in Switzerland. His administrative and engineering ability produced a completed nuclear power station on deadline and under budget. Don’s safety design changes led to a nuclear plant capable of withstanding airplane crashes, floods, and terrorist attacks and which has set many records for performance.

In 1985, Don became manager of GE’s Litigation Technical Support division. Here, Don managed and coordinated litigation support teams for legal and arbitration efforts. This division supplied expert witnesses, supervised document research, directed the preparation of discovery/document databases, and coordinated trial support. Don oversaw a yearly budget for this division as high as 26 million dollars.

From 1997-2002, Don was General Electric’s Principal Systems Design Engineer. In this position, Don was in charge of resolving design and licensing issues for operating nuclear plants as well as defining the design basis for hardware and systems that enhance modification programs for operating nuclear plants. From May 2010 to May 2011, Don was the Mechanical Engineering Design Manager for Diego Garcia where he supervised and approved designs for US Navy projects. Don also performed in-depth studies and cost analysis for complex US Navy mechanical projects.

Don followed his dreams and his passions, and he serves as a role model for other young Pillager graduates that anything is possible. Anything from saving satellites to building nuclear power plants to working for international companies to handling millions of dollars in budgets is possible for a graduate from Pillager High School. Just be proud of who you are and follow your dreams, just as Don did.



### 2012 Inductee **Mike Greer**

After a four-year stint in the Marine Corps and a successful college football career at Bemidji State University, Mike Greer started his Thirty-one years at Pillager in

1965 when he was hired to teach social studies, history, and German and coach football. In 1965, Mike became Pillager's first Athletic Director (AD). Previously, these duties were handled by the school's principal. Mike held this position for 24 years before handing it over to another teacher/coach. The only organized sports at Pillager when Mike became AD were football (began in 1947), boys basketball (began in 1939), and baseball (began in 1948). During Mike's tenure as AD, Girls' and boys' cross country, girls' basketball, volleyball, girls' and boys' track, softball, golf, and wrestling were added. Mike, along with Pillager's first girls' basketball coach, Carol Demgen, was instrumental in forming the first District 24 girls' athletic programs, against multiple obstacles and objections. Mike also pushed to start Pillager's softball program in 1986. Mike believed in equality in sports long before it became popular.

Below, you will see that Mike's coaching achievements will speak for themselves.

However, more important is what Mike gave to fellow teachers, players, and students during his 31 years at Pillager that the public never saw. The fact that Mike was one of the most well-respected and well-liked teachers in Pillager history can be seen in numerous ways.

1) Students in 1969, 1974, and 1986 dedicated their school yearbook to Mr. Greer. 2) Coaches under Mike's mentoring appreciated his knowledge and understanding of coaching: "His (Mike's) insight on the art of coaching was appreciated, and he was always there for support when it was needed." OR ... "I remember Mike saying, 'No matter what the record is, the sport is always about making memories for the kids!'" 3) Staff relied on Mike

as well, "His mentoring was so valuable to me. I could ask him anything and he was always there to help... and he was always patient with his mentoring process. I have used his advice my whole life including when writing my thesis Mike Greer was known for many "Greerisms", but one that was heard by almost all who knew him was, "This too shall pass!" Things that will never pass are the service, dedication, influence, and stats that Mike Greer contributed to the Pillager School District. s for my Ph.D." 4) Players respected Mike and learned more than how to win: "Beyond the victories, however, I feel the most important thing coach Greer did was to pass on to his players his dedication, motivation, and caring. He wanted you to be a good ball player, but more than that, he wanted you to be the best person you could be."

These are just a few samples of the statements made in support for Mike Greer from students, coaches, players, and colleagues. Mike's influence during his 31 years at Pillager can best be summarized by this statement from one of his players: "Even today, thirty-three years after my last high school game, I find myself trying to emulate the attributes he possessed and taught to his student athletes. These types of enduring legacies separate the great coaches from the good coaches." ... and the GREAT teachers from the good teachers. Mike Greer was one of the GREAT ones!

