



Above & Beyond

Penn Manor School District – Spring 2019

High school construction project under way

Bids awarded in January

Major construction is slated to begin this month on the renovation and replacement of major portions of Penn Manor High School.

The board of school directors voted Jan. 22 to approve construction bids totaling \$82.7 million and the notice for contractors to proceed on the project.

New classroom, agricultural education and athletic wings will be built, along with a new auditorium and upgrades to the school's HVAC, plumbing, electrical, fire suppression, technology and security systems.

The project also will include a new district office at the high school, which will open up space for classrooms at Manor Middle School, where the office is currently located.

Construction bids came in about \$4.6 million higher than anticipated, but school district officials are confident the higher costs can be covered without an



Above is an architect's rendering of how the school will look when completed.

additional tax increase over the original, four-year funding plan.

Penn Manor will be able to cover the additional expenses by using more of its reserve funds than originally planned, said Chris Johnston, the district's business manager.

The district has set aside \$9.6 million so far for the project and has borrowed \$40 million to cover initial phases and

plans to borrow another \$40 million to complete the project. The total cost of the project, including architect's fee and other "soft costs," is \$99.9 million, and completion is expected by summer 2022.

You can follow the progress of the project at the construction website <https://construction.pennmanor.net> and on the Facebook page *Penn Manor HS Project*.

Maria Vita named finalist for PA Teacher of Year

Penn Manor High School teacher Maria Vita has been honored as a finalist for the Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year award for 2019.

Vita, who has taught at Penn Manor since 2003, was one of 12 finalists who participated in the Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year Conference in Hershey in December.

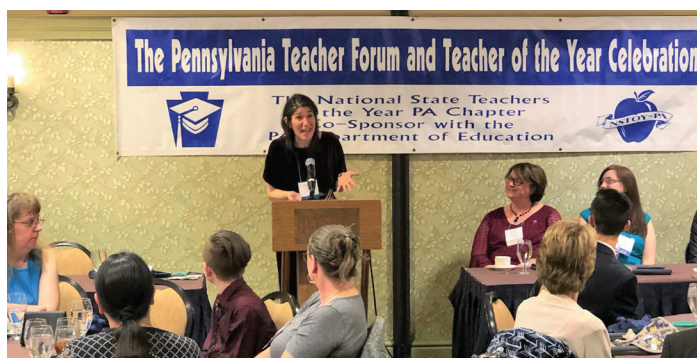
Vita teaches Advanced Placement Psychology and recently was named chair of the American Psychological Association Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools.

She helped establish an Avidum student club at Penn Manor that seeks to create an

"Maria exemplifies the mission of every teacher who wishes to make an impact on children by inspiring her students to love learning and instilling in them an appreciation for compassion and hard work."

— Mike Lechlitter
Superintendent

atmosphere in which all students feel accepted, appreciated, acknowledged and cared for. Avidum also works to increase awareness of depression and prevent teen suicides.



Maria Vita speaks at the Teacher of the Year ceremony in Hershey.

Vita was nominated for the Teacher of the Year award by Penn Manor Superintendent Mike Lechlitter and his wife, Mary Edith, whose three children had Maria for class.

"Maria exemplifies the mission of every teacher who wishes to make an impact on children by inspiring her students to love learning and instilling in them an

appreciation for compassion and hard work," Lechlitter said.

"We could not have asked for a more caring and capable teacher for our children."

Vita said she was "honored and humbled to be considered" for the award.

The 2019 Teacher of the Year is Marilyn Pryle, an English teacher from Abington Heights School District.

Message from the superintendent

As Penn Manor embarks on its long-planned high school project, it's important to reflect on the process that brought us to this crucial juncture.

The Board of School Directors and administration have been working for the past five years on very deliberate plans to renovate Penn Manor High School.

The process started in June 2014, when the school board charged the superintendent with developing comprehensive options for renovation based on the district's master facility plan, adopted in November 2010.

At that time, the district determined that, to meet the current and future educational needs of our students, the old and sprawling high school complex was nearing the end of its life cycle. In addition, its configuration limited our ability to develop alternate academic scheduling for students, which would have forced the high school to stay with the current schedule of four, 90-minute class periods per semester.

After working with architects

for a year on four different options to address these issues, Penn Manor held a series of public meetings during the 2015-2016 school year to seek comments and input from community members, students, parents, teachers and other interested parties.

