

SUMMER 2017

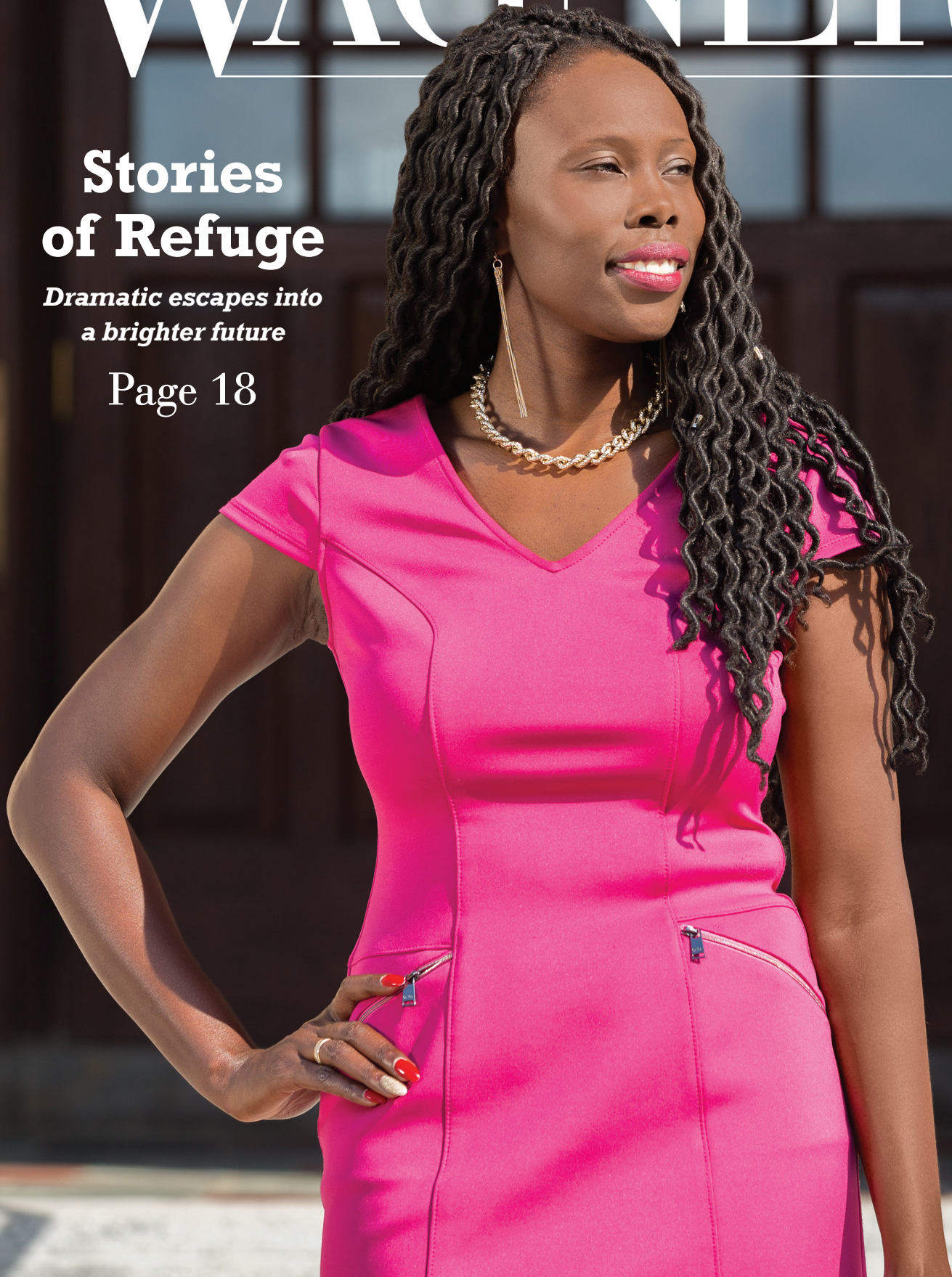
THE LINK FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

# WAGNER

## Stories of Refuge

*Dramatic escapes into  
a brighter future*

Page 18



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Wagner Magazine | Summer 2017

VOL. 14, NO. 2

## FEATURES

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### **New Horizons**

In Ghana for an alternative winter break, Wagner students work, learn, and reflect on history and identity.

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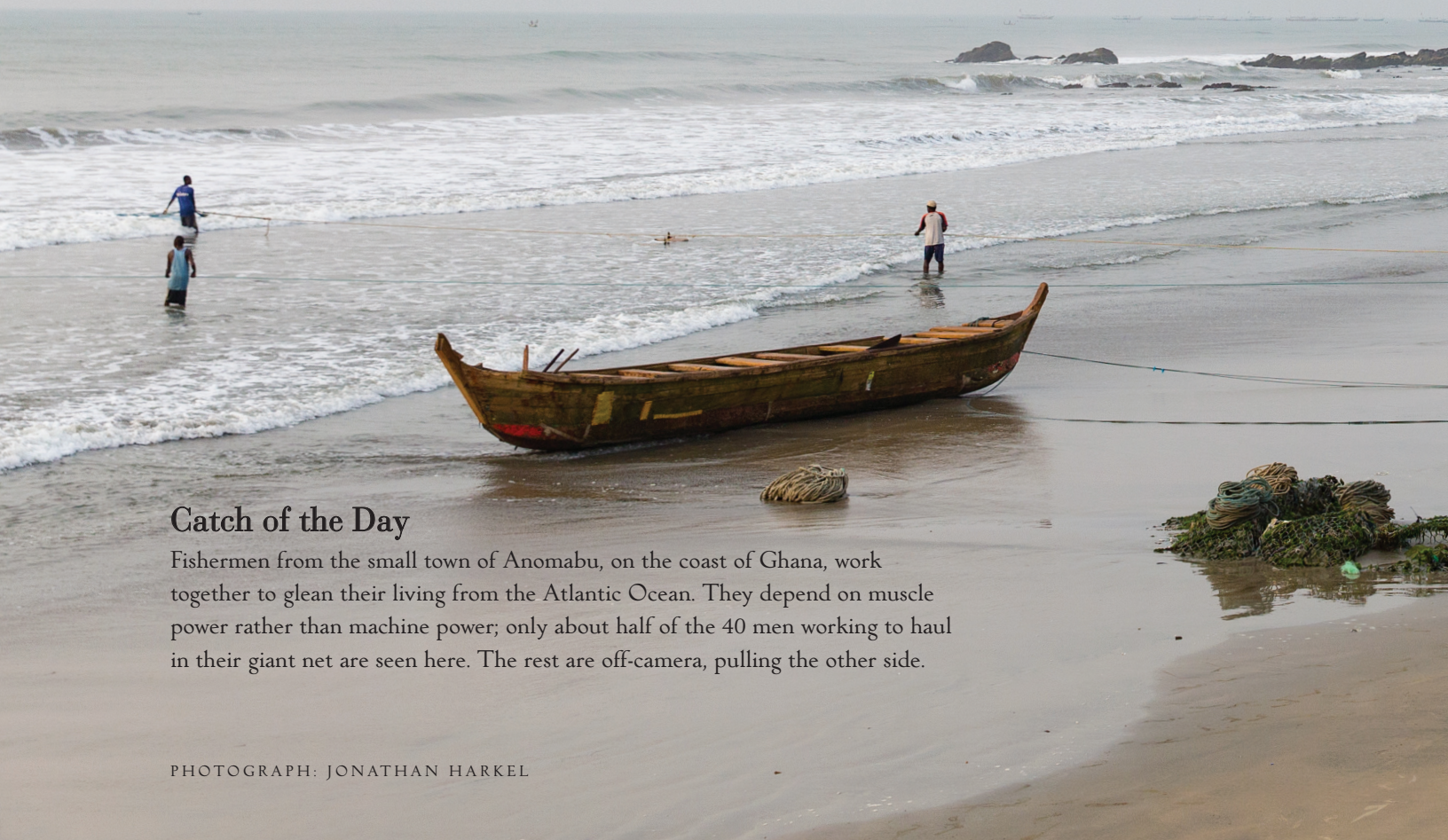
### **Stories of Refuge**

For people escaping chaotic homelands, Wagner College has helped provide a new life in America.

### **Catch of the Day**

Fishermen from the small town of Anomabu, on the coast of Ghana, work together to glean their living from the Atlantic Ocean. They depend on muscle power rather than machine power; only about half of the 40 men working to haul in their giant net are seen here. The rest are off-camera, pulling the other side.

PHOTOGRAPH: JONATHAN HARKEL



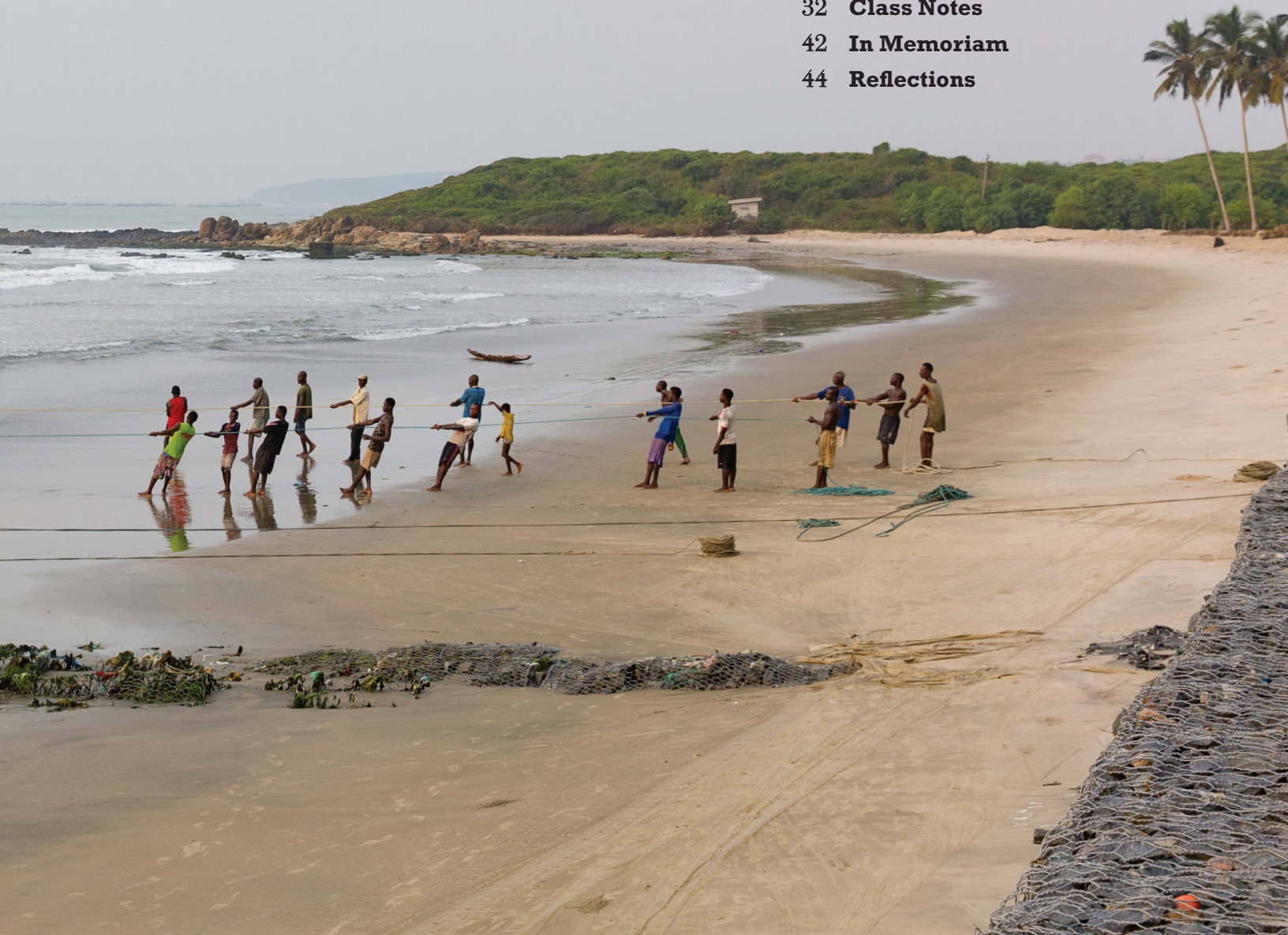
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## History Tour, Part III

In the “Boom Years” following World War II, the College added a library, a gym, a student union, a science complex, and dorm rooms for 1,500 more students.

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# From the President

## Great Graduates of the Class of 2017



HAVING JUST celebrated Commencement 2017, I am filled with pride and hope as I reflect on the graduates who are beginning the next chapter in their lives. The class of 2017 is an accomplished and

engaged class, one of the very best in Wagner's history, marked by strong academic achievement, remarkable leadership, and a sustained commitment to public service and civic engagement.

I hope you, too, will take pride as I share with you just a few notable facts about the newest Wagner alumni, the class of 2017:

- The class represented 36 states and 11 countries, ranging from Canada to Zimbabwe.
- Many studied abroad and served communities in other nations, including Australia, Belize, England, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Ireland, Italy, and Spain.
- Our first cohort of Bonner student leaders, a national program in public service, provided more than 15,000 hours of community service and strategic leadership throughout their four years, each pursuing important work in collaboration with our community partners.
- Commencement 2017 was also the first time in the 134-year history of Wagner at which the highest level of academic degree was conferred, as we graduated our first doctoral candidates with the Doctor of Nursing Practice from our Evelyn L. Spiro School of Nursing.

I'm also proud of the many 2017 graduates who are kicking off promising careers with great companies like PricewaterhouseCoopers, IBM, and

Ernst & Young. Our nursing and physician assistant graduates are starting medical careers at places like Johns Hopkins, Memorial Sloan Kettering, and Mount Sinai hospitals. Others are serving internationally, for example with the British embassy and the Peace Corps. Our graduates in the arts and theater are developing their voices and talents on Broadway, at Madison Square Garden, and at nonprofit start-ups.

Others are furthering their education at prestigious graduate institutions like Harvard Medical School, Tufts Veterinary School, and Columbia University. One mighty and dedicated Seahawk, Najee Harris, was even signed on by the NFL's Oakland Raiders.

You will read much more about many of these stories in this issue of *Wagner Magazine* — and, I'm sure, in future issues as well.

These young people face a time of great challenges. But, because I and the faculty and staff of this community know who they are, what they have done, and what they are capable of accomplishing, we have confidence that their commitment to learning and compassion for others will set all of us on a path to a better world. Their generation is destined to usher in a new type of leadership, where knowledge and empathy are joined to social responsibility and effective action.



Richard Guarasci  
PRESIDENT

**“Their commitment** to learning and compassion for others will set all of us on a path to a better world.”



## From the Editor

### *The Wagner Family in Action*

This year, I marked 10 years of employment at Wagner College, which includes 10 years as your *Wagner Magazine* editor.

In 2007, Wagner College welcomed me, easing what might have otherwise been a rocky transition, as I moved from rural Tennessee to the most densely populated urban center in the United States. Culture shock from a move within the United States? Yes, it is possible.

Wagner's welcome encompassed actions large and small, from my boss's arranging for me to live on campus for a couple of weeks while I searched for my own apartment, to a public safety officer's helping me attach my new license plates to my car.

This support is a manifestation of what is meant by "the Wagner family." I have felt its embrace since I came here; I didn't have to earn it. Yet, more than ever this summer, the meaning of the Wagner family has become real for me.

Lee Manchester also joined the Office of Communications and Marketing in 2007. We have worked side by side ever since, and I have come to appreciate his steady presence and commitment to this community more and more.

(Faithful readers of this magazine will remember his many contributions here,

especially historical pieces like the three-part "Wagner History Tour" that culminates in this issue on page 22.)

Early this year, he started a major medical journey that culminated in open heart surgery this summer.

Lee is a strong individual; however, this kind of treatment is not something that anyone can power their way through without help.

In lieu of a traditional family, Lee's Wagner family has revealed what it's made of in an impressive way.



**A CAMPUS LEGEND** Laura Barlament and Lee Manchester sit in front of a poster that reveals students' fascination with the man who sends daily email bulletins.

When I look at our shared "Team Calendar" and see names covering it all day long for weeks, I think, "This is what love looks like." A steady stream of faculty and staff has provided meals, accompanied short walks, cleaned the kitty litter box, given rides to doctor appointments, and just provided the moral support of their presence, as over the weeks Lee's body has knit itself back together.

This collective caring in action is what the Wagner family means: In times of need, large or small, you are not alone. Wagner students imbibe this ethic as well. To quote one of our newest alumni, Jazmin Diaz '17 (see page 11): "Each of us *matters* to this world."

