

WINTER 2021

THE LINK FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

WAGNER



Leading The Way

*Five alumni help
chart our course*

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Just six months after becoming president, Joel Martin had to steer the college through an existential crisis: the Covid pandemic.

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The Higher Education Health Analytics team was formed in the summer of 2020 to ensure a safe return to campus in the fall. The thirteen-member committee included these five alumni, who worked tirelessly to steer their alma mater through the crisis of a lifetime.

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Seahawks Fly

The Northeast Conference added field hockey as a championship sport for the 2019–20 season and selected the new Wagner College field hockey complex to host that season's championship tournament. The surface provided additional flexibility for sports like lacrosse and soccer, but no one could have predicted its early return on investment. Many fall 2020 sports were moved to spring 2021, and space will be at a premium for practice and competition.

From the President

Dear Friends,

WHAT KEYWORDS WOULD YOU select to capture your experience of 2020 and your aspirations for the year 2021? Here at Wagner College the words would include resilience, resourcefulness and renewal.

Through this pandemic year, it has been by the steadfastness of Wagner's faculty and staff, the leadership of our board and senior team, the unprecedented support of our alumni and friends and the resilience — the remarkable resilience — of our students that Wagner has managed to sustain our learning mission while earning an A++ for the transparency of our data and testing regime.

We opened safely in August, sustained a most successful fall semester, launched an experimental virtual winter session and proceeded with plans to start our spring semester in mid-February with high hopes. We have embraced new technologies, enabling our faculty to reach students in new ways that will persist beyond the pandemic; new dining arrangements and options that students appreciate; new ways to connect with alumni across the country and world, even when we cannot meet in person. We have punched above our weight, gaining national renown, while retaining the special warmth that defines the Wagner College experience.

At the same time, we are planning for significant new strategic developments to enhance our campus experience, appeal to students and strengthen our financial basis. Innovative plans for the health sciences, business, arts and civic engagement — all calibrated to contemporary challenges in our



region and nation — are advancing. The beauty and charm of our location remain unequaled. We are going to unlock its potential in the years ahead by renewing our physical plant and making the campus better known nationally and internationally. Fostering a culture of inclusion on campus, Wagner College will serve as a beacon of hope in a troubled world, much like the torch held by Lady Liberty in New York harbor.

Here at Wagner, we say “yes and.” Yes, the challenges presented by our times are real. And we are prepared to meet them. We will meet them with our crisis-proven resilience, scrappy resourcefulness, a planful approach to renewal and with ever-growing confidence and ever-deepening joy. We will emerge stronger together.

Jan and I have never been more proud to be members of the Wagner family, and we look forward to what our shared future will reveal on Grymes Hill, eager to do our part to usher it in.

We wish you and yours all the best.
Go Seahawks!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joel Martin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joel Martin
PRESIDENT

From the Editor

New Editor, Old Hand

The year 2020 was one for the history books, on so many counts.

For me, it started with a phone call from my dear friend and boss, Laura Barlament. After 13 years at Wagner, she was leaving for a new job in the Midwest.

I knew that meant I would be responsible for putting together the next issue of Wagner Magazine.

I've edited other publications, including an international membership magazine and a local weekly newspaper — but to follow in Laura's footsteps was a daunting proposition, to say the least.

At least I had the experience required.

I'm one of those guys who "bleeds green and white." I've spent a third of my adult life — since February 2007 — working in Wagner's Communications office. I've served as the college's press representative, written numerous features for the magazine, delved deeply into the college's history and edited the daily campus newsletter. In the process, I've really grown to love this community on Grymes Hill.

All of which is to say that, though editing this issue of Wagner Magazine — my first — has been a major challenge, it's also been a tremendous joy.

Like everyone, the uncertainties associated with the Covid pandemic have made me very anxious — but our two feature stories helped calm me down.

I met with our new president, Joel Martin, to explore his strategies for helping Wagner survive its biggest threat since our fiscal crisis of the late 1980s.

And I asked my colleague Claire Regan '80, former editor at the Staten Island Advance and longtime Wagner journalism professor, to write about five alumni who are part of HEHAT, the Higher Education Health Advisory Team that President Martin created to provide solid scientific and policy advice. Reading her story assured me that we're in very good hands.

Even the Class Notes section of the magazine was a joy. We made almost 200 short visits with Wagner alumni whose connections to the college span more than half of our 137-year history — and we bade farewell to 150 beloved classmates and former members of our faculty and staff who left this earth since the last issue of Wagner Magazine was published.

I hope this new issue of our alumni magazine reconnects you to our alma mater — and I invite you to share with me and your fellow alums any news you may have about yourself for the next issue of Wagner Magazine!

Lee Manchester
EDITOR, WAGNER MAGAZINE

PUBLISHER

Jonathan Harkel

EDITOR

Lee Manchester

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Black Bear Design

WRITERS

Jonathan Harkel

Lee Manchester

Claire Regan '80

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Vinnie Amessé

Alegria Cloma '22

Deborah Feingold

Jonathan Harkel

Louis Kang

Seth Jolles '22

Lee Manchester

Anna Mulé

Elliott O'Donovan

ILLUSTRATOR

Annick Poirier / Mendola Artists

INSERT DESIGN

Cass Lang

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS

Cass Lang

Max Rottenecker

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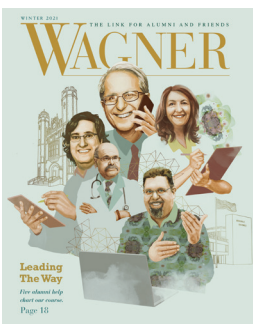
One Campus Road

Staten Island, NY 10301

718-420-4504

lee.manchester@wagner.edu

wagner.edu/wagnermagazine



On the Cover

These are just five of the alumni who helped steer Wagner through some of its darkest, most difficult days last year. Learn more about these members of the Higher Education Health Advisory Team in our cover story, page 18.

ILLUSTRATION: ANNICK POIRIER

From Our Readers



LAURA BARLAMENT JOINED the Wagner College family back in 2007, recruited from the University of the South by her old boss, Vice President Joe Romano, as publications director for our new Office of Communications and Marketing. With the support of her Communications colleagues, including a series of superb graphic designers,

Laura created the Wagner Magazine we all know and love. Thirteen years after coming to Grymes Hill, Laura announced last January that it was time for her to try something new, becoming the communications chief for Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. As we prepared to publish the first issue of the magazine in many years without Laura at the helm, we asked members of our advisory board to share a few words about her editorial leadership.

From trustee Lisa Bennett '85:

IT'S BEEN A PRIVILEGE to work with Laura and to watch her develop the Wagner Magazine into something of which all our alumni, friends and family can be proud. Laura took our simple Wagner alumni newsletter and turned it into what we see today: a respected communication piece with deeper, richer, more thoughtful content. It is a magazine that extends beyond the alumni scope to capture the full picture of Wagner College in its people and its history.

Laura will certainly be missed. She has brought Wagner, its people and its rich history to life in the pages of Wagner Magazine.

She has made a difference for the college — and for those who love it. Wagner Magazine is Laura's legacy, and I thank her for that.

From Andy Needle, Associate Professor, Visual Arts:

I REMEMBER HOW well-attended and emotional Laura Barlament's farewell celebration was. It took place in the Faculty Dining Room, and so many members of the Wagner community spoke of the joy of working with her.

Laura made Wagner Magazine into something really special. No college magazine that I have

seen, no matter how well-funded the school, ever surpassed her creation. The design was beautiful and the articles were captivating. Laura made Wagner history come alive.

From trustee Lorraine McNeill-Popper '78:

UNDER THE LEADERSHIP of Laura Barlament, Wagner Magazine became more than a publication. It became a means of connecting with the Wagner community and learning about many of the achievements and success stories of our fellow Wagner alumni. I particularly remember her phenomenal story on the Wagner College Choir, "We Found Our Voice," bringing to life the history of this Seahawk institution.



Whether it was reunion weekend, commencement or homecoming, you would always see Laura there, capturing the moment to create her next story to be preserved in Wagner Magazine, allowing us to revisit and relive that moment again and again.

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.

Lee Manchester, Editor
Office of Communications, Wagner College
One Campus Road, Staten Island, NY 10301
lee.manchester@wagner.edu



Upon the Hill

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

Anchors Aweigh

A Wagner icon marks our defining moments

SINCE 1963, THE ANCHOR has been ... well, an anchor of tradition on our campus.

Any organization could paint it with its colors and its message — provided they camped around it, overnight, to make sure nobody painted over their work.

The Anchor tradition persisted throughout this extraordinary year.

In April, after the campus had become a ghost town, staff member and Guild Hall resident Maggie Cross painted the Anchor Wagner green with a plaintive phrase from our alma mater.

For August’s freshman move-in, it was painted in the college colors with our reopening motto, “Emerge Stronger.”

And in September, students painted the Anchor for a deeply moving tribute to the life of Breonna Taylor.

The Anchor abides as an emblem, throughout the years, of Wagner’s heart.



**Quote
Unquote**

I chose to become a PA ... [to] be an advocate for those who may not have a voice.



Sara Naeem '22,

Physician Assistant student,
delegate to American
Academy of PAs, in the
Staten Island Advance

And Now a Toast ...

Remote cheers for the Class of 2020

IN NORMAL TIMES, last May 15 would have been a day of celebration on the Sutter Oval — but these are anything but normal times.

Leave it to Wagner to bring our community together for a virtual toast to our graduates' achievements, from across Staten Island and the breadth of the country!

"This is not where we wanted to be," Jan Martin acknowledged in opening the 2020 Virtual Toast, "but we have a message of hope and solidarity that we want to share, and nothing can stop that!"

"You chose this family four years ago," said President Joel Martin. "You are now forever a part of it."

"You have overcome obstacles that no Wagner class has had to surmount," said Provost Jeffrey Kraus. "None of you signed up for this — but you have succeeded. You exemplify what we mean by 'Wagner Strong.'"



Watch the video again at <https://wagner.edu/toast>



Kerri Alexander '15



Rebecca Kelly G '07



Olatunde Ogunlana '10 M'11

Essential Work

Wagner's first annual recognition of Juneteenth

JUNETEENTH COMMEMORATES JUNE 19, 1865, the day enslaved Black Americans in Texas were informed of their liberation, well after the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863.

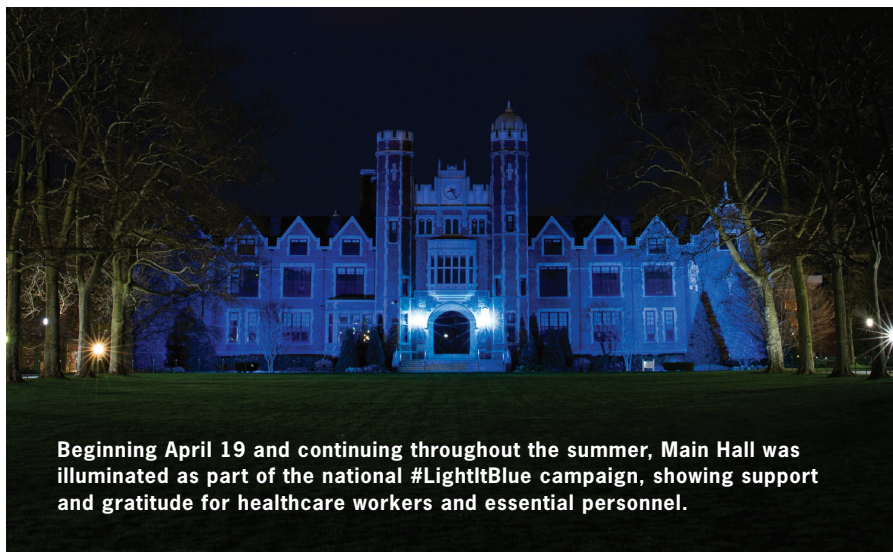
President Martin wrote to the campus community saying, "This year it will be observed with respect and action at Wagner College. ... [We] will suspend all normal work on June 19, with the exception of essential campus operations, so that all staff and faculty can focus on race and injustice, to take time to reflect, connect, mend and engage with this subject in an intentional and focused way."

Kerri Alexander '15, Rebecca Kelly G '07 and Olatunde Ogunlana '10 M'11 joined Wagner leadership to host a live panel discussion.

"I am pleased to share that Juneteenth will be recognized annually by the college as a day for our entire community to engage in learning and listening as well as communing and recharging. We will put in the work to improve ourselves and our beloved Wagner," said President Martin.



Re-watch the panel and learn more at wagner.edu/juneteenth



Beginning April 19 and continuing throughout the summer, Main Hall was illuminated as part of the national #LightItBlue campaign, showing support and gratitude for healthcare workers and essential personnel.



Everyone Tested, Everyone Safe

Weekly Covid tests ensured a safe return to campus

EVERY WEEK THIS FALL, everyone on campus was given a coronavirus test at this station at the Spiro Sports Center. It was all beautifully choreographed. You went online, picked your appointment, and went to the gym. Once you were in line, the whole process — from check-in to nose swab — was finished in 5 minutes. Results usually came back within 2 days. Those 15,000 tests were crucial in keeping Wagner safe through the Fall 2020 semester. The program will ramp up again when the campus returns to life in February.

Bragging Rights

Wagner continues to rank among the best

SOCIAL MEDIA BUZZED with accolades as Wagner was recognized by major publications.

Wagner College was named one of America's best colleges in the Princeton Review's new "Best 386 Colleges" guide, with special kudos

to the Wagner College Theatre program, which was ranked third in the nation.

The U.S. News & World Report's 2021 Best Colleges guide ranked Wagner among the top 15 percent of northern regional universities and placed us among their "Best Value Schools" for the third year in a row.

Washington Monthly Magazine ranked Wagner among the top

50 master's universities in the country. The rankings evaluate American colleges and universities "based on their contribution to the public good in three broad categories: social mobility, research and promoting public service," according to the magazine's editors.

Follow @wagnercollege on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter to share Wagner's success and post your own comments.

Wagner College
August 18, 2020

One of America's best! (But you know that!)

WAGNER.EDU
Wagner College named one of America's best in new Princeton Review guide - Newsroom

1.7K 78 Comments 234 Shares

Kimmie Ann Amazing school ❤️

Lisa Tjornhom Henriksen Class of '85! Proud to be a Seahawk!

Robert Busan We've known this forever.. happy the school continues to be given its due! 🙌🙌

Top Fan

Wagner College
September 14, 2020

We're ranked in the top tier OF THE TOP TIER of the top college ranking! Congrats, everyone!

WAGNER.EDU
Wagner College ranked in top 15% by U.S. News - Newsroom
Wagner also called a 'Best Value' among northern regional universities in...

1.4K 43 Comments 106 Shares

Chuck Cascio Well-deserved! Going to Wagner College was one of the best decisions of my life.

Janet Merkel Was great in '57 and now is GREATER 🙌

Patricia Karin Proud to be a member of 1968!

Wagner College
16,367 followers

Wagner College was named one of America's best colleges in the Princeton Review's new "Best 386 Colleges" guide.

Read the full story: <https://lnkd.in/eMTPACK>

Wagner College named one of America's best in new Princeton Review guide
wagner.edu • 1 min read

350+ 21 comments

George Bailey • 2nd
Senior Strategic Account Manager - Global Strategic Accounts at Aptipro
Other than marrying my wife and my kids, best 4 years of my life...

Karen L. H. • 3rd+
Full-time Companion Animal Veterinarian at Sunshine Animal Hospital
Very proud! Class of '77! Instrumental in helping me become the person I am today!