While the input received was varied, the prevailing feedback supported keeping the high school at its current site. That led to the school board's decision in June 2016 to pursue an on-site renovation at a projected construction cost of \$87 million.

After two years of work to develop detailed architectural plans, the project went out to bid in late 2018, and the school board awarded contracts to the successful low bidders in January 2019, as detailed in a story in this newsletter.

This is truly a once in a lifetime project for our community. A new building will not automatically improve educational quality, but it is an important component for the school district to continue to meet the increasing demands for

greater student achievement and district accountability.

As phases of the project are completed, improved academic programming will be introduced, such as the new STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) wing in the first phase, which will be completed in August 2020.

While property taxes in Penn Manor have risen to generate revenue for the project, the district continues to offer a cost-effective educational program.

According to the most recent statewide financial data for all school districts from 2016-2017, Penn Manor's spending per student ranked 381st (with 1st being the highest cost per student) of the 500 districts in Pennsylvania and 14th of the 16 districts in Lancaster County.

We will continue to strive to keep costs in check after the high school project is completed.

In addition to an update on the high school project, this issue of Above & Beyond features stories about the hard work and successes of our



Dr. Mike Lechlitter

students, faculty and alumni.

I continue to be very proud of the efforts of everyone in the Penn Manor School District, and I hope you find this edition of Above & Beyond to be helpful in evaluating the impact of our district.

A review of these outcomes provides solid evidence that Penn Manor continues to provide a high quality education for our students at a reasonable cost to our community.

– Dr. Mike Lechlitter

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Dr. Gale named secondary assistant superintendent

Longtime Penn Manor High School principal Dr. Phil Gale has been named Penn Manor assistant superintendent for secondary education.

Gale will fill his new post July 1, 2019, upon the retirement of Cheryl Shaffer.

Principal of the high school since 2009, Gale previously served as dean of students, assistant principal and associate principal at the school.

Before joining the Penn Manor staff in 2000, he was a social studies and science teacher at schools in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts.

Gale received his doctorate in educational leadership from Immaculata University in 2012, his master's in education leadership from Millersville University in 2001 and his bachelor's degree in social studies from Elizabethtown College in 1993.

"Dr. Gale is a dynamic leader with a proven track record of results during his tenure at Penn Manor High School," said Dr. Mike Lechlitter, Penn Manor superintendent.

"His leadership and commitment to raising expectations and standards for all students will be a welcome addition to our district-level leadership team," he said.

Penn Manor has begun a search for a new high school principal.



Dr. Phil Gale

PAsmart Grant to bolster computer science education

Penn Manor has received a \$35,000 grant under a new state program called PAsmart, which supports efforts to improve computer science education in schools.

The grant will pay for professional development for elementary librarians and middle school science and technology teachers, along with robotics kits, circuit boards and other materials.

The goal is to provide more effective and engaging computer science experiences for all students in grades four through eight and engineering design experiences in eighth-grade science classes to prepare students for more advanced computer science courses at Penn Manor High School.

Librarians will be working with students in grades four through six to teach coding and the programming of circuit boards.

Students in grades seven and

eight also will learn coding, and eighth-graders will use robotics kits and create experiments with simple machines and physics principles. Projects may include creating amusement park rides designed with applied physics and math principles.

The grant will help Penn Manor develop skills and project-based curricula that demonstrates the relevance of computer science to the lives of all students, regardless of gender or race.

It also will educate parents and the community on the importance of computer science and how it inspires creative learning and professional skills for college and careers.

By exposing all students to programming in a content area, students will understand how computer science is used to solve problems and build solutions in the physical world.

Individuals, team named to Athletic Wall of Honor

Penn Manor has added four individuals and one sports team to its Athletic Wall of Honor.

During ceremonies at the high school on January 18, Chas Alecxih (football), Greg Bervinchak (wrestling), Britney Clugston (field hockey) and Aaron Dread (basketball) were inducted, along with the 2008 field hockey team.

Chas Alecxih (Class of 2007)



Chas Alecxih

Chas Alecxih was a two-sport athlete, throwing for the track and field team for three years and playing football for four.

Chas led the Comets football team as a captain in 2006 and was a two-way starter at tight end and defensive end. In 2005 and 2006, he was named 1st Team All Lancaster-Lebanon League and was Section 1 Lineman of the Year in 2006. He also was selected to play in the Tri-County All-Star game.



