

O F H S



WALL OF FAME
Inducted May 2002



DONALD (TOBY) PETERSON

Toby is a very modest individual and would never consider himself famous or extremely successful. Success for Toby is not measured in wealth, but in the acknowledgement of the hard work, dedication and commitment to people that have made his Ford-Mercury Dealership well known throughout Wisconsin.

As a youngster, Toby worked as a mechanic at his father's gas station. After the gas station was sold, he went on to purchase a vacant Sinclair station, now owned by Marquardt's. With only one other mechanic, who still works for him, Toby was able to build a fine business for thirteen years.

Though he enjoyed the gas station and selling used cars, Toby's dream was to own his own new car dealership. When the owner of the Ford-Mercury Dealership, Iver Jacobson, was ready to retire, he contacted Toby and asked him if he wanted to purchase the business. With the help of Mr. Jacobson and Tom Ebenreiter, Toby was able to purchase the dealership and franchise. This was the start of his business, twenty-nine years ago. Toby found out that owning a dealership took a personal commitment and dedication to make the business thrive through difficult times. As the business began to grow, expansion became necessary. This meant, purchasing surrounding property, tearing down the feed mill and updating the existing buildings. Later, Toby found the need to build a new body shop.

Peterson Ford now has more than thirty full and part-time employees who have been instrumental in making the business a success. This also includes his son, Michael who has been with him since 1974, as well as his daughters. Peterson Ford has earned eleven of fifteen Chairman/Presidential awards. This is Ford Motor Company's highest award for customer satisfaction in sales and service. People often ask Toby, why he didn't buy land or build in another location. Toby's response has always been, "I did what I could afford to do and I like it right here on Main Street."

Toby has always been an advocate for Oconto Falls, its schools, students and churches. Toby has helped many students and individuals along the way, many of whom are not aware of his generosity.

Toby may not be monetarily the wealthiest man in the world, but he is certainly rich in friends and people who know and care about him. He has been a role model for our children showing them that hard work, respect, caring and sharing your blessed gifts is most important and what really counts. He lives for each day.