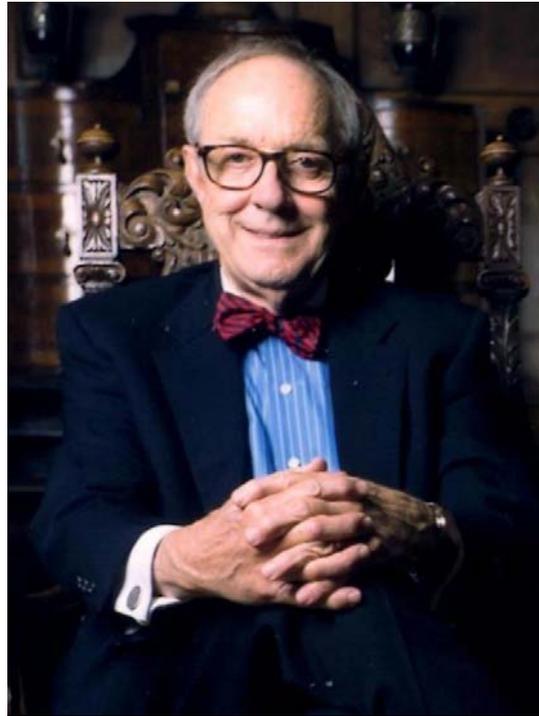


Distinguished Alumni Award 2015

Nat Read, Class of 1957



Nat Read has led a truly remarkable life. He was cast in a rock'n roll movie and appeared in the New York Metropolitan opera before he graduated from high school. He was arrested by the KGB while an exchange student in college in the Soviet Union. He is a scholar, author of numerous books and publications, a stand-up comic, banker, playwright, cartoonist, public relations executive, naval officer, and life-long community servant.

Nat was born in Kilgore, Texas, but moved to the Park Cities in time to attend UP and Hyer elementary schools and to graduate from Highland Park High School in 1957. While in high school he was an Eagle Scout, on the Bagpipe staff, in the band and active in Lads and Lassies. He graduated from Austin College, where he was named a Distinguished Alumnus. After college he drove a taxi in Chicago while awaiting entrance into OCS in the Navy. He served in the Navy from 1962-65 before returning to Chicago where he began his career as a freelance cartoonist and writer, but left to take a position as an advertising copywriter with Standard Rate & Data Service in Skokie, Illinois. He joined Sears, Roebuck and Co. in its public relations department and quickly rose to become National PR Director for Men's Fashions. He was recruited by members of the Carter Administration as Vice President of Public Relations of a start-up high speed railroad proposed for Los Angeles to San Diego.

Nat moved to Pasadena California where he immediately became involved in the community. He was the chair of the Board of the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce, held several Board positions in the Pasadena History Society, Navy League, NAACP and Urban League. He served as a Reserve Police officer in the Los Angeles Police Department- facing danger and sacrificing time with his family and his career to serve the community. He opened his own public relations agency, Read Communications, in 1985.

He has served on the Boards of 27 not-for-profit organizations, and as president or chair of nine of these. Through his agency he has helped an additional 33...thus a total of sixty non-profit organizations have been touched in a significant way through his leadership. Nat has been honored for his outstanding work in many areas of endeavor. In 1974 he was awarded the Freedoms Foundation Award, and won a Silver Anvil, the Oscar of public relations, for staging the most widely witnessed wedding in American history at the 1989 Rose Parade, and was named Distinguished Public Relations Professional in Southern California in 1997. Nat has taught public relations at Mount San Antonio Community college, UCLA, and Pasadena City College and has been a guest lecturer at USC, UC-Irvine and others. He is one of only 100 people to have visited both the North and South Poles.