**FOOTBALL**: Head Coach for 20 years (92-80); Coached 3 undefeated teams (1968, 1971, 1978); Won 6 conference championships; Coached 5 All-State players.

**BASEBALL**: Head coach for 16 years (128-96); Won 7 conference championships.

**SOFTBALL**: Began the program in 1986; Head Coach for 11 years; Won 1 conference championship; Won 1 Sub-District Runner-up.

**BASKETBALL**: Assistant Coach for 2 years \*\*\*\*\*Mike Greer coached a total of "52" seasons at Pillager High School\*\*\*\*\*

Mike has been a finalist for the "Minnesota State High School Coaches Association Hall of Fame" and the "Minnesota State High School Football Coaches Hall of Fame"



### 2010 inductee **Dr. Carl Edeburn**

"If at first you don't succeed, try - try again!" That seems to sum up Carl's beginnings in education. Born

outside of Pillager in 1937, Carl started his education at the Rail Prairie School, a "country school" south of Pillager. Moving on to the "new" Junior High School program in Pillager brought new interests into his life, ranging from the arts (choir, band), athletics, school paper and annual staff, and the Future Teachers Club.

After graduation, Brainerd Community College (now CLC) beckoned where Carl continued his love of sports, playing right tackle for the Red Raiders. Money was tight and student loans were non-existent, so Carl's college plans had to change. He would drop out, go to work for a while, return, drop out ... nine years later, his Bachelor's degree would be complete. (Remember "try - try again"?) His work experience ranged from construction to REA brush crew to retail sales and took him from Minnesota to Seattle, Washington.

In 1957, while working on his THIRD year of college, his Pillager Future Teacher's Club advisor, George Stroming found Carl a teaching job at Bowman, ND on an emergency teaching certificate. Still without a complete degree, in 1960 Carl got another teaching job in Klawok, Alaska where he would "commute" to St. Cloud State College in the summers to work on his degree and crew an Alaskan fishing boat in August before school started, completing his B.S. degree in 1963. (Oh, yeah, "try - try again")

This pattern of teach, fish, think about grad school, repeated itself for Carl in Alaska for the next four years with a marriage to wife Cleo tossed into the mix in December of 1964. In 1967 Carl and Cleo headed to the University of Minnesota Duluth where he taught and worked on his Masters degree for two years. In '69 the family moved to St. Cloud State. The "commuting" began for Carl again as he traveled

to the University of North Dakota to work on his PhD, finishing his Doctorate in 1973.

Carl's persistence in getting his education and completing his PhD led to a prestigious 27 year career of teaching, research, and publication in the education department at South Dakota State University as well as being an outreach consultant and evaluator for the South Dakota, North Dakota, and Iowa Departments of Education. It was during this period that Carl created a resume' that extends for pages! Carl served on over 25 major committees and/or administrative appointments at SDSU, including an appointment as SDSU's representative to Chung Nam National University in Taejon, Korea, as well as state appointments and committees. He has published over 30 articles in refereed journals and authored, co-authored, or formatted seven books. His most important book, *Developing Leadership and Character* (Zigarmi Associates) has been revised and re-published as *The Leader Within*, published by Prentice Hall in 2004. This book has been republished in Japanese and Korean as well as Spanish and Italian under different titles. There are agreements in place to also re-publish it in Arabic, Portuguese, and Chinese.

In addition to publication, Carl has presented over 30 refereed papers and over 50 reports in the U.S., Korea, Germany, and the United Kingdom. He has taught or coordinated over 70 outreach lectures and workshops in South Dakota, Montana, Iowa, and Nevada and has been appointed to serve as an evaluation design consultant at the Office of Bi-lingual-Bi-cultural Education in Washington, DC. Carl also has worked with The Ken Blanchard Company of California in the design and the validation and reliability of over a dozen copyrighted assessment instruments, providing the same services to the University of Nevada for evaluating the qualifications for certifying their public school teachers.

