

# Tecumseh Alumni Association

## Wall of Fame 2019

### Awardee Bios

#### **Joyce Wilbar aka Julie Parrish**

*Ruby Joyce Wilbar, whose stage name was Julie Parrish, graduated from THS in 1958. During HS she portrayed Mrs. Ethel Chauvenet in the Junior Play, Harvey, Florence McCrickett in the Senior Play, Torchbearers. She also participated in the Girl's Athletic Association throughout all four years.*

*Following graduation, Joyce won a national contest for "Patricia Stevens Young Model of the Year" at the modeling school in Toledo, OH. The prize was an acting part in "It's Only Money". Jerry Lewis was one of the judges. She went on to work at Patricia Stevens Finishing School in Hollywood, CA. Early in her career, she appeared in ads and publicity still pictures for Champion Spark Plugs, Ohio Oil, Libby-Owens and Owens-Corning.*

*Joyce became Julie Parrish on stage. Her career included stage roles with the Toledo Repertoire Theater, Longacre Theater (NY, NY) and Broadway, as well as with Arthur Miller productions. In 1966 she received a Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for her portrayal of Maggie in Arthur Miller's "After the Fall".*

*She also had over 50 television appearances on ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox from 1961 through 1998. Several examples are 'My Three Sons', "Gidget", "Star Trek", "Dallas", "The Rockford Files", "Laverne and Shirley", "The Young and the Restless", "This Is the Life", "Dynasty", "Murder She Wrote", "Capitol", and "Beverly Hills, 90210" until 1998.*

*Ms. Parrish followed her debut in "It's Only Money" with Jerry Lewis with 11 other big screen movies. They included "The Nutty Professor" (with Jerry Lewis), "Harlow", "Winter A-Go-Go" (with James Stacy), "Fireball" (with Frankie Avalon, Fabian and Annette Funicello), "Paradise, Hawaiian Style" (with Elvis Presley), "The Doberman Gang", "The Time Machine", "When She Was Bad", "The Devil and Max Devlin", "The Last Fling", and "Baby M" in 1988.*

*Joyce earned an Associate of Arts degree (Magna Cum Laude) in Chemical Dependencies Counseling from Los Angeles Mission College in June 1990. She was presented with the Chancellor's Distinguished Honor Award for scholastic achievement. She worked for nine years (1991-2000) as a full-time on-staff counselor at the Haven Hills Shelter for Battered Women. She also served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women. She supported "A Window Between Worlds", an organization that helps those affected by domestic violence.*

*Ruby Joyce Wilbar passed away on October 1, 2003, at the age of 62 from ovarian cancer. She was living in Los Angeles at the time.*

## **Lee R. Britton**

*Lee R Britton is a 1960 THS graduate. During high school he participated in football (co-captain of the 1959 undefeated Indian team), basketball, baseball and marching band. Lee also participated in the dance band, Varsity Club, and the yearbook staff. He earned a BS degree from Michigan State University in Zoology in 1964 and entered the University of Michigan Medical School becoming president of the Galens Honorary Medical Society 1967-1968. Following graduation in 1968 he did a rotating internship and residency in General Surgery at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, Ann Arbor completing it in 1973.*

*Dr. Britton entered the U.S. Air Force and was honorably discharged with the rank of Major in 1975. Following a year at the Davis Clinic in Mt. Pleasant, MI, he and his wife Harriett, the daughter of Tecumseh physician, the late Dr. M.R. Blanden and Mrs. Francelia Blanden, moved to Alpena, MI in 1976 where they still reside. He founded Alpena Surgical Associates and practiced at Alpena Regional Medical Center until 2010 when he retired. While at ARMC Lee served as a staff surgeon, Chief of Surgery, Chief of Staff and was founder and Medical Director of the non-invasive vascular laboratory. Becoming certified in Dive Medicine he became one of the principals in the Hyperbaric Medicine Program. He was the first Athena Award winner as the outstanding physician voted by the medical staff.*

