

OFHS



WALL OF FAME

Inducted September 19, 2015



DIANE KAY MESSMANN

Although born in Poynette, Diane Kay Messmann made her way to Oconto Falls with her parents, Norman and Lucille when her dad accepted a position as a teacher and coach at the high school. Diane attended St. Anthony Grade School and worked through the grades, eventually earning honors as the OFHS class of 1958 Valedictorian.

After graduation she studied at UW-Madison for five semesters with a major in archeology. On February 11, 1961 she married Professor C. John Mann. The couple then moved to Jackson, Mississippi where Diane earned a B.A. degree in history from Millsaps College.

Over time, Diane and John lived in Palo Alto, California, Champaign, Illinois and Urbana, Illinois. Once their four children, Christian, Anna, Vaughn, and Katrina were in school, Diane went back to college and earned a Masters and Doctorate in anthropology from the University of Illinois.

With a fresh Ph.D. in hand, Diane accepted a position at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Construction Engineering Research Lab (CERL) in Champaign as a researcher and principal investigator with responsibility for ensuring environmental quality at Army bases and installations. In connection with those professional activities, she became an Adjunct Professor in two University of Illinois departments, Anthropology and Public Health. This work included extensive travel in the United States and overseas.

Eventually, Diane concentrated on her life-long interest in and concern for Native Americans. In particular, she enjoyed a long relationship with the Haskell Indian Nations University at Lawrence, Kansas, employing their students in her work at both CERL and at Haskell.

Diane enjoyed gardening, sewing, reading and time with friends. She was active with the Monday Club, an organization known for beautifying Urbana by establishing curbside flowerbeds throughout the city.

Her eldest grandson, Kevin, then a fifth grader, wrote, "I think my grandma should win the "best relative" award for many reasons. I think she is caring, works hard, and is fun to be with."

Going on, he noted, "She is creative too. She always thinks of something to do. For example, she thinks up games, gives ideas for outside activities or an art project. When she is around, you rarely get bored."

Her daughter Anna summed it up, "Mother enjoyed the grandchildren immensely. She remarked that if she had known how much fun grandchildren were, she would have had them first."

"My mother led by example and encouraged us to take the high road. She always looked for the best in others and respected their differences."