



NMH Reunion

2024 Alumni Association Awards

Alumni Citations

David E. Durham '49

David Durham '49 has remained engaged with Northfield Mount Hermon in numerous ways since graduating in 1949, serving on Reunion Committees, Class Committees and fulfilling Class Secretary and other volunteer duties over the years.

Now a United Methodist Minister, he credits Mount Hermon students, teachers and the spirit felt at the school with enriching his faith and acting as a big step on the path that led him into a life of ministry. He says NMH taught him the importance of "community." Living away from home for the first time and learning so much from his roommates, teammates and teachers, David grew beyond his biological family to be a part of the world family. He continued to build community internationally with time abroad in the ministry and with Rotary International, an organization with which he served from 1959-2001.

David remembers fondly his voice lessons with Mr. Raymond, English classes with Mr. Nixon and the approach to morality he learned from a beloved groundskeeper, Harry Hueg ("hue-ig"). He thought very highly of these figures and he saw in them models for who he would one day want to become.

Celebrating his 75th reunion this year, David remains engaged because he hopes that others may have the same rich experiences with the school that he had, and wants NMH to continue for students of many generations to come. The NMH Alumni Association is honored to present David E. Durham with an Alumni Citation.

Peter F. Guild '64

Clark Kent, Superman's alter ego, bears the moniker, "Mild-mannered." The same might be said for our own Peter Guild, and perhaps even more fitting as his last name rhymes with "mild." A four-year student here, he was particularly involved in choral music and golf.

In 1968, armed with degrees in mathematics and economics, Peter went to work for IBM, but his interest in computers was no match for his interest in high performance engines and in 1975 he bought a small machine shop and renamed it Pro-Motor Engineering. The business took off faster than a speeding bullet. Get Peter on a subject he's passionate about, and you'll find he's far from mild-mannered. Want to build a premium well-tuned race car engine? Talk to Peter Guild. He knows the devil is in the details. Want to make sure those same details are being cared for in the operation of Northfield Mount Hermon? Talk to Peter Guild.

Both quiet and relentless during his ten years as a trustee, and many more as a class gift committee member or chair, no one sweated the small stuff quite like Peter. Take care of the

small stuff and the big picture will take care of itself. The school and her alumni have been the beneficiaries of this spirit of calm determination. Thank you, Peter.

The NMN Alumni Association is pleased to present Peter Guild with an Alumni Citation.

Stephanie Lynn Gerson '74

Let's try to stand still for one moment with Stephanie, to honor her for ongoing efforts at keeping her classmates together. Hold on to that word "try," as we must first remember that she's been a long time loyal class secretary who's genuine interest in what others are up to, what makes them tick, has woven reports of individual activities and stories into a narrative of the ongoing life of the class of 1974. While she's embraced the role of "removed observer," and while she does live in the same home which she left in the fall of 1973 to join the class of 1974, her life's been far from static or quiet in the years between, and deeply influenced by her year here.

Delighted to be here, she remembers Jim Block's English class, and his request for an autobiography. Gulp. And yet the request to tell her own story has been at the root of her interest in other's stories. She also recalls Elliott Rowsey's calculus class, not only for the joy of getting to use coloured chalk, but his insistence that everyone teach the class for a week. For Stephanie, art and mathematics coalesced in architecture.

Always on the go, though rarely in a straight line, there isn't room to describe all of her interests, from Paris to Parsons School of Design, and from Lincoln, Massachusetts to lemurs, we give a nod to her story with thanks for telling 1974's story

Susan (Fenske) McDonough '74

There are students who spent four years at NMH that still cherish the growth they experienced at the school. Susan Fenske McDonough is one of the students. Susan wrote; "sending a moody adolescent to a high school and community that could support and encourage her was a good decision for her parents to make." It allowed her to develop independence, self-worth, social/emotional skills, and to meet educational challenges.

Susan was a student leader, on the headmaster search committee, and captain of the swim team. She was the recipient of the Headmaster's Award at graduation. It seems that a moody adolescent found her place. Celebrating her 50th reunion, her gratitude is still palpable.

Susan has served as a class secretary, a member of the Alumni Council, Fundraising Volunteer, and has been on her class's reunion committee since 2013. She is not only grateful for her past experience at NMH but it lives on with her today. NMH influenced her employment choices, informed her creativity, my moral compass, education for my children, and financial commitments. She spent her career primarily in education and nonprofits, supporting advancement operations and related meetings and events.

