



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. Kristine (Long) Jacobson, Class of 1990, has joined our efforts with her journalistic talents to bring you this month's 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 and encourage you to join the Duster Alumni Association (*see form below*).

Sincerely,

Matt Allmand, Chairman - HPS Foundation Committee

Dan Van Dyke - Class of 1968

After a successful career in education, Van Dyke returns to Holdrege and continues to 'bloom where he is planted'

By Kristine Jacobson

Dan Van Dyke, class of 1968, didn't imagine that someday he'd be working back in his hometown.

But after a career as a teacher, coach, and ESU staff development specialist, his current job as executive director of the Nebraska Prairie Museum in Holdrege is a perfect fit. "I always was interested in history and politics, and the older I got the more interested I became," he said.

Dan was born in the Brewster hospital in Holdrege, lived in Huntley as a child, and then moved to Holdrege with his family about the time he started kindergarten. He attended Washington School, the "old" junior high, and the high school, where he played football and basketball, ran track, and was in the spring play, "Guys and Dolls."

After high school, Dan attended Kearney State College, where he double majored in political science and history and earned his teaching certificate. His first job was teaching geography and anthropology in tiny Beemer, Nebraska, a school in Northeast Nebraska that no longer exists today. "I was the social studies department," he said.

After two years at Beemer, Dan moved on to Plattsmouth, where he taught seventh grade Western History and "coached everything," including football, basketball, and boys track.



Dan said he was inspired to coach and teach by some of the great coaches he encountered in Holdrege, including now-retired Joe Buettner, who was Dan's math teacher and coach. "How he treated his kids and how he coached was with a gentle hand," Dan said. "He was always encouraging you and helping you understand how to improve yourself. He was one of the reasons I went into education."

Dan was also inspired by boys basketball coach Merle Bauer. "He could get after you, but you understood he cared about you," Dan said about Merle.

Dan was part of the 1967 state-championship basketball team in Holdrege. He was a junior and didn't play a lot that year. But, his senior class of 1968 almost earned another trip to state. They won every game that season until a heart-breaking second-round loss in districts to Grand Island Central Catholic.

During Dan's coaching years at Plattsmouth, he was finally able to make a return trip to boys' state with the team he coached. They lost in the first round.

While in Plattsmouth, Dan also put his love of politics into practice by becoming the Democratic Party Chairman for Cass County. This was during the time that Bob Kerrey was Nebraska's Governor, and they organized a Democratic fundraiser with Kerrey as the featured guest.

In Plattsmouth, Dan also found time to earn his Master's Degree in Education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He later went on to earn his certification in Educational Administration from UNL. That led to his next job as principal in Benkelman, where he was eventually honored as a Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association Principal of the Year and as a National Association of Elementary School Principals Outstanding Principal.

While leading the Benkelman schools, Dan also took up coaching again. "I was able to take five high jumpers to the state track meet while I was there," he said.

After nearly 10 years at Benkelman, Dan became a staff development specialist for ESU #15 in Trenton, where he worked with teachers in 14 school districts. Dan retired from his teaching career and began working at the Nebraska Prairie Museum in 2006.

He has been active in the Holdrege community since returning. He has served on the ESU #11 Board, the Airport Authority and the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. He recently moved to Broken Bow because of his wife's job and now commutes to Holdrege for work, is still involved in the Rotary Club, and serves as president of the Phelps County Visitors Committee.

"My folks always said you bloom where you are planted, so you basically become part of your community to make it better."

Dan is married to Charlotte and has four grown children, Jennifer, Rebecca, Melissa, and Christopher.

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
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