

The 2021 Hall of Fame celebrated our 100th anniversary by inducting one alumni from each decade of our 100 years as a school.

Mary Clyde Andrews Gilstrap

Class of 1922

Mary Clyde Andrews was born in 1903 in Alpharetta. She was the third of six children of Arthur and Veola Andrews. She grew up on the family farm just outside the Alpharetta city limits. After graduating as one of two students in the first MHS graduating class, she moved to Atlanta. At age 19, Clyde married Rufus Gilstrap also of Alpharetta. She worked for several companies in clerical positions during most of her adult life. Clyde and Rufus had two daughters, Nell and Jean. Clyde outlived her husband by 35 years. She passed away in 1988 at age 84. She is buried alongside her husband at East View Cemetery in DeKalb County. She was a member of Woodland Hills Baptist Church for over 40 years. Her grandchildren called her “Mamodie.”

Kate Walker Wilbanks

Class of 1922

Kate Walker grew up in the family home on Roswell Street in Alpharetta. She was the daughter of Golson and Vada Walker. Her father was an attorney and mayor of Alpharetta. After graduating as one of two students in the first MHS graduating class, Kate attended nursing school at Grady Hospital in Atlanta. She married Samuel Arthur Wilbanks. During her nursing career, Kate did hospital work as well as private duty nursing. She took great pride in her nursing skills and was pleased to be referred to as a nurse. Her private nursing patients included former Atlanta mayor William Hartsfield, former Atlanta Falcons owner Rankin Smith, and legendary pediatrician Dr. Leila Denmark. Kate was born in 1904 and died in 1984. She is buried in the Walker family plot in Resthaven Cemetery on Milton Avenue in Alpharetta across the street from the original Milton campus.

Harold Melford Paris

Class of 1939

Mel Paris was Vice President of his senior class. He worked as a bookkeeper for Berkeley Pump Co. in Atlanta until WWII started. He enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps and served his country for the duration of the war. After completing officers training, Lt. Paris entered flight training school where he learned to pilot the B17 “Flying Fortress” bomber. In 1944, while on a bombing mission over Germany, his plane was shot down. The entire crew parachuted from the aircraft and survived but were captured and held prisoner. Lt. Paris was separated from the other crewmen and imprisoned at Stalag Luft III, a Luftwaffe prisoner of war camp in Poland where many U.S. and British air service officers were held.

This was the prison featured in the *Great Escape* movie. Lt. Paris was liberated by U.S. Army troops exactly one year after he was captured. He was awarded the Bronze Star and the Air Medal. After the war, he attended school at the Museum of Art in Atlanta, earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and then attended the University of Georgia where he earned a Master's in art education. He began his teaching career with Fulton County Schools at Campbell High School in Fairburn, Georgia. He was later named Assistant Director and then Director of Art Education for Fulton Schools. He continued in that position until he retired from the school system after 30 years. Mr. Paris's son, Mel Paris, taught art at Milton High School and also retired after many years with Fulton Schools.

Aubrey Morris

Class of 1940

While a student at MHS, Aubrey's favorite and most influential teacher was his English teacher, Miss Crisler. His job during high school was as the "rural reporter" for the *Atlanta Journal*, a job that he loved. After Milton, Aubrey graduated from the University of Georgia Grady College of Journalism in 1945. As a UGA student he was the editor of the school newspaper, *The Red and Black*, and also editor of the *Pandora*, the UGA yearbook. After UGA, Aubrey was hired as a reporter for the *Atlanta Journal* and spent 13 years as the newspaper's police reporter. He gained fame by being the first reporter on the scene of the 1946 Wincoff Hotel fire which killed 119 people in Atlanta. In 1957, the WSB radio program director hired Aubrey to create and manage a news department. Aubrey served as the WSB News and Editorial Director for over 30 years. He was known for his persistence in gaining interviews with important people. He interviewed every president from Truman through Reagan. After the 1962 Orly Airport crash in France in which 122 Atlanta arts patrons were killed, Atlanta Mayor Ivan Allen took only one reporter with him to Paris: Aubrey Morris. Aubrey was inducted into the Atlanta Press Club Hall of Fame and the Georgia Radio Hall of Fame and became the first recipient of the Georgia Radio Hall of Fame Spirit Award. His portrait hangs on the Demosthenian Literary Society Wall of Fame at UGA. After retiring from WSB and coming back home to the Milton area, Aubrey wrote over 150 columns for the *Alpharetta & Roswell ReVue* and other newspapers that have been donated to the Milton Historical Society.