*Dr. Britton has belonged to many professional and civic organizations. He has served as council member, treasurer, president elect, and president of the Michigan Chapter of The American College of Surgeons representing some 1200+ surgeons from Michigan and served many years on the Board of Governors of the American College of Surgeons representing surgeons worldwide. He is a member and past councilor of The Midwest Surgical Association. He is a member of the AMA, the Michigan State Medical Society, Alpena Medical Society, Society for Surgery of the Alimentary Tract, the Frederick A. Collier Surgical Society, and Society of American Gastrointestinal Endoscopic Surgeons, as well as other scientific organizations. He also served the Alpena community in various capacities including the local hockey board, the board of directors of the Michigan Amateur Hockey Association, Masonic Lodge, various local social and educational organizations. He has been an instructor teaching EMT courses, an arbitrator for the local Circuit Court, and currently serves on the Alpena County Older Persons Committee. He currently spends his time with Harriett and his dogs, Max and Diesel, hunting, fishing, reading, travel, and gardening, etc.*

*Dr. Britton relates the highlights of his career as "the multitude of patients who had faith and trust in me, the hundreds of staff who helped me, the many colleagues who believed in me, and my family who put up with me-through it all."*

## **1<sup>st</sup> Lt Jack Hammel**

*1LT Jack Hammel was born into a prominent Tecumseh family on January 23, 1922. His father was Dr. Harry Hammel who moved to Tecumseh in 1916 and set up his medical practice after attending medical school at the University of Michigan. In 1938 Dr. Hammel and Mr. Ray Herrick led a drive to raise funds for Tecumseh's first hospital, where he served as Chief of Staff at the hospital for many years. Jack Hammel was raised in the family home at 108 North Union Street, which now displays a plaque from the Tecumseh Historical Society as "The Hammel House."*

*Jack Hammel was a natural leader and an outstanding athlete at THS. He was elected Class President both his junior and senior years. He also served on the Student Council for his freshman and sophomore years and as Student Council President as a senior. In addition, he was Captain of the Basketball Team.*

*According to the 1939 Senior Echoes, Jack served on the Annual Staff as Business Manager, had a role in the Senior Play, was a member of the Tennis Team. In his President's Address at Class Night on June 7, 1939, he encouraged the graduates to, "aim high and hit the mark."*

*Jack spent a year at Stanton Preparatory School at Cornwall, NY. He received a nomination from Congressman Earl C. Michener to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Via an accelerated 3-year West Point classes, he completed basic flight training by graduation on June 1, 1943. At West Point, he was a member of the Varsity Rifle Team. Upon graduation he married Miss Anne Swallow of Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania.*

*Jack's first duty station was Yniestra, Florida near Pensacola where he served as a flight instructor until he was assigned overseas with the 14<sup>th</sup> Army Air Force. He was assigned to the 17<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, known as the "Flying Hatchet", as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, which was a key unit in the Chinese/American Composite Wing that fought together during the final two years of the war. His unit was located in the mountainous region of Chihkiang, China which was the 14<sup>th</sup> Air Force's most forward operating base and in close proximity to Japanese occupied territory. The last Japanese Offensive in China which began on April 10, 1945, was launched to overrun the base. With air support from all units in the 5<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, the Chinese were able to thwart the attack and by May 15 the Japanese were in full retreat. As a result of their success during the Battle of Chihkiang, the 5<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation for in part: **"In thwarting the enemy between 10 April 1945 and 15 May 1945, this small combination aerial force wrote a classic in the employment of tactical air power against air and ground forces in China."***

*1LT Jack Hammel was awarded three air medals for his heroic participation in combat missions such as the Battle of Chihkiang. Sadly, after successfully logging scores of combat missions, his aircraft was lost over the mountains of Southern China during the waning days of the war on July 25, 1945. He was moved to his final resting place at The National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii on January 25, 1949. 1LT Jack Hammel was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart for his exemplary service to our nation in World War II.*

*Jack Hammel is an outstanding representative of the men and women of "The Greatest Generation" who heroically served our nation during the dark days of World War II. He along with eight others from Tecumseh High School willingly sacrificed his own life to protect and preserve our way of life. Those eight other men include: Edward Brazee, '34; Orville Gove, '31; Nelson Hoekstra, '39; James O'Neil '42; Gale Taylor, '43; Lester Wahl, '38; Donald White, '37; and Charles Wilson, '33.*