WHAT'S OUT *inside*

WHEN WAGNER COLLEGE announced plans for an on-campus semester last fall, one of the big questions was, “Will we be able to stage live theater performances?”

“We were thinking about that even before plans were announced,” said Phill Hickox, who heads the Wagner College Theatre program’s design, technology and management track.

With indoor gatherings restricted, the WCT decided to move its 2020-21 season outdoors — which meant they would have to build an outdoor stage. From scratch.

The stage, which stands 3 feet off the ground in the parking lot adjacent to Main Hall, measures 16 by 20 feet.

The original plan for a sound system, Hickox told us, was a boombox on the front of the stage.

But then a group of recent alumnae enrolled in the college’s new Presidential Fellowship program stepped in.

Conchetta Aronowitz ’20, herself one of Hickox’s DTM graduates, took charge of building an outdoor sound system from equipment the college already had on hand.

“For me, there’s not a lot of theater happening,” Aronowitz said, “so this was awesome.”

Three more Presidential Fellows pitched in — Emmy Steele, Emily Lagace and Ruth Kupperberg, all 2020 grads — as well as the students currently enrolled in Hickox’s DTM program. Adjunct professor Victoria Neal, a scene and lighting designer, helped finish the job.

“They all did yeoman’s work at something we never do: adapting indoor equipment for outdoor use,” Hickox said.



From left to right: Kirsten Kaiser ’21, Brianna Cielo ’21
Photographs: Seth Jolles



“The Other Side of the Rainbow” (Sept. 18), “A Doll’s House, Part 2” (Nov. 4) and “The Queen’s Men” (Nov. 12) were performed by students on an outdoor stage behind Main Hall.



From top left: Gracie Klebine '23, Aaron Frongillo '21; Tommy Folderaur '23, David Leon '21; Christiana Alicante '21, Ali Nitowski '21, Zac Sloan, '21, Emma Alteri '21; Katrice Jackson '23; Alex Moss '24, Tommy Folderaur '23, Katrice Jackson '23, Sammy O'Neill '23, Paul Hogan '24, Matt Storti '23



Confronting



g a

JUST SIX MONTHS
AFTER BECOMING
PRESIDENT, JOEL MARTIN
HAD TO STEER THE
COLLEGE THROUGH AN
EXISTENTIAL THREAT:

The Covid Pandemic **CRISIS**

By **LEE MANCHESTER**

On July 1, 2019, Joel W. Martin took office as the 19th president of Wagner College. He and his wife, Jan, spent that summer getting to know the campus, visiting every building, basement and rooftop as they prepared for Move-In Day that August.

Classes began; fall finals ended; the winter holidays came and went ... and, just as the spring semester began, troubling news reached Grymes Hill of a new virus that would devastate the world and alter the trajectory of Joel Martin's presidency.

O n November 9,

as the fall semester drew to a close, we sat down with President Martin to look back at how Wagner College had responded to Covid-19 — and how we hoped to move forward in the new year.



President Martin leads a meeting while working from home.

WAGNER MAGAZINE: In January 2020, after you had been on the job as president for just six months, we started hearing about a new virus sweeping through a major Chinese city. What were your thoughts then about that news and the impact it might have on the college?

JOEL MARTIN: I don't know that I'm a worrier by nature, but I was early to worry about the coronavirus. One Sunday morning I woke up and said, "We need to get a task force going; we need to be thinking about it, we need to be monitoring it."

Even when that task force convened, in January, people thought, "Well, it's just like the flu. We don't need to be so worried about it." But the situation evolved — and devolved — very rapidly, especially in New York City.

I asked Jeffrey Kraus, the provost, to ask the faculty to think ahead and plan to go online — theoretically, possibly, on a slim chance that we would need to do so after spring break. We asked them to submit their plans, to the best of my memory, around March 2 — and it turned out it was March 10 that I had to make the decision to say we're going home before spring break [which began on Saturday, March 14]. [Classes were cancelled from Wednesday, March 11 for the remainder of the week.] That little bit of lead time helped our faculty get ready.

We were able to get everybody out safely without any Covid-19 cases on campus, and that was a godsend. We were able to take care of our international students; we also were able to prevent our own students and faculty from going abroad. Those were not easy decisions, and we had to make them without a lot of information. Looking back, we made the right decisions.

And then we entered into this strange hibernation/hiatus mode for March — but I was already thinking about reopening in the fall, and I drafted a proposal, a plan, that would outline the conditions under which we could do that.

I think the thing that helped us prepare for reopening was that we didn't wait for anybody to tell us what to do or how to do it. We said, "Okay, imagine that the world is going to get to the point where it will be safe to reopen. What do we need to do now to be ready? If we wait, we won't be able to do all the work we have to do."

By April, we were actively planning through all these things: physical plant rehabs, dining options, academic delivery. Then on May 27, we held a big, virtual retreat with over 45 people. We went through the whole thing and involved so many different people, and it was just an extraordinary, holistic reinvention of the campus.

In particular, nobody told us that we had to administer a coronavirus test, not even the CDC [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] — we had to invent a testing protocol on our own.

WM: I would like you to talk a little bit about that testing protocol because, as I recall, you were working with one group on what appeared to be a very, very strong testing program and then, almost at the last minute, you got wind of something else that would work much better for us. Can you talk about that?

JM: I was reading all the pre-print research on the spread of the virus, and there were two really, really important reports that I got a hold of. One was from Cornell, and it was one of the earliest and best models of how the virus can spread, and it projected the number of cases that could occur given certain testing cadences and regimes.

And then there was a Yale model that came a little bit later. It had almost like an app or calculator in it; you could adjust



“...nobody told us that we had to administer a coronavirus test, not even the CDC — we had to invent a testing protocol on our own.”

your transmission rates, your number of people, the ambient infectivity of the area, et cetera.

I was also fortunate that, any time I had a question, I could go to Dr. [Chris] Corbo.¹ He helped interpret a lot of this.

I had read an article in the New York Times about a saliva-based test at Rutgers and thought, “Well, that looks very promising.” Fortunately, we had a connection through one of our board members to somebody who was connected to that test, and I was able to get a direct conversation with the inventor. We quickly drafted a contract to use the test on our campus, and we were just about to sign it when we learned from the CICU² about another test that had been developed by

the Broad Institute,³ based at MIT and Harvard.

A bunch of us hopped on a webinar presented by the Broad. I’ll never forget seeing the scientist who runs it, and then all the people who work with him, talk about this. They described how the whole system worked,

from administering the test, to getting it to their lab in Cambridge, [Mass.], to the supply chain ... they had it all worked out. And they emphasized that testing needed to be done at least weekly. I took that to the bank.

I was overjoyed. I had finally received testing guidance from somebody who knew what he was talking about. Couple that with the Yale model and the Cornell model, and you could say, “If we can run weekly testing, we can make it safer. We will never make it perfectly safe, but if you don’t go below weekly ... ”

The Broad [Institute] deserves the Presidential Medal of Freedom for what they did; it was almost too good to be true. This was a philanthropically driven hero

President Martin and Jan Martin offer an enthusiastic, socially distant welcome to Cynthia Sheehy '24, the first new student to move in on Aug. 18, 2020. Not even Covid-19 could stop this annual Move-In Day tradition.

1. Chris Corbo is a Wagner double alumnus, earning his bachelor’s degree in biology 2006 and his master’s in microbiology in 2008. He is also an associate professor and chairman of our Department of Biological Sciences. He is one of the people profiled later in this issue of Wagner Magazine. Corbo was recently named assistant provost for a two-year project to build Wagner’s health science programs.

2. The Council of Independent Colleges and Universities, a consortium of private colleges in New York State to which Wagner has belonged for some years.

3. See the Wall Street Journal’s Oct. 16 article about the Broad Institute at <https://wagner.edu/newsroom/wsj-broad-institute-coronavirus-testing/>



President Martin and Mark Harmon-Vaught, director of the president's office, meet on campus while observing social-distancing safety guidelines.

coming to the rescue. Just think about the impact of that step that they took: Because of them, more than 100 colleges and universities serving tens of thousands of students were able to open this fall. Without the Broad test, only the one-percent schools could have afforded to have run an open campus, you know, because testing is a key pillar of opening a campus under these circumstances. We should get some credit for being smart enough to recognize it and grab it, taking hold of it and not letting it slip away. But they're the ones who made it possible.

We took this very seriously, and we considered everything critically before the decision was made. I asked my team to raise their doubts, using the skills we've developed from the liberal arts to question what we're doing. I wanted this to be a decision that had been tested and proved, based on science, so that's what we did ... but, ultimately, when it came down to it, I had to make the decision, and then communicate that honestly to people.

We never said there wouldn't be [coronavirus infection] cases; we always said there would be cases on campus, that there were risks, and we described every step we were taking. We met all the CDC guidelines, and we said so — but what we didn't say was that we also exceeded them.

I knew that we had prepared the campus even better than we were claiming, you know, and that gave me confidence that we could do this.

And, of course, once you got here, you saw the students on campus and you saw how happy they were and how connected they were, and then we started to see that it actually was working really well.

They say that every success has a thousand fathers and mothers — and you know what, it's the truth. We all did this together, and we should be very proud of it. But let's don't kid ourselves: It wasn't easy, and I don't second-guess anybody who made a different decision on another campus. I know that wasn't easy for anyone.

WM: How are the college's finances doing during the coronavirus crisis?

JM: It's a huge challenge to every institution, public and private, not just us. We have had to tighten our belts, as you know. We had to furlough folks in the spring; fortunately, they were supported to a large extent by the federal government's intervention programs. We had to cut the college's contribution to our employee retirement accounts for one year. But the good news is that, through our careful management and our success this semester, we weathered the crisis with resilience.

WAGNER

COVID TIMELINE

Just this last week we learned that Fitch's bond rating agency reaffirmed our credit-worthiness standing; they haven't altered our bond rating, and that's a significant statement. This would be a year when you expect an institution like ours to be downgraded, so that's great news.

When we designed our reopening plan back in May, June, the goal was to identify ways that we could work on this current challenge, this current crisis, but also prepare us for being stronger afterward by making physical-plant investments that are not one-off, one-time things, but things that are useful to us in the long run. We call the plan "Emerging Stronger," and we've made a lot of important investments in the campus already. You don't do that if you're in crisis, financially, to the point where you're worried about the stability of the institution. That should reassure people.

At our next board meeting we're going to be talking about the next phase of investment in the physical plant. We seriously want to build up Wagner's strategic strengths so that we can be more competitive, generate a better reputation and bring in more revenue, because we have a lot of needs. We'd love to pay people more, have better benefits, better support for our students, our faculty and staff. To do that, you have to generate revenue.

We are very optimistic that we're not only weathering this challenge well but will also emerge stronger from it.

WM: What do you expect for the spring semester?

“We've made a lot of important investments in the campus already. You don't do that if you're in crisis. ... That should reassure people.”

JM: So far, we've been expecting that our best approximation would be sort of status quo — in other words, similar to what we've seen in the fall. It could be worse, if the virus conditions worsen in New York City, as they're doing now; that may cause us to change our plan. On the other hand, it could be better, because this virus could wane or the vaccine could come along sooner. That's a good reason why, for now, the placeholder is to say that we expect the status quo next spring, and we can pivot one way or the other as we need to.

I also think that I'm more optimistic today than I have been in some time, partly because of the news of the vaccines. It could really be that we get back to campus more fully, and faster, than we've even imagined. That gives me hope for, obviously, the end of the academic year in May, and graduation, and everything else. ■

Dec. 31, 2019 Outbreak of novel coronavirus originating in Wuhan, China, first reported to WHO.

Jan. 26, 2020 Five coronavirus infections documented in U.S., all of whom had travelled from Wuhan. President Martin calls first meeting of Wagner's new coronavirus monitoring task force for the next day.

Jan. 30 WHO declares coronavirus outbreak a global health emergency.

Feb. 11 WHO gives a name to the disease caused by the novel coronavirus: CoViD-19, short for coronavirus disease 2019.

March 2 Faculty asked to develop contingency plans in case classes have to go online.

March 11 WHO declares Covid-19 a global pandemic. Wagner cancels classes for remainder of the week.

March 14 First day of Spring Break (through Sunday, March 22).

March 15 Announcement that residence halls will close in two days, on March 17. All classes to be conducted online for the rest of the spring semester.

May 27 Large online retreat (45 participants) held to develop reopening plan for August.

Aug. 24 First day of classes, Fall 2020 semester.

Nov. 9 Wagner Magazine interviews President Martin for this article. Pfizer announces its vaccine is more than 90% effective. (Encouraging news of two more vaccines follows over next two weeks.)

Nov. 11 Because of an increase in positive tests on Staten Island, New York State designates entire island a "yellow zone."

Nov. 12 College announces that most on-campus classes for remainder of semester (through following week) will go online.

Nov. 21 Classes end; dorms close until February.

Nov. 26 Thanksgiving Day.

Dec. 5 Online finals end; Fall 2020 semester ends.

Feb. 15 Classes scheduled to begin for Spring 2021 semester.



Beyond Cookies & Conversation

*Bringing people together on Wagner's
socially distanced campus*



Jan Martin, a lifelong educator, has been a part of the Wagner

College community for a year and a half, including some of the most difficult months the college has ever faced.

SHE'S FOCUSED ON MAKING SOCIAL and emotional connections between the Martin household and the campus community, especially students.

One initiative Jan started during her first year involved baking hundreds of beautiful, individually wrapped cookies for every incoming freshman, both residential and commuter. She continued that this fall, extending it to the socially distanced welcome event staged on the Sutter Oval by the Wagner College Theatre program for its incoming students.

"I remember this one group of freshmen who came up ... they'd been on campus just six days," Jan said. "I asked how things were going and this girl burst out, 'This has been the best six days of my life!'"

"We went to any campus event we knew about, every theater production, and I would always bake for that. For the senior cabaret, 'The Other Side of the Rainbow' — I made cupcakes with little rainbows, just trying to celebrate what the kids were doing and participate on that level."

She could not continue this fall with the classroom visits she began in 2019 — but, with a little ingenuity, she could spend time with students in other ways that were safe for everyone involved.



"That's when I came up with the 'Walk & Talk with Jan & Elvis' idea," she said.

The idea was to invite students to go on walks with Jan and her friendly, furry canine pal, Elvis, to nearby Silver Lake Park and the Staten Island Zoo.

Several members of the new Presidential Fellows program came along with her and half a dozen undergraduates. The Fellows are recent Wagner graduates taking part in a brand-new one-year campus residency, working with academic departments and mentoring undergrads.

"Setting up a mentorship is really hard," Jan said, "but with the Fellows coming along on the 'Walk & Talks,' the students were really on fire to get the inside scoop from them on campus life, studies, internships, career advice, everything."

Jan had a very different group in mind for a second outreach activity, "Books Upon the Hill."

"I knew that when the campus closed down in March, it was going to be traumatic for students," she said, "but they were going to maintain their connections with their professors and one another through their virtual classes.

"Staff, however, were going to feel the most isolated. They were home alone, trying to do their jobs but isolated from the colleagues with whom they had been so close every day.

