

Blake's Magnificent Seven

This year's retirees leave a tremendous legacy with 190 years combined service to the School. The Blake community extends its gratitude and best wishes for the future.

Cheryl Gehring

Up in the Blue Ridge Mountains of north Georgia, the nails are being hammered into a new home that will sit on three acres of land with a trout stream running through the yard. And the home's occupants-to-be, Cheryl Gehring and her husband, Randy, are preparing for life's next great adventure. The mountainside move will bring the proud new grandparents much closer to their two grown sons, who both reside in Atlanta.

Of course, beginning a new endeavor often means leaving another way of life behind. For the past 18 years, Gehring has shared her numerous talents and her deep care for children with Blake's Lower School community. Originally hired as a teaching assistant, Gehring has "done just about every job that a TA could possibly be asked to do," but her main responsibilities included assisting in the Afternoon Kindergarten and Extended Day after-school programs.

The mother of two Blake alums (Charlie '92 and Michael '97), Gehring stepped into her current role as Afternoon Programs & Extended Day administrator after her younger son went off to college. As observers of the Extended Day activities can attest, Gehring runs a dynamic, engaging program in which children truly delight. Gehring has dabbled in calligraphy, drawing, jewelry making and many other crafts, all of which she has introduced to Blake's Extended Day students. "I have no passion for one particular thing," Gehring says, "but I love to constantly try my hand at new challenges and adventures."

In retirement, Gehring is sure to find a world of those new challenges and adventures she so craves. But in saying goodbye to the community she has touched and enhanced in so many ways, Gehring notes, "I probably won't know all that I am going to miss until I am gone. But I know what I will miss the most is the children."

Susan Horovitz

In the 21 years Blake Lower School Administrative Coordinator Susan Horovitz has worked at Blake, she has planted many seeds that will be a part of the legacy she will leave when she retires.

Horovitz first joined the Blake community in 1982 when she and her husband, Michael, enrolled their children (Jennifer Lang '91 and Matt '94) at Blake. Feeling

a strong connection to the community, Horovitz began working at Blake in 1985 when she was hired to create, develop and grow the Extended Day program and as a part-time Lower School administrator. In 1988 she became the full-time Lower School administrative assistant, and the last four years she has worked part time as the Lower School administrative coordinator. Earlier in her educational career Horovitz taught junior high social studies classes and helped develop the Alternate Learning Program at Minnetonka Public Schools.

Throughout her years at Blake, Horovitz has worked on many all-school committees. "It was extremely rewarding to work on programs and activities

where everyone was working toward a common goal that helped carry out the School's values and mission," Horovitz says. One of the ways Horovitz did this was by planting seeds of growth in the area of diversity initiatives at Blake. She was trained as one of the School's first SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) class facilitators and served as administrative liaison for the Parent Diversity Committee.

Horovitz has many plans for retirement including volunteering, spending time with her husband, children and two grandchildren (one who is a first grader at Blake, Max Lang '17), and traveling. Horovitz will continue to participate in a book club, spend more time at her second home in Naples, Fla., golf, flower garden and help her daughter Michelle '98 plan her winter 2007 wedding.



Six of Blake's seven 2006 retirees. Pictured, front row, L to R, Rollie Johnson, Cindy Nahrgang and Susan Horovitz. Back row, L to R, Cheryl Gehring, Charlie Seel and Mary Walters. Not pictured: Greg Smith.

Pictured, L to R: Greg Smith, Charlie Seel, Rollie Johnson, Mary Walters and Susan Horovitz were the honored guests at an appreciation reception held at the Walker Art Center on June 9. They were recognized for retiring after more than 20 years of service at Blake.



Rollie Johnson

It is without question that Athletic Director Rollie Johnson will always be a Blake bear at heart. In his 34 years at the School, Johnson has in some way touched the lives of nearly everyone in the Blake community.

Johnson first came to Blake in 1972 to teach sixth grade science and to coach football, basketball and track and field. From that point on his track record just gets more impressive. Over the years he has coached numerous Lower, Middle and Upper School athletic teams — track and field (24 years), basketball (20 years), Middle School football (25 years), swimming, softball and cross-country. He was named Blake Coach of the Year, Region 4A Coach of the Year and Region 4A Athletic Administrator of the Year (2005).

Johnson has spent the last nine years serving as Blake's athletic director. During this time, the athletic program has become one of the strongest Class A programs in the state. He has worked tirelessly to bring private and parochial schools together for a stronger voice within the State High School League, and his efforts have helped establish a strong statewide reputation for Blake in the area of sportsmanship.