Susan studied Spanish at Drew University in NJ. She returned after college for her "second NMH education." She worked in the Alumni/Development Offices, and as an Assistant to the Headmaster for the "Centennial Road Show."

She has wonderful memories of people who supported her in her growth. She recalls Chris Shepard, Dennis Green, Harrison McCann who all played a role in her pursuit of Spanish

language and culture, an NMH term abroad in Spain, and completing a major in Spanish in college. She is still close friends with Pam Miller (Dysenchuk), her first roommate.

While Susan humbly said that she feels “honored to be honored”, the NMH Alumni Association is privileged to present her with an Alumni Citation for her dedication and service to the school.

Gail Marie Doolittle '89

For Gail Doolittle '89, Northfield Mount Hermon has always been more than just a school; it's been her lifelong home. Growing up with parents who worked at Northfield, her connection to NMH felt almost destined. Attending the school as a day student, NMH played a pivotal role in shaping her life, instilling values that continue to guide her today. Inspired by DL Moody's words, "Do all the good you can to all the people you can, in all the ways you can, as long as you can," she strives to spread love and kindness wherever she goes, embodying the spirit of NMH.

During her time at NMH, Gail cherished the opportunity to interact with people from diverse backgrounds, immersing herself in different cultures and traditions. From exploring Russian language courses to delving into various art forms like pottery, painting, and photography, her NMH experience enriched her worldview.

Among the many teachers who left a lasting impression, Meg Donnelly stood out as Gail's favorite English teacher, helping her navigate the transition to a new environment with grace and warmth. She also credits Janet Meyhew for introducing her to weaving, a skill she still treasures.

As a dedicated member of the NMH community, Gail has devoted nearly three decades working for the school and currently holds the title of facilities logistics coordinator in Plant Facilities. Beyond her professional role, she has actively contributed to the alumni network, serving on her Class Reunion Planning committee and the Alumni Council.

Gail's passion for giving back led her to initiate two enduring projects: Operation Happy Birthday and NMH Ornament Making. Since 2000, she has meticulously crafted birthday cards for colleagues, spreading joy on their special day. Similarly, her handmade Christmas ornaments, which she began creating in 1995, have become a cherished tradition across the campus, reaching over 300 people every year.

The NMH Alumni Association proudly honors Gail for her exemplary service with an alumni citation, recognizing her as a beacon of compassion and generosity within the NMH community.

Christina Lamb Sidell '94

Christina writes “while I wasn't happy all of the time at NMH, my truest friends (and my husband) all came from NMH and that is my happy place.” A long-time volunteer, Christina served on the Alumni Council from 2013 to 2018, has been her classes' reunion chair since 2004, served as Gift Chair and is active in NMH Boston. She says NMH allowed her to grow “as a person and figure out who I was in a safe environment”. She gives “back to the school in hope that others can have that same experience.”

Among her many influences at NMH, Christina remembers Mec Peller, her AP AB Calculus teacher, who fostered her love of math and cared for her as a whole person. She also fondly remembers Phil Calabria who allowed her to run the photo lab and embraced her love of

photography and Hughes Pack who suggested she challenge herself and take AP Physics as a sophomore.

She noted that NMH taught her that it's important to figure out what works for you and to do something you are good at while balancing your work and life. NMH also gave her the ability to be more understanding of people and the courage to not just go along with the crowd.

After NMH Christina attended Union College where she majored in Political Science. She also earned an MS in Dispute Resolution from UMass Boston. Her career has included leadership roles in customer success, client relations, and business development.

Christina aspires for her son to attend as well, and perhaps use the same AP Calculus book she used that was written by the Pellers. The NMH Alumni Association is pleased to present an Alumni Citation to Christina Kathryn Lamb Sidel

Paige (Relyea) Lehman '79

Paige Relyea Lehman '79 has been an active volunteer for Northfield Mount Hermon in many ways for many years, including her fabulous work as Reunion Committee Chair for a decade now and her role as Class Secretary since 1999.

