

WAYNE "RED" KASTNER - (PHS 1963)

When it comes to meeting the Portage High School Hall of Fame requirements, Wayne "Red" Kastner checked virtually all the boxes. Red is a shining example of what it means to give back to a community.

Throughout his distinguished career Red has received much notable recognition. He was inducted into the Portage Fast Pitch Hall of Fame, received the Distinguished Service Award from the Wisconsin Baseball Coaches Association, a commendation from the Mayor for a daring rescue at the power plant, Portage Daily Register's "Person of the Year" in 2014, and Observer's "Man of the Year" in 1996.

In spite of the recognitions, Red's one true passion remains assisting the youth of our community. He umpired high school baseball and refereed basketball for 21 years. Kastner has coached at all levels of baseball starting with little league, Jr. Legion, and Sr. Legion until 2014. He is still active in baseball as the announcer at Portage Warrior baseball and Portage Skeeters Home Talent games.

Mr. Kastner is very involved in the Elks Club. He served as Exalted Ruler from 2006-2009. He has received 5 Grand Exalted Ruler awards for his dedication to the club and community. For the past 31 years he served as the club's Youth Activities Director. His crowning achievement was putting together the annual kid's fisheriee each June at Pauquette Park; a very popular event with adults and kids. For his dedication, Red has received a commendation from the Wisconsin DNR for the advancement of youth fishing.

For the past 20 years Red has also served on the Elks Hoop Shoot committee directing the free throw competition. Many of you may have seen him around town but didn't know it, as he often bears a striking resemblance to Jolly St. Nick. He has played Santa for the police and fire departments, Chamber of Commerce, and the Elks Club.

In 1977 two of his coworkers were performing maintenance inside the smoke stack at the Columbia Power Plant. There was a malfunction with equipment and they were unable to get out. After quickly analyzing the situation, a helicopter was brought in to assist in the rescue. Red volunteered to be strapped in the harness and he was then lowered inside the smoke stack to retrieve his fellow coworkers. Thanks to quick action there were no injuries

Red is married to his wife Vickie, and has a son John.