Johnson is quick to note that beyond his accomplishments, it is the personal relationships that he has built at Blake that have brought him the greatest satisfaction. "I've had the opportunity to hire and supervise a great department and coach some great kids every year in different sports," Johnson says. "Blake has been a great community and will always be a very special place to me."

Johnson's two children and his son-in-law are Blake graduates. His daughter, Cassidy Johnson Steiner, and his son-in-law, Andrew Steiner, graduated in 1996, and his son, Andy Johnson, graduated in 2005.

Johnson will continue to stay involved in education and athletics. This summer he and his wife, Bette, will relocate to California where Johnson will assume the athletic director position at Chadwick School.

Johnson enjoys refinishing antique furniture and over time has collected nearly 300 bears. Johnson says, "I will always be a Blake bear in my heart."

Cindy Nahrgang

For the past 16 years, Blake's students, curriculum and work environment have added up to the perfect equation for Middle School math teacher Cindy Nahrgang. "It was fun going back to school every September," Nahrgang says. "It always seemed so right." Nahrgang, who says she became "addicted" to teaching algebra to middle-school age students, has also appreciated Blake's challenging curriculum and work environment and credits those variables for keeping her coming back year after year.

In addition to teaching math, Nahrgang served as a technology specialist during her entire 16-year tenure at Blake. "I enjoyed meeting the technological needs of the School and the faculty." She also took on leadership roles such as the department head of both the Middle School mathematics and Information Services departments and contributed to the Mathematics Program Team for most of her Blake career and on various other committees through the years.

Nahrgang says that in retirement she will miss Blake's students most of all. Although this September she will not be returning to the "excitement and familiarity of the School and the kids," she will not have any trouble filling her time with her many personal interests.

"I enjoy travel, bridge, walking, biking, yoga and family time," Nahrgang says. She and her husband, Jim, also have plans to visit their daughter and her future husband in Norway at least a couple of times a year. "With a little luck, we may have the opportunity to enjoy grandchildren in the near future," she adds. Nahrgang's son lives in Edina, and she is happy to have him nearby.

Charlie Seel

It is a rare and lucky person who has spent an entire career in the same place and never once doubted that it was the perfect fit. Charlie Seel, who has spent his entire 38-year career at Blake, is one such person. Since the day he interviewed with then Head of School Jim Henderson, Seel says he has always known that Blake was right for him. "I knew when I walked off that campus that Blake was where I wanted to teach," Seel says.

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Since 1968, Seel has done far more at Blake than just teach. His numerous positions have included math teacher, counselor, college advisor, PK-12 student services director, International Programs director, and his current role as Upper School assistant director. Seel's contributions to Blake athletics are equally substantial. He has been the varsity boys' soccer coach since he started at Blake. He will continue to fill the role even after retirement, working side-by-side with his son and assistant coach for the past nine years, Jeffrey '92. Seel has also coached junior varsity hockey, track, and junior varsity girls' softball. As his children (Jeffrey and Jennifer Carlson '94) got older, Seel scaled back on his coaching duties so he could attend their games. No wonder Seel's abounding energy earned him the nickname "Sparky" (after the Como Zoo's Sparky the sea lion), a term of endearment bestowed early in his career that endures today.

Seel has proudly held many titles during his tenure with Blake, but upon his retirement, Seel relishes the idea of concentrating on his favorite titles — husband, father and grandfather. His future holds travel with his wife, Jil, who will also retire from teaching this year, fly fishing at his cabin north of Brainerd, and lots of time with his two grown children, their spouses and his six young grandchildren. "My wife and family are the most important things in my life," Seel says. "Happily so, that is where a lot of my time and energy go."

Greg Smith

Middle School industrial arts teacher Greg Smith is truly a teacher's teacher. His collegial spirit has made him a favorite among his fellow faculty members since he began at Blake 28 years ago. "I went into education because I like teachers," Smith says. "There's this understanding [among teachers] that is just fun."

Smith's career began in the Minneapolis public schools, but the instability in public education led him to seek more reliable employment options after about four years in the system. After that experience he interviewed with a number of companies, but found he missed the humor and general atmosphere that he found in school. That's when a position at Blake opened up. "And I haven't looked back," Smith says.

At Blake, Smith inherited a shop program that had previously focused on manual training and transformed it into a substantive and impacting art class. "Greg's students not only wield power tools, but use them to create beauty," Middle School Director Joe Seivold says.

