

Waconia High School Hall of Fame – Class of 2018

Class of 2018: Cristy Jensen, Philip Litfin, George Oftelie, and Will Yetzer

Cristy Jensen – WHS Graduating Class of 2000

Cristy Jensen is the daughter of Scott and Mary Jensen, and sister to Matt (class of 2003) and Jackie (class of 2005).

During her time at WHS Cristy was active in a wide variety of extracurricular activities in addition to her focus on academics. She excelled in cross country running and track & field where she qualified for state a total of nine times in the two sports. She also played for the varsity basketball team three years earning the role of captain her senior year. Cristy played alto saxophone in the jazz band, marching band, show choir band, pit orchestra, and pep band during her time at WHS. As a member of the Future Leaders of America parliamentary procedure team she represented Waconia at Nationals while also earning state honors in individual presentations several years. She graduated as the Valedictorian of her class and was recognized as a National Merit Scholar.

After high school Cristy attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she swapped her running spikes for cleats and took up ultimate Frisbee while studying Medical Microbiology and Immunology. She was a 3-year starter for Wisconsin's Women's team, "Bella Donna," and was elected to be Captain her senior year. She graduated with the highest honors and moved back to Minnesota to pursue a medical degree. She attended medical school at the University of Minnesota and completed her residency in Anesthesiology. She now practices at Hennepin County Medical Center and Minnesota Gastroenterology.

Cristy and her wife, Jen, were married in 2015 and now live in Eden Prairie with their twins, Edison and Eleanor.

Philip Litfin – WHS Graduating Class of 2003

Philip Litfin is the son of Tim and Yvonne Litfin of Waconia, and brother to Leslie Myer (Litfin), WHS class of 2000, and Nicholas Litfin, WHS class of 2008. Upon entering WHS, Philip immediately became involved in all the arts and athletics WHS had to offer. He was active in cross-country, basketball, track, theatre, choir, show choir, band, jazz band, marching band, student council, Future Leaders of America, and National Honors Society. He adored the instruction and mentorship of Don Shultz and Aaron Olson in band and choir and loved travelling with Marching Band in the summer, and show choir and jazz band in the winter. In musical theatre he played leading roles throughout high school, his favorite being Tevye in Fiddler on the Roof. Philip also loved competing. Basketball was always his favorite sport and he was lucky to be a ball boy for Doug Sayles for years before playing for him in high school.

He achieved the most success however under the amazing coaching of Clark Machtemes and Connie Manuel in cross-country and track. He was all-conference his junior and senior years in both sports as well as the 2-mile and 1-mile conference track champion junior year and senior year respectfully. Philip's proudest high school achievement was winning the MSHSL AAA (Arts, Athletics, and Academics) award in 2003, which is awarded to a senior boy and girl statewide annually. He is currently the only WHS graduate to ever receive such an honor, but hopes that someone will follow suit and win again soon.

Philip can't emphasize enough his appreciation for the teachers, coaches, and administrators that helped him along his way, and even though only a few are named here, many more deserve to be. Philip graduated WHS as Salutatorian and shortly after attended the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland with the goal of getting an engineering degree and dream of becoming a Navy Pilot. During his time in Annapolis he was on the 2007 National Championship Triathlon Team as well as an active member and President of the US Naval Academy Men's Glee Club. Philip graduated in 2007 and is a proud USNA Alum!

Upon graduation from the Naval Academy he went to Naval Flight Training in Pensacola, FL and Corpus Christi, TX. Upon receiving his "Wings of Gold" Philip

reported to Jacksonville, FL and piloted the P-3 Orion, an anti-submarine aircraft whose role is to search for, track, and if necessary attack enemy submarines in pursuit of national interests. He deployed numerous times from 2009-2013 where he flew combat missions out of Qatar and Bahrain in support of US operations in Iraq, the Arabian Gulf, and the Gulf of Aden. He also deployed to Okinawa, Japan in support of US interests in the South China Sea.

Philip's last tour on active duty was as an Instructor Pilot on the P-8 Poseidon in Jacksonville. There he trained newly winged Naval Aviators how to fly the large aircraft. During his time as an instructor Philip led formation flyovers over college and NFL football games, and he led an aircrew of eight on an "Around the World" flight, circumnavigating the globe in 12 days, and accumulating over 25,000 air miles.

Upon leaving active duty in 2016 Philip applied for and was hired by Delta Air Lines. He has flown multiple aircraft for Delta, including a 1-year stint as a Captain on the MD-88. Currently he is based at New York's JFK airport, flying the Boeing 767 and will soon transfer to the 767 in Minneapolis.