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EDITOR, WAGNER MAGAZINE

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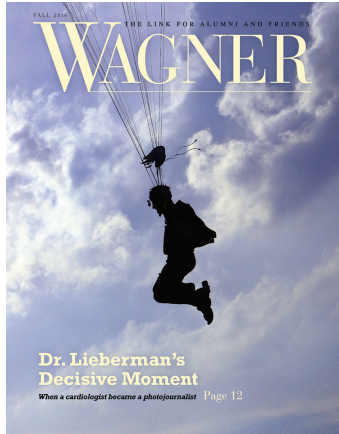


### On the Cover

*As a child, Edna Aurelus M'08 fled a band of armed men who attacked her home in Fort Jacques, Haiti. Now, she has a doctorate in nursing and is a faculty member in Wagner's Evelyn L. Spiro School of Nursing.*

PHOTOGRAPH: JONATHAN HARKEL

# From Our Readers



## Missing Conductor?

I was a member of the Wagner Choir during the fall semester of 1960, my freshman year. Did I miss mention of Dr. Normann, who was the director at least that semester? He was a truly nice and gentle man whom I fondly remember. I ran into him in Philadelphia several years after I graduated.

Choral members were all seriously committed to the group, a standard I fell somewhat short of meeting. Recognizing I was an awkward fit, I decided to leave after that one semester. I seldom ran into most of those who continued as members of the choir, as they did not frequent the Buddy Buddy Club or the Hofbrau,

“Nothing matched the quality we had with the Wagner College Choir.”

both popular off-campus study centers.

I still sing in two community and two church choral programs.

*Butch Savage '64*  
SCHENECTADY, NEW YORK

*Editor's Note: Professor of Music Harald Normann conducted the choir during 1960–61, when Choral Director Sigvart Steen was on leave to conduct a series of choral workshops for churches throughout the country.*

## Singing Praises

I was so thrilled to read your excellent edition of *Wagner Magazine* that came in yesterday's mail. The history of the Wagner Choir (“We Found Our Voice,” fall 2016) especially interested

me, as I was a member under Dr. Steen from 1956 through 1960.

I was a “fellow alto” with Gail Tollefsen Bellafigliore '61, who contributed to your article. She was spot on when she stated, “Our full attention was on Dr. Steen.” We had to memorize all the music and practiced for one and a half hours each day. ...

I loved my choir years. I've sung with groups since then, but nothing matched the quality we had with the Wagner College Choir. I'm happy to be able to see the current choir when I'm in Florida and they're on tour. It's fun to compare notes with the younger generation of choir members after the concerts.

*Judy Rank Hatke '60*  
SKILLMAN, NEW JERSEY



## MORE VOICES

Want to read Judy Rank Hatke's full story about Dr. Steen, plus much more? Our new book, *We Found Our Voice: A History of the Wagner College Choir*, expands on the fall 2016 feature story with additional photos, alumni reminiscences, and details of choir history. Go to [www.lulu.com/wagnercollegehistory](http://www.lulu.com/wagnercollegehistory) to order a copy.

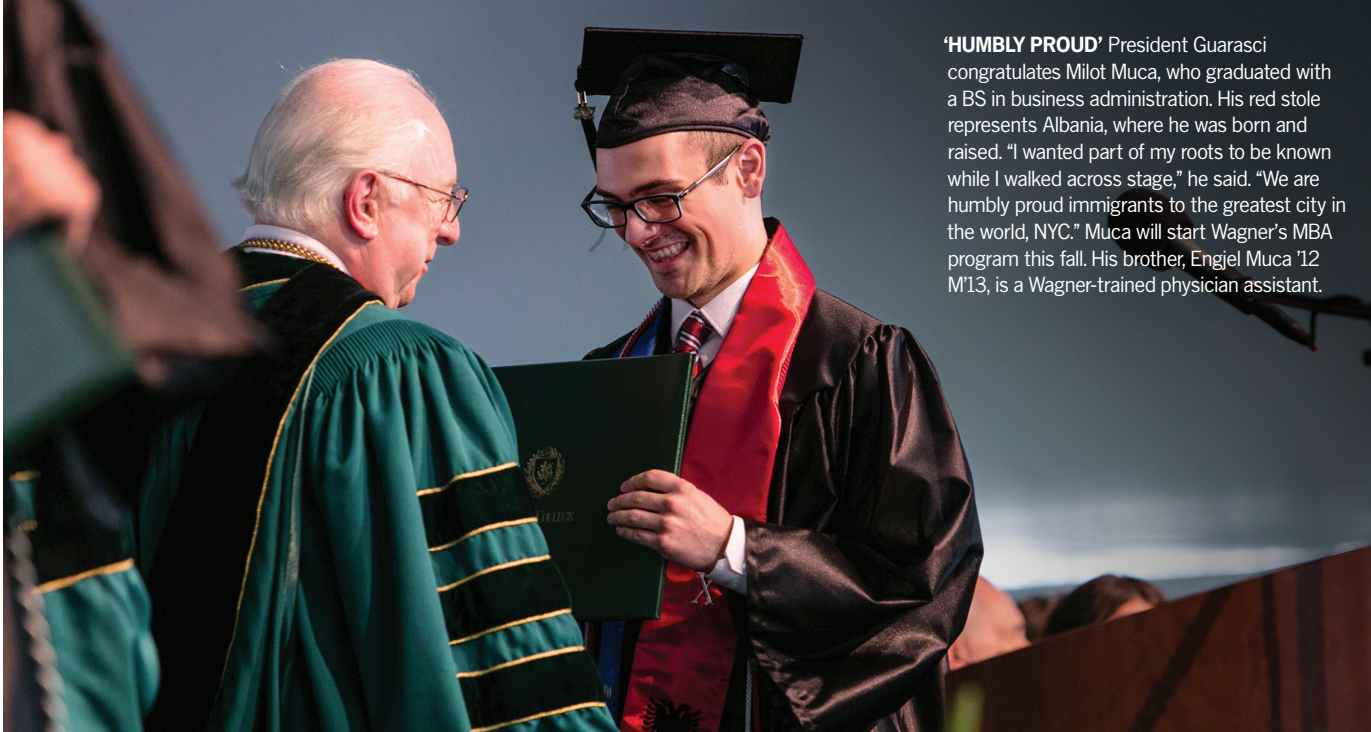
**WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU** We welcome letters from readers. Letters should refer to material published in the magazine and include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number. The editor reserves the right to determine the suitability of letters for publication and to edit them for accuracy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

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# Upon the Hill

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



**'HUMBLY PROUD'** President Guarasci congratulates Milot Muca, who graduated with a BS in business administration. His red stole represents Albania, where he was born and raised. "I wanted part of my roots to be known while I walked across stage," he said. "We are humbly proud immigrants to the greatest city in the world, NYC." Muca will start Wagner's MBA program this fall. His brother, Engiel Muca '12 M'13, is a Wagner-trained physician assistant.

## Equipped with a Practical Education

### Commencement 2017 celebrated amid heat and hurrahs

AT COMMENCEMENT ON MAY 19, Wagner College graduated its 651 newest alumni in a ceremony that set some benchmarks.

On the practical level, it occurred on the Oval during a heat wave, with the temperature reaching 91 degrees Fahrenheit, on a day when the normal temperature is 71.

Despite Mother Nature's whims, Wagner College proceeded to award its first earned doctorates, to the 11 graduates of the Doctor of Nursing Practice program launched in 2014.

In addition, 11 bachelor's degree graduates were in the first cohort of Bonner Leaders, a program Wagner College joined in 2013 to support students' civic involvement, leadership skills, and ethical awareness.

The keynote speaker was Richard Negrin '88, an alumnus who exemplifies the Wagner values of service and leadership. As a student, Negrin was co-captain of the Seahawk football team that won the 1987 Division III national college football championship. He earned a law degree, served as managing director of the city of Philadelphia, and most recently ran for the office of Philadelphia district attorney.

Dr. Warren R. Procci '68, chair of the Wagner College Board of Trustees since 2012, also received an honorary degree.

The son of Waddie Procci '36, he is a psychiatrist in private practice and at L.A. County/USC Medical Center and Harbor/UCLA Medical Center. He is also a clinical professor of psychiatry at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.

"The single most valuable educational experience I have had is my liberal arts education," Procci said. "Facts will fade, but it's the way in which the world works and what we learn about that in a liberal arts education, and the way the people in the world work — this is practical."



## First the Facts . . .

3

WAGNER SENIORS WON AN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP EVERY YEAR FROM 2014 TO 2017

102

NUMBER OF GOALS FOR THE SEASON BY THE SEAHAWKS' TOP SCORER, KIMBERLY WATSON '18



**TOP CHOICE** Anthony Tucker-Bartley visits Harvard Medical School's iconic Gordon Hall during an April orientation program.

## Cultivating Confidence

### How Anthony Tucker-Bartley '17 overcame challenges and gained admission to Harvard Medical School

ANTHONY TUCKER-BARTLEY '17, a biology major who graduated magna cum laude in May, was admitted to the nation's top medical school, Harvard, this spring. He begins classes this fall.

Tucker-Bartley beat formidable odds to achieve his goal; Harvard Medical School had a 3.3 percent acceptance rate last year. His own story is equally noteworthy.

Born in Jamaica, Tucker-Bartley and his family immigrated to the U.S. when he was 7 years old. He was raised in Ewing, New Jersey. While he endured teasing for his accent and disliked school, a local mentor encouraged him and playing football helped him to keep on track.

His mother is an operating room scrub nurse who wanted him to go into medicine for a career. He loved football so much that he chose Wagner, where he had the chance to play, over some other major universities. He received the College's Founders Scholarship and a Bonner Leaders scholarship.

Then, some challenges arose. He broke his ankle playing

football not once, but twice. And, he came close to failing his first college biology class.

The Bonner Leaders program, a close-knit cohort who commit to 300 hours a year of community service and additional training to develop their leadership skills, helped him process these challenges and move forward with a sense of mission.

He finally decided to quit football. The treatment he received at Staten Island University Hospital inspired him to aim high with his pre-medical studies. Applying himself more diligently and asking more questions in class with Professor Heather Cook, who became his academic advisor, he improved his grades. During his sophomore year, he looked up the top 10 U.S. medical schools, printed them out, and hung them on his wall to keep himself inspired.

He did internships at hospitals in Brooklyn and in Camden, New Jersey; mentored youth in Port Richmond, Staten Island; and founded a chess club at Wagner and at Port Richmond High School.

"I wanted to go to one of the top medical schools so that I could be the best doctor I could be," Tucker-Bartley says. "That takes confidence, and a lot of the confidence I have was cultivated at Wagner."



...Then  
the Quiz!Which Seahawks team is the  
first to win its conference four  
years in a row? ANSWER ON PAGE 13

## A Higher Degree of Caring

### First Doctorates in Nursing Practice awarded at May commencement

FOR THE FIRST TIME in Wagner's 134-year history, the College awarded earned doctoral degrees at commencement this May. (The cohort finished in December 2016, so their doctorates are indicated as D'16.)

The Doctor of Nursing Practice program, launched in 2014, builds on Wagner's longtime strength in nursing education. This past academic year, the College graduated 134 students with nursing degrees: 11 doctoral, 21 master's, and 102 bachelor's (half in the four-year program and half in the second-degree program).

Prominent industry groups such as Institute of Medicine and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing have recommended increased levels of education for nurses. Wagner's DNP helps to fill that

need. Its specialization in emergency preparedness and global health adds a distinctive focus. All graduates earn FEMA certification in medical disaster management and become members of the NYC Medical Reserve Corps.

Cindy McVey '95 M'97 D'16 holds multiple Wagner nursing degrees, now including the DNP. She is a staff nurse practitioner for Central Jersey Emergency Physician Associates at CentraState Medical Center in Freehold, New Jersey, so the DNP program's focus on population health and emergency medicine was extremely relevant to her. For her doctoral project, she wrote a guide titled *Hospital Evacuation: Are You Prepared?* (It is available as an e-book on Apple iTunes.) She has also started up a private practice, Hometown



**NURSE LEADERS** Cindy McVey (left) and Patricia Tooker (right) are members of the inaugural DNP class.

Family Health NP, PLLC, which delivers "healthcare to your door," including primary and urgent care.

Another member of the inaugural DNP class received a significant honor soon after graduation: Patricia Tooker '79 M'04 D'16, professor of nursing and dean for integrated learning, was elected dean of the Evelyn L. Spiro School of Nursing, succeeding founding Dean Paula Tropello.

## Wagnerians Worldwide

### Alumni join the ranks of the Peace Corps

NOAH WOLTHAUSEN '17 is Wagner's newest Peace Corps volunteer. A medical anthropology major with minors in Spanish, microbiology, and economics, he will serve as a health extension volunteer in Albania, beginning in January.

At Wagner, he played on the

lacrosse team, and he volunteered with El Centro del Inmigrante and the Staten Island Neighborhood Food Initiative. His senior thesis dealt with the links between the oral microbiome, diet, and health.

In addition, Arielle Richardson '14 is a Peace Corps volunteer in Dilijan, Tavush Province, Armenia. She went through training in 2016, and then began teaching English in local schools.



### SEAHAWK OF MANY BIRDIES

Anton Frondelius '17 became the first Wagner men's golfer to win the Northeast Conference championship, on April 30 at the LPGA International in Daytona Beach, Florida. He finished at one under par overall. He was also named Wagner's first NEC Men's Golfer of the Year.

Quote Unquote

“Don’t wait your turn. I’m gonna say that again. Don’t wait your turn. We need your talents and your leadership today, right now.”



Rich Negrin '88  
COMMENCEMENT  
ADDRESS, MAY 19

## Diversity and Dialogue

### New programs train leaders in higher education and adolescent education

WAGNER'S DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION has launched one new and revamped another master's program.

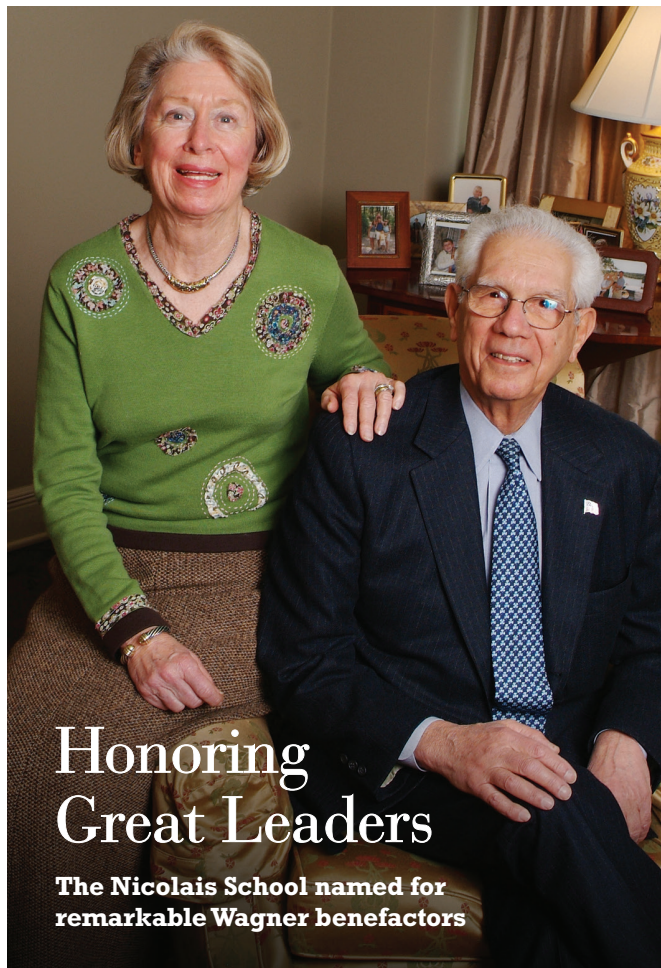
The MA in Higher Education and Learning Organizations Leadership — known as HELO — is a two-year program that prepares students for higher education administrative positions in areas such as student affairs and athletics. It also attracts students who work in or wish to start up new educational organizations. “We want these diverse groups of people to

dialogue with each other, connecting higher education and community organizations,” says Jason Fitzgerald, professor and chair of education.



The MS in adolescent education/special education was revised to run as a one-year cohort program, and its price was dropped from \$38,000 to \$15,000. Its first class of 11 students enrolled this summer. Besides coursework, these students spend a year in a clinical internship with a master teacher.

“This program leverages our work at Port Richmond High School and creates a rigorous teacher education program, working with our community partners,” says Fitzgerald.



## Honoring Great Leaders

The Nicolais School named for remarkable Wagner benefactors

THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION has been renamed the Nicolais School of Business to honor Margaret Christie Nicolais '49 H'14 and the late Michael A. Nicolais '49 H'14, who died on November 7, 2016.

Michael and Margaret met at Wagner College, where they majored in business administration. Michael became an investment manager for the Clark Estates and for Wall Street firms. He served on the Wagner College Board of Trustees, and the family became major College benefactors. (Read more about Michael on page 43.) Continuing Michael and Margaret's devotion to the College, their daughter, Joan Nicolais, now serves as a trustee.

Under the chairmanship of Donald Crooks, associate professor of business administration, the Nicolais School is working on curricular adjustments and other improvements leading to a higher level of accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.

Already launched is a new MS/MBA in accounting; intended for MS in accounting graduates, it requires 18 additional credit hours of work to reach the MBA. Also, for students who do not have an undergraduate degree in business, the new MBA in accounting will help them prepare to meet the requirements to sit for the CPA exam in New York State.