About five years ago, Smith and his colleagues in Middle School arts began a class for eighth graders called Integrated Arts 8. As part of the course students work together on a project that combines the study of painting, music, drama and prop construction. Students must apply to be in the class by submitting a portfolio and interview-

ing with their teachers. There are 16 spots available next year, and so far 35 students have applied. Smith is hopeful that the program will continue to thrive for years to come.

As for Smith's years to come, he has intentionally made very few concrete plans. His wife, Cel, who is an English teacher in Hopkins, will likely continue to work for a few more years. His passion for working on and building boats will likely factor into his future plans as will designing and building furniture. Smith says that the fact of this major life change will probably not hit him fully until September rolls around. "I think I'll ask Joe Seivold to send me the school calendar," Smith says with an impish grin.

Mary Walters

Mary Walters, who's retiring after 35 years of teaching, will leave an indelible mark on the School and the lives of the students she has taught and coached.

Walters began her career in 1971 as a physical education teacher at Northrop Collegiate. That same year she started the girls' sports program at the school and coached multiple sports. After the passage of Title 9, Walters was instrumental in forming a private school athletic conference, which was later replaced by the Tri-Metro conference.

Looking for a new challenge and a way to fully utilize her formal education (she has a master's degree in education, and undergraduate majors in physical education, English and health), Walters transitioned to teaching Middle School English in 1985. She primarily taught sixth graders, whose innocence, curiosity, energy and creativity she thoroughly enjoys. Walters eventually got involved with the Middle School yearbook and newspaper and co-founded Blake News Network (BNN) with her daughter Amy, a fellow Blake Middle School teacher.

Having Amy as a colleague has been one of the highlights of Walters' career. She says that it has been the best thing for their relationship because they've developed a stronger bond and mutual respect for each other's careers. Walters feels a sense of satisfaction upon her departure, almost as if she's turning over the reins to her daughter. She is hopeful that there will be a Walters' legacy at Blake for many years to come.

Walters is looking forward to the next chapter in her life. She's taking a trip to Europe next year and plans to read, garden, play bridge and take lots of walks. Additionally, she's thrilled to have even more time to spend with her 15-month-old granddaughter, Ellie, who is the child of her oldest daughter, Stephanie.

Walters has had a productive and fruitful career at Blake. Her parting wish for students is that they have a balanced life in which they fully participate — something Walters herself seems to have followed successfully.

Faculty Fête Draws Multi-Generational Colleagues and Community Members

On June 1, Blake community members gathered in the Howard Courtyard to honor those faculty and administrators who are leaving Blake after 10 or more years of service.



Retiree Middle School industrial arts teacher Greg Smith chats with Sally Overstreet Herfurth '68, former parent and trustee.



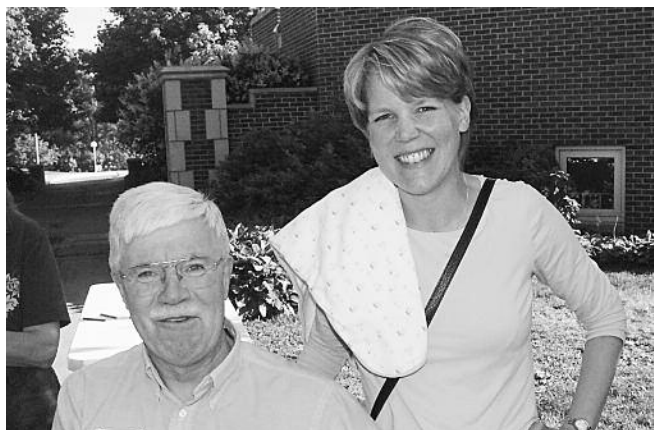
Upon her retirement, Middle School English teacher Mary Walters looks forward to spending more time with her granddaughter, Ellie.



Retiring Athletic Director Rollie Johnson gives the camera a peace sign — or is it a “V” for victory?



L to R: Upper School Director Marc Bogursky, former faculty member Arturo Steely and Upper School social studies teacher Jan Woolman reconnect at the event.



Upper School English teacher Lisa Sackreiter comes back to school during her maternity leave to celebrate the retirees and reconnect with her mentor, former Blake teacher and parent Darrel McAnnany.



Middle School math teacher Linda Witzel catches up with Jane McAnnany, former Blake faculty member and parent.

Faculty Applause

Congratulations to Lower School Highcroft campus strings teacher **Janey Christoffersen** who played violin in a small chamber ensemble in the University of Minnesota's New Music Ensemble at the Weisman Art Museum in December.

Woody Woodward, Lower School Highcroft campus music teacher, performed in "Man of La Mancha," the story of Don Quixote. This was a production of the Nautilus Music Theater with performances at the Southern Theater in Minneapolis.

