



## HOLDREGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

### *Giving Back to Education*

## ***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 continue sharing the stories of some of those HHS Alums thanks to the journalistic talents of Kristine (Long) Jacobson, Class of 1990.

We also welcome your suggestions and comments and encourage you to join the Duster Alumni Association (*see form below*).

Sincerely,

*Matt Allmand, Chairman  
HPS Foundation Committee*

## **Bruce Hendrickson - Class of 1948**

***Hendrickson makes a difference in hometown.***

by Kristine Jacobson

Choosing to come home to Holdrege to start a career wasn't a common trend in Bruce Hendrickson's era.

The 1948 Holdrege High grad attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, graduating with a degree in economics, and then served his country in the U.S. Navy.

It was tempting to stay in California, where he was based during his service. Many of his classmates settled in Texas or California or other places far away. But, he and his wife, Carol, originally from Tecumseh, decided to make Holdrege their home. "The reason we came home was family ties and business ties, and we've never regretted it," Bruce said. "Holdrege has been good to Carol and me. It's a fine little community to have as your anchor."

It was a blessing to Holdrege that Bruce settled in his hometown. He has served the community in many capacities and worked tirelessly for 20 years to share his love of the arts forever with the



community by leading the fund-raising efforts to build The Tassel Performing Arts Center.

After serving in the Navy, Bruce followed in his father's footsteps, becoming a life insurance agent for Banker's Life, which later became Principal Financial.

As a young couple back in Holdrege in 1956, they purchased the home that they still live in today, and immediately became involved in the community. "I've kind of lived by a rule that you should be involved in something in your church, your community and your profession and have it be meaningful, where you can make a difference and say no to everything else," Bruce said.

One of the first organizations Bruce joined was the Rotary. He became president of the group in 1960, which gave he and Carol the chance to travel to Munich, Germany. He later became involved in the Holdrege Chamber of Commerce, served on the City Council for eight years with seven of those years as president, helped with the church youth group at the First Presbyterian Church and later became a Trustee and elder at the church.

His early years in Holdrege prepared him well for his life of service. In high school, Bruce participated in the class play, debate team, a Christian organization called Hi-Y, was a Boys State delegate and an Eagle Scout. He recalls many great role models throughout his youth, including teachers Ms. Boentje, who taught math and calculus and Mr. Phil Dowling and Mr. Jim Speece.

His fifth-grade teacher even gave him a special birthday gift - his first airplane ride in a small plane around Holdrege.

"I had some really outstanding teachers," Bruce said. Those teachers and role models, in addition to the example set by his parents, Carl and Ruth, set him on a path to success that involved service.

In his career, his service started with being involved in the Nebraska Association of Life Underwriters, serving as president in 1965. That led to his involvement in the National Association of Life Underwriters, where he served as chairman of the association's education committee.

In that role, he helped develop a quiz show on money management and family finances called "You Owe It To Yourself" that was filmed and broadcast on television. Nebraska Public Television is one of the networks that broadcast the show.

Bruce then was elected as the secretary of the National Association of Life Underwriters, which led to becoming president of that organization. He was the first Nebraskan to hold that office.

In 1975, he took over as president of the life underwriters group at a convention in Anaheim, California. It happened that President Gerald Ford was the keynote speaker that year, and Bruce had the privilege of sitting next to Mr. Ford at dinner. A photo of Bruce and the president then was printed in the Los Angeles Times. Bruce still has that framed photo of he and the president hanging in his office.

While he was involved in his career and professional organizations, he also started working on a dream to have a community concert hall in Holdrege. Music and the arts have always been important to Bruce, a love that was instilled in him by his parents. His mother was a trained contralto soloist and attended the school of music at UNL. Bruce grew up with a baby grand piano in his home and took piano lessons until the eighth grade.

In high school, Bruce was involved in choir and played the drums in the HHS band. He later played the drums in the band at UNL, where he helped design a

football half-time show. "Music has always been important to me," he said. "I guess that's why we got so involved in raising money for The Tassel."

Bruce and Carol are parents to two children, Julie, born in 1960, and Mark, born in 1963, and music was a big part of their lives as well with involvements in band and dance.

