

Blue 'n' Gold

Summer 2025

HVRHS Alumni Association

Volume 27, Issue 1

Athletes Recognized

Inductees into the 2024 Athletic Hall of Fame scored both on and off the field. Ten alumni received the honor at a ceremony held in the school's gymnasium in November. Anne MacNeil, the region's athletic director, served as emcee.

At times, emotions were visible as the athletes remembered their high school sports achievements and the people who helped them succeed.

Tim Hawley, class of 1971, was introduced by classmate **Frank Hadsell**. Hawley was a standout member of the cross-country team and ran track. "The teachers and coaches here taught me about citizenship and democracy," he said. "I look back at Housatonic for teaching me lessons I thought were impossible." He excelled in cross-country and track and field at Wabash College.

Bruce Adams coached **Julia Neilson**, class of 1998, in soccer, but she excelled in softball and basketball as well. In presenting her, Adams, who is president of the Housatonic Athletic Hall of Fame Committee, said, "Her impressive record I think arguably makes her one of the best well-rounded athletes of this school." She went on to play soccer and softball at Eastern Connecticut State University, where she achieved many honors. "I remember the countless hours of practice," she said. "Each challenge not only shaped my athletic journey, but my character as well."

The late **Joseph Nilsen**, class of 1954, was inducted by **John Berti**, class of 1956, who regaled the audience with memories of past football teams on which Nilsen played. He noted

Nilsen was the last of the 1953 undefeated team to be named to the Hall of Fame. Berti praised him for his leadership skills. His daughters accepted the award on behalf of their father.

Tina Paruta, class of 1987, was an all-star cross-country and indoor/outdoor track runner. She was so good, said her presenter David Bayersdorfer, retired teacher and athletic director, she won a full scholarship to Central Connecticut State University. Paruta said her coaches' presence, including that of the late David Lindsay, "helped me to push through the exhaustion and pain. I stand here today for all who lifted me along the way."

Gary Davis, class of 1973, spoke of **Brad Paulsen**, class of 1979, who could not attend the ceremony. Paulsen made the varsity soccer and track teams his freshman year and excelled at both throughout his high school career. He went on to play at Bucknell University for one year, before switching to play in a competitive intramural soccer league for his fraternity.

Warren Prindle spoke on behalf of his cousin **Paul Prindle**, class of 1960, whom he described as a farm boy, which prepared him for taking on challenges. He found football to be less arduous than farm chores. He played at Springfield College, where he was known as either "Housatonic" or "Farm Boy," which Warren Prindle found endearing. He also found success on the track team, setting several records. He was unable to attend the event.

continued on page 5



Inductees into the 2024 Athletic Hall of Fame are, from left: Tina Paruta, Julia Neilson, Denise Bergenty, Willy Yahn, Robert Ullram and Tim Hawley.

2025 Grads Well on Their Way

Having Princeton as your backup school when applying to college is an indication of the caliber of students who just graduated.

Such was the case with **Elinor Wolgemuth** of Salisbury, who was accepted at the New Jersey Ivy League university, but decided to go with her first choice of the Brown University/Rhode Island School of Design Dual Program in Providence. A very select group, which numbers 15 out of the 900 applicants nationwide, are given a combined five years of studying art at RISD and an academic major at Brown. Wolgemuth will be enrolled in illustration and anthropology.

Gaining early acceptance at Princeton in November and the dual program in March, Wolgemuth explained that students need to be admitted to both Brown and RISD before their application is reviewed for the program by a separate committee. "It has been described as one of the most difficult programs to get into in the world. While it was a challenging decision to make, I ended up choosing it when I attended the admitted-students day in April. I realized I felt more at home in Providence and that I needed to be among a range of artistic and intellectual people. The focus on combining two interests without having to prioritize one over the other was what drew me to the curriculum."