Middle School science teacher **Christine Petersen** has been appointed to the Minnesota Environmental Education Advisory Board (EEAB). She will represent the Third Congressional District for a two-year term.

Congratulations to **John Hamre**, head varsity boys' hockey coach, for being selected as the 2005–06 Section 5A Boys Hockey Coach of the Year. Hamre is in his fourth year at Blake and is quick to point out that this is a group honor and a tribute to the team and his staff.

Joe Seivold, Middle School director and associate head boys' lacrosse coach, was recently inducted into the Greater Baltimore Chapter of the United States Lacrosse Hall of Fame.

Rick Johns, assistant athletic director and Highcroft campus computer specialist, was recently appointed webmaster of the Minnesota Interscholastic Athletic Administrator Association (MnIAAA), a professional organization for Minnesota athletic administrators that promotes high standards of achievement and ethics in interscholastic and extracurricular activities.



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Middle School art teacher **Kathy Grundei** will expand her role as a facilitator and trainer with the Perpich Center for Arts Education. The new position will include working with selected school districts and Quality Teaching Network panels of K–12 arts teachers across the state to help with professional development as standard-based art curriculum is developed and implemented.

This past spring break Middle School English and social studies teacher **Bob Zelle** was invited to a weekend retreat in Holland to work with 35 students from the Amsterdam Institute of Economics. He presented techniques in creative thinking and, through storytelling and creative drama, had the students explore their imaginations to unlock some of their childhood memories.

Blake Scores New Athletic Director

The Blake community is delighted to welcome new Athletic Director Jim Lindsay, who will also serve as the School's PK–12 physical education department chair. Lindsay comes to Blake from Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts. Over his 30-year tenure at Deerfield, Lindsay has worn the hats of director of athletics, coach, associate dean of admissions, and faculty member.

A native of Pointe Claire, Canada, Lindsay and his wife, Cheryl, are looking forward to their move to the Twin Cities, where their daughter, Laura Mark, lives with her husband, Ethan Mark '95, and works at Blake. The



Jim Lindsay and his family. Pictured, L to R: Ethan '95 and Laura Mark and Cheryl, Jim and Matthew Lindsay.

Lindsay also have a son, Matthew, who is a college hockey coach currently residing in Colorado.

Lindsay comes at an exciting time for Blake, with several of its teams winning state and conference championships (see Sports Update on page 23) and the Middle School athletic program entering its second year. In addition, the role of department chairs, and their work across the grades and campuses, is becoming more visible and valuable. When asked what he most looks forward to at Blake, Lindsay says without hesitation, "Blake's great tradition of athletics and working in a place where the fabric of community creates an unprecedented level of support for all students." Environment is key to Lindsay, and Blake's care and concern for each individual athlete, scholar, artist, or all of the above resonates with his own values.

Lindsay looks forward to helping Blake students be good teammates and to challenging our student athletes while ensuring they are having fun. He wants each student to be able to walk away from a competition knowing he or she has grown as an individual. He says, "I want to help give kids the confidence — and the tools — to be as good as they can and want to be."

Grants & Sabbaticals 2006

Highcroft kindergarten teacher **Kathryn Kaatz** has been awarded a Hersey Summer Sabbatical. She plans to offer a short course for classroom teachers on the needs of adoptees and will use the sabbatical for research and planning purposes.

Plank Faculty Challenge Grant 2006 Recipients

Established in 1998 through a gift from former Blake trustee Raymond Plank '40, the Plank Faculty Challenge Grants are intended to inspire and support teachers in their efforts to become better educators and people. This year's recipients are:

Deb Hoops (Lower School Highcroft campus kindergarten) seeks an authentic immersion in the French culture and will travel to Paris, France to shadow a 5-year-old. She plans to document and photograph landmarks and landscapes specific to a child's point of view.



Elaine Hove (Lower School Blake campus librarian) hopes to bring depth and authenticity to the classroom by sharing real people, photos and stories from a visit to Peru.

Bruce Jones (Middle School science) plans to work with the Earthwatch expedition "Mexican Megafuana" near San Miquel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico by participating in a paleontological expedition.

Paula Sadler (Middle School math) plans to travel to Poland and work with

Global Volunteers teaching English in a summer camp. While there, she also plans to visit Auschwitz/Birkenau, the Jewish ghettos in Warsaw and Krakow. She would like to expand the social studies Holocaust curriculum to include a unit in mathematics in an attempt to put the context and scale of the atrocities of the Holocaust into perspective for the students.

Look for updates on these exciting summertime teacher projects in the next issue of the "Bulletin."