

2013-2014

Honored Guest – Ms. Lori Rackl - Class of 1987

Lori Rackl has been the recipient of multiple national awards during her 20-year career as a journalist. Her words have graced the pages of many publications, from Reader's Digest to newspapers across the country, including the Miami Herald, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and the Boston Herald. She currently holds a high-profile role as TV critic for the Chicago Sun-Times, one of the largest daily newspapers in the country.

The oldest of three children, Lori graduated from Addison Trail among the top of her class in 1987. She received several scholarships and attended the University of Illinois, where she graduated magna cum laude in 1991 with a degree in political science.

Getting her start in journalism as a part-time freelancer for the Daily Herald, she produced so many stories that the Herald hired her full-time in 1993. Lori's deadline prowess, reporting skills and colorful writing style helped her quickly climb the ladder at the Herald. Her editors promoted her to the Naperville beat, the largest community in the newspaper's coverage area. She then moved on to the Herald's metro desk, covering consumer affairs.

Lori especially excelled as a feature writer covering the demanding health beat. Her stories won national awards from the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, the American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, and the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons, who'd given its award to Time Magazine the previous year. In 2001, Lori earned the Epilepsy Foundation's National Distinguished Journalism Award for her story on a suburban Chicago man who died when police manhandled him during a seizure.

The Sun-Times recruited Lori to come on board as a staff reporter in 2004. She focused on health, winning a local Peter Lisagor award for a story on nurse staffing issues in Chicago-area hospitals. Editors also asked her to handle big breaking news stories and assigned her to cover the Illinois Health Facilities Planning Board, a panel that would become a key part of the successful federal corruption prosecution of former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

One of her stories in 2005, "Disfigured and Despondent" became the centerpiece of a national breaking-news award received by the Sun-Times. She wrote: *"Disfigured, increasingly destitute and desperate, Bart A. Ross spent the past dozen years battling the medical and legal system, convinced he'd been wronged. The fight took the 57-year-old Polish immigrant on a revenge-seeking odyssey, culminating with the slaying of Judge Joan Lefkow's husband and mother Feb. 28, according to a note left by Ross before he killed himself near Milwaukee on Wednesday."*

Her other Sun-Times honors include recognition for a series of stories she did on Illinois' wounded veterans. She also was named a finalist for a prestigious Investigative Reporters and Editors Association award for a series of articles about sex offenders and ex-convicts living in local nursing homes. She wrote that series with her husband, Chris Fusco, a Sun-Times investigative reporter. Their nursing home articles sparked changes in Illinois law and won the Herman Kogan Media Award from the Chicago Bar Association. Before becoming the paper's TV Critic in 2011, Lori spent several years as the Sun-Times Sunday Travel editor. She also penned a weekly travel column, visiting more than 60 countries.

Lori has a passion for traveling and one of her favorite quotes is by St. Augustine, "The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page." Besides her distinguished career in journalism, Lori is a loving daughter, wife, stepmother and aunt.

PROGRAM

Lori Rackl

Mrs. Cindy Brunns

Mr. Adam Cibulka, Principal, Addison Trail High School

Mr. Terence Bachus

Terry Bachus began his tenure at Addison Trail in the fall of 1966 when he was hired to teach German and coach baseball. He became the Foreign Language Department Chair in 1970, a position he held until his retirement in 1994. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in German from Elmhurst College in 1962, and his Master's Degree from the University of Iowa. Among his most memorable activities during his academic career was backpacking through Germany and Austria while the Berlin wall was still in existence.

After completing his undergraduate studies, Terry began teaching German and coaching baseball at Crete-Monee High School in Chicago's far south suburbs. Subsequently, he learned from a former mentor at York High School of a new school that was being built in Addison, Illinois. He was told by her that if he was interested she would "put in a good word for him." It must have worked because he became a member of the AT faculty. Herr Bachus was one of the "elite pioneer teachers" on staff for the first opening day of Addison Trail High School.

In 1968 Terry married AT Physical Education and Health teacher Joyce Hardesty. They are the proud parents of two married sons, and also the grandparents of five girls.

Mr. Christopher Fusco

Chris Fusco has been a reporter at the Chicago Sun-Times since September 2000, most recently specializing in investigative reports on state, city and county government. His work with two other reporters led to the indictment last year of a nephew of former Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley in the death of 21-year-old David Koschman. Other stories by Fusco exposed widespread disabled-parking cheating at parking meters in Chicago, prompting a new state law that is expected to save city taxpayers tens of millions of dollars a year.

His work has been honored nationally by the Association of Capitol Reporters and Editors (First Place, State-Government Beat Coverage, 2006) and also by Investigative Reporters and Editors.

Fusco, 40, graduated from Marist High School in 1990 and Illinois Wesleyan University in 1994. He worked at the suburban Chicago Daily Herald before joining the Sun-Times.