Sitting down with Principal Ian Strever to go over the list of college destinations, the school leader said what jumped out at him was the diversity of locations the schools represent. Some are the standard choices that are often the destination of graduates, such as the University of Vermont, UConn, University of New Hampshire and state schools, but this year the teens are headed out to such institutions of higher learning as University of Hawaii, Santa Clara University, Missouri State University and University of North Carolina, among many others.

Strever said this year's class was made up of really motivated students. "There was a culture of academics and aspirations," he said. "They spurred each other on without being overly competitive. And they're some of the nicest kids." He also added that many of them are civic minded and enjoyed participating in activities that benefit others. They also had the benefit of smooth high school years, since the restrictions imposed by COVID were over when they were freshmen.

Strever also commented on the legacy found in the small high school. "One of the first questions I ask each year is who has parents or grandparents who attended this school and there's always at least one hand raised."

Tess Marks of Salisbury will be attending Tufts University in Medford, Mass., where she will major in theater, dance and performance studies. The class salutatorian, she has performed in all the school's musical productions during

her time at Housatonic. She said she was drawn to the Tufts program by seeing its professors are working actors themselves and there are a variety of shows that are both professor- and student-directed.

"The welcoming and positive attitudes of the student body were examples of the overall atmosphere of the institution," Marks said. "I can clearly visualize myself thriving in the community, taking advantage of all that the location, programs and people have to offer."

Lola Moerschell of Kent will be heading to Brandeis University in Waltham, Mass., this fall. She chose the school for its strong STEM program, undergraduate research opportunities and inclusive environment, all of which are aspects of college that are important to her. "I believe the tight-knit and supportive community at Housy has taught me about the importance of time management, hard work and the value of learning from your peers."

Following in the footsteps of two of his siblings, **Manasseh Matsudaira** of Cornwall will be enrolling in Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass. at summer's end to pursue studies in energy economics. He said he appreciated the diversity of Housatonic's student body and the teachers "who prepared me to be appropriately ready for the next step."

Among some of the other colleges and universities Housatonic students will be attending in the fall are: Cornell, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Savannah College of Art and Design, Syracuse University, New York University and George Washington University.

Strever also talked about the five students who graduated in January and immediately stepped into jobs. "We're not just preparing everyone for college," he said, "but for entrepreneurship as well. Some students have had internships, getting to dabble in different fields to see whether there is something they really want as a career or for part-time activity." Several others will be attending two-year programs at community colleges, which gives them the opportunity to discover their future plans.

Both Wolgemuth and Marks said they believe Housatonic prepared them well for the future. "The biggest was by letting students take on multiple activities and responsibilities at once," Wolgemuth said. "I feel so lucky to have had these opportunities and I encourage other rural students to apply to 'reach' schools, since coming from a small town can give you an advantage!"

Marks said, "I think that the variety of options and classes at Housy, especially the option to take AP and ECE classes, prepared me for the college level curriculum to come. It pushed me while simulating what I might find in my studies next year. The ability to be involved in many different extra-curriculars at Housy, from theater, to robotics, academic

continued on page 5

Visiting with Some Graduates



Juliet Lyon

Juliet Lyon, Class of 1997

Like so many Housatonic graduates, **Juliet Lyon** knew at an early age she wanted to help make the world a better place and her life's path has led to fulfilling that goal.

She believes that her desire was spawned at Cornwall Consolidated

School, where her teachers served as inspirations for helping others. That continued during her high school years, with teachers Lou Ungemach and David Lindsay playing important roles. Ungemach was a young teacher just out of college and she still has vivid memories of his ninth-grade biology class. From Housatonic he went on to teach in Turkey, England and Poland, where he still lives today. She remains in contact with him. He and Lindsay took students on incredible field trips, giving so much of themselves to their students, she said.

"The school brought me into a family," said Lyon. "Housy is my home. It was easy to join everything and be a jack-of-all-trades, which is a great way to meet different people. I think it's partly why it felt so friendly. Everyone really did know and appreciate everyone else."

