

O F H S



WALL OF FAME

Inducted 2020



IRENE (MAYERNIK) DRAKE

Irene (Mayernik) Drake was born in Oconto Falls to Albert and Irene Mayernik and grew up on a dairy farm in Spruce with her parents, a brother, a set of grandparents, her uncle and a summer's full of visiting aunts, uncles and cousins. She grew up in a family that was always helping others.

Irene attended Kelly Brook Elementary School, Washington Middle School and Oconto Falls High School, graduating in 1972. She earned a Natural Resources Degree from Fox Valley Technical College and worked for the Forest Service, the Soil Conservation Service and the Oconto County Land Conservation Office.

She met her husband, Steve, at a friend's wedding and they have been married for 44 years. They have three children: Briana, Cameron and Andrew with wife Jennifer, daughters Eleanor and Ada.

Irene manages her husband's optometric practice and is actively involved in the community; participating in various Gillett organizations. In 1986, she became involved in local politics being elected to the Gillett City Council. In 2012, she was elected as Gillett's first woman mayor and served two terms; her involvement in Gillett government lasted for over 30 years. During her tenure as Gillett's Planning Committee Chairman, Gillett received over two million dollars in grants and low interest loans that were used for roads, the water tower, wells and the child daycare building.

She was very involved with Seneca's expansion, the water tower replacement, Ridgewood Subdivision, the industrial park and new library. While on the council, she was the city representative to the Oconto County Economic Development Corporation and was a chairman.

Irene has been on the Board of Directors of the Sunshine Child Care Center since her children attended the Center; she held several offices and was chairman of the new building committee. As president of the library board, she was on the building committee that acquired and renovated a bank building for the library's new location using entirely donated funds. She has been a member of the Gillett Lions Club for two decades where she has held several offices, is the current treasurer and food stand chairman. As a Gillett Business Association Member, she is current treasurer and co-chair for Christmas in the Park.

"I think it's important that we give back to our community. We need optimism and a willingness to work with others towards a better life with our family, friends and community."