

SUMMER 2012

THE LINK FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

# WAGNER

## **Nor Any Drop To Drink**

*What Bangladesh  
can teach us about  
a precious resource*

**The View:** *Richard Guarasci's Mission* • **Raising Philly:** *Rich Negrin '88* • **World Premiere:** *Goddess Wheel*

## Crowning Moment

Topping off the yearlong Main Hall restoration project, on April 5 a crane lifted a new dome atop the south tower. This fiberglass reconstruction minutely mimics the shape, design, color, and texture of the original cast concrete, at 15 percent of the weight.

PHOTOGRAPH: DUSTIN FENSTERMACHER



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### **Nor Any Drop to Drink**

Despite Bangladesh's riches of water resources, people are dying for lack of clean water. Where does the solution lie?



# From the President

*Stellar graduates will make a difference*



**Their achievements** are the building blocks of bright futures.

Now that it's summer vacation time, take a few minutes to bask in the reflected glow of Wagner's newest alumni, the class of 2012, and their legacy of academic achievement, leadership, and commitment to civic engagement.

Twenty-nine members of this class completed honor theses, and several received national recognition for their scholarly research. More than 100 of them studied abroad in 33 countries, ranging from Argentina to Thailand. While abroad, many committed themselves to public service, such as **Eileen McPartlan** and other nursing students who worked with refugees in Haiti, and **Sierra Marantz**, who supported the Pisgat Ze'ev community center in Jerusalem.

The class strongly participated in Wagner's broad tapestry of civic commitments across New York City and in Staten Island, particularly with our Port Richmond Partnership. Students like **Lisa Imbriano**, a Spanish major, spent hours tutoring Mexican children, and **Jennifer Ida**, a very talented anthropology major with minors in microbiology and Spanish, who worked closely with El Centro del Inmigrante in Port Richmond. **Jennifer Claycombe** worked with Make the Road New York, in Port Richmond, setting up friendship dinners between Mexican and African-American families to help reduce stereotyping and build mutual understanding.

The many academic, civic, campus, and athletic achievements of this class are becoming the building blocks of bright futures. **Hugh Gilmore**, who majored in Spanish and minored in French, studied in Argentina and France; he will pursue a master's in design in Milan, Italy. **Jennie Rivero**, an education student, will head to the Bank Street School in Manhattan to complete a master's in literacy. **Jessica Verderosa** will attend Fordham University's graduate program in

English. Her honors thesis, "Vampires as Home-Wreckers: Gender Roles in 'Carmilla,' *Dracula*, and *Coraline*," could become the latest film rage in a few years.

**Rose Tobiassen**, an anthropology major and a member of Habitat for Humanity, studied in Kenya and Peru. Next year, Rose will be studying at Durham University in England, pursuing a master's in development and anthropology. Joining her in England will be **Lacey Flint**, a history and education double major, who will start her master's program in museum and gallery studies at the University of Leicester. Yet more are headed to excellent law, dental, and medical schools.

Among those entering professional careers immediately are graduate students **Maria DeSantis**, **Michael DiTommaso**, **Alexandra Ricciardi** and **Vincent DeLuca** with Pricewaterhouse Coopers. **Lauren Pettinato**, a Spiro Scholar, exemplifies our spectacular nursing students, who continue to meet the highest professional expectations with an ethic of care. She will begin her career at the Johns Hopkins Medical Center.

These young people face a time of great challenges in our global economy, in our environment, in issues of justice and opportunity, and in issues of war and peace. Along with the faculty and staff of this community, I have confidence that their commitment to learning and compassion for others will thaw the chill of these global problems, and set all of us on a path to a better world. They have my deepest affection and best wishes.

RICHARD GUARASCI  
PRESIDENT



## From the Editor

### *One man's contribution*

Over the past few months, I have had the privilege of getting to know an extraordinary man: Mohammad Alauddin, professor of chemistry at Wagner College and champion of better health for the poor in Bangladesh, his native land.

For many years now, Professor Alauddin has practically lived on both sides of the globe at once, teaching here at Wagner while also doing research to find solutions for Bangladesh's massive water contamination problem. He has funded much of this work himself, and provided innumerable life-saving water filters to needy families.

He told me that when he was asked by the Bangladeshi government to test arsenic levels in water in 1993, he had no idea about the urgency of the problem. A few years later, he started

reading in the international press about the high levels of arsenic in the drinking water. Alarmed, he convened a conference on the issue in 1999 at Wagner, and he started his own research program.

In recent years, he added another focus area — indoor air pollution, which has made pneumonia the No. 1 killer of Bangladeshi children. He helped develop a project that uses readily available materials and methods to produce more efficient cook stoves with a ventilation system. Bangladeshi women are now making these stoves for their own communities.

"I started visiting Bangladesh because of the arsenic issue, and slowly and slowly, I felt like I'm thrust into it now, I have to work



on it," Alauddin says. "I just worked on one philosophy: That is, Bangladesh is a huge population, and I have seen so many people with arsenic skin lesions, you cannot believe it. ... I saw all this suffering of these people. "So every time I come back, I just think to myself I cannot solve the problem for Bangladesh. No organization can solve the problem for Bangladesh. But, I can at least take care of one family. Can I take care of one family? Five families? Ten families? That I can do. Then at least I can say, that was my contribution."

*Laura Barlament*  
EDITOR,  
WAGNER MAGAZINE



### On the Cover

*A man plants rice in a field in Bangladesh. Even agricultural products are contaminated because of the naturally occurring arsenic in the groundwater, used for drinking and irrigation.*

PHOTOGRAPH: HABIBUL HAQUE/DRIK

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# From Our Readers



*Editor's Note: In the fall 2011 issue, we ran two letters by alumni honoring the late Professor Edythe Kershaw Larson; after that, we received two more letters from alumni inspired by professors who have lately passed away.*

## The Mild Bunch

We read of Murvel Annan's passing in the most recent *Wagner Magazine* and decided to use the opportunity to make note of four outstanding faculty members who had major impact on our lives and the lives of many others in and outside of the classroom. The four are Dr. Annan; his wife, Helen; and Dr. John and Dr. Jane Bacher. We met them sometime between 1962 and 1966.



The Wagner we knew during that time was not a hotbed of civil unrest over race relations or the war in Vietnam, as were other campuses in the country. It was an island unto itself with a relatively conservative and ethnically homogeneous student body and faculty.



Following a week of speakers on campus drawn from the leadership of various national civil rights organizations, a small group of students and these four faculty members began to meet to discuss how they might positively impact campus life and the greater community in relation to racial equality. Don't get me wrong, we were a pretty mild bunch compared to contemporaries

“ I thank you now for that one clear moment of insight and encouragement. ”

at places like Berkeley and Columbia. We called ourselves the Wagner College Forum for Individual Freedom, not a very radical name.

We did a lot of talking, as the name would imply, but also participated in a tutoring program for promising students in Harlem to help them get into college and tried to influence college administration to be more aggressive in recruiting minority students.

It was the Bachers and Annans to whom we went for help in understanding the social issues around us and for solace when President Kennedy was assassinated. They treated us as adults but shared the insights of much more mature and experienced people. These were fine people, who lived their beliefs.

We are not sure what impact those modest efforts had on the community or the campus. We are sure that our association with these

four people had an impact on our lives and those of the others they touched. When we see the ethnic diversity and community connection that exists at today's Wagner, we know that the Bachers and Annans would be proud. We are.

DAVID G. POCKELL '66 &  
NAOMI KLC POCKELL '66  
LAFAYETTE, CALIFORNIA

## Magical Words

I am an emeritus professor from Lehigh University; I retired after teaching in the English department for 29 years. I came to Wagner as a non-traditional student circa 1960; after attending New Dorp High School in Staten Island, I worked in downtown New York City for various firms in clerical jobs. I had also been in the Army for two years and in a Roman Catholic seminary for one year; and, for 19 or 20 months, I bummed around Greenwich Village trying to write fiction and poetry and taking a course or two at the New School.

When I met the girl I would later marry, she urged me to go to college. So I took a night course in economics at Wagner, dreamily planning to major in economics because of my paltry experience on Wall Street. I disliked it as much as I had in high school. My next course was a basic introduction to literature, taught by a young, lanky instructor named Brandkamp.

Midway through the semester, I had to write a paper for him on Ernest Hemingway. A few nights after turning it in, he told me that he wanted to talk to me after class; my heart sank; what had I done wrong? I had thought the paper was pretty good, but now I worried.

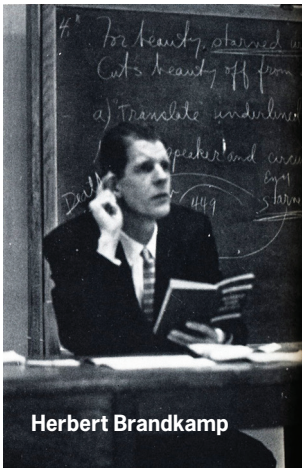
What happened after class is as clear to me today as it was that night: "What are you doing in this class?" he asked. I replied that I thought I was doing fairly well. His response was abrupt and emphatic: "You should be up here teaching this stuff," he said pointedly. They were magical words, for I had always loved literature but never knew I could translate

that into a way of living. And so the next day, I dismissed courses in economics from my mind, declared a major in English and, after marrying the young woman in 1961, became a full-time Wagner College student.

I graduated in two and a half years; won a National Defense Education Act (NDEA) Fellowship to Ohio University, where I received my M.A. and Ph.D.; then returned east to teach for 29 years at Lehigh University.

Now I have learned that Herbert Brandkamp died in 2007, and it is too late to thank him for turning my life around, for giving me the direction I needed to pursue a profession that I have loved for all these years. But I thank you now, young Professor Brandkamp, for that one clear moment of insight and encouragement.

ROBERT HARSON '63  
EMMAUS, PENNSYLVANIA



### STUDENT WORK PUBLISHED

In the summer 2010 issue of *Wagner Magazine*, I presented a feature about a Wagner urban studies class in which the students interviewed recent immigrants in Port Richmond, Staten Island, and wrote their stories.

Claire Regan '80, adjunct professor of journalism and associate managing editor of the *Staten Island Advance*, coached the class in interviewing and writing. This spring, the *Advance* published the students' immigrant profiles in a series entitled, "Putting a Face on Immigration: Six Profiles of Latinos in Port Richmond Shed Light and Defy Stereotypes."

You can find a link to this fascinating series at [www.wagner.edu/wagnermagazine](http://www.wagner.edu/wagnermagazine).

— Laura Barlament, Editor

## We'd Love to Hear from You

We welcome letters from readers. Letters should refer to material published in the magazine and include the writer's full name, address, and

telephone number. The editor reserves the right to determine the suitability of letters for publication and to edit them for accuracy and length.

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# Upon the Hill

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

## An Offering of Hope

Elie Wiesel challenges the class of 2012 to stand against hatred and despair

**E**lie Wiesel, a man who has the moral authority to rebuke U.S. presidents and the United Nations General Assembly, addressed the 600 Wagner graduates with powerful words of hope and challenge on May 18.

Recipient of the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize, the 83-year-old Wiesel spoke for nine spellbinding minutes at commencement after receiving an honorary doctorate in humane letters.

Also honored were Louise Repage Kaufman '75 M'78, outgoing chair of the Wagner College Board of Trustees; and Howard Braren '50, board member, Athletic Hall of Fame inductee, and co-founder of the Wagner Heritage Society.


In his address, Wiesel mischievously mentioned his most famous book, his Holocaust memoir *Night*: "When I came, some of you stopped me and said, 'I read your book,' in singular. The naïf in me would have asked, 'Which one?' But I am generous, and I didn't."

He admitted that *Night* is "special ... in [his] life," because without it, he would not have written any of his others, which number more than 50.

His main purpose, echoed in his many other speeches around the world, is to challenge his audience with the question of what the world has learned since the Holocaust. Despite the bleak evidence of continuing racism, war, anti-Semitism, and extreme poverty, he encouraged the students to take a stand against hatred and despair.



"The thing not to forget is hope," he concluded. "Remember that hope is not a gift given from God to us; hope is a gift, an offering, that only we human beings can give to one another."

 You can find a video of his speech at [www.wagner.edu/wagnermagazine](http://www.wagner.edu/wagnermagazine).



## Remembering R. J.

Nursing student's tragic death leads to memorial fund endowment

**T**he driver who hit and killed Wagner nursing student Ronald "R.J." Tillman while he was bicycling home from campus on February 12 is still at large. In the meantime, Tillman's family and friends, plus alumni who raised money decades ago in memory of another tragically slain Wagner nursing student, are coming together to create something good out of their heartbreak and sorrow.

Tillman was struck on Howard Avenue while heading toward Clove Road at about 9 p.m. on that Sunday evening. He had been studying in the library with his fellow students in Wagner's accelerated bachelor's degree program in nursing.

The 29-year-old from Syracuse, New York, had graduated from Brooklyn College with a degree in film production and worked in that field, but he found it was neither as steady nor as satisfying as he expected, says his mother, Nancy



## International Reach

For the first time this year, Wagner broadcast commencement live on the Internet. Visitors from 29 countries tuned in; the top five in terms of numbers of visitors were:

1. United States
2. Ecuador
3. Russia
4. Pakistan
5. Egypt



Tillman. Influenced by a former roommate who was a nurse, he came to Wagner to complete a second bachelor's degree in nursing.

"He loved it," says Nancy Tillman. "I can't tell you the phone calls we had where he told me how happy he was. He said, 'Finally I found something I love. It's something I know I want to do.'"

His fellow students and professors testified to his gifts as a nurse and his commitment to patient care. They raised \$14,000 toward a memorial fund for R. J. Tillman at Wagner College. The money will be used for the R. J. Tillman Award, given annually to second-degree nursing students who exhibit deep caring, sensitivity, and concern for classmates and patients. The first award will be made in December.

In combination with another memorial fund for a Wagner nursing student, the Tillman Fund will reach the endowment level, allowing these annual awards to be given in perpetuity.

That fund memorialized Helen Sorgan '76, who was murdered on campus on November 7, 1974. In 1975, Pete Knudsen '75, Bill Rehm '76, and Howard Graeffe '75 organized a walkathon in which hundreds of Wagner students participated, raising \$10,000 in Sorgan's memory.

Knudsen, who is both a trustee of the Helen Sorgan fund and a

member of the Wagner College Board of Trustees, endorses the addition of the Sorgan fund to the Tillman fund. "I think it's going to be more effective for the College and honor Helen's memory," he says, noting that only one scholarship was given from the Sorgan fund.

Knudsen hopes that now more donors will designate their gifts to the Sorgan or Tillman funds. "This is a perpetual fund," Knudsen says. "I think this is a really good target for those who appreciate the history and excellence of our nursing program."

## Legal Appeal

Top executives share advice for aspiring attorneys

In an environment where some law schools have slashed their enrollment, and some law graduates have sued their alma maters for allegedly misrepresenting their job prospects, what's a liberal arts graduate talented in argument and skilled in analysis to do?

Aspiring attorneys at Wagner got some solid advice this spring from executives of prominent law firm Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney: Laurie Lenigan, director of legal recruiting, and Richard Morgan, managing director (and parent of Ricky Morgan '12).

