



HOMECOMING 2015

Award Winners

Seven Defiance College alumni and a faculty member were recognized during 2015 homecoming festivities for their accomplishments.

The Alumni Citation for Academic Excellence was presented to Christine (Reeb) Wahl, Defiance, Ohio. Alumni Achievement Award recipients were Jerry Pierman, North Palm Beach, Fla.; Donald Smith, Continental, Ohio; and Thomas Spiess, Fayette, Ohio. Nick Neiderhouse, Maumee, Ohio, received the Young Alumni Service Award. The Schauffler Legacy Award was presented to James D. Clark, Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.; and Marie (Yoder) Wenner, Columbia, Pa. Dr. JoAnn Burkhardt received the Harold A. McMaster Life is Action Award.

CHRISTINE WAHL '72 holds an exemplary teaching record in service to her community. She graduated with a degree in elementary education (K-8). She obtained a Master of Education from Bowling Green State University, then joined the Defiance City Schools staff as a first grade teacher. She was one of 40 teachers selected from the State of Ohio

and Department of Education to author a \$2.5 million grant that established Professional Development Training Centers throughout the state.

In addition to education, Wahl also helped students interested in music. She served as the musical director for the Young People's Theater Guild for 19 years and has provided private music lessons since 1973. Wahl and her husband, Elliot, live in Defiance, Ohio. They have one son, Patrick. After 39 years of service, she retired in 2011 and continues to contribute to the Defiance community as a substitute teacher.

JERRY PIERMAN '63 started in the golf course construction business in 1972. During his early years, he participated in the construction of multiple golf courses. He eventually formed his own business, Pierman Golf Company. While Jerry closed his company in the mid-90s, he continues to consult on golf course construction all over the world. In 2005, he joined professional golfer Lenny Wadkins to form the Lenny Wadkins Design Company. They are currently working on a project in Ecuador.

Pictured are from left to right: Christine Wahl, Jerry Pierman, Marie Wenner, Nick Neiderhouse, JoAnn Burkhardt, Tom Spiess, and Don Smith. Inset: Jim Clark.

Pierman has served on numerous committees throughout the years, including the Executive Committee for the Memorial Tournament at Muirfield Village in Dublin, Ohio, the Golf Course Builders Association of America, and North Palm Beach Country Club golf course advisory board. He has also been a guest speaker on several occasions. He graduated from DC with a bachelor's degree in business. Jerry and his wife, Judy, live in North Palm Beach, Fla. They have three children (Jana, Joseph, and Jason) and five grandchildren.

DON SMITH '71 has had a longstanding career in social work and served on DC's social work advisory council for 35 years. His real joy in life, though, has been raising money for Diabetes Youth Services in Toledo. He learned that DYS conducts summer camps for children with diabetes that combines diabetes education with normal camping activities. "I swim a mile every day (for pledged donations), so I found an activity I love that benefits kids," Smith said.

Since he started 12 years ago, Smith has helped raise \$159,607 for the camp. He graduated with a degree in social work and believes it was DC that first instilled in him the desire make the world a better place through service projects. Smith plans to continue his efforts for Youth Diabetes Services in his new home, Sun City Center, Fla., where he and his wife, Connie, moved in August.

TOM SPIESS '70 graduated from DC with a bachelor's degree in comprehensive art. Originally intending a career of a few years at Fayette Schools, he became deeply involved in education and retired after 30 years. He has served on the Ohio Arts Council; as founder and director of the Fayette Community Arts Council; as a Jennings Scholar; chairman of the Fulton County United Way; president of the Gorham Fayette Teachers' Association; and president of the Fulton County Community Improvement Corporation.

His lasting legacy at Defiance College began as a tribute to his oldest son, Jon. Two years after Jon's unfortunate death, Spiess established the Jon Spiess Memorial Golf Tournament. In two decades, the tournament has hosted thousands of college golfers and grown into a two-day, two-course event featuring collegiate players from NCAA Division I, II, and III schools; NAIA Teams, and junior college teams. Proceeds from the tourney benefit scholarships for DC students. Spiess lives in Fayette with his wife, Cherlyn. In addition to Jon, they have three children: Matthew, Mark, and Elizabeth.

At Defiance College, **NICK NEIDERHOUSE '05** found the opportunity to work with local school systems in the area incredibly beneficial. He graduated from DC with a middle childhood education degree. Starting as a sixth grade teacher at Fallen Timbers, he is now principal of Wayne Trail Elementary. Neiderhouse organizes volunteer efforts for students, including spending weekends assisting individuals with developmental disabilities, fundraising, and serving the community.

Neiderhouse is a member of the Ohio Association of Secondary Administrators, National Association of Elementary School Principals, Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators, and the Educational Leadership Association. In addition, he has served on numerous educational committees and as a volunteer leader. Currently, he lives in Maumee with his wife, Raquel, and their son, Neiko.

