

News Release

Top Aggies 2019

By Cassandra Morthera on Friday, July 5, 2019

The annual alumni reunion of the Northwest School of Agriculture (NWSA) was held on Friday, June 28, 2019. Classmates and friends gathered to reconnect and to honor outstanding alumni from the NWSA with the Top Aggie award.

The award is the highest honor bestowed on NWSA alumni by its alumni association. This award recognizes alumni who have displayed exemplary commitment and service to community, education, family, or in their occupational field.



Recipients for 2019 included Leon Flancher, faculty, 1958-63; Robert Glass 1955; and Bill Weber 1967. The awards were presented by Chancellor Mary Holz-Clause and Brandy Chaffee, chief development officer at the University of Minnesota Crookston.

Biographies of Top Aggies

Leon Flancher, faculty, 1958-63

With a passion for travel and teaching, Leon Flancher has gone from Norway, to Rome, and back to Minnesota. In the fall of 1958, Flancher was hired to teach at the Northwest School of Agriculture (NWSA). A Crookston Central High School graduate, Flancher had recently graduated from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, when he was hired by E.N. Reiersgord to teach English, serve as a preceptor in Robertson Hall, and assist with the drama department at the NWSA.

Flancher received a scholarship to study graduate educational programs at the University of Oslo, Norway, and was released from the NWSA for the 1960 school year. After extensive travel through Europe, he returned to Minnesota and started graduate work at the University of Minnesota and transferred to the University of North Dakota (UND) to be closer to the NWSA where he continued to teach for another two years. In 1968, he earned his M.Ed. from UND and was selected as the coordinator of reading and study skills for the college while still teaching English and music at the Northwest School. Flancher went on to teach summer institutes at the University of Colorado. He was then selected as Dean of Experimental Studies at Metropolitan State College in Denver, Colorado. In 1975, he returned to Minnesota to serve as president of Worthington Community College.

Flancher managed several small businesses in Colorado, developed a statewide consulting business, and was hired by Colorado State University to teach reading. While teaching at CSU he completed his Ph.D. and was hired as an assistant professor. After teaching at Regis University, he became chancellor, university vice president and dean of graduate school at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's International Campus in Daytona, Florida.

Robert Glass 1955

Navy man and travel enthusiast Robert Glass graduated from the Northwest School of Agriculture (NWSA) in 1955. Glass enjoyed his career in the Navy and is grateful to the NWSA for contributing to his initial success in the Navy. Many of the skills and teachers he came across during his time at the NWSA helped him through his entire career.

After graduating from the NWSA, Glass had a continuous U.S. Navy career from 1955-1988. His jobs ranged from commanding officer of Navy Commands in the U.S. and Bermuda to deputy chief of staff for administration and personnel. During his career Glass was recognized for his service with a number of military awards including a Bronze Star with combat valor, two meritorious service medals, three Navy commendation medals, a Navy achievement medal with combat valor, seven Vietnam campaign medals, and numerous U.S. and foreign service medals. Glass shared his leadership and mentoring skills as a Boy Scout leader in Hawaii from 1960-1962 as well as volunteering with Habitat for Humanity.

Bill Weber 1967

A member of the Northwest School of Agriculture (NSWA) graduating class of 1967, Bill Weber still recalls his days in Stephens Hall and playing basketball for Coach Herschel Lysaker. After graduating from the NWSA, Weber went on to the North Dakota State School of Science, now the North Dakota State College of Science, in Wahpeton, N.D., for a two-year degree in mechanical drafting graduating in 1969.

Weber was a medic in the Army Reserve from 1969-1975. Active in the community, he served as president of Reynolds Knights of Columbus and president of the St. Jude's Finance Committee and Church Council.

After working in the Army Reserve, Weber farmed with his dad and uncle from 1981 to 1990 when his dad retired. Weber continued farming on his own until his son joined him. In 2001, Weber and two other farmers started Northern Tier Seed Company where they clean soybeans for Monsanto, Pioneer, Syngenta, Legend Seed, and CHS. In this field of work, Weber has come across many NWSA graduates.

Background

The NWSA was a residential high school located on the Crookston campus from 1906-68. The reunion is planned by the Office of Development & Alumni Relations in cooperation with the NWSA Alumni Association board and is always in June. The first summer reunion of Northwest School alumni was held in 1925. Prior to that time, it was held during the annual Winter Shows in Crookston.

The NWSA alumni reunion, first held in 1918, brings back alumni from the Northwest School of Agriculture, a residential high school located on what is now the University of Minnesota Crookston campus. The NWSA graduated its first class of 8 students in 1909.

About UMN Crookston

One of five campuses that comprise the University of Minnesota System, the University of Minnesota Crookston now delivers 34 bachelor's degree programs and 24 minors on campus as well as 16 degree programs entirely online. These degrees are offered in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of 1,800 undergraduates from more than 20 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. Visit www.umcrookston.edu.

About UMN

The University of Minnesota System, with campuses in Crookston, Duluth, Morris, Rochester, and the Twin Cities, is driven by a singular vision of excellence. We are proud of our land-grant mission of world-class education, groundbreaking research, and community-engaged outreach, and we are unified in our drive to serve Minnesota.

In the photo:

Top Aggies, left to right: Bill Weber, Leon Flancher, and Robert Glass

Contact

Cassandra Morthera

University Relations

218-281-8432

Mentioned in this Article

Brandy Chaffee

News Categories

Events

Awards and Recognition

Alumni & Donors



News Home
News Archives



Small Campus. Big Degree..

- Employment
Events Calendar
Academic Calendar
Library
Directories
Maps, Directions & Parking
Quick Facts
Bookstore

- Faculty & Staff
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System Website
Home

2900 University Ave., Crookston, MN 56716
800-862-6466 | 218-281-6510 | umcinfo@umn.edu
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