Carl's accomplishments are a prime example of "TRY - TRY - AGAIN." He is a model for those of us who have to work our own time schedule, regardless of the reason why. Nine years to complete a four-year degree is a small price to pay for success like his!



**2010 inductee**  
**Jane Reimer -**  
**Morgan**

Jane Reimer-Morgan is a prime example of "like father; like – DAUGHTER"!!! Since both Jane's parents were teachers, education was always important in Jane's life, and with dad (John H. Reimer) being a highly respected Pillager coach for whom the track complex is named, sports was also very high on the "to do" list. It's no wonder that Jane followed the family path into teaching and coaching, as did her sisters, Karla and Trish.

Jane's family moved to Pillager in 1970. Jane took advantage of every opportunity Pillager had to offer from arts to politics, and, of course, sports. Jane participated in drama, choir, triple trio, and band, receiving two state ratings for her individual saxophone work. She also was a DAR representative and a Voice of Democracy Speech winner. Jane was Homecoming Queen, cheerleader, class officer, and graduated as Valedictorian. Sports, however, was where Jane really took off. As a three-year letter winner in three different sports, Jane earned All-Conference honors in basketball, was District 24's second leading scorer, and held the three-year scoring record. In track and field, she holds Pillager's 100 yard dash record (now retired) and was a State participant in the long jump.

College meant more participation and success in sports for Jane: two years of volleyball at Brainerd Community College (now CLC), three years of basketball at Bemidji State University (BSU), and of course track at BSU, serving a stint as team captain. **Jane will be inducted into the BSU Hall of Fame in February of 2011.**

Like her parents, Jane graduated as a teacher and began her career in 1977. Jane has taught and coached in Brainerd, Staples, Parkers Prairie, Breck, and is currently teaching Phy. Ed and coaching in Minnetonka.

Like Dad, Jane is recognized state-wide for excellence in coaching track and field as well as cross country. Her track and field coaching honors include District 22 Boys Coach of the Year in 1983; Section 6AA Coach of the Year in 2000, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2010; and State Coach of the Year in 2005. Her cross country credentials are equally impressive: Section 6AA Coach of the Year in 2002, 2004, 2009 Minnesota State Championship Coach in 2004; and an inductee into the Cross Country Coaches Hall of Fame in 2009.

Jane also serves as a member of the ATHENA committee which honors exemplary female athletes in the Metro/Suburban area, and she serves on the MSHL advisory board for Cross Country Running.

Jane has often spoken about the benefits and opportunities that she got from the Pillager school system and the loving community she moved into in 1970. She followed in Dad's footsteps and Dad would be proud.



**2012 Inductees**  
**Jim and**  
**Janice**  
**Rardin**

Jim and Janice Rardin are described in their Hall of Fame

introduction as "Old School". Their introduction continued to talk about commitment and devotion and work ethic. These are the attributes that guided Jim and Janice's lives. These are the attributes that they have passed down to their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. These are the attributes that make them perfect Hall of Fame inductees and role models for future Pillager students. Jim honorably served his country from 1946-1951. He served in Japan, in the Reserves, and in the Korean War. After Jim's discharge, Jim and Janice continued Rardin Construction, which was begun by Jim's father, Len, in 1925. They committed themselves to expanding the business into one of most trusted, full service contractors in the Brainerd Lakes area. This expansion has resulted in a Better Business Bureau **A+** rated company capable of construction ranging from a home remodel to a residential showplace to a complete commercial "super store".

Jim and Janice are also committed to Pillager and to the Pillager schools. The Rardins are a "four-generation Pillager school family" with a parent, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren having attended or currently attending Pillager school.