Connie Mashburn

Class of 1959

Connie was vice president of his senior class, and a member of the student council, science club, music club, and the yearbook staff. He was voted wittiest male by his senior classmates. During a two-year period, from 1957 through 1959, Connie was one of the athletes who helped Milton win five region championships of the eight in which they

participated. Connie was a three-year letterman and point guard on the basketball team. He was elected team captain his senior year. The team won consecutive region championships. In track, as a high jumper, he won first place medals at the 1958 Fulton County championship track meet and at the Region 1A championship track meet. A four-year varsity baseball player and three-year starter, Connie, an infielder, was selected to play in the *Atlanta Journal* sponsored City of Atlanta vs. Greater Atlanta All Star Baseball Game in his junior and senior years. At the end of his senior year, he was chosen to play in the Georgia High School Athletic Association North Georgia vs. South Georgia High School All Star Baseball Game. Connie was awarded a scholarship to play baseball at UGA where he became a member of the Sigma Chi fraternity. He left UGA at the end of his sophomore year and joined the US Air Force Reserves. After completing his active-duty tour, he enrolled at Georgia State University where he earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree. After college, Connie was hired as an auditor trainee by Southern Railway (later Norfolk Southern Corp) and retired after 35 years as Director of Revenue Accounting. While in that position, he served two terms as Chairperson of the Association of American Railroad's Billing and Collection Committee. Connie has always been very active in numerous community activities. He was chosen as the Alpharetta Jaycee of the Year. He was vice chairperson of Alpharetta's early Planning and Zoning Commission and chosen to serve as the City of Alpharetta's representative on the Georgia House of Representatives Committee on Higher Education in North Fulton. While his children were in school, Connie served as chairperson of the school advisory boards at Alpharetta Elementary, Haynes Bridge Road Middle School, and Milton High School. While volunteering at Milton, Mashburn served as Milton High's representative on the Fulton County Board of Education's Superintendent Advisory Board. Long interested in his Scottish heritage, Connie became a member of the St. Andrews Society and a Fellow of Antiquaries of Scotland. He served three terms as President of Clan Donnachaidh Society of the South, a Scottish heritage organization which covers five southeastern states. Connie was a member of the local Piedmont Chapter of Sons of the Revolution (SAR) and was elected to serve as treasurer of the State of Georgia SAR organization. Over forty years ago, Mashburn became a charter member of the Alpharetta Historical Society (now Alpharetta & Old Milton County Historical Society). He has served as the group's archivist and president and has been the Society's Historian for the past ten years. In 2006, Connie was chosen by the city of Alpharetta to author a book on local history to celebrate the city's sesquicentennial. In 2015, the city of Alpharetta adopted a historic preservation ordinance and Connie was appointed to serve on the newly created historic preservation commission and now serves as the Vice Chair. In 2016, the city of Alpharetta provided funds to the historical society for interviewing local residents with special emphasis on senior members of the community. Connie was asked to lead the effort and over 80 interviews have been

captured. In 2018, Connie became a founding member of the Milton Historical Society where he serves as the group's resident historian. When the City of Alpharetta began the process of building a local history museum in city hall, Connie was asked to curate the museum. In March of 2018 the grand opening was held at city hall where Mayor Pro-Tem Donald Mitchell dedicated the museum to Connie acknowledging his sixty years of experience and dedication to historical preservation in Alpharetta and designating him as the Official Historian of the City of Alpharetta. Connie has given over 100 presentations on local history to North Fulton groups and is currently serving on the Milton High School 100th Anniversary Committee. Connie's great grandfather was a member of the Milton County School Board in the 1920s and his brother, son, and daughter all graduated from MHS. His grandson is currently a student at Milton, a member of the MHS Class of 2025.