She is still remembered for her participation on the wrestling team; the only female for most of her years participating in the sport. She was encouraged to try out and by her junior year she took third place in the Berkshire League and as a senior, and captain, she won the league championship, the record for a female that still stands today. She spoke highly of her coach Rick Peters.

Asked why she chose a male-dominated sport, Lyon replied, "I had a toughness at an early age and needed a way to express it. I was well supported, but it wasn't always easy."

Following graduation, she spent a year in Ecuador on a Rotary Exchange program and then entered the University of Chicago, majoring in public policy. "I felt a desire for intellectual stimulation and those professors were encouraging. I was engaging in the real world."

She then became a community organizer in a Hispanic community in Chicago, advocating for such issues as policing and education, before joining the Peace Corps. and going to Mozambique. She had the desire to go to Africa and work toward fighting poverty. At some point, she managed to earn a master's degree in public policy from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs as a MacArthur Fellow in the Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Global Change.

She described the town in Mozambique, Vilankulo, as a beautiful spot right on the Indian Ocean. Most of its inhabitants are poor, living on a subsistence level earning money by fishing and growing maize. "They are good people with great spirit."

When her stint in the Peace Corps. was done, she chose to remain there in a position of responsibility working in the areas of health, water, education and rural community development for an international non-governmental organization. But the decisions she saw being made, which resulted in the wasting of money, led her to start a community-led organization.

"It's basically a grass roots, from the bottom-up type of operation," she said. "I wanted to try to correct what I'd seen. Called Par Co, it's aimed at seeing your own problems and how you want to solve them in order to change outcomes. Sustainability and impact are built in."

Over the last six years, the members have built a recycling center, worked on seahorse protection and developed a pre-school. Funding, she explained, has come from grants, the private sector and the United Church of Christ in Cornwall.

Lyon's parents are Adriane Lyon, who now lives in Falls Village, and the late William Lyon. Lyon has two children, Hope 11, and Reed 8, who are currently living in Mozambique with their father.

Tracy Atwood, Class of 1962

by Mike DeMazza, a member of the alumni board



Tracy Atwood

In many of our lives, there are individuals who seemingly have lived in a certain place "forever." **Tracy Atwood** is

continued on page 4

Visiting *from page 3*

such a person. Today, it feels as if he has always been a part of life in Falls Village—indeed, some may think he has always lived on Prospect Street. But the reality is that Atwood has likely lived and worked in more towns—and nations—than most of us ever dream of even visiting. His road to, from, and back to Falls Village is somewhat equal parts wanderlust, service and grounding in true small-town American values.

Atwood was born in New London, in 1944 at the height of World War II. The foundation of this traveling man was established at a young age. His father was a farm manager at a dairy farm in Lyme, Connecticut, where Atwood lived until age 2. After moving to Farmington and Simsbury, his family finally settled in the Northwest Corner in 1949. Starting in 1950, while living at the Pine Grove Farm, he remembers mowing lawns and picking strawberries. (“At five cents a quart it took a LONG time to make a dollar.”) Depression-era habits still colored his young life when he was encouraged to save string and ribbon and other items. At Pine Grove, he kept the east and west privies stocked with supplies and it is there that he first met Housatonic Principal, Paul W. Stoddard, who was the president of the Canaan Pine Grove Association. Atwood’s father continued working on the farm and later, his mom became the tax collector in Falls Village.

His formal education started at the current D.M. Hunt Library, where he attended school until the end of first grade in May 1951. At that point, he and his classmates carried their school supplies and equipment up to the new Lee H. Kellogg building for grades two through four. Atwood recalled that Kellogg was only four rooms at that point and, for grades five through eight, he attended school back at the Hunt building. One teacher who influenced him in those early years was Loretta D. Smith, the mother of Wall of Honor member Peter Smith.

In the fall of 1958, he began his four years at Housatonic Valley Regional High School, following in the steps of his sister Laura May, who was two years older. When he enrolled at Housatonic he wished to be known as G. Tracy Atwood thinking it more grown up and sophisticated. He told anyone who asked that the G stood for “Good-Looking.” (In fact, it stands for Grover.) At Housatonic, Laura May and he were followed by their sisters: Marion, Carol and Betty Jean. Their brother David attended the Southbury Training School.