2019 Penn Manor Athletic Wall of Honor inductees: front row, from left, Greg Bervinchak, Aaron Dread, Chas Alecxih and Britney (Long) Clugston; back row, 2008 field hockey team players and coaches.



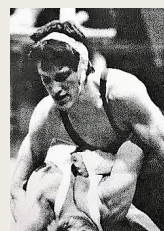
2008 field hockey team



Aaron Dread



Britney Clugston



Greg Bervinchak

Chas went on to play football at the University of Pittsburgh, where he was a four-year letterman, two-year starter and graduated with a degree in communications.

Following his collegiate career, Chas spent four years in the NFL with the Dolphins, Chiefs, Chargers, and Carolina Panthers. On February 7, 2016, Chas was on the Panthers team that appeared in the

Super Bowl, ending his NFL career on the highest note possible.

Greg Bervinchak (Class of 1987)

Greg Bervinchak was a three-sport athlete (wrestling, soccer and baseball) at Penn Manor and earned four varsity letters in wrestling and three in soccer.

Greg was a four-time L-L League Wrestling All-Star and a Sectional

More **ATHLETES** on Page 6

Comet Man version 5.0

Penn Manor's colorful mascot gets a new look

Penn Manor's biggest booster recently got a makeover.

Comet Man, the official mascot for Penn Manor athletics, has a new look, featuring a large, tapered head that resembles a streaking comet, a bold Penn Manor chest logo and oversized gold boots and gloves.

The costume is more durable, breathable and comfortable than the old Comet Man gear, according to Jason Mattern, Penn Manor's new athletic director.

The new Comet Man is believed to be the fifth variation to entertain fans at Penn Manor sporting events since the Comet mascot name emerged in the 1950s.



The new Comet Man

A Comet Man apparently first appeared in 1992 or 1993 and was redesigned in 1997. That version gave way to the Comet



Penn Manor's mascot through the years: from left, the original Comet Man (1992-93), Comet Man (1997), Comet Critter (2006), and Comet Man (2012).

Critter in 2006, then reverted back to Comet Man, with a new design, in 2012.

That costume was so worn out that when Mattern tried to get it cleaned, he was told it might not survive the process. So he started the search for a new outfit.

The winning design was chosen by the Penn Manor community through a Twitter poll.

The new Comet Man has quickly become a fixture at

athletic events, middle school recruitment events, athlete signing days, pep rallies and other Penn Manor events.

To serve as Comet Man, Mattern said, a student must be "reliable, energetic, coordinated and dedicated to enhancing the athletic experience for our athletes and fans."

The mascot is not allowed to speak, but Comet Man can get the crowd pumped up without words.

You go, Comet Man!

Students create virtual tour to showcase local farming

Project gains attention of Google, which sends film crew to PMHS to document process

Penn Manor High School students recently created a virtual reality tour using technology that allows people from across the globe to learn about farming in Lancaster County.

Penn Manor was chosen to participate in a beta project for Google Tour Creator, a new software program that enables schools and other institutions to create virtual tours of their programs, communities and businesses.

Agricultural education students worked with their peers in American literature and commercial art classes to create "Farming for the Future in Lancaster," a 360-degree tour of local farming practices and businesses viewable through VR goggles and using Google's new Poly web interface.

The tour covers such topics as dairy farming, landscaping, erosion control, greenhouses and family farming traditions, providing panoramic images that include pop-up explanations.

Google for Education representatives were so impressed with the farming tour they sent a film crew from New York to Penn Manor High School to create a video about the Lancaster project. The film's release coincided with the worldwide release of Tour Creator last May. The Lancaster farming tour is available for viewing by anyone across the globe.

"It was an incredible experience being able to connect with and help the global community," said Joel Brubaker, a Penn Manor senior who helped create and



A greenhouse, above, is featured in this still shot from the VR tour. A Google crew, below, films students collaborating on the project.



edit the written explanations that are part of the tour.

Kyle Bushong, an agriculture student from a farming family, said the virtual tour "is a great way to show others about where we live."

"We have the perfect soil here, and I feel this land is highly valued by the many generations that have lived here before me," he said. "This is a great way to get the facts out there about what we do."

High school faculty members earn regional, national honors

Three Penn Manor High School teachers have received professional recognition over the past year for their teaching and academic accomplishments.

