



FIFTH ANNUAL  
Laurel Highlands  
Life Achievement

# **HALL OF FAME**

## **Induction Ceremony and Breakfast**

Sponsored by the Laurel Highlands Academic Foundation



Saturday, September 3, 2016

Uniontown Park Inn

## Past Inductees

### 2012

Mr. Robert Eberly,\* North Union 1935  
Mr. Harry Brownfield,\* South Union 1946  
Dr. Ralph Nudo, Laurel Highlands 1971  
Dr. Peter Rhee, Laurel Highlands 1979  
Ms. Nina Pineda, Laurel Highlands 1986  
Dr. Lance Brunton, Laurel Highlands 1994  
Dr. Courtney Cuppett, Laurel Highlands 1996  
Dr. Mary Ellen Wiltrout, Laurel Highlands 2000

### 2013

Mr. Joseph DiNunno,\* South Union 1938  
Dr. George Garrow, Laurel Highlands 1977  
Dr. Mark Esper, Laurel Highlands 1982  
Mr. Douglas Matthews, Laurel Highlands 1983  
Dr. David Sheba, Laurel Highlands 1990

### 2014

Mr. Richard Miller, Laurel Highlands 1969  
Dr. Garret Breakiron, Laurel Highlands 1970  
Dr. Charles Mihaliak, Laurel Highlands 1978  
Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Rockwell, Laurel Highlands 1980  
Dr. Bruce King, Laurel Highlands 1981  
Ms. Janet Deal, Laurel Highlands 1982  
Ms. Joan Kois Woodward, Laurel Highlands 1983  
Dr. John Pensock, Laurel Highlands 1984  
Dr. Rani Dixit Schuchert, Laurel Highlands 1986  
Ms. Tonya Hurley, Laurel Highlands 1988

### 2015

Mr. Ben Moyer, Laurel Highlands 1970  
Mr. Gary L. Carter, Laurel Highlands 1972  
Ms. Robin D. Weaver, Laurel Highlands 1972  
Mr. Thomas W. McClain, Laurel Highlands 1974  
Mr. Mark G. Matuschak, Laurel Highlands 1977  
Dr. Elizabeth Wiltrout, Laurel Highlands 2003

\*Deceased

## Program

### Welcome

Jes Hutson, *Retired Faculty Member,  
Penn State Fayette–The Eberly Campus*

Dr. Jesse Wallace, *Superintendent,  
Laurel Highlands School District*

### Invocation

Nicholas Cook, *Pastor, Abundant Life Church*

### Breakfast

### Comments

Vince Soom, *President,  
Laurel Highlands Academic Foundation*

### Introduction of the 2016 Class

Jes Hutson

#### *Inductees*

Dr. Ronald Smorada, *NU 1964*

Mr. Kenneth Laughery, *NU 1965*

Mr. Nicholas Cook, *LH 1970*

Mr. Mark Kempic, *LH 1979*

Dr. Jason Yonker, *LH 1994*

Mr. John Kazarick, *Special Recognition*

### Closing

Jes Hutson



**DR. RONALD SMORADA** graduated from North Union High in 1964 with a plan to study engineering at General Motors Institute in Flint, MI. But a late summer offer of a scholarship to Waynesburg College kept him closer to home. In 1968 he graduated *cum laude* with a BS in chemistry, hoping to go on to graduate school. During the next year he enjoyed teaching chemistry at North

Union, but with the Vietnam War still raging, he left his alma mater, attended Officer Candidate School in Newport, RI, and became a commissioned U.S. Navy officer. This appointment was followed by additional schooling in naval logistics in Georgia and petroleum management in California. He was assigned as a Petroleum Officer in Vietnam, responsible for all fuel supply for U.S. and allied navies. Ron received the Naval Commendation Award for his service there.

After his discharge, Ron moved to Indiana, and in 1975 received his MS from Notre Dame, followed by a PhD in organic chemistry from Purdue in 1980. Dr. Smorada then began working for DuPont in Wilmington, DE, at their famed Experimental Station, an experience that would lead to a career in the field of “nonwoven fabrics and technology.” During the next seven years at DuPont, Dr. Smorada focused on developing the company’s flash-spinning technology to commercialize Tyvek housewrap.

Dr. Smorada left DuPont to become VP of Sales, Marketing and R&D of Reemay, Inc., in Nashville. There he led a company turn-around and development of the fabric marketed by Procter & Gamble under the name of Bounce dryer sheets, and invented several other products based on nonwoven technology. Other positions included Executive VP of Fiberweb, Inc., and VP for Technology at London-based BBA PLC. He is now president of OnWay International LLC, a company he founded in 2006 to provide non-woven and fiber-forming technology and advice to clients worldwide.