Atwood has memories of many administrators, teachers and classes. He described the humanities class taught by Donald G. Kobler and H. Lincoln Foster as the “best class I have ever taken—anyplace!” The class included six juniors and five seniors who met with their teachers for two class periods each day. The classes, in history and English, demanded much of the students. Assignments included one written paper a week, the reading of classic works to the work of Sartre, acting, reading, writing, field

trips to the library at Yale, stained-glass instruction by an artisan and more. He views the lessons, even now, as a success due to the “dedicated teachers who wanted to exchange ideas and have deep discussions” with students.

He also credits the FFA program at Housatonic for much of what he has done in his life. Under the guidance of Clarke B. Wood, he participated in public speaking, horticulture, dairy and poultry judging, and developed an understanding of Robert’s Rules. While attending the National FFA Convention, he was one of two delegates from Connecticut (the other was John Young) who sponsored a resolution that “girls should be allowed to be members of the national FFA organization.” At that time, girls were in local and state FFA organizations, but not national. The resolution resulted in an hour of debate, questions and heated comments based on an attitude that is best summarized by the statement that “Girls can’t be farmers—they can be in the Future Homemakers of America.” The convention of 20,000 delegates in Kansas City, Missouri, rejected the resolution. It would be eight years before that resolution was accepted and girls were allowed in the national FFA.

These many years later, Atwood still recalls the influence on his life of Miss Estey in Latin, Miss Allyn in English and Miss Gesell in typing. Many teachers were original to Housatonic and had been teaching at the school since its opening in 1939. He also has strong memories of physical education classes where he learned soccer, badminton and handball. In 1958 he tried out for the basketball team, but did not make the cut. He said, with a wry smile, that he “didn’t know if it was a lack of basketball skills or if it was [his father] speaking to Coach Roland Chinatti about the need for help on the farm.”

Housatonic was also where stamp collecting, showing cows at 4H fairs and more related to agriculture became important parts of Atwood’s life. Those cows, with such names as Molly, Limestone Alice Della and Dolly, among others, are still vivid in his memories of those events. Today, the lessons of FFA remain a part of his life. He is an avid gardening enthusiast and proudly stated that last year “We canned 65 quarts of tomato juice.”

It was after graduation in 1962 that Atwood’s life moved beyond farming and the state of Connecticut. After studying for a year at the UConn branch in Torrington, he applied to the Peace Corps, but instead started working with the International Voluntary Service (IVS). His work with that organization involved a variety of agricultural ventures and took him to Cambodia and Vietnam at a time when knowledge of Southeast Asia was first coming to the attention of Americans. He was shoulder to shoulder with rebels and farmers and soldiers and aid workers in that role with IVS.

continued on page 9

Athletes from page 1

Donald Hurlbutt, class of 1967, spoke about his friend **Robert Ullram**, class of 1966, saying he loved all sports and was very competitive. His first love was football, but he also enjoyed hockey. In college he lettered in soccer, baseball and hockey.

"I'm humbled to be here and inducted with these great athletes," Ullram said. He spoke of coach Ed Kirby "who taught us teamwork—working together to achieve the very best. My teachers and coaches were role models. They allowed me to thrive as a student and to stretch and achieve."

Willy Yahn, class of 2014, said the best part of being inducted into the Hall of Fame was entering with his sister **Maggie Yahn Umana**, who was unable to attend. Willie Yahn played soccer and baseball in high school, but he later became known for his baseball talent. He was selected in the 2017 MLB draft by the Baltimore Orioles, playing six seasons in the Minors, was promoted to Triple-A level

Norfolk Tides in 2021 and was a Major League spring training camp invitee in 2022. And while his dream of playing Major League baseball didn't come true, he gave deep thanks to his family for all they did to help him pursue his dream.

