

2007 Distinguished Service Award Recipients

The Distinguished Service Award was created in 1981 to recognize individuals who have shown genuine regard for, and have performed outstanding service to Barton County Community College. A committee of College and Foundation representatives selects the recipient from nominations received. The College is pleased to announce **Warren H. and Dorothy M. Kopke** as the 2007 Distinguished Service Award recipients.

Warren H. Kopke was born in a small home on Tenth Street in Great Bend, Kansas, and has resided here much of his life. He attended school in Pawnee Rock, where he graduated high school. He furthered his education at Fort Hays (Kansas) State College, prior to World War II, enrolling in pre-law. Kopke's schooling was interrupted for three years by a call to serve in the United States Army. He returned to Fort Hays following his honorable service to his country.

He left Hays in 1948, enrolling at Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas. In February 1950, he graduated with a juris doctorate degree, moving back to Great Bend to engage in the practice of law. He married the former Dorothy M. Nisely, Lawrence, in April 1950. Mrs. Kopke was a legal secretary for her husband for many years and has been active in social and civic organizations in Great Bend.

The Kopkes have long been art lovers and were instrumental in getting Leonard "Gus" Shafer's bronze works to Barton County, through an association with Rudy Vanik at Morrison Jewelry. The Kopkes discovered Shafer's work at Halls on the Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, Missouri, soon after they had Vanik see if he could acquire a bronze for them. The discovery soon led to a lifelong friendship.

Upon Mr. Kopke's retirement, the couple donated his law office building to the Barton County Community College Foundation. The foundation was instructed to sell the building and the proceeds were to be used to establish the Warren H. and Dorothy M. Kopke Endowment for the Arts to benefit the L. E. "Gus" and Eva Shafer Memorial Art Gallery. Through their generous gift, the endowment has been used to procure works by Gus Shafer for the college's Permanent Art Collection. The endowment has also made improvements to the Shafer Gallery enhancing the aesthetics of the facility, allowing the community greater conveniences when viewing exhibitions.