

FALL 2016

THE LINK FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

# WAGNER

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## Dr. Lieberman's Decisive Moment

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VOL. 14, NO. 1

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# From the President

## *Six Inspiring Graduates of 2016*



ON MAY 20, it was my great pleasure to celebrate commencement again — my 18th at Wagner College. The class of 2016 was one of the very best in Wagner’s history. Coming to us from different roads and

for varied reasons, the graduates represented 25 states and 16 countries. I would like to introduce you to six of these fine young people who flourished at Wagner.

Drawn by our renowned theater program, **Rosa Taylor** came from the United Kingdom to focus on arts administration. While maintaining a perfect 4.0 GPA, she completed five internships in the New York City theater industry, leading to her first job as assistant company manager for the national tour of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, winner of the 2015 Tony Award for Best Play. Rosa represents the dynamism of this class.

**Kadijah Singleton** came to Wagner from the tiny town of Rexford in upstate New York. A business management major, she developed into a formidable leader within our community, making her imprint on the Black Student Union, the Urban Footprint Dance Club, the Management Club, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, and LEAD, a leadership development program for minority students. She did all this while also completing several professional internships. Kadijah represents the grace and commitment to intercultural justice of this class.

**Shane Ertter** came to us from Scottsdale, Arizona. He found his academic home as an arts administration major, and in short time he became Mr. Radio on campus, leading WCBG to become a vibrant, comprehensive radio station. In addition, Shane worked as an assistant producer for Cumulus Media’s commercial radio stations and interned for several NBC shows. Shane represents the class’s high achievement and generosity of spirit.

A local Staten Islander, **Arijeta Lajka** focused on English as well as government and politics while pursuing a career as an investigative journalist. Arijeta worked for several professional news organizations, including the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, during the semester she spent

abroad in Kosovo. Arijeta was the third consecutive Wagner student to be named a Fulbright Finalist, and she also received admission to the master’s program at Columbia University’s School of Journalism. She represents the class’s independence of mind and personal courage.

**Stephon Font-Toomer**, an arts administration major from Erie, Pennsylvania, excelled on Wagner’s Division I football team and distinguished himself as a performer in Wagner College Theatre. A founding member of the MOVE program, which connects Wagner athletes with civic engagement and professional development, Stephon and his teammates became role models for young teens from the Staten Island community. Stephon represents confidence, will, and intelligence to help the next generation flourish with opportunity and self-determination.

Finally, **Aliyya Noor**, born and raised in Pakistan, found her way to New York City and this little College. She has mentored Port Richmond High School students from families without any college history, and interned at the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. Her academic achievements and contributions to the community earned her the Julia M. Barchitta Award for Civic Engagement. Aliyya also translated for the documentary film *He Named Me Malala*, based on the inspiring story of Pakistani Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai. An accounting major, Aliyya is now working on her master’s at Wagner and then plans to begin her professional life with PricewaterhouseCoopers. She represents the grit and resiliency that are so critical in sustaining social change.

The class of 2016 has stepped into a time of great challenges. But I have confidence that their commitment to learning and their compassion for others will set all of us on a path to a better world.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Richard Guarasci". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

*Richard Guarasci*  
PRESIDENT

“Each represents an outstanding quality of their class: dynamism, grace, generosity, courage, intelligence, and grit.”



## From the Editor

### Primal Power

“Night after night after night, ten measures into the first piece we sang, we had reached out and invited audiences to take part in it, and they did. I can’t remember a single instance of an audience not responding with an enthusiasm that sometimes surprised even them.”

Gene Barfield ’75 wrote the above sentences about his experience with singing in the Wagner College Choir more than 40 years ago. The memories of that time linger so powerfully, he says, that they still bring tears to his eyes.

I can testify that the Wagner choir still has the same magic today. I think of a concert at Trinity Lutheran Church on a Sunday in March of last year. I arrived late, feeling harried. As soon as I sat down in the quiet church, the choir started singing Virgil Thomson’s arrangement of the 23rd Psalm (to the tune by William Bradbury and words by Isaac Watts). My skin tingled; my body relaxed. In short, I was transported. I stayed in that state of wonder for the rest of the concert, a tour through multiple styles, times, and traditions of vocal music.

It feels so ancient and yet so alive, this tradition of 50 or so young people using their bodies, minds, and hearts as musical instruments. Their blended sound reaches you directly, through vibrations in a shared space, with all the warmth of a human touch. In this world where people interact with each other more and more through the mediation of

electronic screens and sounds, a choir concert has a primal power.

I began to appreciate this art form even more last fall, when for the first time in my life I sang in a choir — the Richmond Choral Society of Staten Island, which has a remarkable record of 65 years of performing great choral music.

In the alto section I found friends like Gale Tollefsen Bellafiore ’61, who sang in the Wagner choir under Sigvart Steen. She’s been with the Richmond Choral Society since 1972 — nearly four and a half decades. In the 1980s, she participated in the summer choral workshops of the revered conductor Robert Shaw, even joining his international choir in France in 1988. She is still singing.

The choir is perhaps the longest-enduring student group within the institution of Wagner College (see pages 22–29). It’s a tie that binds the Wagner generations together and gives so much that is good to students and to the world. May it endure for many more generations to come.

*Laura Barlament*

EDITOR, WAGNER MAGAZINE



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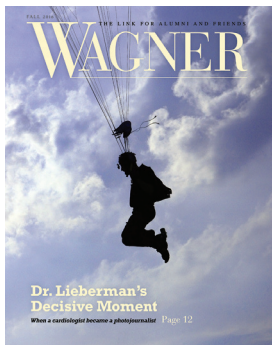
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### On the Cover

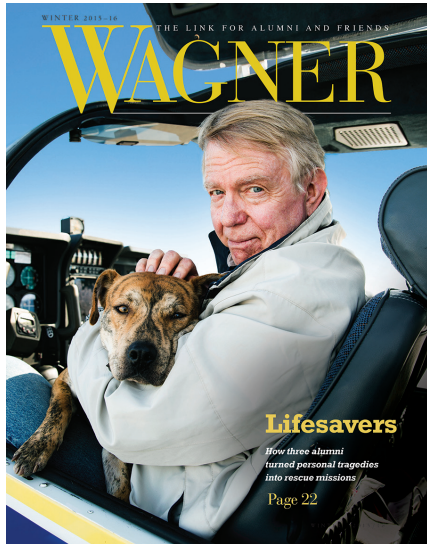
Dr. Scott Lieberman '83 captured this image of his nephew, Matt Greene, as he completed a sky dive on May 27, 2006. The occasion was Lieberman's son's bar mitzvah, and Greene stuck a perfect landing in the parking lot outside of the Tyler, Texas, event hall. Greene and his Dallas Khaos Khobalt teammates went on to claim gold in the intermediate four-way division at the 2013 U.S. Parachute Association National Skydiving Championships. Read about Lieberman's equally impressive photography career on pages 12–17.

PHOTOGRAPH: SCOTT LIEBERMAN





# From Our Readers



“Wagner inspired loyalty and camaraderie.”

## Radio Waves

I have just received the winter 2015–16 issue of *Wagner Magazine*, and was surprised and happy to see an article about WCBG radio (“Radio Revival.”) I served as both an on-air personality and member of the executive board during my education at Wagner, a time when the station was not extremely popular. The e-board and I faced obstacles with getting online broadcasting, and with

no underclassmen to take over after our senior year I assumed WCBG would lie dormant for a while. The station, however, always held a special place in my heart. I am thrilled to hear that it has now been revived, and I hope to be able to hear WCBG on my own radio soon!

*Dawn Farina '06*  
STATEN ISLAND

## EDITOR'S NOTE: THE REAL TREE STORY

In Lee Manchester's fall 2014 *Wagner Magazine* story, “Rooted in Grymes Hill,” he established that the 38 London plane trees around the Sutter Oval were not, contrary to popular legend, planted to honor Wagner's first female graduates.

Instead, he discovered, 20 red maples were donated to honor the women, and they were planted behind Main Hall in 1936.

Now, Manchester has discovered the real story behind the planting of the trees around the Oval.

In the June 1932 issue of the *Wagner College Bulletin*, an article entitled “Campus Plantings”

notes that the senior class had donated 38 plane trees to the College.

The article reports on the celebration of the planting, held on April 13. Martin Dietrich '32, class president, and Herman Brezing, *Wagner* president, gave talks, and “the first tree was planted by use of the shovel used to break ground for the new building.” This “new building” was Main Hall, which had been completed only two years earlier.

The article adds a bit more arboreal history: “Two beautiful Koster blue spruce trees” were planted on either side of Main Hall's entrance, funded by a donation from George J. Fox of Buffalo, New York. Other gifts funded the planting of “sixteen small evergreens ... [and] a large eighteen-foot circular



flower bed with gravel path approach ... on the entrance side of the oval, near the street.” It's doubtful there are still any signs of these plants in today's landscaping, more than 80 years later. But it's interesting to note the role that donations played in beautifying campus during its early years.

### CAMPUS PLANTINGS

On April 13th, the senior class of the college presented the institution with thirty-eight oriental plane trees in a celebration which was honored by the presence of the Board of Trustees and in which the Dean introduced to the President of the college the President of the senior class, Mr. Martin Dietrich. Mr. Dietrich spoke of the value and use of trees and their relation to literature. In his acceptance, President Brezing thanked the class for their interest in the beauty of the campus and wished for the most splendid class record in courage, sacrifice for God and mankind, in noble and high achievement of the beautiful, good, and true. The first tree was planted by the use of the shovel used to break ground for the new building. We are happy to report that all of these trees are growing beautifully.

Mr. George J. Fox, Jr. of Buffalo, N. Y. made a generous donation toward our campus planting fund which enabled us to set out two beautiful Koster Blue spruce trees, one on each side of the entrance to the Administration Building. In addition to these sixteen small evergreens have been planted as the gift of Mr. A. Beuscher of Staten Island, Mr. Abb of Mr. Vernon, N. Y. and Mr. Charles Pfeifer of Farmingdale, L. I. Mr. Charles Pfeifer has arranged and planted into have been arranged and planted into flower beds. A large eighteen-foot circular flower bed with gravel path approach has been constructed on the entrance side of the oval, near the street. Plantings for this have been donated by Mr. Littleton of the Peter Henderson Company.



## A Glimpse into 'the Old Days'

Berna Glover Eich '69 passed along to me the winter 2015–16 issue of *Wagner Magazine* because she knew I grew up on the Ward estate in the 1930s and 40s. [*The Ward estate, acquired by the College in 1949, was located on today's stadium area; see page 24 for more details. — The Ed.*] She thought I'd be interested in the article about the early days of the college ("Wagner College History Tour").

I liked reading the whole issue. I went on the Internet to look up Robert Loggia '51 ("History Makers"), and found the recruiting video "Beautiful upon a Hill" (1949). That really brought back memories, which I wrote about in a short piece called "The Old Gym."

*Janice Jacobsen North*

BLUE POINT, NEW YORK



## THE OLD GYM

*by Janice Jacobsen North*

BACK IN THE OLD DAYS, the 1940s, my family lived on the Ward estate. The college was across Howard Avenue (then Serpentine Road), and activities going on there served as a magnet for us.

The gymnasium was located in the Ad Building (today's Main Hall) and was the scene of many events, not just sports. It had a stage, which was used for plays and speeches, and it was a good place to keep out of the way of what was happening on the floor of the gym.

My brother and cousin would stand on the stage to post the scores at basketball games. The spectators were not so lucky; they were on either side of the action, and players could and would bump into them. When my parents went to see a game, there was the danger of play being interrupted by our black cocker spaniel, Wimpy, who would come looking for them, sneak through an open door, and walk jauntily right across the floor.

We were also loyal supporters of the football team. We cheered the water boy as well as the team under Jim Lee Howell's direction. We applauded coach Herb Sutter's efforts in the gym and on the baseball field. We attended graduation ceremonies and sang the new alma mater, "Beautiful upon the Hill" [adopted in 1947]. Everyone loved it.

We became friends with faculty and their families. Professor Bacher, his wife, and son Pierre were refugees from France. Milton Kleintop, another professor, took a leave of absence during World War II to work in the employment office of the atomic plants located in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. When I went away to college, an ex-GI attending Wagner used my bedroom, since there was no room for him in Wagner's dormitory for men.

Wagner inspired loyalty and camaraderie. When I have met Wagnerians in later life, we know right away we have a common bond, and we tend to keep in touch with each other. Bravo, Wagner!



**WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU** We welcome letters from readers. Letters should refer to material published in the magazine and include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number. The editor reserves the right to determine the suitability of letters for publication and to edit them for accuracy and length.

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# Upon the Hill

*Learning, teaching, giving and achieving on Grymes Hill and beyond*



**MOTIVATED** (Front row) Malithi Desilva, Evelin Cabellero, Mary Onifade, (back row) Andrew Bauch, and Brittany Burke are among the first Port Richmond Partnership Leadership Academy participants to enroll as Wagner undergraduates.

experience — which the students, by the way, have affectionately dubbed PRPLA, pronounced “Purpla.”

Adds Brittany Burke, “I learned that college is not daunting and that everything is possible. My vision statement is that I want to give back the opportunity I’ve been given to someone else.”

Financial support from John “Pat” ’57 H’14 and Marion H’14 Dugan is making this program possible, and Wagner is seeking further underwriting for this program and all of the work organized by the Center for Leadership and Community Engagement.

## Green, White, and ‘Purpla’

**These freshmen are old hands at being Wagner students**

THIS SEMESTER, the first-year class includes eight students who actually started their studies at Wagner College three years ago.

These eight students were in the first cohort of the Port Richmond Partnership Leadership Academy. Founded in 2013 with a grant from the New World COIN program, this three-year learning experience for students from Port Richmond High School in Staten Island is a pipeline to college attainment and civic engagement for teens who have a lot of potential, but could use a little extra push to achieve it.

Ever since they were rising juniors in high school, these students spent more than a month of each summer working on their academic skills with high school teachers and college

professors, and working in community-focused internships with non-profits, schools, and government offices. They continued to meet during the school year and were mentored by Wagner College student leaders.

All 12 members of the first cohort are now in college, whether at Wagner or elsewhere. Many of them chose Wagner because of the great support system they had experienced, and are continuing to stay highly involved in community work as participants in Wagner’s Bonner Leaders program, which obliges them to do 300 hours in community work per year at ever-increasing levels of responsibility.

“I learned how to be more outspoken and open-minded, and how to be more motivated and productive,” says Malithi Desilva of the academy

## A Minor Change

**Helping students develop a civic identity**

THIS FALL, many of the PRPLA and other students are starting their studies in a new minor: civic engagement. This program focuses on leadership, social policy, methods of assessing civic progress, and social and political theory. Community-based internships and on-campus experiences are also central to this minor. The goal is to help students develop their civic identity and provide future employers with concrete evidence of their ability to engage effectively in civic life.



## Quote Unquote

“You must start doing the thing that you dream about doing before you are ready to do it — and you must trust that you will become who you need to be, and that your idea will become what it needs to be, along the way.”