Philip met his wife Nichole on a cruise out of Tampa, Florida in 2011, and they later got married in 2015. Philip and Nicki just moved back to Waconia after living in New York City for the last 2 years, and Jacksonville, Florida for 8 years prior to that. They are expecting a little boy in November and look forward to raising him in this wonderful community. Philip has been away from Waconia for 15 years while serving our country in the Navy. To those who knew him in the military, they will immediately recall his fondness for Minnesota, and his pride for the town of Waconia and the teachers, classmates, and community members for which he was a part of and his happiness to be rejoining them once again. Philip is humbled by, and honored with today's induction. He truly is immensely proud of this school, its teachers and administrators, and the community it nurtures and develops.

George Oftelie

George Oftelie was born in Lake Park, Minnesota and graduated as valedictorian of the Lake Park High School class of 1955. It was there that he met his future wife, Aria.

George received his bachelor's degree in Science and Math Education from Moorhead State University and his master's degree from the University of North Dakota. George played football, basketball and baseball in high school, but it wasn't until college in Moorhead that he played his first round of golf.

His first teaching job was in Starbuck, Minnesota where he also coached football and basketball. In 1964 George and Aria moved their family to Waconia when he accepted a position at Waconia High School. During his 30 years at WHS George taught Chemistry, Physics, Earth Science and even some Math.

It was during his early years in Waconia that George fell in love with the game of golf. He coached 9th grade and B-squad basketball until 1979, but it was as golf coach from 1970 until 1983 that he found the most success. His teams won four straight state championships from 1977 to 1980, a record that still stands. He had five players from those state championship teams go on to play college golf. Four times he was named Minnesota high school golf coach of the year and in 2003 he was named to the Minnesota Golf Coaches Hall of Fame.

George and Aria have three children who all graduated from WHS, Steve ('78), Stu ('80) and Stacy ('83). All three children graduated from the University of Minnesota and all still live in the area. George was a fixture at Island View Golf Club in Waconia for over 50 years and he continued to play golf regularly with his wife, kids, grandchildren and even some of his ex-players until "retiring" from golf for the 2017 season.

George took great pride in his time at WHS and he, Aria and the entire Oftelie family are extremely grateful that he is receiving this honor.

Will Yetzer – WHS Graduating Class of 1936

Wilfred Yetzer, was a lifelong resident of Waconia. Will's life revolved around his family, friends and the betterment of Waconia.

Will spent his high school years preparing for his future in the funeral and furniture businesses. He delivered furniture after school and, when it was needed, worked as an apprentice in the funeral business. He continued this work after he graduated high school and while attending courses at the University of Minnesota to become a licensed funeral director in 1940. At this time, Will also learned how to install linoleum. Will started the linoleum business in 1941 and the business continued to grow from there.

Will entered World War II in 1943. He was the last of the Yetzer boys to be drafted. He became a medic in the surgery department of the 109th Evacuation Hospital. Will dealt with some of the first casualties of the D-Day invasion. He was back home by November of 1945, to his mother, Katheryn, who kept the furniture business alive while he and his brothers were gone.

The furniture and funeral home businesses continued to grow along with Waconia. It was at this time that Will began to step up and began his work for the betterment of Waconia. Will was forward thinking and had the future of Waconia. It began with land development for homes when there was a housing shortage soon after the war, then helping found the current hospital and included helping start Island View Golf Club. Will also helped the quest to bring industry to Waconia with the development of Waconia's first industrial park. Will was a charter member of the Lions club, on the Waconia Chamber, a member of the Knights of Columbus, VFW, and American Legion. Will was named Waconia Business Man of the Year in 1988.

Will married Euna Thom in 1978. They loved to travel, but never stayed away from Waconia for too long. Together they supported many projects around Waconia, including helping complete the library in downtown Waconia, donating the chapel at Ridgeview Hospital, and many projects at St. Joseph's Church in Waconia.

During his later years, Will enjoyed sharing his memories of World War II with anyone who asked and with the children of the Waconia School district. He also used his knowledge of Waconia to help the Waconia Heritage Association with its latest book. Will was always out and about in Waconia going to community events or lending a hand or an ear to anyone who was in need.

Will grew up very poor and the people of this community helped him and his family. It was his humble beginnings and the help from others that taught him many great lessons; lessons he in turn relied on later in life as he worked to better Waconia, help others and pay it forward.

Will passed away July 29, 2016 at the age of 99.