

2021 West Salem High School Alumni Hall of Fame Inductee - Mary Heider, Ph.D

Mary Heider, Ph.D is a 1961 graduate of West Salem High School. She continued her education, going on to get her Bachelor of Science at La Crosse State College, and then took a teaching position at Lincoln High School in Manitowoc, WI. In the next five years she earned her Master of Arts and Ph.D from the University of Kansas in Speech Communication while serving on the faculty at the University of Kansas. Starting in 1970, Mary served as a faculty member and administrator at the University of Cincinnati. Here she would start an incredible career and journey. In 1971, she also joined the College of Medicine's department of Biomedical Communications and in 1975 was appointed full time Associate Professor in Biomedical Communications. Six years later, she was appointed Assistant Dean of Medical Education and through these productive years at the University of Cincinnati she helped develop academic and professional standards, curriculum, and course evaluations. Not only was she serving her community and university, she also provided medical students with career specialty counseling.

Because of her persistent interest in art, she developed an Art and Medicine elective course for medical students. When asked in a 2015 interview about why she sees a link between art and medicine, Mary responded, "It might lead somebody to see something different in medicine, develop something new, and really help patients long-term." In 2009, Mary Heider was awarded emerita status. Since her retirement, her volunteer efforts within the College of Medicine have been devoted to acquiring and placing art in student study areas and other spaces. Mary has installed more than 150 pieces of art in the College of Medicine at the University of Cincinnati. Because of all her talents and knowledge, she has been asked to curate an incredible number of art exhibitions. More recently, Mary Heider and a few others have opened the 506 Ash Studio. It is just another way for Mary to spend time with art but to also support the artists in her community.

-Written by Stacy (Klos) Mitchell, 1989 West Salem graduate and member of the Alumni Hall of Fame Committee