*Brandon Stanton*  
CREATOR OF  
HUMANS OF NEW YORK,  
COMMENCEMENT  
ADDRESS, MAY 20

## Banking Bad

**The real-life undercover work of Bob Mazur '72 is the basis for a major motion picture**

THIS SUMMER, the life of a Wagner alumnus was depicted on the big screen in a riveting crime drama starring Bryan Cranston. It garnered many positive reviews and grossed \$5.3 million on its opening weekend.

*The Infiltrator* movie is based on the autobiography of Robert Mazur '72 (published in 2009 by Little, Brown and Company), which describes his life as an undercover government agent in the 1980s, when he infiltrated the Medellín drug cartel and the money laundering operation that serviced it. His work resulted in the conviction of top drug lords and dirty bankers,



**FALSE FRIENDS** Benjamin Bratt stars as drug trafficker Roberto Alcaino and Bryan Cranston as undercover U.S. Customs agent Robert Mazur in *The Infiltrator*.

bringing down the world's seventh-largest bank, the Bank of Commerce and Credit International.

Well-known for his starring role in the hit AMC series *Breaking Bad*, Bryan Cranston portrays Mazur in the movie, which was directed by Brad Furman.

Mazur visited the College in September to give a lecture about his

work and a film screening. He noted that the filmmakers took liberties “with about 35 percent” of the story, but praised the performances of John Leguizamo as his real-life undercover partner, Emir Abreu, and of Benjamin Bratt as Roberto Alcaino, a top Medellín cartel official with whom Mazur (in his undercover identity of Bob Musella) developed a close relationship.

For Mazur, the film is just a jumping-off point to understanding the real issue: the worldwide problem of money laundering, which supports not just drug traffickers but also terrorist organizations. “The problem goes a lot deeper than what the film shows,” he noted. Mazur now is a consultant who works with banks, police agencies, and other institutions to combat corruption.



## Intellect and Inspiration

**New dean of civic engagement is an expert in using the arts for social change**

KEVIN BOTT was just named to the newly created position of dean of civic engagement this summer. But this theater educator and social justice

advocate has been helping to shape the College's work with the local community for the past few years already.

While serving as associate director of Imagining America, an organization that supports artists and scholars in public life, Bott visited Wagner in 2013 and learned about the Port Richmond Partnership. He then helped to launch a summer community theater initiative in Staten Island. Over the past three years, this program has produced powerful works that address community concerns about race relations and other difficult topics.

A New Jersey native, Bott graduated from Rutgers and started off his career as an actor in New York City. But, he says, an undergraduate study abroad experience had triggered his social consciousness. In Florence, Italy, he met some students who challenged him with their political and philosophical questions. “It undermined my foundation that theater and going to Broadway was what it was all about,” he says.

When those persistent questions could no longer be ignored, he enrolled in NYU's graduate program in theater education. His dissertation focused on using theater in prisons.

Wagner has a uniquely deep relationship with its local community, he says. His role is “to shine a spotlight on what's happening here at Wagner nationally, and to raise funds for these programs that deserve to be supported.”





## First the Facts . . .

12

NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE SERVED AS WAGNER COLLEGE PRESIDENT

41

NUMBER OF YEARS BETWEEN THE BUILDING OF HARBORVIEW HALL AND FOUNDATION HALL

## World Scholars

### Student and professor receive Fulbright awards

IT WAS A BIG SPRING for the Department of English this year, as one of their students and one of their faculty members were awarded prestigious Fulbright grants through the U.S. Department of State.

A double major in English and political science, Arijeta Lajka '15 received a Fulbright U.S. Student Program grant for an English Teaching Assistantship in Turkey for the 2016–17 academic year. The program was suspended, however, after the attempted coup of this past summer. Lajka had also received admission to the Columbia University School of Journalism, and she is spending this year working on her master's.

During her undergraduate years, Lajka started working as a professional journalist, covering news from the Balkans and the Middle East, as well as human rights and environmental topics, for outlets including Vice News and the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network.

Associate Professor Steven W. Thomas of the Wagner English department is at Addis Ababa University in



Ethiopia this year as a Fulbright Scholar. He is teaching courses in film theory and cultural studies for the university's new graduate film program, and also conducting research on Ethiopia's rapidly growing film industry.

Since joining Wagner's English department in 2012, Thomas has been fostering connections between his students in New York and aspiring young filmmakers in Ethiopia. He has worked closely with the Sandscribe Foundation, an Addis Ababa-based organization that supports young film artists and media professionals in Ethiopia. Thomas has also been researching the long and complex multiethnic history of cultural connections between America and Ethiopia, including recent novels and movies.



## A College That Creates Futures

### Wagner lauded in the Princeton Review's new, exclusive guide

WAGNER COLLEGE was one of only 50 colleges throughout the country that was included in a new guide to best-value schools published by the Princeton Review, *Colleges That Create Futures: 50 Schools That Launch Careers by Going Beyond the Classroom*.

The 50 schools featured in this book comprise only about 2 percent of the nation's approximately 2,600 four-year colleges. The selection process factored in data from the company's surveys of administrators

at hundreds of universities between 2013 and 2015 and of 18,000 students attending the schools. The Princeton Review also conducted 200 interviews with faculty, administrators, and alumni in making its choices of the final 50 colleges featured in the book.

Specifically, the Princeton Review editors weighed information about the colleges' career center services, internship, externship, cooperative learning and collaborative research opportunities, and student

engagement in community service and study abroad programs.

"Simply put, Wagner and the other colleges we chose for this book are stellar at putting the 'hire' in 'higher education,'" said Robert Franek, author of the book with the Princeton Review staff. "We commend these schools for the extraordinary opportunities they are giving their students for practical, hands-on learning that complements their academic experiences."



# 1,500

PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN THE  
VALUE OF WAGNER'S ENDOWMENT  
OVER THE PAST 14 YEARS

...Then  
the Quiz!



When was Richard Guarasci named  
president of Wagner College?

ANSWER ON PAGE 11

1 Until the late 1950s, our full name was Wagner Memorial Lutheran College.

6 The "sword of the spirit," a Biblical image.

5 Palm branch, a Biblical image of victory (à la Palm Sunday) (later mistaken for a quill pen).

7 The "trumpet of witness" (Biblical).



3 The open book is the Bible.

8 Here, in tiny little letters, are the graphic artist's initials: "EK."

2 At the time the seal was designed, our campus was located in Rochester, New York.

4 Early Wagner College motto, "Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr" ("To God Alone on High Be Glory"), title of a 1525 Martin Luther hymn.

## WHAT'S INSIDE

*The Original College Seal*

ON DECEMBER 1, 2016, the Wagner College seal celebrates its 100th birthday! Designed by student Edgar Krauch of Buffalo, a member of the class of 1917, it was first used on the College's stationery.



## Quote Unquote

'Tolerance' is one of my least favorite words. To me it suggests ignorance, elitism, and being closed off to experience. 'You're different than me, but I will tolerate you.' ... If we can take it past tolerance, if we can be open to experience others, to get to know and understand them, we open ourselves up to new possibilities.



*Steve Jenkins*  
PROFESSOR OF  
PSYCHOLOGY, OPENING  
CONVOCATION  
ADDRESS, AUGUST 30



**SUMMER SMILES** Joan Smihula '59 (below) helps local kids discover the joy of reading.



## 'Reading Rocks!'

**Alumna-sponsored pilot project helps struggling learners connect with books**

TRAINED AS A TEACHER at Wagner College, Joan Becker Smihula '59 then acquired 33 years of experience as a kindergarten and first-grade teacher in North Bellmore, New York. Now retired, she returned to the College to contribute her expertise, energy, and financial support to the Wagner education department and to Staten Island children this past summer.

Working with education professor David Gordon, Smihula helped to develop Reading Rocks!, a pilot summer reading program for two dozen rising second graders from nearby P.S. 78 in Stapleton, Staten Island.

According to P.S. 78 teacher Giavonna Dupre M'15, the students selected for the program were reading at the kindergarten level — that is, about five levels behind where they should be — for a variety of reasons.

Both the children and the education experts learned a lot. "When we first met with Joan, we thought we could work with some students who were having reading difficulties, and figure

out why," Gordon said. "In the time we have with them, we're finding out who these kids are, and we're getting a much better idea of how learning works."

The reading program ran for nine days, with the children spending about three hours each day in a Wagner College classroom. Two Wagner professors, three graduate students, and two P.S. 78 teachers led the children in targeted lessons to make reading more accessible.

Professor Ann Gazzard, for instance, focused on "philosophy for children." "The idea is to get them excited about the range of ideas found in books," Gazzard said, "so they see how reading can give them access to a whole new world.

"Many of these kids are quite bright," Gazzard added. "Just because you can't read or write well doesn't mean you can't think well."

In another session, led by Professor Jennifer Lauria and P.S. 78 teacher Margaret Rucci M'16, the children engaged in multisensory activities designed to help them link their thoughts and feelings with what they find in books, and "mindfulness training" to help them learn to focus.

"When you're defeated and struggling, that's a deep hole to climb

out of," said Lauria on the fifth day of the program, "but I can see a change today from last week.

"Ultimately, we had hoped the students would recognize that we truly believed in their abilities to improve and grow as young readers, and that we were working with them to help them find their way," Lauria said. "Some children began speaking more positively about their literacy skills and demonstrated more effort in persevering with challenging tasks during our short time together, which was wonderful to observe. The positivity became contagious!"



### SHE'S GOT REACH

This summer, Seahawk swim team member Dorian McMenemy '19 represented the Dominican Republic in the 50m freestyle event at the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She also swam for the Dominican Republic at the London Olympics in 2012, when she was only 15. McMenemy was born in the United States; went to high school in Northborough, Massachusetts; and is a dual citizen of the U.S. and the Dominican Republic, her mother's home country.



**The Answer**  
 QUIZ QUESTION  
 ON PAGE 9

On June 1, 2002. As of July 1, 2016, Guarasci became Wagner's longest-serving president. Building Foundation Hall and the endowment are two of his many achievements.



## Parents, Ground Your Helicopters

**Wagner research reveals benefits of supporting students' autonomy**

LETTING GO can be a major challenge for parents when they drop their sons and daughters off at college for the first time.

Those who don't let go are commonly called "helicopter parents."

A recent study by Wagner College researchers suggests that letting go is a critical factor in how well freshmen adjust to their new independence. "Parental behavior that encouraged students to do things for themselves predicts higher levels of student well-being," the researchers said.

In other words: Parents, for the sake of your children's well-being, *ground your helicopters*. It's time your students learn to make their own decisions and live with the results.

Through multiple surveys of the 2014–15 first-year class, researchers tested how much the students' parents supported or interfered with their autonomy, and the level of "flourishing" students experienced — and what connection could be determined between the two. ("Flourishing" is a measure of emotional, social, and psychological well-being.)

The good news was that "most students are receiving input from parents that is supportive of the students' autonomy, encouraging them to take independent action with respect to important decisions."

There was no evidence that helicopter parenting promoted students' flourishing during the first semester — but there was clear evidence that students felt happier, were more optimistic about what they might contribute to society, and believed they were

"good managers of responsibility" when their parents supported their autonomy.

On the flip side, students who reported higher levels of helicopter parenting had poorer emotional and psychological well-being.

"From surveys," the researchers reported, "we cannot determine whether helicopter parenting causes harm to students who would otherwise succeed, or whether parents hover when students are struggling. But surveys do allow prediction, and helicopter parenting at the end of a full year of college is a bad sign of student ability to adjust."

The study was conducted as part of the Bringing Theory to Practice Project at Wagner College, funded by BTTOP.org, a partnership between the S. Engelhard Center and the Association of American Colleges & Universities. Investigators on the project were professors Alexa Dietrich (anthropology), Amy Eshleman (psychology), and Steve Jenkins (psychology), Associate Provost Anne Love, Provost Lily McNair, Professor Patricia Tooker (nursing), and Vice President Ruta Shah-Gordon.



## Gentrification and Shadow Governments

Whether you're a native New Yorker or a long-time resident, you've seen a radical transformation happen in city life over the past 30



years. Abraham Unger describes this much-debated gentrification process in graphic terms: "The drug-infested parks of 1980s Manhattan now [host] farmers' markets and fashion expos." In his new book, Unger offers an explanation of this sea change in the urban landscape — and an analysis of its unintended consequences for urban democracies.

Unger is an associate professor and director of urban programs in the Wagner College Department of Government and Politics. His book, *Business Improvement Districts in the United States: Private Government and Public Consequences* (Palgrave Macmillan 2016), examines a widespread economic revitalization tool. Business Improvement Districts, or BIDs, are public-private partnerships between property owners and municipal governments, designed to promote economic development and boost real estate values.

Yet, these private organizations have the public power to tax and spend on services in their districts. "BIDs raise substantial questions about how power gets allocated and used on the most local level, block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood. Ultimately, on that level of the street, is where any discussion of democracy must begin," Unger argues.

"In this study, that conversation begins with a look at how a group of shadow urban private governments have wielded their public authority."

Focusing on BIDs in New York City, Unger traces their development over more than a decade and uncovers their hidden costs. This is important because BIDs are representative of the wider phenomenon of public-private partnerships, which are on the increase worldwide.



# DR. LIEBERMAN'S DECISIVE MOMENT





# Dr. Scott Lieberman '83 pivoted from hobbyist to journalist when he captured 'the digital image that played around the world'

By Laura Barlament

## IT SOUNDED LIKE a heart murmur.

That's how Dr. Scott Lieberman '83 knew "something was amiss."

But the cardiologist was not listening to a patient's heartbeat. Instead, he was listening for the sonic boom caused by the re-entry of the space shuttle *Columbia* into the Earth's atmosphere, as it passed above his home in Tyler, Texas, on February 1, 2003.

Lieberman had been outside, photographing the event. He was a serious hobbyist photographer, with a longtime interest in aerospace as well. Some years earlier, he had watched the re-entry of another space shuttle and admired its emerald green contrail. Ever since then, he had been looking for an opportunity to get pictures of such an event. "I assumed it would be a mantelpiece photo for me," he says.

As he was shooting his photos, using his top-of-the-line 6-megapixel Canon DSLR camera, it didn't look quite like what he expected. His wife, Robyn Jacobs Lieberman '85, was filming it with a video camera, and she said it seemed like the shuttle was breaking up. Still, Lieberman never imagined he could be witnessing, and capturing in digital images, a tremendous disaster and worldwide news event.

The abnormal sound let him know something was truly wrong. "It was a rumble that got louder and then faded



away, like a freight train approaching and leaving. It was loud and long, not 'thud thud' like the typical sonic boom."

Indeed, the *Columbia* was disintegrating. As soon as Lieberman downloaded his eight shots and enlarged them on his computer, he could see the fragmentation of the spacecraft.

Lieberman called all of his local news outlets. Through the *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, his photos went

**THE IMAGE OF TRAGEDY** Scott Lieberman's photos of the space shuttle *Columbia* breaking apart on February 1, 2003, ran in more than 1,200 newspapers worldwide. Above is one of the original images, and at left is Dr. Lieberman, a cardiologist, in his medical office with a display of periodicals that ran his photos of the *Columbia* disaster.

to the Associated Press and around the world. Journalists recognized that these images — streaks and blobs of bright light in the deep blue sky — were the closest they could come to portraying this inexplicable, fatal event that had happened 34.5 miles above the Earth, killing seven astronauts.

