

Plattsmouth Alumni Association

Linking the Past with the Future

Published November 2009

PHS ALUM FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR



Rachel C. Rasmussen of Nebraska has been awarded a Fulbright U.S. Student scholarship to Germany in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Rachel Rasmussen a 2004 PHS graduate, is the daughter of Mike⁸⁴ and Deb Blakley Rasmussen. (Mike is the Vice-President of Pitlor & Son, Inc., one of the largest and oldest Mechanical Contractors in the Midwest.) Rachel graduated Magna cum laude from Doane College in 2008 with a BA in History and Spanish and minor in German.

The Fulbright Program is America's flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the United States Department of State and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. In 1946 legislation was introduced by the late Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas to give people the opportunity to study, teach, or do research abroad. "To provide the opportunity to observe each others' political, economic, educational, and cultural institutions, to exchange ideas and to embark on joint ventures of importance to the general welfare of the world's inhabitants." Fulbright recipients are among over 40,000 individuals participating in

U.S. Department of State exchange programs each year. The ultimate goal is to promote mutual understanding and respect between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.

Rachel's love of language began with her high school Spanish teacher's encouragement to pursue language in college. She took advantage of the opportunity to study language abroad while in college and explore different cultures of Europe as a student and with her family.

The Fulbright scholarship has taken Rachel to Dresden, Germany where, since late August 2009 she has made her home. She has found the phrase, "I'm from Nebraska, it's in the middle of the United States," to be her most frequent statement after her name. Her mission in Dresden is to teach English as a foreign language at the Romain-Rolland-Gymnasium in the Saxony region. The Saxony region is in Eastern Germany bordered by Poland and the Czech Republic, Dresden is halfway between Berlin and Prague. She feels especially lucky because this gymnasium focuses on languages, which makes her job easier. The students learn French, English, and Spanish or Latin. The upper grades teach geography and history in French. She works with 12 classes ranging in age from 6th to 12th grade. Rachel reports that the typical school day is not so typical and has taken some time to get used to. The students stay together as a class so they become very close nit while the teachers move from class to class. The schedule of what is taught can vary from day to day, a new schedule is made daily to fit the students and teachers. So far, she has done small discussion groups and presentations on various aspects of American culture. She has dealt with such topics as American advertising, gangs in the US, music in Nebraska, and sports in American high schools. Rachel writes that, "Basically the students are the same as in the US. They are going through the same life changes and experiencing the same drama. The German students are a bit more frank and open about things, but that is the German culture." She notes that the everyday classroom is different in what the teachers allow as normal behavior. Language that Rachel would deem inappropriate is acceptable in class with the understanding that the students realize that "cuss" words are only used in certain informal settings. Slang is an important part of the French and English curriculum in this school. Rachel is also trying to get used to German teaching methods. -Continued on Page 3-

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Greetings Plattsmouth High School Alumni from your alma mater,



It is always a privilege to talk about how great it is to be a BLUE DEVIL. The staff at PHS has been working very hard to ensure that our students have the best education possible. PHS recently learned that it met all of the requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) the tool used to measure requirements for No Child Left Behind. In addition, PHS raised the average ACT score to 21.7 (national average is 21.4) a 1.6 point increase from the 2008 average. There are currently nine 4.0's in the class of 2010. The 2009/10 school year is proving to be a better year in all areas.

In the activities arena the PHS culinary team has been named one of the nation's top 100 hottest programs. The PHS team has represented Nebraska in the past two national contests finishing in the top 10 at the 2009 national competition. This year's team returns 3 of the 4 members, Brian Bashus, Max Piles, and Steven Applegate. In other activities news the DECA chapter (marketing club) sent student Trevor O'Hara to the International DECA competition in Anaheim, California. Trevor was PHS' first competitor in over 20 years and is hoping to qualify again to compete in the International competition. PHS' Air Force JROTC was named as an exemplary squadron for the fourth straight year. The fine arts department is also very strong. The complexity of the plays and music is performed at a very high level. This was exemplified with PHS senior Tessa Harnetiaux being named as one of 16 outstanding young artists in Nebraska. The PHS cheer squad will represent Plattsmouth at this year's Capitol One Bowl. They earned this honor by being named a superior squad this summer at Lake Okoboji.