## WHAT'S INSIDE

Oyster Restoration

WAGNER HISTORY PROFESSOR Brett Palfreyman and his students have joined an effort to revive the oyster population in New York Harbor. Oysters were a major local food source until about 100 years ago, when pollution and overharvesting had destroyed them. Today, the Billion Oyster Project is bringing the bivalves back to places like Lemon Creek in southern Staten Island.

1 Palfreyman teaches New York City environmental history among other courses at Wagner. As a curator for the Museum of the City of New York, he created an oyster exhibit, part of "New York at Its Core: 400 Years of NYC History."

2 Oysters feed by filtering water and processing out the floating nutrients, thus purifying up to five liters of water per hour.

3 Massive oyster reefs used to protect Staten Island from storms and floods by breaking wave forces. Reviving these natural barriers could again reduce the destruction wrought by common storms, not to mention disasters like Hurricane Sandy.

2

3

4

4 Last year, Palfreyman, his students, and other volunteers (shown here) conducted an oyster-growing pilot project in Lemon Creek. Several months of monitoring determined that: Yes, oysters can grow and thrive there, as they did abundantly in times past. The Clean Water Act of 1972 has made a tremendous difference in restoring marine life.

5 Mature, breeding-age oysters are being placed into Lemon Creek again this summer. This floating cage mimics the conditions of a reef and allows workers to monitor how the creatures are faring.

5

## Quote Unquote

“What I learned is that conflict is not a barrier to progress; rather, conflict grants people the opportunity to grow as individuals and as a community.”



*Gabryel Oloapu '17*  
STUDENT SPEAKER,  
COMMENCEMENT,  
MAY 19



## The Food Recovery Crew

**Students join a national movement to fight waste and feed people**

**COUNTING CALORIES** Kirsty Hessing, Marisa Patella, Allie Calascibetta, Roofina Ali, and Melanie Rafael (left), plus Qamar Mohammad Ayoub (center) recover leftover dining hall food to serve those in need.

SINCE AUGUST OF 2015, more than two and a half tons of nutritious food from Wagner's dining hall did not go into the trash — the normal fate of leftover dishes.

Instead, it was delivered to soup kitchens for New Yorkers in need. Whatever was no longer consumable was composted on campus.

Through Wagner's student-run chapter of the national Food Recovery Network, volunteers “recover” the food after the dinner service twice per week. Dining hall staff provides the space for them to work and brings them trays of leftover food, which the students package for the soup kitchens or collect for composting. City Harvest, a New York City non-profit organization, distributes the food to its Staten Island network of community nutrition programs.

This effort started with Bernadette Ludwig, assistant professor of sociology and director of the civic engagement minor at Wagner. She learned about the Food Recovery Network at a meeting of Project Pericles, a national consortium of colleges that promote civic engagement, and started talking it up in her classes.

Kirsty Hessing '18 helped Ludwig establish the Food Recovery Network program at Wagner College. A swimmer from Illinois majoring in behavioral economics, Hessing connected with the issues of food distribution, insecurity, and waste on a personal level. “As an athlete, I have always had an interest in food, especially nutrition,” she says. “I first became aware of these issues hearing athletes talk about how little they had to eat and how they need healthier options.”

To start the program, cooperation with the dining hall, which is operated by Compass Group, was essential. Dining Hall Manager Kathi Indelicato worked out the collection schedule with the chef. “It's great that the students are involved, raising awareness,” she says. “We don't want to waste any food, either.”

Evening shift supervisor Dawn Corbett emphasizes that the dining hall staff's help is minimal. “The students do all the work!” she says.

Hessing and another student leader, Allie Calascibetta '18, organize the volunteers, many of whom are in Wagner's Bonner Leaders program or are members of Students of Wagner Going Green.

On the evening of April 19, for instance, six volunteers show up at the dining hall at 7:45 p.m. They have honed their system so that the work proceeds swiftly and accurately. Some of them transfer pans of sliced beets, mac and cheese, roasted potatoes, pierogi, salmon cakes, and pork into storage trays. One student creates labels, another weighs the trays, and the others calculate totals and enter data into an online form on the Food Recovery Network website.

Within 45 minutes, the job is done. The dining hall staff will transfer the food into a designated refrigerator, from which City Harvest picks it up the next day.

This night, they recovered 41 pounds of food, a relatively low number; the nightly total can reach as high as 100 pounds. But it's enough for Calascibetta. “It's still fighting waste, even if it's just two trays of food,” she says.

## By the Numbers

During the 2016 Day of Giving, 402 individuals donated \$167,715 to the Wagner Fund — the equivalent of annual books and supplies for 201 students.



## ‘The World as Your Classroom’

### A testimonial from a graduate of the Bonner Leaders Program

IN 2013, Wagner College joined the national Bonner Program and invited incoming first-year students to apply to become Bonner Leaders at Wagner.

The Bonner Program provides diverse low-income, underrepresented, and first-generation students with the opportunity to attend college, while engaging their talents in building and supporting communities.

In 2017, 11 Wagner Bonner Leaders graduated after four years in the program. They completed a range of majors, including international affairs, microbiology, history, English, and French. One was admitted to Harvard Medical School and another to Tufts School of Veterinary Medicine.

Bonner Leader Jazmin Diaz, who completed a double major in Spanish and anthropology, is now working in rural Peru for MOCHE, Inc., a nonprofit dedicated to helping impoverished communities, preserving archaeological sites, and promoting research and education on Peru’s cultural heritage. The following is an excerpt from her graduation speech describing her experience in the Bonner Program.

“I entered Wagner with an innocent desire to make a difference for the greater social good. But I soon realized I was just beginning to write my story. Stories of my peers, residents of Staten Island, and forgotten members of our society soon began to shape *me*.

“Coming from Oregon, I was shocked to see the lingering destruction of Hurricane Sandy as I spoke with struggling residents about Staten Island recovery efforts. They lost everything in a matter of hours. From them, I learned resilience.

“I walked the streets of Port Richmond and gathered stories from immigrant families on how they struggled to make ends meet with the high cost of living in New York. From them, I learned strength.

“In the classroom, I studied Spanish and anthropology. My love for the humanities allows me to be intellectually creative and better understand human behavior. My professors challenged me to think beyond what we see. From

them, I learned how to question the unknown.

“Most importantly, I learned from my fellow Bonners. They showed me determination as they pursued their dreams in the midst of challenges. They showed me grit, taking on extra jobs and loans in order to pay for their education. They showed me how to love, because even when it was hard to reconcile our differences, they forgave. We defined community as we addressed national and campus concerns through dialogue.

“Each of us *matters* to this world. We have sadly become separated by culturally constructed categories, but we were meant to live alongside each other.

“A civic education recognizes that knowledge isn’t constrained to formal institutions. The phrase ‘the world as your classroom’ comes to fruition in a civic-minded education. Wagner’s commitment to civic education enriches our knowledge with interpersonal relationships and the capacity to build a greater society.”

“Our connections with other people, identities, and shared humanity are an infinite source of knowledge. If the most important thing we have is each other, what story will you tell? What story will your life tell?”



**COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE** “Our connections with other people, identities, and shared humanity are an infinite source of knowledge,” says Jazmin Diaz (*above*), a member of Wagner’s first class of Bonner Leaders (*shown here*). “If the most important thing we have is each other, what story will your life tell?”

**Quote  
Unquote**

“My experiences at Wagner shaped me, empowered me, and allowed me to transform my voice and use it to be an advocate for change.”



*Dillon Quinn '17*  
STUDENT SPEAKER,  
COMMENCEMENT,  
MAY 19

## A Transformational Legacy

### Sons carry on the Donald M. Fox '64 tradition

AFTER WAGNER TRUSTEE Donald M. Fox '64 died in July 2013, his son Alex agreed to serve out the remainder of his term, until 2016.

Now, Alex is a member in his own right, and his brother, Graham, has joined the board as well. Both have enthusiastically stepped into the vital role their father played at Wagner College for so many years, not only in service but also in generous and creative giving.

Donald Fox and his wife, Willamina Pollock '66, raised their sons to value education — a value their father learned at Wagner College, which transformed his life and his outlook, says Alex.

“He was a first-generation college student,” Alex recalls about his father, the son of German immigrants. “Wagner set his foundation academically so he could excel. He was an indifferent student in high school, but his undergraduate student experience changed him.”

Donald Fox went to Wagner on a soccer scholarship, but he soon became inspired to achieve more. To improve his writing skills, he joined the *Wagnerian* student newspaper staff. A fellow history major, Donald Savage '64, got Fox involved in student government, and as seniors they served as president and vice president respectively.

Fox went on to study at the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. In 1985, he founded the



**NEXT GENERATION** Alex and Graham Fox, shown here with President Guarasci, have endowed an emergency student assistance fund started by their father, Donald Fox.

H. S. Fox Corporation in Dallas and grew it into the largest reinsurance brokerage of its kind in Texas.

Fox served twice on the Board of Trustees, 1985–94 and 2004–13. During his second term, he established funds for supporting the College, its students, and its faculty, that are still in place.

The Fox Family Fund for the Advancement of Civic Engagement Scholarship makes modest grants to faculty for service-research projects.

“The Fox Fellows shows the impact my dad wanted to have on faculty and students and the world,” says Graham. “He conceived of it like a seed grant that would allow faculty to pursue an interest that they could build upon and also impact the world.”

Fox Family grants have gone to projects ranging from environmental health studies in Bangladesh to the Global Leadership Garden at Wagner.

During the economic recession that began in 2008, Don Fox challenged his fellow board members to give additional support for students who were struggling financially. That program provided 10 Fox Scholars with \$5,000 scholarships for three years.

Alex and Graham have continued to build the Fox Family Fund and have endowed the emergency assistance fund, creating a perpetual source of support for students experiencing financial challenges.

Recently, they have helped the College with facilities maintenance as well, funding bathroom renovations in Harborview Hall.

“It’s home to most of the freshmen, and that’s the first face parents see when students come on campus, and we’ve got to do better,” says Graham. “To take part in that solution would have given my dad a ton of pride. He didn’t want his name on a building, that’s not what he was about. He would be pleased that we can take some funds and feed a lot of smaller projects, tapping into the educational experience and the student experience and the faculty and their projects. It’s pretty cool to do that through Wagner.”

Alex says that he has greatly enjoyed his board service, especially meeting the students and hearing about their achievements. “What I really enjoy is that the school is equipping students for the 21st century and transforming their lives through education,” he says. “It’s making a difference.”

## Teachers as Advocates

How has globalization changed the role of teachers?

You can find answers to this difficult question in *Beyond Bystanders: Educational Leadership for a Humane Culture in a Globalizing Reality* (Sense Publishers, 2017), edited by Wagner history professor Lori Weintrob and Nimrod Aloni of Tel Aviv's Kibbutzim College of Education.

"Education is not only about teaching people to read and to write," observes UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova in her foreword. "It is about teaching human rights and cultural diversity, nourishing peace, and fostering inclusive and sustainable development."

*Beyond Bystanders* calls for a shift in the professional self-image of teachers, from agents of socialization to active advocates of human flourishing, social justice, and world betterment. The editors propose that it is irresponsible for teachers to posit themselves as bystanders and to conceive of globalization as something happening to them. Their role must be to empower students to critically evaluate developing global realities – mass migrations, socioeconomic inequalities, global warming, and the dehumanizing effects of submission to social media and consumerism.

The authors of the book include scholars and practitioners from six different countries and diverse professional and cultural backgrounds. Wagner College contributors include Lori Weintrob, Jason Fitzgerald, Cyril Ghosh, Steven Thomas, Lily McNair, Sarah Donovan, Samantha Siegel '11 M'13, David Gordon, Rita Reynolds, Patricia Moynagh, Alexa Dietrich, and Margarita Sánchez. The book's afterword is by President Guarasci, a pioneer in civic engagement scholarship.



## The Answer

QUIZ QUESTION  
ON PAGE 7

This year, women's water polo was the first program in Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference history and in Wagner athletics history to win four consecutive league titles.



## An Ambivalent Embrace

### Wagner College and Donald J. Trump

AS IN MOST OF THE COUNTRY, reactions to the extraordinary 2016 presidential election were mixed on the Wagner campus.

Wagner College has historically had a good relationship with Donald Trump, having awarded him an honorary degree in 2004.

Yet even then, his biography in the commencement program betrayed some institutional ambivalence. "Everyone knows something about him and everyone has an opinion concerning him," it said. Because of Trump's skepticism about the value of higher education, the biography continued, "From that same critical stance, Wagner College, not wanting to be over-impressed, is nonetheless eager to acknowledge that your exercise of the talent, drive and creativity which you possess in abundance is both the lifeblood of a city such as New York and the gift that a free society offers us all."

In 2016, voices opposing and afraid of Trump's policy proposals and leadership style were the loudest ones in the Wagner community.


On November 9, the day after the election, President Guarasci wrote an email to the entire campus community. He emphasized that deep emotions, whether in celebration or in concern, were normal, but that our national and collegiate customs would continue.

"At the end of the night, a new president was elected by a clearly divided nation, but, today, our country will begin the process of peaceful transition that has made the United States so unique a nation in world history."

At the end of his message, he continued,

"I want to reassure you that the long-held principles and values that are embedded in our campus culture at Wagner College remain as they always have been. We continue to be committed to liberal education, to inclusion, and to equity, and we will continue to spread these values through the work that we do, like the Port Richmond Partnership, among others. Here we will support a community that has respect for cultural and religious traditions, one that is notable for its absence of racial or ethnic hierarchies, and prepares young people to lead."

In January, President Guarasci and Wagner's senior staff released another message reaffirming the College's historic values and support for diverse people.

 You can find a link to the entire message, "Wagner College Values," at [wagner.edu/wagnermagazine](http://wagner.edu/wagnermagazine).

**COLOR COATED** Alexis Dispensa '17, microbiology major, and Aisling Green '18, government and politics major, give a fresh, bright paint job to a village school in eastern Ghana.

**I**n January, a group of Wagner students spent two weeks experiencing many firsts in Ghana, West Africa.

Some of the students were traveling abroad for the first time; and, even if they had many stamps in their passports already, most were being introduced to Africa. For others, the trip allowed them to see their home through a new lens. Most of the students took their first taste of jollof rice, a popular West African dish; others learned to enjoy it Ghana-style.

Everyone learned to paint walls and lay brick; some helped local fishermen pull in their nets for a dawn catch; and most climbed a thousand feet above the ground to walk across the rainforest canopy on suspension bridges.

For those who had always experienced life as an ethnic minority

in the U.S., just walking the streets was empowering. "To be around a sea of black people was beautiful," says Cynedra Osinaike '19, a Chicago native of African-American and Nigerian heritage.

The students also toured historic sites with a profound and dark history — the slave fortresses where captured people waited in dehumanizing conditions before being shipped to the "New World."

It was a time of firsts for Curtis Wright, Wagner's dean of campus life and chief diversity officer, as well. He has lived on the U.S. East Coast for 11 years, yet he dipped his feet into the Atlantic Ocean for the first time on this trip, which was also his first visit to sub-Saharan Africa.

"It was really powerful to share this trip with the students," Wright says. His relationships with the students

deepened as they all absorbed the life and history of Ghana. "I think that struggle has challenged them to the core of who they are, and led them to question: What does it mean to be a black man? What does it mean to be an American? For me, it's been very powerful to watch that internal struggle."

Wagner Campus Life staff organized this "alternative winter break" in partnership with the Aya Centre for Intercultural Awareness and Development in Ghana. Financial support came from Beth '71 and Henry '71 Cruz and from the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE). Photographers Jonathan Harkel of Wagner's Office of Communications and Marketing and Deanna Harkel joined the group to document their experiences.

# new horizons





**Ghana trip emphasizes work,  
learning, and reflection**

**COASTAL FORTRESSES**, where European traders imprisoned Africans for export as slaves, made a strong impression on both students and staff.

(1) “I got a deeper sense of appreciation for what my ancestors went through,” said Dean Curtis Wright, pictured here at Cape Coast Castle. (2) A stairway at Cape Coast Castle provided a resting spot for Kemani Howard '18, psychology major, and Michael Kirby-McGann '17, psychology and childhood/special education major.

**AT ELMINA**, another coastal slave castle, “I noticed the rooms were darker and seemed closer and more crowded,” says Anthony Turner, a Wagner voice teacher who joined the trip. “I also felt the continuous evil through the walls. The horror was thicker at Elmina.” (3) People who attempted to rebel or escape were thrown through this doorway into a windowless dungeon. (4) Captured men waited here, with no space to lie down and no sanitation, to be shipped off to European colonies across the Atlantic – if they survived.

**THE AYA CENTRE** arranged opportunities for the group to work in various communities, including a couple of rural villages like Krofu, where the students helped with a library building project. (5) “This opportunity ... lets us walk in their shoes for just a few hours and get a different perspective,” said Sidiq Soulemana '13 M'16, assistant director of Wagner's Center for Intercultural Advancement, working here with the local architect and lead builder.

