



# VIKING ALERT

The Newsletter Published by the North Canton Alumni Association – Fall 2025

## *Hall of Distinction Class of 2025*



*(Left to Right) Gina Boring, Gary Coen, Peggy McClain, Benny Griffiths, Ted Hall.*

### **Gina Boring**



Gina Boring has evolved from a local leader to a national expert. Because of her dedication and expertise, hospitals across the nation have improved the working conditions of nurses and the satisfaction of patients.

Gina was born to Joseph and Alice Spotleson as the third of four daughters. Both of her parents were hardworking

children of American immigrants. Her mother was an active and involved mother who took her to lessons and regular visits to the roller rink and Willow Springs pool. Her father worked for the Ford Motor Company and as a brick layer for fireplaces, patios, and other odd jobs.

Gina attended Orchard Hill, the North Canton Junior High, and graduated from Hoover High School in 1978. She attended Grace College in Winona Lake, Indiana, where she earned an Associate Degree in Nursing in 1981. She later earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of North Alabama and a Masters from Walden University.

In June of 1983, Gina began working as an emergency room nurse at Aultman Hospital. She spent 19 years serving patients during some of their scariest moments. In 2002 she led the initial Magnet Recognition Award Designation at Aultman. This involved creating a shared governance model for nursing and serving as the site coordinator for the National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators. Her work at Aultman opened the doors to other opportunities. She was hired as a consultant at HealthLinx to help dozens of healthcare organizations earn their own Magnet Recognition. She continued to excel at HealthLinx  
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and eventually became an Executive Vice President. She retired in July of 2022, but only briefly. This year, she accepted a position as the Chief of Operations at Nursing Consulting Partners.

Gina has worked as a national speaker and has written articles about quality-driven outcomes and nursing excellence. She became a Board Certified Nurse Executive by the American Nurses Credentialing Center in 2007. She has been a member of Sigma Theta Tau

International – the Honor Society of Nursing – since 2005.

In addition to her devotion to nursing, Gina is also a prolific baker. For a time, she owned Bella Dolci, a bakery on the North Canton square, and she still bakes out of her home. She earned a reputation for the cookies she donated to actively deployed military troops.

Gina met her husband, Ken, at Aultman hospital – he is a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist. They have been



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married for 42 years. They have two sons, Tyler and Collin, and four grandchildren. Her mother, Alice, still lives independently in North Canton. Gina hosts Sunday family dinners and baking cookies for her grandkids is one of her greatest joys. She loves to travel anywhere there is a beach and sunshine – from Florida to Italy. And she gardens at the North Canton Community Garden where she and Ken grow their own peppers, tomatoes, and zucchini.

## Gary W. Coen



Whether it is at an emergency, a drill, or an inspection, you have probably seen the white-haired Gary W. Coen in the vicinity – taking care of North Canton's residents with deliberate and professional care.

Gary was born in Steubenville, Ohio, in April of 1959 as the third of four children, with 2 brothers and a sister. His father was in the National Guard – based out of

Akron-Canton Airport but traveled extensively with his job in the military – so his mom had the primary role in raising the children. His family moved to North Canton in 1964 one week before school started, and he became a kindergartener at Portage School. He attended Portage through 7th grade; in fact, his class was the first to be at Portage as a purely 7th grade building. He fondly remembers past Hall of Distinction inductee, Mr. Nutt, as a favorite teacher who sparked his interest in history. He participated in choir throughout high school. His class was also the first to attend classes at the North Campus on 7th Street. He took small engine classes with Mr. Minetti who helped grow his interest in mechanics.

After graduating from high school in 1977, Gary began working as a technician at Willis Pontiac. He was cross-trained by the seasoned mechanics in the shop. He learned

automotive painting at White Engines and, in 1985, he began work as a mechanic at Ewing Chevrolet. He was an eager learner who took advantage of the training offered him. He remained at Ewing Chevrolet until 1998.