The next day, Lieberman's images appeared on the front page of hundreds of newspapers nationwide.

**PERFECT TIMING** Opposite is an example of Lieberman's expertise in photography, aerospace, and astronomy: In this six-second time exposure, the space shuttle *Atlantis* leaves a streak of light as it passes between the moon and the planet Mercury, at sunrise on September 20, 2006. Longtime *Orlando Sun-Sentinel* photojournalist Red Huber said to Lieberman, "When I saw this shot, that's when I knew you knew what you were doing and the *Columbia* picture wasn't an accident."



**1. A FIERY VIEW** Lieberman always seeks out unusual perspectives for his photos. He got this dramatic shot by climbing to a rooftop opposite the site where firefighters battled a blaze in a row of historic buildings in downtown Tyler, Texas, on February 2, 2009.

**2. EAGLE EYE** Natural phenomena, especially birds, are another interest of Lieberman's. If you want to see eagles, Lieberman says with a laugh, follow the trash. During a visit to Ketchikan, Alaska, he asked around and was told a place where fishermen dump bait. Lieberman found eight nests at the site and plenty of photo ops of our magnificent national symbol.

**3. DOGPILE** Lieberman often covers sports, and the local junior college in Lieberman's hometown, Tyler Junior College, has a very successful athletic program. Here, the baseball team celebrates after winning the Division III NJCAA World Series on May 28, 2014. "This is a classic 'jubi' shot," Lieberman says. "I just waited for it."



**4. STATE FAIR** "I like shooting time lapses of the rides," Lieberman says. "The geometric forms represent the excitement of the fair." This image was taken at the East Texas State Fair in Tyler, Texas, on September 20, 2007.





**SHUTTLE RIDE** Lieberman calls this image of the space shuttle *Discovery* being transported by a Boeing 747 Shuttle Carrier Aircraft “one of my semi-luck, semi-skilled shots.” It was taken on August 21, 2005, at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana, where the 747 had landed to refuel on its trip from California to Florida. While all of the other photographers packed up, Lieberman kept his camera trained on the sky. He had observed that the 747 took off to the north, so he predicted that it would make a turn, giving him a chance to get this silhouette shot in the dawn twilight sky. The Associated Press promoted this image as one of its top photos of the day (APTOPIX).

The *New York Times* literally stopped the presses to substitute one of his photos for an inferior video screen capture. One made the cover of *Time* magazine that week. Globally, according to Lieberman, his photos appeared in 1,200 newspapers and were seen by an estimated 2.4 billion people within the first 24 hours of publication.

In 2003, few professional photographers were using digital cameras. This incident showed the power of digital photography to the world of journalism. That’s why Robert Daugherty, who was then director of the AP State Photo Center in Washington, called Lieberman’s photo “the *digital image* that played around the world.”

**T**he *Columbia* disaster was Lieberman’s first foray into the world of professional journalism, but it was not his first foray into any kind of journalism. As a student, both at Edward R. Murrow High School in Brooklyn and at Wagner College, he had started to learn the craft.

He fondly recalls his involvement with the *Wagnerian* student newspaper

and the *Kallista* yearbook. “I learned a lot. It was a very useful time from an educational perspective,” he says. “I had good editors who helped me develop journalistic and photographic skills.”

### This incident showed the power of digital photography to the world of journalism.

Doing photography for the *Kallista* gave him the opportunity to get his photos developed, which at the time was difficult and expensive. The *Wagnerian* didn’t publish many photos, but he wrote stories, helped convert the paper to a computerized layout system, served as the science editor, and became the managing editor during his senior year.

At the same time, he majored in biology and chemistry, completing the pre-medical curriculum. When he was accepted into the New York Medical

College, his *Wagnerian* colleagues made note of it under the headline “Scott Accepted” in the May 3, 1983, issue.

“Scott worked on the *Wagnerian* for four years, annoyed at least eight editors, became managing editor this last semester, and was involved in many other activities during his attendance at Wagner,” they wrote. “We all wish Scott the best of luck in his medicinal future.”

He graduated from medical school in 1987, and then trained in internal medicine and interventional cardiology at New York’s Lenox Hill Hospital. In 1994, he joined Cardiovascular Associates of East Texas and the Tyler Cardiac and Endovascular Center. He has been practicing interventional cardiology and endovascular medicine ever since.

Little did fellow *Wagnerian* staffers such as Claire Regan ’80 (who became associate managing editor of the *Staten Island Advance*) and Jim McGrath ’86 (who became a sports journalist as well as a teacher and coach) know that they would see him again in the world of professional journalism.





**ROLLOVER** Lieberman is not a licensed pilot, but he loves to fly. In the photo above, the pilot gave him the controls of a World War II-era training aircraft, the P-51 Mustang “Betty Jane,” and Lieberman executed a roll while shooting photos.

Having his photos viewed on the world stage made a huge impression on Lieberman. “Getting published was a fantastic, visceral event,” he told the Poynter Institute’s Andrew Beaujon, who covered Lieberman’s story on the 10-year anniversary of the *Columbia* disaster.

It led Lieberman to decide that he wanted to continue contributing to the AP. That’s what differentiates his work from “citizen journalism” — a trend that some have linked to his story.

“To a certain extent, yes,” he replies when asked what he thinks about being called “the father of citizen journalism.” “But I didn’t work outside of editorial control, and I haven’t used primarily

social media to self-publish my work.”

Instead, he worked with photo editors at the *Tyler Morning Telegraph* and the AP. Eventually he became so adept at editing his photos and writing captions that he was allowed to contribute directly to the AP national desk as an independent contractor.

Lieberman has enjoyed contributing to the world of AP photojournalism, not only professionally but also personally. He attended the party for Bob Daugherty’s retirement from the AP State Photo Center. He has visited AP bureaus around the country. “I have made a lot of connections and dear friends in the AP news business,” he says.

When you search AP Images online today, you’ll find nearly 1,000 photos credited to Dr. Scott M. Lieberman. “On almost any day, my pictures are being pulled and used,” he says.

What makes them so appealing is that he finds the unique angle, framing, lighting, and timing that make any scene truly arresting. “I look for the artistic in the natural moment,” he says, recalling the famed 20th-century photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson’s technique demonstrated in his influential book, *The Decisive Moment*. “I shoot anything that tells a story.” ■





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**1. DUAL BOLTS** Weather, especially lightning, is one of Lieberman's specialties. This image, from May 1, 2007, was taken from his backyard in the countryside near Tyler, Texas.

**2. MUD FLIGHT** The wild frenzy of a mud fight seems to defy gravity in this image from the Scarborough Renaissance Festival in Waxahachie, Texas, on May 5, 2007.

**3. CALM BEFORE THE STORM** In the photo below, used on the front page of the *New York Times*, Lieberman captured a striking image of over 200 temporary medical beds set up in the Maytee Fisch Convocation Center at the University of Texas at Tyler, in preparation for hospital evacuations as Hurricane Gustav approached on August 30, 2008.



3



# Wagner College, 1930



New Dormitory



Cunard Hall



Old Dormitory



Tennis Court



President's House



Faculty Cottages

Athletics  
Track & Field



Stoughton Cottage



Administration Building



Weiskotten Cottage



Haas Cottage

The Oval

Serpentine Road



# Wagner College History Tour

By Lee Manchester

When Wagner Memorial Lutheran College moved from Rochester, New York, to Staten Island in 1918, it was a truly tiny school — just 42 students, enrolled in a high school and junior college program, with fewer than 10 professors. It used a German curriculum and prepared young men to become pastors of Lutheran congregations.

But the world was changing in 1918 — and so was Wagner.

The move to Staten Island, spearheaded by local Lutheran minister and 1894 Wagner College graduate Frederic Sutter, was part of a master plan to bring Wagner College into the 20th century and transform it into a new kind of school: an American college. By the time that plan was completed, around 1935, we had 18 professors and 280 students working on their bachelor's degrees.

And all of them needed places to live, and work, and study on campus.

## New Faculty — New Houses

The first few years of life on the Staten Island campus were pretty rugged, by all accounts. Living space was at a premium for students and faculty alike. Two professors, George Haas and Clarence Stoughton, lived with their wives in tiny, two-room apartments on the third floor of the old Cunard villa. A third, Herbert Weiskotten, could not join the faculty until better housing was available.

And so, in 1922, work was begun on three new faculty homes, named for these three pioneering professors — Stoughton, Weiskotten, and Haas.

The Stoughton and Weiskotten homes were designed in the Craftsman style with half-timbering highlights, popular on Staten Island at that time. We have no record of the architect's identity, but the structures bear striking



similarities to houses designed by architect Henry G. Otto on nearby St. Paul's Avenue. Otto also designed Pastor Sutter's home in 1922.

**ESTABLISHMENT YEARS** Between 1922 and 1930, the Wagner campus grew from six buildings to 10. The additions included a dormitory (today's Parker Hall), three faculty homes, and the building that has become the College's architectural signature, the Administration Building (Main Hall). Only one of these buildings is no longer extant: the Weiskotten Cottage, pictured above.



The Stoughton cottage now houses our public safety and human resources offices. Affectionately known as “Prof,” Stoughton (seen at right) taught English and history, and later played a major role as the College’s first lay president.



The Weiskotten cottage, on the other hand, is one of the very few old buildings on campus to have been demolished; it stood on the site occupied by the Horrmann Library, built in 1960.

The Haas cottage is now the home of Wagner’s Department of Lifelong Learning. (The late Chaplain Lyle Guttu lived there for nearly 30 years before that.) It replaced a decrepit gatehouse that stood on the campus property when we bought it in 1917.

Wagner’s trustees had planned to move that old gatehouse about 50 feet into campus and refurbish it as a faculty residence — but the longer they looked at it, the more it became clear that it wasn’t worth renovating. The problem was, they had already poured a new foundation for it at the new location.

Their solution? They took the old gatehouse’s measurements and built a new cottage with the same dimensions and the same architectural lines as the old one — but with some anomalies. The original house was a simple example of shingle style architecture, so called because the roof shingles were used to cover the walls as well.

But the Haas cottage was stuccoed instead, like the other homes on campus. That explains why it has the distinctive roof lines, doorways, and windows typical of a late 19th-century shingle style house — but no shingles!



**FACULTY AND STUDENT HOUSING** Built in 1922, the Haas Cottage (above) features the shingle style with a stucco finish. It now serves as the offices of the Department of Lifelong Learning. The New Dormitory (right), now called Parker Hall and used for faculty offices, was dedicated in 1923 (above right).

## New Students – New Dormitory

Professors weren’t the only members of the young Wagner community who needed places to live. With our rapidly growing enrollment — nearly doubling in the first two years — we would need more student residence space than the boys’ dormitory (later called North Hall, and now Reynolds House) allowed, and quickly.

The New Dormitory, as it was first called — later known as South Hall, but rechristened Parker Hall in 1961 — was finished in time for the opening of classes in September 1923. It was the first of two new campus buildings designed in the collegiate Gothic style by architect George Conable, who had also designed Trinity Lutheran Church, home of Pastor Sutter’s congregation. It was meant to house up to 70 students, but since fewer beds were initially required, much of its first floor was used as library, classroom, and office space.

In 1925, College leaders announced the next major step in the creation of a modern Wagner College: a \$500,000 endowment campaign. New York state law required a half-million-dollar endowment for any institution granting bachelor’s degrees — and Wagner had to be able to grant degrees in order to survive. By the time the February 1926 college newsletter was printed, the campaign was declared a success.





**WAGNER'S SIGNATURE** Main Hall in 1932, when the trees surrounding the Oval were saplings.



**LAYING THE CORNERSTONE** The photo above shows the cornerstone-laying ceremony for Main Hall (then called the Administration Building) on May 30, 1929. Below is an image of the cornerstone from the *New York Times* on June 16, 1929, with the donors of the cornerstone, Fred Weber and Freda Weber; the Rev. Frederic Sutter; and the Rev. C. F. Dapp, president.

## Bigger Enrollment – Better Facilities

Although it took another two years for Wagner to jump through the additional bureaucratic hoops necessary to grant baccalaureate degrees, the stage was set for growth. The college program doubled in size between 1925 and 1926, since those enrolling in 1926 could be fairly sure that they would earn a bachelor's degree by the end of their Wagner career.

The increasing enrollment put extra pressure on existing facilities, making one more new building essential: a “recitation and science hall,” with multiple classrooms, a combination gym and auditorium, real science labs, a full library, and offices for faculty members.

Ground was broken on the new Administration Building, as it was called — we know it as Main Hall — over the summer of 1928. Architect George Conable's new collegiate Gothic building, which became the college's architectural signature, was finished by February 1930. The official dedication was held on the annual College Day gathering on May 30.

With the opening of Main Hall, Wagner College had taken all of the major steps needed to transform itself into a modern, American liberal arts college. Three smaller steps completed the job:

1. ending the high school program, in 1932, so that Wagner would be free to focus exclusively on higher education;
2. the trustees' decision, in the winter of 1933, to admit women for the first time in the college's half-century history; and
3. the election in May 1935 of Wagner's first lay president, Clarence “Prof” Stoughton.

“It is not our hope to build a great university,” Stoughton said in his inaugural address. “We are blessed, in this metropolis, with some of the great universities of the world. But while we do not need more universities, we do need the small liberal arts colleges, where personality remains sacred, where the student is always an individual, where his individuality is developed and emphasized.” ■

Next in our series: The building boom of the post-World War II era, 1946-1970.



# We Sound Our Voice

FOR MORE THAN 80 YEARS, THE WAGNER COLLEGE  
CHOIR HAS HELD TOGETHER IN HARMONY

BY LAURA BARLAMENT





**T**raveling and spreading the joy of music have always been part of the choral tradition at Wagner College. The first reference to an organized student singing group is found in a May 1931 German Lutheran church newspaper, *Der Lutherische Herold* [*The Lutheran Herald*]. In a “Report on Mission Work Among Immigrants in New York Harbor in the Year 1930,” Pastor E. A. Sievert describes worship services he is conducting on Ellis Island.

A photo accompanying the story shows four members of the Wagner College Glee Club on their way to Ellis Island to support the pastor “with music and song,” as he writes. “May God reward them for what they have done for these people who often feel unfortunate,” he concludes.

Up to this day, the choir continues to help students find their voices, discover the vast cultural riches of music from all ages and all around the world, and share the joy of human harmony with audiences locally, around the United States, and beyond. As the cover notes of the choir’s 1975 album puts it, they are Wagner College’s “ambassadors in song.”

What follows is a glimpse into the history and the lived experience of the Wagner College Choir — one of the few institutions within the College that has such longevity and continuing vitality.

## FOUNDING: SILAS H. ENGUM, 1935–43

THE CHOIR WAS FOUNDED in 1935. Silas H. Engum, its first director, represents the choir’s roots in the Midwestern Lutheran tradition, shaped by F. Melius Christiansen, the genius of a *cappella* choral singing from St. Olaf College. Engum was one of his students, as were most Wagner choral conductors who followed him through the early 1980s.



The Wagner College A Cappella Choir, as it was known, performed only religious music with no instrumental accompaniment (as the designation a *cappella* indicates). The 1936 *Kallista* boasted that Wagner’s choir “sings in the style of the famous St. Olaf choir” and that its 40 members were selected from 85 applicants.

