



## **Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame Foundation, Inc.**

Schmeckle Reserve – UW-Stevens Point

2419 North Point Dr.

Stevens Point, WI 54481

715-346-4992 | WCHFame@gmail.com | WCHF.org

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### **NEWS RELEASE**

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**Contact: Sunshine Buchholz, WCHF Executive Assistant – [sbuchhol@uwsp.edu](mailto:sbuchhol@uwsp.edu), 715-346-4992**

## **2022 WISCONSIN CONSERVATION HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES ANNOUNCED**

**Gordon A. Bubolz, Arlen Christenson, and Kathleen Falk**

The Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame (WCHF) Foundation, Inc., is pleased to announce the April 2022 Induction of Gordon A. Bubolz, Arlen Christenson, and Kathleen Falk. “Each of these conservation heroes has shaped the Wisconsin we know and love; their legacies continue to make a difference in our lives today,” said 2021 WCHF Foundation President Patty Dreier. Each of these individuals will be inducted into the WCHF on April 19, 2022, in live ceremonies held virtually. For more information visit: [wchf.org/2022-induction-events/](http://wchf.org/2022-induction-events/)

**Gordon A. Bubolz** (1905–1990) was a man of contrasts. He was a mix of a conservative business leader and state senator (1945–1953) who was also a dedicated conservationist and volunteer who raised funds for the preservation of lands for public education and enjoyment. He is probably best known for the results of his volunteer efforts to identify and preserve natural areas of ecological significance and educating the public on the value of conservation. A 1990 Legislative Joint Resolution credits Gordon A. Bubolz as a key fundraiser and organizer in the acquisition of four nature centers, three wildlife areas, two county parks and High Cliff State Park—collectively, about 4,600 acres.

**Arlen Christenson** (1934 - ) is a visionary whose contributions innovated new and more effective legal protections for our natural resources and helped the public stay engaged in democratic processes. He played a key role in shaping the Public Intervenor’s Office during its most formative and effective years. Professor Christenson inspired and mentored countless law students through his classroom teaching and supervision of their clinical work with the Public Intervenor’s Office and Midwest Environmental Advocates. As a result, students contributed to environmental protection and his legacy lives on through the hundreds of lawyers throughout the country educated in environmental protection law who are carrying the torch forward to advance public rights in natural resources.

**Kathleen Falk** (1951 - ) grew up in rural Waukesha County influenced by her neighbor, outdoor writer Mel Ellis. Inspired by nature in those early years, Kathleen Falk has lived her life tirelessly advocating for conservation, the environment, and the underserved by bringing people together to change the world for the better. She developed the tools to be impactful by earning her law degree when women attorneys were few; engaged in the legal system and the three branches of government at the local, state and federal level to create a wide range of legislation and policy; and committed to mentoring the next generation of environmental advocates so her work and that of her peers would carry on.

## INDUCTEE BIOS

### GORDON A. BUBOLZ (1905–1990)

Gordon A. Bubolz (1905–1990) was a man of contrasts. He was a mix of a conservative business leader and politician who was also a dedicated conservationist and volunteer who raised funds for the preservation of lands for public education and enjoyment. He is probably best known for the results of his volunteer efforts. Learning to love nature as a child, he devoted his life to protecting and preserving Wisconsin's waters and lands for future generations while building a successful company. The company is now known as SECURA.

As a Republican state senator for eight and a half years (1945–1953), Bubolz battled for welfare reform and limited spending in the Wisconsin Legislature while championing the creation of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), water and air pollution control regulations, and regional planning on a watershed scale. He also advocated for a one percent state sales tax to be approved for the purchase of wilderness lands and river headwaters. Although his home and business were in Wisconsin's "Paper Valley," he was an outspoken advocate for regulating industrial pollution of the Fox River.