The panel's organizer, Tyler Seling '12, summarized Lenigan and Morgan's key tips:

1. **Be diverse** in your coursework and extracurricular activities. "I

told them that Intro to Acting was my favorite class, and they thought that was fantastic," says Seling, a Spanish major and a football player. Firms are looking for well-rounded, team-oriented workers.

2. **"Don't fret** about not going to a top-tier school," but make sure you graduate at the top of your class.
3. **Secure summer apprenticeships** and make yourself indispensable.



## Hawks Talk

Follow these summer adventures on the new Wagner student blog

The Hawk Talk blog gives Wagner students a voice on the College's website. Summer reporters include:

- Erik Arntzen '13, taking art and business courses at the Lorenzo de Medici Institute in Florence, Italy.
- Vanessa Ayllon '14, a double major in nursing and Spanish, improving her Spanish in Cuzco, Peru.
- Chris DeFilippi '14, planning Wagner Orientation.
- Anthropology professor Celeste Gagnon, three students, and one alumna are doing archaeology, ethnography, and community service in Huanchaco, Peru.

- Kellie Griffith '14, interning for Wagner admissions and working for the Port Richmond Partnership.
- Trey Nicosia '15, playing in the Midwest Collegiate Baseball League for the Rockford Foresters.
- Lynn Tay '15, a biology major with minors in chemistry and English, spending seven weeks in Singapore.

 Find Hawk Talk at [www.wagner.edu](http://www.wagner.edu).



## In Memoriam

Wagner mourns after microbiology professor's unexpected passing

We learned on June 21 that Roy Mosher, associate professor and director of the master's program in microbiology, passed away at his home in Staten Island. He was an inspiration to his students and a driving force behind the success of Wagner's microbiology program (see "The Next Generation: Microbiology Is Still Serious Fun for Wagner Students," fall 2011). The next issue of *Wagner Magazine* will include a full memorial to this remarkable professor.

## RENEW YOUR PURPOSE AT WORK

*Tips for successful internships*

Natrina Roper, intern program associate for the William J. Clinton Foundation, talked about how to be a great intern and how an organization benefits from interns, at the second annual Wagner Internship Initiative on April 16, held at Scholastic Inc. in Manhattan.

- A great intern is “low maintenance” and willing to do any task with pleasure.
- A great intern takes advantage of all opportunities to speak with staff and learn more.
- A great intern has to be kicked out of the office at the end of the day.
- A great intern brings freshness, youth, and energy to the organization.

“Because they come in so bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, it reminds us as staff members why we are there and why the work we do is important,” Roper concluded.



Contact the Center for Career Development at 718-390-3181 for more information about Wagner Interns.

## WINDOW ON WAGNER: *Stoughton Cottage*

After the College settled into its new home on Grymes Hill in 1918, the first buildings added to the campus were two cottages for faculty housing. Constructed around 1922, one was torn down in 1960 to make way for the Horrmann Library; but the other still stands, and today contains the public safety and human resources offices.

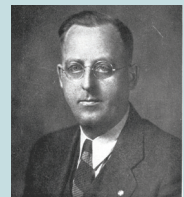
The cottages were designed in the popular Craftsman style, similar to the President’s House (called Kairos House today), built in 1917–18 in advance of the College’s move, as well as the Stapleton home of early College leader Pastor Frederic Sutter, class of 1894.

The surviving faculty cottage was built for Professor Clarence C. Stoughton, a high school history teacher and devoted churchman who came to Wagner Memorial Lutheran College from suburban Rochester in 1919. He served as the principal of our high school program from 1923 to 1927 before joining a real estate firm on Staten Island for several years. He returned to the College in 1932 as registrar, and the following year was named acting dean.

In 1935, Stoughton was elected president of Wagner College, the first layman named to that position. He was beloved by the student body, who dedicated the first Kallista of his presidency “to ‘Prof’ Stoughton ... as a testimony of our appreciation.”

Stoughton’s experience at Wagner made him a firm believer in liberal arts colleges. In his inaugural address he declared, “While we do not need more universities, we do need more small liberal arts colleges, where personality remains sacred, where the student is always an individual, where individuality is developed and emphasized.”

Stoughton, who left Wagner in 1945 to serve in the stewardship office of the United Lutheran Church in America, later became president of Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio. He died on August 31, 1975.



*President Clarence C. Stoughton*

– Lee Manchester

*Stoughton Cottage, ca. 1922*





**ILC 8:** Global Justice and Leadership



**T**his spring, Wagner students planted a living symbol on campus.

The students were taking an Intermediate Learning Community (ILC), part of the Wagner Plan curriculum for students in their sophomore and junior years, which integrated a history course about leadership in twentieth-century conflicts and a government course about civil liberties and human rights.

This ILC included a special project, the Global Leadership Garden, inspired by renowned South African leader Nelson Mandela, who cultivated a garden during his long imprisonment. “I saw the garden as a metaphor for certain aspects of my life,” Mandela said. “A leader must also tend his garden.

He too plants seeds, and then watches, cultivates, and harvests the result.”

The garden became a means of outreach to seventh-grade students from Port Richmond, Staten Island, who helped research quotes from leaders worldwide. Located between Parker and Foundation halls, the Global Leadership Garden includes plants from five continents, along with plaques displaying inspiring words from sources ranging from Vince Lombardi to Pericles to Benazir Bhutto.

“This experience will be one that I will never forget,” wrote Chanez Robinson ’13 in an essay reflecting on the project. “I gave something back to Wagner College, and it is and will become something beautiful and great.”

**Flying High**

Recapping an amazing 2011–12 season of men’s basketball, by the numbers

**25-6 win-loss record:** The best. Ever.

**59-54 victory over #15 Pitt:** First Seahawk defeat of a nationally ranked team since 1978–79.

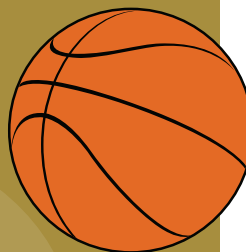
**15 NEC wins:** Matching the school record.

**12 true road wins:** Leading the nation during the regular season.

**20 wins by February 8:** Earliest an NEC team ever hit this mark.

**11th nationally:** 80.6 winning percentage at season’s end.

**1.3 million:** YouTube views of Kenny Ortiz’s game-winning shot against Santa Clara in the Cable Car Championship.




# Arts & Letters

## What Confucius Says Today

Wagner’s Shaohua Hu, associate professor of government and politics, answers the question of Confucius’s relevance to modern China in “Confucianism and Contemporary Chinese Politics.” Originally published in 2007 in the journal *Politics & Policy*, the article was rereleased in April 2012, for the journal’s 40th anniversary issue, as one of the top 10 articles of the past decade.

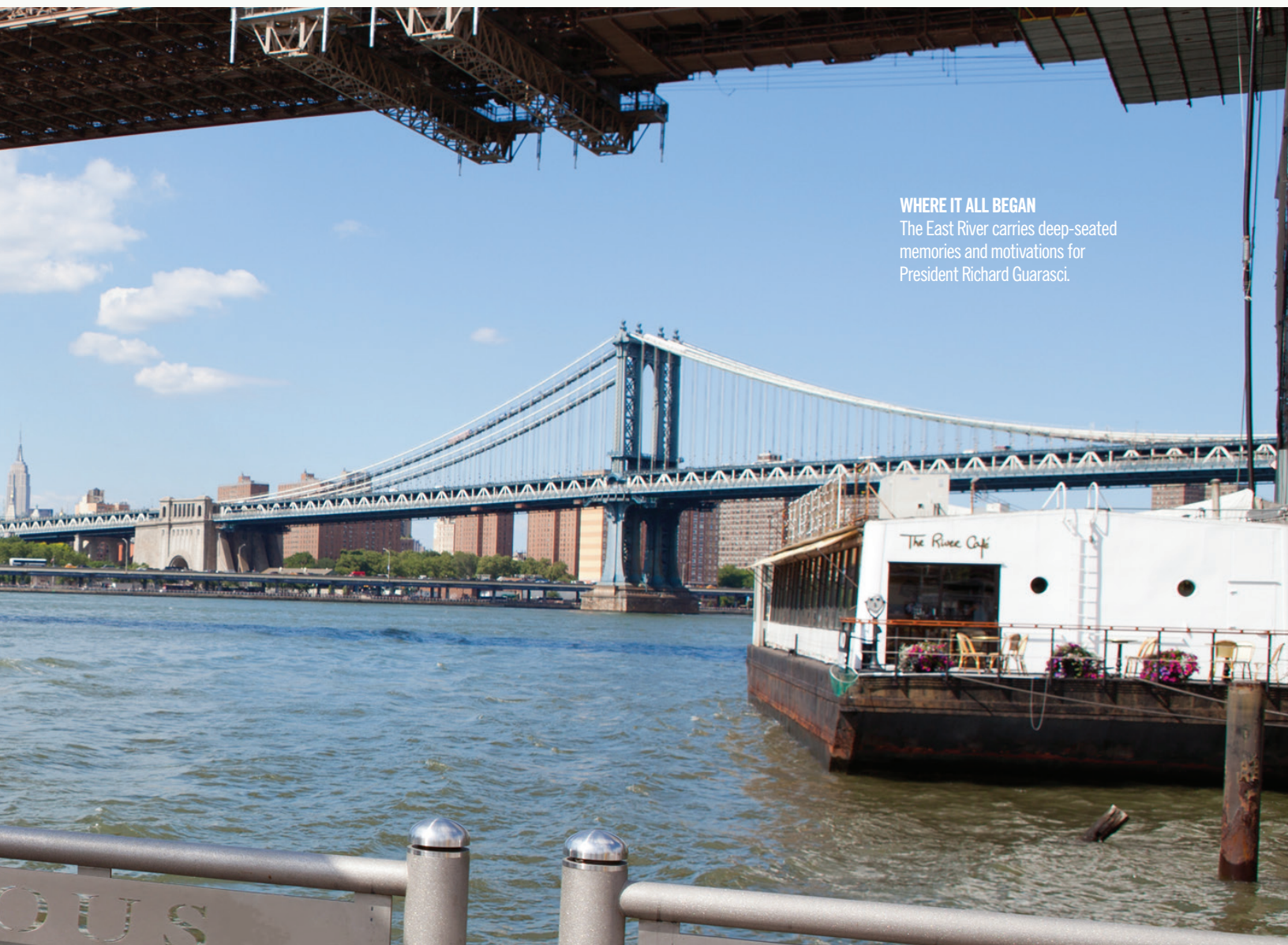
“As China has become more powerful, prosperous, and self-reliant,” Hu writes, “many Chinese take comfort from and pride in Confucianism as an expression of Chinese values, traditions, and culture.” On the other hand, he concludes, “in today’s China, capitalism and communism are more influential than Confucianism.”

 Find a link to the article at [www.wagner.edu/wagnermagazine](http://www.wagner.edu/wagnermagazine).





‘THAT’S NOT A VIEW  
— THAT’S A —  
MISSION’



#### WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

The East River carries deep-seated memories and motivations for President Richard Guarasci.

**THIS IS A YEAR** of many anniversaries for Richard Guarasci. • It has been 10 years since the trustees elected him president of Wagner College, and 15 years since he was named provost. • It has also been a full century since the arrival in America of the first Guarasci, Richard's grandfather, Louis. • Family, memory, and story intertwine to describe how Richard Guarasci arrived at this moment in his life, and ours. *By Lee Manchester*

**W**hen Richard Guarasci was growing up in Flatbush, Brooklyn, his father usually got home from work well after the children's dinner time. Richard's mother let the boy sit with his dad while she served his meal in their small, second-floor kitchen.

After he finished eating, Frank Guarasci, a production manager in a ladies garment factory, "loved to tell me stories, almost parables, from his childhood," Richard recalls. "One story he told me many times

involved his swimming with friends near their house by the Brooklyn Bridge, in the oil-slicked waters of the East River."

Although his parents, Louis and Brigida, had repeatedly told him to stay out of the river, thick with New York City's commercial traffic, 14-year-old Frank came home one day, black with East River oil. Frank's father was a gentle man, but Brigida ordered her husband to "teach the boy a lesson" so that he would stay out of the dangerous waters for good. Father and son went into the bedroom — there was only one — and closed the door.

Standing in front of Frank, belt in hand, Louis broke down and cried.

Louis had survived the sulfur mines of Sicily as a boy and worked seven hard years in the quarries of Tunisia. He had celebrated his 25th birthday, alone, aboard the S.S. *La Provence* en route from Le Havre to New York, seeking a better life for himself. Entering the harbor, his ship had crossed the mouth of the very river in which his son now tempted fate on a daily basis.

How ironic would it be for this river to rise up and swallow his boy, after all that?



### THREE GENERATIONS

*Top left:* The first generation of Guarascis in New York, Louis and Brigida, circa 1915.

*Top right:* Frank and Joan Guarasci's 1938 wedding photo.

*Bottom left:* Carin Tomasuolo and Richard Guarasci in 1964, when Carin was a senior in high school and Richard was a Fordham freshman.

*Bottom right:* Richard and Carin Guarasci today in Brooklyn, where both of their families have their American roots.



“My father Frank never swam in the East River after that,” Richard Guarasci says. “That encounter seemed to move him beyond anything else that passed between him and his dad, before or since.”

And to this day, that story — and that river — continue to have deep significance for Guarasci. Their symbolic power eventually drew him to Wagner College, and it has continued to inform his vision of leadership.

### **RICHARD GUARASCI'S GRANDFATHER**

was born Luigi Guarasci in 1887 in Enna, then known as Castrogiovanni, a small city in the middle of Sicily. As a boy, Luigi worked in slave-like conditions in Sicily's sulfur mines. At the age of 13, he fled across the Mediterranean to the French protectorate of Tunisia, working for seven years in the quarries of Bizerte before embarking upon the electrician's trade in Tunis. Finally, in late 1911, Luigi — now using the French version of his name, Louis — started preparing for his next great leap: the journey to America. His ship docked at Ellis Island just over a century ago, on March 10, 1912.

The next year, Brigida Viggiani emigrated from Enna to New York, and she and Louis were married. Their first child, Frank, was born a year later — and thus began the Guarascis' American family. Between 1917 and 1932, Louis and Brigida had three more children, all girls.

“My grandfather Louis spoke five languages,” Richard Guarasci says. “Though unschooled, he had an incredible thirst for knowledge. He bought the *Encyclopedia Britannica* on an installment plan from a traveling salesman. He believed that if he could read the encyclopedia from beginning to end, he would be a fully educated human being — so that's what he did.”

The Depression was hard on the Guarascis, forcing them to pull together. Though Louis worked as a mechanic on the Brooklyn trolley line, his pay was meager. Son Frank had to quit school before he could graduate, finding a job in the garment trade; a few years later, his sister Angela followed him, securing work in a dress shop. In 1939, Louis died unexpectedly — just a year after Frank married Joan Minardi.

Frank and Joan had to combine finances with Joan's parents to buy the house in Flatbush where they raised their children, Patricia and Richard. That house on Westminster Road was packed with family, from the grandparents on the ground floor to two of Joan's younger sisters in the attic.