Arthur Letchas

Class of 1962

Arthur attended Alpharetta Elementary and graduated from Milton in 1962. While attending Milton, Arthur was a member of the Student Council and vice-president of each class from 1957-1962. Additional activities and honors included Beta Club, and varsity football, serving as Captain his senior year. He was elected to the AA All State Football Team his senior year and chosen as "Back of the Year" of Greater Atlanta in 1962. He also played varsity basketball and ran track. He was State Champion in the 440-yard dash. He made the Honor Roll for five years and was a member of the Language Club and chosen as a Senior Superlative. After graduation, Arthur played freshman football at Clemson University. He transferred to UGA in 1963 and holds three degrees from UGA, a BS in Education, a Master's in education, and an Ed.S. in Administration and Supervision. He was elected President of Kappa Phi Kappa, an educational fraternity and was also a member of the Honor Society Phi Kappa Phi. After college, he taught and coached at North Springs High from 1967-1979 and then accepted the position of Assistant Principal at Crestwood High from 1979-1984. He completed his Fulton County career as Executive Director for Facilities in 1997, retiring after 30 years with Fulton County Schools. In 1982, Arthur had a successful run for Alpharetta City Council. He served five terms on the City Council and in 2002 was elected Mayor of Alpharetta, serving 9 years and 4 months, being term limited. His political accomplishments included achieving a AAA bond rating for the city (only 2 cities in Georgia had achieved this rating), receiving national accreditation for the Alpharetta Police Department, and helping achieve a Gold Level Green City rating, one of the first cities in Georgia to be honored with this rating from the Atlanta Regional Commission. As mayor, Arthur helped to shape the small city of Alpharetta from a population of 3,000 in 1993 to a city of over 57,000 when his term ended in 2011. During this time, Arthur also continued to coach football. He was the Offensive Coordinator at

Centennial High School for 4 years and Johns Creek for 6 years. Arthur and his wife, Sally, have been married for 51 years. They have 2 children, Matt and his wife Jill, Carrie and her husband Jack, and granddaughters Bailey, Emma, and Brynlee. Arthur has been a member of the Alpharetta Methodist Church since 1954. Recently he was chairman of the \$10.7 million building campaign that added a 42,526 square foot addition which was completed in 2019.

Lynn Bates

Class of 1971

Lynn was Senior class president, on the Homecoming court, on the Student Council, sports editor for the yearbook, sports editor for the school newspaper, a member of Quill and Scroll, chosen outstanding female athlete in 1970 and 1971, selected MVP in tennis in 1970 and 1971, number one in region tennis for four years, number two in state tennis in 1969 and 1971, number one in state in tennis in 1970, played varsity basketball for four years, chosen "Miss Basketball" in 1970 and 1971, held the school record for most points scored in a single game, 44 points, and was the first rover for the Milton team as women's basketball was changing to full court play. After graduating from MHS, Lynn received a grant to play tennis for Georgia College and played varsity tennis and volleyball all four years before graduating in 1975 with a BS in Elementary Education. She also Received her Masters in Education at North Georgia College in Dahlonega. Lynn spent almost 50 years total in the Fulton County School system, including 12 years as a student at Alpharetta Elementary and MHS and 37 years as an elementary school teacher--17 years at Roswell North Elementary and 20 years at Crabapple Crossing Elementary. She retired from Fulton County Schools in 2010 and still lives in Alpharetta, enjoying traveling, gardening, and playing with her three rescue dogs. She says her greatest accomplishment is spending 37 years sharing the love of learning with hundreds of children.

