

**Aurora Alumni Association
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Matt Shanholtzer '90	President
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Barb Kudley '75	Hall of Fame
Russ Bennett '78	Superintendent
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Robert Tuttle '63	
Mary Jurkiewsic Beckstrom '83	
Gary Brookhart	Honorary

Aurora Schools Administration

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Pat Ciccantelli	Asst. Superintendent
Bill Volosin	Treasurer
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Mike Roberto	High School Principal
Brian Brookhart	Asst. H.S. Principal
Mark Abramovich	Harmon Principal
Paul Goodwin	Harmon Asst. Principal
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Patty Minrovic	Craddock/Miller Principal

Aurora Board of Education

Jerry Kohanski	President
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Aurora Education Association

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Chris Radtke	Vice-President
Judy Dolezal	Treasurer
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AURORA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

2013

Honored Educators

HALL OF FAME

Induction Ceremony



October 11, 2013
Aurora High School

PROGRAM

Open Reception

Luncheon

Awards Ceremony

Welcome Matt Shanholtzer '90
President,
Alumni Association

Master of Ceremonies Brian Brookhart '98
A.H.S. Liaison,
Alumni Association

City and School Presentations
City of Aurora
Aurora Board of Education
Aurora Education Association

Alumni Hall of Fame Tribute and Presentations
John Smolko
Robert Luckay
Mary Ann Balbach
Dan Dyer

Closing Remarks Russ Bennett '78
Superintendent



Daniel Dyer

Aurora City Schools Language Arts Teacher
1966 – 1978 1982 – 1997

National Endowment for Humanities Teacher-Scholar
Award 1992-93
Phi Beta Kappa – Hiram College
Phi Delta Kappa (Education)

To those alumni who were his students, Dr. Dyer was more than an 8th grade English teacher – he was a true mentor, a role model, and a source of inspiration. Through a unique blend of humor, and relating stories to real life... he was able to instill a love of English in his students that would last a lifetime.
– Brian Brookhart '98

Daniel Dyer began teaching seventh grade English at Aurora Middle School in 1966. In 1978 he left to try teaching undergraduates and high school students—but learned he preferred middle-schoolers. In 1982 he returned to Harmon School, where he taught eighth grade English until his retirement in January 1997. (Between 2001–2010 he taught English at Western Reserve Academy.) While at Harmon he directed more than thirty play productions (many he wrote for his students)—and two at AHS, *Grease* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, the first Shakespeare play in Aurora Schools' history. He also coached, supervised school publications, student council, a writers' club, student film productions, lunch-time tennis, and others. While in Aurora, he earned his Master's and Doctorate from Kent State University and won several national awards, including the 1992 Teacher-Scholar Award from the National Endowment for the Humanities. A freelance writer, he now has more than 1500 publications, including books, essays, and book reviews. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Delta Kappa, and the National Book Critics Circle. He is married to writer Joyce Dyer; their son, Steve, attended Harmon School; their two grandsons wish they could.



Mary Ann Balbach

Aurora City School Social Studies Teacher
1982 – 2007

1991 Aurora City School Outstanding Educator
2007 Aurora Rotary Club Educator of the Year

Great teachers impart more than just knowledge. They make you feel welcome, develop you as a person, and instill curiosity to learn more beyond the boundaries of the classroom. Mrs. Balbach did all of these and more. – Erica Eckart '99

Mary Ann Balbach understood from the time she was in grade school in Long Island that she wanted to be a Social Studies teacher. She received her B.S. from Miami University and launched her career in Kettering, Ohio where she also taught one of the area's first Head Start Classes. After a professional leave of absence to rear her two children, Mary Ann joined an outstanding faculty at Harmon Middle School. Over the years she served as Department Chairperson; implemented a Mock Congress; reenacted the Constitutional Convention; created with Jerry Brodsky and Robert Luckay, the first multi-school Global Issues Seminar in northeast Ohio; led annual trips to Washington D.C. and advised the Natural History Club. Her greatest reward has been her interactions with students.