Ron is a well-known industry speaker and holds patents on various nonwoven products. He has used his knowledge to blend science and business to develop products to make life better. With his wife Claudia and two daughters, he resides in Kennett Square, PA. ■



In 1978 **JOHN KAZARICK** started broadcasting sporting events for the Laurel Highlands School District. He began with the radio station WPQR. Due to his knowledge and love of sports, he was qualified to broadcast boys and girls basketball, baseball, softball, football, boys and girls soccer, wrestling, volleyball, and swimming. He broadcasted all ages. In 1989, South

Union Township established a cable TV network. Mr. Kazarick was hired to be the sports broadcaster for all South Union sporting events and all Laurel Highlands athletic contests.

In the 25 years John Kazarick was with South Union Township TV, he called over 4,000 games. In 2006 a new type of programming was added to the South Union network. It was called “Inside South Union Township” and was a weekly interview show that featured a wide variety of people from all walks of life within the community. John became the host of the show.

In 2008 John was diagnosed with sarcoma, and had to undergo several operations. Sometimes these surgeries prevented him from making it to a game. But that still didn't stop him. He would watch recordings of the games from home (sometimes from bed) and broadcast on a tape delay. Because of this resiliency and drive to keep going, there is an award that is given every year to an athlete at Laurel Highlands called “The John Kazarick Hustle Award.” This honor is presented to a youth who goes above and beyond, continuing to “hustle” no matter how tough the circumstances.

John broadcasted until he physically was no longer able. Unfortunately, in the summer of 2014 he suffered a stroke that affected his speech and strength. He had to retire from what he loved doing most.

In over 30 years of broadcasting for Laurel Highlands and South Union Township, John was able to make thousands of young athletes feel like superstars, getting to hear their name called out on TV and radio. For generations of parents and athletes, phrases like “he eyes it, he tries it, he buys it” and “to the line, to the lane, to the hole...yes!” and “he steps to the line and tickles the twine” will live on forever as memories of youth sports glory days. ■



**DR. JASON YONKER** graduated from Laurel Highlands in 1994. After accepting a full presidential academic scholarship, he received his undergraduate degree in chemistry from West Virginia University, where he graduated *magna cum laude* and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa. He then went on to earn his medical doctorate from WVU. Upon graduation from medical school, he completed his ophthalmology residency at

the Kresge Eye Institute in Detroit, MI. He was chosen by his peers and faculty to serve as the Chief Resident in his final year of training.

After finishing his residency, Jason decided to take his education a step further by pursuing a cataract and glaucoma fellowship at Kresge, where he performed hundreds of complicated cataract and glaucoma surgical procedures and assisted in educating medical students and residents. Dr. Yonker then followed his love of teaching by accepting a faculty position as an assistant professor of ophthalmology at Wayne State University. He served as the medical director of ophthalmology education for the university, where he was in charge of the medical student curriculum. He also taught the latest cataract and glaucoma methods to ophthalmology residents.

Dr. Yonker has published multiple articles in his field and lectured at the state level. He gained board certification in 2008 and is a fellow of the American Academy of Ophthalmology. Dr. Yonker has been accepted into the prestigious American Glaucoma Society, which requires a major contribution to the field of glaucoma, and has received credentialing as a fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

Jason relocated to the Ocean City, MD, area to be closer to family and is a practicing partner of the Chesapeake Eye Center. He recently oversaw the construction of his own surgery center, serving as its Chief Medical Director. Dr. Yonker has also taken a position as a delegate to the Maryland State Medical Society, acts as the Wicomico County Medical Society's vice president, and serves as the Director of Ophthalmology for Atlantic General Hospital. He provides charity care to Maryland eastern shore patients, and will soon assist in charity care management of glaucoma patients in the Caribbean. Jason spends free time with his wife Preeti and their two daughters, and competes in endurance racing and marathons. ■



**KEN LAUGHERY** graduated from North Union High School in 1965. He then completed electronics training at DeVry Technical Institute, and later went on to earn BBA and MBA degrees at the University of Houston. His education enabled him to embark on a career spanning five decades. Just prior to his recent retirement, Ken was Principal Program Manager with Rockwell Collins, where he was responsible for up-

grades to Black Hawk and Chinook helicopter flight simulators at the Army's Special Operations Command. He also contributed to the development and production of the Army's first transportable flight simulator for the Black Hawk helicopter, and was responsible for software upgrades to the Black Hawk's flight computers.