Maggie Yahn Umana, class of 2009, played varsity soccer all four years at Housatonic. In her sophomore year, the team made it to the state tournament semifinals for the second time in school history. She also ran two seasons of track and field.

Denise Bergenty, class of 1973, lettered in many sports. She played field hockey for two years and then changed to soccer when it was offered. She also played basketball, softball and badminton. She is a U.S. Army veteran. "My dad was my coach, mentor and biggest supporter," she said. "Before Title IX, he encouraged me to play any sport I wanted to."



GIVING TO THE HVRHS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION IN YOUR PLANS IS A SIMPLE WAY TO MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE

It's easy and rewarding! If you include a gift for the HVRHS Alumni Association in your financial or estate plans, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that future generations of students will benefit from your generous legacy.

Take the time now to make sure that your plan reflects your intentions to take care of your family and the causes that matter most to you.

To learn more about how you can make a legacy gift to the HVRHS Alumni Association, contact Dick Gustafson at r.gustafson@snhu.edu/603-377-6829, or Kelly Sweet at the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation; ksweet@berkshiretaconic.org/413-229-0370, Ext. 118.

Grads from page 2

bowl and sports, allowed me to find different communities, interact with a wide range of personalities and figure out how I wanted to move forward in my studies."

She continued. "In addition, the teachers at Housy have been incredibly helpful in not only preparing me academically for college, but also in preparing me to be an individual, a confident community member and a constructive critic. I think that the teachers are the strongest part of Housy. They support you, help mold you into a better learner and person and genuinely care about

your future and wellbeing. I am very appreciative of Housy and how it has helped me grow into the person I am today, ready to begin my next chapter of life in college."

Strever, proud of the students, said, "This group represents what I want the future to be. I would love for them to come back and enrich the community. The Athenian Oath all graduates recite at commencement is what it's all about; making a place greater, better and more beautiful than when you found it."

Alumni News by Class and Decade

1950s

Randall Bliven, class of 1958, was featured in an article in the magazine "arts and culture of Palm Beach County" in Florida. It focused on his role as a volunteer at the Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens, where he shares his expertise on Japanese floral art. Bliven developed an interest in floral arranging at the age of 10. The article mentions that he created an orchid brooch for Eleanor Roosevelt when she came to speak at his high school. He remembered that when he offered to pin the flowers on her, Roosevelt declined, saying she'd been stuck too many times.



1960s

Several members of the class of 1966, along with other friends, gathered to celebrate **Robert Ullram's** induction into the Athletic Hall of Fame last fall.



The classes of 1961 and 1962 are holding a reunion on Saturday, Sept 13, from noon to 4:30 p.m. at the Falls Village Inn. Those from other years are cordially invited to attend. Late-minute drop-ins are welcome. There will be an abbreviated lunch menu, for which reservations are required, and if enough interest is shown, there will be a guided tour of the high school.

For complete details contact **Linda Fitzgerald**, class of 1961, at lindafitzgerald43@outlook.com or 919-523-7093 or **Bonnie Kinsman**, class of 1962, at bonniekinsman44@yahoo.com or 860-824-7356. Also on the committee is **Tom Segalla**, class of 61.

1970s

The class of 1975 is preparing for its 50th reunion celebration on Sept. 13 from 4 to 9 p.m. at the Torrington Country Club. Cost is \$85 per person with cash bar. RSVP to **Brad Palmer** by July 31 at 860-671-8057. Checks should be made payable to Brad and sent to 63 Indian Mountain Road, Lakeville, 06039.

1990s

A group of friends from the class of 1997 got together on Cape Cod in March. From left are: **Juliet Lyon**, director of Par Co; **Alison (Wright) Le**, who leads a dental practice in Maryland; **Anne Sheridan**, music teacher in Boston; **Lauren (Laitala) Simoes**, married to a United Airlines pilot and has two children and **Robin (Yerkes) Horton**, who runs her own tech start-up in Boston. Two who missed the reunion were **Karissa (Pasanello) Marcy**, a reading specialist in Virginia, whose flight was canceled, and **Rebecca Echols**, a nurse in Alaska, who became ill on her return from Antarctica.