**GHANA ELECTED** a new president in 2016, who defeated the incumbent. Nana Akufo-Addo was inaugurated during the Wagner visit in a democratic, peaceful transfer of power – something rarely reported in Western media coverage of Africa. (6) Many election billboards and catchy songs on the radio captured the students' attention.

**WORKING** at hospitals and schools such as New Horizon, for children with special needs, let the Wagner group engage with everyday life in Ghana. (7) “I want the children to see that with a good education, anything is possible,” said Denzel Knight '18. “I want to see this school rejuvenated, see the school have a little more light with the new paint.” (8) “This act of kindness you did today is going to go a long way,” said New Horizon Principal Vanessa Adu-Akorsahm (purple dress). “It is going to bind us as a community, like a golden chain that is holding us to you.”

**AT ANANI MEMORIAL** International School of Ghana, in Accra, (9) the children welcomed the Wagner group with music, dance, and speeches in French, English, and other languages. (10) “Even if they struggled, no one laughed, but cheered each other on,” says Cynedra Osinaike. “I expected impoverishment, but everyone was walking around with a smile on their face. Some of these people don't even have shoes, and they're happy with what they have.”



“I don't know my ancestors or my history, but I have an idea that they were most likely traded as slaves. And, after what I learned today, when I find out about my history, I will embrace it more, appreciate it more and know that my purpose is to embody my ancestors and represent them.”

– Denzel Knight '18, Finance





“When I got back to Wagner, my friends told me I changed. I seemed more open to new experiences and even more positive than I was before.”  
— Cynedra Osinaike '19, Psychology and Government





# STORIES *of* REFUGE

*For people escaping chaotic homelands, Wagner College  
has helped provide a new life in America*

BY LAURA BARLAMENT

**T**he original motivation for the founding of Wagner College was to help immigrants feel welcome and cared for in America. In the late 19th century in upstate New York, Lutheran ministers saw the thousands of German settlers as “sheep without a shepherd,” and resolved to educate ministers who could serve these people in German as well as in English. The school they established in 1883 is the direct ancestor of today’s Wagner College.

Following its founding tradition, Wagner College has helped many people find a foothold in the U.S. ever since. A subset of those migrants left their home countries not by choice, but by necessity, escaping wars, occupations, and political upheaval. We bring you a few of these stories here, from alumni of different generations — stories of strength, resilience, hard work, and gratitude for Wagner’s welcoming community and opportunities to build a new life.



**'I AM ETERNALLY GRATEFUL** for the wonderful education and life-affirming experiences I had at Wagner College." *Left, Edda Marder as a Wagner student.*

**WITH HER DAUGHTER,** Wynne Bronwen Schweid, in Seattle in March 2015 (below).

It was always Edda's mother's goal to get to the U.S. "She wanted to get as far away from the Russians as possible," Edda recalls. In 1947, she succeeded. Edda and her mother received authorization to immigrate. This year, Edda celebrates the 70th anniversary of her arrival in the U.S.

Bethlehem Lutheran Children's Home in Staten Island hired Edda's mother as a house parent. Edda went to Curtis High School in St. George, Staten Island, where she learned English and took refuge in her studies. Feeling alienated from her fellow students and the children she lived with, she enjoyed volunteering at the nearby Staten Island Museum.

She helped with research on frogs. She started her undergraduate studies at Wagner College in 1950, majoring in biology.

"I remember walking home from a date in New York City, probably a concert or a movie, and proceeding by myself (at age 18) through Central Park in the city to catch

my bus and ferry back to Staten Island. Fear never occurred to me," she says. "I realized later how lucky I was to feel and be safe in the city and on Staten Island and at Wagner College."

After graduation, she worked as a laboratory technician at Cornell Medical Center, where she met her husband. They moved to the West Coast, where she earned a doctorate in clinical psychology at the University of Washington. She and her husband divorced, and she began a career as a psychologist. Now, she is retired and lives in Santa Cruz, California. She has three daughters and one grandson.

"I am eternally grateful for the wonderful education and life-affirming experiences I had at Wagner College," she says.

## EDDA MARDER SCHWEID '54

**E**dda Marder Schweid '54 grew up in Estonia. Born in 1933, she experienced childhood in a country torn apart by foreign occupation and war.

Schweid was six years old, living in the capital city of Tallinn, when Soviet Russia started to take over Estonia and the other Baltic nations. "It was chaos and mayhem," she remembers.

The Soviets killed, deported, and imprisoned the country's leaders and professional class. Her father, a lawyer, went into hiding — a psychiatrist friend admitted him into a mental institution in order to protect him. Edda was sent to live in the countryside with her mother's oldest sister, Frieda. A well-educated woman who corresponded widely in several languages, Frieda later served more than 35 years in a Siberian labor camp on accusation of "spying."

From 1941 to 1944, the Nazis occupied Estonia. Being Lutherans, Edda's family was not threatened by the Nazis' campaigns of genocide; but, she says, "It was a hard time for anyone to survive in Europe." She vividly remembers the worst of the wartime bombings of Tallinn, by the Soviets in March 1944.

In September 1944, Edda and her mother took a ship to Germany to escape the coming Soviet reoccupation. Her parents had divorced before the war, so her father took his own escape route, ending up in Australia. Edda and her mother lived a migratory existence for a few years in displaced persons camps in Germany, first under the Nazis and then under U.S. occupation.





**THREE GENERATIONS** of Laszlos (*left*), all named George, come together in Raven Rock, New Jersey, in 1964: Dr. George Laszlo; his uncle George Laszlo, who had a farm there and sponsored the family's immigration; and future Wagner alumnus George Laszlo '72 at age 15. *Right*, George Laszlo '72 in 1958 in Budapest, when his parents and sister were in Vienna, and he was a virtual hostage guaranteeing their return to Hungary.

**IN MANHATTAN** this summer (*below*), George Laszlo '72 recalls his escape with deep appreciation.

## GEORGE LASZLO '72

**G**eorge Laszlo '72 grew up in Hungary. Born in 1949, he experienced childhood in a war-ravaged city under a brutal communist dictatorship.

"My family was middle-class, we had a good life," he says, noting that his father, a medical doctor, owned one of the few automobiles in Budapest. "But my father hated living under communism. Before that, it was the Nazis. They went from one bad thing to another."

In October 1956, the Soviet military attacked protesters in Budapest at the outset of what became the Hungarian Revolution. George's father, Dr. Laszlo, used his 1939 Wanderer W24 to transport the wounded off the streets.

After that, Dr. Laszlo continuously looked for ways to get his family out of the country. George remembers one time when his father tried to drive them over the border on country roads, only to be stopped by a Russian tank.

It took a complex series of decisions and risks to complete the escape.

George's older sister, Maritza, had a medical problem affecting her gait. No Hungarian physician had been able to help her. Dr. Laszlo found a doctor in Vienna who agreed to see her, and the family was granted permission to travel there.

Everyone in the family, that is, except for George. He was kept as a virtual hostage, guaranteeing his parents' return.

On July 4, 1958, Maritza and her parents departed Hungary. They never went back. With the support of Dr. Laszlo's uncle, who lived in New Jersey, they were able to immigrate to the U.S.

For the next two years, George lived with his paternal grandparents in Budapest, and his parents tried every method — legal or not — to get their son out. What finally worked were Mrs. Laszlo's connections in the music world. She herself was a well-known singer and actress in Hungary. A friend from her youth, Gabor Carelli, had moved to New York City in 1939 and had become a tenor with the Metropolitan Opera. Carelli

presented the family's situation to two world-famous musicians, the Hungarian conductor Antal Doráti and American violinist Yehudi Menuhin, who used their political contacts to intercede on behalf of George.

In May of 1960, George received a visa for travel to Uruguay. His grandparents packed his bag, but warned him not to tell anyone that he was leaving, not even his closest friends. Carelli took him by train from Budapest to Austria. On May 24, George arrived in New York on a UNICEF flight for refugee children.

Even today, emotions overcome George when he talks about Carelli and the others who helped him escape the Iron Curtain and reunite with his family. He learned English and attended school in Brooklyn until his family moved to Syosset, on Long Island, where his father established a medical practice.

Later, Carelli helped George attend Wagner College by connecting him with Natale Colosi, bacteriology department chair. George studied biology and played in the band, then attended Wagner's study abroad program in Bregenz, Austria, and changed to a philosophy major. He graduated in 1972, as did his sister, Maritza. George has had a long career in research and development software for the biotech and pharmaceutical industries internationally. He is married to Eileen Sullivan, has one son and two grandchildren, and has sponsored an Iraqi refugee family.

"Being an immigrant yourself, you want to help others," he says.



## EDNA AURELUS M'08

**E**dna Aurelus M'08 grew up in Haiti. Born in 1979, she experienced childhood under a cruel dictatorship and all kinds of political upheaval.

Edna remembers her childhood home, Fort Jacques, as a peaceful, even idyllic place — but her country's troubles would soon break into her young life.

Edna's father was a supporter of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the Roman Catholic priest and populist politician. The people elected him president in December 1990, but he was ousted in a military coup in September 1991. This new regime killed thousands, and many more thousands fled as refugees to the U.S.

In September of 1992, 12-year-old Edna and her two younger siblings were home alone when armed men swept into the family's home. She grabbed the other children and ran to her grandparents' house. The men ransacked her home, but she and her siblings survived. "I was so lucky," she says.

The grandparents sheltered the three children, while her father, mother, older brother, and older sister hid in various locations for months.

Eventually, Edna's father was able to reunite the family in Port-au-Prince. The crowded and impoverished conditions in Haiti's capital shocked Edna, but the family was together again.

Decades earlier, in 1974, one of her uncles had immigrated to the U.S. Ever since then, he had been trying to bring his other family members to the U.S. as well. Toward the end of 1996, papers finally came through for Edna's family. They flew to New York on December 12, 1996, to start a new life.

They moved to Mariner's Harbor, Staten Island, where Edna's uncle lived. She and two of her siblings enrolled in Port Richmond High School, where they added English to their linguistic repertoire of Creole, French, and Spanish. "In ESL class, I was the queen," Edna remembers. "But in regular English class, I hung back." However, she excelled in math and science — universal languages that she was always able to connect with.

Edna earned an associate's degree from SUNY Morrisville and a bachelor's in nursing from the New York Institute of Technology. During college, she also held down two jobs, working with people with intellectual disabilities and with mentally ill patients at a hospital.

Seeking exposure to more nursing roles, she enrolled in Wagner College's family nurse practitioner master's program. At the same time, she started a family, marrying Mehmet Gul, a Turkish immigrant, and having her two daughters, Sarah and Victoria.

Edna returned to Wagner College in 2015, after completing her Doctor of Nursing Practice at Arizona State University, to join the faculty in the Evelyn L. Spiro School of Nursing.

She feels the position at Wagner is just right for her now, leading her back to the places that played such a large role in her story. This year, she took nursing students to Haiti for experiential learning in providing medical care to underserved people. In addition, the College appointed her a Port Richmond Faculty Fellow, giving her the opportunity to help her first American home community.

Meanwhile, she says, "Haiti is even worse than when I left it in 1996.

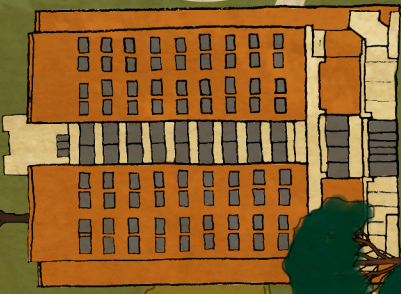
"I'm grateful for being here," she continues. "My friends in Haiti who are so intelligent and full of potential are just sitting there. That could be me. In Haiti, I wouldn't have gotten these chances. Something is guiding me." ■



**IN FORT JACQUES,** Haiti, Edna Aurelus' childhood home, at age 8 (*left*). Now, Edna sponsors a community center in Fort Jacques where girls can develop their talents, knowledge, and confidence.

**TWO IMMIGRANTS** from different countries met and had a family in the U.S.: Mehmet and Edna, with their daughters Victoria and Sarah (*right*).

# Wagner College, 1970



Harbor View Hall



Towers Dormitories



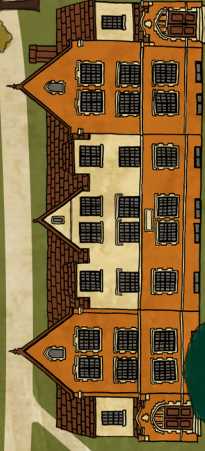
Men's Residence Hall



Guild Hall



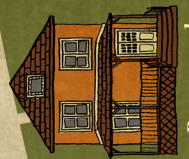
Cunard Hall



Parker Hall



Education



Personnel



Nursing







Science Complex

Frederic Sutter  
Gymnasium

Main Hall

The  
Oval

Admissions

August Horrmann Library

Cottage 5

Howard Avenue

Wagner Union

Music Building

Fischer  
Memorial  
Field

# Wagner College History Tour

By Lee Manchester

Talk to any archaeologist. They'll tell you that, to study a community's history, you have to do it in layers. And when you peel those layers away, you see how each was dependent on the ones beneath it, and how each one determined what came after it.

So far in this "History Tour" series, we've looked at Wagner College at the time of its Staten Island birth, on its brand-new campus, in 1918. We've seen how it evolved from a pre-seminary prep school into a co-ed liberal arts college, from 1918 to 1935.

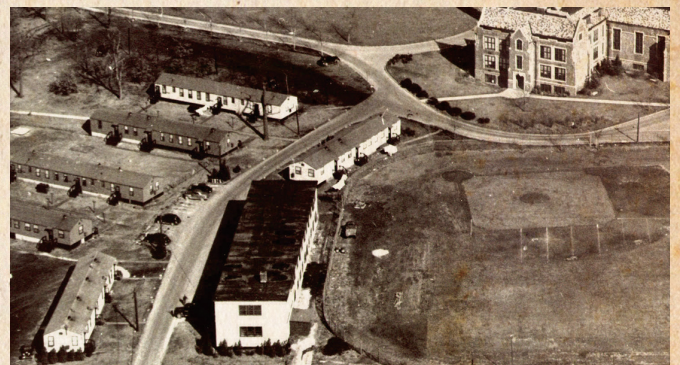
Now, we'll look at the boom years following World War II, from 1946 to 1970. Enrollment exploded. Our campus expanded with constant construction. And our curriculum adapted to the needs of post-war America.

## Veterans Village (1946-50)

Our first lay president, Clarence Stoughton, saw us safely through the war years. Stoughton's departure in 1945, after a decade of leadership, opened the way for a new president, Walter Langsam, who was installed that fall — and just in the nick of time.

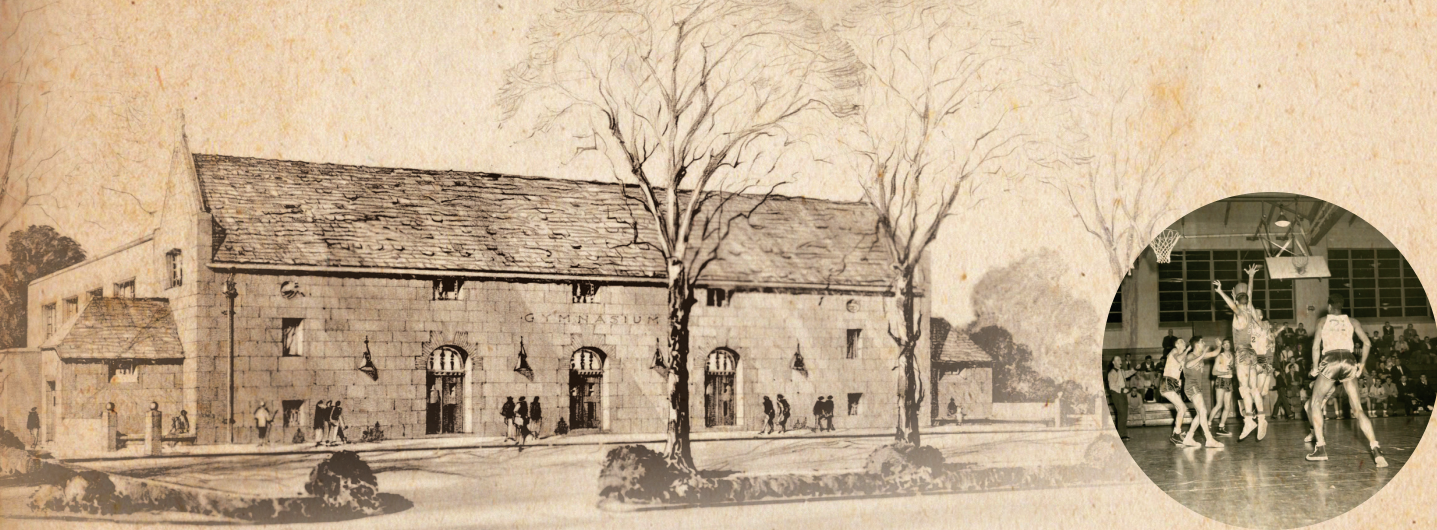
With the end of the war, servicemen were returning to civilian life, and — for the first time — the new G.I. Bill gave many of them the chance to enroll in college. Enrollment soared, from 463 in the fall of 1945, to 833 in 1946, to 1,000 in 1948.