JIM CLARK '75 received his bachelor's degree in social work and psychology at DC. While at DC, he was recognized as a valuable football player. He was inducted into the Ohio State Social Work Hall of Fame in 2011 and holds advanced certification as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (L.C.S.W.) and Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE), among others. Currently, Clark is president and CEO of Daniel Memorial, and founder of the Jacksonville Kids Coalition.

He has spoken nationally and runs a weekly television segment in Jacksonville, Fla. on positive ways to raise children. Clark also designed and piloted the Statewide In-patient Psychiatric Program (SIPP), which is now used as a model throughout the state of Florida. His community work includes serving on the 7th Circuit Judicial Nominating Commission and the State Advisor Group for Juvenile Justice. Clark and his wife, **AMY '75**, met on campus and have been married 38 years. They reside in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla., and have two children: Amanda and Christopher.

MARIE WENNER '54 graduated with degrees in social work and Christian education, has devoted a lifetime to service and Christian education, volunteering with the UCC Synod and conferences, developing curriculum, providing workshops, and training others to serve their church. After marrying Nelson, a 1954 graduate from Lancaster Seminary, Wenner helped with Nelson's church ministry and taught weekday nursery school. They started a church in rural Pennsylvania and had built a membership of almost 100 congregants within six years. The original barn on the property has since been renovated to open the first YMCA in the area.

When Marie's husband Nelson passed away in 2010, they had been married for almost 60 years. They have three children, Mark, Karen, and James, and five grandchildren, Kevin, Greg, Eric, Christine, and Olivia. Wenner resides in Columbia, Pa.

DR. JOANN BURKHARDT, professor of education, was recognized with the first-ever Harold A. McMaster Life is Action Award for her involvement with the McMaster School for Advancing Humanity since 2003.

Burkhardt was named a faculty McMaster Fellow to Guatemala in 2003-04, leading a team of student McMaster Scholars in working with teachers and administrators. In 2004, she began a partnership in Cambodia which included a focus on teacher training in Phnom Penh. She has been named a McMaster Fellow each successive year to Cambodia.

Over the past 13 years, Burkhardt has led nearly 120 McMaster Scholars, students of all academic disciplines, as they work in partnership with various communities to improve the human condition. In addition she has served as both mentor and colleague for 10 faculty and staff on these experiences.



Pictured at left, l-r, Michael Bixel, Larry Flynn, Stephanie Fetter, and Marv Rotondo. Below, l-r, Tom Held, Kenny Krouse, Tim Held, Bob Martin, Frank Kill, Jim Linder, and Tim Shock.



HOMECOMING 2015

Hall of Fame & Coach of the Year

Four Defiance College alumni were inducted in the Alumni Varsity 'D' Hall of Fame during this year's homecoming festivities. They included: Stephanie Nafziger Fetter, Adrian, Mich.; Paul (Larry) Flynn, Avon, Ohio; Maurice (Marv) Rotondo, Sylvania, Ohio; and Michael Bixel, Willoughby, Ohio. An induction ceremony was held at halftime during the DC versus Earlham College football game in Justin F. Coressel Stadium. The Alumni Varsity 'D' recognized Hall of Fame inductees at a 9 a.m. breakfast in the Serrick Campus Center. Also recognized were seven DC alumni selected as 2015 Coach of the Year recipients. They included: Tom Held, Bob Martin, Frank Kill, Tim Held, Jim Linder, Tim Shock and Kenny Krouse.

STEPHANIE FETTER '98 lettered in basketball all four years at Defiance College. She served as captain of the team her junior and senior years, and was chosen All-American for the 1997-1998 season. Fetter and her teammates made three NCAA Tournament appearances during her playing career, and she was chosen as the Purple & Gold Female Athlete of the Year her senior year. She was also active in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Fetter graduated with a degree in finance and worked at Tiffin University for three years as the Bursar. She and her husband **JAMIE '96** have three children: Tyson, Brook, and Trenton. She currently works part-time at Adrian College and does volunteer work for her children's schools.

LARRY FLYNN '80 lettered in basketball all four years at DC. He played in 110 varsity games with a combined record of 73-37. He had 1,258 career points, which ranked him ninth all-time when he graduated. He shot 45 percent from the floor, which was fifth all-time when he graduated. Defiance College was the HBCC Conference champion his sophomore year and won the NAIA District 22 championship his senior year.

Earlier this year, Flynn was inducted into the Lorain, Ohio, Sports Hall of Fame. His high school team Lorain Catholic went 25-1 his senior year, losing only in the state championship. Flynn played on an All-Star team the following summer in Costa Rica, representing Ohio and the United States. He graduated from DC with a degree in accounting and management. Currently, he is a regional audit specialist with AIG. He and his wife, Judy, live in Avon, Ohio, with their two children, Andrew and Elizabeth.