It was also a place that started to shape Richard's educational ideals. “Every Sunday, we had a huge family dinner,” he says. “Like any big family, we had a tremendous diversity of personalities, and Sunday meals at that table felt a little like Grand Central Station — there was always a lot being said, with conflict, laughter, jealousies, affinities going on simultaneously.

“Without even realizing it, you learn a lot of skills in that environment: how to deal with different personalities, when to speak and when to be silent, when to be funny and when to be serious, who to listen to and who to ignore.

“I've always used that as a metaphor for education. The institution is like the table; it's the sacred place — and learning is the food. And out of the cacophony of voices around that table, you have to make a concert.”

**BUT FOR YOUNG RICHARD,** formal schooling did not always feel like a banquet. His first school was St. Rose of Lima, 10 blocks away from home. It was there that he first met Carin Marie Tomasuolo, a girl a

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*‘Now it was on me, my father said, to live up to Louis’s promise of what America would mean for the Guarascis.’*

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year behind him. Their romance blossomed after they entered high school — just as Guarasci's education was stalling out. He was attending Brooklyn Preparatory School, a Jesuit school with a strong academic reputation.

“I loved learning — but I hated school,” Guarasci recalls. “I lasted there about two and a half years.

“One day my father said, ‘We're taking a trip upstate to look at schools.’ We got to Cardinal Farley Military Academy, right outside of Rhinebeck — and he dropped me off.” But not without a lecture.

“You're flunking out of school,’ he said. ‘You're out of control, you're 16 years old, and your life is going nowhere.’

“He explained that what little money he had was invested in me because I was the last son with the Guarasci name. He told me, in vivid detail, what his father Louis's struggles had been like, going from Sicily to Tunisia to America to carve out a life for himself. Louis had wanted my father to become a doctor, but when Louis died, my father was left with the responsibility of taking care of the family.

“So now it was on me, my father said, to live up to Louis's promise of what America would mean for the Guarascis.

“I'm telling you, I changed my personality on the spot. That gave me, as

a youngster, a sense of history and destiny and proportion and responsibility. I began to take school seriously.”

In 1963, Guarasci enrolled in the business school at Fordham University, majoring in economics and minoring in philosophy. It was there that he really fell in love with learning.

“I was living at home and going to school in the Bronx,” he remembers. “I was on the subway an hour and 45 minutes each way, so I had a lot of time to read and study. I learned how to fold the newspaper so I could hold it with one hand while hanging onto a strap with the other. I absorbed everything I could about world events and culture, and I just took off from there.”

Guarasci enrolled in Indiana University for graduate study in economics in 1967. He had continued dating Carin Tomasuolo throughout his college years; on June 9, 1968, the day after she received her degree in education from Fordham, they married at St. Rose of Lima Church, right next door to the elementary school where they had met.

Halfway through his second year at Indiana, Guarasci kept thinking about his commencement speaker at Fordham, Robert F. Kennedy, who had been terrifically inspiring — and he realized that he wasn’t finding any inspiration at all in the study of economics.

As one of his professors put it, “We don’t do policy here, we just do numbers. It’s up to the politicians to make policy.”

“I didn’t want to just do math,” Guarasci says.

He only needed nine more hours for his master’s degree. He could either do a master’s thesis, or he could take three electives outside the field of economics.

“I’m going to take these nine credits in political science, and I’m probably going to terminate with the master’s,” he recalls

thinking. “I’ll go back to New York, get a job at the Fed, and do something interesting with my life.”

The chair of Indiana’s political science department, Elinor Ostrom, helped him pick his electives, including a course in political methodology taught by her husband, Vincent Ostrom.

“I ended up acing the course and winning a full fellowship for the Ph.D. in political science,” Guarasci recalls.

Much later, in 2009, Elinor Ostrom became the first woman — and the first political scientist — to win the Nobel Prize in Economics.

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*One faculty member pointed toward the window and said, “All we have is that damned view.”*

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“I happened to be in Oslo that summer, speaking at a conference sponsored by the Council of Europe on civic engagement and democracy’s future,” Guarasci adds, “and who should be on the plane with me on the way back but Elinor Ostrom. I got a chance to tell her that I wouldn’t be here today had she not walked me through registration that semester. “Serendipity is a huge part of life.”

**A YEAR AFTER** Guarasci completed the coursework for his Ph.D., in 1972, he was asked to interview for a position at St. Lawrence University, a highly respected liberal arts college in Canton, New York. The political science department had an opening; they had called the Ostroms for recommendations, and Guarasci’s name had come up.

“I thought upstate New York was just

slightly north of Westchester,” he recalls. A long, long trip of multiple short, connecting flights demonstrated to him just how remote Canton was, less than 20 miles from the Canadian border.

The Guarascis moved to Canton later that summer, ready to put down roots. It was a great place to start a family — both of their children, Bridget and Patrick, were born there — and SLU is where Guarasci put down the roots of his career, too. With a group of about 12 faculty innovators determined to bust up what was perceived as a “country club culture” at St. Lawrence, Guarasci led in the development of the university’s now famous First-Year Program in 1987.

Five years later, Guarasci was a full professor and associate dean at St. Lawrence, and a reporter was writing a feature article for the *Chronicle of Higher Education* about the First-Year Program.

“At that point, I figured I could spend another 20 years at St. Lawrence to go another inch, or I could look elsewhere for new challenges,” he recalls.

He was “being wooed” by Hobart and William Smith Colleges, in New York’s Finger Lakes region, to become the dean of Hobart College. The president, Richard Hersh, was known for his “entrepreneurial, very aggressive management style,” says Guarasci. “He’s like the Bobby Knight of college presidents.”

At first, Hersh’s argumentative approach during the interview process put Guarasci off — badly.

“But after a few days, I realized that he was exactly the kind of guy I wanted to work for,” Guarasci says. “So, he liked to argue; I liked to argue.”

“I took the job.”

**FIVE YEARS LATER**, Guarasci says, he was ready for his next step. Having



published his first book, served on national higher education councils, and been mentored by Dick Hersh, “I was ready to run a college. I had the skill, the ability, the experience, the temperament, the love of learning, the appreciation for the dignity of the faculty, the admiration of students — and I was battle tough, so I knew nothing was going to knock me off my pins in terms of criticism.” He started looking for a position as provost.

“I got a lot of calls from different places,” Guarasci says. “One of them was from Wagner College. Quite frankly, I didn’t know where Wagner was and whether it was public or private.”

Despite his initial resistance, he was eventually persuaded to take a look. After all, his mother still lived in Brooklyn at the old family home, so the trip would offer a chance to spend some time with her as well.

“I got to campus, and I have to tell you it was a place with a lot of challenges,” he recalls. “But when we were driving up to the gate, and I saw that view of New York Harbor — what immediately came to mind was my dad, who used to swim in those waters. It was like an instant connection to my heritage; it was such an identity thing for me, it just stopped me in my tracks.”

The location struck him, not only on a deeply personal level but also for the potential it offered to a small liberal arts college — but Guarasci had never heard of the school, and that troubled him.

“I came back to Carin a day later and said, ‘You know, I’ve got to think about this one,’” he remembers.

Carin was not encouraging, nor was Dick Hersh — yet something about Wagner intrigued Guarasci.

A few weeks later, he scheduled a second visit.

“It was a crisp January day in 1997,” he remembers of his next visit to Grymes

#### PAST AND PRESENT

President Guarasci’s office overlooks New York Harbor. The Rev. Frederic Sutter (bust seen in foreground) brought the fledgling college to this inspiring location in 1918.



Hill, this time to meet with the search committee. “You could see all the way to the Twin Towers.”

Guarasci asked the committee members why he would want to send his children to Wagner College.

“Highly dedicated faculty,” one said.

“Small classes,” said another.

“Personal attention to students.”

According to Guarasci, “They all boiled down to, ‘Nurture, nurture, nurture.’”

“So I ticked off the names of eight of Wagner’s competitors, and I said, ‘All of those schools say exactly the same thing. What do you have that distinguishes you from them?’”

One faculty member pointed glumly toward the window looking out upon the harbor and said, “All we have is that damned view.”

For Guarasci, something clicked.

“I looked at him and replied, ‘That’s not a view — *that’s a mission*,’” Guarasci recalls.

“On that waterway is written the

promise and the pitfalls of the American democratic experiment,” Guarasci told them. “You are in New York City, and those other eight institutions aren’t.”

Pointing toward Manhattan, he continued, “If you can find a way to make that other borough over there an intimate part of the way Wagner students learn and Wagner professors teach, you will have something those other eight institutions can never have.”

“The Wagner Plan was born that day,” Guarasci says, referring to the curriculum overhaul he spearheaded the following year as the College’s new provost. The Wagner Plan connects interdisciplinary learning communities with service-learning projects in the community, linking college education to Wagner’s special place at the crossroads of the world — a place laden with generations of meaning for Richard Guarasci, now celebrating 15 years at Wagner and 10 years as Wagner College’s president. ●

### Don’t Miss These Web Extras

**VIDEO:** A day in the life of Richard Guarasci **MORE STORIES:** Including how Richard and Carin fell in love

[www.wagner.edu/wagnermagazine](http://www.wagner.edu/wagnermagazine)



**STREETWISE** Rich Negrin meets with community members Keith Jackson, Richard Elliott, and Vincent Kennedy in North Philadelphia, where the PhillyRising program began.

# The Good Neighbor

Philadelphia's managing director Rich Negrin '88 turns loss of dad, daughter into mission to make others' lives better

*By Dan Geringer*

When he was 13, Rich Negrin saw his Cuban-activist father gunned down by anti-Castro terrorists. He held him as he died, kneeling in the street covered with his father's blood. After he became a father himself, Negrin watched his 5-year-old daughter die in 2006 after a lifelong battle with an incurable neuromuscular disease that devastated her ability to breathe.

- Every day, the memory of his father and his daughter inspires Philadelphia's powerful managing director to reach out to its least powerful residents, and try to help.



**S**ince cleaning up the patronage-infested Board of Revision of Taxes and being named managing director in 2010, Negrin has trained 300 community leaders to access city services directly through the 3-1-1 nonemergency system, taken PhillyRising neighborhood rejuvenation from a pilot program to a citywide movement, and trained 1,000 city employees in customer-service delivery.

And after a week of 16-hour days, Negrin, 45, spends his weekends on the city's most troubled streets, clearing trash from vacant lots in Swampoodle and alleys in Point Breeze, painting with both hands in Hartranft.

"The roller's for the walls; the brush is for the nooks and crannies," he says casually, as if every managing director is a two-fisted painter.

### Slain in front of him

Negrin — who spent years as a lawyer for the District Attorney's Office, Morgan Lewis, and Aramark before becoming the mayor's right-hand man — has the mind of a mega-manager and the heart of a block captain.

He gets that heart from his father, Eulalio Jose Negrin, who met with Cuban President Fidel Castro in 1978 to help negotiate the release of 3,000 political prisoners. The next year — on Thanksgiving Day 1979 — Negrin's dad was gunned down by anti-Castro terrorists from the Omega 7 group in Union City, New Jersey, while getting into his car to drive son Rich, then 13, to a Pop Warner football game.

"My parents divorced when I was 5, so this was the first time my father was going to see me play football," Negrin said. "He never made it into the car."

One of the few details Negrin remembers clearly about that day is his father lying in the street, mortally wounded. "He had a look of shock and horror on his face, but when he saw that I was alive, I could tell he was relieved," Negrin said.

"I knelt down and held him. I tried to get the blood to stop. It was pouring out of his mouth. I was covered in blood. That's what I remember most. The blood."

Both of Negrin's parents were among the thousands who fled communist Cuba and came to America in the 1960s. "My dad came from a place where people weren't allowed to say certain things, and if you did, you disappeared," Negrin said. "So he loved and understood how special it is to live here."



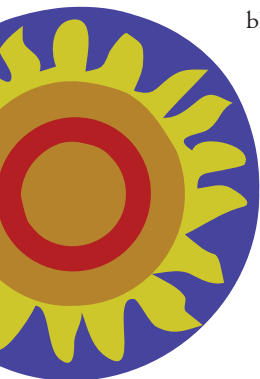
**PASSING THE TORCH** Negrin lost his father, Cuban activist Eulalio Jose Negrin, at age 13; the elder Negrin, who helped to gain release for Castro's political prisoners, was gunned down by terrorists.



**ABBY'S ARMY** Negrin lost the battle to save his daughter Abigail's life, but her memory inspires him to help others in need. "It's hard for folks to fathom the depth of the anguish when you lose a child," he says.

Negrin grew up in a tough North Jersey neighborhood sandwiched between the Port Newark-Elizabeth marine terminals, an oil refinery and a junkyard.

"I hung out with black kids, Latino kids, and a tough Polish kid named Stanley who lived behind my house," Negrin said. "We'd wake up, eat sugar cereal, then go out all day and play football. We heard about gangs, about races fighting each other — something I didn't want any part of."





**BORN LEADER** Negrin celebrates (*left*) as the Seahawk team he co-captained became the NCAA Division III National Champions in 1987. Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter (*speaking to Negrin in the right photograph*) appointed him the city’s managing director after he successfully reformed the Board of Revision of Taxes.

### Helping those in need

Negrin said that witnessing his father’s murder — and testifying at the federal trial during which the hit’s mastermind, Omega 7 leader Eduardo Arocena, was sentenced to two life prison terms — drives his intense focus on helping people in desperate need, as his father did.

Angelique Darcy McGuire didn’t know Negrin or his history as she waited in an intensive-care unit last March, praying for her husband, Mike, a Philadelphia firefighter who had rushed up 11 flights of stairs to rescue residents from a burning high-rise, run out of oxygen, and collapsed from carbon-monoxide poisoning.

Four days after the fire at the Norman Blumberg Apartments in North Philadelphia, McGuire was at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, fighting for his life. “He had developed pneumonia,” Angelique told the *Daily News* recently. “I was terrified.”

As she prayed, Negrin walked in, told her his personal story, asked if he could help. “I want the best for my husband because he’s in zombie land and I need him out of zombie land,” said Angelique, a teacher at J.H. Brown Elementary School.

“Our family will forever be grateful to Rich Negrin. I believe God had our paths cross.”

“We’re both cancer survivors. We need each other very much, and so does our 8-year-old daughter, our treasure of a little girl.”

Angelique asked Negrin if he could get the head of HUP’s pulmonary care to check in on Mike. Negrin, whose stepfather, Raul Cordero, a pastor

in Elizabeth, New Jersey, nurtured his deeply spiritual side, held McGuire’s hand while he and his wife prayed together. A few hours after he left, the doctor she’d asked for walked in.

“Mike recovered,” Angelique said. “Our family will forever be grateful to Rich Negrin. I believe God had our paths cross.”

Negrin spends so much time in the neighborhoods — personally helping everyday Philadelphians, and responding to their messages sent via Twitter — that he shatters the image of a managing director as a bean-counter who leaves his office only to walk to another office.

He is a big bear of a man — a former All-American lineman who co-captained the Wagner College Seahawks to the 1987 Division III National Championship — so when Negrin shows up in a neighborhood, people notice.