"Veterans, men and women, comprise fifty-five percent of the total," observed the *Wagnerian* in 1948. This dramatic increase in older students, many of them married, created a campus housing crisis. At first, at the College's request, Grymes Hill neighbors opened their homes to 80 Wagner students who couldn't find rooms on campus. But, even more housing was needed.



The solution was the Veterans Emergency Housing Project — or Veterans Village, as most folks knew it: six one-story buildings and one with two floors, all built with war-surplus construction materials. Two of the buildings housed single men; the remainder were divvied up into 15 apartments for young families. By Christmas 1946, the project was completed.

**FROM 1951 TO 1970**, the Wagner campus added four dormitories housing more than 1,500 people; the College's first dedicated gymnasium and library; 18 acres that include today's football field; a science complex; and a student union. The only building no longer in existence on the 1970 map (*previous page*) is the Music Building. The Personnel and Nursing cottages now make up Page House; the Education cottage (originally built as the president's house) is today's Kairos House; Admissions is the public safety office today; and Cottage 5, home of former professors and chaplain Lyle Guttu, is now the Lifelong Learning Office.



Located where the gym was later built, Veterans Village didn't last long. A near-hurricane-force gale that struck Staten Island on November 25, 1950 — Thanksgiving weekend — tore across the top of Grymes Hill, ripping the roof off one V.V. building and dumping it on another.

## Guild Hall and Sutter Gym (1951)

Fortunately for everyone, Wagner College had already broken ground on a new, more durable residence hall — this one for women, who accounted for more than a third of enrollment by 1951. A new women's dorm would free up existing housing options for occupation by men.

Ground was broken on Guild Hall in June 1950; a dedication ceremony for the 112-bed residence was held just 12 months later.

Designed by noted architect Herbert E. Matz, a member of our Board of Trustees, Guild resembles a large vernacular country house in the French Eclectic style.

Matz also designed the new Frederic Sutter Gymnasium, constructed at the same time as Guild on the former site of the Veterans Village. It represented a major expansion of the College's indoor sports facilities, which previously had consisted solely of the combination gymnasium/auditorium in Main Hall. The new gym could seat 1,700 people in its retractable bleachers during basketball games, and 2,300 with auditorium seating.

## Music Building (1949) and Fischer Field (1956)

Wagner College was not only growing up, with its new buildings on the main campus — it was also expanding outward.

In June 1949, the College bought the Ward Estate across Howard Avenue from Main Hall, adding 18 acres to the Grymes Hill campus. The property gave us more parking space and a new sports field — but the crown jewel of the West Campus, as it became known, was a two-story, mansard-roofed mansion, built in 1867 as the home of



**NEW AND OLD** were incorporated into the campus in 1949–51, when the Sutter Gym (*above*) was constructed and the Ward House (*below*) was acquired to serve as the Music Building. The basketball shot is from 1955.

banker and former Civil War Colonel William Greene Ward.

The colonel called his Second Empire-style home, with its wraparound porch and signature pinnacles, “Oneata” — a Seminole word, according to a family friend, meaning “kissed by the dawn” — but Wagner students knew it simply as the Music Building, home of the College's beloved choir.

Like many older buildings, the Music Building had great beauty and character — but it was also expensive to heat and maintain. Around 1983, Wagner closed it down, moving the music department into North Hall (now called Reynolds House). Petty vandalism steadily ate away at the Ward house, but it was a pair of fires — a smaller one in 1989, and a much larger blaze in 1992 — that really doomed the old Music Building. Sometime in late 1992 or early 1993, Oneata was demolished.

Seven years after the purchase of the West Campus, a gift from Charlotta Fischer Palmer, wife of trustee Bissell B. Palmer, made possible the construction of a varsity track and combination soccer field and practice football field, named Fischer Memorial Field in her parents' honor. The field was expanded in 1967 with another gift from Mrs. Palmer, making it the Seahawk football team's primary field. A few years ago, the field was renamed Hameline Field to honor longtime football coach Walter Hameline, our athletic director.

## Men's Residence Hall (1957)

**M**eanwhile, enrollment continued to climb, more than doubling in a dozen years — from 1,052 in 1958 to 2,689 in 1970. Clearly, we had more building to do if we were to accommodate all the new students, professors, classes and dorm residents coming to Grymes Hill.

Housing was still an urgent need, and with a new women's dorm already built, the next priority was the new 206-bed Men's Residence Hall — the actual name of the building, though most people just called it the New Dorm — designed by Herbert Matz and completed in 1957. Along with its new student quarters, the building held a modern dining hall capable of feeding 578 students at a time — a vast improvement over the old dining room on the first floor of Cunard Hall, which had served us since our move to Staten Island in 1918.

A very simple example of the Brutalist style of architecture, the Men's Residence Hall has been repurposed several times, like most Wagner buildings. For one year, it was the freshman dorm; then, a women's dorm; then, a men's dorm again. Beginning with the fall of 1973, it became known as the New Administration Building — and, today, it's called Campus Hall. It houses three of our professional programs — nursing, business and education — as well as the music department, which moved out of North Hall in 1995.

## Horrmann Library (1961)

**N**ext on the construction agenda was the August Horrmann Library, the first Wagner College building designed by an architectural firm previously unconnected to the school: Perkins & Will of White Plains, New York. The old library, shoehorned into the attic of Main Hall, had seating for only 100 students at a time — fine, perhaps, for pre-war Wagner, but wholly

**THE BRUTALIST STYLE** of architecture, common for government and academic buildings from the 1950s to the 1970s, defined Wagner buildings during this phase, starting with the 1957 Men's Residence Hall.

inadequate for the modern College.

A major donation in 1958 from the Horrmann Foundation, a Staten Island charity that had long supported the College, got the fundraising ball rolling, and by 1960 we were able to break ground on a modern-looking building with large, plate-glass windows running vertically up

its main floors. When the new library opened in 1961, it quadrupled the study space available for students and more than doubled the number of volumes available on its shelves.

The Horrmann Library has continued to develop since opening 66 years ago, today offering access to an incredibly deep list of digital and print books and scholarly journals curated by a small but expert staff of 21st-century librarians.



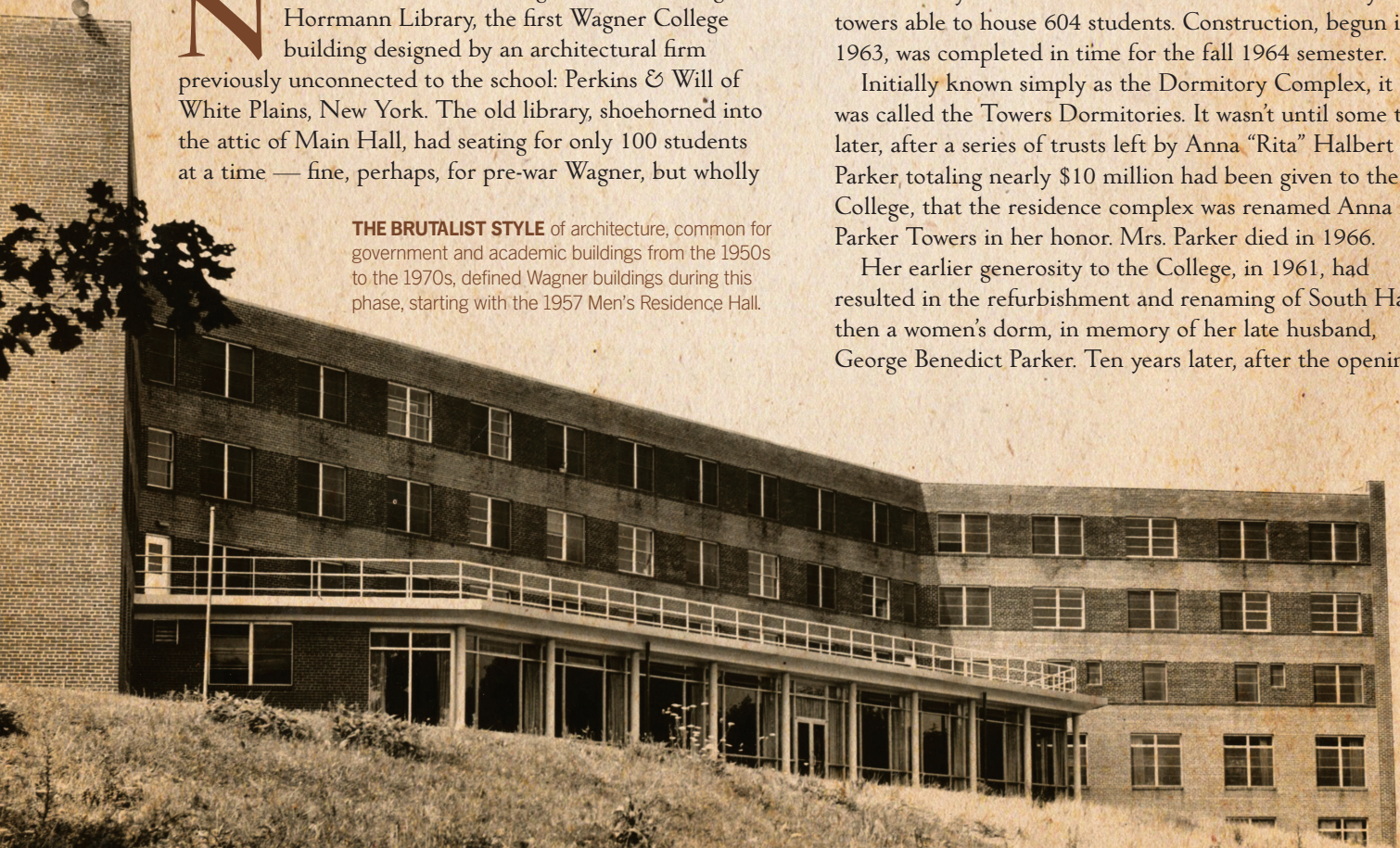
**THE NEW DORM** built in 1957 held Wagner's first dedicated dining hall, with seats for 578 people. Today, it is the Campus Hall Performance Center. This 1958 postcard is courtesy Bill Schmitz '62.

## Towers Dormitories (1964)

**E**ven with the construction of the New Dorm, Wagner students still needed more on-campus housing — for which Perkins & Will provided us a design as modern as the library's for a connected series of five dormitory towers able to house 604 students. Construction, begun in 1963, was completed in time for the fall 1964 semester.

Initially known simply as the Dormitory Complex, it soon was called the Towers Dormitories. It wasn't until some time later, after a series of trusts left by Anna "Rita" Halbert Parker totaling nearly \$10 million had been given to the College, that the residence complex was renamed Anna H. Parker Towers in her honor. Mrs. Parker died in 1966.

Her earlier generosity to the College, in 1961, had resulted in the refurbishment and renaming of South Hall, then a women's dorm, in memory of her late husband, George Benedict Parker. Ten years later, after the opening





**ASTRONAUT JOHN GLENN** (above, second from left) attended the opening of Wagner's new science complex (right) in September 1968. Chaplain William Heil Jr. is speaking, while Dr. Andrew Clauson, Dr. Frederic Sutter, and President Arthur O. Davidson look on.



of a new, high-rise dormitory, Parker Hall was converted for faculty office use.

Neither of the Parkers, by the way, had attended Wagner College; they first came into contact with Wagner by attending football games. Though George Parker hadn't been able to go to college himself, he wanted to help young people who would not otherwise be able to attend.

## Science Complex (1968)

Wagner College leadership had been considering the need for a modern science building for a long time; in fact, in the early 1940s, President Clarence Stoughton had enticed Dr. Adolf Stern to join our chemistry department by promising a new science building, according to President Arthur Ole Davidson.

"We admire this man for his patience," Davidson quipped at the 1968 dedication of our new science and communications complex, attended by Stern himself — as well as astronaut John Glenn, the first American to orbit the Earth.

"In designing the Wagner College Science Center," a fundraising brochure explained, "a departure has been made from the conventional planning in which classrooms, offices and laboratories are interspersed.

"Instead, a different type of organization was selected in which all large group spaces are assembled in a single hexagonal pavilion to form the communications center. The adjoining laboratory building thus becomes a relatively quiet place without circulation of large groups of people at a time."

In 1979, the laboratory building was renamed the Megerle Science Building to honor two of our most faithful supporters, Eugen and Martha Megerle.

And in 1992, the communications center was refurbished through the generosity of then-board chairman Donald W. Spiro '49 and his wife, Evelyn Lindfors Spiro '49. In gratitude, we renamed the building Spiro Hall.

## Harbor View Hall (1968)

Sherwood, Mills & Smith of Stamford, Connecticut, the architectural firm that designed the science and communications complex, also designed Harbor View Hall, opened for the fall 1968 semester.

This 616-bed, 15-story dormitory looking out over the new Verrazano-Narrows Bridge and New York Harbor was the last new residence hall built on Grymes Hill until Foundation Hall was opened more than four decades later, in 2010.

Harbor View was one of six Wagner College campus buildings that have won the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce annual prize for architecture. The others are the Horrmann Library, the science complex, the 1999 Spiro Sports Center expansion of the Sutter Gymnasium building, Foundation Hall, and the last of the buildings from our primary, 20-year-long building campaign: the Wagner Union.

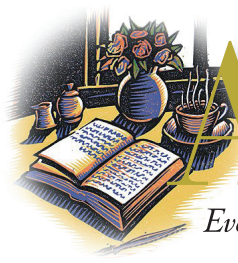
## Wagner Union (1970)

Designed by Perkins & Will and constructed by Starret Brothers and Eken, builders of the Empire State Building, the Union was dedicated in February 1970.

It is a daring structure, its successive floors reaching farther and farther out toward the open sea in an architectural gesture of aspiration.

In awarding the Albert S. Bard Award of Merit in Architecture and Urban Design to the Union that August, the City Club of New York said, "The Wagner Union solves an architectural problem that is more characteristic of the suburbs than it is in most of the high-density areas in our city.

"But it is a design of great brilliance, wit, and skill. And we can hope it might set a pattern for the remaining open areas of the city where a truly freestanding building is still possible." ■



# AlumniLink

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



## Alumni Gather on Grymes Hill

**The annual Reunion Weekend draws a crowd back to alma mater**

MORE THAN 300 ALUMNI AND FRIENDS returned to campus June 2–4 for the annual Wagner College Reunion.

Highlights included opportunities to mingle with President Richard and Dr. Carin Guarasci, hear Provost Lily D. McNair and faculty speak about new programs, and meet with department chairs. Campus tours, an open house in Towers residence hall, and anchor painting reconnected alumni with their college days. Lots of dinners, lunches, and parties — especially the Masquerade Ball dinner dance — gave everyone a chance to enjoy each other’s company.

The Reunion Class Giving Program drew great support, with 230 total donors and nearly \$4 million raised. The 50th anniversary class of 1967 won the giving challenge with a total of 71 donors and more than \$2.4 million raised.



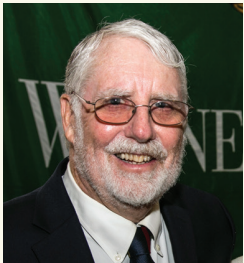
# Alumni Association Honors

**The 2017 annual awards recognize leaders in serving the College and the community and in professional achievement**



**DR. JAY P. HARTIG '67 H'09** was named the John “Bunny” Barbes '39 and Lila T. Barbes '40 Wagner Alumni Laureate. Twice chairman of the Wagner Board of Trustees, he helped recruit two successful College presidents, Norman Smith and Richard Guarasci; helped set the College’s strategic direction; and has given

generously to many Wagner causes. An economics major at Wagner, he retired from PricewaterhouseCoopers in 2007.



**L. NICK LACEY '69** was named the Distinguished Graduate. He had a 45-year highly successful career in aviation that encompassed the private sector and civilian and military government service. A retired colonel in the U.S. Air Force, he served as commander of the 89th Operations Group assigned to carry the president, cabinet heads, and

members of Congress. He also helped set safety standards for the Federal Aviation Administration.

**BISHOP JOHN J. O'HARA** received the Reverend Lyle Guttu Award. He is the episcopal vicar of both southern Manhattan and Staten Island for the Roman Catholic Church.



**HENRY '71 & ELIZABETH HARTUNG '71 CRUZ** were awarded the Dr. Kevin Sheehy '67 M'70 M'92 H'99 Alumni Leadership Medal. Beth has served as president of the Alumni Association Board, and Henry is a Wagner student mentor. Together, the Cruzes founded a mentoring program for student-athletes, endowed a scholarship for education majors, support students’ participation in alternative winter and spring break trips, and consider many current and former Wagner students their “kids.”



**MYSTICA M. ALEXANDER '87** was named a Wagner Alumni Fellow in Economics and Business Law. She earned her law degree from Harvard and worked as a tax attorney in Boston before joining the faculty of Bentley University, where she chairs the Department of Law, Taxation, and Financial Planning.



