

## **2020 Minnesota Chess Hall of Fame Inductee:**

### **Alex Balandin**

Alex Balandin has had a dominant chess career. He has won four state championships (1995, 1996, 2005, 2008) and has won or shared 1st prize multiple times in the following tournaments: (5) Minnesota Open, (4) Jonsey Midsummer Classic, and (3) Winter Carnival. Other tournament victories include Region VI, Minneapolis Open, Northern Open, Trans-Mississippi, and Glacier Vending (Budget Paper).

His winning tournaments have stretched over the globe in the USA, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Slovakia and Canada. He also won 1st place on 1st board at the 1996 PanAM. During this time he played on teams with GM Sergei Tivakov and future GM Vladimir Kramnik.

Alex even has drawn then future GM's Vladimir Kramnik and Peter Svidler!

Alex currently holds the title of FM and his highest USCF rating is 2497.

Few chess players combine such a strong playing career with also a long career of coaching. For over 26 years he has taught some of the best young players in Minnesota such as Victor Feldberg, Jason Drake, and Yana Nagle to name just a few. He coached chess clubs at the University of Minnesota and the University of St. Thomas.

He has led teams to state titles coaching Sunny Hollow Elementary and Plymouth Middle School to that goal. Adding to this is his work with HOF Coach Brian Ribnick and the team at Metcalf Middle School.

While in Russia Alex coached his college team in Ukraine and had the great opportunity of studying with GM Vladimir Volkhonsky for 10 years and also at the Ukrainian School of Grandmasters with GM Igor Platonov.

Alex Balandin is a strong candidate for the Minnesota Chess Hall of Fame. His influence and career both as a player and as a coach has few equals.