

SJPS Foundation names 2017 Distinguished Alumni

By TONY WITTKOWSKI - HP Staff Writer | Posted: Thursday, March 16, 2017 6:00 am

ST. JOSEPH — Nina Davuluri, William Emery and Rob Fredrickson all grew up in St. Joseph school system.

Now all three will be honored for their accomplishments in June by the St. Joseph Public Schools Foundation.

The SJPS Foundation released its list of honorees for the 2017 Distinguished Alumni this week, which included a posthumous selection. Emery, class of 1942, Fredrickson, class of 1989, and Davuluri, class of 2007, will be recognized at a special ceremony on June 4 and at the high school commencement.

The Distinguished Alumni Committee met in January to go over applications collected through December. After the reviewal period, the committee sent its recommendations to the Foundation's Board of Trustees.

Bob Ehrenberg, chairman of Distinguished Alumni Committee, said there were eight new nominees this year, as well as the other nominations from previous years that were carried over.

“Their nomination forms were compelling and everyone on our committee had some prior knowledge of all these individuals,” Ehrenburg said. “It was a very difficult selection process this year. These three rose to the top and we are really excited about this award ceremony.”

This is the sixth year the Foundation has honored various St. Joseph alumni.

Get to know them

William K. Emery, M.D., was a posthumous nominee for the committee. He died in January 2015 at the age of 90.

Emery was a third-generation family physician in St. Joseph. Born in Ohio, he graduated from St. Joseph High School in 1942. He earned his medical degree from the University of Michigan in 1949 and served two years as a physician for the U.S. Army in Germany.

In 1955, he returned to St. Joseph and practiced family medicine in the office he first shared with his father above the former Uptown Drugs, until his retirement. It is estimated that Emery delivered 2,000 babies over the course of his career.



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William Emery

He was the director of corporate health affairs for Whirlpool Corp. and served the company for 37 years. As an advocate for public health, he served 15 years on the Berrien County Board of Health. He served on the Lake Michigan College Foundation board for 12 years, worked with the Whirlpool Foundation, and served on the board of directors and as president of Sarett Nature Center.

In 2011, he was awarded the Bernard C. Radde Distinguished Service Award by LMC for his community contributions. Emery was married to his high school sweetheart, Arlene Hetler, for 68 years. She died in 2016 and they are survived by three children.

Rob Fredrickson was born and raised in St. Joseph. Fredrickson was a three-sport standout athlete at St. Joseph, graduating in 1989, and earned an athletic scholarship to Michigan State University to play football.

At MSU, Fredrickson was an All-American selection at linebacker, graduating in 1993 with a degree in business administration. He was awarded the Chester Brewer Award, which recognizes distinguished performance in athletics and scholarship. He was selected in the first round of the NFL draft by the then-Los Angeles Raiders in 1994 and played nine seasons with the Raiders, Detroit Lions and Arizona Cardinals until his retirement in 2003.

In 2008, he joined the radio broadcast team for the Arizona Cardinals and is also an account manager for Bonneville International in Phoenix. Fredrickson is an active member of a Phoenix volunteer group, The Thunderbirds, which has donated more than \$100 million to Arizona charities. He lives in Scottsdale with his wife and three boys.

Nina Davuluri graduated from St. Joseph High School in 2007 and the University of Michigan in 2011. She gained international acclaim by becoming the first contestant of Indian descent to win the Miss America Competition in 2014.

As an active motivational speaker and advocate for civil rights, Davuluri has traveled the world to address an array of audiences on topics of diversity and inclusion. Using her platform “Celebrating Diversity Through Cultural Competency,” she launched a social media campaign to encourage civil dialogue on diversity issues.

In addition to her personal platform, Davuluri also has a partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Department of Education promoting women in science, technology, engineering and math-related fields.

She has collaborated with tech companies, including Google, Facebook, Dell and Texas Instruments, to advance their STEM initiatives, and has worked with many charities and organizations in the U.S. and India advocating for equality and education.

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