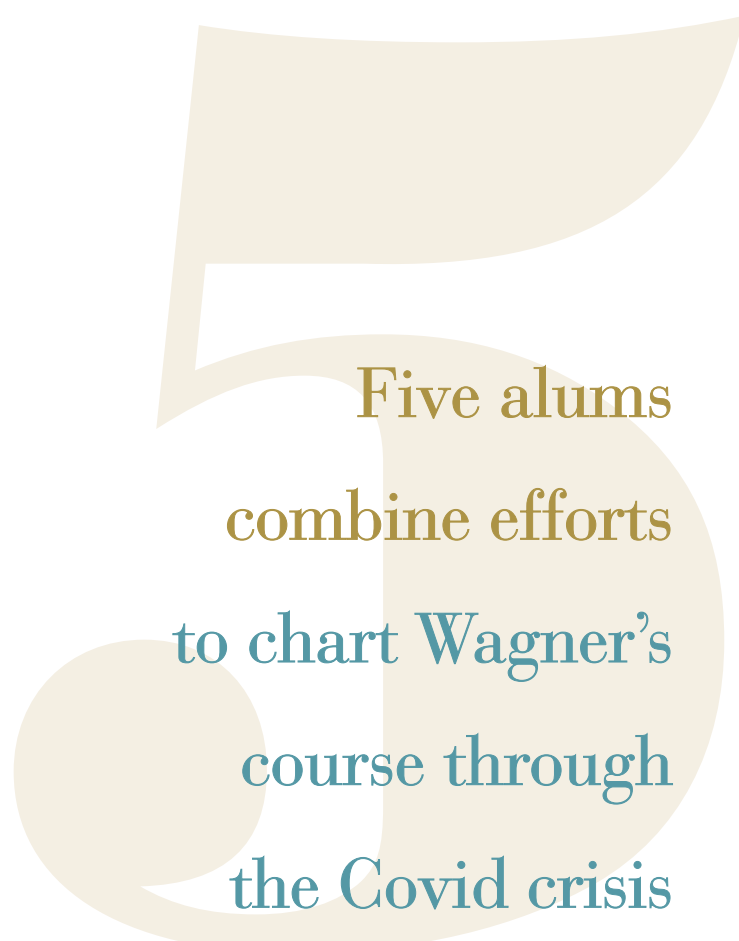
"So I decided to start up a virtual book club just for staff," Jan said.

The first book they read was about a young California couple who quit their jobs and set sail for the South Pacific. Reading it together took the group away for a few hours from New York, the epicenter of the pandemic at that time.

"As a group, we read eight books over the course of the pandemic," Jan said. "The group evolved; some left, others joined, but it was very free — come when you want, when you can.

"Starting a book club had not been on my radar, but when the pandemic hit I thought, what can I do to draw connections for people who are feeling isolated, or just need something that will take them away?"

"We really got to know each other well," she said, "and we really made friendships." ■



Five alums
combine efforts
to chart Wagner's
course through
the Covid crisis

BY CLAIRE M. REGAN '80

Leading The Way

WAGNER COLLEGE HAS WEATHERED a host of tragedies and challenges through its 138-year history. Two World Wars and Vietnam. Terrorist attacks across the harbor. Depressions and recessions. Hurricanes and blizzards.

But none has been anything quite like the coronavirus pandemic. A merciless killer, Covid-19 has been sneaking up and snuffing out lives — approaching 300,000 in the U.S. at this writing — since it first became part of our vernacular in February 2020.

As Wagner alumni, we cherish memories of four years on Grymes Hill filled with camaraderie, friendship and fun. The campus was our safe haven, a cocoon of sorts, where we could let our guard down as we learned and grew.

The coronavirus all but snuffed out that innocence at many colleges across the country where surges in the infection rate sickened students or forced them home.

But at Wagner, the story has played out differently.

Thanks to the steady leadership of President Joel W. Martin, his senior staff, and members of the Higher Education Health Analytics Team he assembled, the college offered in-person learning and maintained a remarkable level of normalcy — and safety — for the fall 2020 semester.

The Dance Project presented “A Celebration of Socially Distanced Dance” on the steps of Main Hall. Masked theater majors performed Shakespeare on an outdoor stage. Chef Michael served funnel cakes and churros in the Union Atrium as a Wagner Wednesday dessert treat.

Science, transparency, stringent protocols and rigorous testing made it all possible. Wagner students, faculty and staff made it happen.

“Wagner has always been a caring community,” President Martin wrote in an editorial published by the Staten Island Advance. “When the pandemic tested us, we came together and brought out the best in each other.”

The profiles in this section salute five Wagner alumni whose extraordinary efforts and expertise kept students safe and made memories possible.

The Scientific Method

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT a scientist that brings peace to a pandemic.

Amid screaming headlines and dire declarations of “surges” and “spikes,” a scientist uses data to stay focused, informed and even optimistic.

Meet Christopher Corbo '06 M'08, associate professor and chair of Wagner's Biological Sciences Department — and, yes, a scientist, specializing in immunology, bacterial pathogenesis and electron microscopy.

Corbo, who earned his bachelor's degree in biology and master's degree in microbiology from Wagner, has been invaluable as an adviser to President Martin, especially during selection of the Broad Institute Covid-19 testing system.

“Testing is the factor that drives down the infection rate,” Corbo explains. Coupled with a social contract calling for respect and consideration for the health and safety of all community members, a virus can be held at bay.

“And that is inherently Wagner,” he says. “Everyone cares for everyone else here.”

“We have one of the most rigorous Covid testing programs of any university in the country,” adds Corbo, who co-chairs the Higher Education Health Analytics Team. “With the extraordinary cooperation of our students, faculty and staff, that testing program has helped us achieve a very, very low rate of infection.”

Corbo also worked closely with Provost Jeffrey Kraus and Associate Provost Nick Richardson



to establish best practices for online instruction, and with Mark Harmon-Vaught, director of the president's office, to set up the college's Covid reporting dashboard.

Updated daily with information from the college's testing regimen and about campus quarantine and isolation, the dashboard earned an A-double-plus rating for transparency and completeness.

Corbo used hypothetical data to chart how the virus could spread on campus. The information helped senior staff prepare for every possible scenario as part of a reopening plan.

Science has been Corbo's passion for as long as he can remember. A lifelong Staten Islander, he worked as a zookeeper at the Staten Island Zoo and originally planned to pursue conservation science. But at Wagner, he switched to biology and worked at the Institute for Basic Research. His doctorate in molecular neuroscience is from the City University of New York.

As a scientist, he understands how information can alleviate fear, and he hopes to transition his Covid expertise into a special-topics course for the Biological Sciences Department.

In a pandemic, even scientists can be caught off-guard, Corbo confides.

“I remember initially not being really concerned about the coronavirus,” he says. “I remember receiving an email from [Provost] Jeffrey Kraus asking faculty:

‘If you had to go completely remote, how would you do it?’ I didn’t put a ton of thought into it because I never thought we’d be in that situation.”

As a scientist, he points to the past to explain the present with a tinge of optimism.

“This is not the first outbreak we’ve heard about. We’ve lived through SARS, we’ve lived through MERS. And so here’s the next iteration of that. It’s going to go the way it always goes, as some form of an outbreak that always gets contained.”



From On-Campus to Online

WHEN THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC SHUT DOWN the campus last March, the immediate concern of Frank Cafasso '00 M'02 was for the faculty, who had to abruptly transition from teaching in person to teaching remotely.

“Our approach for spring was to do whatever we had to do to get classes running,” Wagner’s chief information officer explains. “We wanted to let faculty use whatever technology they were comfortable with.”

A good listener who understands that technology can be intimidating, Cafasso supported professors with ongoing training sessions focusing on Zoom video conferencing and Moodle, the course management system.

He praised Christina Dempsey, training coordinator on his 16-member I.T. team, for “raising the comfort level” among faculty during summer workshops.

For Cafasso, preparation began even before the pandemic became a global crisis. In January 2020, he joined other Wagner administrators on an emergency response team.

“We knew there was a possibility of it [Covid-19] affecting us and we knew we needed to start making preparations,” he recalls. “You can’t over prepare. You come up with a plan and hope you’ll never have to use it.”

One of Cafasso’s biggest challenges was equipping classrooms for a fall semester of hybrid learning, which blends in-person teaching with video instruction for students who are remote. Cameras were installed in every classroom and the wireless network was upgraded, bringing the college’s investment in campus-wide enhancements into the six-figure range.

“Technology is expensive to deploy and maintain,” he points out.

And with schools across the country upgrading in the same way at the same time, supplies were in demand and didn’t arrive on campus until four days before the start of the fall semester.

“It was non-stop intensity from March to mid-September,” Cafasso says. “We did a lot of heavy lifting, a lot of work on the infrastructure, to get it going.”

As a member of the Higher Education Health Analytics Team, he kept informed about pandemic initiatives in the government and healthcare sectors, and learned how Staten Island’s two other colleges were handling the crisis.

Cafasso, who earned a bachelor’s degree from Wagner in computer science and a master’s in business administration two years later, says his longtime familiarity with the campus helped him get the job done faster. So did a close relationship with faculty and staff that only an alumnus can appreciate.

The C.I.O. is hoping fall semester successes bode well for the spring.

“Overall, I’m very pleased how everything turned out for fall,” he summarizes. “There were very few issues.”



The Path to Health and Wellness

FOR SEASONED NURSE KATHLEEN OBERFELDT M'98 D'17, it wasn't the spread of a deadly virus that first caught her attention. It was the global response to it.

After all, with more than 36 years in the field, she has handled life-threatening healthcare crises wrought by Ebola, H1N1 and SARS.

"I personally couldn't figure out why it was so bad," she says, recalling the first confusing weeks of the pandemic when Covid-19 was turning the world upside down while medical experts struggled to understand its origin, transmission and morbidity.

As dean of the Center for Health and Wellness, Oberfeldt's first concern was for Wagner students and their safety. She worried especially about residential students, and went to work with the Office of Residential Education to establish a plan for their safe return home as the campus shut down in mid-March.

"I couldn't imagine dorms filled with ill students," she recalls with alarm.

That was just the beginning for Oberfeldt, who in her combined role as first responder, front-line worker and campus caregiver helped shepherd the college through the toughest months of the pandemic.

As a key adviser to President Martin, she worked tirelessly through spring and summer on the college's plan to safely bring students, faculty and staff back to campus for the fall semester.

"As soon as we started closing everything down, we started making plans to reopen," she says.

When it became clear that testing was the key to a viable reopening, Oberfeldt assisted President Martin as he researched options.

"It was down to the wire when we learned about the Broad (pronounced "Brode") Institute," she recalls. "We jumped on that bandwagon. I was very happy Wagner invested in good testing; it gave us a solid plan to reopen."

Located in Cambridge, Mass., the Broad Institute is a biomedical research center operated by M.I.T. and Harvard University. Its novel automation system for Covid-19 testing has been adopted by Wagner and more than 100 other colleges and universities in the northeast.

During the summer, Oberfeldt's role broadened even further when she was appointed by President Martin to co-chair of the Higher Education Health Advisory Team. She appreciated collaborating with Staten Island health and government officials as well as administrators from the College of Staten Island and the Grymes Hill campus of St. John's University.

"It was a coordinated effort to gather and disseminate information," she explains.

For the safe return of students, faculty and staff in the fall, Oberfeldt joined the campus-wide effort in making sure all components of Wagner's reopening plan were in place.

RN Nursing Solutions was hired to assist Health and Wellness staff at the Covid-19 testing site set up outside Spiro Sports Center. Through the fall semester, more than 2,300 tests would be administered at the site each week.

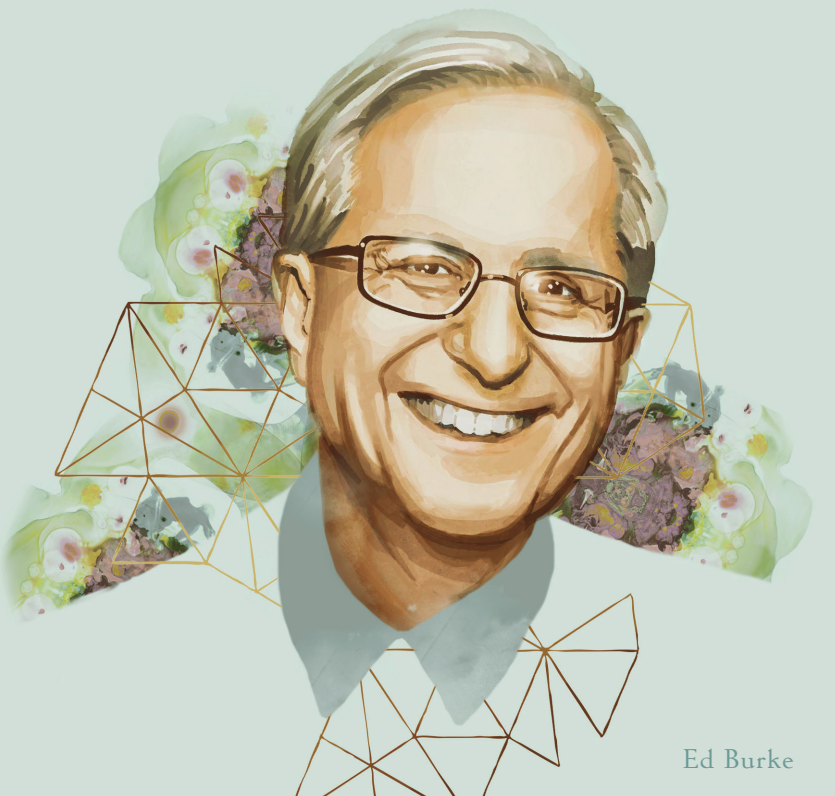
Oberfeldt also made sure nursing care was available on campus 24/7 to address the needs of students quarantined in Guild Hall and provide psychological and medical support for the whole student body.

A native Staten Islander now living in Keyport, N.J., Oberfeldt holds a master's degree and a doctorate in nursing from Wagner. Andrew, her high school sweetheart and husband of 38 years, also holds a master's degree from Wagner, and two of their three children are Wagner alumni.

She is pleased that hard work and planning through the pandemic has paid off.

"We didn't see the numbers [of infections] we thought we'd see," she reports. "Students were grateful and felt safe. We wanted them to know they weren't alone through all of this."

Even with a vaccine on the horizon and campus protocols in place, Oberfeldt knows there's no time to



let her guard down with another semester just around the corner.

“Thank God everybody has done well,” she says. “We’re blessed to have come through this as well as we did.”

Our Friend In Borough Hall

AFTER WORKING IN NEW YORK CITY GOVERNMENT for more than three decades, Ed Burke ’80 has a lot of connections. He can slice through the bureaucracy of any city agency with a simple phone call; this deputy borough president for Staten Island always prefers talking to emailing.

So when Wagner President Joel W. Martin assembled the Higher Education Health Analytics Team in the spring, Burke became a valuable resource in accessing information from the city.

He helped Wagner, St. John’s University and the College of Staten Island collect data from the city Department of Health as they charted plans for testing, tracing and reopening.

“My job was to make sure the colleges had access to city agencies,” summarizes Burke, who appreciated the “vivid camaraderie” displayed during biweekly HEHAT meetings through the summer and fall.

“The colleges immediately saw the benefit of sharing information,” he says. “There was a coalescing of ideas. In times of crisis, you realize you have to work together.”

He was proud to see Wagner keep the virus at bay through the fall semester.

“As an alum, I understood why so many students wanted to be on campus” in spite of the pandemic, Burke says. “It’s a family atmosphere, and therefore worthy of that extra effort. The students followed guidelines and proved Wagner’s approach was effective.”

At Wagner, Burke majored in English and served as editor of the Wagnerian student newspaper. The journalism experience proved handy when he started his career in public relations and communication at the former St. Vincent’s Medical Center and with former Congressman Guy V. Molinari.

Burke, who also holds a master’s degree in public administration from Baruch College, has served as Staten Island’s deputy borough president since 2006 when he was appointed by then-Borough President James P. Molinaro.

