

## **2021 Minnesota Chess Hall of Fame Inductee:**

### **Russ Erickson**

Russ Erickson has been contributing to the Minnesota chess community since 1980, when he began coaching the chess club at Zachary Lane Elementary School, where he was a classroom teacher. Russ grew what was initially a relatively modest program into a scholastic chess juggernaut, with membership climbing to well over 100 students. Before his retirement from Zachary Lane in 1999, Russ led the school's chess club to numerous team and individual honors at both the state and national level.

Minnesota Chess Hall of Fame Member Sean Nagle credits Russ with playing a critical role in his development as a young chess player. "I was incredibly fortunate to take my first steps into the world of chess as a third-grade student in Russ's Zachary Lane Chess Club. Russ's enthusiasm for teaching chess was palpable and his genuine concern for his students was just as evident. Even now, nearly 30 years after my time at Zachary Lane, Russ continues to take an active interest in my life and the lives of my former teammates."

Following his retirement from the classroom in 1999, Russ has remained active as a chess teacher through his "Chess with Russ Foundation". Declining health and the confines of a wheelchair have not diminished Russ's energy and passion for introducing schoolchildren to the myriad benefits of the game of chess. Together with a loyal team of helpers Russ has continued to coach and spread the joy of chess!

The Minnesota Chess Hall of Fame is honored to welcome Russ Erickson.