But Jim and Janice's support for Pillager schools goes far beyond just attending all of the activities that their family was involved in, which they have done religiously for three generations. Jim and Janice also have contributed generously to the Pillager Schools. Here are just a few examples:

Pillager Booster Club Golf Tournament, Pillager Dollars for Scholars, Pillager High School Music Department, elementary fundraisers, and in the purchase girls' basketball team warm-ups. The use of Rardin Construction Company equipment has frequently been donated to the school. They contributed the Charlie and Carrie Peterson Memorial Forest to the school and also have set up a scholarship which is available to any graduating senior wishing to enter the construction trades. In addition to these contributions, Rardin Construction has committed itself to hiring numerous Pillager graduates throughout the years.

There is no better way to describe Jim and Janice Rardin than by Tug Hengel's words from their introduction:

"You get up, and you go to work... every day.... Jim and Janice always lived this way .... They are honest, and they are hard working. They are devoted to each other, their children, and their community. Jim and Janice believe that strong communities have strong schools, and they have supported this school many times. If the Pillager Public School system can continue to produce graduates with the same integrity and work ethic as Jim and Janice, then I believe that the Pillager Public School system deserves our whole-hearted support."

Being "Old School"... Jim and Janice Rardin exemplify the best of being "Old School"!



**2011 Inductee**  
**Roy C. Booth**  
**“Always a  
 Work in  
 Progress”**

When people hear something referred to as a “work in

progress,” people often think that it isn’t finished yet. Well, nothing describes Roy C. Booth’s varied career to date better than “a work in progress”; it is far from finished, literally expanding every day. As a Pillager student, Roy’s interests and achievements were varied: holding class offices, lettering and receiving honors in track and field, receiving perfect attendance awards, achieving the rank of Eagle Scout (Roy’s proudest achievement, we’re told), collecting comic books (Roy owns and operates a successful book, comic, and games store.), acting in school plays, reading incessantly, and writing, writing, writing! Roy made his first professional short story sale in 9th grade at the age of 14 and had numerous poems published in national literary magazines beginning in 1983, the year he graduated from Pillager High School.

In college, Roy’s interests continued to expand into theater and, of course, more writing, graduating with honors from Central Lakes College; graduating *magna cum laude* from Bemidji State University (BSU) with degrees in English, Speech, and Theatre; and graduating BSU again with a Master of Arts Degree in English with an emphasis in creative writing in 1998.

Throughout high school and college, Roy got involved in theater; his first appearance was on the Pillager stage in

a 1983 production of *Desperate Ambrose* as a villain. Since then, Roy has worked on over 200 play productions, holding every possible production job available. He has also directed 77 productions and acted in over 100. These figures do not include the numerous films and TV productions that Roy has also been in or worked on.

Roy’s passion for reading, theater, film, and writing naturally led to a career as a writer, not just a *writer*, but a PROLIFIC writer. Roy has published over 50 short stories to date, ranging from science fiction to mystery to fantasy to romance, just to name a few of his genres. He has also published over 55 stage plays which have been performed in excess of 700 times in over 27 countries world-wide with translations done in over seven different languages. He won playwrighting competitions across the country and internationally, even in the UK. Roy has had seven screen plays optioned and has numerous other writing successes ranging from essayist, journalist, comic strip gag writer (including *Garfield* and others), comedian, game creator, and television writer. Roy has been a keynote speaker and panelist at various literary, educational, and business conventions around the United States.

Because he writes daily, Roy’s resume’ changes rapidly. His passion for his craft expands every day as he explores new ideas and subject matter for his writing. But it doesn’t just stop there. As a husband, father, business owner, and creative artist, Roy C. Booth is far from finished. “Please, stay tuned” because Roy C. Booth is just beginning... as always a “work in progress”!



**2010 inductee**  
**Jerry**  
**Fornshell**

Regardless of age, whenever people think back to their high school days, names pop up from the past: the great teachers – and the not-so-great; great students – and the not-so-great; great athletes – and ... well, you get the idea. Pillager graduates will remember those same names: scoring leaders, record holders, heroes of the big game, winning coaches. Yet, for people who have really followed Pillager closely, one name regularly pops into the conversation: Jerry Fornshell.