Current Borough President James Oddo took notice of HEHAT’s good work and shared praise on Twitter. “We’re watching what’s happening at colleges across the country and it makes me that much more appreciative of our collaboration with our three fine S.I. institutions @WagnerCollege @csinews @stjohnssi, and the work of the Health Analytics Team to keep our students as safe as possible.”

The borough president added in another Tweet: “This is a proactive, data-driven approach for dealing with a pandemic for which there is no playbook.”

Burke is grateful his boss hosted a Webex conversation with the three colleges early on. “It got the ball rolling on this collaboration,” he says.

For Burke, serving as a member of HEHAT has been one more way to stay close to his alma mater and help it through a once-in-a-lifetime challenge.

“I applaud Joel [Martin] for having the vision, for seeing the need to call together this task force,” Burke says. “He saw its importance from the start and kept up the momentum. Forty years after graduating, to be working with the president, faculty and staff on such a crucial issue has given me a sense of pride and purpose as an alum.”

Doctor Everywhere

IT’S BEEN 36 YEARS SINCE HE GRADUATED, but Dr. Brian Mignola ’84 remembers his time at Wagner like it was yesterday.

Just mention his alma mater and he’s ready to recite the names of favorite science professors: Kanzler,

“As an alum, I understood why so many students wanted to be on campus in spite of the pandemic”

Priddy, Yarns, Schulz — and, at the top of the list, Otto Raths, professor of physics.

“He was one of the best teachers at any level — grade school to medical school,” Mignola beams. “He made a very difficult subject very understandable.”

And so it’s no surprise Mignola was ready to step up for Wagner as the coronavirus pandemic surged in the spring, accepting an invitation from President Martin to join the Higher Education Health Analytics Team.

Mignola continues to serve as prescribing physician for all tests administered on campus. And as the college physician for all of Wagner’s sports teams, he shepherded the Athletics Department through some difficult days.

A Brooklyn native now living on Staten Island’s South Shore, Mignola is also an adjunct faculty member in the physician assistant program and consultative physician for the college’s Center for Health and Wellness.

Off campus, he serves as the physician for 1,500 officers in the NYPD and as director of a family medicine practice in the Dongan Hills section of Staten Island — “just five minutes down the hill from Wagner,” the proud alumnus quickly points out — where he supervises clinical rounds for students in the college’s physician assistant and nurse practitioner programs.

Even after 14-hour work days, Mignola makes family time a priority. He met his wife, the former Lora Giacomoni ’85 M’91, at a health fair on campus and remembers their first Wagner-style date down the hill at the Roadhouse restaurant.

He Zooms regularly with his former Alpha Sigma Phi fraternity brothers, and looks back at his college years with appreciation.

“Wagner was a very unique experience,” he shares. “The camaraderie on campus was great. It was a family; we all knew each other.”

He is proud to note that his daughter, Daria, is a Wagner senior majoring in environmental sciences. The Mignolas also have two sons: Jonathan, an administrative director in the anesthesiology department at Staten Island University Hospital, and Andrew, a mechanical engineer who — more than coincidentally — designs operating rooms.

Mignola has first-hand knowledge about the severity of Covid-19. He contracted the disease in late March, suffering stomach problems, a cough and extreme fatigue that kept him sleeping 23 hours a day. Fortunately, he had a relatively quick recovery in 10 days.

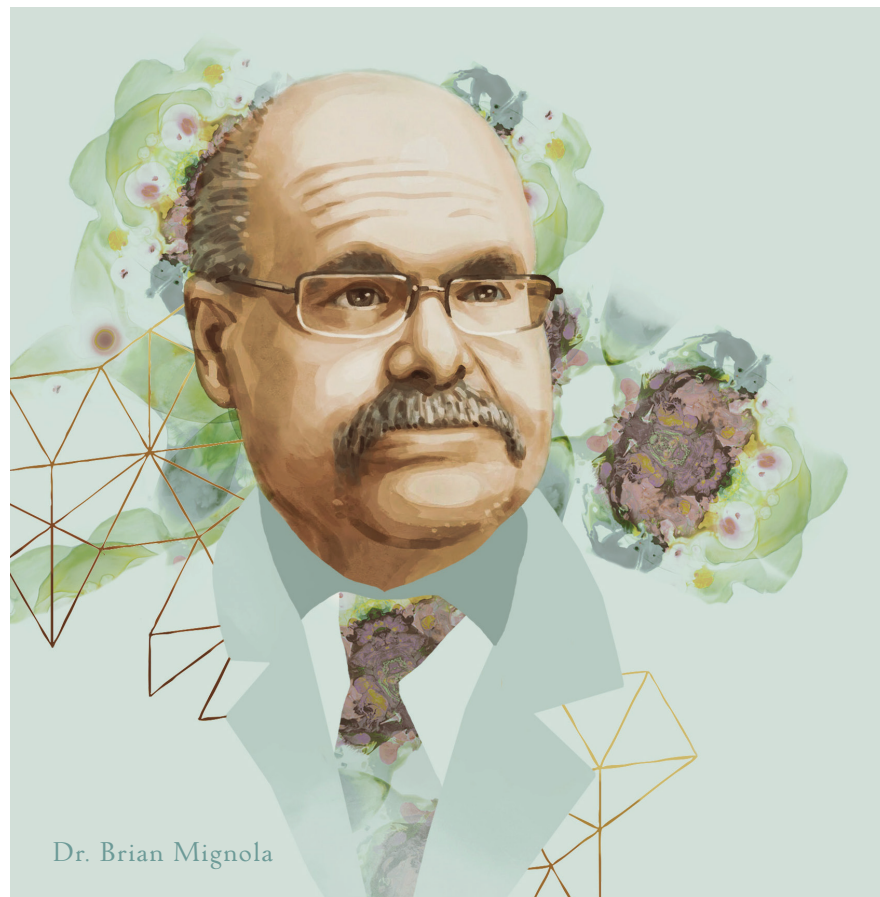
His experience as a physician during New York City’s darkest days 19 years ago puts the pandemic in perspective.

“I was around for 9/11,” he shares. “I thought that was bad, but it was contained. This [pandemic] has been 9/11 on steroids.”

Still, he is optimistic about what lies ahead.

“The virus is attenuating,” Mignola says. “I think the vaccine will be very effective. I’m optimistic that over time, as herd immunity increases, the virus will burn itself out and become comparable to the flu.”

“Hopefully, this is a once-in-a-lifetime thing.” ■



Dr. Brian Mignola



AlumniLink

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

Today's Wagner College simply could not function without the leadership and support of its alumni.

If you need any proof ... meet some of the alums who keep our college humming, as well as those we've honored in the past year.



Warren and Linda Procci attending a 2018 reunion weekend event.

Alumni, Legacies Lead Trustees

A BIG THANK YOU TO **Dr. Warren Procci** '68 H'17, first elected to the board of trustees in 1999, who completed 8 years of service as board chairman last summer. The son of native Staten Islander and local physician Waddie Procci '36, Warren is the former president of the American Psychoanalytic Association.

The new chairwoman of our board of trustees is **Joan Nicolais**,

former senior vice president for business development at CBS and daughter of Dr. Michael Nicolais '49 H'14 and Dr. Margaret Nicolais '49 H'14. First elected a trustee in 2015, Joan has chaired the Academic Affairs committee and serves on the Executive, Building & Grounds, Business & Finance, and Trustee Affairs committees. She is also a founding

member of the Nicolais School of Business Advisory Council.

Among the four newly elected trustees is the Rev. **Paul Egensteiner** '79, bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Trustee **Jeffrey D. Forchelli** '66 previously served on the board from 2005 to 2014, also serving as trustee vice chairman. In 1976 he founded the law firm known today as Forchelli Deegan Terrana, where he serves as managing partner.

Trustee **Donna Mollica New** '68 is an active managing partner in Donway Partners, a real estate brokerage firm in San Diego, Cal. Donna previously served on the board from 2003 to 2012.

Trustee **Anita Sabatino** '69 was named a Distinguished Graduate of Wagner in 2019 by the Alumni Association. Before retiring in 2018, Anita set up the first global mentoring program for top talent in IBM China and was a member of IBM's executive team.

Polly Peck Moles '68 was named a lifetime trustee. An educator and ΑΔΠ alumna, Polly was a founding member of the Alpha Delta Pi Scholarship Fund. She and husband Tom Moles '65 H'00, also a lifetime trustee, have been steadfast supporters of Wagner's athletic program. She served as a trustee from 2002 to 2014. ■

NEW Alumni Association Board Members

Welcome to the seven new members of our Alumni Association board!



ADRIAN D. ADDERLEY '09 is vice president of financial planning and analysis at National Holdings Corporation, an investment bank and wealth-management firm in New York. He also serves on the Nicolais School of Business Advisory Board.



MICHAEL BARRETT '68, an active Bregenz alumnus, is president of Barrett Associates, a public affairs and lobbying firm in Albany, the state capital of New York.



DARREN GRECO '98, a retired naval officer, is a special agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. His daughter Antonia is enrolled in Wagner's physician assistant program.



ROBERT SCALZO '01 M'03 is a managing director at Epoch Investment Partners in New York. He was instrumental in setting up the Wagner Golf Intercollegiate Invitational at the Montclair (N.J.) Golf Club.



CHARLIE SIEDENBURG '95, a beloved adjunct faculty member of the Wagner College Theatre program, is the faculty representative on the Alumni Association board.



KEITH STITH '87 is chief of detectives for the Hudson County (N.J.) Prosecutor's Office.



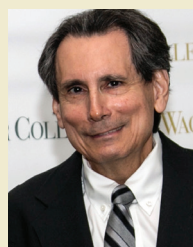
STACY TRENT '94 leads a team driving multi-channel marketing campaigns and data management at Bristol-Myers Squibb.

Photo of Keith Stith by Reena Rose Sibayan / Copyright © The Jersey Journal

Alumni Awards 2020



DONNA MOLLICA NEW '68, who returned to the college's board of trustees last year, was named the 2020 John "Bunny" Barbes '39 and Lila T. Barbes '40 Alumni Laureate, the college's highest alumni service award.



MICHAEL MUCCINO '73, a longtime Alumni Association board member and first vice president of the Wagner College Guild, was awarded the Dr. Kevin Sheehy '67 M'70 M'92 H'99 Alumni Leadership Medal.



KATHLEEN GERBING '70 M'74, a New York state prison superintendent with a longstanding commitment to inmate literacy education and rehabilitation, was named a Distinguished Graduate of Wagner College.



CAITLIN MCGEE '10, a successful Wagner College Theatre graduate who has mentored WCT alums of succeeding classes, was awarded the Wagner Alumni Key.



THE REV. LEILA ORTIZ '05, bishop of the Washington, D.C. Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, was given the Reverend Lyle Guttu Award. She is profiled elsewhere in this issue of Wagner Magazine.

Caring When It Counts

Three Wagner College graduates serving New York City as Covid nurses



We first met **Celia Engelson** '04 last spring, at the peak of the first wave of the pandemic, when New York's hospitals were overrun with Covid patients.

Celia was working as a nurse practitioner at a neurology clinic operated by the NYU Langone Medical Center — but when Langone's hospital floors filled with coronavirus patients, she was redeployed to work as an inpatient N.P. on a Covid ward.

"It's all hands on deck," she told us in May. "In a weird way, this is an exciting time — it's new every day."

Today, Celia is back at her regular post, where her professional life is as busy as it ever was.

She was given her initial shot of the coronavirus vaccine just three days before Christmas.

Daniel Genovese-Scullin

'07 graduated from the Wagner College Theatre program in 2007, but after six years of touring he wanted to settle down — which, for him, meant changing professions. He earned his R.N., worked



as a critical care nurse, and enrolled for his master's degree at Sacred Heart.

Dan joined the staff at Richmond University Medical Center on Staten Island in 2018 as a pediatric trauma manager. A year earlier he had married Anthony Genovese and, with his career on a stable trajectory, the couple wanted to start a family.

But last March, Dan was pulled from the trauma program to work bedside in RUMC's new Covid unit, working 13-hour shifts whenever he was needed.

"It's been hard," he said in April, "and, of course, there have been some really sad moments. Even so, it's been great to see how everyone has come together to work as a team."

All the while, he and Anthony were preparing for new life in their household. Anthony's twin sister had donated an egg and Dan's sister was carrying their baby, MaryRose, who was born on May 25 — "our little Memorial Day gift," Dan calls her.

Dan is back to working behind a desk at RUMC as director of trauma services for both adults and children.



Since graduating, **Jessica Donnelly** '18 has worked in the emergency department at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, covering 12-hour shifts three or four times a week.

"We started hearing about the coronavirus in January, February, but we weren't sure then if it would be coming here," Jessica said. "It wasn't until March that we even knew it was airborne."

Since then, however, she and her colleagues have seen it up close, every day.

Jessica first heard about the possibility of getting the vaccine at the beginning of December, when her hospital sent an email to emergency and intensive care staff to find out who wanted to get it.

"I did some research on my own," she said. "My conclusion was that, whatever the side effects, the benefits of the vaccine far outweighed the risk of getting Covid-19."

On Tuesday, Dec. 15, she got the first of her two vaccine shots — one of the first in America to get it.

"My hope is that the vaccine is the beginning of the end of all this," she said. "Maybe by this time next year, this will all be over." ■



Serving All Of Us

Wagner alumni have a long history of helping each other — and of giving a boost to those coming up after them. That history has written two new chapters in the last couple of years.

Top: Students, staff and alumni gather at the 2019 Black Student Union Alumni and Student Social. Bottom: Members of OutWagner during a 2019 meeting.

THE **Black Professional Alliance**, officially launched just last year, is the alumni partner of the Black Student Union, successor to the Nubian Student Union and Black Concern.

The role of the Black Professional Alliance is twofold: It brings together Black graduates and professionals to network with one another, and it makes those connections available to Black students preparing for their

transition to graduate school and careers.

The BPA's kickoff event, a panel discussion at September's Virtual Homecoming, drew 37 participants from the alumni, student and campus communities. Another event is being planned for the spring.

OutWagner, Wagner College's first LGBTQIA+ alumni group, kicked off with a New York Pride Brunch in June 2019. It functions as a networking and support organization for LGBTQIA+ and

allied alumni, and extends that support to Wagner students.

Last summer, OutWagner held a virtual trivia night event for its 2020 Pride Celebration, with 42 people representing the full range of the Wagner community. A virtual networking event in the fall brought together 26 participants, and more programs are in store for 2021.

To become a part of the Black Professional Alliance or OutWagner, email alumni@wagner.edu. ■

Building a Family's *Legacy*



Christian E. Mouttet '89 is listed among Trinidad's 10 most successful businessmen — but when we spoke with him in December, what impressed us most was not the pride he took in his accomplishments, but his pleasure in uncovering innovative solutions to the business puzzles he has faced.

THE MOUTTET FAMILY BUSINESS, originally focused on food imports and manufacturing, later expanded into pharmaceutical distribution. It was created by Christian's parents in 1958 from a very modest nest egg of 1,500 Trinidad & Tobago dollars, about \$875 U.S. Their first big deal was a shipment of peanuts from Nyasaland, today's Malawi.

Christian was born 9 years later. Educated at a Jesuit boarding school in northern England, he chose to attend Wagner College.

"We had the best of both worlds," Christian said, "with a small campus just half an hour from New York City.

"I had a double major, first in business, but I remember more about my political science classes than my business courses, especially professors George Rappaport and Phyllis Andors."

It was in graduate school at the University of Miami that he met his wife, Joanna. They married in 1993 after Christian had joined the family business.

His first big achievement was the purchase of a semi-distressed pasta manufacturing company.

