



# Bios for Oiler Alumni Hall of Fame Induction Class of 2021

April 13 2021 3:25 PM

WOOD RIVER - The Oiler Alumni Hall of Fame Selection Panel has recently elected the following eight outstanding EAWR alumni to its Hall of Fame Induction Class of 2021. The Induction Dinner is *tentatively* scheduled for some time in October 2021 (Date: TBD). The bio information below is the set of draft narratives that will eventually be inscribed on the individual plaques that will be displayed with the current Hall of Fame inductees. This group of eight will bring the total inducted into the Oiler Alumni Hall of Fame to 58.

The Oiler Alumni Hall of Fame was begun by the EAWR Board of Education in 2009 to recognize the accomplishments of all of those inducted to their respective professions and their communities. All of the new and previous inductees all share noteworthy professional, academic, and service accomplishments in their adult lives that the Oiler Alumni Hall of Fame seeks to celebrate and recognize.

Members of the Selection Panel are all EAWR Alumni: Frank Akers, Jean Bruce, Jesse Daniels, Norris Dorsey, Bob Kasten, Leigh Robinson, and Andrew Russell.

**Command Sergeant Major Phillip Barber** (Class of 1989) has enjoyed a distinguished career in the US Army, currently serving as the Senior Enlisted Army National Guard Advisor to the Deputy General of Operations, 1<sup>st</sup> United States Army. He advises on all matters pertaining to training and professional military education for roughly 18,000 enlisted soldiers, annually. His previous assignment was as the Command Sergeant Major, 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron, 106<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment, advising the commander of the squadron and supervising and enforcing standards for enlisted personnel in that organization. Phillip began his military career in 1989 as an infantryman and served as an anti-tank gunner in the 130<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. He rose

through the ranks as a squad leader, platoon sergeant, 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant and to his current rank as Command Sergeant Major. In 2000, he deployed to Kuwait for Operation Desert Spring. He has also been deployed to Germany (2002) with Task Force Santa Fe, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. In 2005, he was deployed with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division for Operation Iraqi Freedom III in Baghdad. In 2008, Sgt. Barber was deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan, serving as a Platoon Sergeant. Sergeant Major Barber's military awards include: Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal and numerous others. Plus, he holds the following Badges: Basic Parachutist, Pathfinder, Air Assault, and Combat Infantryman.

**John Barnerd** (Class of 1992) is a highly successful attorney with the Simmons-Conroy Law Firm, one of the nation's leading firms, which specializes - among other areas of law - in helping plaintiffs with medical conditions related to asbestos exposure and mesothelioma against large corporations and which has won record verdicts. Representing clients who suffer from mesothelioma and asbestos-related illnesses is Mr. Barnerd's specialty. Growing up in East Alton and witnessing neighbors who had suffered from asbestos exposure strengthened his passion for working in this area of personal injury litigation. Mr. Barnerd has been recognized by Super Lawyers magazine as a "Rising Star" 2008 – 2012; Best Lawyers: "Best Lawyers in America," 2020-2021, in the area of Plaintiffs' Mass Tort Litigation; and - in 2010, Chicago Lawyers Magazine recognized him as a top 40 Under 40 Illinois Attorney. John has been invited to speak on several legal panels as an asbestos expert. Notable appearances include the Mesothelioma Applied Research Foundation's first ever Legal Panel during the 2011 International Symposium on Malignant Mesothelioma, co-chair of the Midwest Asbestos Litigation Conference in St. Louis and presentations during the Plaintiffs' Asbestos Litigation Conference in Los Angeles. While at EAWR, John participated in many sports and clubs, including golf, basketball, NHS, Student Council, and band while also being named "Friendliest" by his senior classmates.

**Kent Biggerstaff** (Class of 1965) has been one of the nation's leading professional athletic trainers. Kent, a longtime Major League Baseball Athletic Trainer, began his athletic training career in 1967 and spent 36 years in professional baseball. During this time, he worked for the New York Mets, Milwaukee Brewers and spent his last 23 years in the Major Leagues as Head Athletic Trainer for the Pittsburgh Pirates. During this tenure as a professional baseball athletic trainer, he earned many honors including selection as the All Star Athletic Trainer in the National League in 1990, 1994 and 2002. Kent was also selected as the Athletic Trainer for the 1996 Major League All Star Tour of Japan and was named 2002 Major League Athletic Trainer of the Year. And in 2016, Biggerstaff was named a Professional Baseball Athletic Trainers Society Hall of Famer (PBATS), an honor only few have received. During his induction, it was noted that, "The NATA Hall of Fame is the highest honor in athletic training, and one that we all know Kent is extremely deserving of. He was an absolutely integral part of the inception

and growth of PBATS and has worked extremely hard to build an amazing reputation for the athletic training profession.” Since the end of his professional baseball athletic training career, Biggerstaff, a graduate of SIU-C, has spent time as an athletic trainer for the PGA Tour and the Summer Senior Olympics. While at EAWR, Kent envisioned a future in athletic training and either participated in sports or served as team manager in others.

