

It is with great respect and appreciation that we honor Leonard L. Klein ('39) and Norman R. Veliquette ('61) as our 2007 and first recipients of the Elk Rapids Distinguished Alumni Award.



If you know an Elk Rapids Alumni who should be considered for this award and recognition, please contact the Elk Rapids Alumni Office at 231-264-8692 or email Amy Schindler at [ASCHINDLER@elkrapids.k12.mi.us](mailto:ASCHINDLER@elkrapids.k12.mi.us).

Our 2008 Distinguished Alumni will be selected in April and announced at the We Are E.R.! Dinner Auction on May 17, 2008.

# Norman R. Veliquette ('61)

Norm has a rich history in the Elk Rapids area with both parents, B.C. and Marie Veliquette, 11 siblings and three children all ERHS graduates. In addition to many 4-H accomplishments, Norm was also a part of the 1960, First Team Detroit Free Press All State Class D Football Team.

After graduation from Elk Rapids, Norm served in the Navy on an appointment to the United States Naval Academy. A career-ending injury in Navy football led him to enroll at Michigan State University where he earned his B.S. in Agricultural Economics in 1967. In 1965, Norm spent seven months living in rural Brazil on the International Farm Youth Exchange. His passion for peace through world understanding continued as he has hosted several exchange students here in Elk Rapids.

After college, Norm worked four years for the Michigan Farm Bureau as a regional representative and fruit market specialist while also forming a partnership with two of his brothers, beginning a fruit growing and processing operation in the Kewadin area. He married Marjory Ann McPherson in 1969 (his self-proclaimed best decision). Norm co-founded Great Lakes Packing Company and Cherry Ke, Inc. in 1972, and later Cherry Bay Orchards in Suttons Bay. Successfully growing and marketing cherries, these companies have preserved local farmland and open space in agriculture and provided jobs to thousands of people in the region. Norm pioneered portable cherry processing in the 1980s, a one-of-a-kind venture that ultimately settled in Hart, Michigan, becoming, under younger brother Jon Veliquette, one of the nation's most prestigious cherry processing plants. Norm served a total of 18 years over the 1970's and 80's on the federal administrative boards and was a major contributor to authoring and operating federal market orders for red tart cherries. In addition, he was also an architect and co-founder in the 1990s of Cherrco, Inc., an international marketing coop for cherries that gained control of 60-80% of the frozen cherries marketed in North America. The federal market order and Cherrco brought stability and profitability to the cherry industry, contributing to Michigan's economy and preserving farmland and open space, not only in Michigan, but in other cherry-producing states. Norm is also a past chairman of the Michigan Agricultural Commission.

He has held many local public positions including 20 years on the Elk Rapids Schools' Board of Education. Norm is also well known for his dedication to the Rotary Club of Elk Rapids. He has held many positions of leadership and is internationally known for walking approximately 100 miles on his hands (over the period of a decade, and starting at age 50) to raise funds for the Rotary Foundation and to attract attention to Rotary's global campaign to eradicate polio. He has authored and published a three-book series with worldwide readership, *Fulfilling Our Promise*, about international efforts of volunteers to eradicate polio and participated in cultural and humanitarian missions to the Soviet Union, India twice, and Nigeria for polio National Immunization Days. His leadership and many accomplishments as a part of Rotary will continue to benefit the Elk Rapids community for generations to come.

# Leonard L. Klein ('39)

Leonard moved to Elk Rapids from Ann Arbor for his Senior year, graduating from Elk Rapids High School in 1939. He played basketball and baseball, the only sports offered at that time. After high school, Leonard attended Yale University during WWII and received a commission as an Engineering Officer upon graduation in 1943. He also served as Group Engineer Officer for the US Army Air Corps until 1946 and went on to attend and receive a Civil Engineering Degree from M.S.U. in 1949. Leonard is a Registered Professional Engineer. He worked for Armco Steel for seven years before joining Superior Products Co. in 1957 from which he retired in 1987. Leonard was nationally recognized for his career accomplishments. In 1973 he was instrumental in the design and installation of the world's largest precast concrete gravity storm sewer pipe. He received the Award of Merit while serving on the ASTM Committee C-13. Leonard is a life member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, Grade of Fellow, past President of the Michigan section and was awarded Engineer of the Year for the state of Michigan. His professional accomplishments go on and on but his humble nature limits what he shares with us.

While nationally recognized, his heart remains local. He has been quoted as saying, "I've been border to border, coast to coast, over and back both oceans and I have never found a place as nice and beautiful and friendly as Elk Rapids." Leonard has been an Honored Member of Rotary - with an active "never say no" attitude. He has also served on or as the Elk Rapids Township Planning Commission, Village of Elk Rapids Harbor Commission, Elk Rapids Zoning Board of Review, Antrim County Planning Commission, Chairman of the Antrim County Board of Public Works, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the MSU School of Engineering, and so much more!

Distinguished Alumni 2007



Superintendent Jon Hoover presents Norm Veliquette ('61) with his award



Superintendent Jon Hoover presents Leonard Klein ('39) with his award