"That was a great experience. We were able to return the business to profitability within a year," he said, "and the payback came in just 3 years."

Another very big deal was the purchase of his country's KFC franchise, which included 30 restaurants.

"At that time, it was the largest private transaction in Trinidad's history," he said.

Today, Christian's businesses operate 125 restaurants under the KFC, Pizza Hut, Starbucks, Subway and T.G.I. Fridays brands in Trinidad.

One of the most interesting deals in Christian's career was the purchase of a rival pharmaceutical distributor.

"The business was in some distress, but it had a very good product line and good distribution channels," he said.

Normally, the sale of such a business would involve protracted negotiations — but Christian's father knew the business and the family selling it.

"Is it worth what they're asking?" Christian's father asked.

"Yes," Christian replied.

"Then give the price that they are asking," his father said. "Just make sure we're getting what they say they're selling."

Rather than absorb the business into their own organization, they merged the Mouttet pharmaceutical business into the one they had bought, "which was bigger, an old, very reputable business. It really took off."

The Mouttets executed a similar maneuver when they acquired Agostinis, a group of companies that included their largest pharmaceutical competitor, engineering a reverse takeover.

"We sold them our pharmaceutical distributing and retail business," Christian said, "in return for just over 50 percent of the overall business. We ended up with controlling interest there."

In addition to business, Christian Mouttet has been involved in high-level public service in the Caribbean nation of Trinidad and Tobago, including the chairmanship of the state-owned Telecommunications Services corporation. He also serves on the prime minister's committee charged with guiding Trinidad's economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

He has also been of service to his alma mater, backing Wagner's participation in a Trinidad college fair sponsored by the U.S. embassy.

"I sincerely hope that the college can expand its international student base," he said. "Wagner is so well-placed as a great small-college campus with a small-college feel, but with everything New York has to offer right at its doorstep."

Christian clearly enjoys his life.

"It's been incredibly interesting," he said, "and a lot of fun." ■



ClassNotes

Updates from old friends across the generations

1949

Philip Andrew Becker '49 M'55 is a retired M.D. **Egon Wendel**, an emeritus professor of education (1969–90), and Katherine Wendell M'67 tell us, "We are married 67 years and still enjoying life."

1950

Alice J. Eiler, the wife of **Henry (Harry) Philip Eiler**, passed away on June 7, 2017. "I enjoy my two mile walks along the beach in Southern California at dawn each morning with my lovable German shepherd," he says. Harry marked his 90th birthday in May 2019. **Edmund F. Hecklau** sends "a big hello to all those other nonagenarian classmates out there! It's not so bad after all, is it?"

1952

Thomas Bonamo, a retired captain in the Fire Department of New York City, celebrated his 90th birthday on May 13, 2020. The Rev. **Edward F. Weiskotten** and Gloria (Bauman) Weiskotten '54 (AOII) celebrated the 65th anniversary of their wedding on June 19, 1954.

1954

Dorothy Rausch Randall is still very active in raising funds for the programs at Art Omi, a nonprofit arts organization in Ghent, N.Y. "This year's theater benefit topped \$550,000!" she wrote. "Am so proud to be on the ferry from Hoboken to the City every day with all of those up-and-coming young people. All six grandchildren are now taller than I!"

1957

Lillian G. Beneforti Burry has written "A Tour of Historic Colts Neck," her home community, for the Colts Neck (N.J.) Historic Preservation Committee. It's a guide to 13 historic sites in the township, and comes with a map to help you find them. The book, released in mid-October, was initially available in the Colts Neck General Store. Last summer (2019) **Kathrynne Forsbrey** wrote, "I continue to teach yoga and tai chi at age 83, and I am writing a book. Will keep you updated." **William Gerdes** moved to a continuing care retirement community in Hudson, Ohio, the same town he has lived in for the past 50 years.

1958

Walter G. Hartung and his wife of 60 years, Lillian,

are enjoying continuing care independent living at Willow Valley Communities in Lancaster, Pa. A retrospective of the paintings by **Robert Huot** was exhibited from Oct. 2019 through Jan. 2020 at the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute Museum of Art in Utica, N.Y. Huot, who studied chemistry at Wagner but was deeply interested in making art, was friends with Wagner art professor Tom Young, a figure in the NYC art world's Tenth Street Scene of the 1950s and '60s. Visit Robert's website at roberthuot.com. Bacteriology and public health graduate **Diana L. Sullivan** retired in 1997 from the New York City public schools, where she had been a lab specialist in biology at Tottenville High School on Staten Island. She is living in Manasquan, N.J. **Paul West**, the subject of a Fall 2017

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 Oct. 18, 2020.

Content: Wagner welcomes your news and updates. 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: Photos must be clear and of good quality. They will be returned at your request (please attach your address to the photo). Low resolution images will not be accepted.



Welcome to the world, Emma Joan Aloisio, born Feb. 28, 2018! This little Seahawk is the daughter of Jessica Knudsen Aloisio '08 and Peter Aloisio '07.

Wagner Magazine feature story, was conductor of the Bethune Big Band's second annual tribute to its founder **Lonny West**, Paul's brother, held in Oct. 2019 at the NYC Baha'i Center's John Birks Gillespie Auditorium in Manhattan's Greenwich Village.

1959

Carol (Whytock) Goetz '58 and **Roger Goetz** happily celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

1960

Harold Crater, who cherishes memories of singing in the Wagner choir under Dr. Steen, continues participation in choral music with the Victoria (Texas) Civic Chorus, an organization he has served as treasurer for over 20 years. **Paul Nuzzolese**, a double-sport athlete during his college years (baseball and football), was named to the Seahawk Hall of Fame's

Class of 2021. Dr. **Robert H. Swanborg** and his wife are enjoying retirement in Michigan.

1961

In 1998, **Jack Beaver** informally adopted Darryl Ryan. Twenty years later, they made it official, and Jack now has a fine daughter-in-law and two grown grandchildren.

Richard Rubin has been enjoying his retirement immensely for more than two decades and is still riding his Harley, which now sports antique plates! **Constance Young DeMasi Tauriello**, retired and enjoying life, visited the Cayman Islands.

1962

Carol Campi, wife and high-school sweetheart of **John Campi**, died peacefully in her sleep last January at their home in Florida. The couple, who married in 1962, had two children, Jon and Christen. **Frank DeJulio** '62 M'65 was honored in July 2019 by the Tottenville (Staten Island) Historical Society for his half century of service as an educator at P.S. 1 where, in 1972, he founded the school's Colonial Marching Band, cited as "an award-winning music program [that] enriched the lives of many students for 20 years." Frank also used his talents in musical direction "to make life happier in nursing homes, church functions, community events and mentoring many of his former students."

Dr. **Vince Fischetti** '62 M'66 H'10, head of Rockefeller University's Laboratory of Bacterial Pathogenesis and Immunology, was a guest speaker at Wagner in Nov. 2019. Last fall (2019) **Bjarne "B.J." Gabrielsen** was recognized with the National Cancer Institute Director's Award of Merit for his contributions to the development and production of a topical microbicide — cyanovirin-N, a peptide from blue-green algae — that is in clinical trials for the safe and effective prevention of HIV infection. B.J. retired from the NCI in 2007 as a senior director in drug discovery-development. During his NCI tenure, he also received the NIH Award of Merit for his work with the NCI Natural Products Branch. Prior to joining NCI-NIH, B.J. was an associate professor of chemistry at Wagner

(1969–79) and a member of the organic chemistry faculty at the University of Florida (1979–86). B.J. and his wife Marie live in Punta Gorda, Fla. In Oct. 2019, after 55 years, **Dorothy Grieco Montiero** made an 80th birthday visit to her former roommate Kathryn Small Blankley '63, who lives with her daughter Beth in Vienna, Austria. Ben Sarullo '62 M'65 was profiled in a July 2019 Staten Island Advance feature as the "legendary Farrell [H.S.] grid coach [who] left it all on the sidelines." Ben, who won a 2017 bout with stomach cancer, has been married to wife Jennifer for 57 years. **Alan W. Schlienger** and wife Kathy celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on April 26, 2019.

1963

Zuzana Plesa works as a counselor at Eglin Air



Al Palladino '61, Dennis O'Keeffe '64, Tony Cuzzucoli '61 and Wally Pagan '61 gathered with 20 other brothers and friends — including President Joel Martin — for Alpha Sigma Phi's 44th annual reunion in Lyndhurst, N.J., on Sept. 29, 2019.



Christopher '07 and Stephanie Savoia-Pearl Silvestri '08 welcomed baby Frankie on July 17, 2020. Big sister Mia is loving her new role!

1965

John A. Brockway and Betsy “Lisabeth” Holderle Brockway '68 are retired and enjoying their townhouse at Dalton Farm in Poughquag, N.Y. “Travel, grandkids’ visits, hobbies and biking keep us busy and healthy,” John writes. “Life is good indeed.” **Karen L. Dawkins** cruised through the Greek Islands with two granddaughters, 22 and 14. Pastor **Carl Wilfrid**, now retired, celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination as a minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on June 29, 2019. (Carl graduated with a B.S. in bacteriology!)

1966

Ever since **Rob Hoff’s** graduate studies at the University of Minnesota, he has been teaching at Mercyhurst University, where he initiated the major in psychology (his major at Wagner). He’s been at Mercyhurst for more than 50 years and is still teaching full time. **Theresa “Terry” Baker Mulligan** has published her third book, “These Boys are Killing Me: Travels and Travails with Sons who Take Risks.” The memoir “partly covers my year spent in Bregenz, Austria, in 1964,” Terry says. Read more on her website at terrybakermulligan.com. **Elizabeth Barker**, emerita professor of nursing at Ohio State University, attended the first graduation ceremony for the Choluteca School of Nursing, a technical high

school offering certification in nursing in Honduras, which she helped found in Feb. 2017. **Jack Thomas** has enjoyed substitute teaching since retiring from industry. **Christine Wolff Massey** retired from her temporary position as dean of the Barton College School of Nursing in Wilson, N.C., where she taught psychiatric nursing and human sexuality. She still offers workshops for nursing students preparing for National Council Licensure Examination and enjoys her granddaughters.

1967

After a long career as an educator, **Joan E. (Kramer) Hildebrandt** and husband Gary are happily retired and living in Maine to be close to their son’s family, including five grandsons and a great-granddaughter. **Russ Johnson** '67 M'72, the subject of an “Uncommon Lives” feature in the Fall 2014 Wagner Magazine issue, published his 15th novel in September, “Mountains Will Fall.” Russ and wife Nancy Pelcak Johnson '70 M'79 celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 27. “We met on Nancy’s first day at Wagner, in Sept. 1966 — Russ’s senior year,” they write. “We know that ‘time flies’ is a grossly overused cliché — but, man, does it fly!” Photographer **Arno Minkinen**, who was featured in a Winter 2013–14 Wagner Magazine story, has a new book, “Minkinen: Two Hundred Seasons,” a half-century’s retrospective

of his work from 1969 to 2019, published by Kehrer Verlag. The book won the prestigious German Photo Book Award for 2019/20 from Stuttgart Media University. **Peggy Nuspliger** retired in 2000 after teaching music for 32 years, but she still directs the Adirondack Community Chorus in her hometown of Lyons Falls, N.Y., as she has done since 1976, staging three concerts a year and multiple community events with between 60 and 80 singers. After 44 years with Allstate Insurance on Staten Island and in Watertown, Conn., **Robert Charles Smith** is finally and fully retired.

1968

Chuck Cascio continues to write and work with people who want to publish their own writing. He has published six books and hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles over the years. He also writes a blog for his website, chuckcascioauthor.com, where he recently featured Wagner College. Last summer (2019) **Bruce Cynar and Kari Pedersen Cynar** celebrated the 50th anniversary of their June 1969 wedding.

1969

In Aug. 2019 **Linda Barbes Stein** '69 M'73 told us that she had enjoyed the Golden Seahawk reunion in June. She began acting after her retirement, appearing as Lady Tressilian in an Agatha Christie mystery, “Toward

Force Base, which is her way of serving the military. She also helps military clients through Military OneSource, a program that provides resources and support to military personnel and their families. **John Anthony Ward** is retired as a research scientist at the Brooke Army Medical Center (now called San Antonio Military Medical Center). “Still running every day,” he writes. “Paula and I have two children, three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.”

1964

James Elliman turned 80 years old in 2019 and is still loving life. In 2020 the Rev. **John Smolik** '64 M'68 celebrated his 50th anniversary as pastor of St. Peter Lutheran Church in Pottstown, Pa., having served in the Lutheran ministry for 52 years.

Zero,” at the Actors Community Theatre of Davie, Fla., and in the October (2019) “Sea Shorts” program for the Lauderdale-by-the-Sea (Fla.) Seaside Players. **Paul E. Fein** ’69 M’72 published “The Chemistry of Leadership: A Self-Discovery Formula to Finding the Leader in You.” **Marjorie Horeis Crouch** was awarded Ruth Frank’s Volunteer of Year award from the Parkdale-High Park Federal Liberal Riding Association for service to the Liberal Party of Canada.

1971

Joost Keesing and Kathleen Atwater Keesing, who were married after their junior year at Wagner, recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

1972

We gratefully report that **Dorothea Morris Cornell** and family made it through the Ridgecrest, Cal. earthquakes of July 4–5, 2019, with no major damage — which was remarkable, considering that the main 7.1 temblor was the strongest to hit California in 20 years. “It was quite an experience,” Dorothea says. **Jeffrey Charles Sims** has written a book, “Discovering the Allagash,” which he describes as “a canoeing guide to this North Maine Woods paradise.”

1973

Longtime film producer **Richard Baratta** worked on two feature films released in 2019, “Joker” with Joaquin Phoenix and “The Irishman” with Martin

Scorsese. In Oct. 2019, he gave a master class for the students in our Film & Media Studies program.

1974

Glenn Alpert, furloughed from a career as a chorister and soloist with the Metropolitan Opera, has started a new career in Cochection Center, N.Y. as a life coach. **Susan Moan Hardie**, R.N., Ph.D., is on the board of directors of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (apsac.org) and was recently appointed secretary.

1975

Math graduate **Joan Arnold**, a partner with the law firm Pepper Hamilton LLP and chair of the firm’s Tax and Private Client Practice Group, became

chair-elect of the American Bar Association’s Section of Taxation in Aug. 2019 and section chair in Aug. 2020. She has previously served as president of the American College of Tax Counsel. A former faculty member at Rutgers Law School, Joan earned her LL.M. in taxation from the NYU School of Law and her J.D. from Villanova University School of Law. **Richard E. McLaughlin** retired as a chemist after 43 years of employment. In Aug. 2019 **Dorothy L. Reciniello** retired after 10 years as the children’s librarian at the Hillside Public Library in New Hyde Park, N.Y. — a second career that followed her 24 years at J.P. Morgan Chase, where she retired as an assistant vice president. “Wagner provided the skills and the drive to succeed professionally,” Dorothy writes. “Looking back, the four years at Wagner were truly the best years ever.”

1976

Donna (Christie) Bredholt and Peter Bredholt celebrated their 40th anniversary in 2019. Their sons took them on a celebratory trip to Copenhagen, Denmark. Wagner College Theatre alumna **Peggy Lee Brennan** was one of this year’s honorees at the Minty Organization Dinner Gala. The organization, created by Michael Pinto ’10, supports theater programs in Staten Island’s Catholic high schools. **Alan Riedel** wrote a novel, “I, Jetebais,”

Knot Notes



After Jessica Bulone ’17 M’18 and Shawn Barnes ’16 met at a Halloween party in 2014, they became best friends — and more — before becoming engaged. This photo is from their Aug. 31, 2019 wedding in Berlin, N.J. Congratulations!