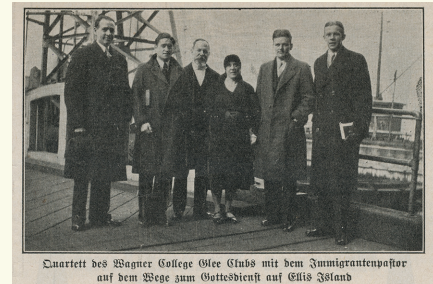
The choir went on its first tour in March 1939, visiting nearby areas: Long Island, New Jersey, and central New York State. During the following years, it expanded its travel to Pennsylvania and western New York State. The choir also performed regularly for radio broadcasts on major New York City stations.

## WAR AND POST-WAR PERIOD: JOHN L. BAINBRIDGE, 1944–49

STARTING IN 1942, the impact of World War II on College life, including the choir, was significant, as most young men were drafted into military service. The choir was briefly disbanded during 1943, and Engum left the College. But by early 1944, the choir had been reorganized as an all-women’s ensemble under the direction of music professor John L. Bainbridge. During the post-war enrollment boom, choir membership exploded, reaching its all-time high point of 80 members in the spring of 1948. The choir gained popularity through local concerts and radio broadcasts. It resumed touring in 1946, appearing throughout New York, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut.



The choir’s first-ever LP recording was made in 1949. A superb Juilliard-trained organist, Bainbridge did not stick strictly to the Lutheran *a cappella* tradition. The LP represents Bainbridge’s mix of repertoire, from the sacred and classical to the secular and popular. Although the album cover features the words “Wagner College A Capella [sic] Choir,” some of the selections are accompanied by organ and piano, as appropriate for those varied styles of music.



Quartett des Wagner College Glee Clubs mit dem Immigrantenpastor auf dem Wege zum Gottesdienst auf Ellis Island

**SERVICE IN SONG** Members of the Wagner Glee Club travel to Ellis Island to sing for a worship service in 1930 (above).

**CENTER STAGE** The Wagner College Choir with Director Sigvart Steen on the stage of Lincoln Center’s Philharmonic Hall, where they gave a sold-out concert on February 17, 1966 (opposite).

## Voices UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

“No other course at the College was, I think, capable of offering its students the prospect of realizing so much of their own potential [as was choir]. . . . We learned many specific things that can be cast in an academic mold. And we built a community among ourselves, one we were thrilled to share in the best possible ways with anyone who would show even the slightest interest, one that endures to this day. Night after night after night, ten measures into the first piece we sang, we had reached out and invited audiences to take part in it, and they did. I can’t remember a single instance of an audience not responding with enthusiasm that sometimes surprised even them.”

— Gene Barfield ’75



## THE ESTABLISHMENT ERA: SIGVART J. STEEN, 1949–68

SIGVART STEEN USHERED IN a long-lasting and very memorable era of the Wagner College Choir. Dynamic, intense, and committed to choral excellence, Steen was already a noted conductor when he moved to the New York City area in the summer of 1948, so that his wife, contralto Margery Mayer Steen, could further her operatic career. A graduate of Luther College and St. Olaf College, he had conducted the U.S. Navy's Great Lakes Blue Jackets Choir and founded the Luther College Nordic Cathedral Choir. In the fall of 1949, Wagner College hired Steen as professor and chair of music and choir conductor.



1992, the 18-acre property included a gracious 19-room mansion built in 1867 by William Green Ward, a wealthy banker who had served as a colonel in the Civil War.

The Ward house became the choir's home for about 35 years. The long schlep from the main campus to the Music Building (as it was known) for choir rehearsals, in all kinds of weather, is a leitmotif of chorister lore. During most of the Steen years, these rehearsals took place daily, first thing in the morning. Once the students reached the building with its wraparound porch, they ascended a large stairway to the second floor, where the choir used the old home's ballroom as its rehearsal space. This special place — a beautiful old house devoted to the art of music — bestowed a certain romance upon the choral identity at Wagner College.

### THE CHOIR'S HOME

Also in 1949, the College purchased the old Ward family estate, located across Howard Avenue (then known as Serpentine Road) from the main campus. Today, it's the location of the Wagner football stadium; but from 1949 to

### TOURING

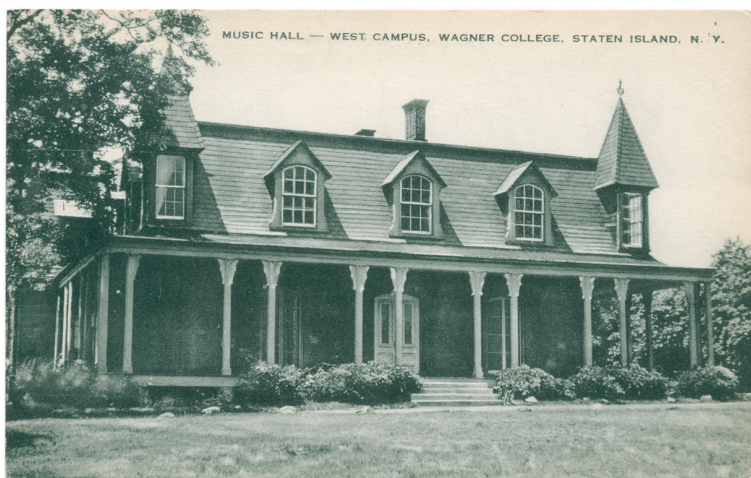
Steen took the choir on 16 tours across the United States and Canada, plus one time to Europe, when they were invited to sing at the convention of the Lutheran World Federation in Hannover, Germany, in July and August of 1952. The only American college choir at this event, they were received rapturously by large audiences.

The regular tours were three-week journeys, undertaken during January and February, by bus or by train. The timing often meant extreme winter weather. In 1955, they traveled 3,500 miles throughout the Midwest and Canada, singing for as many as 13,000 people during their travels. Washington, D.C., became a regular stop starting in 1956. In 1960, the tour incorporated 18 states, from the Midwest to California and back through the South. In 1962, they appeared in Florida for the first time, as part of an 11-state tour.

### PASSING OF THE BATON, 1969

STEEN WAS DIAGNOSED with bone marrow cancer in 1965. Nevertheless, in January-February 1966, he led the choir on a 7,000-mile, 24-concert, coast-to-coast journey, which concluded with a sold-out homecoming concert at Philharmonic Hall (now known as David Geffen Hall) in Lincoln Center.

In December 1968, "Steen was vigorously rehearsing the choir for its annual Christmas Concert when he fell seriously ill and was admitted to the hospital," writes his son, Richard Steen, in a biographical essay. "He had in fact made music with his students up to the week before he succumbed to the fatal illness on December 20, 1968."







**HIGH STANDARDS** This photo of the Wagner College Choir with Sigvart Steen in the fall of 1968 was given to us by choir alumna Kathryn Lee Hume Arn '72. Steen died in December 1968, having firmly established the choir's reputation for excellence throughout New York City, the United States, Canada, and even in Germany, where he led the choir at the Lutheran World Federation's convention in 1952.

## Voices

### REHEARSING AND PERFORMING

"On the first day of rehearsal, we were given music and told that it would be collected within a week. Wow! We spent a great deal of time in the piano room of our dorm trying to memorize the music and be prepared for the collection. Fortunately, there were many choir members who had been in the choir for several years and were able to carry the bulk of us while we learned as we went along.

"The concerts were always a cappella. Our full attention was on Dr. Steen. And we ended each concert with 'Beautiful Savior.' We would all sing the first verse and then, as we began to hum, Dr. Steen would point to one of the choir members, and have them sing the next verse. They all sang so beautifully."

— Gale Tollefsen Bellafiore '61

### AROUND THE UNITED STATES

"The single most important part of my days at Wagner was my membership in the choir. The extended choir tours defined those years, when we sang in Lutheran churches, colleges, and famous concert halls around the country. Night after night for three weeks we rolled along, our concerts following church suppers given by our hosts; afterwards we stayed in people's homes. In the days before 'reality TV,' I experienced the diversity of the lives of everyday folks in many different parts of our country."

— Caroline Runyon Zuber '58

### ON THE ROAD

"In January or February of 1951, while traveling on the Pennsylvania Turnpike en route to New Kensington, west of Pittsburgh, we stopped for lunch at the midway rest area, where we ran into the Concordia College Choir, led by Paul Christiansen, son of F. Melius Christiansen of St. Olaf College fame. We had an impromptu mini-concert as dueling choirs. It was a great time. Back on board the bus, Dr. Steen told us that the reason we were required to wear jackets and ties, and dresses for the women, was so we would appear as professionals. The Concordia students were wearing army fatigues, jeans, etc. They looked rather ragtag and sloppy compared to us — point made."

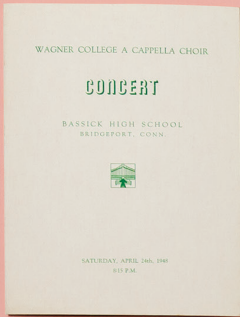
— Bill Wehrli '53

### GENESIS OF A CHOIR COUPLE

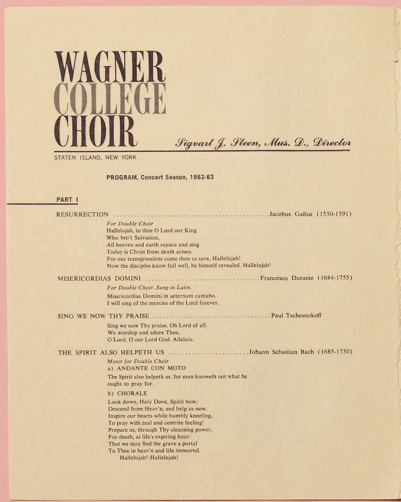
"I met June Billings, my future wife, on the 1956 choir tour. ... I took an immediate liking to her. ... [Before tours,] the choir seniors would convene in order to determine which guys would chaperone which gals while on tour. As it happened, another bass also had his eyes on June, but I persisted, and won. The rest is history: 59-plus years of marriage to this very bright and beautiful Swede. We always describe our relationship as a 'college choir marriage.' June and I still sing together at Hope Lutheran in Bozeman, Montana."

— Jeff Safford '56 M'59

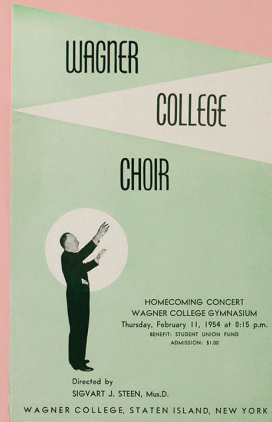




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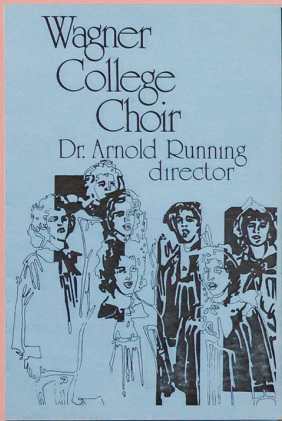
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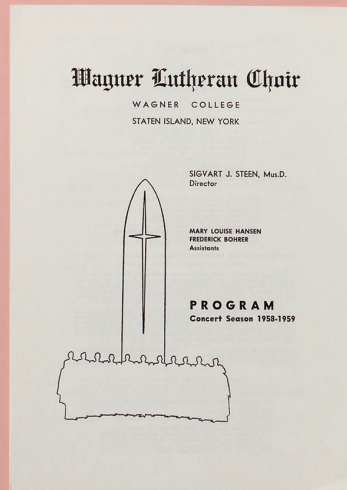
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A small selection of Wagner College Choir programs from its first four decades.

- 1. APRIL 24, 1948**, Bassick High School Concert, Bridgeport, Connecticut. John L. Bainbridge, director.
- 2. 1962–63 CONCERT SEASON.** Sigvart J. Steen, director.
- 3. FEBRUARY 11, 1954**, Homecoming Concert, Wagner College Gymnasium. Sigvart J. Steen, director.
- 4. NOVEMBER 12, 1978**, St. Andrew's Church, Richmondtown, Staten Island. Arnold Running, director.
- 5. MAY 19, 1979**, Commencement Concert. Arnold Running, director.
- 6. 1938–39 CONCERT SEASON.** Silas H. Engum, director. Pictured: Irma Gramm '42 and Ruth Haas '42.
- 7. 1958–59 CONCERT SEASON.** Sigvart J. Steen, director.

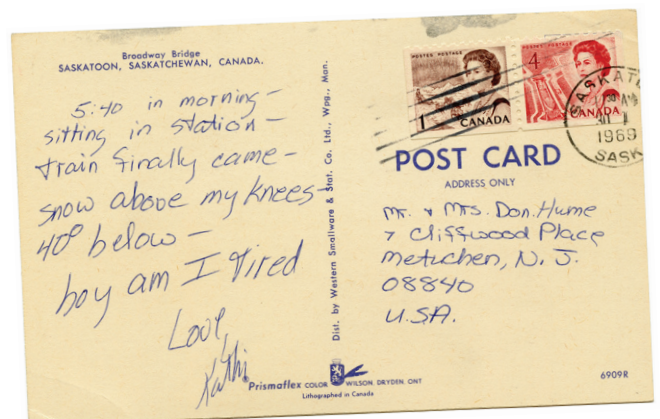
## Voices BAPTISM BY FIRE — OR BY ICE?

“The train trip across Canada and back across the northern USA was during one of the coldest years on record, culminating in -40° temperatures, the trains freezing to the tracks, and delays in the Rockies due to avalanches. We performed at Orchestra Hall in Chicago and some very large cathedrals and churches in Canada. ... It was a true ‘baptism by fire.’”

— Allan DiBiase '72

Steen left his choir with a complete plan for another coast-to-coast tour in January and February of 1969, crossing the breadth of Canada and returning via the Upper Midwestern U.S. The choir's 60 members unanimously voted to go on with the tour in Steen's memory. His widow, Margery Mayer Steen, as well as Walter E. Bock, Wagner director of church relations, accompanied them. A junior music major, Allan DiBiase '72, who had been working as Steen's assistant and rehearsal accompanist, was selected as the conductor.

**‘THE DEEP FREEZE TOUR’** Kathryn Lee Hume Arn '72 wrote this postcard to her parents from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, in January 1969. This choir tour coincided with a record cold spell.







**TOURING ABROAD** Snapshots from the albums of Diane Wehrli Mathisen '79 show choir members in Germany in June 1978, left with a concert poster, below with the tour bus.



## Choices A GENTLE MAN

“Although I was a nursing major, my four years at Wagner centered around the choir. I was too immature to appreciate what a fine human being Dr. Running was. His patience, kindness and musicianship seemed to know no bounds. I sang with some very fine choral conductors for about 30 years after graduation, but I always have kept a very special place in my heart for Dr. Running and his ‘Love Principle.’ Once a year or so, Dr. Running would explain to the choir that his approach to making music with others was to approach every rehearsal with love. When he did that, everything simply worked out the way God planned.”

