

Friends of U-High Award

Neil R. Styczynski

The University High School Alumni Association honors Neil R. Styczynski as the 2016 Friends of U-High Award Recipient for his contributions to University High School.

Neil Styczynski and his wife, Joan, became members of the University High School family in 1996 when their oldest son entered U-High. They are now parents to four U-High alumni, Matthew (2000 and Massachusetts Institute of Technology 2004); Maura (2004 and Duke University 2008); Mitchell (2012 and Washington University in St. Louis 2016); and Michelle (2016 and Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology 2020). Their children earned 22 U-High varsity letters in Cross Country, Volleyball, Basketball, Swimming, and Track with Neil and Joan's support of each team. All of their children participated in band, chorus, and/or musicals and plays during their time at U-High.

As U-High parents, Neil and Joan have made donations that included more than 50 computers to the Lab Schools and were recognized as charter members of the ISU Lab Schools' Legacy Society and ISU's 1856 Society. In April of 2012, Neil was inducted into the ISU College of Arts and Sciences Hall of Fame. Neil also served on the U-High committee to determine the parameters for the initial roll-out of laptop computers to U-High students. Neil has been a substitute teacher at U-High since 2006, and has enjoyed getting to know a broad spectrum of U-High students and teachers through interactions across each subject area. He has chaperoned U-High Spanish trips to Costa Rica, Ecuador, and The Galapagos Islands, and a choir trip to New Orleans. Neil is a native of Polo IL and graduated from Polo High School in 1970. He received his undergraduate degree from Western Illinois University in Mathematics and Economics in 1974, and participated in Western's initial relationship with Montana Native-American communities as a teacher's assistant in mathematics on the Crow reservation in Lodge Grass MT. He continued his education at the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana receiving an MBA in Finance and Accounting in 1976, while substitute teaching in the Champaign schools.

After receiving his MBA, he immediately went to work for IBM (International Business Machines) in Chicago, moving to Bloomington in 1977 where he was a representative for IBM until his retirement in 2006. In retirement, he has continued his education developing competencies in Spanish, French, Italian, and German at Heartland Community College, in addition to substitute teaching at all three of Normal's high schools.

Neil has also served on the Board of Directors for Big Brothers – Big Sisters of Central Illinois (serving Bloomington-Normal, Decatur, and Champaign-Urbana) from 2009-16. Since 2008, he and his wife Joan have sponsored a scholarship through the ISU College of Arts and Sciences for a community college transfer who intends to go into teaching after graduation.

He is looking forward to many more years of substitute teaching at U-High and, with Joan, attending and supporting U-High's musical and athletic events.

Neil Styczynski has proudly served and contributed to U-High in many ways. His dedication to the school is forever appreciated.

University High School



2016