Students are also busy doing community service projects. If you have been in downtown Plattsmouth, Sophomore Shelby Stone was in charge of the mural painted on the corner of 5th and Main. The Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA) has already completed one of its three annual blood drives. The Spirit Club is once again raising money for the Susan B. Komen Foundation (breast cancer awareness). Last year they raised over \$1800.00 and have raised their goal to \$2000.00. The Student Council has raised over \$2000.00 for the Make a Wish Foundation. The JROTC and National Honor Society do road clean up. Many students partner with senior citizens at Woodbridge (assisted living facility) in a big PAL program and have little PALs at the elementary school.

PHS is also civically engaged by hosting some great events. This past fall the PHS Hall of Fame inducted its newest members at an assembly in the auditorium. PHS should be very proud of Dr. William Wehrbein and Mr. Fritz Duda (accepting for his deceased father Fred Duda). Both inductees were able to articulate a message to the students that was both meaningful and from the heart. The messages were well received by the student body and opened the student's eyes to the successes of the PHS community. On November 11, PHS will host its annual Veteran's Day celebration. This year the celebration will include a message from Governor Dave Heineman and music by the PHS choir and the Air Force group "Night Wing". PHS is also going to begin a special award for an outstanding veteran. If you would like to attend, please contact me at jwiles@plattsmouthschools.org or call the high school at 402-296-3322.

Finally, 2009 has been a banner fall for our athletic teams. For the first time in history, PHS had all six of its fall sports teams rated in the top 10 of their respected sports. The boy's golf team qualified for the state tournament for the first time since 1998 and placed 8th. The softball team qualified for the state tournament for the very first time and won their opening game. Both the boys and girls cross-country teams qualified for the state meet. The volleyball team is ranked 10th at this time. The football team won districts but then lost to Crete in the first round of state playoffs. The school and community spirit has been outstanding and hopefully will carry on throughout the year.

It is truly a great time to be a BLUE DEVIL. Once a BLUE DEVIL always a BLUE DEVIL as many of our outstanding students are the children and grandchildren of PHS alums. Plattsmouth High School is truly a special place and one that all of our alumni can be proud. All alumni are invited to attend a game, play, or concert and see the spirit in action. If you cannot make it to an event please visit us online at plattsmouthschools.org or to see some spirit photos visit <http://buledevilsprit.blogspot.com>? And remember **GO BIG BLUE!**

Educationally Yours,
Jeff Wiles '81, Principal

ALUMNI BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

The 2010 Men's Alumni Basketball Tournament will be tentatively held on Friday March 19 and Saturday March 20, 2010. Anyone interested in putting a team in the tournament can contact Boy's Basketball Coach Dave Snyder via e-mail at dsnyder@plattsmouthschools.org. The cost is \$20.00 per player. All proceeds from this exciting event goes toward cutting the cost of summer camps for members of the Plattsmouth Boy's Basketball Team. A great opportunity to participate or watch!

The German teacher shares the faults and mistakes of a student with the class, whereas the American teacher strives to use constructive criticism and encouragement. The 8th grade students at Rachel's school study different areas in the US. One of the chapters in their textbook is entitled "Nebraska: Middle of Nowhere?" Rachel is looking forward to this chapter in the spring, "to be able to share the real Nebraska and dispel any misconceptions presented in the book. I do think it is wild that there is a chapter in high school textbooks in Germany about Nebraska. Even if it is a rather unflattering chapter!"

Dresden has not been all work for Rachel. She has enjoyed settling in at the University (studying philosophy) and finding her own apartment after living with a host family (two sisters) for the first seven weeks. She has found the people to be very pleasant and helpful. While looking for an apartment she met a young couple, who had studied in Minnesota and Chicago, Rachel was invited to her first Polterabend ("evening of noise"). This pre-nuptial social event is where family and friends gather before the wedding to break dishes (the noise) as a way to scare off the evil spirits that want to disrupt the marriage. The couple then has to clean up the broken pieces as their first task together. Rachel is looking forward to learning and taking part in many more German cultural experiences.

So far, her plans to get a Masters in International Relations and to someday work for the State Department as a Foreign Service Officer have not changed. She has learned that it is a more complete education in foreign relations when a person can live and work in the country in question. She closes with "I really enjoy sharing my little part of Nebraska with people and giving people from around the world a little insight into life in the Midwest. I have enjoyed my time in Dresden up to this point and I am glad to have this opportunity to discover a beautiful city and learn about the German culture from the inside."

RETURN TO GLORY!