— Kristine Iwersen Moore '77

## THE MUSIC

“What Dr. Arnold Running managed to bring forth from us, most of whom were not music majors, continues to astound me to this day, more than 40 years later. We did not believe, at times, that we were capable of creating such magic.”

— Gene Barfield '75

## GROWING THE TRADITION: ARNOLD RUNNING, 1969–79

HIRED IN THE FALL OF 1969, Arnold Running, like Steen, trained in the F. Melius Christiansen tradition at St. Olaf College. Before coming to Wagner, he experienced great success as a choral director at Parsons College in Iowa and Augustana College in South Dakota, leading both ensembles on tours of the United States and of Europe.

A highlight of the Running years was the choir’s return to Europe. Running led the choir on three month-long trips, in May–June of 1972, 1975, and 1978. Every year the choir tour began or ended in Bregenz, Austria, where Wagner College had operated a satellite campus since 1962. Other tour stops included Munich, Berlin, Hannover, Darmstadt, Bonn, and Stuttgart.

Running continued the Steen tradition of extensive annual U.S. tours, although the travel time was reduced from three to two weeks. Running also introduced some significant innovations: The choir’s first tour under his direction included 47 choir members — and 15 instrumentalists! Traveling in New York and New England, the choir and chamber orchestra performed a challenging program that included Renaissance music and 20th-century compositions, as well as a selection of folk songs, hymns, and spirituals. At the end of the March 1977 tour, the Wagner College Choir made its second appearance in Lincoln Center’s Avery Fisher Hall.

## A PART-TIME INTERIM: RICHARD STEEN AND JAN MEYEL, 1979–86

DR. RUNNING’S FORMER STUDENTS say he was forced to retire in 1979. It was a time when the College was at its nadir, veering to the edge of bankruptcy. The Ward house was closed in 1984, because its heating system was deemed irreparable. Neglected, the grand old house fell victim to vandals and fires; it was demolished in late 1992 or early 1993. North Hall (today’s Reynolds House) housed the music department, and the choir rehearsed in a Spiro lecture hall.

**‘AMBASSADORS IN SONG’** The 1970–71 Wagner College Choir with Arnold Running, director, went on a tour of 15 cities in the Northeast and Midwest in January–February 1971.







Richard Steen



Jan Meyel



Patrick Gardner



Jeffrey Unger

The choral directors were part-time instead of full-time faculty, limiting the choir’s activities. Yet students from this time still recall the joy of the music they made.

Sigvart Steen’s son Richard grew up at Wagner College and became a musician himself. In fact, he gave his first voice recital in Guild Hall in 1968, with Allan DiBiase as accompanist. A graduate of St. Olaf College and the Yale School of Music and former music professor and choral conductor at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington, he served part time as Wagner’s choral director from 1979 to 1981. He led the Wagner College Choir on a wide-ranging tour in March of 1980, encompassing nine states and Washington, D.C.

Jan Meyel, an affable and talented vocalist who performed internationally, then took over as choir director from 1981 to 1986. Former students like Annmarie Lambiasi ’85 remember his “larger-than-life personality,” his warmth and humor. The choir did not go on tours, but performed at local churches and on campus, with repertoire ranging from Lutheran hymns to classical pieces to Broadway medleys.

## A TURN OF FORTUNE: CASTLEBERRY, GARDNER, AND UNGER, 1986–96

THE CHOIR’S FORTUNES started to turn around in the mid-1980s. A new music department chair, Ronald Lee (a graduate of Luther College, where Sigvart Steen had founded a famous Midwestern choir), hired David Castleberry in 1986 as the first full-time faculty member and choir director since Arnold Running’s retirement. During his four years, this Texas-trained musician built the choir back up from around 20 to more than 40 members. The choir resumed its annual spring tours starting in 1988, a tradition that has continued unbroken to this day. In addition, in May–June of 1990, the choir went on a 20-day Europe tour, performing in Germany, Austria, and Italy. “For me, it represented a culmination of four years of building,” Castleberry says.

When Castleberry departed Wagner to become the choir director at Marshall University, he connected the department with another excellent conductor, Patrick Gardner, who led the choir until 1993 — when he went to Rutgers, where he is still director of choral activities. Jeffrey Unger, who was previously a high school and college choral conductor in New Jersey, then led the Wagner College Choir for three years. Gardner and Unger both maintained the choir’s local performing schedule and annual tours in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions.

**CHOIR ANGEL** During the 1990 tour of Europe, Choir Director David Castleberry presents a T-shirt to Martha Megerle in honor of her support. Martha and Eugen Megerle, longtime supporters of Wagner College, were natives of Schorndorf, a small city near Stuttgart, Germany. The choir tours of the 1970s, 1990, and 2013 all included concerts in Schorndorf in honor of the Megerles’ support. Martha Megerle died in 2002, but a provision of her estate plan underwrites choir tours to this day.

## Voices ONE HARMONIOUS VOICE

“I joined the Wagner College Choir in the fall of 1979. ... Dr. Richard Steen was the choir director, and his passion for music was demonstrated at each and every practice and performance. The choir included a diverse group of male and female students, who came together at least twice a week, to create one harmonious voice. While we all were different majors, at choir practice and performances, we were all the same: singers. ... Being a choir member provided me with discipline, time management, and leadership skills. All of these have added to my success as a nurse leader today.”

— Lorraine DiBartolo Flood ’83,  
MSN, RN

## A UNIQUE SOUND

“I was a music major with a concentration in voice at Wagner, but one reason I loved the choir so much was that it wasn’t all music majors. We just had everyone who liked to sing. We had a unique sound, with beautiful trained and untrained voices, all voice types. Dr. Unger was a perfectionist. One trick I learned from him, which I still use when I’m directing shows at Shawnee Playhouse [a regional theater in Pennsylvania], is to position the voices in the ensemble for the best sound, matching up different timbres and vibrato. Also, from Wagner College Choir I learned to love all different styles of music. There are so many types of pieces out there for choir, so many styles and sounds you can get.”

— Sara Schappert Ferguson ’97





## A PROUD CHOIR ALUM

“Being a member of the choir was one of the best things I did after I transferred to Wagner from a state school in Massachusetts. I was the choir tour manager my junior and senior years, planning a Northeastern tour in the spring of 2005 and a Florida tour in spring of 2006. So many memories were made on those trips, meeting new people and building stronger friendships. Another [highlight] would be performing at Carnegie Hall in the fall of 2003. ... Looking back, I still can’t believe I sang at Carnegie Hall. Dr. Wesby was one of the most important people of my college career at Wagner, and I thank him for all of his support, guidance, and believing in me for my three years at Wagner. I was also a member of Espresso and Stretto, close-harmony jazz ensembles, and loved that as well. I’m a proud Wagner College choir alum and wouldn’t trade my time at Wagner for anything in the world!”

— Kara Plant McEachern '06

## GROWING IN MUSICIANSHIP

“I came to Wagner knowing that I would enjoy the college choir, because my friend Sylvia Maisonet '16 told me about the fun she had in Dr. Roger Wesby’s choir. On the first day of choir, we did vocal warm-ups that I’d never encountered in my previous years in choir. It made me feel excited to join such a professional and hard-working group of musicians. ... The music we encounter on a weekly basis ranges from sophisticated Aaron Copland pieces to soulful jazz masterpieces by the Wesbys to dramatic Bach chorales. As an aspiring musician, college choir has taught me to be disciplined, humble, and versatile as a singer and composer.”

— Ariel Ubaldegaray '18



**VOCAL POWER** Michala Williams sings a solo with the Wagner College Choir at Opening Convocation, September 8, 2015.

## EXPANSION AND EXCELLENCE: ROGER WESBY, 1996–PRESENT

ROGER WESBY came to Wagner College in 1996 with wide-ranging musical and cultural experiences that he has poured into his work with the Wagner College Choir. His wife, Barbara Wesby, is the choir’s accompanist and an adjunct faculty member who teaches composition and musicianship. Both are composers as well, and they have had long experience with teaching music in El Salvador and Costa Rica as well as in the United States. In addition, Roger Wesby has a background in jazz: For quite a while early in his career, he says, he was torn between pursuing classical trumpet, jazz trumpet, and choral conducting. He even had his own big band in Costa Rica, before he finally settled on choral conducting as his main focus, returned to the United States after 14 years abroad, and earned choral conducting degrees from the Westminster Choir College and Indiana University.



Every year, Wesby has led the choir on spring tours covering the Northeast, the Southeast, California, and Florida. Along with choir alumni, the Wagner College Choir returned to Germany and Austria in 2013 — the first such trip since the Castleberry choir’s in 1990. Under Wesby, the Wagner choir has joined other U.S. choirs several times for concerts in Carnegie Hall, and they have performed great works such as Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess*, Brahms’ *Requiem*, and Orff’s *Carmina Burana*. And the innovations continue: In March of 2017, they will strike out into uncharted Wagner Choir territory, with a 10-day tour of Spain.

Fitting with his diverse background, Wesby says, “There is worthy music in every genre.” The choir’s repertoire now includes music ranging over a 500-year span of history by composers and folk traditions from around the world. ■





# AlumniLink

*Events, opportunities, and celebrations for the Wagner family, both near and far*



## Time to Reconnect

### Reunion brings classmates together to support each other and the next generation

MORE THAN 400 ALUMNI AND FRIENDS of the College returned to campus on the weekend of June 3–5 to reconnect with each other, celebrate each others' achievements (*see opposite page about the Alumni Award honorees*), and have fun on the Hill.

Some relived their college days by staying in the residence halls. Many painted the anchor; some even took a painting class while sipping pinot with Jenny Toth, professor of art. The alumni choir rehearsed and performed at the annual memorial service. Alumni who wanted to learn about today's Wagner could take campus tours, learn about transformational programs with Provost Lily D. McNair and faculty members, and chat with President Guarasci.

And there was plenty of time to relax and play, from a beanbag tournament to a beer blast to a 1920s-themed cocktail party and dinner dance.

Each milestone reunion year had the chance to gather at designated tables for their classes at the Saturday lunch on the Oval.

Wagner's newest class of Golden Seahawks, the class of 1966, enjoyed a well-attended dinner together on Friday evening. Bob O'Brien '66, a former trustee of Wagner College, and David '66 and Naomi Klc '66 Pockell led the 50th reunion effort.

Because David Pockell fell ill, they were not able to

come to the reunion. "It was very regrettable that I couldn't attend," he said in September, noting that he's ok now. David and Naomi met at Wagner College and were married the day after graduation, June 6, 1966, so they had planned to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary with classmates.

"The older you get, the more you like to see people from those days," he says. "We have an intense shared experience, and we have lived lives of interest that I would like to hear about."

Class of '66 members recorded a video message for the Pockells, which meant a lot to them, David said.

The class also contributed a sizable reunion gift to the College, totaling up to more than \$1.8 million, including a planned gift from Nils '66 and Evelyn Goysock '68 Larson. The majority of this spectacular 50th reunion gift will support the College's endowment.

The class of 2006, celebrating its 10th anniversary, used the occasion to come together and remember Kira Marshall '06, an inspiring friend who died much too young, in April 2011. Many of them attended the dedication ceremony for a bench placed on campus in her memory. Members of the class raised an extraordinary sum of more than \$108,000 in honor of their 10th anniversary. Some of it funded the Kira Marshall memorial, but most of it helped provide for general educational needs through the Wagner Fund.



# Alumni Association Honors

The 2016 annual awards recognize leaders in serving the College and the community and in professional achievement

## ALETTA KIPP DIAMOND '65 H'15 AND ROBERT DIAMOND

were named the John "Bunny" Barbes '39 and Lila T. Barbes '40 Wagner Alumni Laureates. Aletta was elected to the College's Board of Trustees in 2003 and is now serving her fifth term. She and Bob have supported the Wagner community in many ways: cheering on the Seahawks, helping to found the Chai Society, and raising scholarship money for sorority Alpha Delta Pi, among others.



## DENNIS K. GALANAKIS '58, M.D.,

was named the Distinguished Graduate. A professor of pathology and medicine at the Stony Brook School of Medicine, and director of the blood bank at Stony Brook Medical Center, he is an international expert in transfusion medicine. He has pioneered a procedure that uses the patient's own platelet-rich plasma to stop excessive bleeding from surgery and to minimize transfusion in open-heart surgery and the treatment of burn patients.



**CHARLES "TAD" BENDER '06** was awarded the Dr. Kevin Sheehy '67 M'70 M'92 H'99 Alumni Leadership Medal. He served as vice president and president of the Alumni Association from 2006 until 2013. He was also a member of the Capital Campaign Committee.



**ERIK UNHJEM '72** received the Reverend Lyle Guttu award for his spiritual contributions, which include working with Rev. Guttu to raise money for the campus carillon, named in memory of Erik's father, the late Rev. Dr. Arne Unhjem, who was a professor of religion and chaplain at Wagner.



**ELIZABETH DAWSON BARKER '66** was named a Wagner Alumni Fellow in Nursing. She earned a doctorate in nursing from the University of Texas at Austin, and she now serves as a clinical professor, director of master's programs, and director of the family nurse practitioner program at the Ohio State University College of Nursing.



**MELISSA D. POWERS '05** was named a Wagner Alumni Fellow in Education. She has taught high school science, coached softball and volleyball, advised her school's student government, organized Super Science Saturday, and directed summer day camps in Ridgewood, New Jersey. She recently earned her J.D. from Seton Hall University.



**RANDY DEMENO '82** was named a Wagner Alumni Fellow in Computer Science. Chief technologist for Windows products and Microsoft partnership at Commvault, DeMeno was named Computer Reseller News Top-25 Innovator and Top-100 Executive of the Year. He has attained many patents for Commvault's data management software.



**LUKE F. MORRIS '06** was awarded the Wagner Alumni Key for his professional achievements. Named vice president/financial consultant for Fidelity Investments in 2012, he was one of the top-ranked advisors in the nation last year and earned the Fidelity Charitable Award for assisting clients involved in philanthropy.



**GREGORY J. KOVAR '89** was named a Wagner Alumni Fellow in Sociology. As the day habilitation director for Lifestyles for the Disabled in Staten Island, he provides meaningful opportunities and experiences for more than 200 adults who are disabled.

**SCOTT M. LIEBERMAN '83, M.D.,** was named a Wagner Alumni Fellow in Biology. Read about him on pages 12–17.

**ROBERT PERRETTA M'12** received the Certificate of Appreciation for his recent work with the Alumni Association. A technology project manager at Citigroup, he mentors Wagner business students and helps the hockey team.







## Confusion Turned into Business Gold

**The story of two class of 2007 alumni who share something unique**

WHEN ANTHONY DEANGELO ARRIVED at Harborview Hall, in August 2003, to check in to his freshman room at Wagner College, the registration desk staff told him, “You’ve already checked in!”

“No, I didn’t,” he replied in confusion. “I just got here!”

“Look, you signed your name,” they replied.

But the scrawl on that paper was not his. Turns out, there was another freshman that year at Wagner College named Anthony D’Angelo.

Throughout four years as fellow business administration / finance majors at Wagner, and nearly seven years as business associates, Anthony J. D’Angelo ’07 and Anthony V. DeAngelo ’07 have learned to turn their shared names from a point of confusion into a significant asset.

Since 2009, the two men have built a financial services team that has become one of the busiest and most productive nationwide for AXA Advisors, LLC.