**LAWRENCE AMBROSINO '69** was named a Wagner Alumni Fellow in Education. His five-decade career in public education has included teaching and being a principal in New York City schools and serving as superintendent of schools for Shrewsbury, New Jersey.



**KIM LINDA JOHO '79 M'82** was named a Wagner Alumni Fellow in Bacteriology. She is manager of microbiology and molecular pathology at the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick, New Jersey. She also teaches at Wagner and at Middlesex County College.



**SUSAN NOCK '85** was named a Wagner Alumni Fellow in Theater. She is an Actors’ Equity Association artist whose career encompasses film, television, national and European tours, and stages in New York City and others nationwide.



**KELLIE GRIFFITH '14** was awarded the Wagner Alumni Key, for graduates of the last decade. A Fulbright Fellow teaching assistant in Ecuador in 2014–15, she is now a teacher in a first-grade Spanish/English dual language classroom at P.S. 19 in Port Richmond, Staten Island.



**RENA PISCOPO IANIELLO '48** received a Certificate of Appreciation. A Wagner nursing graduate, she has donated seats in Wagner’s Main Hall Theatre and is a member of the DaVinci Society.



**DOUGLAS W. MATTHIUS '72 M'77** received a Certificate of Appreciation posthumously. He was an avid supporter of Wagner College Athletics programs, especially basketball. He passed away unexpectedly on June 28, 2016.



## A ‘Beautiful’ Legacy

### Unknown artistic talent from the composer of Wagner’s alma mater

DURING THE WINTER OF 1941, Wagner College senior Frank Betancourt was in charge of a campus revue show that raised money for the Red Cross. One of the numbers was a new song written by Betancourt himself, called “Beautiful Upon a Hill.” The song was so popular among Wagner students that it became the College’s alma mater in 1949.

We don’t have many details on Frank Betancourt’s life, though we do know that he favored Manhattan’s West Village. In the late 1950s, he lived on MacDougal Alley, just off Washington Square. Jackson Pollock, the famous abstract expressionist artist, lived in that same home in 1949–50.

During the late 1980s, Betancourt became friends with

Jacqueline Besignano; they met while each was visiting a family member at the same Manhattan nursing home, and perhaps they bonded over their shared Wagner College connections. Jacqueline was the mother of John Besignano, who had married into a Wagner legacy family. John’s wife was Lauren Malone ’72, the daughter of Francis Edward Malone ’49 and niece of George Schaffer ’50.

Whatever the nature of Jacqueline Besignano and Frank Betancourt’s friendship was, it was close enough that she ended up owning a piece of his artistic legacy. When Jacqueline died in 2004, she left to John and Lauren four pictures, executed in colored marker, by none other than Frank Betancourt. This year, when the Besignanos were downsizing their home, they reached out to see if Wagner would be interested in Betancourt’s pictures — and, of course, we said yes!

We plan to hang the pictures in Reynolds House, alongside a reproduction of the signed, handwritten score of his “Beautiful Upon a Hill.” — *Lee Manchester*

## Remembering the Grymes Hill Singers

### Another piece of Wagner musical history

BOB SMITH ’67 shared the story of the student folk music trio The Grymes Hill Singers on the occasion of his 50th anniversary of graduation.

It started in September 1963, when he left his home in Connecticut and arrived at Wagner. An “amateur folk music guitarist,” he performed a few songs at an orientation party on the Oval. As a result, he met two older students, Rusty Brown and Paul Bensen. The three of them started performing in the dorms and student homes off campus.

In 1964, a freshman, George Stevens, introduced them

to his stepfather, Joe Raymond, who owned “a small home-grown record label called Recall Records.” Raymond signed the trio, and they recorded their covers of well-known folk songs at Sterling Sound in Manhattan. The album was released in 1965.

The Grymes Hill Singers won third place in a contest judged by Albert Grossman, Bob Dylan’s manager, and performed at the famous Bitter End club. But, by 1967, the group had dispersed. Paul Bensen graduated in 1965; Ron Baglio ’68 replaced him in the trio, but then Rusty Brown left and joined the Army in 1966. Bob Smith finished his degree in 1967.

“I continued a minor solo ‘career’ for about three more years, and now I just sing in my living room,” he says.





# Upcoming Events



## AUGUST

### First Day of Classes

August 28

### Last Day of the Wagner College Fiscal Year

August 31

Don't forget to make your 2017 gift to the Wagner Fund! (Envelope enclosed.)

## OCTOBER

### Wagner College Theatre: 1776

October 5–15, Main Stage

Winner of the 1968 Tony for Best Musical, *1776* brings to life the ideals and struggles of our Founding Fathers.

### Columbus Day

October 9

The Wagner College Marching Band will perform in the parade on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan.

### Wagner College Theatre: Or, by Liz Duffy Adams

October 12–15, Stage One

This comedy focuses on the extraordinary life of English Restoration playwright and spy Aphra Behn with “style, humor, and jaw-dropping wit” (*New York Times*).

### Italian Idol Singing Competition

October 13, 5 p.m., Performance Center, Campus Hall

### Homecoming

October 13–14

Friday, 5–9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.–5:30 p.m. on campus and on the Oval, 6 p.m. at the football field. Visit [wagner.edu/homecoming](http://wagner.edu/homecoming) for details.

### Viva Italia! Finale Concert

October 22, 4 p.m., Performance Center, Campus Hall

### Reformation 500th Anniversary Symposium

October 23

Wagner faculty will conduct roundtable discussions during a day of reflection on Martin Luther's ideas and their influence over the past 500 years. Bishop Robert A. Rimbo, Metropolitan New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, will speak.

### Wagner College Choirs: Reformation Day Concerts

October 29, 4 p.m.,

Trinity Lutheran Church, Staten Island

October 31, 4:30 p.m.,

Performance Center, Campus Hall

Featuring music by Reformation composers such as Bach, Telemann, and Schütz, as well as American folk hymns, African sacred music, and African American spirituals. The Oct. 31 performance is a shortened version with commentaries on the music.

## NOVEMBER

### Wagner College Theatre: *Nine*

November 16–19 &

November 30–December 3

Inspired by Fellini film *8½*, *Nine* follows the story of a celebrated film director whose midlife crisis blocks his creative impulse and entangles him in a web of romances.

### Day of Giving

November 28

Follow Wagner College social media for our annual campaign on the national Day of Giving. Visit [wagner.edu/dayofgiving](http://wagner.edu/dayofgiving) for updates.

## DECEMBER

### Vocal Jazz Set

December 5, 8 p.m., Performance Center, Campus Hall

### Wagner College Choir: Holiday Concert

December 10, 4 p.m.,

Trinity Lutheran Church, Staten Island

With beautiful contemporary works, a poly-choral work by Pachelbel, spirituals, Chanukah music, the traditional Christmas sing-along, and more.

**CHANGE HAPPENS.** Please call the Office of Alumni Relations at 718-390-3224 or check [wagner.edu/calendar](http://wagner.edu/calendar) for updates.

CELEBRATE WAGNER WITH A FUN WEEKEND OF ENTERTAINMENT, FOOD, AND FOOTBALL

2017

# HOME COMING



Register by September 24 for discounted prices.

[wagner.edu/homecoming](http://wagner.edu/homecoming)

### FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13

Community BBQ and Pep Rally • 5–7:30 p.m.

Salsa Lessons and After-Party • 7:30–9 p.m.

A Cappella Fest • 9 p.m.

### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14

Wagner Community Showcase • 10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Open classes, panel discussions, and more

Homecoming on the Oval • 12–5 p.m.

BBQ, food trucks, beer garden, dunk tank, DJ, kids' activities, Homecoming Court

Kickoff: Seahawks vs. Central Connecticut • 6 p.m.

Office of Alumni Relations • 718-390-3224 • [alumni@wagner.edu](mailto:alumni@wagner.edu)



# ClassNotes

Updates from old friends across the generations

## 1943

**Dorothy Deal Morten** wrote, “I enjoyed the article [in the fall 2016 issue of *Wagner Magazine*] about the choirs. I was also in the choir for my four years, and we also went on trips (not as exciting as going to Europe)! When Frank Betancourt first introduced ‘Beautiful Upon a Hill,’ **Gloria Rappold Greening** and I sang it as a duet.”

## 1946

**Jean La Hart** says hello to all of her classmates, the first nursing graduates of Wagner College. She lives in Catonsville, Md.

## 1949

**Kristine Iwersen Moore** ’77 M’81 sent us a tribute to her father, **John “Eric” Iwersen**, who passed away at the age of 88 on January 22, after a long battle with Alzheimer’s disease. After graduating from Wagner in 1949, Eric earned a doctorate in chemistry from Johns Hopkins University. He spent most of his career at Bell Laboratories, where he was “one of the original thinkers and doers

who paved the way for the modern microelectronic world,” according to colleague Marty Lebselter. He was also a lifelong singer and actor. He and his wife, Marie, had five children, 10 grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

## 1950

Dr. **Louis Gianvito** celebrated his 90th birthday in March. The *Staten Island Advance* reported on a birthday party that was thrown for him by the Westerleigh Tennis Club. Louis practiced medicine for 58 years, finally retiring at the age of 86. The Reverend **David J. Greer** was named rector emeritus of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Shreveport, La. He retired in 1989, but just received emeritus status. Last year, he celebrated 61 years of ordination and 87 years of life, which he marked with a trip to Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

## 1952

**Fred** ’52 M’54 and **Lee** ’53 **Brockmann** are still community activists as members of Sarasota United for Responsibility

and Equity (S.U.R.E.) and leaders of the Peace and Justice Network in their church, First Congregational United Church of Christ in Sarasota, Fla.

## 1953

**Miriam Plitt** is a member of the editorial team for her community magazine, *Creative Expressions*. She lives in Westminster, Md.

## 1954

**Wanda Schweizer Praisner** ’54 M’57 is the recipient of the 2017 New Jersey Poets Prize, which was presented at a dinner and reading at the County College of Morris on April 18. She also gave a reading at Princeton Library and Highland Park Library from her fifth collection, *Natirar* (Kelsay Books).

## 1957

**Lillian Beneforti Burry** is serving as the director of the Board of Chosen Freeholders in Monmouth County, N.J., for 2017. Jharon Silva sent in a tribute to his father, **Eric Neil Lachmansingh**, who died on January 16 at age 86,

after a courageous battle with cancer. He was born in Guyana, South America, and died at Bethesda East Hospital in Boynton Beach, Fla. **James Marx** ’80 wrote to us about the passing of his parents, **Herbert and Pauline Pape Marx**, who met at Wagner in 1956. Herbert died in 2014 and Pauline in 2016.

## 1958

**Dorothy Rodemann Sickler-Coy** has been teaching folk and square dancing at Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn, N.Y., with her husband, Don Coy.

## 1959

**Frederick S. Osmer** passed away on November 19, 2016, at the age of 77. His daughters, Anne Osmer Coleman and Laura Osmer Williams, wrote to inform us of his passing, and added: “Fred was a chemist who worked for Lever Bros. (Unilever) for almost 30 years, and was one of the inventors of the Dove Bar. He was always very proud of the many patents he received for his work and attributed it all to the wonderful education he

received at Wagner. Dad had many fond memories of his college years and he was extremely proud to share those memories.”

**Elaine Petrella** has moved to Gardnerville, Nev., to be with her youngest son, Jeffrey; daughter-in-law, Mary; and 14-year-old granddaughter Alexis, who, she writes, “has been in theater since age 5.”

**June Billings Safford** has established herself as a painter and poet in the lovely mountain town of Bozeman, Mont., where she has lived since 1968. A former teacher of creative writing, she has published a number of poems, most recently in *Poets Across the Big Sky, Vol. II*. She is an avid back-country skier and hiker. She and her hubby, **Jeff Safford '56**, travel abroad often, and she is glad she minored in German at Wagner. Dr. **Doris Smith** is pleased to be newly retired from her 15-year position as a scoring leader for Educational Testing Services, focused on the principal certification exam.

She and her husband are enjoying family and friends and the opportunity to travel to warm climates for about five months each year. They live in Randolph, N.J.

## 1960

**Conrad Meibauer**, now retired, taught math at Monsignor Farrell High School for 38 years. He started the varsity swim team and coached for 36 years. In May 2013, he was inducted into the Catholic High School Athletic Association’s Hall of Fame. According to *The Tablet*, the newspaper of the Diocese of Brooklyn, Conrad led his team to 252 varsity wins, six team championships, and five dual-meet championships. **William Sirockman** writes, “I had a wonderful experience in helping Roche Laboratories to get into the clinical laboratory business known as Labcorp (1967).” Dr. **Carl R. Wirth** writes, “I’m retired now, but I still sing with a couple of choral groups.”

## 1962

**Richard '62 and Barbara '64 Rice** celebrated their 51st wedding anniversary with a cruise to Alaska — “the last frontier!” Dr. **Beverly Hoehne Whipple** received the Rutgers Medal, which read “Rutgers University 250th Anniversary Fellow,” as Rutgers celebrated its 250th anniversary in 2016. She was named a fellow on the Newark campus, where she received two of her three graduate degrees and where she was a professor in the College of Nursing. Her husband, Jim; their son, Allen; their daughter, Susan; and a granddaughter, Elyse, attended the ceremony. **A. J. Williams-Myers** was honored to have a new library named for him, the A. J. Williams-Myers African Roots Community Center Library in Kingston, N.Y. He is a professor emeritus of black studies at SUNY-New Paltz and has written several books on the African presence in the Hudson River Valley.

## 1964

**Russell N. Kimmerly** was called as pastor of Mt. Zion-St. Paul United Church of Christ in August 2016. He lives in Harrison, Ohio. **Fred Sisto** retired in 2013 after 47 years as a CPA. Last year, he completed a yearlong Master Gardener Course sponsored by Middlesex County (N.J.). **Theresa G. Stiano**, who lives in Bloomingburg, N.Y., retired as a trustee for the Mamakating Library District. For 20 years, she has volunteered at Orange Regional Medical Center. **John M. Wilson** lost his wife after 42 years of marriage, and moved to Portland, Ore., where he enjoys outdoor activities such as skiing, kayaking, biking, and walking.

## 1965

**John '65 and Betsy Holderle '68 Brockway** celebrated their 50th anniversary last year in Lake Placid with their kids and grandkids. John writes, “Loving travel

### Keep in Touch!

**Email:** alumni@wagner.edu

**Web:** wagner.edu/alumni

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

**Deadlines:** This issue reflects news received by June 27, 2017. The submission deadline for the Fall 2017 issue is October 15, 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.



# Ken Mitchell '87

## *A Zoo-tiful Day in the Neighborhood*

**CLAIM TO FAME** Ken Mitchell '87 is the executive director of the Staten Island Zoo, a small but vital institution of education and conservation. Annually, close to 200,000 people visit its 350 animal species, including 69 that are endangered or even extinct in the wild.

**SPECIES SURVIVAL** The zoo recently became home to the world's rarest cat, the amur leopard. Only 50 survive in the wild, and the hope is that the zoo's pair will breed. Last year, the zoo's scimitar-horned oryx, a Saharan antelope extinct in the wild, bore its first calf. The zoo specializes in reptiles, including such threatened species as the Aruba Island rattlesnake. "We are not just exhibiting animals, but making sure they continue to thrive and flourish for generations to come," Mitchell says.

**LEGAL EAGLE** Mitchell grew up near the zoo, riding his bike through the leafy eight-acre property. But he had no boyhood dreams of becoming a zookeeper. "I always had an interest in politics, civics, and law," he says.

**SEAHAWK FAMILY** Mitchell names his uncle, Alex Mitchell '57, an American Airlines executive who oversaw the company's financial regulatory analysis, as an early influence. He followed his uncle's footsteps to Wagner College to become an economics and business administration major. Two sisters, Elizabeth Mitchell Diaz '92 and Ann Mitchell '04 M'08, also are alumni, as is his wife, Jacquelyn Mahoney M'00. He hopes his 6-year-old son, Charlie, will be part of the class of 2032 or so.

**CECE THE TWO-TOED SLOTH** takes her turn greeting zoo visitors. Her baby, Waffles (see its head on Cece's chest?), was born on April 9. Fun fact: The Staten Island Zoo is the only NYC zoo not run by the Wildlife Conservation Society.

**WIN SOME ...** After Wagner, Mitchell earned a JD from New York Law School. For seven years, he was chief of staff and general counsel for the Democratic city councilman representing northern Staten Island. When his boss was elected to Congress, Mitchell won the council seat in a February 2009 special election. In the next general election, however, Mitchell lost to a Democratic challenger.

**HOMECOMING** In early 2010, the zoo's former executive director stepped down. Mitchell agreed to serve as executive director on an interim basis, and it turned out to be a good fit. His knowledge of city government and local organizations is extremely useful in advocating for zoo support and funding.

**LESS IS MORE** What makes the zoo most special to Mitchell? Its intimacy. "You come here, and it's small enough that you can do it in a day, and you can get close to the animals. Our docent program allows people to touch the animals. At a lot of other zoos, you don't have that personal touch."

**STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES** Over the past several years, all of Wagner's pre-veterinary students have interned at the Staten Island Zoo, says Chris Corbo, assistant professor of biology. This valuable hands-on experience has given them a leg up in the highly competitive admissions process to the veterinary schools at Cornell, Tufts, and Ohio State.