After high school, Gary had applied at the North Canton Fire Department, but at the time it was difficult to join. In 1986, when Dale Hargrove became chief, Gary and his brother Bob were asked to join as volunteers.

Gary was always an eager learner and took advantage of any opportunity to improve his fire-fighting skills. He took basic firefighting and first responder classes in 1986 and 1987. In 1989, he took National Fire Academy classes and Stark State Fire Safety Inspector classes on weekends. In the early 1990s, he finished Firefighter 2 classes, began attending the annual Northern Ohio Arson Conferences, and

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earned his EMT card as a member of Stark County's first national registry class. He became a CPR instructor in 1996. His training continued to include Basic and Advanced Fire Investigation, Building Construction, Confined Space training, Underground Storage Tank Inspection, Pyrotechnics, Thermal Imaging Cameras, and Car Seat Installation. In 1998, he became the second ever full-time employee at the North Canton Fire Department as a fire inspector. His devotion to learning had given him all the requirements he needed. He was promoted to Captain in 2003.

Gary has a passion to educate the public about fire safety and has used his skills to support the community of North Canton. He is an honorary lifetime member of the North Canton Jaycees and worked with them on the annual fair and July 4th fireworks. He also coordinated the Jaycees Safety Town classes each year. He

brought car seat checks to the North Canton Fire Department. He manages fire safety drills at Walsh University and all of the North Canton schools. He worked with the Chamber of Commerce and was even responsible for getting Santa to the annual Christmas Tree Lighting.

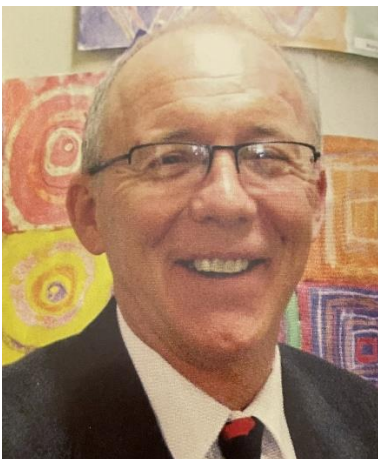
Gary was active outside of North Canton as well. He co-chaired the Ohio Firefighters Conference when Stark County hosted it in 1999. He was on the committee in 1997 to purchase the Stark County Fire Safety Trailer that was used at schools throughout the county, and he co-chaired the Stark County Regional Fire School. He participated in the annual EMS Week kick-off breakfast, the Fire Prevention breakfast, and the Stark County Firefighters Association County Memorial Service for 34 years.

Gary has been honored for his service. He was North Canton Firefighter of the year in 2000 and the Stark County

Firefighter of the year in 2006. He has been honored by the Jaycees, the Orange Crush booster club, and even a Principal's Award from fellow inductee, Benny Griffiths. Most recently, he received the Dave DeMeo Award at the Fire Prevention breakfast in 2024.

Gary was raised at Northminster Presbyterian Church but has excellent relationships with all of North Canton's churches because of his role as fire inspector. He lives with his girlfriend, Kim George, and enjoys having his siblings in town with him. Gary has hobbies outside of firefighting. He is a member of the NorthEastern Ohio Camaro Club and has 2 1969 Camaros. He is a member of the National Hot Rod Association and has been drag racing locally and divisionally since 1977. Gary was Track Champion at Magnolia Drag Strip in 2008. Additionally, he has purchased two former North Canton fire trucks to restore.

## Benny T. Griffiths



Northwood Principal Benny T. Griffiths had a unique personal approach that set him apart – he knew nearly every student and parent by name, making each one feel valued. His commitment to his students, his parents, and his staff made a lasting impression on each and every one.

Benny was born February 26, 1948, to Don and June Griffiths and grew up in Massillon. He was the oldest of four children. His father worked at Republic

Steel and, for a time, Benny did too. After he graduated from Washington High School, Benny attended Kent State Stark as a business administration major. His first job was in the accounting department at Republic.