They love to meet with new clients together. “Here’s the hardest thing you’re going to have to do,” they say, and lay

**NAME GAME** “I told you I’d get you to join my fraternity one day,” Anthony J. D’Angelo ’07 (left) jokes.

down their two business cards. Everyone laughs. “There has never been a better ice breaker than putting down the card with the same names,” says Anthony V. “It makes the connection we need to get our clients to trust us.”

The two Anthonys met soon after the room confusion incident. During their first conversation, they made an agreement: “We have the same name, so let’s keep a strong reputation.”

They also became very good friends. Anthony J. joined the fraternity TKE, becoming its chief recruiter. Anthony V. started his own event planning business that catered to fraternities, so he always resisted joining TKE but became an “honorary brother.”

Anthony J. started working for AXA Advisors immediately after graduation, whereas Anthony V. went into the family realty business. In 2009, Anthony J. was promoted to be a vice president of AXA Advisors’ New York City branch, and he was able to recruit and train a new team of financial professionals. The first call he made was to a man he knew was brilliant at connecting with people.

“I’m in,” was Anthony V.’s simple reply.

Both were excited. Anthony J. remembers thinking, “Anthony and Anthony working together is going to be something big and special. We’re going to change this company.”

They had a few things going for them: their friendship and trust in each other, and the fact that sharing a name allowed them to double book appointments. (A trick somewhat similar to covering for each other in business classes back at Wagner.) Their team has grown exponentially and now competes with another team in Austin, Texas, for the company’s top spot.

They also share a devotion to their clients’ well-being, realizing that the advice they give has a long-term impact on people’s futures.

“Our goal is to do well by doing good for people,” says Anthony V. “We get business by doing a great job for our clients.”

(Visit [www.anthony-dangelo.com](http://www.anthony-dangelo.com) and [www.anthonyvdeangelo.com](http://www.anthonyvdeangelo.com) to learn about their practices.)

“I told you I’d get you to join my fraternity one day,” Anthony J. jokes. “It’s so much fun to work with a friend.”





# Upcoming Events

## NOVEMBER– DECEMBER

**Wagner College Theatre:  
Anything Goes**  
November 17–December 4,  
Main Stage  
Cole Porter hits, including “I  
Get a Kick out of You” and  
“You’re the Top,” sparkle in this  
lighthearted romance.

**Wagner College Theatre:  
The Trojan Women 2.0**  
November 29–December 4,  
Stage One  
Playwright Charles Mee  
fuses elements of Euripides’  
Greek tragedy, high art,  
and pop culture.

**Stretto and Espresso:  
Vocal Jazz Set**  
December 6, 8 p.m.,  
Performance Center,  
Campus Hall

**Wagner College Choir:  
Holiday Concert**  
December 11, 4 p.m.,  
Trinity Lutheran Church,  
Staten Island

**Wagner Guild Luncheon**  
December 14, 12 p.m.,  
Wagner Union

## FEBRUARY

**Choirs and Jazz Ensemble:  
Tribute to Black Music**  
February 22, 9 p.m.,  
Performance Center,  
Campus Hall

**Wagner College Choir:  
Black History Town Hall  
Meeting**  
February 25, 12 p.m.,  
First Central Baptist Church,  
Staten Island

## MARCH

**Wagner College Theatre:  
Titanic**  
February 23–March 5,  
Main Stage  
This masterfully crafted musical  
examines the lives of the  
passengers aboard the doomed  
luxury liner *Titanic*.

**Wagner College Theatre:  
The Dance Project 2017**  
February 28–March 5,  
Stage One

**Wagner College Choir:  
Send-Off Concert**  
March 5, 4 p.m., Park Avenue  
Christian Church, Manhattan

**Wagner College Choir and  
Alumni: Spain Tour**  
March 5–19

**Wagner College Choir and  
Alumni: Home Concert**  
March 26, 4 p.m.,  
Trinity Lutheran Church,  
Staten Island

**Alumni Event: Career  
Conversations**  
March 30, 5:30 p.m.,  
Union League Club,  
Manhattan  
Students network with alumni  
and friends to learn about life  
and work after college.

## APRIL

**Songfest**  
April 1, Spiro Sports Center

**Wagner Guild Luncheon**  
April 12, 12 p.m.,  
Wagner Union

**Alumni Event:  
Sushi & Sake 101**  
April 18, Sushisamba,  
Manhattan

**Wagner College Theatre:  
La Cage Aux Folles**  
April 20–30, Main Stage  
Based on the hit French play  
and movie, this hilarious and  
sentimental musical reveals the  
true meaning of family.

**Treble Concert Choir:  
Spring Concert**  
April 23, 4 p.m., Trinity  
Lutheran Church, Staten Island

**Wagner College Theatre:  
Stupid F@%king Bird**  
April 25–30, Stage One  
A heartbreaking and hilarious  
sort-of-adaptation that takes a  
baseball bat to Anton Chekhov’s  
*The Seagull*.

**Wagner College Choir:  
Final Concert**  
April 30, 4 p.m., Trinity  
Lutheran Church, Staten Island

## MAY

**Vocal Jazz Set/Espresso**  
May 2, 8 p.m., Performance  
Center, Campus Hall

**Alumni Event:  
Wagner Salutes Educators**  
May 2, 5:30–8:30 p.m.,  
Flagship Brewery, Staten Island

**Alumni Event:  
Nursing Night Out**  
May 8, 5:30–8:30 p.m.,  
Flagship Brewery, Staten Island

**Baccalaureate**  
May 18, 4 p.m., Main Hall  
Auditorium

**Commencement**  
May 19, 10 a.m., Sutter Oval

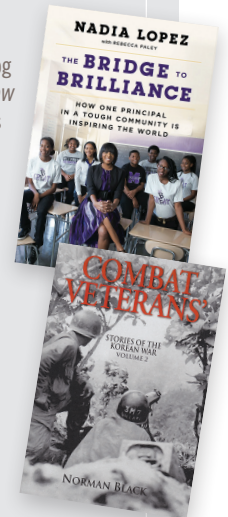
## JUNE

**Reunion Weekend**  
June 2–4

## New & Noteworthy

**Nadia Lopez '98 H'16** *The Bridge to Brilliance: How One Principal in a Tough Community Is Inspiring the World* (Viking, 2016). The founding principal of Mott Hall Bridges Academy in Brownsville, Brooklyn, Nadia Lopez gained national fame via the well-known blog *Humans of New York*. (Both she and *Humans of New York*'s Brandon Stanton spoke at Wagner College's 2016 commencement.) In Lopez's new book, she describes her uphill battle to launch and run her school. She gave a TED Talk featured on PBS's series *Education Revolution* on Sept. 13. Go to [wagner.edu/wagnermagazine](http://wagner.edu/wagnermagazine) to watch it online.

**Norman Black '60 M'73** *Combat Veterans' Stories of the Korean War* (2016) In this two-volume work, journalist Norman Black presents 35 first-hand accounts that tell of bloody combat and also of dedication to duty and commitment to comrades. They give readers an understanding of what draftees, volunteers, and professional military men experienced in the Korean War, adding to and sometimes even countering official reports and other historical accounts.







# ClassNotes

*Updates from old friends across the generations*

## 1946

**Gloria Gilmour Lindsey** wrote to us a few of her memories of being part of the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps at Wagner College. “I remember walking to and from Staten Island Hospital so I could save the travel allowance we cadet nurses were given,” she said. “I am not Scotch for nothin’!” She is retired and lives in Cairo, N.Y.

## 1949

Hon. Dr. **Guy V. Molinari** '49 H'90, a former borough president of Staten Island, was named one of the 50 most influential Staten Islanders this year by the weekly political magazine *City & State*.

## 1950

**Joel Cohen** was inducted into the Staten Island Jewish Community Center's Sports Hall of Fame in

2015 for his numerous sports biographies and instructional books for young readers.

## 1952

We were informed of the passing of Dr. **Morton Kurland** by his daughter, Abby Irish. He died on August 22 at the age of 83 after a lingering illness, she said. He is survived by his wife, Adrienne, their four daughters, and 10 grandchildren. A psychiatrist, he had retired in 2014 from his work as director of psychiatry for the Betty Ford Center and the Barbara Sinatra Center. More sad news came from **Michael G. Viise**, who lost his beloved wife, Neva, to an inoperable brain tumor on September 24, 2015.

on the Arts. In early June, she was in residence at the Salt Brook School in New Providence, N.J. Her poem “The Pera Palace Hotel, Istanbul” was nominated for a Pushcart Prize last year — her 10th such nomination.

## 1955

The Rev. **William M. deHeyman** has been living in Shannondell retirement community in Audubon, Penn., for 10 years. On Sundays, he offers a special ministry called First Steps to Worship, for children six years and under and their families, at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Fort Washington, Penn.

## 1956

**George Lewis** received the Citation for Meritorious Service, one of Rotary's highest awards. George is known as “the Water Man” for his tireless work to supply clean drinking water around the world. He is also an artist, with many of his paintings featured in a book, *Oil 4 Water* (Olmstead Publishing). He donates the proceeds from the sale of his paintings. “People who buy the book or my paintings

## 1953

**Charles “Chuck” Babikian** is semi-retired, but still operating CBS Realty in Harrington Park, N.J. In fact, he is celebrating his 60th year in the real estate business.

## 1954

**Wanda Schweizer Praisner** '54 M'57 continues to serve as a poet-in-residence for the New Jersey State Council



### Diplomajoy

**Grace Woodward '15** was so clearly overjoyed upon receiving her diploma on May 22, 2015, it looked like she wanted to jump right out of the picture. This jubilant image, captured by veteran *Staten Island Advance* photojournalist Jan Somma-Hammel, won a feature photo prize from the 2016 New York State Associated Press Association. A theater performance major from Dallas, Woodward was especially proud because she struggled with dyslexia and learning differences. “But, as my dad always says, ‘If you want to do something, you have to figure out how to do it.’ So I figured it out, and I went to the college of my choice: Wagner.” She is acting in commercials and films in New York City and plans to move to Los Angeles in the near future.



get the extra satisfaction of knowing that they are helping to make the world a better place,” George said.

## 1957

**James V. Canfield**, who received a Ph.D. in economics education from Ohio University in 1971, retired as superintendent of high schools for Manhattan in 1989. He served as mayor of the city of Palm Coast, Fla., from 1999 to 2007. He is now president of the Palm Coast Historical Society and Museum. **Kenneth R. Von der Heiden** moved from high mountains to Sutter Creek, Calif., for health reasons. “Doing fine at 1,350 feet instead of 9,000 feet,” he writes.

## 1960

**Louis DeLuca** received the Compass Award at the Distinguished Educator Awards at Wagner College in June. Lou has been the CEO of United Activities Unlimited, a multipurpose nonprofit human services organization on Staten

Island, for more than a quarter century. His three education degrees — Wagner bachelor’s, NYU master’s, California Coast University doctorate — prepared him to be a powerful advocate for education.

## 1962

**Elise Benedict Browne** contacted *Wagner Magazine* to inform us of the passing of her dear friend and classmate, **Georg Bohsack**, on November 18, 2015, after a short illness. He was very involved during his student years at Wagner, serving as captain of the soccer team and president of Pi Ki Omega fraternity when it became Theta Chi, among other activities. A successful businessman, he founded the ophthalmology equipment distributor GWB International. He is survived by his wife of nearly 42 years, Anne Pomerantzeff Bohsack, their children and grandchildren, as well as many beloved friends. **Beverly Hoehne Whipple** was interviewed

in December 2015 by a colleague, Dr. Eusebio Rubio from Mexico City, about her research on human sexuality, especially women’s sexuality. The interview is in English, and you can find it on YouTube by searching “Personajes: Beverly Whipple.”

## 1963

**Charles Gravenstine** spent the spring semester of 2016 in Africa, teaching at the Lumen Christi Institute in Arusha, Tanzania, and then traveling for five weeks in Morocco. **Lois Schutz Laurence** and her husband, Ron, are in their 14th year of operating a pick-your-own blueberry farm in Stratham, N.H. They also grow many vegetables, berries, and other fruits. They welcome all to visit, and you will want to go after you see the photos on their website, [BlueberryBayFarm.com](http://BlueberryBayFarm.com).

## 1966

**Maureen Ward Gallo** is retired after serving as the CEO

of two hospitals. She earned a Master of Public Administration from Penn State and is a fellow of the American College of Health Care Executives. She and her husband have two children — an attorney and an orthopedic surgeon — and three grandchildren. She serves as a board member of the Kiwanis Club and secretary of the Pennsylvania Kiwanis Foundation. She is also board chairperson for the Emergency Health Services Federation for an eight-county area of Pennsylvania. **Carolyn Haas Henry** wrote to us with many fond memories of her career and time at Wagner. “I look back on 50 years since graduation and realize how my nursing education at Wagner prepared me for my career — from hospital, to home, to nursing home, to school, to Kaiser Permanente, where I was a supervisor. I taught Lamaze childbirth and diabetes education; the teaching aspect of nursing was a favorite.” In July, she celebrated the 50th

### Keep in Touch!

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**Web:** [wagner.edu/alumni](http://wagner.edu/alumni)

**Mail:** Alumni Office, Reynolds House, Wagner College, One Campus Road, Staten Island, NY 10301

**Deadlines:** This issue reflects news received by September 12, 2016. The submission deadline for the Summer 2017 issue is June 1, 2017.

**Content:** Wagner welcomes your news and updates, and we will happily share

them with the Wagner family. We ask that you send us announcements of weddings, births, and graduations after the fact.

**Photos:** We accept photos of Wagner groups at weddings and other special events. With the photo, send the names and class years of all alumni pictured; birth date, parents’ names, and class years with photos of children; and dates and locations of all events.

**Photo Quality:** Digital and print photos must be clear and of good quality. Prints should be on glossy paper with no surface texture; they will be returned at your request (please attach your address to the photo). Digital photos must be jpegs of at least 250 pixels per inch; low-resolution photos converted to a higher resolution are not acceptable.



anniversary of her marriage to Paul Henry, a retired Lutheran pastor. They have nine grandchildren from ages 12 to 20. Her father, the Rev. Dr. **Harold Haas** '39 H'58, just passed away on August 15. She lives in Rochdale, Mass. **Roberta P. Seaton** has been living in the independent townhouses in the Courts of Fellowship Community, Whitehall, Penn., since her husband died. "It has a wonderful Christian atmosphere. I'd recommend it to anyone," she writes. **James H. '66 and Janet Yorkston Schuttler '66 M'70 Wassmuth** celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary on October 6, 2015. They met on freshman registration day, September 10, 1962, and were married on October 6, 1985.

## 1967

**Russ Johnson** '67 M'72 published the second book in his Detective Pete Nazareth crime novel series, *A Measure of Revenge*, in March 2016. You can find it on Amazon and at Barnes & Noble. **James Robb** '67 M'75 wrote to us in late 2015 that he planned to relocate to San Antonio, Tex., in 2016.