2000s

Sarah Burdick Isaacs, class of 2002, had been named permanent principal of Hall High School in West Hartford. Previously assist. principal, she has been interim since of the summer of 2024. Isaacs has lived in West Hartford since 2007, and has been with the district for more than 15 years—which is the majority of her career in education, beginning



as a middle school language arts teacher at King Philip. Isaacs has a bachelor's degree in English, master's in curriculum and instruction and sixth-year certificate in educational leadership—all from the University of Connecticut. She and her husband, Aaron, live in the Hall district and have three children who will be future Titans.

Where are you now? What are you doing? Your classmates want to know. Become a part of class notes by sending an update to editor Ruth Epstein at kcsruth@aol.com.

Alumni Association News

Alumni Association welcomes two new members...



Gary Davis



Keith Marks

Gary Davis, class of 1973, and **Keith Marks**, class of 1988, are the latest additions to the board of directors of the Housatonic Valley Regional High School Alumni Association.

Davis was born and raised in Kent. Following graduation from Kent Center School and Housatonic, he attended Siena College for two years before leaving to work in the family business. Davis IGA supermarket was opened in 1974 by his parents, **Charlie Davis**, class of 1948, and Anne Davis. He quickly learned the ropes and eventually worked his way up to store manager. Upon the death of his mother in 1992, Davis became a partner with his father. Along with his sisters, Audrey, and **Marie Davis Roze**, class of 1978, Davis made the store a true family business. During his time as owner of Davis IGA, he served on the board of directors of the Connecticut Food Association for 17 years. He was inducted into the CFA Hall of Fame in 2010. With the sale of Davis IGA in March 2023, he retired after more than 45 years in the grocery business. It was with great pride the Davis family served the town of Kent.

Over the years Davis has been involved with several local organizations. He is a 35-year member of the Kent Lions Club and has twice been club president. He served as treasurer of the Lake Waramaug Authority for 15 years. In his position as the town grocer, he was able to solicit food and beverage donations from vendors for the annual Kent Pumpkin Run, a 5-mile road race held every October. The runners always raved about how well they were fed at race end!

He has served on the finance council at Sacred Heart Church in Kent for many years and is currently a trustee of St. Kateri Tekakwitha parish. Sports were a big part of Davis's time at Housatonic. He lettered in cross country, basketball and track. He had the privilege of coaching track and field at the school from 2013 to 2019, and of those years he was head coach for the last three. He currently serves as Kent's representative on the school building committee and also on the Athletic Hall of Fame nominating committee. In retirement, Davis volunteers in Kent as a Meals on Wheels driver and serves on the Kent

Cemetery Committee and the town's Economic Development subcommittee. He looks forward to making a positive impact with the alumni association of HVRHS.

Keith Marks was born and raised in Canaan, and now lives in Lakeville. After graduation, Marks received his bachelor's degree from the University of Connecticut (class of 1992) and his law degree from Western New England University (class of 1995). He clerked at the Connecticut Appellate Court and Connecticut Supreme Court before working in Hartford at the law firm Day, Berry and Howard. Marks then began a career helping registered investment advisory firms comply with securities regulations. He worked in Lakeville at National Regulatory Services until 2007, and then joined the newly founded Ascendant Compliance Management as a partner and General Counsel. Marks became a frequent public speaker in the investment advisory compliance industry, speaking at more than 50 conference events. In 2022, Marks became the chief compliance officer of Kelleher Financial Advisors, and is now the managing director of Compliance for FL Putnam Investment Management Co.

Locally, he has been very active, including seven years as the board chair of SOAR Educational Enrichment, Inc., which provides after-school programs and other enrichment activities at Salisbury Central School. He was also the president of the New England Broker Dealer Investment Adviser Association from 2012-2017. Marks also enjoyed coaching girls' soccer and basketball as his children grew up.

