

**News Release**  
**For Immediate Release**  
September 2013

## **Grand Forks Central Announces Charter Members of Distinguished Alumni**

GRAND FORKS, N.D. – Grand Forks Central High School has selected five alumni to become charter members of the GFC Distinguished Alumni.

**Dr. Tom Amberry, Judge Ronald Davies, Hal Gershman, Jeffrey Holmes, and Dr. Kathry Uhrich** will be formally inducted during a school assembly during homecoming week. The inductees will also be honored during halftime of the Grand Forks Central football game at 7pm that same day.

The Distinguished Alumni designation honors graduates of Grand Forks Central who have made a significant impact on their communities and professions and serve as models of success to current Grand Forks Central students.

The 2013 Distinguished Alumni are the charter member to be inducted among the 127 years of Central graduating classes.

Portraits and biographies of the inductees will hang in the hallways of Grand Forks Central.

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### ***2013 Grand Forks Central Distinguished Alumni Charter Members***

#### **Judge Ronald Davies**

Ronald Davies, a 1922 graduate of Grand Forks Central High School, went on to receive a Bachelors Degree from the University of North Dakota in 1927. Davies attended law school at Georgetown University in Washington D.C., graduating with a Juris Doctorate in the spring of 1930. He returned to Grand Forks to begin his legal career and in 1932 was elected to serve as a Municipal Judge for the city. Davies law career was interrupted in 1942 when he enlisted in the United States Army, serving as a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant during World War II. In 1946 Ronald Davies returned home to Grand Forks where he worked as a UND Law Professor and served as a part-time Executive Director of the North Dakota Bar Association.

In 1955, Davies was appointed U.S. District Judge for the District of North Dakota by President Dwight D. Eisenhower and in 1957 he was temporarily re-assigned to assist the Arkansas District Court in alleviating the backlog of cases caused by the retirement of one of the federal district judges from that area. That same year, Davies ordered a preliminary injunction (court order) against the Governor of Arkansas, Orval Faubus,

barring him from using the Arkansas National Guard to block nine black students from attending Little Rock's Central High School. Five days later, the Little Rock Nine were escorted by the 101<sup>st</sup> airborne division of the U.S. Army into Little Rock's Central High School to attend classes. The New York Times called Judge Davies ruling the "landmark decision on racial integration in our nation."

Judge Davies has been the recipient of many lifetime achievement awards including the Outstanding Georgetown Law School Alumnus Award in 1958, the University of North Dakota Alumni Association's Sioux Award in 1979, and the State of North Dakota Roughrider Award in 1987.

### **Dr. Tom Amberry**

Tom Amberry a 1940 graduate of Grand Forks Central High School served in the United States Navy during World War II, participating in the D-Day invasion at Normandy and in the Pacific theater fighting the Japanese Army. At the end of the war, Amberry returned to California, attending Long Beach City College and the California School of Podiatric Medicine in San Francisco, graduating with a Doctorate in Podiatric Medicine in 1951. Dr. Amberry received the 1<sup>st</sup> Podiatry Clinic License in the State of California and served on the Board of Trustees of California College of Podiatric Medicine from 1960 – 1980. Dr. Amberry was a national lecturer and author of several journals on podiatric surgery, and in 1960 received a gold medal from the New York Hall of Science for his role in "Time in Motion in Foot Surgery" a short film that revolutionized podiatric surgery.

Nearing the end of his career as a podiatric surgeon, Dr. Amberry, a high school basketball player, began shooting free throws as a hobby during his spare time. At the age of 71, Dr. Amberry set the Guinness Book of World Records for most consecutive free throws made by sinking 2,750 in a row over a 12 hour time period. Dr. Amberry went on to win the World Championship of Free Throw Shooting in 1994 and has made several television appearances including David Letterman, Jay Leno, and Ripley's Believe it or Not. Dr. Amberry has provided free throw consulting services for over 200 college basketball programs and served as a special assistant coach for the Chicago Bulls from 2002-2004. In 1996, he co-authored the book *Free Throw: 7 Steps to Success at the Free Throw Line*. Dr. Amberry has taught free throw shooting mechanics in all 50 states, 104 countries, and 5 continents.

### **Mr. Hal Gershman**

Hal Gershman graduated from Grand Forks Central High School in 1961 and earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of North Dakota in 1966. Mr. Gershman joined the Peace Corps upon completion of his college studies and worked for the Ministry of Public Health in Bolivia for two years. In 1968, Gershman founded Happy's Pizza Chain in Mexico City and in 1972 he opened the first pizza

delivery business in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In 1976, Mr. Gershman returned home to Grand Forks where he became President of Happy Harry's Bottle Shop and Gershman Enterprises.

Mr. Gershman has not only experienced tremendous business success in our region, but has also participated in a wide array of civic and philanthropic activities including roles on the Alerus Event Center Commission, Grand Forks Regional Airport Authority, Empire Arts Theater Board of Directors, Northern Great Plains Rural Development Commission, Advisory Council of the 9<sup>th</sup> Federal Reserve District Bank of Minneapolis, and the Grand Forks City Council.

Mr. Gershman has been the recipient of many honors and awards including the Governor's Choice for Economic Development Ambassador of the Year Award and the University of North Dakota Alumni Association's Prestigious Sioux Award.

### **Mr. Jeffrey Holmes**

Jeffrey Holmes, a 1983 graduate of Grand Forks Central High School, went on to receive a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from Cornell University. Upon completion of his undergraduate degree from Cornell, Mr. Holmes completed a Masters Degree in Architectural History, Theory, and Criticism from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), graduating with honors from the most prestigious technical school in the world.

Mr. Holmes has been in the architectural field for more than twenty years serving as a professor, partner, and currently as the Lead Architect for Woods Bagot Architectural Firm's New York Studio. He serves as the Design Leader for Woods Bagot's Global Studio, and has designed projects in Asia, the Middle East, Australia, and the United States.

Jeffrey's work has won numerous awards including an Award of Merit from the New York Chapter of American Institute of Architects, the New York City Masterwork Award for Best New Building, and the American Institute of Architects Board of Directors Citation for his work on the Freedom Tower at World Trade Centre, New York.

### **Dr. Kathryn Uhrich**

Kathryn Uhrich a 1983 graduate of Grand Forks Central High School received her Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from the University of North Dakota in 1986. Kathryn went on to receive a PH.D. in Organic Chemistry from Cornell University and served as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Bell Laboratories, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Dr. Uhrich currently serves as a professor of Chemistry and Chemical Biology at Rutgers University in New Jersey where she is also the acting Dean of the Mathematical and Physical Science Departments, overseeing more than 300 staff at the school. Dr. Uhrich founded the Uhrich Group Laboratory, which is dedicated to the synthesis and characterization of biocompatible and biodegradable polymers for dental, medical, and cosmetic applications. Dr. Uhrich currently holds more than 30 United States and international patents, and has been named one of New Jersey's biggest brains by the Star Ledger Newspaper.

Dr. Uhrich has received several awards for her work including the Thomas Alva Edison Patent Award from the New Jersey R&D Council, the Buck-Whitney Award from the American Chemical Society, and the University of North Dakota Alumni Association's Prestigious Sioux Award.