At Kent, Benny met his wife Suzanne whom he credits with convincing him to pursue a career in education. He did his student teaching at Northwood Elementary, and, after

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graduating from Malone in 1974, he was hired to teach second grade at Northwood. He was the first male hired to teach in the primary grades in North Canton. He also began coaching high school track and middle school cross country.

In 1980, Benny was selected to establish the district's gifted and talented program. He earned his Masters in Gifted Education at Kent State and has also earned certification in Elementary Administration, supervision, and as a superintendent. Benny held his position as supervisor of gifted and talented until 1989 when fellow inductee Peggy McClain assumed the role. During his tenure, he created a gifted summer program, established the high school Academic Challenge team, served as summer school principal, and worked as an instructor at Malone.

In 1989, Benny briefly left North Canton to take a principal position at L.J. Smith Elementary School in Massillon. His school was K through 6, and he also supervised the gifted program. In 1994, Benny was back where he belonged at

Northwood where he served as principal until his retirement in 2010.

Benny has been busy beyond his paid school responsibilities as well. He has served as a Charter member of the North Canton City Schools Educational Endowment Fund, coordinated North Canton City Schools Corporate Cup, implemented the Outdoor Learning Lab at Northwood, and was on the Stark County Administrator's Leadership Team. He has been a member of the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the Stark County International Reading Association. He has been a member of the Education Committee at the Canton Chamber of Commerce, a board member at the Massillon West Stark Chamber of Commerce, and coordinated the building of a Habitat for Humanity home. He coached youth basketball at the Y, was the announcer for Hoover's Boys' Basketball games, and was the starter for the first North Canton YMCA July 4th

race. After his retirement, he served as a community liaison for Absolute Home Health and Hospice Care Services.

Benny has been honored for the work that he has done. He not only was awarded the Business Plan Award from the Massillon West Stark Chamber, but they have since named it after him. He was awarded the Martha Holden Jennings Scholar Award, the Outstanding Principal's Award from the Stark County PTA, and the YMCA North Canton Leadership and Fellowship Award. Each year a Hoover Senior earns the Six Pillars of Character Scholarship Award in his name, and six times a Hoover senior has chosen him as their honored educator.

Benny has been married to Suzanne since 1969. Together they established New Home Church in 2018 where he is an active participant in the worship service. The church has a reputation for its involvement in community outreach. He is also a current member of the Patient Voice Committee at Aultman Hospital. He enjoys reading, singing, planting flowers and playing golf.

## Attention 2025 Graduates!

Please enjoy this printed version of the alumni newsletter on behalf of the North Canton Alumni Association! To stay up-to-date with future newsletters, scan the QR code and enter your email to receive a digital copy of the newsletter moving forward.





## Ted W. Hall



As a co-worker of his once said, "every school district needs a Ted Hall." North Canton City Schools was most fortunate to have had the original.

Ted was born in Canton, Ohio, on February 10, 1955 to Harry and Laura Hall. He grew up in Perry Local Schools where his father was a teacher, coach, and Audio Visual coordinator, and his mother was a school secretary and journalist for the Massillon Evening Independent. On his street in Perry Heights, 5 houses were owned by Halls. He grew up with 11 cousins who are like siblings to him.

Ted was a proud Perry Panther. While in school, he was in the Junior Police Safety Patrol, managed most of the school's sports, and helped the teachers with AV equipment. After graduating in 1973, he attended Kent State Stark Campus for his first three years of college before graduating from the main campus in 1977

with a degree in comprehensive social studies education.

Ted did his student teaching at Hoover High School under the tutelage of Paul Kieffer and was offered a long-term substitute job in the fall of 1977 which turned into the beginning of his long career in North Canton. He taught American History, Consumer Economics, World Studies, and Government while at Hoover. Additionally, he assisted with curriculum planning, National Honor Society, Boys and Girls State, and – like his father before him – coordinated Audio Visual services at Hoover and for the district. In 1981, he earned his Masters degree in Curriculum and Instruction and as a Media Specialist.

