



The Carillon

The Official Newsletter of the
Caledonia Education Foundation

Fall 2013

Judy Harrison Named 2013 CEF Honored Alumnus



The Caledonia Education Foundation is pleased to honor Judy Harrison, CHS Class of 1962, as its 2013 Honored Alumnus for her many years of volunteering, working, and serving in the Caledonia Community. Judy will be honored on Oct. 4, 2013, at the Annual Foundation Fest Tailgate Party held before the Homecoming Game.

Judy grew up living next to her grandparents on 100th Street. She has never lived more than a mile from 100th street. She attended the historical one-room DeTray school that still stands at the corner of 100th Street and East Paris. Three generations of her family attended there. After 8th grade, she attended Caledonia High School for 4 years and was in the last class to graduate from the old high school building that

used to stand where the stadium parking is now.

Judy has given back to the Caledonia Community through the businesses she grew and her public and community service. When finances kept her from attending college, she enrolled in cosmetology school. She built her home based salon, Country Cut 'N Curl, into a profitable business that also allowed her to raise her 3 children. Once they were in school, Judy studied nights to prepare to become an insurance agent. After a few years of working at a local agency, she felt the call to open the first female owned agency in our community, J.B. Harrison Insurance Agency. Judy remembers both the fear and excitement of being in business for herself, "On that first day, all I had was an empty file cabinet and a phone." A true daughter of Caledonia, she soon became known for her emphasis on insuring family farms. Judy sold the business and it still continues to thrive in Alto today.

Judy's greatest joy in life was raising her 3 children, Brad, Jill, and Bryan, who are all Caledonia graduates and have been active in the Caledonia community. Her grandkids are 5th generation CHS graduates. Along with her late husband, Bill, who was a Caledonia teacher, coach,

and school board member, the Harrisons exemplify a true commitment to the community, its warm family culture and a great love for Caledonia Schools.

In this mobile society, not many people settle in one town for a lifetime. Judy has seen the growth and changes that have occurred over the years in the Caledonia Community. Her daughter, Jill, writes, "Rather than watch them (the growth and changes) happen, she has been involved in numerous ways to shape them in a positive way—often in a leadership role. That involves some risk and also takes some courage."

That commitment to the community led Judy to 12 years of service on the Kent County Board of Commissioners. During this time, she was appointed to serve on the Board of Aeronautics during a time of growth for the Gerald R. Ford Airport, serving 2 years as chairperson (the only female to ever chair the Board).

Judy is a charter member of Peace Reformed Church. As a woman of strong Christian faith, she has always believed you lead by example. She influenced women and children by being an active member in the Women's Guild, taught Sunday school classes and Bible study, and served as a teen youth group leader.

Over the years, Judy served as a tennis instructor for

Caledonia's first Youth Tennis Program. She was also a dedicated sports mom, attending her children's sporting events, hosting team dinners, and doing hundreds of purple and gold loads of laundry!

Retirement has not slowed Judy down. She fills her time by continuing to serve with various organizations. She served as President for the Caledonia Women's Club that seeks to improve the community through volunteer service and provides college scholarships for young women. Her time is also spent as a member of the Caledonia FFA (Future Farmers of America) Advisory Council, continuing her family's proud legacy and dedication to agriculture. Judy served on the committee which worked to bring a much needed new library to Caledonia. As an MSU Advanced Master Gardener, she also lends her talents as a member of the Caledonia Garden Club.

Judy travels often to her mountain home in North Carolina but always looks forward to coming back to Caledonia. She states, "I have chosen to live in the Caledonia Community because it is just HOME to me. This community has so much to offer and it just keeps getting better. We have good people, raising their families, going to work and church and supporting their kids just like we did. It's the circle of life and I love it here." ♥