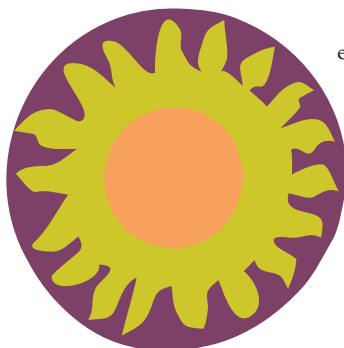
After a *Daily News* story described a blighted block of Dakota Street in Strawberry Mansion that had been long-neglected by city services, Negrin took a walk with its 77-year-old captain, Willie McRae, and promised to clean the trashed vacant lots and demolish the dangerous vacant buildings. He kept his promises.

### Making a difference

While Negrin’s father gave him the determination to touch people’s lives, his late daughter, Abigail, gave him a heartfelt empathy with anyone who has suffered, or is in danger of suffering, a devastating loss.

“It’s hard for folks to fathom the depth of the anguish when you lose a child,” said Negrin, a father of four.

From early childhood, Abigail’s genetic disease, spinal muscular



atrophy, left her struggling to breathe and swallow. “My wife left the D.A.’s Office, where she was a child-abuse prosecutor, to manage Abigail’s care full time,” Negrin said. “We were Abby’s Army. Our mission was to keep her alive until there was a cure. Unfortunately, we lost that race.”

Abigail’s daily fight to survive fueled Negrin’s need to make a meaningful difference in other people’s daily struggles.

Last year, he expanded PhillyRising from its pilot Hartranft neighborhood in North Philadelphia to five more communities. PhillyRising created resident-run computer labs, reopened a long-shuttered indoor swimming pool, started a Police Athletic League program for hundreds of kids, and cleaned up vacant lots that were carpeted with dangerous trash.

“In neighborhoods that have been under siege for so long, people go, ‘Wow, the managing director is coming down to our little church basement,’” said John Farrell, who supervises PhillyRising.

“To people who have lived in a community for 30 years and seen tons of city officials come and go, how do we prove we’re not just some other guy in a suit? Rich shows up, builds trust quickly, gives us credibility. That is huge.”

This year, Negrin will expand PhillyRising to 20 neighborhoods, which means more personal moments like this:

While revisiting the site of a PhillyRising cleanup recently, Negrin was told that a stray bullet from a drive-by shooting had traveled through a bedroom window, narrowly missing two sleeping children.

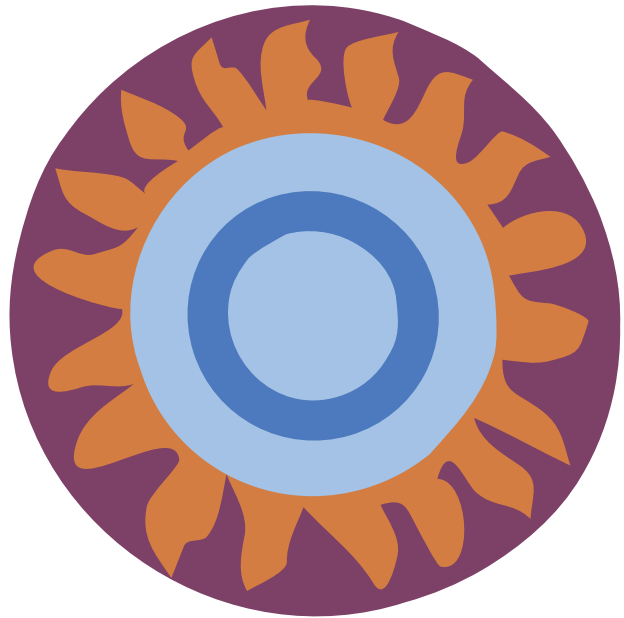
He felt compelled to visit the family to assure them that PhillyRising would stick around until shootouts and stray bullets were ancient history.

“This little 4-year-old boy, one of the kids that the bullet just missed, sprints across the living room and leaps into my arms,” Negrin said, his voice thickening with emotion.

“Huge smile. Adorable spirit. Just a lovely, lovely kid. I’m this big, giant guy. You’d think little kids would be afraid of me. But this kid thinks I’m a playground.”

Negrin paused to collect his thoughts. “I see his face before I go to bed every night,” he said. “Making life safer and better for that kid is what I’m all about. I love this job.”

*Story and photo on page 16 reprinted with permission from the Philadelphia Daily News, Feb. 3, 2012. Photo on page 16 by Alejandro A. Alvarez, Philadelphia Daily News.*



## About PhillyRising

The PhillyRising Collaborative targets neighborhoods throughout Philadelphia that are plagued by chronic crime and quality of life concerns, and establishes partnerships with community members to address these issues.

Since his appointment as Philadelphia’s managing director in 2010, Rich Negrin has led the PhillyRising program. It began in the North Philadelphia neighborhood of Hartranft, where its achievements include demolishing unsafe buildings, cleaning up vacant lots and graffiti-marred walls, opening a pool and a community computer lab, training community leaders, and bringing in volunteers and partner organizations. As a result, said Mayor Michael Nutter in a March 2011 speech, “from February to December 2010 crime in Hartranft dropped by 16 percent from the year before.”

PhillyRising now operates in nine neighborhoods and has seven staff members in the Managing Director’s Office. Learn more about it and hear comments from Rich Negrin at [www.phila.gov/mdo/phillyrising](http://www.phila.gov/mdo/phillyrising).

# Fighting with Beaus and Eros

World premiere musical brings  
unexpected groups together for  
love, war, and fun

**By Laura Barlament**



It's sexy and funny, earnest and mystical. It's *Sex and the City* meets *Touched by an Angel* meets *Gladiator* meets the Keystone Kops.

*Goddess Wheel*, a new musical by Tony Award-winning *Hair* composer Galt MacDermot and lyricist Matty Selman, was given its world premiere by Wagner College Theatre at Snug Harbor Music Center (WCT's home away from home during the Main Hall renovations) in April.

With a huge cast of 44 actors, the play mystified, challenged, delighted, and excited. It bridged seemingly unbridgeable gaps; it unfolded its essence in student voices, while also shaping those student actors in new ways.

But the most important thing, according to co-creator Galt MacDermot, is that it was *fun*: "The first thing you notice with any kind of show is, 'Am I being entertained? Do I like this?' And that's what I was noticing, that I really was enjoying the show. ... I mean, it's a cast of 22 women, and then they bring in the football team! There's no way that can fail."

## Act One: Goddesses and Whores

Loud, urgent music erupts from the pit as six voluptuous women, draped in flowing, nude-colored chiffon gowns, enter the stage and start a whirling dance. Astrological symbols and sparkling lights swirl around them, while they chant a mysterious invocation in tight harmonies:

*When chickens shelter safe indoors  
And shun the roosters' cry,  
Then Zeus will put an end to wars  
And set the low on high ...  
But when chickens fly the coop  
And make the cock their friend,  
Then all of Greece will loop de loop  
And war will never end ...*

What does it mean? They aren't *really* talking about domestic fowl. These are the title characters, the goddesses of the wheel, and their riddle captures the central premise of this musical, and of its ancient source: *Lysistrata*, a comedy written in 411 BC by the Greek playwright Aristophanes. The women of Athens want an end to the Peloponnesian War, which raged between Athens and Sparta from 431 to 404 BC. Their solution: a sex strike. As Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* puts it, "If we want to force the men to make peace, we must renounce ... sex." As Selman's *Lysistrata* puts it, "Shun the rooster's cry ... means ... stop making love?"

But this congruence spells the end of similarities between

the ancient and modern plays. *Goddess Wheel* explodes the tight boundaries of Aristophanes' one-act romp: The musical veers from raunchy comedy to ragged grief to tender intimacy to historical commentary. Selman and MacDermot morphed Aristophanes' housewives into prostitutes, adding an incisive economic motivation to the sex-strike concept (no soldiers, no business). They added a panoply of otherworldly characters: the goddesses of the title, plus the Oracle of Delphi, plus a Woody-Allen-esque Hades. They sent the Athenian ladies through a trippy dream sequence and on a mission to the underworld. They put the Athenian and Spartan armies on stage, and they turned Aristophanes' idyllic ending on its head — all to the infectious beat of MacDermot's signature rock-funk-Afro-Caribbean musical style.

In *Goddess Wheel*, MacDermot and Selman created a world of entertaining opportunities — and working with Wagner students led them there.

## Interlude: Backstory

It all started last fall, when the Wagner actors did their first read-through of the play. It had a lot of good tunes, clever lyrics, and a bare-bones script.

"It was vague," director Rusty Curcio, head of dance at Wagner, says diplomatically of the show at that stage. It didn't have much dialogue connecting the songs. Despite the title, it had no goddesses. It had no Spartan army. But Curcio was unfazed. Coming from a background in dance (he was a longtime member of the Trockaderos dance troupe), Curcio says, he's accustomed to "starting with a seed and building a story out of it."

And he chose the cast accordingly. He selected them for the creativity and range they demonstrated in audition, rather than how well they fit a certain character. "On this kind of show, they needed to have versatility," he says.



**CREATIVE TEAM** Matty Selman (left) adapted his *Goddess Wheel* book and lyrics for the student actors. Composer Galt MacDermot (right) attended two performances and signed programs for fans.

At that point, Curcio had already been involved with the work-in-progress for years. The connection was made back in the spring of 2006, when he directed MacDermot's renowned rock musical *Hair* at Wagner. MacDermot, a longtime Staten Island resident, came to see the show and loved the production, so he reached out to Curcio and showed him the *Goddess Wheel* project he had underway with Matty Selman (who, by the way, grew up in Staten Island's West Brighton).

It's highly unusual for a college theater to premiere a show, and the students approached it with anticipation and trepidation.

"The reason why I wanted to do the piece is because it was new, fresh, and exciting," says Robert Keir '14, who played an Athenian soldier, Thanassis. (At Curcio's prompting, Selman gave names to all of the soldiers, who ended up with such colorful monikers as Buttious, Bulgious, and Erectius.) "This was something that we had to create. Almost like giving someone a coloring book, and you have to fill the shades you choose."

## Act 2: The Athenians and the Athletes

ONE TWO THREE FOUR ONE TWO THREE FOUR! bellows the Athenian army as they march down the aisle and up to the stage. They face the audience in unison with a bare-armed salute, resplendent in white chaps, holding tiny white shields bearing the male symbol, and white épées thrust out from their enormous white codpieces, emblazoned with the female symbol.

It's a sight gag guaranteed to earn laughter.

Fast forward to late in Act 2: The stage is set for peace to be made; the Athenian women have lured the army, on leave from war, into an amphitheater, and have them on their knees in a trance; when down the aisles, carrying enormous spears and wearing little more than black boots and helmets, creep a troop of the biggest men ever seen on a Wagner stage, looking ready to kill.

Curcio always knew the show needed a Spartan army — and

that idea not only proved what MacDermot calls Curcio's "comic genius," but also opened doors on the Wagner campus where walls had once existed.

Curcio's idea was to recruit student-athletes to play the Spartans — "a stroke of brilliance," he calls it with a laugh. "I just thought it would be fun. There's also the size difference," he adds — referring to the build of a 250-pound football player or a 6'5" basketball player versus the typical theater guy. Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* derives some of its humor by playing up class differences between the Athenians and Spartans. Curcio knew that the equivalent at Wagner would be the social gap between student-athletes and student actors on campus.

Besides, work was already being done to mend that gap. Led by a football and track athlete, John Garrish '12, the theater and athletic student advisory boards had started a program they called "Bridging the Gap" to bring the two socially estranged groups together.

Garrish had a small role in Wagner's spring semester production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. He started talking to his fellow athletes about being a part of the new play. "He told us about it during the [football] season, and at first everyone was like, 'No, I'm not doing the play, bro,'" recounts Derrick Forrest '12, a 250-pound defensive lineman who had last acted in a play in the eighth grade.

"And then when I came back from winter break, I was like, 'Man, you only live once,'" Forrest continues. "Let me see what it's like." He and seven other football, basketball, and lacrosse players joined *Goddess Wheel*'s Spartan army, helping to create a hilarious fight sequence and jamming along in the final dance number.

As it turned out, Forrest and his fellow athletes loved the experience and were inspired by the actors' hard work. "Every time before we'd go out to walk the aisles, we would just sit there, hyping each other up, saying, 'Showtime, let's go,'" he says. Their pre-show rituals were to do pushups and curls with a weightlifting bar in the back of the auditorium. "I think it relaxed us. It relaxed us and gave us a little pump."



**TRUST** Director Rusty Curcio (right) allowed his student actors to develop their characters.



**MIXING IT UP** Student-athletes (in black helmets) as well as student actors made up the huge cast of *Goddess Wheel*.



## Finale: Finding Their Song

“For me, the writing experience takes on a whole new dimension when you’re in rehearsal,” says Matty Selman. “Because you can see the people, you can write for them, everything’s coming alive, you have the songs, so it’s just a magical time.”

Much of the magic that audiences saw on the stage came from the alchemy of a writer shaping his words to life, and students accepting a very different kind of rehearsal process: one where you had to “live in the unknown,” in Curcio’s words, “to be ready for whatever happens.”

Often, the students would come into rehearsal with one script and walk out with another. “The most amazing part for me was being able to write on the spot,” says Selman. “I would say, ‘OK, wait. We’re not going to say that anymore. Danielle, can you say this?’ And I’d write it and hand her a piece of paper. And I’d say, ‘Rusty, is that ok?’ Rusty would say, ‘Yeah, it’s your show.’ And suddenly we’d do it.”

The Danielle whom Selman mentions is Danielle Dallacco ’12, who starred as Lysistrata, the heart and soul of the entire show. She admits that she had her moments of frustration during rehearsals. But, she says, she grew to love it. “I feel completely connected to my character because I breathed life into her,” she says. “Because this show is a premier work, she only ever existed on paper. I was honored to be the first to ever bring her to life.”

Her fellow actors echoed this thought: It was scary, exciting, and ultimately extremely self-fulfilling to help create their roles. Caroline LaTorre ’12, for example, is proud that she took the goddess character of Hera, who speaks the play’s opening words, from non-existent to “a driving force.”

“I loved that from this experience I got to learn about the process a new musical undergoes upon production,” she says. “My takeaways from this experience are: be open-minded, open to change.”

As the goddess Afro-dite (Aphrodite in an Afro ... get it!), Heather Kirschenbauer ’12 of course played a central role in a play pitting love against war. She says she found in an initially uncomfortable situation a liberating power. “After months of rehearsal, I feel that this role has helped me find my own self,” she says. “I had to connect and be confident in my own sensuality.”

“Also the level of teamwork was more heightened than in other productions,” she continues. “It was definitely a more organic experience, and the level of trust that was given to us was truly remarkable. Rusty trusted us to make a lot of our own decisions.”

“My sense of it is that this Wagner world premiere was as much of a critical help to me as a writer, as I think it was an invaluable experience for the students in their education,” says playwright Selman. “No matter what they do in their lives going forward, to have something like this come off the page and see how integral they are to the outcome, it can’t be anything other than empowering to them.”