During his years at Housatonic, Marks was the president of the class of 1988, and a member of the National Honor Society. He lettered in four varsity sports and was the captain of soccer and basketball teams. He also played a role in the school musical in 1988.

...Bids Farewell to Another...

Julie Lang, class of 1979, has been a longtime, dedicated member of the alumni association. Her colleagues always knew where to go for needed answers and were never disappointed. She was the keeper of records and served as treasurer of the organization, along with all the other duties she has as the principal's executive secretary. The success of the association was due in large part to her commitment and attention to detail—all with her cheery smile and sweet disposition. Julie stepped down from the board last year. Members express their deep gratitude for all she has done. Alumni association President **Patricia Allyn Mechare**, class of 1964, said, "Julie has served on the board of directors for several decades. Her knowledge and service has been invaluable as the association has grown over the years. She will be sorely missed, but I'm grateful she will continue to have a connection as the high school's liaison with the alumni association."

continued on page 9

Tess Marks Receives Alumni Association Scholarship

Tess Marks of Lakeville, recipient of the 2025 Alumni Association Scholarship, is a third-generation HVRHS graduate who has excelled academically, played varsity sports and participated in myriad student activities. She was the class salutatorian, served as the class president for three years, was a leader in the Student Government Association and National Honor Society and is a member of the Academic Bowl team. Marks played varsity girls' soccer for three years and was captain in her junior year. She also played varsity girls' lacrosse and won sportsmanship awards in both sports. She was a member of the Robotics team, the Rainbow Alliance Association, the Diversity Club and the Travel Club trip to Ecuador. Her awards include the Yale Alumni Book Award, the University of Vermont Citizen Scholar Book Award, the DAR Citizenship



Award and was National Winner of the Hamilton Song Writing Competition. Her passion is the theater and she played strong roles in the Housatonic Musical Theatre Society's productions in all four years. Her work at the Sharon Playhouse as youth theater manager, teaching assistant and summer apprentice has reinforced her commitment to study theater and education. Her academic record at HVRHS was simply stellar, as was her array of activities. Marks will attend Tufts University in Medford, Mass., planning to major in theater arts.

Tess is the daughter of **Kristen Neary**, class of 1990, and **Keith Marks**, class of 1988. Her grandparents are **Linda Chase**, class of 1962, and the late **David Marks**, class of 1962. Her sister **Josie Marks** graduated in 2022.



Julie Lang, class of 1979, the principal's executive secretary, left, and **Katie Wood**, class of 1975, administrative assistant, are named honorary inductees into Housatonic's Honor Society during the annual ceremony in June by Principal Ian Strever. Wood retired at the end of the school year and Lang will be retiring in the near future. Strever, in making the designations, said when he arrived at the school, the pair showed him the kind of hospitality that makes Housatonic feel like home. "They are not just colleagues, but have become friends."

Visiting from page 4

He returned to the United States in December 1965. During the next year he spent a month as a horticulture instructor at Housatonic ("I learned that I never wanted to be a teacher—not all students wanted to learn ... many just wanted to horse around.") before enrolling at Cornell to attend the School of Agriculture. While at Cornell, he took as many courses as he could about Southeast Asia. In spring of 1968, he received his degree from Cornell and returned to the Central Highlands of Vietnam to work with local farmers. In 1975, when the United States formally withdrew from South Vietnam, he worked with Save the Children and left Saigon on April 12, 1975, for the Philippines. There he helped to process refugees at Clark Air Base.

While with Save the Children until 1979, Atwood worked as the deputy director for Asia, the Near East and Africa. In that role he started programs in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Burkina Faso. After that he worked for the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in Pakistan, in addition to the Yemen Arab Republic, Mali, Kyrgyzstan, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan and Iraq with shorter stints in other African and South East Asian countries.