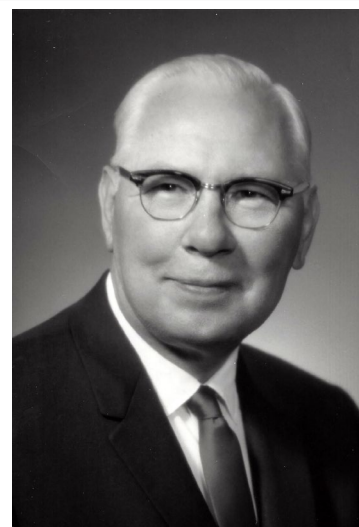
After his work in the state senate was finished, he worked as the volunteer leader of a nonprofit conservation group that created his most enduring environmental legacy. In 1974, Gordon established and led Natural Areas Preservation, Inc. (NAPI), a nonprofit dedicated to identifying and preserving natural areas of ecological significance and educating the public on the value of conservation. A 1990 Legislative Joint Resolution credits Bubolz as a key fundraiser and organizer in the acquisition of four nature centers, three wildlife areas, two county parks and High Cliff State Park—collectively, about 4,600 acres. His most prominent tribute was one of those four nature centers being named the Gordon A. Bubolz Nature Preserve.

"That which we do for ourselves dies with us. That which we do for others lives on."—Gordon A. Bubolz

For more info, see the bio of Bubolz: [wchf.org/gordon-a-bubolz/](http://wchf.org/gordon-a-bubolz/)

### ARLEN CHRISTENSON (1934 - )

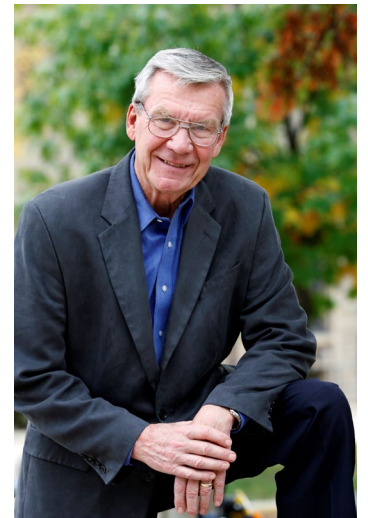
Arlen Christenson is a visionary whose contributions innovated new and more effective legal protections for our natural resources and helped the public stay engaged in democratic processes, Professor Arlen Christenson exercised his intellect and leadership over six decades of formative years of environmental advocacy in Wisconsin (1960s-2010s). He was a highly respected University of



Gordon A. Bubolz  
Circa 1960s. Photo courtesy of  
Bubolz Family Collection.

Wisconsin-Madison Law School Professor who specialized in environmental, land use, local government, and administrative law from 1963 until 2000, when he was granted emeritus status. Professor Christenson inspired generations of environmental lawyers and created the organizational structures where those lawyers can continue to advocate for public rights to counter well-organized economic self-interests.

Arlen Christenson, born and raised in Amery, Wisconsin, played a key role in shaping the Public Intervenor's Office during its most formative and effective years. In 1975, he authored a report commissioned by the Center for Public Representation on the Public Intervenor, which convinced Attorney General Bronson LaFollette to implement a variety of his recommendations to empower the attorneys' ability to protect public rights in natural resources. Republican and Democratic attorneys general appointed and reappointed him to advise the Public Intervenor's Office from 1975 until the office was abolished in 1995. He ensured they were effective conservation advocates that improved state and sometimes national policy. He then went on to do the same for Midwest Environmental Advocates as a founding board member until taking emeritus status, helping grow the state's first non-profit environmental law center into a powerhouse of lawyers with a 20-year track record and bright future (1999–2021). He similarly played a major role in land use policy as founding board member of 1,000 Friends of Wisconsin when that organization launched in 1989.



Arlen Christenson  
Circa 2000. Photo courtesy of UW-Madison.

Born and raised in the beautiful farmland and forests of Amery, Wisconsin, Arlen Christenson served in the U.S. Navy (1952–1954). Professor Christenson is a product of the University of Wisconsin System. He earned a Bachelor of Science from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls (1958) and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Law School (1960). After practicing law in Minneapolis law firm, he joined the Law School faculty in 1963. He held a variety of leadership positions within the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dedicated to academic research and its application, he took a leave of absence from academia to engage in public service as Wisconsin's Deputy Attorney General (1966–1968) and Executive Assistant Attorney General (1968–1969).

Professor Christenson inspired and mentored countless law students through his classroom teaching and supervision of their clinical work with the Public Intervenor's Office and Midwest Environmental Advocates. As a result, students contributed to environmental protection and his legacy lives on through the hundreds of lawyers throughout the country educated in environmental protection law who are carrying the torch forward to advance public rights in natural resources.