Selman plans to work toward publishing *Goddess Wheel*, with a dedication page acknowledging Wagner College Theatre and all of the student actors who brought the show to life.

The show ends with everyone on stage and up and down the aisles, actors and athletes, Athenians and Spartans, mortals and goddesses, singing and dancing together:

*It’s the end song  
And the notes we bring  
Are freedom’s slaves.  
Go on, sweet notes, escape your staves  
And find your song.*

“When you hear 40 people or so singing on stage, it’s thrilling,” says MacDermot. “I loved it!” ■



**IN THE BLUE** Danielle Dallacco ’12 created the character Lysistrata, seen here in a dream sequence.



**PERSPECTIVE** Projections by multimedia artist Tony Brown created varied atmospheres and dynamic scenery.





# WATER WATER EVERYWHERE,

*Nor Any*

# DROP TO DRINK

For almost 20 years, Wagner Professor Mohammad Alauddin has been working to solve the drinking water contamination problem in one of the world's most populous and water-rich nations. What is the solution for Bangladesh — and what can we learn from it?

*By Laura Barlament*

Photographs by Habibul Haque/Drik

The Hotel Golden Deer in Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh, is located on Gulshan Lake, in a district of embassies with manicured lawns, spacious homes behind guarded gates, and shiny, chauffeur-driven Mercedes Benzes.

◆ Across Gulshan Lake from the hotel, a row of spindly shacks made of bamboo, tarp, and sheet metal occupies a narrow dirt bank.



**MARKED MAN** A farmer displays a keratosis-scarred palm, a result of long-term arsenic poisoning.

Laundry hangs on lines, and thick green vines hide some of the trash that flows down the bank into the grayish-green water, emerging farther out to make

trash islands. Around the lake, it smells like a convocation of 100 overflowing New York City garbage trucks.

Nestled in India's eastern armpit on the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh is a nation awash in water. Water-related disasters — floods, tsunamis, cyclones — frequently bring it into the international spotlight. Its main food crop is rice, one of the world's most water-gobbling plants. Thanks to new irrigation systems, Bangladesh produces rice year-round.

So, it is an irony of cosmic proportions that Bangladesh's water is slowly poisoning vast swaths of the population.

Earlier this year, Professor Mohammad Alauddin brought another group of students here, his sixth trip for the Wagner short-term study abroad program called Expanding Your Horizons. The goal: to gain insight into the water problem in Bangladesh, and also to gain a glimpse of the world's future if we don't take care of that precious resource we often take for granted — water.

**T**he lesson starts at the Hotel Golden Deer, where we sip water from sealed plastic bottles, and each room has a private bath. But Dipankar Chakraborti, longtime director of the School of Environmental Studies at Jadavpur University in India, is here to talk about water realities for many more people in the world. "If you listen to him, you don't have to listen to anybody," says Alauddin, calling his guest an "elder brother" and "mentor."

With a white shawl wrapped around his trim body and glasses precariously hooked into his long hair, Chakraborti launches into a PowerPoint with pictures of misery: two girls walking across parched earth, a six-hour journey, to fetch water in Rajasthan, India; naked children drinking water from a cattle trough in Sudan; another African child drinking cow's urine. "You can't believe this — and this is the truth," he says. "And it will keep increasing, and increasing and increasing."

Chakraborti speaks science from the heart — because he speaks from personal experience. He's not afraid to shock, cajole, even offend to get his point across.

In 1988, Chakraborti tells us, he started his work at Jadavpur

University in West Bengal, on the western border of Bangladesh. That's when he became aware of nearby villagers who had a mysterious set of symptoms: blackened skin, dark lines on fingernails, black spots on the tongue, crusty lesions on their palms and the soles of their feet. They were suffering social exclusion, because people believed their strange looks were a contagion or a curse of the gods. They were losing their families and livelihoods, and dying of cancers of the skin, lungs, bladder, and kidney.

From his previous studies, Chakraborti knew they were suffering the tell-tale signs of arsenicosis — chronic arsenic poisoning. He also suspected its source. Throughout the world, groundwater can contain naturally occurring arsenic at high enough levels to harm human health. It doesn't take much: The World Health

## **AS IT TURNS OUT, THERE WAS A DEVIL LURKING IN THE DEPTHS: ARSENIC.**

Organization prescribes a limit of 10 parts per billion (ppb) in drinking water — the equivalent of 10 drops in 500 barrels of water.

Beginning in the late 1950s in West Bengal, and in the 1970s in Bangladesh, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) funded projects to provide clean drinking water for the poor. Because water-borne diseases like diarrhea and cholera were rampant, tapping into shallow underground aquifers presented the perfect solution: hand-pumped "tube wells" allowed the people to access bacteria-free drinking water easily and cheaply.

At first, Chakraborti told us, the locals refused to drink from an underground source, calling it "devil's water." But in time the government's promotions and the tube wells' benefits allayed their fears. Tube well water reduced the incidence of diarrhea, which claimed the lives of so many children. It made water available to grow crops when the rains didn't fall. It was cold and refreshing. The public attitude reversed. Having one's own tube well became the pride of every family man. There are now 9 to 12 million tube wells in Bangladesh alone.

But as it turns out, there *was* a devil lurking in the depths: arsenic.

Colorless, odorless, and tasteless, it's the perfect poison, as many an Agatha Christie reader knows. Washed down from the Himalayas, the massive mountain chain where Bangladesh's rivers originate, it was hidden and harmless in shallow aquifers until the people started sticking tube wells 30 to 100 feet into the sediments

of the flatlands. And slowly drinking death.

Chakraborti was not the first to demonstrate the dangers of arsenic-laden groundwater in poor populations, but he was perhaps the most persistent. In West Bengal and then in Bangladesh, he and his students walked from village to village to village, from well to well, documenting the symptoms and testing the water. They found the very worst of the problem in Bangladesh, which had the highest concentrations of arsenic contamination paired with the greatest population density: In a country about the size of New York State live about 160 million people, eight times New York's population.

He notified government officials, but was frustrated at the lack of response. "They gave me the name of a madman who speaks rubbish," he said. But he did not give up. As Barry Bearak wrote in the *New York Times*, "In 1994, he began sending letters to the Bangladeshi government, UNICEF and the World Health Organization — to no effect. Soon he was calling reporters, organizing conferences and generally becoming one of science's great gadflies."

Chakraborti's efforts, though hard-won, have been successful. The Bangladeshi government and UNICEF started coming to grips with the arsenic problem in the late 1990s and working to mitigate it. But Chakraborti does not dwell on that. "No one's denying it. It's the truth," he exclaims. "But this truth is like a fire!"

For many reasons, technical and economic and social and bureaucratic, the water problem is far from being solved, and the threat to the next generation of Bangladeshis looms. What frustrates Chakraborti the most is that water itself has not gained the respect it deserves. He points out that while the world population grows exponentially, the Earth's water resources remain constant. No

one can afford to waste or pollute water. Showing us a slide of a mushroom cloud, Chakraborti compares the coming water crisis to an atomic explosion in slow motion.

The next day, we pile into a van and get a good sense of what the phrase "population explosion" means. We are headed to the villages of Laksham and Sharasti, about 70 miles southeast of Dhaka. We will be in this van for the next five hours, dodging through streets and highways clogged with every form of transportation imaginable — other cars; women on foot, wrapped in saris and head scarves, carrying children and bags of rice; men wearing the wrap-around skirts known as *lungis*, pedaling rickshaws loaded with passengers, or flat-bed tricycles piled high with vegetables; tiny three-wheeled autorickshaws; cargo trucks brightly painted with birds and flowers; long-distance busses, scraped all along the sides as if they had been driven through narrow canyons, with passengers riding on the roof. Five hours — 70 miles. One way.

We cross the mighty Meghna River, which fans out into the largest river delta on Earth, the Ganges. Beneath the bridge, the river's dirt banks are lined with long, narrow boats and flat-bed trucks, and bright green fields of rice lie between the river's branches.

Sharasti and Laksham themselves, however, are not on any river. Tube wells must have seemed like a godsend to these people who lacked easy access to water. But their heavy use of the highly arsenic-contaminated well water, combined with poverty and poor nutrition, made the problem "a double whammy for them," Alauddin says.

Those factors are why Columbia University researchers



#### TO DRINK OR NOT TO DRINK

The Bangladeshi government tested tube well water for excessive arsenic levels and painted red those wells they found to be unsafe.



**EXPANDING HORIZONS** In January 2012, Professor Mohammad Alauddin brought a Wagner group to Bangladesh to visit villages and learn about their water systems: Kelly Edmonds '13, Krey Keller '13, Melanie Garces '12, Nahama Paul '14, Nicolette Faison '13, and *Wagner Magazine* editor Laura Barlament.



chose this area for a long-term study of nutritional supplements' effectiveness in combating arsenicosis. There are about 7,000 patients in the study, which started in 2008. Alauddin helps to monitor the work.

Finally we come to a group of ramshackle houses, corrugated metal sides attached to bamboo frames, on a narrow dirt road. Minutes after we extract ourselves from the van, we are surrounded by a large crowd of curious onlookers.

The local staff of the Columbia project — including a young doctor named Shamim Ahmed, the project director, and a female field worker — assembles five women of a range of ages. Wrapped in ruffled cotton saris of purple, red, yellow, and green, they stand in a line before Professor Alauddin. They look submissive and

shy as he gently questions them about their diet, water, and skin conditions. They are taking either a combination of selenium and vitamin E, or vitamin E alone, and are drinking clean water. They also receive treatment for any medical needs that arise while they are part of the study. Every two years, they give samples of their urine, toenails, and blood for arsenic testing.

One of the younger women opens the top of her bright yellow sari to reveal her collarbone area. Dark brown spots like moles mar her latte-colored skin — melanosis, the first stage of arsenicosis. The women say they eat meat about once a month. Nutrition is a critical factor in the arsenic threat: The human body is able to detoxify itself of harmful elements like arsenic, if it is able to replenish key nutrients, especially those found in green, leafy vegetables and white meat, milk, and eggs. Yet many villagers, especially in a very impoverished area like this, eat almost exclusively rice — they grow vegetables mostly for sale in the markets. And the vegetables they do eat are stewed, losing many nutrients.

“Villagers say, ‘Raw vegetables are not tasty, I cannot eat it,’” Alauddin tells us. “I wish I could live with them and eat with them and show them how to prepare the food.” Alauddin is part of another research group, also testing selenium supplements. “If these patients are treated in the early stage, if they are given selenium tablets, and we provide safe drinking water, it’s reversing skin lesions, symptoms of arsenicosis,” he says. “It’s a very promising and encouraging result.”

For others, these treatments are too late to reverse years of drinking arsenic-laden water.

A little farther down the road, we pass through a wooden gate into a courtyard surrounded by another set of corrugated metal buildings. In the yard, a calf lows loudly, chickens peck the ground, and brightly colored laundry hangs on the line. Again, many curious faces appear.

A small man with a short, grizzled beard removes his shirt to show his chest. Dark spots cover his skin. Alauddin gently touches his palms, which look scabby, burned, and blistered — advanced symptoms known as keratosis — while speaking with him quietly. “From what I can tell he has been drinking water with arsenic at least 20 years,” Alauddin says. He has squamous cell carcinoma on his hands and feet, and is undergoing chemotherapy treatments through the Columbia program, says Dr. Ahmed. No longer able to farm, he ekes out a living by operating a tea stall in the local market.

Alauddin pulls a Toshiba laptop out of his bag and sets it up on an old wooden chair. He fills a tiny vial with water pumped from a

nearby tube well and attaches it to the computer. Flies alight on his hands as he stares at the screen and murmurs numbers, while the computer graphs the water's arsenic content. "This is quick and very sensitive," Alauddin says. "Even if it's 10 ppb, I can tell."

An analytical chemist, Alauddin started testing tube well water for arsenic as early as 1993. Seeing the ineffectiveness of the government's efforts, he has run his own lab in Dhaka, using mostly his own funds, since the late 1990s.

One of his big frustrations is the tube-well testing program sponsored by the Bangladesh government. Field workers were sent to the hardest-hit areas to test tube well water for arsenic. Wells they found unsafe were painted red, and safe wells were painted green.

However, the simple field kits they used were not sufficiently sensitive to detect trace amounts of the killer element. Professor Alauddin's laboratory tests showed that the field workers' results were correct only half of the time. "Fifty percent of the data can go either way, which means 50 percent of the data is bad," he says. "Which 50 percent is good, that is the question."

Meanwhile, of course, people need water. "Many of them, they don't have any other option," says Alauddin. "The pond water is contaminated with microorganisms, and the tube well water condemned with arsenic. They have no choice. After 10 to 12 years of painting the tube wells red and green, that paint is faded, and people are totally disregarding it and drinking."

We walk back to the van along the rice fields, followed by a small pack of barefoot boys in oversized clothes. Men in hiked-up lungis bend to plant bright-green sprigs into the ankle-deep water. Where does this water come from? Tube wells. Years ago, the government helped farmers acquire irrigation systems to promote greater rice harvests and combat hunger. Yet, since they are using arsenic-laced water to irrigate, even these healthy-looking plants carry a slow death. In fact, the prevalence of arsenic-contaminated water makes it likely that the element is spreading throughout the food chain.

In this land of plenteous water, it seems unbelievable that the people could be dying for lack of water — lack of safe water, that is. The science and technology to provide clean water exist.

Walking down the road in Sharasti, we see a prime example: Behind a blue fence, there's an impressive-looking set of shiny silver tanks. A big sign announces "Continuous Arsenic Removal Plant," and in larger print, "DPHE / UNICEF Project." DPHE is the Department of Public Health Engineering, the national agency in charge of drinking water supply in rural areas. It looks impressive — but, Alauddin says, it is non-functional. It costs too much to maintain,

and the know-how doesn't exist in the local community.

Social and cultural factors cannot be ignored in providing solutions. Alauddin is a big believer in systems that use more basic technology and are accepted, implemented, and operated by the users themselves. Like a river water purification system that he shows us the next day, in a village in the district of Munshiganj, 15 miles south of Dhaka. We take a ride down the smooth, calm river in a boat they call a "stroller," something like a long canoe with a motor attached.

After about 25 minutes, we stop at a small settlement along the river. Clambering up the mud bank, we come to a concrete structure about one story tall, with a water tank above it. This river sand filtration system pumps water out of the river and filters it through layers of sand, brick chips, and gravel. Built nine years ago for \$20,000 (funded by UNICEF and a local nonprofit, Dhaka Community Hospital), it provides sufficient daily drinking water for this community of about 500 people. A community board runs the system, and each family pays about 50 cents per month.

This village exemplifies a new attitude toward water in Bangladesh, Alauddin notes. "The mindset has been, 'Water is free, it's natural!' That has changed," he says. These people have come to understand that water is not to be taken for granted, but is a precious resource.

"This is very nice water," Alauddin says, standing atop the structure surrounded by his students. "I have also checked it." He accepts a cut-glass tumbler — evidently the town's finest in honor of their special guests — and takes a deep drink. ♦

**ALL CLEAR**  
Professor Alauddin has spent years researching water issues and creating solutions for Bangladeshi villagers.





