

A-F Area School District Academic Hall of Fame 2019



Robert Warren

Class of 1981

*Executive Director
Hartford Performs, Inc.
Hartford Connecticut*

Education

American Academy of Dramatic Arts, New York—Associate of Arts/Performing Arts
Marymount Manhattan College, New York City—Bachelor of Fine Arts Scholarship Recipient
University of Maryland/College Park—Bachelor of Science in Radio, Television, Film

How did Adams-Friendship Schools prepare you to perform for life?

“From Kindergarten to College, the teachers, counselors and administrators in the A-F school district saw something in me that I didn’t realize I had. Thankfully, for me, they did and I was encouraged by so many wonderful educators to excel in the classroom and in all of the extra-curricular activities that a small town kid could be a part of.

To go from a community of a few thousand direct to New York City and thrive for seven years, I had to rely on every ounce of grit, tenacity and courage that was instilled in me by some of the most kind and amazing mentors that I could ever had asked for. For me the primary engagement in school and the community was through the arts. However, the physical demands and friendships acquired during 4 years of Cross Country, Swimming, and Track surely played a big part in keeping me out of trouble. Even though I did not consider a career in the Arts until my senior year in high school, everything I learned in 13 years as an A-F student would have allowed me to perform for a lifetime in any career.

I left A-F in 1981 with a dream and a special message from my amazing school time mentors, Linda Webster Machan and Joan Jones, as well as the entire Sand County Players Community that had taken me under their wing. The message on a wall hanging read, “I don’t know where I am going but I am on my way.

I was fearless in my pursuit because collectively, the entire A-F community created a complete individual full of critical thoughts, and a curious mind. I left knowing that I was prepared to take on a lifetime of adventures.”



Audra Hovorka Mead

Class of 1988

Director—Human Resources Fox World Travel, Inc.

Education

UW-LaCrosse-Bachelor of Science Business Administration

UW-Oshkosh-Master of Business Administration Human Resources

How did Adams-Friendship Schools prepare you to perform for life?

“As I reflected on the question, several immediate points came to mind, but the one that was forefront and shone a little brighter than the others was this: the faculty invested in me as a person.

Throughout all of my education in the Adams-Friendship School District (Castle Rock Grade School and the Adams-Friendship High School), it has been the relationships formed with a number of my teachers that made me realize that what they did was not just a ‘job’. Every day, they were making an investment in me as a person – to be better, wiser, and more open to possibilities and learning. They took seriously their ability to change someone’s life and hopefully teach students, like me, that the same ability and responsibility was in each of them.

I have remembered this throughout my career and in my personal life when I challenge myself and others to recognize the responsibility we each have to make a difference in the lives of those we touch. It doesn’t matter if it is someone I work with or the person who may be bagging my groceries, when an opportunity presents itself to use my ability to potentially change someone’s life, I take it – no matter how great or small. The impact may not be immediately evident as it may take days, months or years, but every action serves up a reaction.

We all have a responsibility to positively impact the lives of those we serve (whether personal or professional), and that gift is not to be wasted. This was a gift bestowed on me by the teachers who made an early investment in me.”



Linda Webster Machan

Educator

Ms. Linda Webster Machan was inducted to the A-F Academic Hall of Fame as an outstanding educator in recognition of inspiring students to perform for life. Ms. Machan graduated from UW-Eau Claire with a secondary education degree—emphasis middle school, an English major, and Geography minor. After interning at LaFollette High School in Madison, she accepted a teaching position in Adams-Friendship in 1972. Ms. Machan continued a pattern of life-long learning with post graduate work in musical theater at the University of Minnesota, reading methods at UW-Stevens Point, middle school methods and best practices at UW-Platteville, and school administration at Winona. As a classroom teacher, her high expectations and commitment to learning were an inspiration. Her organizing of the Sand County Players supported a love of the arts and involvement in the community. As Dance Team coach, her passion influenced many young women well beyond her retirement from the classroom in 2007.

Ms. Machan believes her enthusiasm for the arts is part of her DNA. Her mother studied music before becoming a home economics teacher. Her father was a volunteer director of a drum and bugle corps during her elementary years. During those formative years, she started choreographing and directing original “shows” of her own. Throughout high school, she could be found in the band and chorus rooms—often choreographing for student groups.

Though Ms. Machan studied dance in college, no degree was offered at Eau Claire during that time. As a teacher, the bicentennial of 1976 provided an opportunity to share her passion. She began directing shows with students as a way to create a whole-school celebration. Colleagues took notice. Band teacher, Clark Staehling drafted her to work with dance for his majorettes, and high school band director, Angie Lavalley soon had her working with the high school girls. Dance Team was born from these experiences. In 1974, Superintendent Gordon Sardeson approached Ms. Machan with the opportunity to coach the Pompon squad. This was the start of a long tradition of excellence at and beyond the state level. The young women involved in Dance Team credit her not only with being an inspirational role model, but also with helping them develop self-confidence and pride in their school. She treated students with dignity and supported them in times of personal challenge. As a coach, Ms. Machan taught young women to respect each other, themselves, and serve as role models for others. They learned the value of hard work, competition and persistence. She continued to influence the young women of Adams-Friendship High School even after her retirement from the classroom by continuing to coach the Dance Team until 2015. Her dedication to the youth in our community is evident through her 35 years as a teacher and 41 years as a coach.

Her work for the youth and community did not end with retirement. Ms. Machan continues to be actively involved with the Sand County Players and the A-F Area Educational Foundation. She serves on the events committee for the A-F Fine Arts Center and works tirelessly to promote events through the Foundation's website and Facebook pages.

A quote from a former student summarizes this exceptional educator. *"I am just one of hundreds of young women who can thank Linda for enhancing the quality of their character and for instilling in them values that will last a lifetime. We are so lucky to have passionate and caring educators and coaches like Linda in Adams-Friendship."*



Harvey Wagner Legacy

The Legacy Award was presented to Mr. Harvey Wagner. Mr. Wagner was born on a farm in Grand Marsh, attended Grand Marsh Grade School, and graduated from Adams-Friendship High School in 1956. He credits playing sports in high school with developing his teamwork and leadership skills. Agricultural classes and FFA instilled the importance of hard work and the need for higher education. After graduating from UW-Platteville in 1960, Mr. Wagner returned to Adams-Friendship High School as a teacher. During his five years as a classroom teacher, he also taught adult agricultural classes. His desire for farm life grew, and he left the classroom to actively farm at Wagner Farms, Inc., in 1965.

Mr. Wagner lives by the motto, "Give back to the community more than you've taken from it." He lives this motto through his many contributions to the Adams-Friendship area. Mr. Wagner was a member of the Moundview Hospital Board for 22 years as well as being involved with Adams County Economic Development. He was a charter member of several groups including the Knights of Columbus, Moundview Golf Course and Grand Marsh Area Development. In 1967, Mr. Wagner was elected to the Board of Directors of Grand Marsh State Bank. He became president of the bank in 1976, graduating from UW-Madison in 1977 with a Master's degree in Finance. Though he retired in 2016 after 40 years as president, he continues to be active in the community as a contributing member of the Adams-Friendship Education Foundation, the Chamber of Commerce and a life-time member of the Old Farmer Antique Club. Mr. Wagner has been married to his wife, Beverly, for 56 years. They have one daughter, two sons, and four grandchildren. He summarized his philosophy by saying, *"I believe that to have a strong community, you need a strong school system, strong banks, and strong healthcare."*