Buffie Burson

Class of 1985

Buffie Burson was a basketball star at Milton. Her senior year, the girls basketball team set a school team record of 27-4 (1984-85). The team was chosen as the Atlanta Journal/Neighbor Newspapers N. Fulton Team of the Year. Buffie was selected and played on the winning North team of the Georgia State North-South All-Star game in 1985, led the team to winning the 5AAA Region Championship her senior year, and led the team to back-to-back Final 4 appearances in the AAA State Basketball Tournament her junior and senior years (83-84, 84-85). When she graduated, she held the MHS school record for steals in a career—170 over 4 years. During her junior year alone she had 82 steals which was a single

season school record as well. She was chosen as “Best All-Around” Basketball player her senior year. She was only 5’ 4” on a team with the other starters all being over 6’ tall. She was awarded the Charles E. Martin trophy given annually at the time to the top student athlete (males and females) at Milton. Buffie never missed a game in 4 years. She was awarded the Army Reserve Scholar Athlete Award. She received a basketball scholarship to Truett-McConnell Junior College which had previously won the State Junior College Championship to qualify for the National Tournament. She went on after junior college to play at the University of Montevallo in Alabama. She was a two-year letter winner as a member of the women's basketball team and began her legendary coaching career as a graduate assistant coach at Montevallo. After her time at Montevallo, Buffie spent three years as an assistant coach at Shorter University. In 1994, she was named the head girls basketball coach at the University of North Georgia where she has been ever since. In 27 years as the North Georgia head coach, Buffie has posted 22 winning seasons, 12 national tournament appearances, and four NCAA tournament appearances. In 2018, she collected her 500th career victory. She made her furthest run in the NCAA tournament in 2019, making the first Elite Eight appearance in North Georgia’s program history, after winning the Southeast Regional Championship. Buffie has been named the Peach Belt Conference Coach of the Year three times (2006, 2014, 2018), the Atlanta Tip-off Club/Naismith Awards Georgia Coach of the Year, and the 2014 WBCA Region Coach of the Year. She is also a four-time Atlanta Tip-off/Naismith Awards NAIA Coach of the Year and a three-time Georgia/Alabama/Carolinas Conference (now known as the Southern States Athletic Conference) Coach of the Year. During her career, Buffie has coached one National Player of the Year, 10 All-Americans, five Conference Players of The Year, and eight Freshman of the Year, along with six Academic All-Americans, and several All-Conference and All-Academic selections. In addition to Buffie’s coaching duties, she is an assistant professor in the Kinesiology Department at the University of North Georgia. Over the summer months, she is the director of several girls' basketball camps along with the Team Camp of Champions, featuring some of the best high school varsity teams in the state. During the fall, her team hosts “The Haunted House of Hoops,” a free basketball clinic for elementary girls and boys, as a way of giving back to the community for their support of the team. Her team also granted a wish for a Make-A-Wish child one year. Buffie was inducted into the University of Montevallo Athletic Hall of Fame in 2021.

Todd Strada

Class of 1996

Unfortunately, MHS didn’t have a boys gymnastics team while Todd was at Milton. Todd was a national level gymnast while he was a student at Milton. He was named the Georgia “Male Gymnast of the Year” in 1996 and was on the U.S. National Team. He also was the

Georgia State Men's Gymnastics All Around Champion in his age level each of his 4 years at Milton. Todd placed 6th in the 1995 Coca-Cola U.S. Gymnastics Championships and 7th in the 1996 Coca-Cola U.S. Gymnastics Championships. He was a volunteer for Gymnastics during the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, GA. Also while at Milton, Todd was a member of the National Honor Society, the Latin National Honor Society, the Latin Club, and FBLA. After graduating from Milton, Todd attended the University of Iowa on a Gymnastics scholarship. During his time at Iowa, he was named the University of Iowa "Most Valuable Gymnast" three times, chosen for the Big Ten Conference All-Academic Team twice, named "All Big Ten Gymnast" three times, and led his team to the Big Ten Championship Team Title in 1998, Iowa's last championship. In 1999, Todd was the Big Ten "Gymnast of the Year," the Big Ten Conference All-Around Gymnastics Champion, and took 2nd Place in the NCAA Gymnastics National All-Around Championship. That same year, Todd was named the University of Iowa "Male Athlete of the Year." He received five All-American awards during his collegiate career and served as President of the University of Iowa Athlete Advisory Council. In 2020, Todd was selected to the Milton Parks and Recreation Wall of Fame. Todd currently lives in St. Charles, IL with his wife Brooke Shipbaugh, three sons, Joey, Vincent, and Dominic, and two stepchildren Hanley and Knox. He is a Partner at Findley Davies Corporation and manages the Defined Benefit Administration team.