**Ula Brazier** (Class of 1931 - posthumous award) was a tireless community volunteer who balanced her life as a homemaker with many neighborhood and community service experiences. For example, she was the first woman to be honored with a statuette from the Piasa Bird Council of the Boy Scouts in 1952. She also held many positions with the state and national levels of the PTA. Ula was the “neighborhood mom” who opened her house and yard to all of the neighborhood kids; drove kids who needed a ride to Vacation Bible School; transported neighborhood children to the State Fairgrounds in Springfield; and worked hard to make the East Alton Library a reality. One of her crowning achievements was being elected to the EAWR Board of Education, in 1959, where she served for ten years. In 1965, Ula was elected by the Board as its President - the first woman ever in the history of the school district! During her tenure on the school board, EAWR was growing in its enrollment, whereupon she became an integral part of the planning and construction of the East Building, one the most aesthetically pleasing school buildings even to this day. While, at EAWR, Ula graduated as Valedictorian at the age of 16 and was active in extracurricular clubs and activities.

**Norris Dorsey** (Class of 1950) is one of the most beloved and respected teachers and coaches in the history of EAWR. Countless alumni - many of whom have gone on to greater athletic and career successes - speak of the fatherly and character-building influence that Coach Dorsey had on their athletic performance, as well as their adult lives. Norris began his long career at EAWR as a P.E. and Health Teacher and later also taught Driver Education. And, in addition to coaching basketball and football in assistant roles, he was best known as the Head Baseball Coach from 1965-1982. During his tenure as Head Baseball Coach, Norris won three conference championships, three District championships and a Regional Championship, when EAWR played in the Southwestern Conference and, after 1971, the Mississippi Valley Conference. His varsity baseball teams compiled winning records in 15 of the 17 seasons in which he coached. His success led to the school board naming its baseball diamond, “Norris Dorsey Field.” Norris Dorsey also was a talented athlete in his own right, having won college scholarships to both Hannibal-LaGrange College (Basketball) and the University of Tulsa (Baseball), as well as progressing in the Milwaukee Braves minor league organization through Double-A as a pitcher. Norris also served his country as a soldier in the US Army, stationed in Japan. While at EAWR, Norris was a talented, multi-sport athlete and played for the legendary Chick Summers.

**Jake Ringering** (Class of 2000 - posthumous award) was a career firefighter for the Villages of East Alton (2001 - 2010) and Godfrey (2010-2019). With the Godfrey Fire Protection District, Jake had attained the rank of Captain on May 1, 2014. He was also the technical rescue officer, respiratory protection officer and a lead instructor for the department. He earned Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshal Certification in: Firefighter II, Firefighter III, Basic Operations Firefighter, Advanced Technician Firefighter, Fire Officer I, Hazardous Materials Awareness, Technical Rescue Awareness, Fire Service Vehicle Operator, Fire Apparatus Engineer, Vehicle and Machinery Operations, Rescue Specialist-Confined Space, Hazardous Materials First Responder Operations, Rope Operations, Fire Service Instructor I, Fire Service Instructor II, Fire Investigator, and Rescue Specialist-Vertical II/High Angle. As a result of his dedication to public service, Jake impacted many lives and countless individuals are alive today as a testament to that dedication. Jake also served as President of the Godfrey Firefighters Local 1692 and taught Fire Science at Lewis & Clark Community College. He was also a trainer/instructor through Max Fire Training. On Tuesday, March 5, 2019, Captain Ringering - in response to a residence fire - was killed in the line of duty. While at EAWR, Jake participated in baseball, golf, and club hockey and was voted "Most Talented" by his classmates.

**William Tiley** (Class of 1957) has spent a lifetime in engineering and tech. His career began in aircraft maintenance in the US Air Force where he became the youngest Master Instructor on record in training recruits. After being an enlisted man, he was enrolled in the "Operation Bootstrap" program at the University of Illinois, where he received his engineering degree and a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Commission in the Air Force, where he received recognition as a Maintenance and Engineering officer. During the Vietnam War, he was awarded a Bronze Star, three Meritorious Service medals, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with a Silver Star. After his military career (1985) he worked as a civilian engineer and pilot with the Caterpillar Corporation in San Antonio. In 1997, he started an aviation engineering company called Job Aire that employs 250 people and where he invented three mechanical devices for passenger carrying aircraft. His latest project is the co-invention of an "Emission Zero Module" which is being produced by a new company, CoLambda. This device converts carbon monoxide to harmless water vapor and will be marketed in April 2021. While at EAWR, Bill was - by his own joking self-admission - "last in his class," but did participate in Band and Cross Country.

**Lt. Col. Jason Whipple (Retired)** (Class of 1994). Lt. Colonel Whipple - a 1998 West Point graduate - had a distinguished career and service record with the U.S. Army from 1998 - 2019. During his Army career, he led troops in various capacities: Executive Officer and later as a Budget & Maintenance Officer (Fort Campbell, KY); Company Commander and later a Brigade Planning officer (Korea); a Project Manager for Thermodynamics at West point; Division Director of the U.S. Army Analytic Center; a

Deputy Program Manager at the DOD Test and Assessment Agency; and Asst. Professor of Mechanical Engineering at West Point. After his active duty career in the Army, Jason continued his engineering career as a Science and Engineering Project Manager at the Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, NM, where he and his family live currently. LTC Whipple is an avid Christian and teaches Sunday School in Albuquerque. At West Point, he led a Bible study group of cadets. While at EAWR, Jason excelled in many sports such as basketball, football, and track. He was also voted “Most Likely to Succeed” by his classmates along with another Oiler Alumni Hall-of-Famer, Dr. Laura (Pulaski) Hill.