

2018 Woman of Distinction: Sarah Richards

Sarah was born and raised in Mankato, and from an early age wanted to be the first female quarterback for the Minnesota Vikings. Instead, she became a PGA Pro and worked in the Twin Cities and Florida as a golf professional for nearly 30 years.

Since returning to Mankato in 2008, Sarah has been involved in many Mankato-area philanthropic organizations and volunteer activities, including the YWCA Mankato Board and Executive Committee, Greater Mankato Growth Council, MSU Big Ideas Challenge, Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota, and Dream Big Planning Committee for the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation. YWCA Mankato played a significant role in jump-starting Sarah's community involvement when, the year she returned, Anne Ganey, former YWCA Mankato Executive Director, asked Sarah to join the board.

A common thread that links her local volunteer work to her professional career is the idea of "leadership from legacy."

When Sarah returned to Mankato to join the family business, Jones Metal Inc., she aspired to promote her grandfather's legacy of entrepreneurship, and her great-grandmother's legacy of non-traditional roles for women in the community. This drives her work at Jones Metal, where she is president and CEO and a third-generation owner along with her brother and sister. One of her co-workers observes, "Working with Sarah is demanding, fulfilling, and fun at the same time, as Sarah constantly strives for excellence in the management team and the entire company. She is an outstanding boss, leader, and friend."