"The beneficiaries of public rights are diffuse, often unorganized, and have only small economic stakes as individuals. Without lawyers dedicated to protecting public rights, our air and water will be polluted, dammed, and privatized." –Arlen Christenson

For more info, see Christenson bio: [wchf.org/arlen-christenson/](http://wchf.org/arlen-christenson/)

## **KATHLEEN FALK (1951 - )**

Inspired by nature in her early years, Kathleen Falk has lived her life tirelessly advocating for conservation, the environment, and the underserved by bringing people together to change the world for the better. She developed the tools to be impactful by earning her law degree when women attorneys were few; engaged in the legal system and the three branches of government at both the local, state and federal level to create a wide range of legislation and policy; and committed to mentoring the next generation of environmental advocates so her work and that of her peers would carry on.

After graduating from Stanford University and the University of Wisconsin Law School in 1976, she began her career as co-director and general counsel of Wisconsin's Environmental Decade (now Clean Wisconsin). There she successfully litigated law reform cases in the state's highest courts and won groundbreaking decisions such as the seminal case on the state's environmental impact statement law. She excelled at convincing courts to rule for the environment in those "first time cases."

As an Assistant Attorney General for 14 years, Kathleen served as one of the two chief environmental watchdogs for Wisconsin, the State Public Intervenor. Tasked with protecting the state's natural resources, she went to bat for citizens in every corner of the state. She successfully litigated and lobbied in many areas of public policy including water, wetlands, mining, farmland protection, public access to streams, and the land use impacts of transportation. Throughout these years she trained about a hundred legal interns from the UW Law School to be advocates and change-agents.

Kathleen was the first woman elected by the half of a million Dane County residents and became the longest serving elected County Executive in Dane County history (1997–2011). She made numerous outstanding and sustained contributions to conservation policy that have served as models for other communities statewide and beyond. Her strong management skills and inclusive leadership led to innovative land and clean water protections, initiatives to help move families out of poverty, and reforms to the criminal justice system. The environmental policies she successfully enacted were often the first or the strongest in the State. Her progressive policies and programs earned the support of differing political views. One example was the creation of the Dane County Conservation Fund which has resulted in the preservation of over 10,000 acres of land creating countless outdoor recreation opportunities.

Kathleen has mentored scores of environmental advocates, pragmatic problem solvers, policymakers, leaders, and champions. She has done this in countless ways, most notably through leading by example. Perhaps Kathleen's finest and most admirable quality is her ability to bring people together around a common goal so that environmental progress is made.



Kathleen Falk  
2008. Photo by Shannon McMahon.

In 2013 when President Obama appointed her to his administration as the Regional Director for the US Department of Health and Human Services for the 50 million residents of the Great Lakes states, she brought her knowledge of the natural environment to the many issues of human health and well-being addressed by the federal government. An example was reflected in her work on the ground where she led the coordination of health services to assist citizens in Flint, Michigan, impacted by the drinking water crisis there.

Drawing upon her lifelong experience at every government level and in every branch of government, she taught graduate students for five years at several schools which included the University of Wisconsin Gaylord Nelson Institute where students were eager to "change the world" and are, indeed, carrying on her legacy.

"It is hard to create change...but entirely possible." –Kathleen Falk

For more info, see Falk bio: [wchf.org/kathleen-falk/](http://wchf.org/kathleen-falk/)

## **WCHF INDUCTION EVENT DETAILS**

The 2022 WCHF Induction Events will be held on April 19, 2022. The events will be held live on a virtual platform and are free and open to the public. For more details about the events visit: [WCHF.org](http://WCHF.org).

### **WISCONSIN CONSERVATION HALL OF FAME FOUNDATION, INC. (WCHF)**

The WCHF was established in 1982 to encourage the growth and practice of a conservation ethic as a legacy for the people of the State. Individuals may be nominated for induction into the WCHF by the public. Based on a set of criteria, 2022 nominees were selected for induction by the WCHF Board of Directors and an independent Board of Governors.

The WCHF is located in the Schmeeckle Reserve Visitor Center on the UW-Stevens Point campus in Stevens Point, WI. Visitors can explore the Wisconsin Conservation History Museum, Hall of Fame Gallery, birding area and nature-themed gift shop. Outdoor spaces include hiking trails, an open-air shelter and an amphitheater.

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