On June 21, 2019 Dr. Ira Pisetzner '58 and Barbara Pisetzner celebrated the 60th anniversary of their wedding. Ira retired from his Staten Island dental practice in 2010. The Pisetzners have traveled to South Africa, Botswana and Fiji, and they enjoy their lives in Delray Beach, Fla., where they go to shows, movies and restaurants with friends.

under the pen name Robert Martin Bishop, a tale of suspense about a fallen angel who regrets his decision to leave heaven and now wants to confess and save the world before a Satanic scheme can unfold.

1978

Phil Boyd retired in 2019 as a senior manager in the NYC Transit Procurement Unit after 37 years. Veterinarian **Charles Fleming** M'78 of Rochester, N.Y. has been elected president of the New York State Veterinary Medical Society.

1979

Geraldine Mahoney retired after 38 years of teaching theater at Middletown (N.J.) High School North.

1980

In Aug. 2019 Dr. **Louis De Santis** '80 M'84 was elected northeast regional director of the American College of Prosthodontists. An adjunct clinical professor at NYU's College of Dentistry, Louis maintains a private practice on Staten Island. In September **Claire Regan** was elected to the nine-member national board of the Society of Professional Journalists for a two-year term. She is immediate past president of the Deadline Club, SPJ's New York City chapter. In Aug. 2019 **Rosalind Noonan's** latest novel, "In the Line of Fire," was published by Penguin Random House, the second in the R.J. Noonan "Laura Mori Mystery" series.

1981

Angelo Castillo '81 M'83, Pembroke Pines (Fla.) city

commissioner since 2004 and three-time vice mayor, was featured in July 2019 as part of the South Florida Sun-Sentinel's "South Florida 100," a panel of influential community leaders. **Sheryll La Sacco** '81 M'84 retired in June 2019 as a special education teacher for the Middlesex (N.J.) Board of Education.

1982

In July **Hope Iliceto** '82 M'92 was named president and CEO of the Visiting Nurse Association of Staten Island. She was previously the chief nursing officer at NYC Health + Hospitals Home Division.

1984

This June **Ed Gurrieri** stepped down as Manalapan (N.J.) High School head football coach, a job he'd held for 13 years. In 2011 Ed was named Shore Conference Football Coaches Association Coach of the Year, and he won five Shore Conference Class A North division titles in a row (2010–14). In 2014 he was chosen as the Central Jersey Coach of the Year by the New Jersey Football Coaches Association, and in July 2019 he was inducted into the Shore Football Coaches Foundation Hall of Fame.

1985

In May 2019, **Lydia Diane Plummer-Alleyne** launched the Lydia Mode, a full-service professional consulting firm in the Washington,

D.C. metropolitan area that supports government contracting firms as well as commercial clients.

1987

In January **Keith Stith**, a career law enforcement official since 1990, was sworn in as the first Black chief of detectives in the history of the Hudson County (N.J.) Prosecutor's Office. Keith, who won Wagner College's 2018 MLK Agent of Change-Alumni award, joined the college Alumni Association's board this summer.

1989

Deirdre Mary Callan recently opened Sweet Bella Frozen Yogurt and Espresso in Venice, Florida. In October 2019 **Bob Peterson** was named vice president for finance and chief financial officer for Neptune, N.J.-based United Methodist Communities, a faith-based nonprofit organization serving the needs of seniors. In June **Christopher West** was appointed commander of New York State Police Troop G in Latham, N.Y., overseeing 24 stations in 10 counties. He has been with the New York State Police since entering its academy in 1990.

1990

Seahawk tennis and basketball player **Kassie (Hornbuckle) Alnwick** has published "Borrow My Tribe: Women's Wisdom from your Chosen Sisters"

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Called for Such a Time as This

Rev. Leila M. Ortiz '05, Bishop, ELCA Metro D.C. Synod

How does a Puerto Rican girl with bad grades, raised in the Pentecostal church, become the first woman, and the first person of color, elected as the Lutheran bishop of Metro D.C.?

God Called Her, That's How.

Leila Ortiz '05 was raised partly in the Bronx, partly in Puerto Rico.

When work, church and family obligations challenged her studies at the University of Puerto Rico, her family sent her to live with her aunt in the Bronx.

There, she got her first sense that she was called to the ministry.

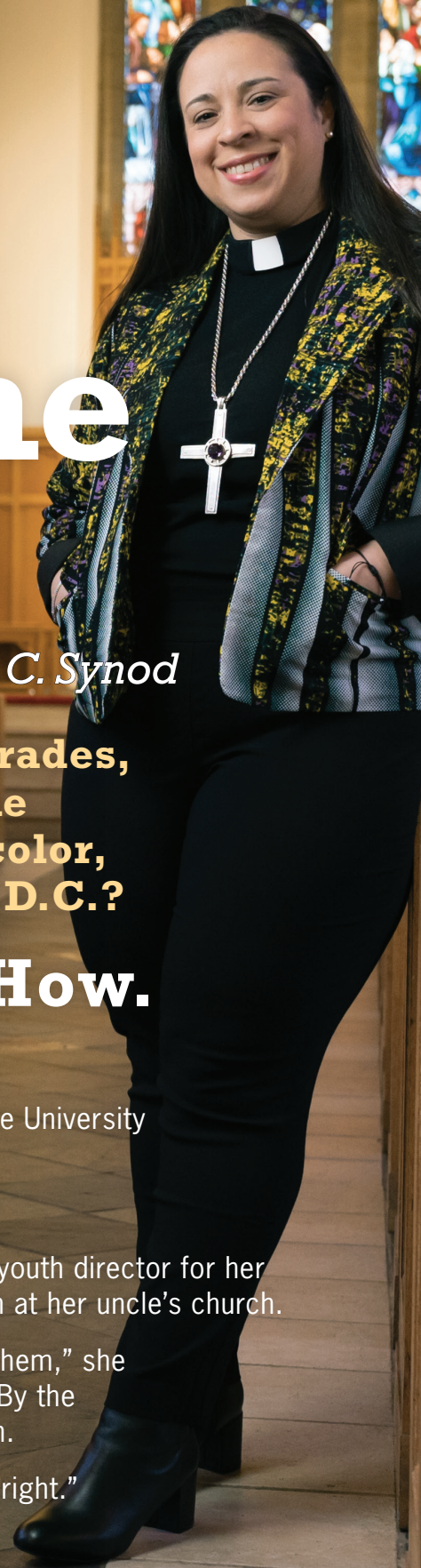
Her aunt's husband was a Lutheran pastor. Since Leila had served as youth director for her congregation in Puerto Rico, she volunteered to work with the children at her uncle's church.

"I went to the basement, where the kids were, and I started teaching them," she said. "The kids enjoyed it so much, they started inviting their friends. By the end of the year, we had brought 17 new families into the congregation.

"The pastor said, 'Maybe you have a call to the ministry,' and that felt right."

PHOTOGRAPH: ELLIOT O'DONOVAN

WAGNER MAGAZINE





HE WAS SENT TO MEET WITH AN OFFICIAL at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Metro New York Synod office.

"He told me about the Uppsala Scholarship, a program for people of color or whose first language was not English, where you would finish your B.A. at Wagner College and go to the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia," she said. "It covered everything — tuition, room and board, books."

That's how Leila Ortiz went from Puerto Rico, to the Bronx, to Grymes Hill.

"Seminary was actually where I had my conversion moment," she said.

In Philadelphia, one of her professors was lecturing on the Lutheran doctrines of justification and election — but she just wasn't getting it.

"My thinking about God was always conditional," she said. "If I do this, God will do that."

One day, Leila's professor said, "When you understand that God chose for you to be saved, and that you did not choose your own salvation, then you will understand God's amazing grace."

"That was my moment," she said. "That's when I said to myself, 'This is why I'm here.'"

Leila looked forward to her pastoral internship, scheduled for the third year of seminary — but some of her professors saw something else in her.

"Leila, we think you have a gift for teaching, and we want you to consider Ph.D. studies," they told her. "We'll cover the expense."

"I was humbled," she recalled, "but I just wanted to be a pastor — and my internship confirmed that."

She was ordained in 2013. Three years later she joined the staff of the ELCA's Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod — and then, at the June 2019 synod assembly, she was nominated to replace the outgoing bishop.

"I was younger than most previous bishops, a woman of color, from a different denomination, with a different world view, and I was still fairly new to the church," she said.

Nevertheless, several colleagues nominated her, and with each succeeding ballot her candidacy grew stronger. Finally, with the fifth ballot, the Rev. Leila M. Ortiz was named bishop-elect.

"I knew that, when I was called, something was up," she said. "It had to be a move of the Holy Spirit; other than that, it didn't make a lot of sense."

She was installed as bishop on Sept. 1, 2019 — six months before Covid-19 turned life upside down.

"It's been challenging, but it's also been a humongous gift," she said. "We've never seen this experience before, and hopefully we'll never see it again — but we have been called for such a time as this."

{CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33}

(Troy Book Makers, 2020). She works as a spiritual life coach for women and an inspirational speaker. Visit kassiealnwick.com. In Sept. 2019, former student government president

Alexandra Duggan Marchesano became director of the Carolina Union, the student services division of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She has had a long career in collegiate student services, working most recently at UNC-Greensboro.

1992

Nursing graduate **Andrea Haylock**, a clinical assistant nurse manager at Richmond University Medical Center on Staten Island who is currently pursuing her master's degree in our nursing program, also serves as a lieutenant colonel and the chief nurse in the U.S. Air Force Reserve's 514th Aeromedical Staging Squadron. Her unit was deployed this spring to Lincoln Hospital in the Bronx for three weeks in support of Covid-19 care efforts.

1994

Nursing graduate **Debbie Brendley**, who earned her doctorate in nursing practice from Gardner-Webb University in 2018, was promoted to the rank of captain in the U.S. Navy Reserve Nurse Corps in June 2019. **Greg Rocco**, an

assistant principal at the Rocco Laurie Intermediate School (I.S. 72) in New Springville, Staten Island, was named the new junior varsity football coach for St. Peter's Boys' High School on Staten Island.

1995

Charlie Siedenbug was one of this year's honorees at the Minty Organization Dinner Gala. The organization, created by Michael Pinto '10, supports theater programs in Staten Island's Catholic high schools. In October, People magazine profiled **Tracy Vicere**, founder of Friends & Angels: The Tracy Vicere Foundation. Twenty years after surviving cancer, in her mid-teens, a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis prompted Tracy to create a foundation that would provide young patients with everything she had needed during her hospital stays, but hadn't received. Find more at tracyvicerefoundation.org.

1996

Dr. **Hassan Mohaideen** M'96 was one of the early medical professionals to earn an MBA. He is currently president and CEO of a healthcare technology and management company. "I enjoyed my time at Wagner," he says. Dr. **Carol M. Russell**, an osteopathic physician who specializes in obstetrics and gynecology, was honored in Sept. 2019 for her years of dedicated

service to Staten Island's Greenbelt Conservancy.

1997

Staten Island Advance reporter Alexandra Salmieri M'20 highlighted **Kathleen Francis** M'97 C'12 D'16, a family nurse practitioner at NYU Langone in Brooklyn, in a July feature called "The Heroes Around You." Kathy started working in NYU Langone's Covid units in March, at the peak of the pandemic's initial impact. She told Alexandra that it reminded her of the 1980s, when she worked with HIV patients at St. Vincent's (now Richmond University Medical Center).

1998

In June 2019 **Thomas Baldinger's** theatrical production company released a short film, "Hook'd," about a washed-up actor who scams his way onto a reality TV show. In Jan. 2020 an independent production company inked a deal with Tom to make "Hook'd" into a feature-length film. "The pandemic delayed our production, but we are back on schedule and will be

looking to begin shooting in the spring," Tom says. (Incidentally, 90% of the feature film will be shot on Staten Island.) Read more at 624-productions.com/hook-d. In Sept. 2020, **Jeff Ferlauto** took command of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Bear in a ceremony at Coast Guard Base Portsmouth, Va. His previous assignment was on the West Coast, where he was executive officer of USCGC Stratton. Ferlauto, a Coast Guard commander, enlisted in 1998, one year after earning his B.S. in criminal justice from Wagner. He is a CPA who earned his MBA from Northwestern University.

2000

Jedediah Bila and husband Jeremy Scher had their first baby, Hartley Luca, on Nov. 15, 2019. In early March 2020, Jedediah was this year's guest speaker for our Founding Fathers Lecture Series. Jedediah is a co-host of "Fox and Friends Weekend" on the Fox News Channel. In Sept. 2019 **Gina DeSantis** M'00, principal at Staten Island's Moore Catholic High School, was also



Joseph Anthony Dunn, son of Andrew and Gianna (Bruno) Dunn, was born on May 6, 2020. His parents, both members of the Class of 2015, had an alumni-rich wedding in January 2019 — including Joseph's grandmother, Wagner staff accountant Elizabeth Dunn '14. Congrats to all for everything!

named president and CEO of the institution. In July **Dani Fava** was named head of strategic development at Envestnet, a financial services company that provides unified wealth management technology and products to financial advisers and institutions. She previously served as director of institutional innovation at TD Ameritrade Institutional. **Michael Schrader** is the new owner of Jean's Fine Wines & Spirits, an established business in New Brighton, Staten Island, where he has worked since 2006.

2002

On Sept. 7, 2019, the Rev. **William H. Critzman III** was married to Patrick Wallingham at Old South Haven Presbyterian Church in Brookhaven, Long Island. Their union was the subject of a story, "Two 'Nice, Quiet' Vacations Upended by the Dogs," published in the New York Times. Will is the senior minister of West End Collegiate Church in Manhattan. Wagner College Theatre graduate **Jeffrey Currey**, an administrator at Goodwin University in East Hartford, Conn., has served for three terms as a legislator in the Connecticut House, where he is deputy majority leader. In 2019, Jeff was instrumental in shepherding several bills through the legislature affecting the LGBTQ community, including one barring use of the so-called "panic defense" by defendants accused of

assault. In June **Andrew Dick M'02** was inducted into the South Plainfield (N.J.) High School Hall of Fame for his work in the field of microbiology. Currently vice president of microbiology with the Knowlton Development Corporation, he was previously a senior manager (for 15 years) with Johnson & Johnson. In 2018 he was named Wagner Alumni Fellow in Microbiology by the Alumni Association.

2003

Michele (Sampson) Nelson was named vice president for board affairs and university strategy at Seton Hall University. **Krystle Petty**, a member of the Wagner College softball team during her student years, was named to the Seahawk Hall of Fame's Class of 2021.

2004

In early March, we received word that **Amy Hillner Larsen** had been cast in "Once Upon a One More Time," a jukebox musical built around songs by Britney Spears. Scheduled to premiere at the James M. Nederlander Theatre in Chicago on April 14, the show was canceled due to the pandemic. **April Holcomb** is working for Agilent Technologies, a global analytical instrumentation manufacturing company, as an analytical chemist responsible for TOFMS (look it up!) technical

service throughout the Western hemisphere. April earned her Ph.D. from Drexel University in 2009. **Courtney Pritchard**, a member of the Wagner College basketball team during his college years, was named to the Seahawk Hall of Fame's Class of 2021.



Heather (Peterson) Stapel '95 and Jonathan Stapel '95 of Leicester, Mass. just celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary in October.

