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# LEGACY LEDGER

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER OF LEGACY NAFC



*A Message From NAFC Education Foundation  
Executive Director, Tyler Bliss*

As this school year comes to a close, we'd like to take a moment to recognize the teachers, staff members, administrators, nurses, food services workers, bus drivers, custodians, and other school professionals who make NAFCs thrive. Our children, and our community, have so much to be thankful for. Congratulations on another successful school year!

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# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

If you're a kid from Indiana, here's a path to great achievement: earn an engineering degree. Examine the careers of astronauts Frank Borman or (the late) Gus Grissom. Aim for the stars in choosing a school. They both did, studying at three of the best engineering schools anywhere. Borman... our country's oldest living astronaut... went to America's oldest engineering school: the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He was commissioned as an officer in the Air Force (allowed back in 1950 because the USAF Academy did not exist yet). He also earned a graduate degree from Caltech. Grissom stayed in state and graduated from Purdue - - as did the two alumni profiled here this month.

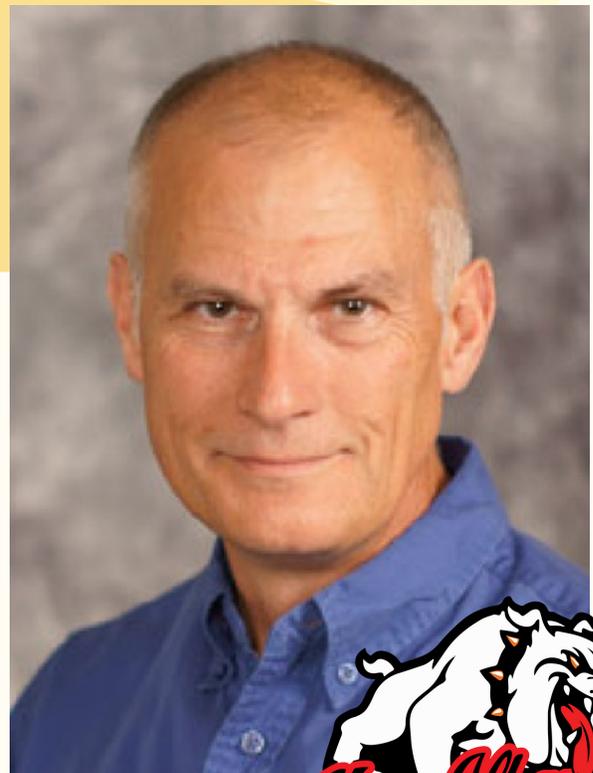
Mike Ott and Jeff Pearl studied different fields of engineering, yet they both got a great education and followed their own visions. Maybe they don't (yet) have the same household name recognition as Grissom and Borman. They both really should. Let's list them among the ranks of "Hoosier Engineers, Hoosier Proud".

Editor and contributor: Rex Bickers, FCHS '70

## JEFFREY PEARL, NAHS '78

Jeff's family tree is full of dearly departed Bulldog alumni: his aunt Doris Pearl Freiberger ('53) was uniquely part of a state champion rifle team. There was also an uncle, Kenneth ('46), and both of Jeff's parents, Howard ('43) and Doris Sturgeon Pearl ('50).

Jeff earned his Civil Engineering degree at Purdue (1982), then began his career in Chicago, working for a number of engineering consulting firms in the power industry. He eventually put down roots in Wisconsin, where paper



manufacturing is big business. He was employed for eleven years at Consolidated Papers, all the while longing to start his own engineering firm. In 2000, his dreams converged with a major workforce re-organization in the company, eliminating his job in the engineering department. It left him both elated and a bit terrified to start a new firm. Since 2000 - - through 9/11, recessions, and the pandemic - - Pearl Engineering has built a solid reputation, providing innovative and cost-effective consulting engineering services to the power, pulp and paper, food processing, chemicals, and building products industries. The current engineering staff spans structural, mechanical, electrical, safety assessment, industrial process, and design expertise. They've added talent whose training reflects Jeff's roots in the midwest, hailing from Wisconsin, Kansas (KSU), Indiana (grads from Rose-Hulman and the Krannert School of Management at Purdue), and Kentucky (WKU).

Both Jeff and his company have earned recognition for involvement in local educational initiatives, such as STEM Scout Troops and high school internship programs. Participation in the Community Progress Initiative for economic development has included a study trip to Ireland, where a mill had closed. He has also served on church-based mission trips to Mississippi and to Honduras.

Married for 39 years, Jeff and his wife, A.J., are co-owners of the firm. They have two adult daughters. Jocelynn is a Ph.D. molecular biologist, engaged in gene editing and epigenome engineering. Gretchen works in manufacturing, but she's really in love with Arizona's deserts where she enjoys being a rockhound and an off-road motorcyclist.