She continues to keep classmates connected to each other and to their NMH experience because the school holds a special place in her heart. Arriving at NMH in the fall of 1976, she describes her 14-year-old self as shy, sheltered and overwhelmed. By the time she left, NMH had opened her eyes to the wide world that was there for her to explore. The school inspired in her a love of travel and shaped the values that she has passed to her children, namely to lead courageously with the Head, Heart and Hand.

Paige remembers fellow classmate and dear friend Gail Osgood '78 who had a tremendous influence on her at NMH and beyond. While Gail passed away in 2012, her good nature, her more-than-occasional pranks, and her zest for life are gifts that her classmates continue to cherish. While at NMH Paige enjoyed performing in choir and Swim Dem. She notes that while the activities were fun, it was the camaraderie and friendships that stand out. She remembers Vic Piscuskas teaching a cross-country skiing class where he took students beautiful spots through the snowy woods behind the Northfield campus; it was magical!

Paige says the school was a wonderful turning point in her life and she enjoys staying connected to the school and classmates. Keeping in touch comes naturally to her so being a class secretary and reunion committee member are fulfilling roles, especially when a classmate sends in their first news since graduation or attends their first reunion!

NMH Alumni Association is proud to bestow the Josie Right Spirit Award to Paige Relyea Lehman.

Young Alumni Award

Daisy (Letendre) Gordon '09

For Daisy Letendre Gordon '09, a day rarely goes by in her personal or professional life where she doesn't utilize or call upon a skill, perspective, or experience that originated at Northfield Mount Hermon. Her NMH education has empowered her to ask questions, raise objections, and participate in meaningful conversations — leading to a deeper engagement and understanding of the world around her.

Daisy's memories of her days at NMH include playing the trumpet in the Jazz Ensemble, and editing the student newspaper, The Bridge. However, nothing compares to the transformative experiences she had as an athlete. As a senior, she captained the Varsity Cross-Country, Swimming, and Crew teams. Still to this day she fondly reminisces about early morning rows on the Connecticut river.

Throughout her time at NMH, Daisy was profoundly influenced by faculty members such as Jim Block, Anne Atkins, Vicky and Peter Jenkins, and Jeff Neil, who played pivotal roles in shaping her academic and personal journey. From Jim Block's impactful "Varsity English" class (or AP Composition) to Anne Atkins' unwavering support as a swim coach, Daisy's NMH experience was enriched by their guidance and mentorship.

Since graduating, Daisy has remained actively involved with NMH, serving as both a class officer and class secretary, and joining the NMH alumni council in 2020. She also volunteers her time to lead NMH local events in D.C., believing that these opportunities help maintain connections with friends worldwide and foster pride in their alma mater.

After NMH, Daisy pursued a BA in Political Science from Trinity College followed by an MBA from the University of Maryland. Currently, she serves as a Senior Advisor for the Federal Government Affairs department at FirstEnergy Corporation.

The NMH Alumni Association is excited to present Daisy with the Young Alumni Award in recognition of her outstanding contributions to NMH.

William H. Morrow Award

James C. Block P'95, '98

For over 40 years James Block's name was synonymous with the NMH English department, having the opportunity to sit down with a multitude of students and their rough drafts and help them through the writing process. His contributions to NMH did not end in the classroom, having supported a wide variety of extracurricular activities throughout his four decades at the school.

He advised the school newspaper, the Bridge, in the 90s and into the 2000's, with the paper winning scholastic awards multiple times under his watch. He acted as dorm head in Overtoun in the 70s and was later a staff member in Upper South Crossley for many years. He was frequently seen on the myriad of trails and tracks, leading girls varsity cross country in the late 90s and into the early 2000's.

He is appreciative of the unique ways NMH fosters learning; he enjoyed having the academic freedom to choose the texts and teaching methods he thought best for students and found many of the extracurricular work to be as meaningful as teaching. His knack for lifelong learning and teaching continues; he provides tutoring and SAT prep to local teenagers, enjoys giving guided tours at a historical site near his residence, and is active in his church.

The NMH Alumni Association is honored to bestow the Morrow Award, the highest honor to a non-alumni member of the NMH Community, to James C. Block for his significant impact on the life and spirit of Northfield Mount Hermon.