Curtis G. Gocke, Assistant Varsity Wrestling Coach has provided the following invitation:

The 2009-2010 PHS wrestling team is celebrating the 20-year anniversary of the 1990 PHS State Wrestling team on January 23rd during the PHS Wrestling Tournament. We are looking forward to the opportunity to recognize this wonderful achievement and to bring back the 90's to PHS at least for one day. We are encouraging all towns' people, alumni and family members to attend one or both of the events planned on this day. The first event will be a part of the tournament itself as we recognize the team and their coaches before the finals of the tournament, approximately around 2:00pm. The second event is a reception at the Plattsmouth Country Club around 7:00pm. This is a great opportunity to recognize our past and motivate our present and future wrestlers. We have had a good response so far, having found about 16 of the 24 wrestlers at this point in time.

If you know any of the contact information for the following alumni please contact the Alumni Association with their updated information, your help is greatly appreciated.

Bill Haynes, Jamie Pestel, Toby Jackson, Paul Downey, Craig Skidmore, Chris Jordan, Scott Peckman, Eric Holman

CLASS NOTICES

Class of 1970 will hold its 40-year reunion on July 23rd and 24th 2010. More detailed information will go out the first of 2010. If you know of a 1970 classmate who has not gotten a "Save the Date" postcard, please help them contact Shari Grove Thompson at 402-296-2944 or e-mail her at shari681@windstream.net.

Class of 1960 (50th Year Class Reunion) is holding a two day reunion Memorial Day weekend 2010. Friday evening is a Social Dinner at Lake Ridge Country Club. Saturday evening, we will be attending the Plattsmouth High School Alumni Dinner. For further information, please contact Charles Stoehr at cstoehr@windstream.net or Phone 402-298-8793 or mail to 150 Oak Hill Road, Plattsmouth, NE 68048. For the Saturday PHS Alumni Dinner you must make reservations directly with the Alumni Association. More information about that Alumni Banquet will be available in the March 2010 Newsletter.

Dr. William M. Wehrbein inducted into PHS Hall of Fame



William Wehrbein, son of Flora Belle Mead Wehrbein ^{'38} and the late Edward Wehrbein ^{'32}, grew up on a farm between Plattsmouth and Louisville with his sisters Nancy ^{'71} and Susan ^{'76}. Bill was definitely a well rounded high school student, he was involved in the vocal and dramatic arts all four years, playing the leading role in *South Pacific* as a sophomore, many other vocal ensembles, part of the team that won the division trophy at the Creighton Math Field Day each of his four years at PHS, his Presbyterian Church choir and youth group, he earned the rank of Life Scout, attended Boys State and worked on his father's farm

during the summer. He participated in two NSF summer science camps at the University of Kansas. Bill was the Valedictorian of the Class of 1966, a National Merit Finalist, on the All-State Scholastic Team (ranked second in the state on the University of Nebraska Regents exam) and received an academic scholarship at Nebraska Wesleyan University.

At Nebraska Wesleyan University, William was a member of the University Christian Ministry, Sigma Pi Sigma Physics Honor Society, Student Senate vice-president, editor of the school newspaper, and on the Youth Advisory Committee for State Selective Service. In 1969 he was selected for a Summer Institute in Space Physics at Columbia University in New York City. This program also took him to the U.S. space program centers around the country. He graduated with highest distinction with a double major in physics and mathematics in 1970. William earned two national honors upon graduation; a Woodrow Wilson Graduate Fellowship and a National Science Foundation Graduate Fellowship, which helped support his Ph.D. study at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Bill completed a Ph.D. in Astro-Geophysics at CU in 1977. His research dissertation was on ozone in the atmosphere of Mars, which involved analyzing data sent back from instruments launched into space. Dr. Wehrbein spent the next four years doing research for the Department of Atmospheric Sciences at the University of Washington in Seattle. In 1981 he returned to Nebraska Wesleyan as an assistant professor of physics.

Dr. Wehrbein's caring attitude led to his success and reputation as a dedicated college teacher at NWU. Professor Wehrbein was chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy, chair of the Natural Science Division, a published researcher, President of the Faculty, the faculty representative on the Board of Governors, winner of the 1998 United Methodist Exemplary Teacher Award, the 1996 NWU Friend of the Humanities Award, and the NWU Great Teaching Professor in 1985-88. He was active in the American Association of Physics Teachers and serves as secretary of the Nebraska Academy of Science. Dr. Wehrbein retired from Nebraska Wesleyan University in 2008 with the title "Professor Emeritus".