It was also in 1979 that he met Mary Campbell at a Methodist Church on Nebraska Avenue in Washington, DC. ("I wanted to attend church, but the Congregational Church was too far away."). He spent two years in the church choir "looking at the back of Mary's head. After those two years, I finally got the nerve to talk to her." They had much in common—both are the second of six children and lived on dairy farms—Mary in Illinois. A month after that first nervous talk, he asked her to marry him and, in August 1981, they went together to Yemen.

In 1982, Mary returned to Connecticut to give birth to their first child John. While waiting for John to make his presence known, she found the (now) family house on Prospect Street in Falls Village, which the couple closed on before the

end of that year. John was followed by Joseph (in 1984) and Catherine (in 1986). All three had "a lot of overseas education," he said. It was not until 2006 that the Atwood family returned to Falls Village to live there permanently.

Since then, Atwood has been involved in many aspects of life in Falls Village and Region 1. He was elected as an alternate on the Board of Finance. He has worked with Habitat for Humanity as a local president and helped build houses and is now a member of the Falls Village Housing Trust. He also became a member of the alumni association board of directors "quite a number of years ago— around 2017, I think." He recalls sitting across from Ed Kirby and being made to feel comfortable, remembering Ed comforting one of his sisters at their dad's funeral.

Today Atwood is a member of the FFA Alumni and is "very proud of that—FFA has been a major part of my life for well over 40 years." Since "retirement" in 2013 (he really has not taken that step yet), he has been found at dozens and perhaps hundreds of basketball games— mostly girls' games. He explained this saying "there were no girls' sports at Housatonic until the late 1960s and I went to girls' games as a way of honoring my sisters and others who did not have the opportunity to participate."

Asked to summarize the importance of Housatonic in his life, Atwood replied, "My time at Housatonic taught me that you can do whatever you want to do in life." He said that Dr. Stoddard "wanted students to know about the world beyond Housatonic."

Tracy Atwood has had a fascinating and full life. His closing message to current and future students at Housatonic Valley Regional High School is that "You have a wonderful opportunity to go to a school with such dedicated adults— make use of every part of it. Not just academics. It is free to you!"



Alumni Association from page 7

...And Remembers a Founder...

Dorothy Winn Cecchinato, class of 1947, died recently. She was an integral part of this organization, one of the first four who developed and helped it grow to its current thriving status. She served as treasurer for many years, faithfully keeping a close eye on the finances, making sure all expenditures were accounted for. She was the first to receive emeritus status on the association. She left her mark and for that, we all say thank you.



In Memoriam

Barbara Benedict Bartram, '47

Dorothy Winn Cecchinato, '47

Jeremiah Fallon, '49

Cynthia Barnett Smith, '52

Edna Pond Tapley, '53

Jean Peterson Jones, '54

John "Jack" Gordon, '55

Faye Harmon Lawson, '55

Barbara Breen Victorien, '55

Frederick Leroy Baldwin, '56

Irene Carlin, '58

Barbara Carberry McEnroe, '58

Jed Lakin, '59

Joan Ann Mary Lamothe, '59

Carolyn Porter Small-Perry, '59

Janet Lyn Tompkins Tuthill, '59

Donna Aakjar, '60

James Norton, '60

John O'Brien, '61

David Matheson, '62

Hobart Clark Terhune, '62

Judith Smith Bellem, '63

Roberta Grith Colucci, '64

Elizabeth "BJ" Ducillo Christinat, '65

Jane Caron McGarry, '65

Edward Osborne, '65

Janet Duffy Stone, '64

John Topping, '65

David Caranci, '67

Peter L. Hawley, '67

William J. Manasse, '68

Frank Bailey, '71

Dean Davidson, '72

Catherine O'Loughlin Sherwood, '72

William Blank, '73

Allyn Hurlburt III, '73

Karen Blakey Fisher, '74

Janet MacRitchie, '75

Michael Tyler, '76

Mary Cooney, '80

Anthony J. Stewart, '80

Adam Rand, '84

Sarah Lyon Southard, '94

Justin Carroll, '01

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HVRHS Alumni Association

