

# Weber, Kleiss, Wetzel to be inducted into Hall of Fame

--Honorees made significant contributions in business, soil science, ag economics

In the truest spirit of Homecoming—which at its core is welcoming back alumni to their high school base—the TCHS Alumni Association is once again honoring three former Warriors who have distinguished themselves in their chosen careers since graduating from Tuscola High School.

This year's chosen honorees, who will be inducted into the TCHS Hall of Fame on Homecoming weekend, are Michael T. Weber (Class of 1962), Joe Kleiss (Class of 1963), and Robert Wetzel (Class of 1962). Inductions will take place during the 2013 Hall of Fame luncheon, scheduled for 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 14 at the Douglas County Museum. Special guests the Class of 1963 and members of the 1953 and 1972 football teams will also be recognized.

**•Michael Weber—Ag Economics** (nominated by classmate Marsha Graham Strader)

Weber—a professor emeritus of Michigan State University in the Department of Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics—grew up on a cash grain farm in rural Tuscola, the son of AJ and Anna Weber. He earned a B.S. degree from Southern Illinois University, and an M.S. and Ph.D. from Michigan State University. During his 37-year career with MSU, Dr. Weber was instrumental in building and sustaining programs on agricultural and food marketing, international ag development and food security. His contributions have impacted teaching, research, outreach and service to MSU.

Dr. Weber started his professional career

in 1965, working for three years as a Peace Corps volunteer, serving as an agricultural extension agent in rural areas of Huila, Colombia. His faculty career at MSU began in 1976, with a two-year visiting professorship teaching assignment at the Federal University of Ceara in Fortaleza, Brazil. Later at MSU, he taught and helped develop activities with the university in Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and especially in Africa.

Dr. Weber helped spearhead intellectual and managerial leadership for work by the MSU Food Security Group, aimed at developing strategies to reduce hunger and poverty in Africa's low-income countries and elsewhere. In early 2007, he accepted a long-term field assignment as food security advisor/researcher in Zambia, South Africa. In June 2009 he returned to the MSU campus to continue assisting the MSU Food Security Group, helping backstop applied research and policy outreach in Zambia and other countries.

In 2003, Dr. Weber was bestowed the Ralph H. Smuckler Award for Advancing International Studies and Programs by MSU. He retired from the university in August 2011.

Dr. Weber is fluent in Spanish and Portuguese, and speaks some French. He and his wife, Francisca, live in East Lansing, Mich.

**•Joe Kleiss—Soil Science** (nominated by classmate Alan Jones)

Joe Kleiss began his lifelong interest in soils growing on a farm in rural Tuscola, the son of Jim and Dorothy Kleiss. After receiving a B.S. in agricultural science from the University of Illinois in 1967, he completed an

M.S. in agronomy in 1969 from Iowa State University, then returned to the U of I to earn a Ph.D. in soil science in 1972.

Kleiss worked for three years with Park Ridge-based Dames & Moore Consultants in the environmental and applied earth sciences. In 1975 he took a faculty position in the Dept. of Soil Science at North Carolina State University, the beginning of a 36-year career that included research, teaching, and extension activities. He taught undergrad and graduate courses that spanned introductory soil science and advanced courses in soil morphology, genesis, and classification. As coordinator for the undergrad soil science teaching program, he was the primary faculty advisor for soil science majors, and he also served as advisor and coach of the student soil judging team.

Kleiss was recognized by the student Agronomy Club as Outstanding Instructor of the Year on five occasions, and was elected to the NC State Academy of Outstanding Teachers. He served as president of the Soil Science Society of North Carolina, and was also a recipient of that society's achievement award. He served on the Council of the Hugh Hammond Bennett chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society and was honored with the chapter's superior service award.

As a member of Gamma Sigma Delta ag honorary society, Kleiss received an award of merit. At the national level he was a divisional chairman of the Soil Science Society of America, served on the Council of Soil Science Examiners, and was awarded the education award from its national



Michael Weber



Joe Kleiss



Robert Wetzel



society. The American Society of Agronomy elected him a Fellow in 2000. He has also won numerous other awards and assignments within his field of expertise.

Kleiss married his high school sweetheart, Jacki Thomas, in 1966. They have three children and three grandchildren who live in the Raleigh area. Since his retirement in 2011, Kleiss has continued to assist in the teaching program at NC State and conduct soil science training workshops for high school teachers and students.

**•Robert Wetzel--Business** (nominated by Doug McCumber)

Bob Wetzel grew up on a farm southeast of Tuscola, the son of Edward and Margaret Wetzel. After graduating from TCHS, he attended the University of Illinois, majoring in engineering. While at the U of I he was a James Scholar and member of Alpha Kappa Lambda fraternity, and this is where he met his wife, Jane Mursener.

Wetzel graduated from Illinois with a B.S. in industrial engineering, and accepted a position at Newport News Shipbuilding Company as a reactor test engineer on Polaris nuclear submarines. He had extensive training in operating the nuclear propulsion plant and was a certified reactor engineer. Concurrently, he enrolled in and completed the MBA program at College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Va.

In 1972, Wetzel became a consultant with Touche Ross in Detroit, Mich. and four years later was promoted to start a new consulting practice in Cleveland, Ohio. He was made a partner in 1978 and became leader of the Ohio consulting practice. In 1989 he was made the Cleveland office managing partner for Touche Ross, with responsibility for all audit, tax, and consulting work for the firm.

In 1992 he was moved to Los Angeles, Cal. to manage the southern California

practice for the merged firm of Deloitte & Touche, and under his leadership the practice grew to 1,500 professionals—including the western half of the U.S. as well as Mexico. In 2002, the Wetzels temporarily relocated to Germany, where Wetzel was responsible for the German, Austrian, and Swiss practices of Deloitte, doubling the size of the practice in the short time he was there. They returned to the U.S. after 2003, and Wetzel retired from Deloitte in 2007.

The Wetzels have two children: daughter Chace; and son Jonathan and his wife, Lindsey. They also have a grandson, with another due to arrive soon.

As you can read, the three honorees are well deserving of the Hall of Fame honor, and you won't want to miss the luncheon in their honor. Tickets are \$15 per person for the catered dinner and ceremony, but you need to call the TCHS office at 253-2377 as soon as possible to ensure your reservation.



# Tuscola High School Hall of Fame Inductees for 2013