2006

In May 2019 **Michael Armato**, a professor of political science at Albright College, received the Dr. Henry P. and M. Paige Laughlin Distinguished Faculty Award for Teaching from his colleagues. Michael is currently engaged in a book project under contract with SUNY Press exploring progressive political activism and identity in New York's Hudson Valley. Wagner baseball standout **Andrew Bailey**, 2009 MLB Rookie of the Year and two-time MLB

All Star, joined the San Francisco Giants coaching staff last summer as a pitching coach. Seahawk basketball and softball standout **Joy Gallagher '06 M'08**, Wagner's first Northeast Conference Student-Athlete of the Year, was inducted in Aug. 2019 into the Luzerne County (Pa.) Sports Hall of Fame. After getting a B.S. in chemistry and her MBA at Wagner, Joy earned a Ph.D. in organic chemistry from Penn State. She works as a strategic marketing manager for Dow Chemical. **John Sciarra**, a member of the Wagner College football team during his college years, was named to the Seahawk Hall of Fame's Class of 2021. In 2019, **Joshua M. Tucker** left his job at MAPFRE Insurance (after 12 years) to pursue a new position handling insurance for the University of Massachusetts President's Office, handling the insurance policies for all five campuses and assisting with risk management.

2007

In May 2019 **Hannah C. Honeycutt** was named executive director of the South Carolina Access to Justice Commission. For the previous five years, Hannah had served as an assistant public defender in the Richland County (S.C.) Public Defender's Office. She graduated magna cum laude from Wagner with a degree in English and Spanish, and earned her J.D. from the University

Knot Notes



Congratulations to Trevor Williamson '17 and Sydney Gallina, married on Oct. 10, 2020 at the Berkley Oceanfront Hotel in Asbury Park, N.J. Alums included in the photo are Trevor's father Bob Williamson '91, grandfather Ray Williamson '68 and grandmother Maureen Williamson '68. Also in attendance at the wedding but not pictured were Trevor's great uncle Fred Williamson '64 H'11, great aunt Joanna Williamson Monday '72 and cousins Gail Mahoney '17 and Alyson Barton '18.

of South Carolina School of Law in 2013. **Adam Jacobs** had a daughter named Emma in October 2016 and another daughter named Jordyn in March 2018. **Alexandra Jacobs Wilke**, a former Wagnerian editor, was recently elected to the Potsdam Village Board of Trustees; she was sworn in on Dec. 31, 2019. Attending the ceremony were her husband, Andreas Wilke, and their two daughters, Matilda (1) and Edith (3).

2008

Justin Drummond '08 M'09 was promoted in December to chief operating officer of P.F. Growth Partners LLC, a franchise division of Planet Fitness with headquarters in Timonium, Md. **Samantha Snukis**, a chemistry graduate who ran on the Seahawk

cross country team, was profiled in Aug. 2019 in the Reading (Pa.) Eagle as she was preparing to defend her women's amateur title in the Reading Radsport Mount Penn Hill Climb, a cycling and running competition. (News flash: She won!) She works as a physician assistant at Commonwealth Orthopaedic Associates in Reading.

2009

Former Student Government Association president **Harry S. Jackson III** was named to the "Emerging Leaders of Gaming 40 Under 40" list by Global Gaming Business Magazine for 2019–20. Harry is an attorney with Fox Rothschild LLP in Atlantic City, which serves the gaming industry. **Sirena LaBurn** curated a group

show in the Wagner Union art gallery that was on display from Nov. 7, 2019 to Jan. 10, 2020. The other three artists involved were former graduate school colleagues of Sirena's at the New York Studio School in Manhattan. The theme of the exhibition, "Amor Fati," was "paintings which explore certain death." In June **Philip Pallitto** '09 M'11, an English teacher and drama director in the Somers Point (N.J.) School District, was named Atlantic County Teacher of the Year. He has taught English language arts in the district for nine years and has directed 16 plays in Somers Point, 28 productions overall. **Lia Papazoglou** recently graduated with an M.Sc. degree in sustainable development, with distinction, from the University of Surrey in the U.K. She works at the Business Council on Climate Change in San Francisco, helping businesses and key stakeholders in the Bay Area incubate and scale climate change solutions.

2010

Nicole Malliotakis M'10 won a decisive victory over Democratic incumbent Max Rose in November's election for Staten Island's seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. A New York state assemblywoman since 2011, she ran unsuccessfully as the Republican candidate for mayor of New York City against Bill de Blasio in

2017. **Olatunde Ogunlana** '10 M'11 was given the college's MLK Agent of Change-Alumni award in recognition of his commitment to furthering the legacy of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Born in Nigeria and raised on Staten Island, Tunde works as an auditor for the legal and audit group of Goldman Sachs, with a focus on the investment management division. He is a member of Wagner College's Alumni Board. Nursing graduate **Danielle Sheehan Sharp** won the 2019–20 Outstanding Reviewer Award from Urologic Nursing, the official journal of the Society of Urologic Nurses. She is currently a family nurse practitioner at a primary care practice in lower Manhattan. Before that, she worked at a community health center in Rhode Island as a primary care provider after graduating from the FNP program at Georgetown University in 2015. Her article on "Hypertonic Pelvic Floor Muscle Dysfunction and Urinary Tract Infection: A Comprehensive Approach to Diagnosis and Treatment" is scheduled for publication in Urologic Nursing's Sept./Oct. issue. Last summer (2019) we received word from PA graduate **Kate Punyanskaya Spivak** '10 M'11 about a device she had invented, called the Bridge, that helps moms who have low milk supply through the use of at-breast

supplementation. (Kate's master's thesis, by the way, was focused on the health of pregnant women.) The device is sold through a company Kate and husband Max created, Laally.

2011

Rob DeLuca '11 M'13, who runs DeLuca's Italian Restaurant in Tottenville, Staten Island, led an ad hoc organization, the Independent Restaurant Owner's Association Rescue, during the pandemic to pressure the city and state for fewer restrictions on restaurant operations.

Rachel Mancini, who teaches A.P. and Regents chemistry at Tottenville High School on Staten Island, was named one of the 2019 winners of the Sloan Award for Excellence in Teaching Science and Mathematics, given by the Fund for the City of New York and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Of note: Mancini teaches at the high school from which she graduated, and where her father has taught chemistry for the last 18 years!

2012

Alyssa Spivak Levintov, a biopsychology major who earned a doctorate in dental surgery from NYU, joined the Dr. Silman Smile Spa, a family and cosmetic dentistry practice in New Jersey, in Aug. 2019. Wagner linebacker **Julian Stanford**, entering his eighth season in the NFL, was signed by the Carolina Panthers in August after

spending two years with the Buffalo Bills, mostly on special teams.

2013

Rhea Francani, who teaches music and dance at Florida Atlantic University's A.D. Henderson University School, released a new country pop single recording, "I'll Go," this summer. Visit her website at rheafrancani.com. Wagner College Theatre graduates **April Lavelle** and **Alex Boniello**, along with partner Kayla Greenspan, were producers of "Hadestown," nominated in 14 categories for the June 2019 Tony Awards and winner in 8 categories, including Best Musical. Their production company is called Kaylavlex Theatricals. Alex also performed as Connor Murphy in "Dear Evan Hansen" from 2018 to 2020.

2014

Megan DiBenedetto '14 M'18, a nurse at NYU Langone and a Wagner med-surg instructor, was the subject of a story on NET, a Catholic TV network. Living with cystic fibrosis and advised to "cocoon" because of her medical vulnerability during the coronavirus crisis, she has continued instead to care for those who need her. "She says that sometimes, you just have to run head on into your biggest challenges," NET said. Watch and read Meg's story at <https://bit.ly/3co2mDI>.



In October 2019, Wagner College Theatre celebrated the final weekend of its production of "Evita" with a reunion of cast and crew members from the 1991 and 2001 productions. Over the years, several WCT students have played Eva Peron: **Tori Lynn Palazola** '91, **Brianna Cielo** '21, **Isabelle Miller** '20, **Nicole Vitaliano** '02 and **Dori Rosenthal** '91.

Seahawk outfielder **Ian Miller**, picked by Seattle in the 2014 MLB draft, was called up to the Chicago Cubs from the team's alternate site last August. He played in 2019 for the Minnesota Twins. Wagner College Theatre alumna **Alison Savino**, who studied stage management with **Phill Hickox** and **Arturo Porazzi** at Wagner, started Columbia University's MFA program in stage management in Aug. 2019.

2015

Seahawk baseball standout **Nick Dini**, drafted in his senior year by the Kansas City Royals organization, was called up to the majors in Aug. 2019 as a catcher. He played last year as well, but was placed on the injured list in July after testing positive for the coronavirus. Arts administration graduate **Alison Turner** has been busy making a musical career for herself in her

native Vermont under her stage name, **Ali T**. Last fall (2019) her second album, "Smoke & Mirrors," was released with strong critical acclaim in the regional press. Visit her website at sheisalit.com.

2016

Last fall (2019) Wagner College Theatre graduates **Becca Barrett** and **Kyra Lee** '19 were touring as performer-educators for Speak About It, a consent education and sexual assault prevention organization, visiting high school and college campuses with their one-hour show followed by discussions about sex and consent. In Nov. 2019 the Staten Island Advance website highlighted **Ariana R. Palmieri** for her long-lived blog about living waste-free — no surprise, since she won the college's award for expository writing as a graduating

senior. Visit Ariana's blog at greenify-me.com.

2017

Jazmin Diaz, a Bonner Leader featured in this magazine the summer after she graduated ("The World as Your Classroom"), has been selected for the Moelis Scholars Program at the University of Pennsylvania's Stuart Weitzman School of Design, where she is pursuing a master's degree in city planning with a concentration in community and economic development. In June 2019, **Taylor Dodson M'17** was made head coach of Indiana University's women's water polo team, where she had been assistant coach. She was previously assistant coach at Wagner College. In Dec. 2019, **Hadeel Mishal** joined the Office of the New York City Public Advocate as its civic and community empowerment organizer. She previously worked as a youth organizer for the Arab American Association of New York, and a youth leadership project associate for the Food Trust of Philadelphia. **Greg Senat**, a Seahawk basketball and football player, had a busy year! He was an offensive tackle on the Kansas City Chiefs' injured reserve list when the team won the 2020 Super Bowl. He was signed to the Cleveland Browns practice team in September. The following month he joined the active roster of the Dallas

Cowboys the week before they were scheduled to play the New York Giants.

2018

Joseph "JoJo" Cooper, a Seahawk basketball standout, signed a new deal in Sept. 2020 with BC Raiffeisen Flyers Wels, which plays in the top Austrian basketball division. Entering his third professional season, JoJo last played in Germany for Pro-B team WWU Baskets Münster, leading his team to a regular season championship in 2019. **Grace Lukasik** is currently working as an RN on a high-acuity, fast-paced medical surgical floor at New York-Presbyterian Hospital. **A.J. Sumbry**, another basketball standout, signed in June 2019 (following his redshirt senior year of Seahawk competition) with a Danish professional basketball team, BMS Herlev Wolfpack. Last year, he moved to the Cactus Tbilisi basketball club in the republic of Georgia.

2019

Theater grad **Kevin Atwater** has been developing his musical career, releasing a new single this fall, "Koh," on his Spotify account. Get Kev's link at linktr.ee/kevinatwater. In September **Kevin Doherty**, former Seahawk lacrosse team captain, was named defensive coordinator for the lax program at Virginia Military Institute. In its

November 2019 issue, the CPA Journal published "Reducing Federal Income Tax with Qualified Charitable Distributions: How to Preserve a Tax Write-Off," written by Wagner accounting professor Peg Horan and **Alexis Ferro**, an analyst at Goldman Sachs. Last fall (2019) Wagner College Theatre graduates Becca Barrett '16 and **Kyra Lee** were touring as performer-educators for Speak About It, a consent education and sexual assault prevention organization, visiting high school and college campuses with their one-hour show followed by discussions about sex and consent. Singer

Charlie Poveromo, aka "Charlie Romo," was voted "Best Musician on Staten Island" in a Staten Island Advance/silive.com readers' poll in Jan. 2020. WCT alumna **Vanessa Rebeil**, who studied stage management with Phill Hickox and Arturo Porazzi at Wagner, started Columbia University's MFA program in stage management in Aug. 2019.

2020

Seahawk linebacker **Cam Gill** made the NFL's Tampa Bay Buccaneers this September.



These new nursing alums, members of the Class of 2020, had their final semester at Wagner turned upside down by the pandemic. These second-degree nursing students in Prof. Teresa Powers's clinical studies group at Maimonides Hospital had only one thing on their minds when they put this graduation collage together in May 2020: uplifting their professors and fellow students. Thank you for the "Wagner Nursing 2020" shout-out!

In Memoriam

Celebrating lives that enriched the Wagner family

ALUMNI



Paris wedding, Peggy married Bill Reynolds, who later became president of Litton Industries International. They lived in Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Cal., Zurich, Switzerland and London, England before returning to the U.S. in 1980, dividing their time between a Middleburg, Va. farm and a pied-à-terre in Manhattan, N.Y.

A lifelong supporter of her alma mater, Peggy and husband Bill were elected to Wagner College's Board of Trustees in 1996. In 1998, they were awarded honorary doctorates, and in 2008 Peggy was named a lifetime trustee.

The generosity of Bill and Peggy Reynolds has benefitted numerous projects on the Wagner College campus, including the Spiro Sports Center expansion, our paved footpaths and the renovation of Reynolds House. Peggy left her alma mater a very generous bequest, whose magnitude is still being calculated.

LIFETIME TRUSTEE **Dr. Margaret "Peggy" Bambach Buck Reynolds** '40 H'98 died on Monday, March 23, 2020 at her home in Key Largo, Florida. She was 101 years old.

Born in Brooklyn, Peggy's family moved to Staten Island, where she graduated cum laude from Wagner College in 1940 with a bachelor's degree in English.

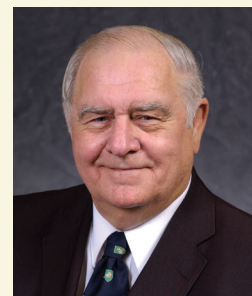
Fresh out of college, Peggy became Wagner's director of publicity in 1940. Three years later she married Orlando J. Buck, the son of Congressman Ellsworth Buck from Staten Island. Orlando was one of the 19 soldiers flying home on leave who died on Sept. 18, 1944 when their C-47 transport plane crashed into solid ice on an unnamed, uncharted peak 16 miles northeast of Mt. McKinley, Alaska.

Following Orlando's death, Peggy Buck signed up as a volunteer with the Red Cross for war relief work. Immediately after V-E Day, she was assigned to staff a Red Cross R&R club for American service members in Nice, on the French Riviera. In a 1948

LIFETIME TRUSTEE **Dr. Fred W. Lange** '53 H'06 of Sussex, N.J. died on Aug. 11, 2020. He was 88 years old. Fred graduated with a bachelor's degree in economics, later studying banking and finance at New York University. He was president and owner of Lange Financial Services, a private money management firm originally on Wall Street that moved its operations to Staten Island and then to New Jersey.

Fred was first elected to Wagner College's Board of Trustees in 1995, serving four terms before being named a lifetime trustee in 2007. He served as chairman of the Investment Committee for 10 years.

Fred was honored twice by his alma mater. In 2006 he was awarded an honorary doctor of humane letters degree. In 2013 he received the Wagner College



Alumni Association's highest service honor, the John "Bunny" Barbes '39 and Lila T. Barbes '40 Wagner Alumni Laureate.

Fred, a generous supporter of Wagner athletics, is the namesake for the track at Wagner College Stadium. He also provided financial support for the establishment of Wagner's Founding Fathers Lecture Series, which opened in 2018.