At DC, **MAURICE “MARV” ROTONDO ’70** lettered all four years of his athletic career, was All-Conference and All-District (NAIA District 22) Offensive Guard in 1969. In addition to football, he was a four year player for the Defiance club lacrosse team and was captain in 1970. Off the field, he was chosen as Tau Kappa Epsilon Man of the Year, House Master and Pledge Master 1968-70.

Rotondo retired from teaching in 2010 after four decades of service. His time as an educator was marked by recognition as Ottawa Hills Teacher of the Year in 1983, three Lucas County Teacher of the Year awards, two national recognitions for “Who’s Who” teacher by former students, and Teacher of the Month in 2008. He served for 20 years as president of the Ottawa Hills Education Association. He is also a Vietnam War veteran. Rotondo and his wife, Cynthia, live in Sylvania, Ohio.



MICHAEL BIXEL ’83 was

recognized for his prowess on the football field. He came to Defiance College as a transfer student his junior and senior years, moving over from Bowling Green State University. Bixel lettered in football those two years at DC and was chosen All-District, All-League, All-American, MVP, and as captain of the team.

After graduation, he played on several nationally-ranked flag football teams. He graduated with a degree in history and is currently vice president (projects) at PNC Bank. His wife, Elizabeth, is also a 1983 graduate of Defiance College. They live in Willoughby, Ohio, and have three children: Ashley, Chelsea and Michael II.

TIM HELD ’96 was recognized for the fifth consecutive year as Coach of the Year for his latest outstanding season with the Cincinnati Moeller High School baseball team. Moeller has now won three of the past four Division I state baseball titles, defeating Westerville Central 16-0 for the 2015 championship. The game was called after five innings due to the 10-run rule, giving Moeller the largest margin of victory of the 88-year history of the tournament in any division in a championship game. Held also earned Coach of the Year honors from the Greater Catholic League-South, the Cincinnati Enquirer, and local coaches’ associations. He was invited to coach the Perfect Game All-American East team in August. He lives in Cincinnati with his wife, Leslie, and their two sons.

TOM HELD ’85 was recognized as Coach of the Year for once again leading the Defiance High School baseball team to the Division II state championship. The Bulldogs finished the 2015 season with a 28-5 record, bringing Tom’s lifetime record at Defiance 437-70. Tom and his wife, Deanne, have three children and live in Defiance.

JIM LINDER ’89 was recognized as Coach of the Year for leading the Wayne Trace High School boys basketball team to the state semifinals for the first time in seven years. Wayne Trace entered the semifinals ranked second in the state, and although a loss to Canal Winchester ended their season, they did so with a 25-2 overall record. Linder’s sons, Ethan and Corbin, helped lead the Raiders’ phenomenal season. Linder is in his eighth year as head coach of the boys basketball team. He was honored as an Alumni Coach of the Year two years ago, the Crescent-News Co-Coach of the Year and Northwest District Coach of the Year last year. Linder holds the single-season record for wins at Wayne Trace with 25 victories during the 2014-15 season. He and his wife, Jane, live in Paulding and have six children: Riley, Abbey, Haley, Corbin, Ethan and Josiah.

FRANK KILL ’02 was awarded Coach of the Year for leading the Lima Central Catholic High School boys basketball team to the state tournament. The team advanced to the state final before losing in the title game to Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph. This was Kill’s second state championship game as head coach at LCC, and his second year to receive Coach of the Year recognition. His Thunderbirds won the state championship in 2014. Kill and his wife, Kris, live in Lima and have two children.

TIM SHOCK ’08 received Coach of the Year honors for leading Hicksville High School’s baseball team to the state semi-finals. The team secured the Division IV Regional Championship with a record of 19-10. Although Hicksville was the fifth seed in the Bryan District Tournament, the Aces ran off six straight playoff wins to make it to the state tournament for the first time since 1982. Shock lives in Hicksville with his wife, Chris. They have two children, Abbey and Gunner.

BOB MARTIN ’76 was honored as Coach of the Year for his work with the Doncaster Danum Eagles basketball team in Doncaster, England. He has been with the Danum Eagles high school program since 2001 and led the team to eight conference championships, seven final four appearances, and six English Schools high school national championships. Martin was named 2014-15 Coach of the Year and Team of the Year in the region, and currently has more than 300 “mini-Eagles” involved in a weekly youth program.

KENNY KROUSE ’87 received Coach of the Year honors for his outstanding 2014 season with the Tinora High School football program. Tinora won the 2014 regional title with a 13-1 record before ending the season with a loss in the state semi-finals. Tinora was ranked fourth in the final AP State Football Poll. Krouse and the Rams hold a 61-4 record in the conference over the past 10 years and have had three undefeated regular seasons (2002, 2010 and 2014). He has a career record at Tinora of 132-60. During that time they have won eight Green Meadows Conference titles and have made nine playoff appearances. Krouse lives in Bryan with his wife, Lori, daughter, Madysen, and stepsons, Brandon and Jared.