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HOLDREGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

Giving Back to Education

Introducing New HHS Alumni Recognition Feature!

Dear HHS Alumni and HPS Foundation Supporters,

Holdrege High School is fortunate to have many very successful graduates. We are excited to begin a new venture to share the stories of some of those HHS Alums. Kristine (Long) Jacobson, Class of 1990, has joined our efforts with her journalistic talents to bring you this monthly feature.

Many classes will be having reunions in 2013. Class organizers are encouraged to contact us - we can assist with communication by sending messages to classmates through Constant Contact. We welcome your suggestions and comments.

Sincerely,

Mike Waller, Chairman - HPS Foundation Committee

Brad Pearson - Class of 1963



Pearson Combines Love of Art and Golf in Successful Career in Holdrege

By Kristine Jacobson

As a young boy, Brad Pearson remembers redrawing scenes from comic book covers in his childhood home next to the Holdrege Golf Course.

That was when he first realized his interest in art. Today, nearly 60 years later, Brad still enjoys living near the Holdrege Golf Course and has been able to combine his love of golf and art in a professional career without leaving Holdrege.

Brad studied one year of art at Holdrege High School, where he graduated with the class of 1963. After high school, he attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and started exploring a career in architecture. He eventually changed his major and graduated with a degree in sociology. It was in Lincoln that he met his wife, Judy.

After college, he entered the U.S. Navy and was stationed at the Corpus Christi Naval Air Station in Texas, where he worked as a flight instructor. While in Corpus Christi, he decided to sell his art for the first time by entering his pen and ink drawings and watercolors in an art show.

"Lo and behold, some people, bless their hearts, bought some of my work," Brad said.

Brad returned to Holdrege in 1974 and "stumbled" into a job as the golf course superintendent at the Holdrege Golf Course. It was a perfect match for him. "I had the winter to do my art and the summer to do my regular duties at the course," Brad said.

In 1984, Brad's art career took a different turn when he was introduced to bronze sculptures at an art show in Hastings. That same year, Holdrege graduate George Lundeen, who was a few years younger than Brad in school, displayed his bronze sculptures at the First National Bank of Holdrege. Brad took the opportunity to ask him for a lesson.

"He sent me a book and some clay and said, 'this is your lesson,'" Brad said. Brad purchased more books on the topic and immersed himself in learning the art of bronze sculptures. He then was able to watch George sculpt and was introduced to other sculptors at Lundeen's studio in Loveland, Colo.

Brad then sculpted his first bronze. He sold his first sculptures to family and friends.

"I was very lucky to have friends and family buy my work," he said, "because if they didn't, I wouldn't have kept going."

Soon, others outside his circle of family and friends purchased his work. In November 1994, Brad's "Apple of My Eye" life-sized bronze statue was unveiled at Holdrege Middle School. Smaller versions of the sculpture were sold to fund the commissioned project.

In 2000, he was commissioned by the Golf Course Superintendents Association to sculpt a life-sized bronze of famous golfer, Old Tom Morris.

"Being a member of that association opened up big doors for me," Brad said. The statue was unveiled in December 2001 in Lawrence, Kan., at the association's headquarters. A second Old Tom statue was placed at the World Golf Hall of Fame in St. Augustine, Fla., in February 2002 and then a third copy was shipped to St. Andrews, Scotland, in July 2002. It was placed in the foyer of the British Golf Museum adjacent to the famous St. Andrews golf course clubhouse. The sculpture took him 360 hours over three months to complete.

"That was the proudest one for me because of where it ended up," Brad said. One of his most popular collector statues are his series of 14 mini Santa sculptures that he created between 1992 and 2011. The bronze Santas have a red finish on Santa's coat. He sold more than 500 of the Santas over the years.

Another of Brad's life-size sculptures, a golf caddy, stands at the entrance to the Holdrege County Club.

Brad retired from his career at the golf course five years ago after 34 years. He now has more time to enjoy golfing and more time with his four grandchildren in Hastings and Holdrege. His daughter, Amy, lives in Holdrege and his daughter, Heather, lives in Hastings.

He is also looking forward to his 50th high school class reunion June 14-16, 2013.

And of course, he is looking forward to doing more art. His next challenge - welding junk art.

"I don't think artists can retire," he said. "It's just in their blood."



About Us

The mission of the HPS Foundation is to support and enhance the educational efforts of students and teachers of Holdrege Public Schools by providing funding for innovative and challenging programs, learning experiences, and activities.

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