JoyEllen Freeman Williams

Class of 2009

JoyEllen is currently the Special Collections and Rare Books Curator at Kennesaw State University. She serves her profession as a member of the Society of American Archivists Publications Board and as the administrative coordinator for the Atlanta Black Archives Alliance. Most recently, JoyEllen was appointed by Governor Brian Kemp to serve on the Georgia Historical Records Advisory Council (GHRAC). After graduating from MHS in 2009, JoyEllen attended the University of Georgia and received a bachelor's degree in English. During her time at UGA, she was a participant in the Honors program and the Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities. She served as a researcher, writer, and editor for the *Civil Rights Digital Library* and related initiatives. It was during this experience that JoyEllen fell in love with the archival profession. After graduating from UGA in 2012, she enjoyed internships at the National Archives at Atlanta, the Roswell Historical Society, the Flat Rock Archives, and the Archives Research Center at the AUC Woodruff Library. In 2016, JoyEllen received a master's degree in archival studies and became a certified archivist. That same year, she landed a job as an archivist at Kennesaw State University and was later promoted to curator. Some of the most exciting materials she's handled in her career as an archivist and curator include 4,000-year-old Sumerian clay tablets, a lunar Bible (yes, it went to the moon!), a manuscript leaf from the year 1240, photographs from Dr. Martin

Luther King Jr.'s funeral, and first edition books signed by Langston Hughes, Toni Morrison and James Baldwin. JoyEllen also enjoys writing and book collecting. During her undergraduate career, she served as a poetry editor for a literary journal and later had one of her poems published. In 2013, she self-published a Christian children's book called *Morning Glory* that began as a writing assignment for MHS teacher Nancy Moeller's Children's Literature TAG seminar. In 2015, she received an honorable mention for a short story she wrote called *Coco Mío*, which was published by the Society of American Archivists. JoyEllen thoroughly enjoys collecting books, specifically historical fiction, African American fiction and poetry, and Amish novels. While at Milton, JoyEllen was a member of the National Honor Society, Multicultural Club, Spanish Club, and the Y-Club. When asked about some of her favorites at MHS, it's not surprising that she mentioned enjoying the wide array of books she read in English courses guided by her English and TAG teachers Nancy Moeller, Carroll Keen, Lisa Ethridge, and Naitnaphit Limlamai. "They were all brilliant women who challenged me and helped prepare me for my future career as a curator of rare books." JoyEllen is married and has a baby daughter.

McKenzie Kurtz

Class of 2015

While at Milton, McKenzie was a theatre star. She was nominated for Best Actress all 4 years at the Shuler Hensley Awards and won in 2013 and 2015. The Shuler Awards, also known as the Georgia High School Musical Theatre Awards, celebrate excellence in high school musical theatre programs across the state. The awards culminate in a televised awards show complete with a red carpet at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre, hosted by Tony Award winning actor Shuler Hensley. McKenzie's freshman year she received Best Actress at the GHSA State One Act Play competition. Her sophomore year she won Best Actress at both the Georgia Theatre Conference and Southeastern Theatre Conference. After graduating from Milton, McKenzie went on to study Musical Theatre at the University of Michigan where she graduated with honors and received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 2019. While at the University of Michigan, she performed in multiple summer stock productions, most notably, "Ariel" in *FOOTLOOSE* at the MUNY directed by Christian Borle, "Savannah" in *FREAKY FRIDAY* at Music Theatre Wichita and "Inga" in *YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN* at Wagon Wheel Center for the Arts. Less than 6 months after graduating, McKenzie was cast as "Princess Anna" in Disney's *FROZEN* on Broadway.