Community Service Award

Paul E. Murtha '69

Paul Murtha, MH '69, has dedicated his life to service, embodying the class motto, "Dare to be Wise". Paul's journey of service began at NMH where he was a camp counselor in an NMH summer program for disadvantaged children in Springfield, MA and later when he was one of the first participants in NMH's year abroad exchange program in Quito, Ecuador. These experiences laid the foundation for Paul's deep connection to service and particularly to his dedication to Ecuador, where he returned 37 years later to initiate a series of impactful social service initiatives leaving a lasting influence on Ecuadorian communities.

Over the last 2 decades Paul has demonstrated exceptional leadership and resourcefulness in addressing critical needs in Ecuadorian communities. From 2005 to 2023, he initiated and led numerous projects aimed at improving education, healthcare, and community development in Ecuador. Notable among these accomplishments were disaster relief efforts during the 2008 El Niño floods and the 2016 earthquake, where he secured funding and organized emergency aid.

Additionally, Paul's work as Director of two organizations; the Vibrant Village Foundation and the Muyu Chakana Foundation, focused on promoting agroecology, food security, and peace education, resulting in tangible improvements in family nutrition, sustainable agricultural practices, and social cohesion within Ecuadorian communities. Furthermore, his dedication extended to collaborating with marginalized groups, such as the Bloods gang in Ibarra, fostering peace and empowerment through innovative inner-city programs which have endured for 12 years.

Paul's impactful service reflects his belief in the innate human impulse to help others and the transformative power of hope. Today he lives in Cotacachi, Ecuador where he continues to assist needy families, promote permaculture projects, and plans to continue his work in alternative education for the Amazonian Seikopai peoples. Paul's tireless efforts have not only improved the lives of countless individuals but have also inspired lasting change, demonstrating the profound influence of his NMH experience in fostering empathy, cultural understanding, and a commitment to social justice.

It is our honor to present the NMH Alumni Association Community Service Award to Paul Murtha

Community Service: Empowerment Award

Dr. Nancy A. Banks '89

Nancy Banks, '89, is a shining example of the school's commitment to service and empowerment. With a career dedicated to fostering positive change and empowerment, her impact extends from her professional endeavors to her volunteer work, demonstrating significant focus and accomplishments in empowering others to transform lives, create opportunities, and improve circumstances.

Nancy's journey of service began at NMH, where she was influenced by the school's values of social justice, empathy, and community engagement. She was also encouraged by deep and lasting relationships with her dorm parents including Carol and Ned Lebo and David and Gail Demain and teachers including Bill Batty and Glenn Vandervliet.

Following her graduation in 1989, Nancy attended college at NYU and carried the values she learned at NMH into her academic and professional pursuits. After obtaining a PhD in American history from Columbia, she embarked on a career in education, serving as a teacher at the Ethical Culture Fieldston School. Later, as dean of student life and director of student programs, she established innovative and student-centered programming. Nancy empowered students to take ownership of their school community, amplifying their voices and fostering a culture of inclusivity and social activism through community events.

Nancy's dedication to service extends beyond the school walls, as she actively engages with community issues and advocates for social change. From organizing events addressing gun violence and consent education to facilitating student exchanges and promoting civil discourse, Nancy's impact is far-reaching. Her efforts in bridging divides, building connections, and amplifying marginalized voices underscore her unwavering commitment to service and empowerment. Her legacy of service is an inspiration to her peers and future generations, embodying the transformative power of empathy, advocacy, and community engagement at a time when these qualities are more important than ever.

Congratulations to Nancy Banks '89 on being the first recipient of the Alumni Association's Community Service Empowerment Award.

Community Service: Social Impact Award

Dawson Her Many Horses '94

For Dawson Her Many Horses '94, attending NMH as a postgraduate student allowed for new and different insights and perspectives to emerge in contrast to his childhood as an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe of South Dakota. Those learnings, both in academic and non-academic settings, have served him well in the years since his time at NMH.

After obtaining degrees from Columbia University and Dartmouth, his talent led him to the banking industry, with a unique skillset to support the development and expansion of Native American banking efforts, from serving the financial needs of tribal governments and tribally owned enterprises to becoming an industry leader in increasing the flow of capital to tribal

communities. In 2023 as head of Native American Banking for Wells Fargo he was named a Managing Director, one of the first enrolled tribal members to obtain the distinction at a major U.S. bank.

Outside of Wells Fargo, he has been steadfast in giving back to the community and driving societal change at large, most notably as a member of the board of directors at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, and a Finance Leaders Fellow with the Aspen Institute.

