

The Class of 2008 Selects...

Thomas J. Rutkoski (Class of 1962)



A life long resident of Butler County Mr. Rutkoski attended Lyndora Elementary. An Eagle Scout, Mr. Rutkoski had a difficult time throughout his school years, suffering from dyslexia. After high school he entered the US Air Force serving during the Vietnam War in satellite reconnaissance.

After his service he became a professional photographer for the new television station WPGH TV, channel 53 and progressed to motion picture work at KDKA TV. Working for twenty years at KDKA as chief cinematographer, Mr. Rutkoski became an award-winning photojournalist, receiving the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists "Cinematographer of the Year Award". In 1990, he founded Gospa Missions, a nonprofit foundation established to provide humanitarian aid and motivational support as he traveled the world. He also established a non-profit charity Abode for Children based in Evans City. This foundation is dedicated to the welfare of children in Africa, India and throughout the world. Through

Abode for Children; Mr. Rutkoski has built orphanages and schools in Ogoja, Nigeria and Cherukupally, India, each accommodating over 600 hundred children.

Mr. Rutkoski has dedicated his efforts to provide for those young people who have no one else to care for them. After the 1994-95 war in Bosnia, Gospa Missions was responsible for shipping containers of food to refugees and thousands of pounds of clothing and medical supplies to the war torn area. Mr. Rutkoski has gone from a young man barely able to read a book to actually authoring four books, publishing motivational audios and videos and presenting over 1000 motivational speeches throughout the world. Recently Mr. Rutkoski was featured on WQED-TV's "On-Q Magazine," a show in a series called: "Pittsburgh People Changing Lives."