## 1968

Dr. **Warren Procci**, chair of the Wagner College Board of Trustees, received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Wagner College DaVinci Society in September. A Wagner chemistry major, he earned his medical degree from the University of Wisconsin, where he completed his

residency in psychiatry. He holds a diploma from the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. In addition to his private practice, his career includes a 42-year history of scholarship and service at both L.A. County/USC Medical Center and Harbor/UCLA Medical Center. Rev. **Edward Voosen**, along with his wife, **Ruth Sandberg Voosen** '71, gave a series of performances and talks about church music at the First Christian Church in Tullahoma, Tenn., in September. They led the singing with their guitar and flute accompaniment. Ed, who earned his way through college and seminary by giving guitar lessons, retired in 2010 after serving as pastor of Bethel Lutheran Church in Auburn, Mass., for 36 years. Ruth, a flutist and soprano, worked as a college nurse and nursery school teacher. They have three children and five grandchildren.

## 1969

**Paul Fein** '69 M'72 is director of the IDD Leadership Group, a leadership learning and development consulting practice that he founded a few years ago. He has had a diverse career, including teaching high school chemistry, marketing for several manufacturing industries, and facilitating executive development. He is working on a leadership book entitled *The Chemistry of Leadership — A Self-*

*Discovery Formula to Finding the Leader in You*. "My learning journey all started with 'chemistry' at Wagner College," he writes.

## 1970

**Robert Dapolito** retired after 39 years as a registered nurse with the Department of Veterans Affairs. "It was an honor to work with the veteran patients, especially the Vietnam era veterans," he wrote. "The education I received at Wagner College was instrumental in this pursuit." Bobby earned a BSN at the University of South Florida after graduating from Wagner. His clinical assignments included the V.A. Medical Centers in Bay Pines, Fla.; Salisbury, N.C.; Tuscaloosa, Ala.; and Grand Junction, Colo. He has lived in Colorado since 1989.

## 1971

**Kathy Damberg Clark** retired in the summer of 2015. She attended the Bregenz 1970 reunion. **Leland Jacob** '71 M'79 is the coordinator of volunteers at Crossroads Farm at Grossmann's in Malverne, N.Y.

## 1972

**Jacob Ellis** passed away on March 4, 2016; his friend and colleague, **Richard Mollette** '67, informed us of the news. Jacob attained his Administrative Certificate in Public Education from the Danforth Program



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at the University of Washington, and he worked in schools in Seattle, Washington: as a school counselor at Nathan Hale High School and then as an assistant principal and talent development specialist at Cascade Middle School. He is greatly missed. **Anthony Ferreri** '72 M'81 finished his doctorate in business administration from California Coast University earlier this year. He is the executive vice president and chief affiliation officer for Northwell Health System, the parent company of Staten Island University Hospital. Also, the weekly political magazine *City & State* named him one of the 50 most influential Staten Islanders this year.

## 1973

**Phil McLaughlin** '73 M'81 retired in November 2015 after 42 years as a microbiologist for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. After spending the first 14 years of his career at the New York Regional Lab located in Brooklyn, he transferred to the FDA's Winchester Engineering and Analytical Center in Winchester, Mass., and became a specialist in the sterility testing of medical devices. He and his wife, Sue, live in Nashua, N.H., and have two daughters, Kaitlyn and Kerry-Rose, and one dog. He has been attending classes in the

senior education program at a local university. "I have found an indoor golf driving range, which allows me to make sure my golf game does not get worse over the winter, and I have continued to play the trumpet, as I did in the Wagner College Marching and Concert Band," he writes.

## 1975

**Helen Settles** M'75 was profiled in the *Staten Island Advance* on July 5. "Fan in the Spotlight: Helen Settles Keeps Ahead of the Game" by Jim Waggoner captured an interview with her at a Staten Island Yankees game. A retired teacher, Helen uses her time to support youth participation in sports — especially for kids with special needs. She co-founded the Staten Island Special Olympics in 1975 and has volunteered for the organization for 41 years; she recently took a group of Special Olympians to a New York Yankees game, courtesy of Con Edison, Waggoner reported.

## 1976

**Peggy Lee Brennan** was crowned Ms. Missouri Senior America 2016 on July 10. A Wagner theater major, she wowed the judges with her song and dance routine to "People Will Say We're in Love." Peggy Lee has had a long and successful career on stage and on screen, including several movie

roles and a guest star appearance on *M\*A\*S\*H* as Radar's love interest.

## 1977

**Kenneth Hahn** won a Cinema Audio Society (CAS) Technical Achievement Award in January for his work as a re-recording mixer for the television special *Live from Lincoln Center: Danny Elfman's Music from the Films of Tim Burton*.

## 1980

**Ed Burke**, deputy borough president of Staten Island, was named one of the 50 most influential Staten Islanders this year by weekly political magazine *City & State*.

## 1987

**Ken Mitchell** was featured in the January/February issue of *Industry: Staten Island* magazine. He is the executive director of the Staten Island Zoo, a position that he took on an interim basis initially, and which became permanent in 2010. Since he took the zoo's leadership, annual attendance has increased from 158,000 to 190,000. The zoo's collection includes more than 1,200 animals, including the rare amur leopard, added in 2014. The zoo features the Conservation Carousel, opened in 2015. The zoo's aquarium, built in 1985, is undergoing a complete renovation.

## 1990

**Monica L. Ursillo Passante** celebrated 25 years of teaching ELA in the public school system and 26 years of a successful kidney transplant given to her by her mother. Her son finished his first semester of college at the University of New Haven with a 3.55 GPA. Her daughter is a successful junior at St. Joseph by the Sea High School, Staten Island, with a 96 average.

## 1993

**Quincy Lewis** was back in NYC during March Madness this year to show his basketball players from Brigham Young University where to get the best pizza, wrote *Staten Island Advance* sports columnist Cormac Gordon. Quincy is now a BYU assistant coach, and the team made it to the NIT semifinals. He joined BYU in 2015, after 12 years at Lone Peak High School in Utah, where he transformed a modest basketball program into one that won seven state titles and one national championship.

## 1994

**James Hickey** '94 M'96 received the Distinguished Administrator Award at the Distinguished Educator Awards at Wagner College in June. He is headmaster of the Austin Preparatory School in Reading, Mass.



# Yana Demian '09, aka Space Girl

*From concert hall  
to delivery room*



**CLAIM TO FAME:** Yana Demian '09 is a Wagner-trained RN who works at Staten Island University Hospital. But from 1997 to 2003, Yana Demian was Space Girl, "the Queen of Acid Trance." Demian's keyboard performances for live rave audiences drew as many as 100,000 fans. Her catalogue includes three EPs and three full-length LP recordings.

**TALENT AND TORMENT:** Born in Moscow, Demian started serious studies of the piano at age 4. "My mom forced me to practice every day for 2 or 3 hours," she says. "And I had a very strict teacher, very old school. She smoked all the time, and when I got a note wrong she would burn me. It got to the point where I started hating it." As a teenager, Demian rebelled, listening to anything *but* classical music. Her tastes ranged widely, from Ella Fitzgerald to AC/DC. Nevertheless, she became a student at the prestigious Moscow Conservatory.



**MATERNAL AMBITION:** On March 8, 1991, Demian's mother brought her 15-year-old daughter to America to visit her grandparents; however, Mom had a secret agenda: to enroll Demian at Juilliard. "She took me down to apply, supposedly just on a whim. I got in right away," she says. Still, Demian knew that classical music was not for her.

**SPACE GIRL STARDOM:** One night, a friend took her to a rave in Brooklyn, where she heard a new type of electronic music: acid trance. She was hooked. The next day, she went out and bought a Roland XP-50 keyboard. She picked her stage name, "Space Girl," from a song by German electronic music artist D. J. Hooligan. At her first performance, a 1997 rave at Mount Airy Lodge in the Poconos, "The audience went completely crazy," she recalls. "Taking New York City's nightlife by storm, Space Girl was soon headlining clubs like the Tunnel

and Limelight, entertaining thousands of rapturous fans," wrote one reviewer. "Soon she was being booked all over the States and overseas, from mega-clubs in megalopolises to moon-drenched desert parties miles from civilization."

**LIGHTS ON:** "Around 2003, 2004, they declared war on the raves," Demian recalls. "The cops would come in, turn up the lights and clear everyone out. There were too many people involved with drugs." Almost overnight, her performing career was over.

**FROM RAVING TO HEALING:** Influenced by her father, a surgeon, she felt drawn to medicine. "While I was performing, I saw people overdose at the raves," she said. "It was part of the culture, and I felt at least somewhat responsible for that. It felt like nursing would be good for me, kind of a way to make amends." After trying a pre-med program and finding it was not the right fit, she discovered the 15-month, second-degree nursing program at Wagner College, tailored for people like her who had already earned a bachelor's degree in another field and were changing careers.

**A NEW ADRENALINE HIGH:** The transition to nursing was rough. "I'd never had to work with people, I'd never been a part of a team, and I wasn't used to being surrounded by women all day. But now, I love it." She found her niche working in the delivery room, first at Mt. Sinai Hospital and now at Staten Island University Hospital. "It's like an emergency room, but for delivering babies," she says. "There's a feeling of accomplishment when you come home from work and you've brought new life into the world. It's very rewarding, and very high adrenaline." Perfect for a former Space Girl.

## 1995

**Sheree Goode** was named a 2016 Staten Island Advance Woman of Achievement for her compassionate and effective work as a probation officer on Staten Island. "I believe in change," says the 18-year veteran. "I believe people can change."

## 1996

**Leslie Carrington** was featured on the blog *Madame Noir* on May 27. She is the founder and CEO of a wellness company, HolistiCitiLyfe. A social worker, Leslie went through a big change in her life after a traumatic experience in her family. Now, she offers retreats for women of color seeking increased wellness. **Christine Pedi Gise '96 M'98** and her husband, Andrew Gise, announce the birth of Adrianna Elizabeth Gise on April 17, 2015. They also have a son, Andrew, who is four years old. *See Crib Notes, page 41, for a photo.*

## 1998

**Jennifer N. VanDerWarker Serventi**, a neuro-oncology physician assistant at Wilmot Cancer Institute at the University of Rochester (N.Y.) Medical Center, received the Luminary Award from Adding Candles, a not-for-profit that funds brain cancer research, in September. Jennifer also earned a master's in leadership in healthcare systems from





the University of Rochester School of Nursing this year. As a final project for her master's, she designed the Neuro-Oncology Connect Telemedicine Program, through which she and her team will provide expert brain tumor treatment and access to clinical trials for patients throughout rural New York State.

## 2000

**Lauren Rinaldi Grimaldi** M'00, a teacher at the Eden II School for Autistic Children on Staten Island, received the Distinguished Wagner Alumna Teaching Award at the Distinguished Educator Awards at Wagner College in June.

## 2002

**Kinsey Casey** married Rick Charles Siger on July 3

at Green Valley Ranch in Coram, Mont. According to a wedding write-up in the *New York Times*, Kinsey is the deputy chief of staff for the chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh, and Rick is the director of strategic initiatives and engagement at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. They met in 2004 as staff members for John Kerry's presidential campaign. **Paul Martuccio** M'02, principal of P.S. 13 on Staten Island, received the Distinguished Educational Leader – Hank Murphy Award at the Distinguished Educator Awards at Wagner College in June.

## 2003

**Andrea R. Gulino Freeman** published a book, *Messages From My Grandparents ... In Heaven: How You Can*

*Keep Contact With Yours.* "It's a nonfiction book that offers a narrative on coping and healing after the loss of a grandparent, as well as the ability to recognize and maintain a connection with departed loved ones," she writes. It is available through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Balboa Press. Her website is [www.angelicmotivation.com](http://www.angelicmotivation.com).

## 2004

Dr. **Stephanie Famulari**, who is a podiatrist on Staten Island, received the Community Service Award from the Wagner College DaVinci Society in September. She gives her time to Camp Good Grief, Richmond University Medical Center, Workman's Circle Nursing Home in the Bronx, as well as Bishop Ahern High School on Staten Island. **John Charles Kiernan** received the Distinguished Community Educator Award at the Distinguished Educator Awards at Wagner College in June. He is principal of the St. Charles School on Staten Island and also varsity hockey coach for Monsignor Farrell High School on Staten Island.

## 2005

**Mark Intoccia** and **Amanda Concilio Intoccia** '08 announce the birth of Rocco Andrew Intoccia on June 5. *See Crib Notes, page 41, for a photo.* **David M. Osborne Jr.** was sworn in as a

new officer of the Montclair Police Department in Montclair, N.J., in May. Previously, he had been a substitute teacher and coach with the Montville Board of Education as well as a dispatcher for the Montclair Police Department.

## 2006

**Laura Marie Agostino** married Damian Salatino on August 13 in Staten Island. *See Knot Notes, below, for a photo.*

## 2007

**Christopher and Laura Woodruff Duni** announce the birth of their second child, Christopher Joseph Duni, on April 23. Big sister Natalie (born November 2013) is loving her little baby brother. *See Crib Notes, page 41, for a photo.* **Rebecca Kelly Arnold Golfman** is teaching a course on arts, activism, and race this fall for the Wagner College Department of Theatre and Speech. She received her J.D. from the University of Connecticut School of Law in 2012 and works on several projects to teach and advocate for civil rights, legal education, and empowering girls through theater.

## 2008

**Amanda Concilio Intoccia** and **Mark Intoccia** '05 announce the birth of Rocco Andrew Intoccia on June 5. *See Crib Notes, page 41, for a photo.* **Becky Giannatasio McCoy**

### Knot Notes



**Laura Marie Agostino** '06 married Damian Salatino on August 13 at Our Lady Star of the Sea Church in Staten Island. During their reception at the Hilton Garden Inn, the new couple paused to take a picture with their Wagner guests. Pictured: **Katie Ehrman Young** '06 (seated); **Marilyn Kiss**, professor of Spanish; Damian Salatino and Laura Agostino Salatino; **Emily Dillon Hernández** '06; and **Irina Carrasco Conte** '06. Photo by **Arielle Maggio-Ferguson** '06 M'08.



launched a new podcast on March 3, featuring interviews with people who have dealt with loss and how they survived in times of adversity. Look for her stories on social media at #UnfoldingGrace. **Kevin Richard** launched a vintage-inspired collegiate clothing company, 1883 Clothing Co. The year 1883 is a subtle reference to Wagner, as it's the year of the College's founding in Rochester, N.Y. "I've always identified with Wagner's story," he wrote, "as I'm from upstate New York and moved down to the city for school and work so that I, too, could grow and succeed." He sells Wagner men's and women's sweaters. Check out his website for more information: [www.1883clothingco.com](http://www.1883clothingco.com).

## 2009

**Allen Koehler** was named director of financial aid and admissions at Penn State Hazleton. He also completed his master's in higher education administration at Northeastern University. Previously, he worked at Mount Saint Mary's College in Newburgh, N.Y. **Sirena LaBurn** attended the New York Studio School's Summer Session after graduating from Wagner and discovered her love of landscape painting. She returned to Wagner on April 13–14 to give presentations on the influences, inspiration,

and methods of making art. **Al Phillips** was featured in the sports section of the *Arizona Republic* in July. A defensive back for the Arizona Rattlers, an Arena Football League team, Al is also serving in the Army National Reserves. The team honors his commitment to service by accommodating his Army duties. He also had a successful season with the Rattlers in 2016, including (as of July) 25 solo tackles, four pass breakups, and one interception.