Meagan Slates

Agricultural education teacher Meagan Slates was honored as the Outstanding Early Career Teacher for the Northeastern United States.

Slates earned the award – one of only six in the nation – from the National Association of Agricultural Educators during its annual convention in San Antonio, Texas, in December.



Meagan Slates

She previously was named Outstanding Early Career Teacher for Pennsylvania.

Applicants were evaluated on their teaching philosophy, effective classroom instruction, experiential learning, leadership development qualities, professional growth and community engagement.

Slates teaches Introduction to Ag Mechanics, Plant Science 1 and Wildlife

and Natural Resources classes at Penn Manor.

Molly Miller

Technology education teacher Molly Miller has been named to the 21st Century Leadership Academy by the Council on Technology & Engineering Teacher Education (CTETE).

Miller is one of only six educators named Leadership Academy Fellows and is the only public school teacher selected for the national honor. The other fellows are university educators.

She will complete professional development sessions with educators and technology professionals, participate in a legislative action session in Washington, D.C., and take part in the 2020 International Technology and Engineering Educators Annual Conference.

Last May, Miller was named the Secondary STEM Teacher of the Year by the Lancaster County STEM Alliance.



Molly Miller

She teaches Honors Engineering Principles, AP Computer Science, Applied Science and Exploring Technology courses.

Neil Fellenbaum

Agricultural education teacher Neil Fellenbaum has been named Pennsylvania's Outstanding Teacher by the Pennsylvania Association of Agricultural Educators.

Fellenbaum was nominated for the award by his peers and is now in contention for a national award.

A Penn Manor alumnus, he is coordinator of the high school's agricultural education department.

Fellenbaum and other award nominees were evaluated based on their teaching philosophy, instructional strategies, professional growth, community connections and involvement in promoting student participation in ag organizations.

He teaches courses in Plant Science 2, Engines 1, and Introduction to Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources



Neil Fellenbaum

Unified Track team expands opportunities

Governed by Special Olympics, program enables students with intellectual disabilities to compete

Penn Manor has joined with other area school districts to offer a new extracurricular program that enables students with intellectual disabilities to compete in organized sports.

Called Unified Track & Field, the program is governed by the Special Olympics and endorsed by the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association.

Student athletes compete alongside partners without disabilities, with teams fielding an even number of each. Students are eligible to compete in one track event of 100, 400 or 800 meters; one relay (4 x 100 meters or 4 x 400 meters); and one field event, including shot put, long jump and javelin.

Team members compete in flights, which pair students of



similar abilities against each other, giving everyone a chance to be competitive.

Penn Manor, Hempfield, Warwick and McCaskey high schools fielded teams last spring, the first season for the program. Four teams — Conestoga Valley, Ephrata, Dallastown and Central York — were added this year.

The meets tend to be enthusiastic affairs with strong support from other students, teachers, family members and



Penn Manor's Unified Track & Field team, above, poses for a team photo after the first meet. At left, an athlete receives encouragement.

other fans.

"I think all of our Unified athletes feel like superstars," said Jessica Cunningham, who coaches the team along with Doug Kramer. "They are proud of themselves for what they accomplished, and they feel encouraged and supported by the Penn Manor community." Sports teams teach students

many valuable lessons about unity, sportsmanship and perseverance, Cunningham said.

"I am glad we now have a program that allows all of our students to participate in a sports team. We're all learning valuable lessons about encouragement and perseverance from our Unified athletes."

Special education services provided at PM schools

Penn Manor School District is required to provide a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities who are determined, through the evaluation process, to need special education and related services under IDEA and 22 Pa. School Code §14.

A school-age child with a disability who is determined to be in need of special education and related services is identified as a child with a disability eligible for special education in need of specially designed instruction.

The following are disability categories under IDEA:

- Autism
- Deafness

- Deaf / blindness
- Emotional disturbance
- Traumatic brain injury
- Hearing impairment
- Specific learning disability
- Intellectual disability
- Multiple disabilities
- Other health impairment
- Orthopedic impairment
- Visual impairment, including blindness.

- Speech and language impairment

A full description of the services and programs available is accessible at:

www.pennmanor.net/special-education/ or by contacting Theresa Kreider, director of student services, at (717) 872-9500, ext. 2227.