In her retirements Mary Ann is active in her church, serves on the Board of her condo association, volunteers at the public library, attends the Aurora Study Club, and frequently visits her children and grandchildren in Michigan and North Carolina.

Aurora Hall of Fame

The Aurora High School **Athletic** Hall of Fame was established in 1982 by the Athletic Department. The **Distinguished Alumni** division was initiated in 2001 by the Aurora Alumni Association. In 2013 all areas of the Hall of Fame were put under the auspice of the Alumni Association who added a third area of recognition, **Honored Educator and Staff**. Under the Alumni Association, all Hall of Fame candidates are now initially nominated by A.H.S. alumni and selected by a committee chaired by members of the Alumni Association Advisory Board. Future Hall of Fame inductees will be selected in all three divisions as determined by the number and qualifications of the nominated candidates.



Aurora High School Alumni Association

The Aurora Alumni Association was established in 1994 by A.H.S. alumni from the 1970s and 80s. During their first 13 years this group developed a data base of nearly 4,000 alumni, gave scholarships, sent out newsletters and started the Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame program. After a 5 year period of inactivity from 2007 – 2012, the group reorganized under new leadership in 2012 and established a Board of Directors that includes Aurora Alumni from every decade between the 1960s – today. The revitalized group has established a website, increased their visibility, given scholarships, and is proud to sponsor the first Aurora Hall of Fame inductions since 2007.

Hall of Fame Committee

Barb Kudley '75 - Chairperson

Mary Jurkiewicz Beckstrom '83

Brian Brookhart '98

Matt Shanholtzer '90

Barb Brookhart – Retired Staff



John Smolko

Aurora City Schools High School Art Teacher
1983 - 2008

I started out with more desire than talent, but the principles John focused on pushed me to the next level. His most important lesson – FOCUS!

Do what you say you are going to do. Don't let someone else define you – Define yourself.
- Jeff Champ '91

John Smolko taught secondary school art for 35 years. The final 25 years were at Aurora High School where he developed one of the finest art programs in the state of Ohio. He initiated the Advanced Placement Art Program in Aurora and achieved a one hundred percent passage rate. John was on the team that brought the International Baccalaureate Program to Aurora and his IB Art Program helped enhance the AP curriculum. His art students received awards and scholarships every year he taught and many of them are art professionals today. Parents, teachers, students, and the community all supported John's art program and made it an integral part of a successful dynamic curriculum.

Today, John is creating art every day and exhibits all over the country. He is a member of the Group Ten Gallery in Kent, Ohio and his works hang in many public and private collections. He is also a signature member of the Colored Pencil Society of America and offers pencil workshops nationally. John lives with his wife, Gigi, in Kent and has two grown sons that are independent and a source of pride.



Robert Luckay

Aurora City Schools Social Science Teacher
1978 – 1998

1974 - Jaycees Outstanding Young Educator

1975-76 - Jennings Scholar

1996 Aurora City Schools Outstanding Educator

Mr. Luckay made history, including our own special state history, come alive. He took the time to be caring, nurturing, and human at a time in my life when these characteristics were vital to my development.
- Evan McCarthy '98

Robert (Bob) Luckay moved to Aurora in 1967 and graduated one year later with a Social Science Comprehensive B.A. degree from John Carroll University. Bob both taught and lived social studies. He applied the knowledge and skills of government by running for city council, serving several terms from 1976-79, 1982-85, and 2002-03. He also served as vice mayor for four years. In addition to chairing a number of city committees he also chaired the 1999 Heritage Festival, the Landmark Commission, and the 2001 bond issue campaign to acquire lands for parks and recreation. Bob also served as president of the Aurora Conservation Council. Former students recall that Bob Luckay's teaching style was marked by a zeal for life and a comprehensive mentorship that changed the life of many. His wise words, caring jokes, and field trips are embedded in the memories of former Harmon Middle School students. For many, later life debates about the merits of ecological stewardship and environmentalism, hiking as a class in Mr. Luckay's woods comes to mind.

Robert Luckay still lives in his home on the 54 acre family farm adjacent to Harmon School continuing a five generation family tradition of Aurora connection.