It was déjà vu all over again for **water polo** during the 2012 Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) championship: Mirroring the 2011 finale, Wagner finished as the runner-up when top-seeded Iona College rallied for an overtime victory. Under second-year coach **Chris Radmonovich**, the Seahawks notched high-profile wins over West Coast powers Hawaii, Cal State Northridge, and Pacific; **Laura Karbach '13** was named MAAC Defensive Player of the Year.

- Under new head coach **Jim Carone**, Wagner **baseball** was named *College Baseball Insider* Northeast Regional Team of the Week in March after winning a series against Jacksonville University; they ended the season with a 22–33 record, and team MVP **Ryan Van Spronsen '12** was named to the All-NEC Second Team.
- In **track and field**, Seahawks set new school benchmarks: for the women, the 400-meter (**Francyna Evins '12**) and 800-meter (**Kelly Pereira '15**); and for the men, the 800-meter (**Dan Zaccariello '14**), 5,000-meter (**Zachary Spector '12**), and 110 hurdles (**Alan Kopeloff '13**).
- Under first-year men's **lacrosse** head coach **Matt Poskay**, an All-Star for the Boston Cannons of the Major Lacrosse League, the Seahawks snapped a 26-game losing streak on April 14 with a victory over Sacred Heart.
- **Julie Vigliotti '13** was named NEC Soccer Scholar-Athlete of the Year, and **women's soccer** set a school record with nine victories.
- Three seniors graduated to free-agent opportunities in the NFL: linebacker **Julian Stanford** and defensive back **Jeremiah Brown** with the Jacksonville Jaguars, and defensive end **Quintin Anderson** with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

# Two Ways

## of Driving to the Basket

Mason and Cermignano tip off promising head coach careers

*By John Beisser*

**T**wo distinct paths took Bashir Mason and Lisa Cermignano to the same place this spring: The VIP room in the Spiro Sports Center, where they were inaugurated as Wagner College head basketball coaches at press conferences held a mere 15 days apart.

Mason's appointment at age 28 made him the youngest Division I men's head basketball coach in the nation. Cermignano, 36, traveled a more traditional route to her desired goal, as she notched her way up the coaching ladder, rung by rung and state by state.

Only 10 years ago and 16 miles away, Mason graduated from St. Benedict's Prep in Newark, where he played for the man he has replaced at Wagner, Dan Hurley, now head coach at the University of Rhode Island. Mason moved on to Philadelphia's Drexel University, where he was a four-year starter for the Dragons at point guard and a four-time member of the Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) All-Defensive Team. After graduation, Mason spent two seasons as an assistant coach at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York, before returning to St. Benedict's. He served as an assistant to his former coach there for two seasons, until Hurley brought him along to Wagner in 2010.

While Mason has stayed close to home, Cermignano's move to Wagner represents a return to her roots. Raised in the small town of Mantua Township, some 15 miles south of Philadelphia, Cermignano developed into the 1993 New Jersey High School Player of the Year before going on to enjoy a Hall of Fame playing career down in DC at George Washington.

Cermignano's assistant coaching odyssey, encompassing five college campuses over 14 years, began with one season at Maryland, followed by two seasons at Monmouth. Her next stop was a five-year stint back at her alma mater, where she helped guide the Colonials to a pair of NCAA Sweet 16 appearances. This work led her to Nashville, Tennessee, where she spent three seasons at Vanderbilt, the most academically renowned school in the SEC, one of the nation's power conferences. She then coached for three seasons at Illinois, another academic giant that competes in an elite conference, the Big 10.

The teams Mason and Cermignano take over at Wagner are as disparate as their backgrounds.



Known as an impeccable dresser, Mason arrived at the March 27 press conference resplendent in a charcoal suit. As he strode down the center aisle, the Seahawk players seated in the front row rose as one and began clapping in a salute to their new leader, soon joined by the rest of the audience.

To the players, Mason is a trusted mentor who has helped transform Wagner from a program that won just five games the year before he arrived into one that achieved a school-record 25 victories last season, including a monumental 59–54 defeat of No. 15 Pittsburgh. Mason was particularly instrumental in developing the Seahawk guards into one of the top units in the conference. Tyler Murray '12 and Latif Rivers '14 were named to the NEC Second Team, while Kenneth Ortiz '14 garnered Defensive Player of the Year honors.

“We’ve started something here for the past two years with this team, raising young men and building them to be good student-athletes,” said Mason. “That job isn’t done yet. Wagner basketball is here to stay. It is on the rise for many years to come.”

While Mason’s charge is to expand on a rapidly built foundation, Cermignano’s task is similar to the one the men’s coaching staff inherited in 2010. The women’s team is coming off nine straight losing seasons, including a 2–27 mark last season.

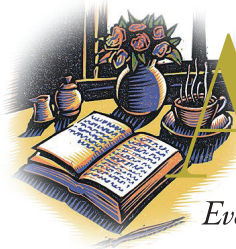
Cermignano will look to follow the men’s blueprint for success, which includes getting the veteran players to buy in to a new vision, while at the same time recruiting talented student-athletes and melding the mix into a cohesive unit. Like Mason, Cermignano is confident.

“I think Wagner College is a beautiful place and a great opportunity for female student-athletes,” Cermignano said. “Everyone I met on my interview, everybody that’s a part of Wagner College and Wagner athletics, wants to win and create a winning tradition. And that excites me because that’s what I’ve been about. That’s what attracted me when I went to George Washington University as a player and all of my different steps as a coach. To get my first head coaching job back East, near my family, close to all of the people who are important to me, it’s like a dream come true.”

#### READY TO SOAR

After assisting with the Seahawks’ turnaround of the past two seasons, Bashir Mason is now the men’s head coach. Lisa Cermignano brings deep experience at top universities to the women’s team.





# AlumniLink

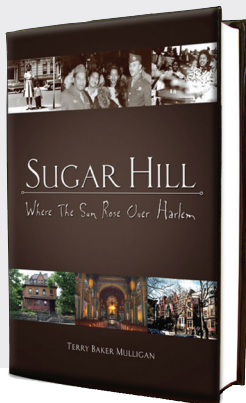
Events, opportunities, and celebrations for the Wagner family, both near and far

## { FLASHBACK }



### THE LAND OF FAIRY TALES, CA. 1970

From 1962 until 1988, Wagner College maintained a very popular study abroad program in Bregenz, Austria. Students traveled widely during their time abroad, including destinations like Neuschwanstein Castle in Bavaria, Germany (*pictured above*). Bringing a piece of Alpine culture home, they acquired traditional dress: Dolly Hamlin Luwisch '73 and Karen Resetar Minogue '72 are shown above, inspecting a *Dirndl*. This year's Reunion Weekend included a celebration of the program's 50th anniversary. Read more about the Bregenz experience in "Reflections," page 45.



## New & Noteworthy

**Terry Baker Mulligan '66** *Sugar Hill: Where the Sun Rose Over Harlem* (Impulse Press, 2012)

Terry Baker Mulligan writes joyously about weathering adolescence while history unfolds around her in mid-century Harlem. Evangelists, curly-haired doo-wop boys, and interracial couples populate her memorable cast of characters, while she also chronicles Thursday matinées at the Apollo, Sunday mornings at Smalls Paradise and the Hot Cha, as well as encounters with Willie Mays in the shoeshine parlor and with Minniejean Brown, one of the Little Rock Nine, in the Dreamland luncheonette.

## Upcoming Events

### Admissions

- Campus Visit Day  
Aug. 9
- Overview Visit Days  
July 9, 13, 20 & 27; Aug. 3, 13, 17 & 20

### Alumni Events

- Alumni Day at Del Mar Racetrack  
Aug. 5  
*Del Mar, California*
- Gala in Honor of President Guarasci's Tenth Anniversary  
Oct. 12  
*New York, New York*

- Homecoming  
Oct. 27



### Campus Events

- Family Weekend  
Sept. 28–30
- Founders Day and Kaufman-Repape Lecture  
*Featuring Bonnie Bassler, Squibb Professor of Molecular Biology at Princeton University: "Tiny Conspiracies: How Bacteria Talk to Each Other"*  
Oct. 10, 7 p.m., Spiro Hall, Room 2
- Main Hall Rededication  
Oct. 11, 12:15 p.m.
- Commencement  
May 24, 2013

### Music

- Italian Idol Singing Competition  
Oct. 19, 5 p.m.  
*Wagner College Music Performance Center*
- Viva Italia Finale Concert  
Oct. 28, 4 p.m.  
*Wagner College Music Performance Center*
- Fall Choral Concert  
Nov. 4, 4 p.m.  
*Trinity Lutheran Church, Staten Island*

- Opera Workshop  
Nov. 11 & 18, 7 p.m.  
*Wagner College Music Performance Center*
- Jazz Ensemble Fall Concert  
Nov. 18, 3 p.m.  
*Main Hall Theater*
- Holiday Choral Concert  
Dec. 2, 4 p.m.  
*Trinity Lutheran Church, Staten Island*
- Vocal Jazz Set  
Dec. 4, 8 p.m.  
*Wagner College Music Performance Center*
- Fall Concert, Concert Band  
Dec. 9, 3 p.m.  
*Main Hall Theater*

### Theater

- *Putting It Together*  
Oct. 3–6 & 10–14  
*Wagner College Main Stage*
- *Spring Awakening*  
Oct. 9–14  
*Wagner College Stage One*
- *Legally Blonde*  
Nov. 14–17 & Nov. 28–Dec. 2  
*Wagner College Main Stage*
- *The School for Lies*  
Nov. 27–Dec. 2  
*Wagner College Stage One*
- *Rent*  
Feb. 27–March 2 & March 6–10, 2013  
*Wagner College Main Stage*
- *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress*  
March 5–10, 2013  
*Wagner College Stage One*
- *Guys and Dolls*  
Apr. 24–27 & May 1–5, 2013  
*Wagner College Main Stage*
- *The Dance Project*  
April 30–May 5, 2013  
*Wagner College Stage One*

Please note that dates are subject to change.

## For more information, registration, and tickets:

Admissions 800-221-1010 or 718-390-3411 • Alumni Relations 718-390-3224  
Music Department 718-390-3313 • Theater Box Office 718-390-3259

## Who in the Wagner World Was ... Jonathan Acierno



A quiet, tree-lined lane that ends at a peaceful lake now bears the memory of the late Jonathan Acierno '02. In May, the Staten Island street where he grew up, Overlook Terrace, was named Jonathan M. Acierno Way in his memory.

Acierno died on January 18, 2010. He packed a lot of life into his short 29 years, despite suffering from epilepsy and myasthenia gravis, a neuromuscular disorder. He was an inveterate volunteer since childhood; organizations he supported included the March of Dimes, Habitat for Humanity, and the Knights of Columbus. He taught children for many years at his parish church, St. Joseph's, and helped organize a local epilepsy support group. During his Wagner student years, he was very active on campus in the Newman Club, Club Diversity, Student Ambassadors, and more.

According to his mother, Angela Acierno, "If anyone would ask him for help, his answer was always yes." She adds, "His life's motto was, 'It's not about disabilities, but our abilities and what we do with them.'"

Contact Editor Laura Barlament at [laura.barlament@wagner.edu](mailto:laura.barlament@wagner.edu) or 718-390-3147 with suggestions for "Who in the Wagner World Was ...?"



## Alumni Honors

*The 2012 National Alumni Association Awards, given at Reunion Weekend*



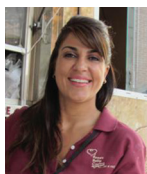
**Evelyn Lindfors Spiro '49 H'92** was named the John "Bunny" Barbes '39 and Lila T. Barbes '40 Wagner Alumni Laureate.

A nursing graduate and the namesake of Wagner's Evelyn L. Spiro School of Nursing, she also helped establish the Wagner-Johns Hopkins-Spiro internship program, which allows Wagner nursing and science students to spend summers at Johns Hopkins for research and clinical education. The generous support of Evelyn and her husband, Don Spiro '49 H'88, has played a central role in the College's advancement.



**Andy Cortese '72** was named Distinguished Graduate. An accounting major, he is now managing director and head of global investment services operations and technology

for AIG. His career path has also included such prominent firms as Spectrum Investment Group, JPMorgan Chase, Goldman Sachs, and Chase Manhattan Bank. He is a member of the Wagner Board of Trustees and a great supporter of Wagner athletics.



**Rosa Graziano '88** was named a Wagner Alumni Fellow in arts administration. Inspired by her Italian heritage and her family's Italian delicatessen and catering business in New Jersey, she launched

Rosa's Bella Cucina gourmet food truck in Los Angeles nine years ago. Its success is highlighted by high praise from the Food Network and celebrities such as Jimmy Kimmel.



**Mary Ellen Peters O'Brien '54** was named a Wagner Alumni Fellow in nursing.

Having earned a doctorate in educational leadership, she became a leader in nursing education at Dekalb College

in Georgia, where she spent a total of 25 years, included 10 as head of the nursing department.



**Wanda Schweizer Praisner '54 M'57** was named a Wagner Alumni Fellow in education, in honor of her 29 years as a teacher. She is also an

accomplished poet, serving as poet in residence for the

New Jersey State Council on the Arts; her third book, *Where the Dead Are*, is forthcoming from CavanKerry Press.



**Kinsey Casey '02** received the Alumni Key, which recognizes young alumni of high achievement. She currently serves as national security director for the White House's Office of

Presidential Personnel, and previously she provided advance travel support for Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano.



**Rev. Richard Michael**, former Wagner chaplain, received the Rev. Lyle Guttu Award.

He stepped into spiritual leadership at Wagner after the untimely death of Chaplain Guttu. He has

also served congregations in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Staten Island, and is committed to Middle East peace and interfaith dialogue.



**Rita B. King '62** received the Dr. Kevin Sheehy '67 M'70 M'92 H'99 Alumni Leadership Medal.

She served six years on the NAA board, including two as president, and also assists with Wagner's career

development efforts for students.



**Paul Hansen** received the Certificate of Appreciation for his service on the Wagner Planned Giving Advisory Committee. The son of the

late Mary Louise Hansen, longtime chair of Wagner's

music department, he has helped Wagner alumni make sound financial planning decisions and helped build the Heritage Society, which consists of individuals who have included Wagner in their estate plans.



*Make a nomination for the 2013 NAA awards! Go to [www.wagner.edu/alumni/naa\\_awards](http://www.wagner.edu/alumni/naa_awards) Deadline: October 26, 2012*

## Reunion 2012



**LIFETIME FRIENDSHIPS** Kimberly Simek '07, Alexandra Jacobs '07, and Alison Hay '07.



**CONTINUING EDUCATION** Provost Lily D. McNair, speaking about the Main Hall restoration work.



**A WARM WAGNER WELCOME** Bill Sonstrom, Bill Wehrli '53, and Melvin Hooper '72.



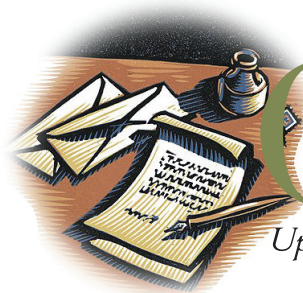
**COULD HAVE DANCED ALL NIGHT** Ivonne Beauchamp '05 and Joaquin Gonzalez-Nieves, Robert and Betsy Ebers '58 Press.