**A NEW LOVE** Admitting that he prefers the leopards to the rattlesnakes, Mitchell says, "I had no idea how involved the work of a zoo was. I've grown to love it and appreciate the work of our professionals."

opportunities at this stage in life — upcoming, a train excursion through British Columbia, biking in Everglades and Key West, and a trip to L.A. Life is good indeed. Saddened to hear of passing of classmate and AEO brother **Mel Mraz.**" Mel died on September 19, 2014, in Oxford, Md. **Stephen J. Kudless** M'65 won the 2015 White Mice Prize for poetry from the International Lawrence Durrell Society. His prize-winning poem is entitled "The Color Hazel." A widely published poet and playwright, Stephen taught in New York City schools for many years, retiring from New Dorp High School in Staten Island. **Tom Moles** was inducted into the Wagner College Athletics Hall of Fame in October 2016. He was an integral player during the Seahawks' undefeated season of 1964.

## 1966

**Elizabeth Barker** is working to establish an associate degree nursing program in Choluteca, Honduras.

## 1967

**Peggy J. Nuspliger** is marking her 40th year as director of the Adirondack Community Chorus, which performs three major concerts a year as well as other performances for local nursing homes and other community organizations. Her other major activity is playing

tennis doubles three times a week during the outdoor season. **Anna Scholz Dunn** was thrilled to attend the 50th class reunion at Wagner this year. Her long career in nursing includes working at a hospital in West Orange, N.J.; as a visiting nurse in Monmouth County, N.J.; opening and working for 15 years as director and nurse of northeast Florida's first adult day care center, in Daytona Beach, Fla.; and serving as director and nurse at an adult day care center in St. Louis, Mo. She moved to Columbia, Ill., in 1995 to be near her daughter and three grandsons. She retired in 2012 and volunteers at a skilled nursing facility and assisted living facility. One special trip she took in 2010 to Austria and Switzerland included seeing the Passion Play in Oberammergau, Germany. **Warren Schueler** writes that after retiring from teaching culinary arts, he created the Magic Gourmet, an intimate dining experience combined with a bit of magical entertainment, as he is also a professional magician. He also cooks for a local food outreach in Keansburg, N.J. He and his wife, **Linda Cathers** '69, travel a lot and enjoy their three grandchildren. **Synneve Skeie-Alameddine**, DDS, has been married for 40 years and has three sons, Rahmi, Riad, and Tarek. A 1978 graduate of the Baylor College of Dentistry, she has an office

in Pleasant Hill, Calif., and lives in Lafayette, Calif. She treasures her memories of Wagner, the choir, and the beautiful campus. **Katy Perry Sinko** writes, "It has been a busy 50 years. I got married and went to Laos to work for the State Department for two years. My son, Stephen, was born. I got my hubby off to Cornell University. My daughter, Edie, was born. We moved to Saudi Arabia with Aramco for eight wonderful years. Returned to the USA, completed a master's degree and teacher certification at Elmira College. I became co-owner of an art gallery and started teaching fourth grade and art. I got divorced. Retired from teaching in 2011. I have done tons of traveling, thanks to the Wagner Bregenz program that got me started. I have 10 grandchildren ranging in age from 10 to 20. I have a busy life in Trumansberg, N.Y., and am in a happy relationship. I am healthy, very happy, and living a good life!"

## 1968

**Kurt Landgraf** was appointed president of Washington College in Chestertown, Md., as of July 1. **Chuck Cascio** has released two volumes of *The Fire Escape Stories*, about a man's childhood memories of Brooklyn during the 1950s. His books are available on Amazon. **Harold Kozak** offered an ACE/NASA

talk at Wagner, along with Dr. John Snedden of the University of Texas, in April. The topic was the asteroid collision that led to the formation of the Chicxulub crater. **Arnold Obey** completed his 36th consecutive NYC Marathon last November. "The legs are a little sore," he told the *Staten Island Advance*, "but I'm very happy. Every year I enjoy it and I felt very comfortable and was able to complete the race."

## 1971

**Diane Kennedy** writes that two major life events happened in March 2016: She retired from her work in research with a medical oncologist, who specializes in treating breast cancer patients at the University of Cincinnati; and she and her husband became grandparents. **Kathy Van Tassel Maxcy** informed us of the passing of **Pamela Paul** on November 1, 2016. Pamela majored in economics and worked in finance. A member of the Wagner College Choir, she continued to sing in choirs all her life long, most recently in Musica Viva, a New York City chamber choir. She had been hit by a car in 2014 and seriously injured, and she had a stroke in December 2015. Her friends say that she never complained and remained joyfully engaged in life, even through great pain and difficulty,

until the end. She died in her home, waiting for a ride to choir rehearsal.

## 1972

**Molly LeVan**, a lawyer, is the permanent law clerk to the Hon. Douglas Lavine of the Connecticut Appellate Court. Her son, Det Newton, is a teaching tennis professional. **Michael Tadross** is executive-producing *Ocean's Eight*, an upcoming heist comedy film set for release in summer 2018 by Warner Bros.

## 1973

**Diane Pane** '75, who is the academic coordinator of Wagner's physician assistant program, let us know that Dr. **Peter De Agostini** passed away on October 7, 2016. Peter graduated from Wagner as a biology major and went on to attend medical school at the Universidad Autonoma de Monterrey, Mexico. He completed a pediatrics residency and neonatology fellowship at Long Island College Hospital, Brooklyn, N.Y. He retired after practicing pediatrics in upstate New York for 30 years.

## 1974

**Susan Moan Hardie** '74 is the president of the California Professional Society on the Abuse of Children. **Steve Lohrmann** retired from an account manager position at IBM and founded a

vacation rental company in Ocean City, Md., Best of OC Condo Rentals LLC. Check them out at [bestoceancondos.com](http://bestoceancondos.com).

## 1976

**Randy Graff** was named Outstanding Featured Actress in a Play for her work on *The Babylon Line* at the 29th annual Lucille Lortel Awards, which recognize excellence in New York Off-Broadway theater. *The Babylon Line*, by Richard Greenberg, ran at the Lincoln Center Theater from November 10, 2016, to January 22, 2017.

## 1977

**Carolyn Ceder Root** gave a lecture, "Submarines: Historical Perspective and Future Vision," at Wagner College on April 12. For more than 20 years, she has worked as a consultant providing expertise in systems engineering, underwater acoustics, and other areas for the U.S. Navy, NASA, and NOAA. In 2015, she founded a new firm, Alpha UMi, which aims for sustainability in careers, organizations, and communities.

## 1978

**Lorraine McNeill-Popper** received the Addiction Policy Forum's 2017 Advocate of the Year Award at the second annual CARA reception in March.

# Crib Notes



1. Anthony Joseph "A. J." Caporale, born on October 21, 2016, to **Joseph '96 and Elaina Mastrangelo '03 M'05 Caporale**.
2. Ari Miles Koster, born on July 30, 2016, with big brother Joshua, the sons of Craig and **Joanna Bell Koster '04**.
3. Anthony Felice Cafasso, born November 2, 2016, to **Frank '00 M'02 and Kara McGann '07 M'09 Cafasso**.

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

Please see page 33 for publication guidelines.

The award recognizes those who have excelled in grassroots advocacy, promoting community education and policies that support a comprehensive response to addiction.

## 1979

Dr. **Victor Dolan** was named Chiropractor of the Year by the New Jersey Chiropractic Council

on Sports Injury and Rehabilitation. He is a chiropractor for Curtis High School's football team and the NYPD Finest Football team. **Philip Rugani** joined AlgoSec in November 2016 as senior vice president for worldwide sales. He focuses on driving revenue growth, as well as building, cultivating, and leading AlgoSec's global sales

team and channel partner program. **Wayne T. Wendel '79 M'84** marked his 25th year of teaching in the West Windsor-Plainsboro School District. He teaches honors American history and financial literacy, while also coaching basketball as an assistant coach at WW-P High School North. He lives in Princeton, N.J.

# 1980

**Ed Burke**, Staten Island deputy borough president, is the author of *Groundhog Chuck Builds a Weather Station*, a children's book based on the Staten Island Zoo's famous weather forecaster, Groundhog Chuck. "The book teaches youngsters some of the basics about weather science, and how animals adapt to various climates,"

Zoo CEO **Ken Mitchell** '87 told the *Staten Island Advance*. It is available at the zoo's gift shop and on its website, [statenislandzoo.org](http://statenislandzoo.org). **Michael J. McDonough** M'80 received a Doctor of Medical Humanities degree from Drew University in Madison, N.J., in May 2016. He is a professor of health services administration at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J.

# 1981

**Cynthia Clo**, a special education teacher at Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School, was featured as a "Top Teacher" by WNYT News Channel 13 in Albany, N.Y. "Cynthia Clo ... doesn't see her students as disabled. She sees them as amazing. Her students see her that way too," the report said.

# 1982

**Lynn Portas** wrote and recorded the musical messages for Emusi, an app launched last year, which the *Staten Island Advance* describes as "a modern-day version of the singing telegram." It's available for Apple and Android, and it allows you to send a musical message — something like a "musical emoji." Visit [emusiapp.com](http://emusiapp.com) for more information.



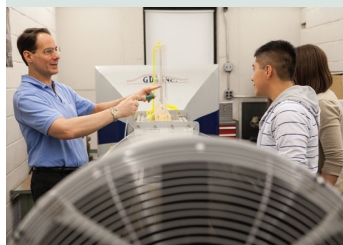
# 1983

**JoAnn Moore** retired in 2015 from the U.S. Department of State, after 30 years of serving as a federal agent.

# 1984

**Theresa Vario Berger**, a Democrat, narrowly defeated a Republican candidate in the race to become the mayor of Howell, N.J., in November 2016.

**1** gift = *countless* opportunities



# 1986

The *Staten Island Advance* featured the new bowling team from South Richmond High School, where **Jim McKeon** is principal and **Luke Timmins** '99 is assistant principal and coach. "The public high school for teens with special needs is participating in its first PSAL sport — a co-ed bowling team that competed against Staten Island boys' contenders Susan Wagner and McKee/

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— Grow Wagner —



S.I. Tech on consecutive days” last October, Jim Waggoner wrote in the *Advance*. Jim McKeon introduced the idea of creating the team, which is bringing a lot of new opportunity and pride to South Richmond students and their families.

## 1987

**Patricia Denise Coscia** wrote about what she’s been up to since her college days. She has worked many years as an ESL teacher, literacy teacher, and tutor, as well as various other jobs. She joined Fountain House in NYC, a nonprofit dedicated to the recovery of men and women from mental illness. She has shown her art in the Fountain House gallery and published her creative writing in the *Fountain House Review* and other publications. She is also active as a theater volunteer, and she relies on her many long-term friends for support.

## 1989

**Mike Jones** was inducted into the Wagner College Athletics Hall of Fame in October 2016. He was the starting center on the Seahawks Division III National Championship football team in 1987 and helped the Seahawks set a host of school records. **Mona L. Zaloom** was named a *Staten Island Advance* Woman of Achievement this year. She is a founder

of the interfaith Building Bridges Coalition of Staten Island, created in 2001, which includes more than 30 clergy, congregations, and houses of worship of all faiths. She works as a nurse at the Hungerford School in Staten Island.

## 1994

**Ryan Tobin** was inducted into the Wagner College Athletics Hall of Fame in October 2016. He was a four-year starter and two-year captain at middle linebacker on the Seahawks football team and remains among the top two all-time record setters in seven statistical categories.

## 1996

**Joseph Caporale ’96** and **Elaina Mastrangelo Caporale ’03 M’05** announce the birth of Anthony Joseph, called A. J., on October 21, 2016. He was born on Staten Island, where they live. See Crib Notes, page 37, for a photo.

## 1997

**Kathleen Wright** and her husband, Kirk, welcomed Jude Kristofer on June 10, 2016. Jude joins his big sister, Amelia (2).

## 1999

**Catherine Horton Benedetti** co-founded Hibernian Home Care with her husband, Roger Benedetti, a pharmacist. She serves

as vice president and director of nursing for this company that serves seniors in Monmouth and Ocean counties, N.J. This year, Hibernian Home Care received the Best of Home Care – Provider Choice Award from Home Care Pulse, the industry’s leading firm in satisfaction research and quality assurance. **Frank DeBlasi** was selected as one of the *Phoenix Business Journals* 40-Under-40 Class of 2017. He is senior vice president and wealth management advisor for U.S. Bank. A few years ago, Frank beat testicular cancer, and he has started a non-profit organization to raise money for children with cancer. Its signature event is Ballsfest, a party before the Dave Matthews Band’s annual concert in Saratoga, N.Y., which he has attended for years. The *Staten Island Advance* featured the new bowling team from South Richmond High School, where **Jim McKeon ’86** is principal and **Luke Timmins** is assistant principal and coach. “The public high school for teens with special needs is participating in its first PSAL sport — a co-ed bowling team that competed against Staten Island boys’ contenders Susan Wagner and McKee/ S.I. Tech on consecutive days” last October, Jim Waggoner wrote in the *Advance*. The team is bringing new opportunity and pride to South Richmond students and their families. “I’m seeing

those [Susan] Wagner kids high-fiving our kids, many of whom won’t break 100, and I’m getting chills,” Luke told the *Advance*. “We’re being treated like we belong, and we do. ... It’s about getting these kids out to a new environment where they’re included just like any other kid in the PSAL.” **Rick Sarille** was inducted into the 2016–17 class of the Northeast Conference Hall of Fame. A running back for Seahawks football when the NEC was in its formative years, he graduated as the holder of nine NEC career records, and still ranks third in rushing and all-purpose offense, and second in career points.

## 2000

**Frank Cafasso ’00 M’02** and **Kara McGann Cafasso ’07 M’09** announce the birth of Anthony Felice on November 2, 2016. Big sister Olivia welcomed her new baby brother as well. See Crib Notes, page 37, for a photo. **Melody Javaheri Fischer** was inducted into the Wagner College Athletics Hall of Fame in October 2016. She is the first volleyball player to be voted into the College’s Hall of Fame. She was a three-year captain and floor general, and led Wagner to its first and only NEC Volleyball Championship. **Janet Sobieski Sampson** was also inducted into the Wagner College Athletics Hall of

Fame, as its first women's lacrosse member. She was an inaugural member of Wagner's women's lacrosse program and still ranks second in career goals and third in total points.

## 2002

**Michael Cerminaro** was inducted into the Wagner College Athletics Hall of Fame in October 2016. He remains Seahawks baseball's all-time career leader with 66 doubles. **Michael Lynch** of Hendrick Hudson High School in Montrose, N.Y., was named New York Jets High School Coach of the Week in October 2016. He is in his 12th season of coaching at Hendrick Hudson and sixth as head coach. He is also a social studies teacher at Blue Mountain Middle School.

## 2003

**Elaina Mastrangelo Caporale '03 M'05** and **Joseph Caporale '96** announce the birth of Anthony Joseph, called A. J., on October 21, 2016. He was born on Staten Island, where they live. See Crib Notes, page 37, for a photo. **Brooke Lopez M'03** received the Jewish Community Center of Staten Island Next Generation Award at the Eighth Annual Nancy Avis L'Dor V'Dor Award Lunch this year. **Michele Sampson-Nelson** completed her Ph.D. in faith-based educational leadership, administration, and policy from Fordham's

Graduate School of Education in May.

## 2004

**Joanna Bell Koster** and her husband, Craig Koster, announce the birth of their second child, Ari Miles, on July 30, 2016. See Crib Notes, page 37, for a photo.

## 2005

**Mark '05 and Amanda '08 Intoccia** opened Mark's Bake Shoppe in Richmondtown, Staten Island, in May. Find out more at [marksbakeshoppe.com](http://marksbakeshoppe.com). **Héctor Guillermo Martínez** was appointed president of GM Security Technologies, based in Puerto Rico and covering the northern region of Latin America. He had been serving as executive vice president of strategy and development. **Heather Weinman Winter** and her husband, Darren, welcomed their second daughter, Hailey Georgia Winter, on March 9, 2016.

## 2006

**Elisabeth Cardiello '06 M'07** spoke at the United Nations Global Entrepreneurship Congress in Johannesburg, South Africa, in March. Elisabeth is the founder of a coffee business, Caffè Unimatic, and she spoke on internationalization, crossing borders, and the personal characteristics of entrepreneurs. **Steven Dixon**, a captain in the U.S. Marine

Corps, last year presented to President Guarasci a U.S. flag, which flew in honor of Wagner College over the skies of Iraq and Kuwait in support of Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force, Crisis Response, Central Command, on December 12, 2015.

**Rebecca Colucci Kelly**, whose friendly face and voice have welcomed alumni back to their alma mater for the past nine years through her work in Wagner's Office of Alumni Relations, started a new position this summer as life enrichment manager at Sunrise Senior Living, a nursing care facility in Staten Island. She works with people suffering from dementia and Alzheimer's.