## 2010

**Jesse Hagen** returned to Wagner on April 7 to speak about digital marketing. He is copy director of an agency located in SoHo, and he has provided strategic and creative direction on

digital marketing campaigns for the NFL, DirecTV, BET, L'Oreal, Hain Celestial, and more. **Caitlin McGee** booked a regular role on the series *Crunch Time*, NBC's hybrid game show/comedy pilot, according to *Deadline Hollywood*. **Jake Shore** staged his play, *Holy Moly*, at the Flea Theatre in Tribeca in August. The play is part of his novel, *A Country for Fibbing*, and the simultaneous debut and publication of the related works was a first in the U.S. The e-book version of the novel is available on Amazon.

## 2011

**Gabrielle Gill** went on a trip to Salavan, Laos, in March to train medical providers as part of the CleanBirth/Yale School of Nursing

team. CleanBirth works to prevent the needless deaths of mothers and babies in Laos, where maternal and infant mortality rates are among the highest in the world. Gabrielle is a registered nurse and a Yale-trained midwife. **Sam Mailloux** was appointed a senior associate with the Siegfried Group, LLP, a national CPA firm. He will work in the New York metro market. He was previously at Deloitte for four years. He is working on his MS in accounting from Wagner College and also volunteers for Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC. **Colin Shaw** wrote a story for *Outsports*, a gay sports news website, about his positive experiences in coming out to his Wagner lacrosse teammates and coach several years after

## Crib Notes



1.



2.



3.

1. Christopher Joseph Duni, born on April 23, to **Christopher '07** and **Laura Woodruff '07 Duni**.
2. Adrianna Elizabeth Gise, born on April 17, 2015, to Andrew and **Christine Pedi Gise '96 M'98**.
3. Rocco Andrew Intoccia, born on June 5, son of **Mark '05** and **Amanda Concilio '08 Intoccia**.

**We'd love to see your baby's face.**

Please see page 35 for publication guidelines.



graduating. The article, entitled "Straight Lax Bros Greet Gay Teammate's Coming Out Exactly How They Should," was published on June 29, shortly after the Pride Parade in Manhattan, which Colin attended with a couple of lacrosse teammates. "Staying in the closet for 14 years was the biggest regret I will ever have. I know now that people who truly love you will love you no matter what," he wrote.

## 2012

**Robert Perretta** M'12 M'16 was featured in *Bloomberg Business* on February 29 in an article entitled "Corbat Heads to Cancer Benefit as Staff Beats Fundraising Target." Rob is an assistant vice president in Citigroup's technology compliance department; Michael Corbat is the CEO of Citigroup. The story was about a benefit for the Stephen D. Hassenfeld Children's Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders, and Rob's leadership in fundraising for the center, as well as his story of overcoming cancer during his college years. He was treated at the Hassenfeld Children's Center. "I am just trying to help out the place that saved my life as much as I can," he told *Bloomberg Business*. Citigroup employees donated \$34,320 at the benefit.

## 2013

**Alex Boniello** performed on the nationally broadcast Tony Awards ceremony on June 12, as a cast member (Voice of Moritz) for the Deaf West production of *Spring Awakening*, which was nominated for three awards, including Best Revival of a Musical. **Doug Donato** started working at Hartford Symphony Orchestra in Hartford, Conn., as a production assistant in the spring. **Rhea Francani** has transformed her training in theater and music education (she earned a master's from Columbia) into country music singing and writing. In July, she was interviewed on New York City radio station NASH FM 94.7. She spoke about her path into the world of country music and the release of her first album, *Now or Never*. She gave credit to Wagner College in helping her pursue her dreams, saying, "That experience at Wagner, that theater training, really helped me."

## 2014

**Jennifer Bauer** won a 2016 Teacher Excellence Award from Success Academy Charter Schools, a 34-school charter network in New York City. Jennifer was selected from among 1,400 faculty members for the ETHOS Excellence Award. This award reinforces the schools' key values: Excellence, Teamwork, Humor, Ownership, and

Students. Jennifer teaches dance at Success Academy Fort Greene in Brooklyn. A sociology and education major, she says, "My education allowed me to see that biology, the psyche, culture, and geography are all factors that go into the development of a child." **Katherine Liu** received her master's from Juilliard in the spring. Her violin recital on March 11 in Paul Hall at the Juilliard School included works by Gershwin, Mozart, Strauss, and Tchaikovsky. **Keila McCracken** is founder and president of the Northern Minnesota Fibershed, a group of farmers and fiber artists who promote environmental sustainability by using local fibers, dyes, and labor to fulfill the community's fiber needs. **Adriana Peri** opened Peri's Pearl Tea in Tottenville, Staten Island, in 2015. "I knew when I went to Wagner College I would major in marketing and management so I could learn exactly what it takes to manage a business," she told the *Staten Island Advance*.

## 2015

**Michelle Greenough** won a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship to support her doctoral work in molecular biology at Clemson University. **Kayleigh Macchirole** biked across Tanzania this summer in a fundraising effort for the nation's 2 million orphans. "Not

only will I get to see Tanzania in a really unique way, I'll also get to see firsthand how my fundraising is helping the children there," she told *Southold Local* in April. Kayleigh raised \$3,000 for Foundation for Tomorrow, a nonprofit organization that funds education and support for orphaned children in Tanzania. "The more I read about the situation there, the more I know I'm doing the right thing," Kayleigh said. **Allie Sethares** renewed her Fulbright English Teaching Assistant grant in South Korea for another year. She will continue to teach at a middle school in Mokpo, about 200 miles south of Seoul, until July 2017. **Heather Wolf**, who works as an alumni relations officer for Wagner College, won the title of Miss Staten Island 2016. In the competition for Miss New York 2016, she won the interview award among the non-finalists. "Winning a title in the Miss America Organization gives you the opportunity to speak about something you're passionate about on a much larger scale. For me, that passion is suicide prevention. I hope to reach as many people as I can," Heather said. She is raising money and awareness for You Can NOT Be Replaced, an organization that promotes kindness and communication as a means of suicide prevention.



# In Memoriam

*Celebrating lives that enriched the Wagner family*

Dr. Harold Haas '39 H'58  
Mr. Carl E. Heilsberg '43  
Mrs. Cornelia Borgemeister Reynolds '44  
Rev. Edward H. Wiediger '44  
Mrs. Joan M. Welch Stubbs '47  
Mrs. Lillian Intemann Arnesen '48  
Mr. Anthony Marraccini '49 M'50  
Mr. John Gaczi '50  
Rev. Henry W. Kircher '50 M'53  
Rev. Henry Sterling George Sheppard '50  
Mr. Arthur R. Vakiener Jr. '50  
Hon. Charles J. D'Arrigo '51  
Mr. Richard E. Meyer '51

Mrs. Marie Young Ballweg '52  
Mrs. Evelyn Pedersen Gordon '52  
Dr. Morton Kurland '52  
Mr. Ralph J. Powelson '52  
Rev. Dr. William Bodamer '53  
Mr. George E. Pontoppidan '53  
Mr. Charles Rockefeller '53  
Dr. Richard C. Van Name '53  
Mrs. Tyra Rydell Hobbs '54  
Col. Leon F. Mangin '55  
Dr. Francis J. Byron Jr. '56  
Mrs. George F. Carstens '57  
Rev. Dr. John M. Brndjar '59

Mr. Ernest A. Farris '59  
Mr. Paul I. Holman '61  
Mr. William R. Van Heertum '61  
Mr. Georg W. Bohsack '62  
Mr. Ronald C. Jones '63  
Mrs. Janet A. Melver DeRoche '63  
Mr. Arnie Magenheim M'63  
Rev. Robert W. Busch '65  
Mrs. Lynne Smith Danesh '65 M'72  
Mr. Arthur Chester Grannis III '65  
Mr. Hank Pedro '65  
Mr. Michael J. Yellin '66  
Ms. Carol Nicolaysen '67 M'72

Mr. Edward Koynian Jr. '68  
Ms. Michelle Cliff '69  
Mr. Lawrence Wunderle '69  
Mr. Richard Laszlo M'70  
Mr. Jacob Ellis '72  
Mr. John C. Kachadurian '72  
Mr. Douglas Matthius '72 M'77  
Mr. David G. Koza '73  
Mrs. Christine Maiorano McCabe '73 M'78  
Mr. James J. McNamara M'73  
Mrs. Christine Lautenberger Simone '75  
Mr. Joseph A. Zaborowski '81  
Mr. Brian R. Huff '06

## FACULTY REMEMBRANCE

### Professor of Psychology Lee Borah

*Dedicated to his students, known for warmth and whimsy*



Lee A. Borah Jr., professor emeritus and former chair of the Department of Psychology, died on June 7 at age 84.

Dr. Borah held a B.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota and an M.A. from the University of Washington. He was valedictorian of his Cokato (Minn.) High School class of 1950.

He thrived on teaching and inspiring his students during a career that spanned from 1962 to 1997. He brought lecture material to life through personal anecdotes and through his writings in the department newsletter, *Hallucinations*. In addition to student perspectives, the newsletter included his regular columns: "From the Big Ashtray," "Sylvester Speaks" and "Report from Higher Brook," a detailed account of a small, intimate community and the people who lived there. The community itself was an elaborate set of miniatures arranged on his credenza, changing with the seasons.

"People who know me should be able to identify where I live in Higher Brook," he wrote in 1995. "Naturally, the front door is blue, and there are lilacs blooming on each side of the front door, and around the

back door are crepe myrtle trees." In the summer, he wrote, the village "disappears into the mists of time ... into closets, chests, etc."

Lee's sense of whimsy extended to his nickname for himself, "the happy hooker," a reflection of his love of creating hooked rugs. He designed some in the style of Monet, including a version of Monet's "Water Lilies."

He created a family for his students. Psychology Club and Psi Chi members joined him for potluck dinners at his apartment and end-of-semester parties on campus; both included his signature dessert, trifle. All were joyous gatherings filled with laughter. Dr. Borah also mentored his students individually, sometimes with the text of an article and his handwritten note, "Read, and let's discuss." Many of the friendships he developed with students lasted more than 40 years.

— *Compiled from alumni reminiscences by  
Elissa Alkoff Malcohn '79*



## ‘Real Talk’

*Listening to Stories That Are Hard to Hear* By Felicia Ruff

Each year, when I put “College Professor” and “Wagner College” into TurboTax to describe my profession and my employer, I have a flood of memories. As I type those words, I feel so proud — so proud that I reread it. A lot.

Now, anyone who teaches knows that time passes differently for us. The people in front of you stay the same age, so you assume that you do as well — when, in fact, a decade (or two) has passed.

As I reflect, I realize President Richard Guarasci and I have been doing this college thing together for a while; Richard hired me as a visiting professor in 2001 when he was provost — and, well, I just never left.

This fall, I began my 10th year as department chair and my 17th year as a Wagner professor. Richard and I have been through a lot together. Times haven’t always been easy. We’ve lost some people who were very dear to us. While I am confident that being a college president offers struggles of which I am not aware, he knows many of the unique challenges of being chair of the “drama department.”

But through it all, I can’t escape how proud I am to work at Wagner, to work with leaders like President Guarasci and Provost Lily McNair, each of whom are never satisfied, never rest on past accomplishments, but who are always looking to *do* better. To *be* better.

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Last year, Provost McNair exemplified this quality to me as she brought issues to the faculty that are hard to talk about. In my church, we call that “real talk.” Lily got us engaged in “real talk” about race and about the way students of color feel on our campus.

These conversations started with our leaders listening to our students. Lily told us that Richard and his wife, Carin, had invited students to their home for a lovely dinner. But they didn’t leave it there — they had “real talk.” And some of what was said was, evidently, hard to hear. But they didn’t turn away. They saw it as an opportunity to do better. To educate. To advocate. And to make change.

In turn, Lily gently but persuasively introduced us to this conversation in a way that we, her colleagues, could hear and reflect on. These were heartfelt conversations. And I was deeply touched when my department drew praise from Lily and from Curtis Wright, dean of campus life and chief

diversity officer, for producing Amiri Baraka’s *The Dutchman* and Lin-Manuel Miranda’s *21 Chump Street* — two plays that depict some of the difficulties faced by people of color in our society.

This dialogue opened other paths. I am proud that we have hired Rebecca Kelly Arnold ’07, a theater graduate who went on to earn a law degree, to teach a course on race, performance, and activism this fall.

I believe Wagner College Theatre has always been committed to fighting for the individual — particularly regarding sexual orientation, gender identity, as well as differing body types. We don’t recruit a look — we recruit a person.

But last year, our department discovered ways in which we are looking past people with physical disabilities. And we’ve had some “real talk” among our students and faculty. Our department has joined a conversation on what we can do better, not just at our school but in our industry, to represent other stories and other people.

My senior seminar members did their thesis research on disabilities and theater, identifying issues that face commercial theater audiences and producers in New York City, for example.

Earlier this year, theater alums Alex Boniello ’13 and Emilia Martin ’07 were part of a show that “awakened”



a consciousness for better access and inclusion among Broadway producers and audiences — the Deaf West production of *Spring Awakening*, a critically acclaimed staging that was performed simultaneously in American Sign Language and spoken English.

During the spring semester, our department hosted their fellow *Spring Awakening* actor Ali Stroker to speak to over 200 students packed into Spiro Hall. Some of what she shared was stunning.

In 2015, Stroker became the first wheelchair-bound actor to ever perform on a Broadway stage. She said with delight that the producers were proactive about renovating the theater to accommodate her wheelchair. But she also told a very personal story — which she called humiliating — of the company's trip to the White House to perform in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In the ultimate irony, they did not provide wheelchair-accessible transportation to this event.

We will make changes at Wagner as a result of these conversations. But what's so special to me about Wagner is that we know that when our students leave us, they will make *real* change. They will find themselves in leadership positions, casting, producing, directing, teaching, and they won't look past someone based on their color or physical ability.

That's what makes me excited to do our work together. We at Wagner are privileged to watch as these students grow up to become art makers, arts administrators, and activists — not just arts activists but social activists. Change-makers.

And while, particularly in an election year, people look to politicians and pundits for leadership, I like to



remind us that it is the artists and the storytellers who are the true change-makers. They show us what others want to keep hidden. From *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to *Hamilton*, from Stanley Drama Award winners *Rent* (Jonathan Larson, 1993) to *Bad Hearts* (Mike Bencivenga, 2016), these are stories of people who must be represented.

I am so proud that our department and our College takes the time to listen to one another's stories.

I am particularly grateful that we honor the storytellers and makers of change — our community of theater artists. ■

*Felicia Ruff, Ph.D., is a professor and chair of the Department of Theatre and Speech. This essay is a revised version of the opening remarks she gave at the 2016 Stanley Drama Awards on March 14.*



## WAGNER COLLEGE



### Defying Gravity

Mark Kaweesi of Uganda was one of the 25 Mandela Washington Fellows at Wagner College last summer through President Obama's Young African Leaders Initiative. Wagner's six-week institute on civic leadership built the capacity of dynamic community leaders like Kaweesi, who uses break dancing and other art forms to empower economically disadvantaged youth.

PHOTOGRAPH: JONATHAN HARKEL