In 2000, Ted left the classroom. He served as District Director of Media Services where he was the technology representative on strategic planning committees, implemented a district learning program to give kids amazing virtual field trips, coordinated activities in Hoover Hall, managed the district's public relations, and ensured that North Canton would have televisions in every classroom and a district television station. He was instrumental in establishing Hoover's acclaimed video productions program. In 2010, he became assistant principal – first at North Canton Middle School and then at Hoover. He was the Dean of Students at the Early Childhood Center and managed

the transition from the Kindergarten Center to all day kindergarten in the K-2 buildings. After retiring from North Canton in 2012, he became Dean of Students at Portage Collaborative Montessori School.

Ted has been active outside his work in the schools. From 2015 to 2023 he was the co-owner of Hall Community Development which administered grant money to help struggling homeowners. These grants resulted in 111 homeowners receiving repairs and 68 receiving complete home remodels including lead abatement. Ted was the campaign treasurer for Mayor Wilder as well as four North Canton Board of Education members. He served on the North Canton Schools Educational Enhancement committee from 2001 to 2025 and was its president from 2021 to 2025. He served on the board of the North Canton Student Loan Foundation, was district liaison to North Canton Little League and volunteered for the North Canton Heritage Society. He continues to serve on Citizens Supporting Excellence in Education and the board of Crossroads United Methodist Church.

Ted has been honored for his service. He was named Outstanding Teacher of American History by the Canton (story continued on page 6)



Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1995, received the Award for Outstanding Contribution to Excellence in Education in 1998 from the North Canton Educational Endowment Committee, was named a Person of Character by the Stark County Educational Service Center, and earned the John Smith Award for

Outstanding Community Service in 2024 from the North Coast Ohio Antique Classic Boat Society.

Ted met his wife Rebecca in 1977. They are parents to Hoover graduate Peter Hall who now lives in Boston. Ted is active at Crossroads United Methodist Church in Canton and Branchport United Methodist in

New York. His hobbies include boating – especially antique wood boats – and he volunteers at the North Coast Ohio Antique Classic Boat Society as well as the Finger Lakes Boating Museum. He also enjoys fishing, working with antique photography and AV equipment, and spending time with the Hall family and his North Canton family.

## Peggy Bailey McClain



When Peggy Bailey McClain was interviewed for Our Town North Canton, she shared that she “loved seeing how everything works together in the [school] district.” Her bird’s eye view as Director of Curriculum gave her plenty of opportunity to watch and participate in that happening.

Peggy was born as the middle of three daughters to Charles L. and Faye Bailey. She grew up in the small town of Three Springs in South-

Central Pennsylvania. She enjoyed small town life and was an avid reader. She began playing the trumpet in 4th grade and has continued throughout her lifetime. She graduated at the top of her class at Southern Huntington County High School in 1965. After high school, she attended Shippensburg State College and graduated in the fall of 1968 with a degree in Elementary Education.

Peggy met her husband, Myron, in middle school and they dated throughout high school and college. They married in December of 1968. Peggy began her teaching career during the 1968-69 school year with a class of 34 third graders in Three Springs. When Myron graduated from Penn State and got a job at Goodyear, the couple moved to North Canton, and Peggy began teaching 2nd grade at Greentown School. She continued there until 1973 when she and Myron began their young family.

After taking time with her three children, Peggy returned to education in 1985. She had completed her Masters’ degree

in Supervision with an emphasis on gifted education because of her own gifted children. Later, she earned her Assistant Superintendent certification. She was hired as the first full-time gifted education teacher in North Canton’s Guided Independent Study Program (also known as GISP) in 1985.

In 1989, Peggy became the supervisor of the gifted program at North Canton. During her tenure, she brought many innovations. She expanded the gifted program to include middle school students in the Discover program, she introduced Camp Invention under the auspices of the National Invention Center, and she expanded summer school enrichment opportunities. Additionally, she helped to found the Federal Academic Challenge League at the high school level and began the Stark County Middle School Academic Challenge Program.

