

## A-F Area School District Academic Hall of Fame

### Linda Machan

Ms. Linda Webster Machan was inducted to the A-F Academic Hall of Fame as an outstanding educator in recognition of inspiring students to perform for life. Ms. Machan graduated from UW-Eau Claire with a secondary education degree—emphasis middle school, an English major, and Geography minor. After interning at LaFollette High School in Madison, she accepted a teaching position in Adams-Friendship in 1972. Ms. Machan continued a pattern of life-long learning with post graduate work in musical theater at the University of Minnesota, reading methods at UW-Stevens Point, middle school methods and best practices at UW-Platteville, and school administration at Winona. As a classroom teacher, her high expectations and commitment to learning were an inspiration. Her organizing of the Sand County Players supported a love of the arts and involvement in the community. As Dance Team coach, her passion influenced many young women well beyond her retirement from the classroom in 2007.

Ms. Machan believes her enthusiasm for the arts is part of her DNA. Her mother studied music before becoming a home economics teacher. Her father was a volunteer director of a drum and bugle corps during her elementary years. During those formative years, she started choreographing and directing original “shows” of her own. Throughout high school, she could be found in the band and chorus rooms—often choreographing for student groups.

Though Ms. Machan studied dance in college, no degree was offered at Eau Claire during that time. As a teacher, the bicentennial of 1976 provided an opportunity to share her passion. She began directing shows with students as a way to create a whole-school celebration. Colleagues took notice. Band teacher, Clark Staehling drafted her to work with dance for his majorettes, and high school band director, Angie Lavalley soon had her working with the high school girls. Dance Team was born from these experiences. In 1974, Superintendent Gordon Sardeson approached Ms. Machan with the opportunity to coach the Pompon squad. This was the start of a long tradition of excellence at and beyond the state level. The young women involved in Dance Team credit her not only with being an inspirational role model, but also with helping them develop self-confidence and pride in their school. She treated students with dignity and supported them in times of personal challenge. As a coach, Ms. Machan taught young women to respect each other, themselves, and serve as role models for others. They learned the value of hard work, competition and persistence. She continued to influence the young women of Adams-Friendship High School even after her retirement from the classroom by continuing to coach the Dance Team until 2015. Her dedication to the youth in our community is evident through her 35 years as a teacher and 41 years as a coach.

Her work for the youth and community did not end with retirement. Ms. Machan continues to be actively involved with the Sand County Players and the A-F Area Educational Foundation. She serves on the events committee for the A-F Fine Arts Center and works tirelessly to promote events through the Foundation’s website and Facebook pages.

A quote from a former student summarizes this exceptional educator. *“I am just one of hundreds of young women who can thank Linda for enhancing the quality of their character and for instilling in them values that will last a lifetime. We are so lucky to have passionate and caring educators and coaches like Linda in Adams-Friendship.”*