



# March 26, 2019

## Wyandotte Distinguished Graduate Inductee



### Joseph Palamara Class of 1971

Joseph Palamara distinguished himself in both the private and public sectors, as a member of the Michigan House of Representatives and the Wayne County Commission, and as an outstanding athlete.

While Joseph was at Roosevelt High School, he was a member of the National Honor Society, the Border Cities League Federation and the World as a Community class (WAAC). Joe was an outstanding athlete and earned two varsity letters in baseball at Roosevelt.

Joe also played baseball, basketball and hockey in the city's recreation programs. In 1971, he helped lead his Class-D basketball team to the MRPA State Basketball Championship and in 1972 led the Trenton American Legion Post #426 win the State Baseball Team Championship.

After graduating from Roosevelt in 1971, Joe was awarded an Evans (Caddy) Scholarship to attend Michigan State University. Joe majored in hotel, restaurant and institutional management. While at MSU, Joe was a walk-on member of the varsity baseball team. 1975 was a break-out year for Joe as a second baseman. He was the Spartans' leading hitter, earning him the Steve Garvey Sportsmanship Award, named First Team All-Big Ten and an All-American Baseball Player by the American Association of College Baseball Coaches. That same year, Joe earned his bachelor of arts degree from MSU's College of Business.

After graduating MSU, Joe worked in both public and private sectors. In the early 1980s, while employed by the city of Royal Oak as the arena manager and recreation supervisor, he attended evening classes at the Detroit College of Law. In 1985, Joe graduated with a juris doctorate degree. He has been a licensed attorney and member of the State Bar of Michigan for over 30 years.

In 1984, Joe made his first bid for public office. He won a seat in the Michigan House of Representatives. As a state legislator, Palamara sponsored a number of bills that became state law. Those included: measures to require DNA testing of criminals, a law to allow direct access to OB-GYN health care for women and another to regulate athletic agents in Michigan. Representative Palamara played an integral part in other pieces of legislation that were approved including supporting millions of dollars in state grants to upgrade the Wilson Middle School athletic field and build Wyandotte Shores Golf Course. Joe served in the State Legislature for seven terms until 1998, when term limits went into effect.

Joe was elected as Wayne County Commissioner in 1998, representing eight downriver communities. He has served eleven terms and has been instrumental in turning around the state's largest county into consecutive years of budget surpluses. Joe has sponsored over a million dollars in local improvements from the county's Parks Millage Fund to parks all over the downriver area. After serving as chairman of the Commission's Ways and Means Committee, he currently serves as vice chairman of the entire Commission.

Palamara has also served as a board member at Henry Ford Wyandotte Hospital, the Michigan Association of Counties and the Wyandotte Public Schools Scholarship Foundation. Joe has been a volunteer coach in numerous youth sports. He has served as guest speaker and lecturer for a variety of schools and events including serving as master of ceremonies at President Bill Clinton's visit to the Wyandotte Bacon Memorial Library in 1996.

Joseph Palamara and his wife Aline, also a graduate of Roosevelt (1973) and Michigan State University (1978), are the proud parents of three children (all MSU graduates) and four grandchildren.