Bruce's work raising money for The Tassel started in 1976. He continued raising money for more than 20 years, with a few setbacks along the way. In the 1980s, he was part of a committee that wanted to pass a sales tax to help fund a theater/recreation center in the community. The vote failed four to one.

But, Bruce continued plugging away until the \$4.1 million was raised by 1999, and The Tassel was built. "It's been kind of my legacy," Bruce said. "I'm real proud of what they are doing at The Tassel. They have made a real impact in the community."

Throughout the years, Bruce and Carol have hosted in their home many artists who have performed in Holdrege. For Bruce and Carol's 50th wedding anniversary, they sponsored a free Nebraska Brass program for the entire community. Other major performances, such as the Nutcracker Ballet, the Vienna Boys Choir and symphonies have been performed there throughout the years, in addition to educational programs for children, dance recitals and other events. The Tassel is owned by the Holdrege Public Schools and is under the direction of the non-profit Tassel Coordination Council.

Bruce also helped raised money for the Lied Center at UNL and has a fund established at the University to generate income to bring university performing and visual arts to The Tassel.

In addition to the arts, Bruce has enjoyed several other hobbies throughout his years. One of his early passions was golf. His dad introduced him to golf at age 12. When Bruce was in high school, he and two friends wanted to start a golf team, and they asked their principal, Mr. Jim Speece, to be their coach because they knew he golfed. Holdrege's first golf team earned a trip to the state tournament at the Pioneer Country Club in Lincoln.

"I've played lots of golf literally around the world," Bruce said, including in places like Guam, Scotland and Canada. A golf injury 30 years ago left Bruce unable to play. "So, I put my golf clubs away and became a sailor," Bruce said. "We've had a lot of fun sailing."

One other passion has been model trains. He started enjoying model trains when he was a child and then put them away when he went off to college. He got the trains out again when he started considering retirement. He added on a small room to his house, and over the years has enjoyed creating an impressive model train display.



Bruce's other service throughout the years has included being involved in church locally and nationally, even helping develop the national church budget one year; serving on several political campaigns, including helping elect Nebraska's 32nd governor Norbert Tiemann; serving as chairman of the Founder's Campaign to start a YMCA in Holdrege; and serving on the Phelps County Community Foundation, volunteering as the foundation's third president.

Bruce and his model train display.

This summer, Bruce and Carol had the honor of being crowned Swedish Days King and Queen.

"A lot of these things probably wouldn't have happened had we stayed in San Diego," Bruce said. "Giving back to your home community and doing these things has made an interesting life for us."

## 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.*

**Holdrege Public Schools Foundation**  
 505 14th Ave, PO Box 2002  
 Holdrege, Nebraska 68949  
 Holdrege Public Schools Foundation  
 (308) 995-8663  
[holdregedusters.org](http://holdregedusters.org)

### Print & Send

Duster Alumni Association—Join Today!	
<b>ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP—billed annually (couple rate—if both are HHS Alumni)</b> Please check appropriate category and submit with payment as directed below.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiast—\$25 or \$35 per couple	<input type="checkbox"/> Fan Club—\$50 or \$75 per couple
<input type="checkbox"/> Cheerleader—\$100 or \$150 per couple	<input type="checkbox"/> Purple & Gold Pride—\$250 or \$350 per couple
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Duster Lifetime Booster—\$1,500 or \$2,000 per couple—<i>one-time only</i> payment</b>	
NAME(S)	
ADDRESS	
EMAIL	
YOUR GIFT IS TAX-DEDUCTIBLE <span style="float: right;">CHECKS PAYABLE TO: <b>HPS Foundation</b></span> SEND TO: <b>Phelps County Community Foundation, 504 4th Avenue, Holdrege, NE 68949</b>	

[Forward this email](#)



Try it FREE today.

This email was sent to hpsfoundation@hpsfoundation.org by [hpsfoundation@hpsfoundation.org](mailto:hpsfoundation@hpsfoundation.org) | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Holdrege Public Schools Foundation | 505 14th Ave | PO Box 2002 | Holdrege | NE | 68949