The NMH Alumni Association is honored to bestow the first Community Service Social Impact Award to Dawson Her Many Horses for his significant contributions which demonstrate the NMH ideal of service to others.

Lamplighter Award

Thomas G. Baxter '59

This year's Lamplighter Award, the highest honor given by the Alumni Association, is awarded to Thomas G. Baxter MH 1959. A leader of his class, Tom has demonstrated unwavering dedication and remarkable service to his alma mater. He volunteers to help ensure that NMH continues to be a place of opportunity and excellence for generations to come.

Tom grew up on Mount Hermon's campus where both his parents were faculty members, earning him the honor of being a "double faculty brat." The legacy and example of his parents, who cared deeply about their students and did things above and beyond what was required of them, is part of what drives his volunteerism to the school. He has served on the Alumni Council for many years, including being the Chair of the Awards Committee and a member of the Nominating Committee. His class leadership roles include Class Secretary, Reunion Co-chair for the Class of '59, and editor of a frequent and much-enjoyed class newsletter. He currently serves as an Advisor to NMH's East Northfield Water Company.

After Mount Hermon, Tom earned his BS in Mechanical Engineering from Northeastern University. He served in the US Army Corps of Engineers and had a long career as an engineer, ultimately retiring as Executive Director of New Jersey Water Supply. Tom's interest in engineering started while growing up doing summer jobs on campus, where worked on the farm, in the buildings and on the grounds. He fondly remembers Carroll Rikert and Harry Hueg, whose mentorship ignited his passion for engineering.

Tom's legacy of service extends beyond NMH, from coaching girls' gymnastics, serving on his church's Board of Trustees and various committees, leading mission trips and his long-standing work with Habitat for Humanity, building homes for first time and low to moderate income homebuyers.

In Humanities I class, current NMH students contemplate the questions: "Who am I?" and "How then shall I live my life?" Clearly, living and learning at Mount Hermon influenced Tom's answers to those important life questions. In recognition of his dedication and steadfast commitment to Northfield Mount Hermon School, we proudly present Thomas G. Baxter with the Lamplighter Award.

Distinguished Service Award

Valerie (Bowman) Jarrett '74

In her book, "Finding My Voice", Valerie (Bowman) Jarrett '74 writes that over a 30 year span her career was more of a zigzag than a straight upward trajectory. Alternating between the public and private sector, her chosen path ultimately reflects the NMH values of service to humanity and led to her becoming a role model for women, girls and people of color around the world.

After graduating from NMH, Valerie attended Stanford University with plans to study anthropology with Jane Goodall. She later attended University of Michigan law school and after graduating started her professional career at a high-powered law firm. Impressive as that was, Valerie listened to her inner voice and made what was an unusual career move at the time and started working in the public sector as a lawyer in the Harold Washington Administration, the first black mayor of the City of Chicago. She was later promoted to Deputy Chief of Staff and then Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Development, a cabinet position for Mayor Richard Daley. After leaving city government, she became CEO of The Habitat Company, a real estate development and management company in Chicago.

A longtime friend and confidant of both Michelle and former President Barack Obama, Valerie entered the national limelight when she served as Senior Advisor to the President for his two terms. She managed the Offices of Public Engagement, Intergovernmental Affairs, Urban Affairs, and chaired the White House Council on Women and Girls.

Upon leaving the White House, Valerie continued her career by serving on a range of boards. She is now the CEO and Board member of the Obama Foundation whose mission is to inspire, empower, and connect people to change their world. In addition to building the Obama Presidential Center, the foundation runs My Brother's Keeper and the Girls Opportunity Alliance which help young men of color and adolescent girls, respectively, reach their full potential. It also runs leadership programs across the US, Europe, Africa and Asia.

Valerie attended NMH for two years and has strong family ties to the school. Her mother Barbara Bowman, and 4 cousins attended either Northfield or Mount Hermon in the 1940's and 5 cousins who are Valerie's contemporaries, attended NMH in the 1970's. Notably, her mother also received the Distinguished Service Award from the school in 1966.

Valerie's distinguished career is an example of an alumnae who found her purpose and became a role model and leader who has made and continues to make tremendous contributions to our society. We are proud and honored to bestow the 2024 NMH Alumni Association's Distinguished Service Award to Valerie (Bowman) Jarrett.