Prior to that, Ken spent a total of 32 years in various positions at NASA's Johnson Space Center, plus five years at NORAD in Colorado Springs. His NASA service began as a computer technician and culminated as a manager with the Shuttle Training Aircraft Program, where astronauts received their training to land the Space Shuttle Orbiter. Highlighting Ken's career was the five-year period he spent as a NASA-certified instructor of Space Shuttle astronauts.

During the five-year interim between the completion of the Apollo Program and the beginning of the Space Shuttle Program, Ken served as Operations & Maintenance Controller at NORAD in Colorado Springs, responsible for the secure computer systems.

Ken's numerous career recognitions include the Lockheed Martin Top Flight Award and the NASA Public Service Group Achievement Award. ■

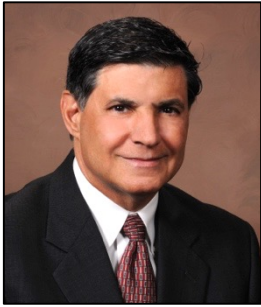
---

## **Laurel Highlands School District**

Dr. Jesse Wallace, *Superintendent*

Angelo Giachetti, *School Board Chair*

Vince Soom, *Academic Foundation President*



**NICHOLAS COOK** is a 1970 graduate of Laurel Highlands. He is the son of the late Walter E. Cook and the late Jennie M. (Constantine) Cook of Uniontown. Nick is also a 1974 graduate of the WVU College of Business and Economics, and a 1977 graduate of the WVU College of Law. From 1976 to 1979, Nick was an instructor of accounting in the WVU College of Business and Economics. He practiced law in Uniontown from 1977 to 2006.

Nick served six years on the faculty of the Sigma Chi Fraternity Annual International Leadership Training Workshop. He has served the Uniontown community as a director and/or officer on the following boards: Uniontown YMCA, Uniontown Salvation Army, United Way of South Fayette, Confer Vista Apartments, and Uniontown Rotary Club.

Mr. Cook was a volunteer lay preacher at several churches throughout Fayette County between the years of 1985 and 1999. Since 1999, he has been the pastor of Abundant Life Church of Uniontown, the largest nondenominational church in the county.

Nick is the brother of the late Walter E. Cook, Jr., and Dr. Richard A. Cook. He is married to Susan Morton Cook of Bridgeport, WV. They are the parents of Laura and Amy and they have five grandchildren. Nick and his wife Susan reside in South Union Township. ■

---

**The Laurel Highlands Life Achievement Hall of Fame is sponsored by the Laurel Highlands Academic Foundation**

Its purpose is to honor past students from the former North Union and South Union and current Laurel Highlands High Schools who have made an impact by distinguishing themselves in their careers, community, or society, and/or have brought recognition to the school district.

There is also a provision for non-graduates/non-students to be eligible for nomination if they have made significant contributions to any of these three schools.

*Nominations for the class of 2017 are currently being accepted. Please visit [www.lhsd.org](http://www.lhsd.org) for a nomination form.*



**MARK KEMPIC** serves as president of Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc., and Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc., both subsidiaries of NiSource Inc., a Fortune 500 energy holding company based in Merrillville, IN.

In his role as president, Kempic is responsible for designing and executing strategies to fulfill his company's mission of replacing its aging infrastructure so it can continue to deliver safe, reliable, and efficient natural gas supplies to more than 446,000 customers in Pennsylvania and Maryland.

Mr. Kempic began his career with Columbia Gas in 1979 as a part-time night dispatcher and held numerous positions of increasing responsibility before leaving the company for several years to practice law. He rejoined Columbia Gas in 1998 as a lawyer, and was promoted to president in 2012.

Kempic holds professional memberships in a number of organizations, including the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, the Energy Association of Pennsylvania, the United Way of Washington County, the Animal Rescue League of Pittsburgh, and the American Red Cross of Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Mark graduated from Laurel Highlands High School in 1979 and holds an associate engineering degree in solar heating and cooling from the Pennsylvania State University, and a bachelor's degree in computer and information science from the University of Pittsburgh. In 1991, he earned his JD degree from Capital University School of Law. Kempic holds a license to practice law in four states. He currently resides in Pittsburgh. ■

---

**Sponsors**

First Federal Savings and Loan  
of Greene County  
First Niagara Bank  
Jes Hutson  
The Kazarick Family  
Laurel Highlands Academic Foundation  
Mark Matuschak

Tom and Susan McClain  
Neubauer's Flowers  
Joe and Katie Price  
Bill and Kathy Simpson  
Jim and Patty Tobal  
Mike Wood Toyota