Donna Wert honored for 20 years of school board service

Congratulations to Donna Wert for being named to the Honor Roll of School Board Service for her 20 years serving on the Penn Manor Board of School Directors.

Karen Devine, of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, presented Wert with a certificate of appreciation at a board meeting last fall.

Wert, a retired teacher who joined the all-volunteer board of school directors in 1998, said it has been "ultra fulfilling" to serve on the board.

Since 1983, the PSBA has been recognizing school board members who have served for eight years or more.

The honor roll "is a way of saying thank you to those



Karen Devine, left, of PSBA and Donna Wert.

individuals who exemplify leadership and statesmanship, giving unselfishly of their time and talents for the future of our public schools," according to the PSBA.

Many thanks to Donna, and all of our volunteer school directors.

Annual notices on district policies, procedures available online

Federal and state laws require school districts to provide students, parents and/or the public with notices on such topics as privacy, nondiscrimination, child nutrition, open records and others.

Penn Manor invites parents and guardians of students to review the information at <https://www.pennmanor.net/annual-notices/>.

Please contact your child's principal

with any questions or concerns about the information contained in these notices.

You may also contact the Office of the Superintendent at 717-872-9500, ext. 2223, with questions or concerns.

Fourth straight Silver Medal for HS

For the fourth straight year, Penn Manor High School has been honored with a Silver Medal from U.S. News & World Report and is ranked the No. 1 high school in Lancaster County.

Penn Manor is ranked No. 36 in Pennsylvania and No. 1,335 in the United States, based on the magazine's 2018 evaluation of academic data from more than 20,000 public high schools in 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The rankings are based on test scores in reading and math for all students and for student subgroups, including African-

"We pride ourselves on the diversity of the programs we offer to prepare all students for life after high school."

— Phil Gale
HS Principal

American and Latino pupils and the economically disadvantaged; graduation rates; and the number of students taking and passing college-level courses.

"To receive this award for four consecutive years is an

indication of the tremendous work that our students and teachers are doing," said Phil Gale, high school principal.

"As a big school, we pride ourselves on the diversity of the programs we offer to prepare all students for life after high school. This recognition demonstrates the quality education that our students receive in all of the programs at Penn Manor High School," he said.

Mike Leichter, Penn Manor School District superintendent, said the award reflects "a successful formula that includes



dedicated students, caring teachers and a supportive community."

"When all three of these elements are combined and work together, continued progress can be made," he said.

Athletes: Inducted into Penn Manor Wall of Honor

CONTINUED from Page 3

Champion in 1984, 1985 and 1986 and a Sectional Runner-Up in 1987. Greg qualified for districts all four years at Penn Manor and is a member of the elite "100 Victories" Club.

He was a perfect 35-0 in his final two seasons with the Comets in dual meets and had an overall dual meet record of 66-2 – the highest winning percentage in Penn Manor history. Greg also is the Comets' all-time team points leader, with 315, and holds the record for all-time points per match.

After graduating from Penn Manor, Greg wrestled for Lock Haven University and later coached wrestling at Hempfield High School for 24 years.

Britney (Long) Clugston (Class of 2004)

Britney was a four-sport (track, soccer, basketball and field hockey) athlete at Penn Manor, earning seven varsity letters.

In field hockey, Britney was a four-time L-L League All-Star and a 1st Team All-State Selection in 2002 and 2003. She also earned MVP honors in her junior and senior seasons and was team captain in her senior year, leading the Comets to a sectional championship and the district tournament.

She earned a full scholarship to Penn State to continue her field hockey career. During her junior year, Britney had a nearly 74 percent shot-on-goal rate. After her senior year, she was named to the 2nd Team NFHCA All-Mideast Region. She also earned spots on the Academic All-Big Ten Team and the NFHCA National Academic Squad.

In her senior season, Britney led the team in points (30) and goals (14), placing her sixth in points and third in goals for the Big Ten in 2007, the same year she was named to the Big Ten All-Tournament team and

competed for a National Championship.

Aaron Dread (Class of 1990)

Aaron Dread was a four-year starter and four-year varsity letter winner on the Penn Manor boys' basketball team. He also earned a varsity letter in soccer.

In basketball, Aaron is the all-time career scoring leader for the Comets, with an impressive 1,743 points. In his 1989-1990 season, Aaron was named an L-L League All-Star and 2nd Team All-State. Overall, Aaron was a two time All-Section member.