Retirement will not see Bill sitting around, he has many different civic groups and issues that he will continue to support. He has been a tireless leader for the Bread for the World national organization, lobbying our government leaders to end hunger at home and abroad. He has participated in missions to Panama and Ethiopia in regard to world hunger and quality of life. He is currently an elder, in the choir, and on the mission committee at Eastridge Presbyterian Church in Lincoln. He is also the present board secretary for Cornerstone Ministries at UNL. Bill's hobbies are bicycle touring, movies, Lewis and Clark, judging school science fairs, and visiting high school physics teachers. His love of film has remained strong, he is president for the Friends of the Mary Riempa Ross Film Theater, a support group for international, documentary, and independent film at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. His commitment to health and wellness is evident through his passion for bicycling and as a board member of the Great Plains Trails Network.



Late Fred V. Duda inducted into PHS Hall of Fame



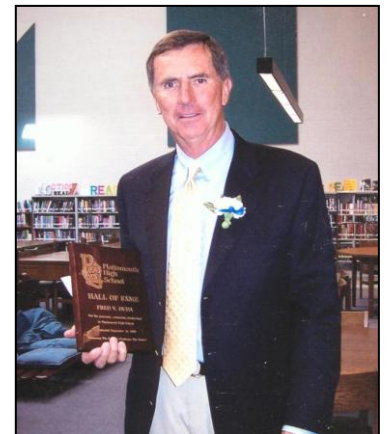
Fred V. Duda was born to Ferdinand and Anna in the Czech Republic, formerly Czechoslovakia. They immigrated from Cermna, a small agricultural village to the U. S. in the early 1900's. Fred, known as "Fritz" was the oldest child to travel to America. Twelve children were born to Ferdinand and Anna, however only four lived to adulthood. Fred learned to speak English in Plattsmouth when he started school. Fred characterized the spirit and values of this part of the world, he was bright and eager to learn. When he was in the 9th grade, his father withdrew him from school to help support the family. Fred's sisters, Mary and Anna and brother Michael grew up in the Plattsmouth area.

Fred dreamed of a better life than working on the Burlington refrigerator cars. When he was sixteen he rode a freight car to California and found a job as a dishwasher in a chain restaurant. Within a few years he was managing the restaurant. Fred met and married the love of his life Fountiene during the Great Depression, they returned to the Midwest where Fred began knocking on doors for the Jewel Tea Company. Jewel Tea was a popular home coffee route service. His ambitious nature and innate leadership ability propelled him into being the leading sales executive in the country. Fred managed to expand the business to Long Beach, California and ultimately throughout California. He received many sales and leadership awards with the company and eventually served as manager of all their offices on the West coast. Fred enjoyed a successful food-retailing career with the Jewel Tea Company spanning almost 40 years. He spent his post retirement years in the real estate industry in California.

Fred and Fountiene had two children, Fritz Duda and Fountine Duda Prince. His hobbies were family, baseball, and golf. Fred passed away in 1992, he is survived by his son, Fritz and daughter Fountiene, his sister Mary, 9 grandchildren, and 21 great-grandchildren. At the time of his death, his children chose to honor his integrity, his strong industrious nature, and his devotion to family in the form of student scholarships. The scholarships are given to the Catholic school at the church Fritz attended in California and in the place of his humble beginnings, Plattsmouth, Nebraska. In 1993 the first Duda Scholarship was awarded to a student from the school he was unable to graduate from. The scholarship applications are read and decided upon by the Duda family members. Since 1993, the Duda family has given 44, \$5000.00 scholarships to PHS graduates.

His daughter Fountiene states, "Each year when we travel to the Honors Night at Plattsmouth High School, we remember our father and how hard he worked to give us a good life. It is such an honor for us to be present and to make the award to hopeful and eager students. We always know that our dad would be so pleased to know that the way he lived his life inspired us to provide an opportunity for further education to young people who dream of learning and finding a career which will help them to contribute to this world in which we live."

While Fred dealt with life's challenges and was unable to graduate from Plattsmouth High School, he was a magnetic and dynamic individual who journeyed from humble beginnings in Plattsmouth to a position, which allowed his family to provide financial educational assistance to many PHS graduates.



Accepting the Hall of Fame award for the Late Fred V. Duda was his son Fritz L. Duda of Dallas, Texas.

JACK HERWEG MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Applications for the Jack Herweg Memorial Scholarship will be accepted beginning January 1, 2010 with deadline for applications on April 10, 2010. The scholarship will be awarded in May. This scholarship is intended for use towards payment of tuition and books.

Send the following information to Herweg Scholarship, Plattsmouth Alumni Association, P. O. Box 283, Plattsmouth, NE 68048

Eligibility Requirements:

1. Applicant must be a graduating senior of Plattsmouth High School or past graduate of Plattsmouth High School.
2. Applicant must be seeking a degree in a music related field, music education or administration from an approved accredited educational institution.
3. Applicant must be in good standing and maintain a minimum of a 'B' average.
4. Application must be received no later than the posted deadline of **April 10, 2010**.