In 1993, Peggy became North Canton’s Director of Curriculum. She was the

*(story continued on page 7)*



district's test coordinator during a period of time when mandatory school testing was increasing. She oversaw the professional development programs for all of the school staff, participated in interviewing and hiring, and worked with homeschool families. Peggy was instrumental in forming the Portage Collaborative Montessori School – a public school option for four local districts which was originally housed in North Canton. She wrote grants to help underperforming gifted students and to start the American Sign Language program at Hoover. She earned a large grant from the Ohio Department of Education for the North Canton's Local Professional Development Committee because of its exemplary work.

Peggy has been honored for her achievements. She was

selected to participate in the Classroom of the Future Curriculum Writing Program with Ashland University. In 1997, she received the Leadership in Education Award from the McKinley chapter of Phi Delta Kappa. She earned the Education Endowment Fund Outstanding Contribution to Excellence in Education Award in 2001. When she ended her career at North Canton in 2009, the Education Endowment Fund named the special \$2000 yearly grant "The Peggy McClain NCEE Big Idea Grant."

Peggy and Myron have recently moved to Dublin, Ohio. While in North Canton, they attended The North Canton Chapel where Peggy served on two building committees, taught Sunday School, was a member of the strategic planning committee, headed the meal ministry program, served on the

Women's Ministry Planning Committee, and was a member of the church choir and orchestra. She is currently active at Grace Polaris Church in Worthington, Ohio. She maintains a connection to North Canton as a member of the Flo Rankin Memorial Scholarship Committee.

In her free time, Peggy enjoys quilting, sewing and embroidery. She is still an avid reader. She enjoys playing games, doing puzzles, and baking with anyone who will join her. She hosts a Grandma Camp Week for her three grandchildren. Peggy and Myron's daughter Amanda, her husband Chuck and their two children live in Columbus. Their son Matthew lives in Brooklyn, New York, with wife Christina and son Finn, and their youngest son Andrew and his significant other Kelsey also live in Brooklyn.

## From the Viking Vision: Construction Updates

### Middle School Construction Begins

The community will begin to see activity at the site for our new middle school on 7th Street in front of Hoover High School. A construction fence will be in place soon and site preparation will begin. We will keep the community updated on our website and on social

media throughout the summer as the project progresses.

### Hoover Aux Gym Parking Lot and Door #31 Closed During Construction

The Aux Gym lot will be closed for the summer as part of the prep work for the new middle school site. It will reopen

before the start of the new school year. Door #31 at Hoover High School will no longer be accessible and will remain closed for the duration of construction. This means our athletes and coaches will need to adjust where they enter the building. We're recommending that families and athletes begin using Door #1, where there's ample parking.





## ***Encourage Graduating Seniors to Apply for One of Our Scholarships!***



## ***Donate Today!***



The Alumni Association is collecting dues and donations from our members. As a reminder, Yearly dues are \$15 and Lifetime dues are \$100. And we always welcome donations to our scholarship account.

Donate now: [https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted\\_button\\_id=F52CYN223T8MQ](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=F52CYN223T8MQ)

(Or use the above QR Code!)

(PayPal charges us, a non-profit, a service fee. If you choose to cover that fee, we will be most appreciative!)

### **James Phillip Holl Scholarship**

Do you know of any North Canton Hoover graduating seniors who are planning on technical school, trade school, two-year university, or an apprenticeship? Have them apply for this scholarship!

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdf62oQ0wyoZ38mKYX0o86VjdAXiG2xhYb-Dbq24sBMThzU1w/viewform>

or

<http://www.northcantonalumni.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Scholarship-Holl-Trades.pdf>

### **G. Kenneth Oberlin Eagle Scout Scholarship**

Do you know of any North Canton Hoover graduating seniors who are Eagle Scouts? Have them apply for this scholarship!