**FIFTY YEARS OF CATCHING UP** Paul Sarkisian '62, Donald '62 and Maureen Hutchison '61 McLoughlin.



**SPECIAL SUPPORTERS** Kim Spiro (*left*), daughter of 2012 Barbes Alumni Laureate Evelyn L. Spiro '49 H'92, and Evelyn's grandson Jonathan Spiro (*center*) with his wife, Megan, with President Richard and Carin Guarasci.



# ClassNotes

Updates from old friends across the generations

## 1942

**Edith Rayner Morison** recently wrote to *Wagner Magazine* to say that she enjoyed the fall 2011 issue. She lives in Pleasant Hill, Calif.

## 1943

**Ruth Teichmann Annunziato** '45 sent us the sad news that her husband, Dr. **David Annunziato**, died on November 29, 2011, at the age of 90. She writes, "He did a great deal during his life to benefit children," as a pediatric physician on Long Island. After graduating from Wagner (where he met Ruth), earning his medical degree at the Long Island College of Medicine, and serving in the Navy, he had a large private practice in Massapequa Park until 1973. Then he started teaching full time at Nassau County Medical Center as director of ambulatory pediatrics and director of pediatric education. He was also a leader with the American Academy of Pediatrics on the local and national levels. He received many awards, including several from the Nassau County March of Dimes and the AAP's prestigious Clifford G. Grulee Award. Ruth was quoted in the *Amityville Record* as saying,

"He was a wonderful husband and father. We always knew his patients came first, but we lived with that and appreciated it."

## 1952

Thanks to Rev. **George Handley**, Wagner has heard that Rev. **George Guba** died on March 1, 2011. George Handley noted, "He and his wife, Anne, lived in retirement in Binghamton, N.Y. He was a 1955 graduate of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and had served parishes in Upstate New York (Mohawk Valley, suburban Buffalo, and Binghamton)."

## 1953

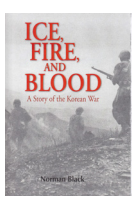
**Ted Klemens** died on November 20, 2011; but before that, he wrote a compilation of his Wagner memories. They included the "pure poetry" of **Sonny Bosley's** '54 set shot, running back **Neil Leonard's** "elusive and magical explosiveness," the unforgettable performance of **Joan Champion** as Lady Macbeth, singing "On a Chinese Honeymoon" at the Clover Club, and a few more items. (The editor will send you the manuscript upon request.) "The

'50s have been dubbed the dullest decade," he concluded. "Ho, ho, that's rich." In his author's note, he wrote, "Ted Klemens '53, a.k.a. Theo Klemens, was a journalist for 35 years; he now lives in South Florida, concentrating, he says, 'on doing as little as possible.'" Rest in peace. **Frank O'Leary** sent this update last November: "As I approach my 85th year, I recall all the classes I have taken in colleges and universities throughout the US and ask myself: Which class gave me the most bang for the buck? The answer has to be Solid Analytical Geometry (SAG) taught by Professor Weldon at Wagner College in 1952. The Good Lord must have known I would spend 15 years preparing Orbital Support Plans, called OSPs, for military spacecraft utilizing the Air Force global tracking net. With SAG, a National Geographic world globe, wax pencil, compass, and a piece of string, I could calculate most orbital problems before the computers had that capability in the 1960-70 time frame."

## 1960

**Norman Black** '60 M'73 has written his first novel, *Ice, Fire, and Blood: A Story of the Korean War*, and he

published it in March through CreateSpace. It is available through Amazon in print and e-reader versions. The novel deals with US combat infantrymen's experiences in Korea in 1950-51, a desperate period when Chinese forces and the harsh winter inflicted devastating losses. The book's characters are composites of veterans Norman knew when he served in the Navy in the mid-1950s. Norman had a career first in journalism, and later in corporate public and governmental relations. He lives in Georgia.



## 1963

**Charles Gravenstine** spent part of the fall semester of 2010 teaching a course in clinical pastoral education in Hildesheim, Germany.

## 1964

**John E. Dreslin** retired from dentistry at the end of 2011. He also celebrated 20 years as organist at Union Baptist Church in Mystic,

### Keep in Touch!

**E-mail:** [alumni@wagner.edu](mailto:alumni@wagner.edu)

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

**Mail:** Alumni Office, Reynolds House,  
Wagner College, 1 Campus Road,  
Staten Island, NY 10301

**Publication policies:**

**Deadlines:** This issue reflects news received by June 1. The submission deadline for the Fall 2012 issue is October 1.  
**Content:** Wagner welcomes your news and updates, and we will happily share them with the Wagner family. We ask that you send us announcements of weddings, births, and graduations after the fact.  
**Photos:** We accept photos of Wagner groups at weddings and other special events. With the photo, send the names and

class years of all alumni pictured; birth date, parents' names, and class years with photos of children; and dates and locations of all events.  
**Photo Quality:** Digital and print photos must be clear and of good quality. Prints should be on glossy paper with no surface texture; they will be returned at your request (please attach your address to the photo). Digital photos must be jpegs of at least 250 pixels per inch; low-resolution photos converted to a higher resolution are not acceptable.

Conn. **Joyce Holland Jauch**, who received her DDS at SUNY Buffalo in '69, sends this update: "After many years in private practice with my husband and raising four kids, Dave passed away in October of 2010. Our youngest, Bob, took over the dental practice, managed by our daughter, Mary. Jenna is a physician assistant at Roswell Park, our local cancer hospital, and David Jr. is a chiropractor; we're a very health-oriented family. While I occasionally keep my finger on the pulse of 'my' dental practice and do Cone Beam CAT scans for dental implant patients, mostly I just enjoy life and my kids and eight grandkids! (I love to travel, as well!)" She lives in Buffalo, N.Y.

## 1965

**Clifford Lish**, who was a starting running back for Wagner College, was inducted into the Ramapo High School Athletic Hall of Fame at a dinner held in March. In high school, he was a three-sport athlete (football, basketball, and track). A halfback in football, he led the Northern Bergen Interscholastic League in scoring with 105 points in the 1960 season.

## 1968

**Christine M. Byars** has retired from public health nursing and is "enjoying every minute" of being the grandmother of Zachary and Melena Rose Byars in Boulder, Colo. **Harold Kozak**, an adjunct professor in Wagner's physics department, and his wife, Robin, celebrated the marriage of their son, Alexander, to Megan Haggerty in Baiting Hollow, N.Y., on May 5.

## 1970

**Rebekah Ludwig Gibbons** notes that October 29, 2011, was the 100th anniversary of the birth of her late father, **Rudolf Fridolin Ludwig** '34, who passed away in 1993. Rudolf not only graduated from college at Wagner, but also from its high school division, in 1930, and he left Rebekah with many great memories of Wagner as well as stories about influential professors and even a copy of the "Graduation Song" he wrote in 1930. Rebekah earned a BSN from the University of Washington in 1988 and lives in Everett, Wash.

### Crib Notes

## Classes of 2032 and 2033

*Some of the newest faces to join the Wagner family*



1.

**1. Andy DiOrto '95 and Natina Saitta DiOrto '96 M'98** announce the birth of their fourth child, Carmela, on August 12, 2011.

**2. Connie-Jo Saitta O'Neill '98 M'00** and her husband, Fred, welcomed Lily on May 10, 2011.

**3. Chad Moran '99 M'01 and Pamela Abrams Moran M'02** welcomed Alaina Ruth on July 28, 2011.

**4. Melissa Ferrari-Santlofer '99 M'02** and her husband, Nathan, announce the birth of Caroline Rose on January 11.

**5. Daniel Higgins '05** and his wife, Regan, welcomed Declan Rhys on February 1.



3.



2.



4.



5.

**We'd love to see your baby's face.**  
Please see opposite page for publication guidelines.



## Take a Walk Down Memory Lane...



### Wagner College Memories: A Photographic Remembrance of Grymes Hill in 99 Images, Past & Present

This 10-by-8-inch hardcover book contains 99 classic scenes, from a panoramic view of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge to the Collegiate Gothic grandeur of Main Hall to winter's snow-covered calm. Available for \$39.99 in the Wagner College Bookstore

To view the book online and  
download a mail order form, go to  
[www.wagner.edu/newsroom/node/135](http://www.wagner.edu/newsroom/node/135)

## 1971

We are sad to announce the passing of **Michele Connors Tellefsen** '71 M'74 on January 29. She served as president of Alpha Delta Pi at Wagner and of the sorority's Staten Island alumnae group for many years. Fellow Alpha Delta Pi sister **Jean Gaise Swedberg** '64 spoke at Michele's funeral, noting that the two became friends when Jean

returned to Wagner as dean of women. "Michele loved life and loved people and she was a loyal person," said Jean. "Two of the organizations she cared about were Wagner College and Alpha Delta Pi." The Michele Connors Tellefsen – Alpha Delta Pi Leadership Award will be given annually in her memory.



## 1972

**Alonzo "Lonnie" Brandon Jr.** was honored at a special event on March 18 in his hometown of Montclair, N.J., for his 22 years of organizing the annual Montclair African-American Heritage Parade & Festival. Lonnie worked in Montclair's Department of Parks and Recreation for many years, serving as superintendent for 12 years and as director of parks, recreation, and cultural affairs from 1992 until his retirement.

**Tom Houser** returned to campus in October 2011 for the reunion of the 1971 football team. "We had a great turnout," he wrote, "and raised \$900 for the stadium lighting fund." He reported on a few classmates who had long been out of touch: "**Mike Mazzarino** '73, who played fullback and had not been back to campus since May of 1972, came up from Florida. **James Roper** had not been back in 25 years. He drove five hours from Rome, N.Y. **John Toto** '73, who lives in Staten Island, had not been on campus in many years. He came and had a ball." Sharing this group photo, he wrote, "The event was a great success, and I encourage other teams and groups to organize an event." **Richard McMahon** worked with Wagner theater students to stage a reading of his new play, *1. White Wins!!!!*, at Wagner's Stage One. The play explores science, philosophy, religion, technology, creativity, chess, and destiny. The production featured eight student actors and was directed by **Paige Strothmann** '12.

## 1975

**Pete Knudsen** wrote of former National Alumni Association board member **Howard Graeffe**, who died on February 8, "At Wagner, Howard was the consummate organizer. He conceived of and led the formation of the Helen Sorgan / Project Hope Walk-a-Thon, which raised over \$10,000 to benefit Wagner and Project Hope. These skills carried over to his career as a business leader. After acquiring a small division of a real estate development company, he grew the business into a major force in the Greater Lehigh Valley real estate industry. He was an active participant in civic, political,

and religious organizations. Howard is a perfect example of how you can live both a good life and a successful life."

## 1979



**Helen Hunter Voysey** sent this update: "After a nice tenure as a biology teacher in New Rochelle, N.Y., I decided to move to Arizona to finish off my years as a teacher in relative peace. Little did I know that I would become the chair of the science department at Rincon High School in Tucson. My two sons are grown and leading academic lives at their respective universities, and I am thoroughly enjoying my life in the desert. Who would have thought the Peace Corps would ultimate lead to this!" Helen says that Tucson's topography reminds her of West Africa's; she did her Peace Corps service in Togo, where she taught biosciences, geology, agriculture, and art. Speaking about her move from New Rochelle's schools to Arizona's, she says, "Hopefully I'll be able to make a difference here as well!"

## 1980

**Claire Regan** was given the Award of Excellence in September 2011 by the Society for News Design for her July 4, 2010, front-page design of the *Staten Island Advance*, where she is the associate managing editor. Claire also continues to teach journalism at Wagner College.

## 1981

**Sally Kaelber** and her daughter, Kristen, are part of the Angelic Ensemble, which provides vocal and instrumental music for weddings, funerals, and special events. They were featured in the *Staten Island Advance* on April 25. Learn more at their website, [Angelicensemble.com](http://Angelicensemble.com).



## Knot Notes

### Wagner Weddings *Celebrating new commitments*



**Rose Moser '05** and **Edward Mackel '05** married on November 5, 2011, at the Swan Club in Long Island, N.Y. Pictured are fellow Wagner alumni who celebrated with them: **Peri Anderson '04**, **Bridget Herrmann '05**, **Tea Saiti '05**, **Arlene Pierret '06**, **Venus Roman '05**, **Jamie Parreco '04**, **Christine Frost '05**, **John Parreco '05**, **John Monahan '07**, **Alex Moore '05**, **Pat Greaney '05**, **Cole Williams-Ficarra '05**, and **Joshua Elmore '06 M'07**.



At her wedding to **Matthew Giammarinaro** last September, **Nicole Filippazzo '07** celebrated with **Dana Kennedy '07**, **Erin Stoms Fenton '07**, **Kimberly Simek '07**, and **Jenn Lemoncilli Gitto '07 M'08**.



At her wedding to **Michael McEachern** last November, **Kara Plant '06** celebrated with **Susan Schobel '06**, **Allison Baucom Figley '06**, **Justin DiSanto '06**, and **Sarah Shaker '06**.

Have a wedding photo with "Wagner family"? Please see page 36 for publication guidelines.

# Tiana Kalba Kostic '06

*She Can Tell If You're Lying*

**CLAIM TO FAME:** In Connecticut, convicted sex offenders are on probation for at least 10 years after serving time. Tiana Kalba Kostic '06 is one of the people making sure these ex-cons comply with the terms of their probation. A certified forensic psychophysiological and polygraph examiner, she questions them about their past crimes, sexual history, and current behavior – while a polygraph machine records blood pressure, breathing, sweating, and other physical reactions that indicate the truthfulness of their responses.

**TV BECOMES REALITY:** When she was about 14 years old, Kostic discovered a Court TV show about Dayle Hinman, an FBI criminal profiler. She was hooked. She studied psychology at Wagner, then earned her master's in forensic psychology at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, followed by certification in the psychophysiology of the detection of deception.

**LIAR LIAR:** How can the layperson, who does not have the advantage of using a polygraph (a machine, Kostic notes, that is 98 percent accurate), detect deception in everyday life? Kostic offers two easy tips: Women tend to touch the back of their neck if they are feeling tension; men often touch their nose if they're trying to hide something.

**EVERYDAY PEOPLE:** Kostic confronts a lot of very tough stuff on her job, but she loves it. "Every day I get to hear a story," she says – all kinds of stories. "You wouldn't be able to pick a sex offender out of a crowd. They're just everyday people. I test 18-year-old boys, I test 65-year-old men, I test poor people, I test millionaires who live in a mansion in Fairfield. There's no one set characteristic of a sex offender."

**FACING THE DARKNESS:** The key, she says, is not taking what she hears personally. And it can get very personal: "One time an offender told me I was just his type, because he went after 25-year-old women, brown hair, blue eyes. ... But I can't get offended by that. He was just making a statement." Her job is to keep listening, keep watching – and to ask the next question.



# 1982

**Tom Masella** returned to Wagner as associate head coach for Seahawks football. He was a star defensive back at Wagner, and went on to coach at nine institutions, most recently Fordham.

