

Class of 2023

La Crosse Central High School and the Central High School Alumni Association are proud to announce the 2023 inductees into the La Crosse Central High School Hall of Excellence: Colonel Matthew E. Hanson, Roald Gundersen, and Alex Vaver.



Colonel Hanson graduated from La Crosse Central in 1997 and enrolled in the Worcester Polytechnic Institute where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering. He then attended the United States Air Force Navigator School and went on to become an Electronic Warfare Officer. In 2006, he participated in Euro-NATO Pilot Training. In 2007 he was an A-10 student and a year later was an A-10 Pilot at Osan, Korea with the 25th Fighter Squadron along with being the Squadron Navigation and Plans Officer. In 2010 he became an A-10 Pilot with the 354th Fighter Squadron in Tucson, AZ and earned a Master's Degree from Texas A & M. In 2013 he was appointed the Strategy Guidance Team Chief at the 607th Air Operations Center in Korea. In 2015 he enrolled at the United States Army School of

Advanced Military Studies and earned another Masters Degree in Military Arts and Sciences. He then became Chief of Plans and Policy at Shaw Air Force Base and Commander of the 705th Training Squadron. In 2019 he attended the Air War College and earned his third Masters Degree in Strategic Studies. He then became Chief Contingency Planner for US European Command J5 in Stuttgart, Germany and went on to become Chief of Staff at NATO's Joint Airpower Competence Center in Von Seydlitz Kaserne, Germany.



Roald Gundersen graduated from Central High School in 1978 and went on to graduate from the Minneapolis College of Art & Design in 1979. He then attended the University of Minnesota where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in Architecture and one in Environmental Science. He then became the Project Designer of K+KZL Architects and Planners out of San Jose, CA where he worked on the restoration of a hundred-year-old timber and masonry cathedral. He was a Project Designer for Phoenix Solar Oasis in Tucson, Arizona and a Project Architect for Biosphere 2 in Oracle, Arizona. In 1991 he founded Roald Gundersen Design out of Stoddard, WI. Over the years he has worked on numerous projects in and around the La Crosse area such as the Driftless Straw Bale Farm & Greenhouse, Co-founded the Cameron Park Market Association and Canopy, The Book End House, the Myrick Hixon Ecopark Tree & Stair, and the Riverside Park

Bandshell. He was the founder and CEO of WholeTrees Architecture & Structures and presently is the founder of Gundersen Architecture & Structures.



Alex Vaver graduated from Bloomer High School in 1962. He attended the MacPhail College of Music in Minneapolis, MN and earned a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education. He was the Caledonia, MN Band Director from 1966-1974 and went on to attend Moorhead State University in 1971, earning a Masters of Science in Education along with joining the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra. He became an adjunct Professor at UW-La Crosse as the Instructor of Low Brass and Director of the Jazz Ensemble, "The Tribe". In 1973 he became the Pit Orchestra Conductor for the La Crosse Community Theatre and over the years conducted both "South Pacific" and "Les Misérables." In 1974 he became an Associate Conductor of the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra and then moved on to become the

Band Director at Central High School for 20 years. He was also an adjunct Professor of Music Education at Winona State University and their Basketball Band Director.

A reception will be held May 25th at 5:30 PM at Central High School in the Central High School Hall of Excellence. The induction ceremony will take place during Central High School's commencement ceremony on Friday, May 26th at 5:00 PM at the La Crosse Center.