

# Meet the 2017 CEF Honored Alumnus, Mr. Bob Bergy

In this mobile age, it is rare to find families where generations grow up and live in the same community. The family of Bob Bergy, our 2017 Honored Alumnus, has roots in Caledonia dating back **100 years**. The farm he lives on turned 100 years old this past July as his Great Grandmother, Alma Bergy purchased it in 1917. The land was farmed by his grandpa, Eugene and his sons for many years. There are now 7 families living on the property including Bob and his wife, Cheryl, two of their daughters, his parents, his sister, and two of his nephews and their families. Bob comments, "The best thing about everyone being in the area is that the grandchildren are close by. We are available to help when they need it and no one has to travel far to get to the family gatherings. My girls enjoy being close to Cheryl and me."

Bob was born in Tacoma, WA while his dad was in the service but his parents moved back to Caledonia when he was only 4 months old. He lived in town and walked to Caledonia Elementary each day, went to junior high in the old A building that has been removed, and attended Caledonia High School in what is now Duncan Lake Middle School. He graduated in 1965 and his class was one of the largest at that time with over 100 students.

During high school, Bob was involved in Future Farmers of America (FFA) for 4 years. His teacher was Mr. Bill Harrison, another CEF Honored Alumnus. Part of the FFA class was studying about being on a team. Bob recalls, "In my senior year I was a member of the demonstration team. Doug Fitch and I demonstrated how to milk a cow. We took 1<sup>st</sup> place at district competition, 1<sup>st</sup> place at regional's, and 2<sup>nd</sup> place at the state competition." Bob also played the saxophone for 4 years at CHS.

Throughout the summers in high school, Bob worked on a farm. In 1966 he felt the call to serve his country and joined the Army National Guard and continued until 1972. During this time, Bob started working as a mechanic for Caledonia Tractor. He spent 24 years there working in parts, rental, and sales as well as a service manager. When they went out of business in 1993, he was hired as the Branch Manager for Carleton Equipment where he still continues to work. He is not ready to retire yet as he enjoys what he does everyday!

Bob grew up in a family supported by small business. His grandfather farmed the land he lives on today and his father was the owner of the Marathon Gas Station that is now the Speedway Gas Station. Bob has worked for a Caledonia small business all of his life. When asked about his experience he commented, "When you work for a small business you have more input into how the business is run. Small businesses are often family owned and that can mean a friendlier atmosphere in the workplace. It also allows the employees more input in the day to day operations. The two companies I have worked for, Caledonia Tractor and Carleton Equipment, have both



**Bob surrounded by his family as he celebrated retirement from the Caledonia School Board in 2007.**

## Bobs Advice to Caledonia Students:

*You are attending one of the best high schools in the area. When you graduate you will be prepared for the future. Take charge by working hard! Always do your job the best way you know how. Always look for the positive things in life.*

*offered that to me."*

Family is high on Bob's list of priorities and having so many family members nearby means a great deal to him. He met his wife, Cheryl when she worked at the MidVilla Inn in Middleville. Bob stopped there for a burger and Cheryl waited on him. They were married in 1972 and were blessed with 4 daughters. Lori, Carolyn, Sarah, and Shari are all Caledonia Alumni. They also hosted an exchange student from Germany,

Maren, for the 1989-1990 school year. She spent her senior year with them and graduated from CHS in 1990. They consider her family and have kept in touch with her. They are blessed with 7 grandchildren ranging in age from 8 months old up to a 17 year old granddaughter who is a senior this fall at CHS.

It is evident that Bob believes in giving back to his community through service and building a better tomorrow for his grandchildren. He has been a member of the American Legion Post 305 for many years. He lived in the village for 12 years and was a member of the Village Zoning Appeals board for 3 years.

Some of the accomplishments that Bob is most proud of include serving with 3 local organizations. Bob was a charter board member of the Sportsman's Club since it was founded in 1973 and was involved in the start up process. Bob recalls, "It was a lot of work but there was a lot of fun

throughout the process, as well." In 1975 the Jaycee's formed a Caledonia chapter and decided it would be a good idea to have a parade on the 4th of July in 1976 for the Bicentennial. A committee was formed and Bob served as co-chairman of that committee. This started a tradition that still takes place today. Lastly, Bob was elected to the Caledonia School Board in 1995. During his 12 years, he served in the roles of Treasurer, Vice President, and President.

For recreation, Bob enjoys having family over for cookouts and playing outdoor games with the grandkids. You might catch him on the family float in the 4th of July parade or out playing a round of golf. In the winter, you can find him at the Sportsman's Club trap shooting.

Bob is to be commended for his service and giving spirit. He has succeeded through hard work and effort. In the words of his proud daughters speaking about their Dad, "Bob continues to serve this community through his family, by attending his grandchildren's school functions, through his business by helping local businesses with their Bobcat needs, and through his dedication as a community member by supporting our schools and local government. Bob believes this community is a great one. Living here for **70 years** and serving this community in various ways shows Bob's love for Caledonia. One that was passed down to him and he is now passing down to his children and grandchildren. It is a love he hopes everyone can share for our area."

Greet Bob at Foundation Fest on Sept 22nd.