BROOKLYN NATIVE **James E. Powers Jr.** '63, a Wagner business graduate and Seahawk baseball player, died on April 4 of Covid-19 complications in a Manhattan hospital. Powers had worked for Frigidaire after graduation before becoming a medical supplies salesman. In 1965 he married alumna Beverly

Ann Phipps '63, a social worker. They were enthusiastic collectors of Black art, and when Powers was laid off in the 1980s, the couple decided to open the Spiral Gallery in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn, named in honor of the Spiral Group, a short-lived collective of Black artists formed in the early 1960s. Active in the late 1980s and early '90s, the gallery became a community known for nurturing Black artists and serving art-lovers.



Brian Morris '65, a former member of Wagner's Alumni Association board, died on June 8. The Staten Island native worked for a few years as a reporter at the Staten Island Advance and married his high school sweetheart, Maryrose Barranco '66 M'73, before becoming communications director at Wagner College, a position he held from 1968 to 1972. Under his watch, Black and Latinx students occupied Cunard Hall, demanding that Wagner take steps to become more diverse; 40 years later, Brian produced a film, "Seeds

of Change," documenting the incident that included interviews with several of the Cunard occupiers. After leaving Wagner, Brian embarked on a highly successful career in public relations on Staten Island, working for Borough Hall, several politicians and, at the end of his career, the Staten Island Zoo. "Brian was a consummate marketing and development professional and a true gentleman with a kind demeanor," said Ken Mitchell '87, executive director of the zoo.

Carol M. Haupt '67 M'69, a devoted elementary school teacher and a generous benefactor of her alma mater, died on June 13 at the age of 74. Born in New Britain, Conn., Carol joined Zeta Tau Alpha sorority and studied abroad for a semester at the Wagner College campus in Bregenz, Austria. She earned her doctorate in education from Rutgers University. Carol spent most of her 35-year career in education teaching the fourth grade at Staten Island's P.S. 69, where she was known for her love of her students, strict discipline, and a penchant for spelling. "I loved my job," Carol said when she retired in 2004. "I loved every day. Teaching was my life." Carol was very engaged with Wagner's Alumni Association, serving on her class's 45th and 50th anniversary reunion committees. She was a recipient of the college's Alumni Service Award, and she was a longtime member of the Heritage Society and the Wagner College Guild. A gift from Carol endowed a scholarship at Wagner for education students beginning in 2010.



Arnold Obey '68 M'73, a longtime marathon runner and retired Staten Island public school principal, died on March 22 from Covid-19 while on a trip in Puerto Rico. He was 73 years old. The Bronx native was a two-sport standout at Wagner in basketball and indoor track and field. In addition to his career as a teacher and school administrator, Arnold was an assistant coach for his alma mater's men's basketball team for three years, led the boys' basketball squad at Staten Island Academy for eight years, and served as a high school referee. His track career in high school and college led to 38 consecutive runs in the New York City Marathon. He would have



missed the 2012 marathon, when he suffered a stroke and underwent heart surgery, except that the competition was canceled that year because of Hurricane Sandy. Arnold was inducted into the Seahawk Hall of Fame in 1991. “Arnold Obey was one in a million,” said Staten Island Advance sportswriter Charlie De Biase Jr. “In all my time at the Advance, I can probably count on one hand how many people I’ve never heard a bad word about. Arnold, without a doubt, was one of them.”



Larry Ambrosino '69, who served part-time for two years as sports information director (from 1975 to 1977) for his alma mater, died on Aug. 28 of leukemia. Larry's professional life was devoted to educating young people on Staten Island and, for 10 years, in Shrewsbury, N.J. A president of the Staten Island Council of Boy Scouts,

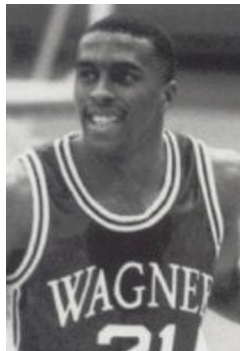
he was founder and chairman of the Staten Island Sports Hall of Fame and the Patrolman Rocco Laurie Memorial Scholarship Fund. Bestowed with numerous community awards, Larry was named a Wagner Alumni Fellow by the college's Alumni Association in 2017. “He was the quintessential kid at heart,” said his friend, former New York City Councilman Fred Cerullo, “always strong and youthful and energized. His love of Staten Island and those who call it home always came first — right after his family. Larry touched so many lives.”



Robert J. 'Bob' Schnurr '74 M'78, a longtime Wagner athletic supporter and statistician, died on Sept. 22. Bob volunteered as an assistant to the Seahawk basketball team throughout — and long after — his college career, traveling to all of the team's away games for more than 30 years. He also lent his

abilities as statistician to the football team (starting in 1978) and the women's volleyball team (from 1992 on). Bob earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration. A former president of the Seahawk Hardwood Club and member of the Hall of Fame committee, Bob was given the college's Alumni Service Award in 1985 and was himself inducted into the Athletics Hall of Fame in 2000. Last spring, as part

of the men's basketball Alumni Day ceremony in Sutter Gymnasium, he was recognized for 50 years of service to the Wagner Athletics program. “Bob Schnurr epitomized the Wagner College spirit for many years and was loved by everyone in the Seahawk community and beyond,” said Athletics Director Walt Hameline. “His passion for Wagner and dedication to our basketball teams and our Hall of Fame are immeasurable.”



Robert 'Bobby' Hopson '94 M'00 of Bridgehampton, N.Y., died on April 21 at the age of 48 of complications from diabetes. Hopson, a star on his high school basketball team, the Bridgehampton Killer Bees, was also a standout on the Wagner basketball team throughout his college career. He was inducted into the Seahawk Hall of Fame

in 2009, and was given similar honors by his high school in 2019. Hopson, whose Wagner degrees were in special education, was working for the year before his death with mentally and physically challenged residents of a house in East Hampton, Long Island, overseen by the nonprofit East End Disability Associates. “Bobby was a charismatic person who was liked by all,” said Wagner College Athletics Director Walt Hameline. “The Wagner community is deeply saddened by the news, and our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and loved ones.”



Scott Salinardi M'05 died April 23 after a heart attack at the age of 45. Since 2004, Scott had been director of programs for Lifestyles for the Disabled, a Staten Island organization that provides enriching learning experiences for intellectually disabled people, established by his father Richard Salinardi

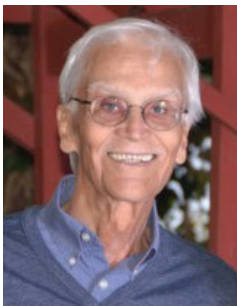
'69 in 1994. Born and raised on Staten Island, Scott earned his bachelor's degree in public policy from the University of Chicago and an MBA from Wagner College. “Scott could have employed his skills to be financially successful in any endeavor,” said Staten Island District Attorney Michael McMahon. “Instead, he devoted his life to serve the most vulnerable, our intellectually disabled community, through Lifestyles.”



The death of Wagner College student-athlete **Nashawn Brooks '23** following a June 9 traffic accident came as a deep shock to the Wagner community and the Seahawk football team as well as his former classmates, teachers and coaches at Irvington (N.J.) High School, where he had been named the 2019 male athlete of the year.

A memorial gathering on the steps of his alma mater, organized by Irvington's mayor, was attended by more than 200 grieving friends, classmates, teachers, coaches, community leaders and neighbors. "Nashawn was loved," said Wagner language professor Dane Stalcup. "He was excitable in the best way, and he was interested in the idea that there are other things in the world to know about." President Joel Martin said, "This is an unimaginable, tragic loss. He will forever be part of the fabric of Wagner College."

FACULTY



FORMER ENGLISH PROFESSOR **Donald M. Hensley, 89**, died on July 5, 2019, in Gastonia, North Carolina, where he had been born in 1929. He taught at Wagner for 41 years, from 1968 to 2009. He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, a master's degree

from Wake Forest University, and a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania. He is survived by his wife, Yan Hang Zhang-Hensley '02.

experienced by his family, friends and colleagues. Yet words are all we have. Brian Palestis was a great teacher, a great scholar and, most importantly, a great person. We will miss his presence at Wagner, but he will always be in our hearts."



Brian Palestis, who joined the Wagner College community as a biology professor in 2001, died Jan. 28, 2020 after a long battle with brain cancer. Recognized with three different faculty awards for excellence during his career, Brian held the Martha Megerle Endowed Chair from 2014 to 2016. Well known for his

studies of the common tern in New Jersey's Barnegat Bay, Brian published more than 30 journal articles on animal behavior, ecology and evolutionary biology. He also put his undergraduate experience as a member of Princeton's fencing team to use as volunteer assistant coach for Wagner's women's fencing team. "A soft-spoken man, Brian's dedication to the college spoke volumes," said President Joel Martin and Provost Jeffrey Kraus in a joint statement. "Words cannot ease the loss



Eva Lazar Gabriel, a music teacher at Wagner College from 1971 to 1986 and a longtime member of the Wagner College Guild, died on June 17. Born in Budapest, Hungary in 1932, Eva studied at the prestigious Franz Liszt Music Conservatory before fleeing the country with her first husband in the wake of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. She

came to the United States in the late 1950s and moved to Staten Island in 1965, quickly becoming part of the cultural and artistic fabric of the community. After teaching at Wagner College, Eva opened the Lazar Vocal Studio in her home, donating the profits she earned to cultural and environmental organizations on Staten Island. The recipient of numerous awards from local organizations, Eva was named a Staten Island Advance Woman of Achievement in 1997 and an American Association of University Women Woman of Distinction in 2019. "Eva loved Wagner and was committed to the Wagner Guild," said Guild president and Wagner trustee Aletta Kipp Diamond '65 H'15. "Her warm smile will be missed by many from the Guild and the Wagner family."

Deaths reported to Wagner College from June 27, 2018 to Oct. 18, 2020.

IN MEMORIAM

ALUMNI

Margaret "Peggy" Bambach Buck
Reynolds '40 H'98
Virginia R. Clark Peel '42
Helen Sandberg Swartz '42
Virginia "Ginny" Ruth King '46 M'52
Rev. Alastair Sellars '46
Gloria Femenella Wood '46 M'48
Florence Welkowitz Toder '47
Ronald H. Reynier Sr. '48
Alva E. Schulz '48
George A. Kruse '49
Dr. Herman Lew '49
Rev. William "Bill" Luger '49
Louise Zarelli Banks '50
Ralph W. Barber '50
Olga Antonopoulos Doerzbacher '50
Walter Dohrmann '50
John G. Gerretsen '50
Rev. Omar N. Gjerness '50
Julia Kneeshaw Hayes '50
Helen Neville Kelly '50
Robert Edward Reisch '50
Edith Knudson Shamblin '50 M'53
Richard W. Baller '51
Rev. Bernard F. Engelhardt '51
Eric T. Hansen '51
John Lagana Jr. '51 M'56
Dr. Arnold Sneider '51
Anita Dinnerstein Targan '51
Rev. George E. Handley '52
George J. Salomon '52
Douglass A. Wheeler '52
Richard L. Dury '53
Russell M. Grill '53 M'58
Fred W. Lange '53 H'06
Adolph Moller '53
Joan H. Harrison Olsen '53
Phyllis Marie McBreen Pellegrini '53
Janet U. Warnecke Muller '54
David C. Schildwachter Sr. '54
Herbert F. "Herb" Schumann '54 M'63
Beulah G. Wong '54
Louisa H. Cirillo Baumhoff '55
Walter J. Flannelly '55
Dorothy H. Harris Lapnow '55
Carol Per Lee Plumb '55 M'70
Walter C. Romanofsky '55
Helene Massey Schmitt '55 M'58
Dr. David Earle Williams '55
Reginald J. Kennedy '56
Edward D. Peterson '56
Carol Arkwright Price '56 M'73

Richard F. Bailey '57 M'68
Beverly A. Bettinger Collins '57
Harry Agoratus '58
John "Jack" Guzi Jr. M'58
Ethel Andrews Terkelsen M'58
William C. Jensen '59 M'65
Michael S. "Mike" Simon '59
Karla Huebing Tyson '59 M'63
George A. Hassinger '60
Robert W. Johnson '60
Harold Thomas "Harp" Junta '60
Harry P. Orlando '60
Lucy Ann Parsons '60
Charles J. Smith '60
Robert William "Bob" Smith '60
David Peter Welker '60
Ingrid Lily Arend Buswell '61 M'81
Helen R. Powell Kubik M'61
Peter E. Perret '61
Angelo J. Coscia '62
Fredrick H. McCarthy '62
Robert B. Waller '62
Dr. John F. Olsen '63
James E. Powers Jr. '63
Gail Flotten Chambliss '64
John L. "Jack" Henson '64
Mary Lou Nowack-Wysocki '64
Carole B. Rose Davis M'65
John J. Dugan Jr. M'65
William A. Gemmel Jr. '65
Elizabeth A. Siemers Henriksen '65
Rev. John T. Hicks '65
John Hood Hord '65
Brian A. Morris '65
Lillian S. Orrok '65
Suzanne H. Haylock Schell '65
Frank J. Gabriel '66 M'71
Dr. Dudley W. Goetz '66
Ann Wargo Hobson '66
Dr. Paul G. Isler '66
Patricia Aust Scalice M'66
Andrew Schmitt Jr. '66
Carol M. Haupt '67 M'69
Richard Wayne Hogan '67
Connie Burr Kiefer '67
Elizabeth Louise Callahan Veisley '67
Arnold Obey '68 M'73
Vincent Romeo '68
Dr. Thomas Yarcheski '68
Lawrence E. "Larry" Ambrosino '69
Alan M. Baratta '69
Oliver R. Featherston '69
Leslie W. Howard '69
Francis "Frank" M. Lo Russo '69

Dr. Jeffrie J. Silverberg '69
Henry Simon '69
Donna J. Sturgis '69
Charles J. Trachta '69
Dr. Kathleen J. Holik M'71
Dr. Kathy Perricone Kleinlein '71 M'74
Barbara J. Giannetto Maltz '71
Henry Williams M'71
Rev. James R. Bocchino '72
Helen W. Bolton M'72
Catherine Castell '73
Ann Beck Goodman '74 M'76
Dr. Paul A. Greccay '74
Raymond T. Pollock '74
Robert J. "Bob" Schnurr '74 M'78
Barbara A. Qualben Brown '77
Raphael Marie Spano M'77
Margaret Halliday Gallagher '78 M'81
Kazimir Rucando '79
Anne Marie Levan-Volpe '80
Gregory J. LaMorte '81 M'83
Theresa Deborah "Treesa" Wilson
Lacey '82
Brian Keith Saddler '84
Harold S. Prince H'85
James J. Pearsall M'86
Elizabeth T. Lauenstein '87
Justine Dahl Summers '88
Patricia Mary "Pat" Farrington M'89
Kim Ann Bonventre '91
Ann E. Noble '91
John J. Flanigan '92
Rev. Michael G. Cedro '94
Robert F. "Bobby" Hopson '94 M'00
Scott Salinardi M'05
Stewart Briggs Smith '06
Kaylea R. Sasek '10
Nashawn Brooks '23

FACULTY

Eva Lazar Gabriel
Donald M. Hensley
Brian Palestis

STAFF

Philip Chiolo
Frances M. "Franny" Conlon
Edward V. Curtis
Gloria Hurley

WAGNER COLLEGE

A SOCIALLY DISTANCED WELCOME

Last August, these upperclassmen coordinated freshman move-in — which, like everything else about 2020, was both the same as always ... and completely different! Even so, life on Grymes Hill — like the Anchor itself — abides.