I asked Jeff to reflect on his youth. Were there special teachers or school experiences that he recalled? His eyes lit up as he said: "Absolutely. In the eighth grade at Scribner, Mr. Carl Booth gave me my first introduction to the concept of force versus stress, relating the science to the real world." Jeff told me that he has drawn on this for decades with students and younger engineers. "Since then", Jeff said, "my sense of Mr. Booth has grown even more... a gem of a teacher, an entrepreneur, and an adventurer inspiring me in many similar areas".

## MIKE OTT, FCHS '69



Mike entered Floyd Central as a junior when the school was first opened. He earned his degree in chemical engineering from Purdue, rotating semesters on the West Lafayette campus with manufacturing experiences at Rohm & Haas, a chemicals company with operations in Louisville. He was able to join the company as soon as he graduated in 1974. Working for Rohm & Haas in Maryland, Mike studied accounting and earned his certification as a CPA. By 1978, Mike planned to quit his job, move to Chicago and seek an MBA

degree. Instead, his company proposed a job transfer and paid his tuition at the University of Chicago. He finished his MBA in 1980. Soon afterward, he was sent to New Zealand as Sales Manager, then promoted to Division Manager for Mexico. The earthquake of 1985 led Mike and his family to decide that it was time to return to the U.S.

He was hired as general manager for Polysciences, a chemical company near Philadelphia, and eventually purchased the company from its founder in 1993. Polysciences has a niche market, making “very pure, very expensive materials for custom specialty applications”.

Mike is currently Chairman of the Board of the Society of Chemical Manufacturers & Affiliates. In 2002, Purdue bestowed upon him the Outstanding Chemical Engineering Award, and in 2007, the Distinguished Engineering Alumnus Award. While it is not in the same league, Mike is also proud of his 2011 induction into the Floyd Central Alumni Hall of Fame.

Mike and his wife Ginger have lived in Abington (PA) since 1985, and they have two sons. Like his dad, Ryan has a Purdue degree in chemical engineering. He is senior VP at Ott Scientific, the holding company that owns Polysciences and other affiliated companies. Andrew earned degrees from Penn State (business) and from Villanova (chemistry). He is currently COO at Polysciences. Standing 6’10” tall, Andrew played Division I basketball at both Villanova and Penn State.

I asked Mike about being a Floyd Central Hall of Famer. He answered without hesitation: “The alumni community brings together guys and gals whose lives might have remained unknown to many of us. I really enjoyed learning about the NASA connections that led to the company co-founded by schoolmate Mark Deuser (FCHS '70). And to have my plaque on the same wall as my basketball coach, Joe Hinton... well, that’s special too.

# A Year of Impact...

## New Albany-Floyd County Education Foundation

### 21-22 SCHOOL YEAR BY THE NUMBERS

- 10** months of in-school support
- \$96,000** in classroom projects funded through Great Classroom Grants
- 18,000** visits to Junior Achievement
- 7** field trips locations visited by elementary students
- 60** new teachers awarded \$100 each
- 5,000** packs of multicultural crayons and markers delivered
- 3,400** children provided free, monthly books through Imagination Library
- 1,300** children fed over the weekend through Blessings in a Backpack
- 2** major fundraising events
- 1** community who ❤️s our schools!

# Play FORE! Education Golf Scramble - July 15th

**AssuredPartners**

Play **FORE!** Education  
CHARITY GOLF CLASSIC

New Albany-Floyd County  
Education Foundation

**FRIDAY, JULY 15TH**

***Morning Flight***  
Donuts and Coffee  
7:30 am Registration  
8:00 am Morning Shotgun Start

11:30 am Lunch Served

***Afternoon Flight***  
12:00 pm Registration  
1:30 pm Afternoon Shotgun Start  
4:30 pm Snacks Served

**CHAMPIONS POINTE GOLF CLUB**  
FUZZY ZOELLER'S

1820 Champions Club Ln.  
Henryville, IN 47126

**German American Bank**  
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Join us for the 14th annual Play Fore! Education Golf Scramble at Fuzzy Zoeller's Champions Pointe, in Memphis, Indiana on Friday, July 15th, 2022.

Accepting sponsorships and teams of 4. More information can be found at:  
**[bidpal.net/PlayForeEd](http://bidpal.net/PlayForeEd)**

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**NOT A MEMBER YET?**

# LEGACY NAFC

Join Today!

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New Albany-Floyd County  
Education F  undation



LEGACY  
NAFC

The New Albany Floyd County Education Foundation is a not-for-profit organization that works in conjunction with NAFC Schools to provide privately funded supplemental resources and programs to students, teachers, and schools. NAFC Alumni Nation is an alumni program of the NAFC Education Foundation. Legacy NAFC is the official support group of NAFC Schools, NAFC Alumni Nation, and the NAFC Education Foundation.



[www.NAFCEdFoundation.org](http://www.NAFCEdFoundation.org)

<https://nafcalumni.nationbuilder.com/>

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