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeRlti0I2I2LAhbm1aMY87nYOZ3F80GYC08upU5qUDQ4DbIq/viewform>

or

<http://www.northcantonalumni.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Scholarship-GKO-Eagle-FINAL.pdf>





## Reunions!!

### *Class of 2005*



**The class of 1960** is planning a get-together at Walthers Twin Tavern on October 11 at 1pm. For more information, contact Paul Paparone at [ppaparone@neo.rr.com](mailto:ppaparone@neo.rr.com).

**The class of 1965** will hold its 60th class reunion on October 17 and 18 - Saturday evening will be held at Arrowhead country club in North Canton- Friday evening ice breaker is at Mulligans Pub. For more information, contact Cathie Woods Pepper at 330-495-6405.

**The class of 1975** is planning a 50 year celebration weekend, October 10-12, 2025. Home football game Friday night, as well as an ALL ALUMNI mixer at the Barrel Room. Saturday plans include a Fair Oaks school tour and Athletic complex tour in the morning, and a 6pm celebration at Arrowhead Event Center. Sunday morning starts at 10am with a church service at the Y, followed by brunch at a nearby restaurant. For more info, contact Jim Strauch at [jim.strauch75@gmail.com](mailto:jim.strauch75@gmail.com).

**The class of 1980** is planning a 45 year reunion on October 24-25. Friday night football at the stadium; tickets available through the HomeTown Fan mobile app or at the stadium kiosks (North gate only). Post-game gathering at Walther's Twin Tavern, 430 Applegrove St. NW. Saturday reunion will be casual attire at The Barrel Room, 7901 Cleveland Ave NW, starting 7pm. Cash bar.

**The class of 1985** is planning to celebrate their 40 year reunion on the weekend of October 3-4. The plans will include the Hoover home football game versus McKinley on Friday, October 3, and a celebration on Saturday, October 4 at 6:00pm at Walther's Twin Tavern. For more information contact Cathy Changet at 330.704.1377 or [Cathy.Changet@gmail.com](mailto:Cathy.Changet@gmail.com).



## **Recent Deaths**

***Class of 1947 - Jean Allen Owens***

***Class of 1954 - Ted Brown  
Richard "Dick" Smith***

***Class of 1956 - Carol Gillespie Ready***

***Class of 1959 - Donella Ruth Rohrer Daily  
Bonnie Lou Bennett-  
Kirkbride-Cook-Dyer***

***Class of 1962 - J. Michael Smith***

***Class of 1965 - Ronald J. Manse***

***Class of 1960 - Lee Cramer***

***Class of 1970 - William "Bill" Shaub***

***Class of 1972 - Arthur Hultman  
Paul "Pete" Rollins***

***Class of 1973 - Eugene Swearingin***

***Class of 1974 - Mark Garber Sr.***

***Katherine "Kathy" Hall***

***Class of 1975 - Denny Davis***

***Class of 1976 - Rebecca Goodin Swope***

***Class of 1979 - Matthew Barton Kolarik  
Karen Ryan Willunger***

***Class of 1991 - Clifford "Scott" Smith***

***Class of 1998 - Amanda Rollins***

***Class of 2011 - Skylar Edward Correll***

***T. Daniel Donnelly – Middle School teacher***

***Betty Ford – Head cook at Northwood  
Elementary***

***Dr. Thurman Ed Tobias – longtime supporter***

***Norma Jean Taylor – former HS Secretary***

Do **YOU** have a newsworthy article or piece of interest that you would like to share with your fellow alumni in our newsletter? If so, please drop us a line at: North Canton Alumni Association, P.O. Box 2534, North Canton, OH 44720 **OR** contact us at [www.northcantonalumni.org](http://www.northcantonalumni.org) **OR** contact us by email: [NorthCantonAlumni@gmail.com](mailto:NorthCantonAlumni@gmail.com).

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