During his four years on the team, the Comets made three L-L League playoff appearances and earned the team's first district playoff win in 18 years. The Comets also earned three straight District 3 berths and a PIAA playoff berth in 1990.

Aaron attended Millersville University and helped the Marauders basketball team earn four straight playoff appearances, capture one PSAC Championship and reach two NCAA Regional Tournament Rounds. In the 1993-1994 season, Aaron held an impressive 45.4 three-point field goal percentage, with 49 three-pointers.

2008 Field Hockey Team

The 2008 field hockey team won the PIAA Class AAA State Field Hockey Championship, dominating Hershey High School, 5-0, a year after losing in the state finals by a 2-1 margin.

Penn Manor blanked Lackawanna Trail, 3-0, then gained revenge on defending champ Emmaus with a 2-1 victory in overtime before earning a 4-2 win over Central Dauphin. In the final, the Comets scored on all five of their shots on goal, setting a PIAA record for the most goals scored and the largest margin of victory in the state final game. Senior goalie Kathi Weidman stopped all three shots she faced.

The 5-0 victory was Penn Manor's first ever PIAA State Championship in field hockey.

Team members included Alexandra Adams, Cathryn Altdoerffer, Jennifer Bradley, Katie Breneman, Maggie Brommer, Helen Doolittle, Taylor Eichelberger, Mariah Farbo, Megan Harris, Kelly Harsh, Nicole Henderson, Madelyn Hess, Carena Neely, Laura Revelt, Nancy Stehman, Renee Suter, Haley Weaver, Kathi Weidman, and Jill Witmer.

Parent/guardian contact procedures

Penn Manor strives to keep parents, students and staff as well-informed as possible about school closings, schedule changes and other issues affecting our schools.

Information is shared via Twitter (@pennmanor.net), the district website (www.pennmanor.net), your child's school website and the Penn Manor cellphone app (available through iTunes or Google Play).

If the schedule changes before the start of school, that information will be shared via the above methods and through local media outlets. **In the event of an unanticipated closing, dismissal or other emergency** after the school day has begun, parents also will receive an automated phone call.

Updates also are available via our hotline at (717) 872-9500, ext. 2333.

Thank you to our sponsors

Penn Manor School District thanks the businesses that have entered into corporate sponsorships of Penn Manor athletic fields and other facilities. These sponsorships generate revenue to support school district extracurricular programs. To learn more about sponsorship opportunities, please contact Jason Jesberger of Market Street Sports Group at (717) 509-2803 or at jjesberger@marketstreetsportsgroup.com.




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Four distinguished alumni named to Wall of Honor

Four distinguished individuals have been inducted into the Penn Manor Alumni Wall of Honor – Joshua Herr, Craig Kauffman, J. Samuel Walker and Jan Mindish.

The four honorees were inducted April 12 into the Distinguished Alumni Wall of Honor during a reception at Lancaster Yacht Club. The following day, they talked with high school students about how their time at Penn Manor shaped their future endeavors.

Joshua Herr (Class of 2001) is Design Director for Creative Direction for Adidas and leads the Originals team, which works with celebrity designers. Herr's team developed XENO, a new shoe material that changes colors in response to light, that was introduced for the 2016 NBA All-Star Game.

Craig Kauffman (Class of 1981) has spent nearly 30 years in banking and is president and CEO of PeoplesBank. He serves as chairman of the board of the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and is a board member of the Lancaster General



From left, J. Samuel Walker, Joshua Herr, Jan Mindish and Craig Kauffman are the newest members of the Penn Manor Alumni Wall of Honor. Walker, Herr and Kauffman are Penn Manor High School graduates, and Mindish was longtime principal of the high school.

Health Foundation and the Safari Club International Foundation.

J. Samuel Walker (Class of 1964) is an American historian and author known for his research and writing on the nuclear age. He was historian for the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission for 24 years and has written many books and articles on diverse topics, including American foreign policy, nuclear energy and college basketball.

Jan Mindish, a longtime Penn Manor

teacher and high school principal, was recognized as the Pennsylvania Principal of the Year in 2007. She is executive director of the Penn Manor Education Foundation and remains active at Penn Manor, despite her retirement in 2009 after 37 years of service. She is an honorary alumna.

Many thanks to these accomplished community members for sharing their expertise with our students, and congratulations on their well-deserved recognition!