Jerry’s connection with Pillager schools began at birth. His dad, Leonard, owned Fornshell Bus Service (eventually owned by Jerry and now by Jerry’s son, Eric) which has transported many Pillager students over three generations.

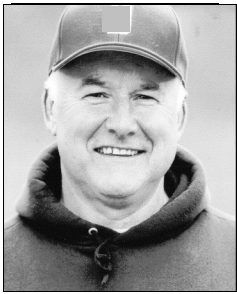
Jerry’s connection to the school continued as a student where he was actively involved with sports and other extra-curricular activities. It was after graduation and after starting a family that Jerry’s connection to Pillager school became even stronger. Jerry began volunteer coaching youth sports of all kinds and never looked back. His long, successful coaching career as an assistant and head coach ran through elementary into junior high and culminated at the varsity level. He led teams at all levels to countless successes and winning seasons, including three state football appearances and one state basketball appearance.

However, Jerry was far more than just a successful Pillager volunteer and coach for over 20 years. He was a successful Pillager

business owner, entrepreneur, community leader, and role model.

A true “workaholic,” Jerry built a small gas station and convenience store at the entrance of Pillager into two successful businesses, Pillsbury Junction and The Plaza, as well as developing new commercial lands around the Plaza. This, in turn, led to medical clinics, dental offices, retail businesses, and housing moving into the newly developed Pillager area. This was accomplished while he was operating Fornshell Bus Service and doing over 200 snow removal jobs every winter. Jerry also served on the Pillager Fire and Rescue Squad, was a First Responder, and was chosen Pillager Citizen of the Year in 2005. Oh – and he coached in his spare time.

No one may ever know the amount of time and service that Jerry “volunteered” to the school and the community. No one may ever know the number of bus trips he supplied to teams and community groups or the hours he spent preparing and repairing fields or the ice rinks flooded or the sod laid. But, if you followed Pillager closely, you just knew that Jerry had a hand in it some how. As an ex-Activity Director said, “It’s hard to say how much he’s done because he’s done so much. What he’s done for Pillager athletics is tremendous.... Jerry touched the lives of so many in so many different ways.... Jerry’s name is synonymous with Pillager.” And another associate added, “Every community needs a Jerry Fornshell.”



**2010 inductee**  
**Lowell**  
**Searcy**

An old cliché states, "You can't go home again." But Lowell Searcy has disproven that statement –TWICE—with a boatload of awards, honors, and recognition in between.

Lowell graduated from Pillager in 1963, a three-sport athlete, team captain, and all-conference performer who, as far as we know, is the only PHS football player to score six touchdowns in one game.

The son of a PHS teacher, Lowell's next natural move was to college (Brainerd Community College – now CLC – and Bemidji State). After graduating from college in 1967, Lowell came back home for the first time to teach and coach at Pillager. His two-year coaching of track, baseball, cross country, and basketball netted a basketball Sub-District Championship in 1968-69. But then it was time to move on.

1969 started a three-year stint at Verndale High School teaching math and coaching everything from Pee Wee baseball to Babe Ruth to high school to American Legion ball as well as an amateur baseball team (he also played for them). His Verndale teams set the bar high with great win/loss records, and both baseball and basketball teams were conference champs all three years and Sub-District Champs two of those years. But, hey... it's time to move on again.

1972 began a twenty-seven year career teaching and coaching in the Brainerd school system (retiring in 1999). The list of

accomplishments for his teams, his players, and Lowell personally could fill any high school trophy room to the top! His baseball teams had a 72% winning percentage (643-253), forty-one various championships, and seven state appearances with two state championships. One hundred fifty-one of his players went to play on college diamonds, twenty-nine played in Minnesota State All-star games, and nine went on to play professional baseball. He is currently the winningest active high school baseball coach in Minnesota history and the second winningest Minnesota coach of all time.