Application Procedures

- 1) The following must accompany this application:
 - a. A copy of the latest academic transcript to include the student's grade point average and credit hours if applicable.
 - b. One letter of recommendation
 - c. A biographical statement about you and your aspirations for the future.
 - d. An outline of your activities, awards, community service projects, organizations, and information about achievements during High School, Undergraduate School, or Graduate School.
 - e. Application must include Name, Address, Phone, e-mail address, signature and date, and signature of Parent /Guardian if student is a minor.

ALL APPLICATIONS ARE CONFIDENTIAL

PHS HALL of FAME Nomination Information

**“Honoring the Past to Challenge the Future”
Any former PHS student who has been out of school at least 15 years is eligible**

Please send the following information to:

Hall of Fame, Sandra Allgeier, 1416 South 15th Street, Plattsmouth, NE 68048

OR e-mail at: sallgeier@windstream.net

1. Name and contact information of candidate
2. A narrative about why you think this person is a good candidate
3. Your name and contact information
4. We will contact the candidate, explaining that he/she has been nominated and will be considered for induction if he/she so wishes and provides us with necessary information.

The PHS Hall of fame is funded by the following:

1. The sale of Memorial Bricks (found in PHS Entrances)
2. Your generous donations...

If you would like to help, contact Shaun Brothers – PHS Athletic Director – 402-296-3322

The Joe York Scholarship

Please add my donation of
\$ _____
to the Joe York Scholarship Fund

Contact Information

Name _____

Address _____

Graduation Year _____



**Plattsmouth
Alumni Association**

ALUM OF THE YEAR

The Plattsmouth Alumni Association is seeking Nominations for the 2010 **ALUM OF THE YEAR**.

Nominations will be accepted until **April 16, 2010**.

Please submit nominations to: Plattsmouth Alumni Association Attn: Alum of the Year Committee
P.O. Box 283 Plattsmouth, NE 68048

This award will be given annually in recognition of outstanding contributions that a PHS Alum has given to his or her community. The recipient will be selected based on the following.

- Individual must be a PHS ALUM
- Contributions the individual has made to the betterment of his/her community.

The nominator should submit a biographical statement of the nominee, to include a brief family history and accomplishments the individual has made during their life since graduation (please state year of graduation). The nominator must submit a brief statement explaining why they have nominated this individual.

Previous recipients of this award include:
2006 ~ Sharon Ramage Smith – Class of 1957
2007 ~ Carl Glup – Class of 1966
2008 ~ Frank Bierl – Class of 1934
2009 ~ Dean Meisinger – Class of 1951

The Plattsmouth Alumni Association in conjunction with the POPS Foundation is pleased to introduce the **BENEFACTORS CLUB**. Through your charitable contributions both organizations are able to provide scholarship funds, educational programs and other activities for the Plattsmouth Community Schools.

The POPS Foundation an organization designed to “Provide Opportunities for Plattsmouth Schools” is recognized by the State of Nebraska as a 501 c3 Corporation. This status allows all charitable donations to be fully tax deductible to the individual donor. It is through the relationship with the POPS Foundation that the donations given to the Plattsmouth Alumni Association are also tax deductible.

The Benefactors Club has been established to honor those of you who would like to make a charitable donation that would help improve the education process in Plattsmouth Community Schools. A permanent display for the Benefactors Club is currently in the design phase and will be introduced to you in a future newsletter.

Charitable donation in the following amounts will be recognized through the Benefactors Club:

Platinum Level - \$10,000 and above
Gold Level - \$5,000 to \$9,999
Silver Level - \$1,000 to \$4,999
Bronze Level - \$500 to \$999

If you have any questions, please contact Sandy McKnight, Executive Director at 402-298-8513.

Plattsmouth Alumni Association
P.O. Box 283
Plattsmouth, NE 68048

NON-PROFIT
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Become an Alumni Association Member TODAY!

_____ Enclosed is my **annual membership fee of \$5.00 per person** for the Plattsmouth Alumni Association.

_____ Enclosed is my **LIFETIME Membership fee of \$125.00 per person**.

Name (maiden name) _____ Graduation Year _____

Name (maiden name) _____ Graduation Year _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Please put my name on the list of Alumni for the following activities: _____

In addition to my annual membership, I would like to make a donation in the amount of: _____

Place my donation in the _____ General Fund, _____ Scholarship Fund.

Total Enclosed \$ _____