

Diane Emmons--Volunteer

Our first honoree this morning has been an integral part of the Houghton community since she came to study music in the 1970's. Diane Emmons graduated from Houghton with a Bachelor of Music degree in 1974. She went on to complete a Master of Science in Education from SUNY Geneseo, and spent over twenty years teaching for the Belfast Central School District, as both a classroom and a music teacher.

Diane's lifelong love of music not only guided her teaching career, but it has been lived out in her continued generosity toward her community and her alma mater. She has shared her musical gifts through participation in musical ensembles, Madrigal groups, and the local church choir. Recently, she pioneered an initiative to start a Houghton chapter of New Horizons, a national program designed to provide a collaborative and supportive environment for older adults to revisit their love of music or discover it for the first time. Her careful research of the program, her persistent but gracious efforts to gather support within the community, and her own commitment of time and energy to the program illustrate how Diane approaches everything she does.

In 2018, she donated her beautiful Otto Bausch cello to the Greatbatch School of Music, expressing a hope that it will "encourage a young cellist or an adult beginner to pursue a dream to make music honoring the Lord here at Houghton."

Diane's impact on Houghton has extended well beyond the area of music. She has volunteered selflessly in the Alumni and Community Engagement Office, willingly offering her time to support their team in whatever they need. At various times, she has found herself cataloguing documents and photos, coordinating registrations for events, reunions, and meetings, and offering hospitality to alumni and friends of the college. She is always looking for ways to improve the world around her—whether it's creating a work of installation art on her large retreat-like property near the equestrian center, or in partnering with others to contribute to the thriving of the larger Houghton community.

Diane has been described by her friends as a person who “sums up the spirit of Houghton.” She is a strong and nourishing presence to her friends and to many of the students she meets at church or at college events. As one of these friends wrote, “As a liberal arts college, Houghton can be proud of its daughter, Diane, for her Christian leadership in scholastics, music, and volunteerism. Her selfless outreach to students, faculty, and the Houghton community is an encouragement to those who would like to know what Houghton is truly about.”

Diane, you have demonstrated a heart to serve and care for those around you—specifically those at Houghton College and in the extended Houghton community. Over the years, you have made all of us part of your family. Your impact is reflected in the many lives you have touched with your gracious, winsome, and adventurous spirit. For your faithful service to Houghton College and its alumni,

and your continued engagement with the Houghton community, we are delighted to present you with the Alumni appreciation award.