Lowell's experience ranges from Pee Wee baseball to college football, with thirty-five years of service at CLC (the longest tenured football coach in Minnesota Community College history). With forty-three years of coaching experience, Lowell has logged 110 seasons as a coach as well as thirty years as a football and basketball official. He has worn the "zebra" stripes on fields and courts of all levels across Minnesota and also college basketball tournaments in Hawaii. In all, Lowell estimates that he has officiated 3735 high school and college games in his career.

From Minnesota Baseball Coach of the Year – TWICE to Minnesota Community College Football Coach of the year – TWICE to three (now FOUR) local and state Halls of Fame to the prestigious "George Haun Award" given by the Minnesota State High School Coaches Association, Lowell's list of awards, honors, and accomplishments would fill a book!

But this humble legend just couldn't stand still! In 2007 Lowell took over the head football coach's position at Pillager High School – going full circle and returning home a second time. As he says, "You can go home again!" Lowell, welcome home!!



**2011 Inductee**  
**Carol**  
**Demgen**  
**Pillager's**  
**"Mother of**  
**Girls' Athletics"**

In the high school setting, women's

competitive athletics are a somewhat recent addition. In Pillager, one woman can be considered the "mother of girls' athletics"; that woman is Carol Demgen. Coming to Pillager in 1969, Carol taught elementary and high school physical education and health for 31 years, retiring from full-time teaching in 2000.

In addition to her teaching duties at Pillager, Carol completed her Master's degree in Physical Education, advised the cheerleading squad for all sports, advised the GAA (Girls Athletic Association), taught Drivers' Education (which she still does, making 43 years and counting of teaching Drivers' Ed. at Pillager), and laid the groundwork for competitive girls' athletic programs at Pillager.

In 1970-71, Carol and the (then) District 24 coaches and physical education instructors (Pillager, Wadena, Pequot Lakes, Pine River, Motley, Verndale, Staples, and Brainerd) spent the entire year, meeting on week nights and weekends, to form an alliance that would provide athletic opportunities for girls. Prior to this time, there were no organized girls' programs for competitive sports in our district. In the fall of 1971 with no uniforms, little or no equipment, and very little money, these coaches started competitive girls' basketball for the first time in our district. Pillager's first

girls' head coach was, of course, Carol Demgen. The alliance that Carol and the other District 24 coaches created was also the framework for TitleIX, which equalized opportunities for all of the girls' sports that followed.

Carol was basically in charge of all girls' athletics until 1974, when the school district finally bought girls' uniforms and scheduling was taken over by then Athletic Director, Mike Greer. Carol remained as the Head Girls' coach for basketball, volleyball, and track and field from 1971-1980, but she continued to coach girls' intramural sports for many years.

Girls' athletics would have eventually come to Pillager schools; however, without Carol's determination, passion, and hard work laying the foundation, girls' athletics would not have become a reality as quickly.

Mrs. "D", as she is lovingly called, was (and remains) a major influence in the lives of countless girls at Pillager schools. She touched those lives not only as a dedicated teacher but also as a role model and mentor to the young women of Pillager. Her legacy lives on in the girls' athletic programs we see today. There is no doubt that Mrs. "D" is the "mother of girls' athletics" at Pillager schools.



**2011 Inductee**  
**Harold**  
**Gillson**  
**“A Man of Respect”**

Many people spend their entire lives striving for the respect of others. Yet, the most respected individuals are many times the ones who are the most unassuming. Such a man is Harold Gillson.

Born in Rail Prairie Township in 1918, Harold's life was simple. Harold spent his first 3 years in school at Rail Prairie and Springhill schools before moving to Pontiac, Michigan for grades 4-6. He returned to Pillager in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and graduated from Pillager High School in 1936. Harold was one of three honor students in a graduating class of seven, and he participated in two class plays as well as on the softball team. Harold's life was very normal for a young man in the 1930s.

World War II brought a change in Harold's small-town, rural life. He served as an infantry man in the Army beginning with basic training at Camp Walters, Texas in 1942. He quickly earned the rank of Corporal before leaving basic training and was sent to Non-Com School after basic. Beginning in 1945, Harold was stationed in the Philippines where he worked his way up to the rank of Sergeant and transferred to the First Cavalry Division.

