

## 2014 Inaugural ISD 88 Hall of Fame Bios

### David Benson – Class of 1961

An inspiration. If you were to ask any of David Benson's fellow classmates from 1961 to describe him, this would be the resounding answer. Other words would be fun-loving, adventurous, funny, up-beat, positive, kind, humble, and generous. Born in New Ulm in 1943 without hands or feet, his life could have easily been one of hardship, but David had an exceptional can-do spirit. He embraced his limitations and turned them into something positive for himself and others.

Even as a young child, David's fortitude was evident. He learned to walk with wooden feet and write with a leather strap holding a pencil. He was active in Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts and participated in phy-ed and recess games. David spent much of his time at his grandmother Thornley's house and her unconditional love and patience is often credited for David's goodness and inner strength.

In high school David continued to not let his disabilities get in his way. He went to school dances, hung out with friends like any other student, and was on the New Ulm High School newspaper. He also enjoyed participating in water sports at the family's cabin. After graduation in 1961, David went to college at Mankato State University. There he joined a fraternity and became a regular college student. He took time off from school and eventually completed his bachelor's degree in sociology and psychology, with emphasis in Special Education, from St. Cloud State University in 1981. After graduation, David spent 24 years with the Robbinsdale School District working with preschool and elementary-aged children with special needs. He also worked part-time for several social service agencies that provided care and treatment for special needs children in their homes.

“In spite of his limitations, David led a successful life and was a role model to other children with disabilities, teaching and inspiring them to reach beyond their means.”

“David, through his determination and fortitude, overcame one challenge after another. He was not defined by what he couldn't do, but what he could accomplish.”

These quotes say it all. David was truly an inspiration.

