

## *Distinguished Alumni Award*

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# *Paul Grethey*

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The University High School Alumni Association honors Paul W. Grethey, class of 1961, as the 2015 Distinguished Alumni Award recipient for his contributions to his profession and civic service.

With over 48 years as owner-operator of Johnson's Floral in Morton, Ill., Grethey is recognized for his contributions to the community and to local youth organizations. He graduated from University High School in 1961 where he participated in theater. Grethey's responsibility for the theatre program was to acquire the props, including going out into the community and soliciting homes and businesses. He also won a science award in which he performed taxidermy on a monkey.

After graduation, Grethey served in the U.S. Army for four years. He was stationed in the U.S. as well as Korea. When he completed his service in 1967 and returned home, Grethey and his father, Wally, purchased Johnson's Floral. Shortly afterwards he met Jane Feller and they married in 1971.

Johnson's Floral was a family business, and as such, Grethey's younger brother David became a partner in the business after the passing of their father. In addition to David, their mother, Theresa, and David's wife, Sylvia, also worked at the store. Part of the success of Johnson's Floral is that they continually adapt to the needs of the community. In addition to being a florist, Grethey also does nursery work, growing plants as well as trimming shrubs and trees.

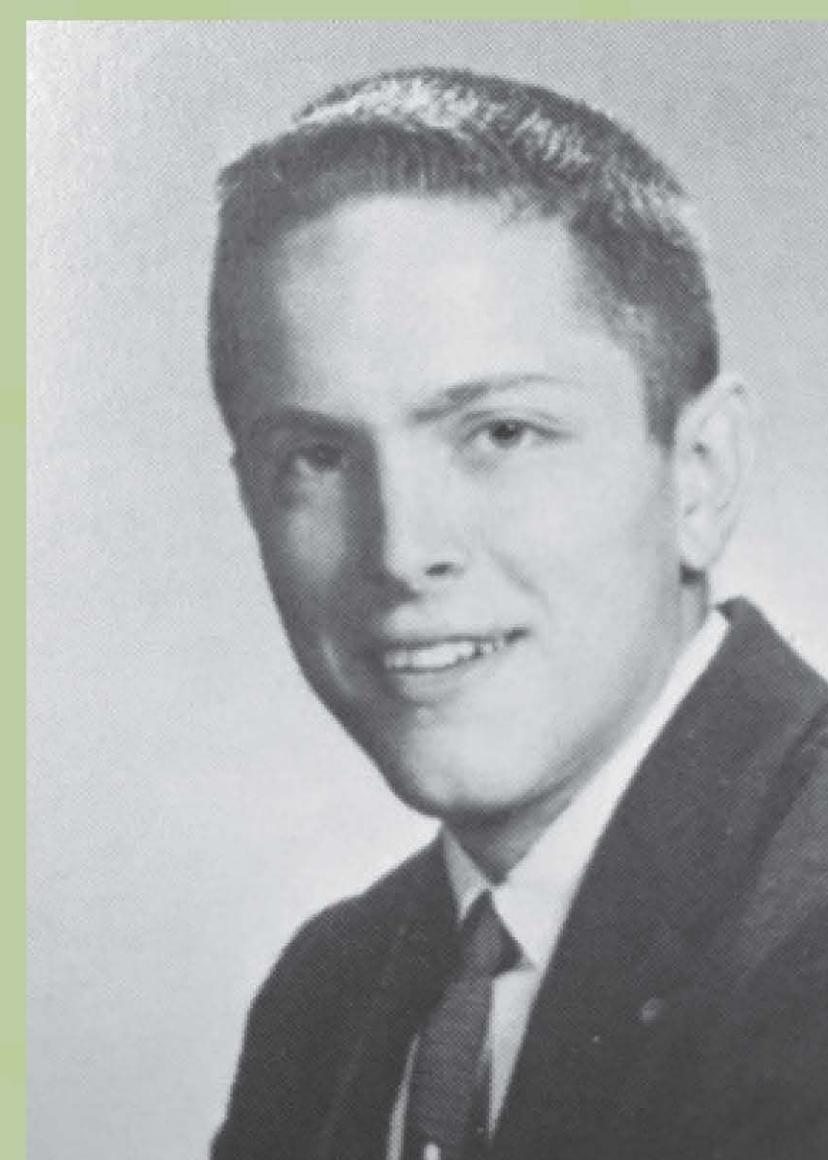
Grethey's business has kept him very busy yet he has found time to give back to the community. He has volunteered for many youth programs including the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Morton High School Football, Youth Baseball, and Catholic Education for their church. In the 1980's he used his experiences in running the floral shop to teach a small business class at Illinois Central College in East Peoria.

However, Grethey didn't limit his volunteer activities to just the youth. For 25 years, he served on the Tazewell County Board, starting out on the County Health Board as the Property Chairman. He also is a member of the American Legion and the Illinois State Floral Association. In addition, he has also served over 40 years on the Morton Chamber of Commerce. In 2011, Grethey was announced as the winner of the Morton Chamber of Commerce Distinguished Service Award, recognizing his years of service and his dedication to making Morton a better place to live.

Grethey and his wife have four children; Anne, Susan, Tim, and Paul, and eight grandchildren. His hobbies include racquetball, snowmobiling, and golf. He is an avid fan of both the Chicago Cubs and Bears.

*"The U-High experience has made a big impact on my life. It made me a better person. I definitely gained confidence. I learned how to get along with fellow students, how to pay attention and listen, which is something we use daily. I believe that all my teachers gave me confidence and encouragement in my life."*

- Paul Grethey



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# *University High School*

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