During the last part of 1945 and the beginning of 1946, Harold was one of the first contingents sent to Japan after the nuclear bomb was dropped. There, he assisted with weapons clean up until May 1946 when he left Japan and was honorably discharged from the Army. Because of his exemplary service and his

leadership ability, Harold was called back into military service in 1950, and until 1952 he served as an ROTC instructor at the University of Minnesota.

After his discharge from the military in 1952, Harold returned home to the Pillager area and began a grain farming partnership with his father which he continued for 58 years. That year Harold also began his lengthy service to Pillager schools by beginning a school bus service.

The key word here is “service.” Throughout all of his life, Harold Gillson has been known for his service. In addition to serving his country proudly, over his life time Harold has served as PTA president, an election judge for years, township supervisor for over 25 years, Pillager Military Squad Leader for 40 years, school bus owner for 58 years, and a driver for 34 years where he served over 100 different families. He has been a beloved husband to wife Irene for 67 years, a devoted father to sons Rick and Roger, and a grandfather to eight grandchildren.

Through his entire life, Harold has been known for his honesty, his integrity, and his love and service to God. These are the qualities that we honor in Harold Gillson, a quiet, unassuming man who has spent his entire life utilizing his time, his talents, and his resources to benefit his community. As Harold stated himself, “Pillager is my community,” and we are proud to have Harold Gillson as a greatly respected part of it!



**2011 Inductee**  
**Andrew**  
**Hargrave**  
**“A Man on a Mission”**

The early 1930s were tough times in

America. The stock market crash in 1929 led to the Great Depression of the 1930s. Graduating from Pillager high school in 1931, Andrew Hargrave had a mission. He enrolled in Dunwoody Institute of Minneapolis in 1932, hoping for a career in the printing industry. Graduating from Dunwoody, Andrew found it impossible to find employment in the printing field or in any field for that matter because of the depression. He struck out into a hard-living, rough-and-tumble world and joined the Civilian Conservation Corps for a number of years before returning to Pillager. As he is quoted from a July 1960 article from North Central Bible College, “In 1937 I came back to Pillager and became the operator and best customer of a night club near home.”

Life continued on this path until the autumn 1938 when Andrew's life changed forever. A revival group called “The Light Bearers Quartet” spent seven weeks in Pillager holding revival meetings and stirring the entire community with their message. As Andrew stated, “It was during this time that I found Christ and my life was drastically changed.” In 1940 Andrew enrolled in North Central Bible College in Minneapolis. He arrived on campus with only \$10 in his pocket and not even an entire suit of clothes to his name. Andrew worked his way through college in the print shop at school, a trade he learned earlier and one which would lead to his true mission later.

After graduating in 1943, he married Doris Charles and served as a pastor in Sauk Centre, Minnesota for three years. He then returned to school and operated the printing press until it was sold, training other missionaries in graphic arts and printing. In 1946, Andrew's life would change again as he and Doris received a missionary call to Brazil. This call would begin Andrew's life-long mission that would change thousands of lives across South America and eventually extend into Africa as well.

Andrew's next eight years were spent setting up a large printing plant in Rio de Janeiro which printed and distributed the gospel's message throughout the region. This gospel press was eventually turned over to the national ministers of Brazil and continued distribution.

Andrew then continued this mission in Nigeria and Ghana, providing the gospel's message to third-world populations and extending an alternative to tribal politics and strong-arm governments. Literally millions of pieces of literature were provided to third-world populations through Andrew's mission and leadership. But his life-long mission did not stop there. Despite losing all of his personal belongings as well as his printing presses and equipment, Andrew assisted in the rebuilding of Nigeria after the devastation of its civil war.

As a young Pillager graduate, Andrew's mission was to learn a trade to survive the Depression. However, with one life-changing experience, he became a man on a mission that would change hundreds of thousands of lives in South America and Africa. This man on a mission lives on through his work.