## 2007

**Danielle Buccino** is assistant stage manager for this year's Best Musical Tony Award-winning show, *Dear Evan Hansen*. **Kara McGann Cafasso '07 M'09** and **Frank Cafasso '00 M'02** announce the birth of Anthony Felice on November 2, 2016. Big sister Olivia welcomed her new baby brother as well. See Crib Notes, page 37, for a photo. **Keith Carter M'07** has had an exciting coaching career since his days on the Wagner Seahawks sidelines, including two trips to the Super Bowl. In 2014, he was quality control assistant with the Seattle Seahawks; in 2017, he was assistant offensive line coach for the Atlanta Falcons. In

2006, **Monette McKay** made the *Staten Island Advance's* "30 Under 30" list. This year, the *Advance* asked "Where Are They Now?" and found, "The mezzo-soprano-belter is now a young Broadway veteran after stints in *Mamma Mia*, *Memphis*, and *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*. Monette also appeared in the season one finale of HBO's *The Night Of*."

## 2008

**Ashley Desplat** was named director of revenue management for the Hotel Indigo Savannah Historic District in Savannah, Ga., in April. **Shawn Postiglione '08 M'09**, head basketball coach of Bridgewater College in Virginia, brought his young team to the 15th Tournament of Heroes, one of the country's marquee NCAA Division III holiday events, at the College of Staten Island in December 2016, wrote Jim Waggoner in the *Staten Island Advance*. The No. 18 Illinois Wesleyan Titans defeated Bridgewater in the consolation game of the tournament. **Kristen Woodbury** and **Christopher Valletta '11** were married on October 22, 2016, in Bayonne, N.J. She works as a therapist at Richmond University Medical Center in Staten Island, and he is an assistant district attorney for Nassau County, Mineola, N.Y.

## 2010

**Kate Eshelman** graduated from the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kans., in June 2016 with her doctorate in bioanalytical chemistry, and started working with QuintilesIMS, located in Overland Park, Kans., as a clinical research monitor in September 2016. **Diana Rawson** won a 2017 ETHOS Excellence Award from Success Academy Charter Schools. She works as a school psychologist at Success Academy Bronx 1.

## 2011

**Courtney Sowinski** married Chase Dragoon on August 20, 2016, in Ogunquit, Maine. She works for Dell Technologies in Hopkinton, Mass., as a marketing program manager, and he is a healthcare manager for Huron Global Management Consulting Company in Boston. **Christopher Valletta** and **Kristen Woodbury '08** were married on October 22, 2016, in Bayonne, N.J. She works as a therapist at Richmond University Medical Center in Staten Island, and he is an assistant district attorney for Nassau County, Mineola, N.Y.

## 2012

**Erica Aresco M'12** was named Columbia University's associate athletics director and chief financial officer. **Ashraf Hasham** is making a difference in Seattle,

his hometown. He is the deputy director of TeenTix, an arts access and youth empowerment organization, and was appointed to the Get Engaged program of the Seattle Arts Commission, which advocates for the youth voice in city affairs. **Zoe E. Siegel** graduated from the University of South Carolina School of Medicine with a Master of Science in genetic counseling in 2016. She is working at the Anderson Cancer Institute in Savannah, Ga., specializing in genetic oncology.

## 2013

**Rugiatu Bahr '13 M'16** was the featured speaker at the women's history month opening reception hosted by the Wagner Center for Intercultural Advancement in March. **Tatum Colitz** was named associate athletic director/senior woman administrator at Wagner College. **Olivia Puckett** is a swing for this year's Best Musical Tony Award-winning show, *Dear Evan Hansen*.

## 2014

**Ellen Huffman**, who works as a senior auditor at Deloitte, and **Eric Mathias**, who works as an associate in real estate structured finance with Goldman Sachs, met with Wagner students on campus in March. **Arielle B. Richardson** is a Peace Corps Volunteer

in Dilijan, Armenia. She went through training in Armenia from March to June of 2016, and then began her work teaching English in local schools. **Latif Rivers** joined the Harlem Globetrotters for their 2017 World Tour. He is known as "Jet" on the team. **Lexi Small** is working as an editor at Hachette Book Group. Initially with the Center Street imprint, she acquired and edited her first book, *The Engagement Game* by Joi-Marie McKenzie, and it was published in March. This memoir has received many rave reviews. In 2016, Lexi moved to another imprint within Hachette, Grand Central Publishing, where she edits romance and women's fiction.

## 2015

**Kerri Lee Alexander** completed her Master of Arts in theological studies at Princeton Theological Seminary and has been fully funded to continue her studies in the Ph.D. program in history at Howard University. **Lorraine Brancale** was Manhattan College's spring commencement valedictorian and gave the valedictory address on May 18. She earned a 4.0 GPA in her two-year master's program in mental health counseling. **Kelly Passafiume** won a 2017 Teacher Growth Award from Success Academy Charter Schools. She teaches first grade at Success Academy

Bergen Beach. **Heather Wolf** left her work with the Office of Alumni Relations at Wagner to become a senior consultant with the Munshine Group.

## 2016

**Najee Harris**, Wagner's football team co-captain in 2016, signed a three-year contract with the Oakland Raiders in May "following a standout performance during the team's rookie mini-camp," according to the website *Fansided*. **Shelby Nielsen** was appointed development operations associate for Development and Public Affairs at the Juilliard School. Previously she was coordinator of development projects and special events for the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine.

# In Memoriam

*Celebrating lives that enriched the Wagner family*

Rev. Eugene H. Roth '44	Mrs. Pauline Pape Marx '57	Mr. Timothy Fiori '72
Mrs. Rita McGivney Kennedy '46	Rev. Alan W. Kamens '58	Mr. Melvin E. Hooper '72
Mrs. Lilyan Bennett Mulvaney '46	Mrs. Sarah A. Bailey Houck '59	Mrs. Charlette Scheiper Sause '72 M'77
Mr. Norman P. Johnson '48	Mr. Frederick S. Osmer '59	Dr. Peter De Agostini '73
Mrs. Claire I. Eilenberger Kispert '48	Ms. Carol E. Sharpe '60 M'68	Mr. Donald D. Herbst '73
Dr. Peter L. Berger '49	Mrs. Jacqueline Copeland Tyce '60	Mr. Robert G. Gathmann '77
Dr. John "Eric" Iwersen '49	Mr. Charles O. Jopp '61	Ms. Laura E. Le Grow '77
Dr. Michael A. Nicolais '49 H'14	Ms. Lynne Stewart '61	Mr. Robert H. Cassano M'78
Mrs. Phyllis MacDonald Powell '49	Mrs. Elise Benedict Browne '62	Mr. James A. Kagdis '79
Mrs. Barbara Fehringer '50	Mrs. Joyce Nagel Hartwig '62	Mrs. Ellen Christiansen Marino '79
Mr. Frank Murphy Jr. '50	Mrs. Ruth Thornton Shea '62 M'66	Mrs. Andrea Trimarche Demarest '83
Mr. Robert S. Peirano '50	Mr. William P. Keene '64	Mr. Stephen M. Ficara '86
Mr. Marvin I. Duskin '51	Mr. Peter J. Izzo Jr. '65	Ms. Katherine Bacchicchi '89
Dr. H. Richard Hoff '51	Mr. Lennart G. Olson '65	Dr. Anthony Carter M'89
Rev. David L. Vogel '51	Mrs. Margaret Regan Warner '65	Mr. Christopher J. DiBello '90
Mr. Alfred Schlegel '53	Mrs. Patricia Norton Gabbett '67	Mr. Donald G. Mulligan M'94
Mr. Seymour Siegler '53	Dr. David Rockefeller H'67	Mr. Jason K. Bowdish '98
Mr. William F. May '55	Mrs. Belinda McMillen Tyler '67	Dr. Eugene M. Lang H'06
Mr. Michael Miskulin '56	Col. Dr. John H. Glenn Jr. H'68	Mr. Jonathan M. Ayers '10
Mr. Richard E. Eversen '57	Mrs. Brenda C. Murphy M'68	Ms. Kayla A. Thomas '13
Mr. Eric Neil Lachmansingh '57	Mr. Richard M. Hooker Jr. '69	Mr. Matthew L. Sinopoli '15
Mr. Herbert Marx '57	Ms. Pamela Claire Paul '71	

## Faculty and Staff Remembrances

**Helen Anarumo** died on December 13, 2016, at age 96. She worked in the Wagner bookstore from 1989 to 2011.

**Dr. Anthony Carter M'89** died on May 20 in a tragic house fire, on his 62nd birthday. He served as a faculty member and as chair of the Wagner College Department of Business Administration from 1998 to 2003. Since 2005, he had been a faculty member at the University of New Haven. "He was an incredibly caring individual who was happiest when he was helping others," said UNH President Steven Kaplan.

**Carol Haag** died on November 28, 2016. She worked for Wagner Dining Services for 41 years.

**Serafina "Sophie" Ponzo** died on April 11 at age 65. She started working for the Wagner Office of Finance and Business in 1992, retiring as the accounts payable manager in 2015.

**Professor David Sappin** died on March 10 at age 77. He retired from a long career as a New York City public school teacher, and then became an adjunct professor of mathematics at Wagner from the fall of 2009 until the fall of 2016.



## Dr. Michael A. Nicolais '49 H'14

Michael A. Nicolais '49 H'14 died on November 7, 2016, after a short battle with cancer. He was 91 years old.

Until six months before his death, he daily walked a mile and a half to his health club for a modest work-out, and then hopped on the subway to go the office, where he remained an active financial manager. He loved the financial markets and he loved New York City, where he was born and spent a large part of his life.

Mike Nicolais was born on Staten Island on May 30, 1925, and spent his entire youth there. He served for 33 months in the U.S. Army infantry during World War II. He fought on the German front line, including in the Battle of the Bulge, and was awarded both a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. Upon returning from serving his country, he attended Wagner College, earning a B.S. degree in accounting, magna cum laude, in three years.

At Wagner, he met a classmate, Margaret Christie, on a blind date. They were married in 1953.

Shortly after graduating, Nicolais joined the Clark Estates, a renowned family office where he worked for the next 42 years, serving for the last 23 years as its president. He was an excellent value investor who also, from time to time, would dip his toe into the world of venture capital. He was well known on Wall Street and served on many public and private company boards of directors.

Because of his relationship with the Clark family, he served for many years as a director of the Baseball Hall of Fame and of the Fenimore House, a museum

dedicated to American writer James Fenimore Cooper. Upon retiring from the Clark Estates at the age of 65, he immediately launched his second career as a money manager, including working with legendary investor Phil Carret and at Wall Street Access until his death.

One of the great loves of his life was his alma mater, Wagner College. He and Margaret were each awarded honorary doctoral degrees because of the time and financial resources they devoted to Wagner. Mike Nicolais served as a Wagner trustee from 1976 to 1988. In 2007, the Nicolais gave Wagner a record-setting gift of \$10 million. The president's home at Wagner is named Nicolais House, and the College's business administration department was renamed the Nicolais School of Business in November 2016.

"Michael's life is a testament to the very best of what America represents in its finest moments: high achievement, self-reliance, and civic responsibility, all framed around foundational values of honor, duty, and the highest of ethical standards," said President Guarasci in his funeral eulogy. "But Michael never lived around celebrity and personal boasting. He believed achievement spoke for itself, and life was to be lived with simplicity and prudence."

Nicolais is survived by his wife of 63 years, Margaret Christie Nicolais '49 H'14, four children, and 10 grandchildren.

# Life Revolution

*Remembering the Year 1989* By Shaohua Hu

**T**he year 1989 was an eventful one in world history. The first half witnessed nationwide protests in China, my home country, concluding with the bloody crackdown in Beijing. In November, the Berlin Wall fell. On Christmas day, Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife were executed by firing squad.

Amidst these revolutionary events, I opened a new chapter in my life as well. On August 26, I landed at New York's JFK Airport to begin a doctoral program at American University (AU) in Washington, D.C. Twenty-eight years later, I am still in the U.S., an associate professor of government and politics at Wagner College. The United States has become my home.

During the first half of 1989, I was studying in China at the Hopkins Nanjing Center, a program of the Johns Hopkins University at Nanjing University. We Chinese students were taught by American professors, and we lived with American students, in rooms equipped with AC and showers — a luxurious lifestyle by Chinese standards back then.

The Nanjing Center helped me overcome several obstacles that stood between me and enrolling in an American university. First of all, the center paid Chinese students' fees for the TOEFL exam, a requirement for study in the U.S. The fee was rather high, and U.S. dollars were hard to come by. In 1989, Chinese

“The first fortune cookie of my life said, ‘You will be at the top of the world soon.’ I found it amusing and auspicious.”

GNP per capita was about \$350; my monthly salary was 150 yuan, or \$40. My American roommate helped me draft a letter to submit with my applications, saying that I could not afford the application fees but would pay them after I was accepted.

Among the five universities to which I applied, only AU provided me with a scholarship, which included free tuition and a \$9,000 annual stipend, in exchange for working 20 hours per week. The next hurdle was that for some reason, I had to contact the university. Back then, the Internet was yet to be born, and few Chinese families had phones; one could only make international calls in select post offices. I spent one third of my monthly salary for a 5-minute call.

International travel was even more difficult. One could not purchase an airplane ticket over the counter; you had to know somebody at the airlines.

Although I worked in Beijing, I had to go to Shanghai, where my sister helped me secure a United Airlines ticket. My siblings pooled their money to pay for the flight. I took with me exactly \$45, the quota for a study abroad trip at that time.

My friend Martin met me at JFK Airport. We knew each other from Peking University, where I was an undergraduate student and he, a doctoral student at Columbia University, was doing research on Premier Zhou Enlai. We took a bus and a subway to his small and hot rent-controlled apartment near Columbia. Then, we ate at a Chinese restaurant, where I received the first fortune cookie of my life. It said, “You will be at the top of the world soon.” I found it amusing and auspicious. The next night, I boarded the Greyhound bus to Washington. Miles of lights made me feel as if I were traveling in a fairyland. After staying with a friend for several days, I rented a room in a house near campus for \$350 a month.

Nothing special happened in my first semester — an indication of how easy it was for foreigners to live in America. Nevertheless, several minor things deserve mentioning. First, the fall semester was not as tough as expected. In China, American colleges were said to be places where students worked so hard that they had no time to sleep. That didn't happen to me; however, if I had burned the midnight

oil more, my grades might have been better than an A, an A minus, and a B plus. Second, people were polite and kind. I felt relieved to discover that there was no need to compliment women's appearance or to hug and kiss people. I did practice saying "How are you doing?" hundreds of times. Smoking customs surprised me. Back then, most Chinese men smoked, but few women did. Among my cohort at AU, almost all women smoked, but few men did. In addition, food was abundant. Coca-Cola was like a luxury in China, and all-you-can-eat buffets unheard of. If communism meant potatoes plus beef, as Khrushchev apocryphally said, was not America a communist paradise?

Finally, cars were ubiquitous. In 1984, when President Reagan visited China, a Chinese citizen made history by becoming the first to buy a car. During my first week in Washington, I did not know about the shuttle service between the subway station and my campus. Walking along Nebraska Avenue, I barely met a living creature on the sidewalks, and only saw cars zooming by. This was depressing for me, since even a small Chinese town teemed with people walking everywhere.

Concluding my first few months in America during my winter break, I was exposed to two different American lives. First, I went to southern Illinois to visit the parents of my American roommate from the Nanjing center, who was still in China. The town was peaceful and beautiful. A respected lawyer, Mr. Dove took me to several places, including the local jail. Seeing the only inmate combing his hair in front of a mirror, I joked that I would be glad to write my dissertation there, since he seemed to have leisure time and necessary support.

On the bus back to Washington, I was seated next to a man who looked like the Amish I had seen in the film *Witness*. He turned out to be a



Mennonite who occasionally went to China to buy kerosene lamps. To my pleasant surprise, he invited me to visit his community in Pennsylvania, and I interrupted my trip to take him up on it. A buggy took us to his farm, where he worked on his own plot, and owned a used book store. I distinctly remember the tastiness of his cage-free chicken, the frigid morning in his unheated house, and how time seemed to slow down. The next day, we attended a church service in a one-room schoolhouse. After the service, we all went to lunch in one family's home. The children were learning how to sing in German. They called all outsiders "English," and, upon request, this "Englishman" sang a Chinese children's song. It was relaxing to listen to them chat about their communities in the Midwest and Belize.

The year 1989 is the most memorable year in my life. I was thankful for the opportunity to come to America. Without it, I would have returned to Beijing. Living there in the wake of the Tiananmen tragedy would have been very hard. Seeing footage of the bloody killings brought tears to my eyes. Like many observers and participants, I had little interest in talking about it. Luckily, much has changed since then. China has transformed from a traditional and communist society into a more modern and open one, and the world has also become more peaceful and prosperous.

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## WAGNER COLLEGE

### Go Ahead

At Songfest 2017, on April 1, the Wagner College Dance Team performs "Oh, the Places You'll Go with Siri." The Dance Team is one of Wagner's official spirit teams and performed at Songfest as an exhibition only, not in the competition.



PHOTOGRAPH: LOUIS KANG