

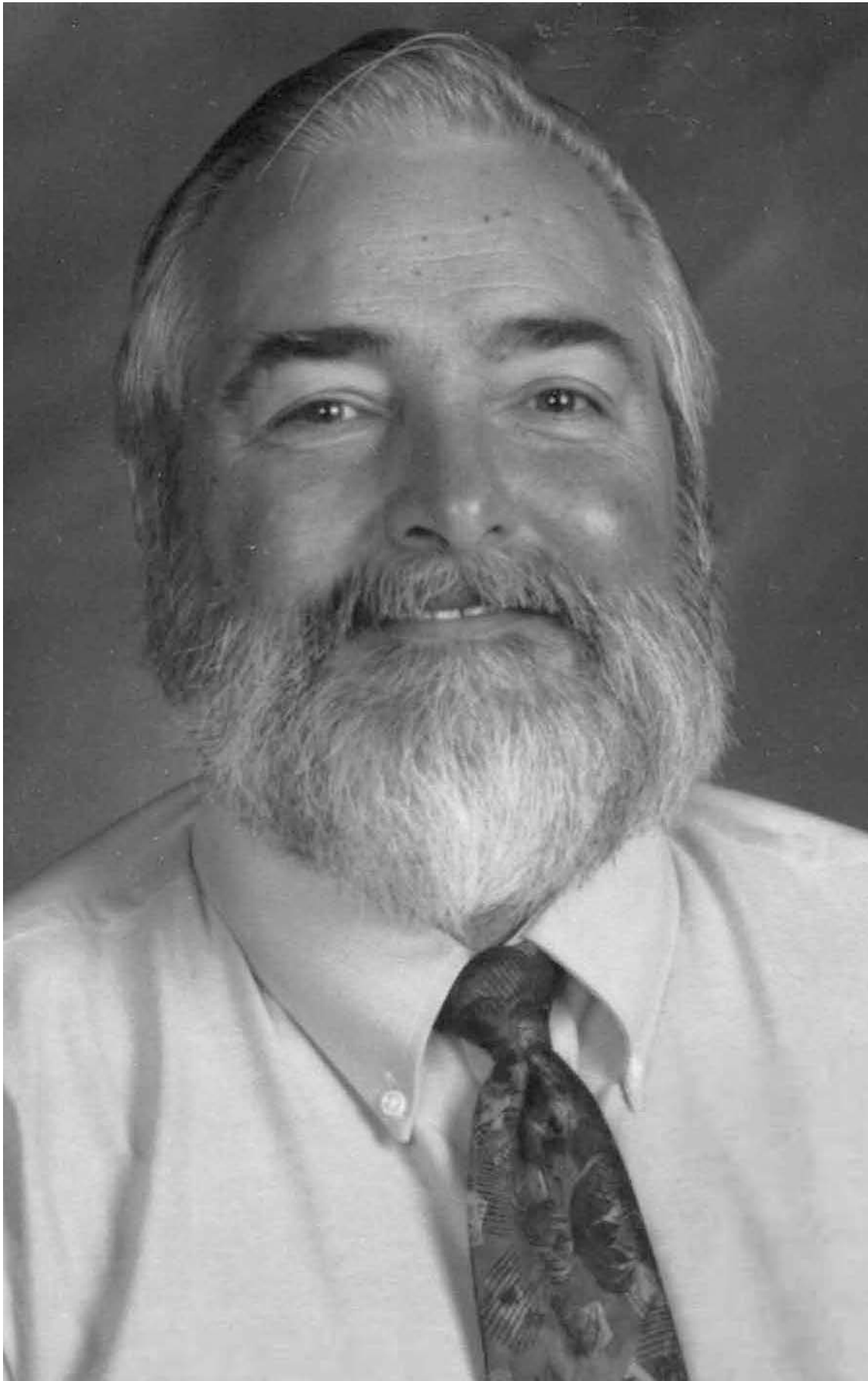
OTTAWA HIGH SCHOOL HALL OF FAME

2012



RICHARD E. ROBERTS

School Psychologist/Dept. Chair 1981-2003



Rich Roberts was a school psychologist and department chair of the Special Needs program for Ottawa Township High School from 1981 until his death in 2003. He was raised on a farm near Elizabeth, Illinois and entered Illinois State University in 1965, later enlisting in the U.S. Air Force, serving from 1965 to 1970, and during that time twice deployed to Vietnam serving with the Intelligence Department. After completing his military service he returned to ISU and earned a Bachelor's Degree in Education, and a Master's Degree in School Psychology. He came to Ottawa in 1976 and was an early advocate for special needs students and for integrating students into the school and community. He was one of the founders of the Ottawa Youth Service Bureau, and served as Board President for many years. Rich Roberts was instrumental in the development of mental health services in LaSalle County, serving as a member of the Board of Directors of the Mental Health Center of LaSalle County, holding the office of treasurer for six years, and president for two. The organization later changed its name to the Mary L. Ferguson Center, where he continued to serve on the board and was actively involved in the merger of the Center with the Quad City Counseling Center and the LaSalle County Council for Alcohol and Drug Abuse into the North Central Behavioral Health Systems in 1996. He served as a member of North Central's board from 1996 to 2003, serving as Vice Chair for four years. Rich Roberts was also a founder of the Alternative Program, and of the OTHS Night School, helping students in completing their high school requirements and to graduate with diplomas. He was a prolific grant writer, which generated needed funding, and was a community leader, mentor, friend, and dedicated fighter for the rights of children.