# 1990

**Lou Anarumo** has come a long way, from coaching high school junior varsity on Staten Island to coaching full-time football pros. He left Purdue University in February after eight years as the defensive backs coach, to perform the same role for the NFL's Miami Dolphins. **Robert Rams**, a band director at Staten Island Technical High School, will lead the Wagner College concert band starting in the fall. The ensemble includes Wagner students and alumni as well as community members of all ages.

# 1995

**Andy DiOrio** and **Natina Saitta DiOrio '96 M'98** welcomed their fourth child, Carmela DiOrio, on August 12, 2011. See *Crib Notes*, page 37, for a photo. **Steven Lowell** shared his professional expertise with Wagner theater students in April by holding a workshop about the voiceover business. Steven has a blog for the voiceover community, [voicethedream.com](http://voicethedream.com), and is community manager of the voice casting service Voice123.

# 1996

**Natina Saitta DiOrio '96 M'98** and **Andy DiOrio '95** welcomed their fourth child, Carmela, on August 12, 2011. See *Crib Notes*, page 37, for a photo.

# 1997

**Gail Kelley** was honored for her tireless work for the LGBT community by Staten Island Pride Events at the Gay St. Patrick's dinner dance on March 10. Gail has served on the board of Community Health Action of Staten Island and volunteered for the Seaman's Society for Children. The former director of alumni relations at Wagner, she is currently the director of development at the Alice Austen House on Staten Island. **Kelley Mitchell** received accolades for being make-up department head of the TV show *Glee*. In an interview with [Allure.com](http://Allure.com)'s beauty trends blog in January, she said,

## Seahawk Happenings

### Alumni Events

*Wagnerians getting together across the country*



Winter on the Hill, on February 11, brought together 125 alumni and friends — including **Beth Cruz '71** and **Lorraine McNeill-Popper '78**, pictured here — for an afternoon of men's and women's basketball. On March 1 and 4, 150 alumni and friends returned to Spiro Sports Center to watch the men's basketball team in the quarterfinals and semifinals of the Northeast Conference Tournament.



On April 19, 15 graduates of the last decade joined **Joel Richardson '02 M'07** at the Staten Island Comedy Festival for an evening of laughing, networking, and brainstorming for future events geared toward 2001–11 graduates.



Lily McNair, provost and vice president for academic affairs, met with 19 alumni and friends on April 11 for a reception at the Rosewood Mansion on Turtle Creek in Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas. She also hosted an event for African-American alumni at her home on May 5, attended by 17 alumni who graduated between 1970 and 2005. Pictured here: **Rodd Murphy '81**, **Marilyn Jackson '73**, **Daymon Vizar '82** and **Wendy DeShong-Neuhalfen '83**, with Lily McNair front and center.



Thanks to the hospitality of Neil and Alyce Robertson, parents of **Katherine Robertson '15**, we hosted an event on February 21 in Miami, attended by 18 alumni, parents, and friends. We then headed to Longboat Key, Florida, on February 24 for a reception with 75 alumni and friends, welcomed by President Richard and Carin Guarasci, Lily McNair, and members of the Board of Trustees and National Alumni Association Board.



On May 18, some of our newest Golden Seahawks — **Janet Haffin Rice '62**, **William Schmitz '62**, **Cynthia de Heyman Spry '62 M'82**, and **Robert Stranieri '62** — led the academic procession at Commencement. More than 100 legacy graduates, along with their families, gathered prior to Commencement for a celebration in Reynolds House (formerly North Hall).

To stay informed of upcoming events in your area visit [www.wagner.edu/alumni](http://www.wagner.edu/alumni).



Alex Moskaluk (right) with an Albanian student, Natasha Lushi; their shirts say, "I am the change."

## The Toughest Job They Ever Loved

Kevin Burke '09 and Alexandra Moskaluk '08 both returned to Wagner during the past academic year to speak about their experiences as recent Peace Corps volunteers.

Burke served in Stepnogorsk, Kazakhstan, a town several hours' drive north of the new capital of Astana, from August 2010 until late November 2011. "My primary assignment was working at a youth center," he reports. "I also worked at a center for disabled young adults, worked in local schools developing volunteer projects for the schools and town, taught English at a local college, and coached basketball." His time in Kazakhstan ended early when the Peace Corps decided to withdraw from its operations there.

Kevin's presentation at Wagner included historical tidbits (the apple and the domesticated horse originated in Kazakhstan), cultural tips (don't mention the movie *Borat* in association with Kazakhstan), and a description of bathing in a traditional sauna, or *banya*. On his Peace Corps service, he commented, "I can't imagine anything more difficult than this, but I can't imagine anything I'll love more." For the future, he is planning to work on

his certification in teaching English as a foreign language, in preparation for teaching abroad or rejoining the Peace Corps to volunteer in a different country.

Moskaluk served in the Republic of Albania from March 2009 until May 2011. She lived for one year in Fushë-Krujë, a small community of 5,000 north of the capital city, Tirana; and another year in Durres (population 220,000) on the

Adriatic coast.

In Fushë-Krujë, she organized a Girls Critical Thinking Club with high school students and helped a women's artisan group learn marketing skills. In Durres, she helped a local group conduct campaigns against domestic violence, human rights awareness activities, youth development projects, and other social services. She was also a part of the Peace Corps' Anti-Trafficking in Persons Committee and the Outdoor Ambassadors Committee.

She loved her Peace Corps work and the opportunities she had to travel around the Balkans, Turkey, and Southeast Asia. In addition, she says, "My Peace Corps experience allowed me to clarify my interests and goals." After returning home to Boston, she began a second bachelor's degree to become a registered nurse. She also serves on the board of Friends of Albania ([friendsofalbania.net](http://friendsofalbania.net)), a nonprofit that provides small grants to Albanian organizations working with Peace Corps volunteers.

Moskaluk welcomes questions about the Peace Corps; reach her by emailing [laura.barlament@wagner.edu](mailto:laura.barlament@wagner.edu).

the Broadway revival of Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Evita* at the Marquis Theatre, which began previews on March 12 and officially opened on April 5. Christina performs on Wednesday evenings and Saturday matinees.

**Daryn Plummer** was named the head basketball coach at Franklin High School in Franklin Township, N.J., last fall. He spent the previous two seasons as Franklin's junior varsity coach. Daryn was a two-time All-American for Seahawks football and played two years of basketball as well. **Joel Richardson '02 M'08**, a.k.a. "Soul Joel," and his business partner, **Scott Chamberlin M'07**, organized the fifth annual Staten Island comedy festival in April. Last year, Joel even got a mayoral proclamation for Staten Island Comedy Festival Week.

## 2005

**Nicholas Fernandez**, who has completed his third year at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y., went on a pilgrimage last summer to the Holy Land and then to Rome, a trip sponsored by the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher. The experience made him "more conscious of faith," Nick told the *Dunwoodian*, the seminary newsletter. **Daniel Higgins** is happy to announce that he and his wife, Regan, welcomed their second child on February 1, 2012. "His name is Declan Rhys Higgins," Daniel writes, "and is tied for the cutest kid ever with his older brother, Liam." Daniel suggests saving a spot for him in the class of 2034. See *Crib Notes*, page 37, for a photo.

**Alex Lojo '05 M'07** left his job with the Office of External Programs at Wagner, where he managed Wagner's film appearances among other duties, in April to become events manager for the Office of Community Affairs and Patient Relations at Maimonides Hospital in Brooklyn. **Rose Moser** and **Edward Mackel** married on November 5, 2011, at the Swan Club in Long Island, N.Y. They met at Wagner during their freshman year, developed a friendship, and started dating in their senior year. Rose and Edward live in Sunnyside, Queens, and both work in Manhattan. *Thirteen other Wagner alumni participated in their wedding; see Knot Notes*, page 39, for a photo. **Ashley Voss '05 M'07** married Robert J. Miller

"It's probably the best job I've ever had. I've been here since the pilot, so I knew all these guys before they were famous. I just adore them all."

## 1998

**Connie-Jo Saitta O'Neill '98 M'00** and **Fred O'Neill** announce the birth of Lily O'Neill on May 10, 2011. See *Crib Notes*, page 37, for a photo.

## 1999

**Melissa Ferrari-Santlofer '99 M'02** and **Nathan Santlofer** announce the birth of their first child, **Caroline Rose**, on January 11, 2012. **Chad Moran '99 M'01** and **Pamela Abrams Moran M'02** welcomed **Alaina Ruth** on July 28, 2011; her big brother, **Logan**, was born on November 12, 2008. See *Crib Notes*, page 37, for

*pictures of Caroline Rose and Alaina Ruth.*

## 2002

**Pamela Abrams Moran M'02** and **Chad Moran '99 M'01** welcomed **Alaina Ruth** on July 28, 2011. See *Crib Notes*, page 37, for a photo. **Christina DeCicco Sisko** is the alternate for the starring role of **Eva Perón** in

on July 1, 2011, at Our Lady Help of Christians Church in Tottenville, Staten Island. Her wedding party included matron of honor **Tina DeMeo DiGrigoli** '05 M'06, maid of honor **Kerry Jaeger**, and bridesmaids **Denielle Diodato Albanese** '06 M'07 and **Katherine Strafer** '03. Ashley teaches third-grade special education at Public School 4 in Arden Heights, Staten Island.



## 2006

**Andrew Bailey** was traded from the Oakland A's to the Boston Red Sox as a closing pitcher, but surgery for a thumb ligament in April was expected to keep him out of the game for much of the season. **Philip John DePaul** and **Janine Lynn Psillos** married on August 13 at Our Lady of Mercy Roman Catholic Church in Hicksville, Long Island. Janine earned an M.S. in counselor education from Queens College and is a special education teacher at Public School 165 in Queens. Philip is the director of operations with Coastal Plumbing Supply in Staten Island. The couple lives in Massapequa, Long Island. **Christina LaRocca** released her solo album, *I Stand Tall With My Eyes Wide Open*, last fall. "It's Rihanna meets KT Tunstall with a heavier R&B

sound," she told the *Staten Island Advance*. "It still has that old-school feeling, but it's more radio-friendly pop with an intellectual folk twist." It is available through all online outlets. **Timothy Marino** and **Christine Statile** '06 M'08 married at Our Lady Queen of Peace Roman Catholic Church in Staten Island on November 11, 2011. **Kara Plant** married Michael McEachern on November 12, 2011, at the Taunton Holiday Inn in Taunton, Mass. See a photo with fellow *Wagnerians* on page 39.

## 2007

**Chris Allen** earned his tenure and is in his fourth year of teaching special education at P.S. 57 in Park Hill, Staten Island. He also works for a DJ/production company and provided services for Wagner's Songfest 2012. **Nicole Filippazzo** married Matthew Giammarinaro on September 30, 2011, at the Smithtown Landing Country Club in Smithtown, N.Y. See a photo of *Wagnerians* celebrating on page 39. **Justyna Czekaj** (she changed her name from Surowiec to her mother's maiden name) spoke at Wagner last fall in an alumni panel about living and working abroad. She worked in Sydney, Australia, for a year and a half, in investment real estate and venture funding. She returned to New York City last summer and works as a social media marketing strategist for a human resources consulting firm, Partners in Human Resources International. She also received her real estate license and started working as a real estate agent with Keller Williams NYC. "It's something I love and am so passionate about," she says.

## 2008

**Domenic Reno** M'08, who served as Wagner's strength and conditioning coach from 2004 to 2009, became the assistant strength and conditioning coach for the New York Giants in July 2011. That brought him to the 2012 Super Bowl opposite another former Wagner athletic staff member, **Patrick Graham** M'03; he was an assistant coach at Wagner from 2002 to 2003, and now is the linebackers coach for the New England Patriots.

## 2009

**Robert Geronimo** was featured in the *Staten Island Advance* in February for his excellence in comic book art. He is pursuing a classical art education, earning a master's in art history from Brooklyn College, and also working on comic book assignments for Moonstone Books and Boulevard Books. He also established Ascalon Press and is working on *Tales from the Grim* for that imprint, and he teaches two popular classes for children and teens at the Snug Harbor Cultural Center on Staten Island. **Johanna Sambucini** '09 M'12 was crowned Miss New York 2012 on January 15 at the Purchase College Performing Arts Center, and on June 3 she represented New York in the Miss USA 2012 pageant. She has promoted many philanthropic causes such as Autism Speaks, an organization dedicated to increasing the quality of life for individuals living with autism.

## 2010

**Amy L. Blaszkow** joined the firm CMJ, LLP, in Queensbury, N.Y., as an associate in the accounting, assurance, and advisory department. She lives in Lake Luzerne, N.Y. **Nicole Malliotakis** M'10, Republican New York Assemblywoman representing parts of Staten Island and Brooklyn, was named one of the "40 Under 40 Rising Latino Stars" by the Hispanic Coalition of New York. Nicole is the first person of Hispanic descent to be elected on Staten Island and, at age 31, is the borough's youngest elected official. **Meeghan Rogers** is working for Clear Channel Outdoor, New York Division's finance team. **Harry Coghlan** '87 is president and general manager of this division.

## 2011

**Christina Angeli** is a new program manager in Wagner's Office of External and Summer Programs. She previously worked part time in Wagner's development office as the phone program coordinator. **Kyle Glover** was featured in the *Whyalla News* of Whyalla, Australia, in January, while he did a three-month internship with the Centre for Rural Health and Community Development at the University of South Australia. **Carly Lyster** was named the coach of the new girls' lacrosse team at St. Joseph-by-the-Sea High School in Staten Island. **Marcie Klebanow** M'11 was named assistant soccer coach at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind.



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# In Memoriam

*Celebrating lives that enriched the Wagner family*

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Mr. George C. Rapport '39  
Mrs. Eunice King Jackson '40  
Mrs. Evelyn Ohr Phelan '41  
Mrs. Eleanore Schmidt Schweppe '41  
Rev. Kenneth G. Drescher '42  
Mr. Harry Hustedt '42  
Mrs. Minnette L. Waters Kundtz '42  
Mr. Charles A. McCarthy '42  
Dr. David Annunziato '43  
Chaplain Theodore C. Herrmann '44  
Ms. Isabelle J. Maiorano '44  
Mrs. Caroline Muller Reissig '44  
Mr. Robert Borstel '45  
Rev. Walter Kortrey '45  
Mrs. Catherine Yarger Messersmith '45  
Mr. John W. Mentha '46  
Mrs. Winifred DeNyse Mueller '47  
Mrs. Faye Reiman Ferretti '48 M'60  
Mrs. Elisabeth Hintermeister Johnson '48  
Dr. John R. Randall '48  
Mr. Bert H. Castens '49  
Mrs. Harriet Steinberg Grover '49  
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Ms. Lynn-Rachel Ary '81  
Ms. Diane Pillersdorf M'84  
Mr. Ronald J. Tillman '12

## Faculty, Staff, and Friends

Mr. Larry Geraciotti  
Dr. David E. Long  
Dr. Marguerite B. White

### FACULTY REMEMBRANCE

## Professor Marguerite B. White

*Former nursing professor was an expert in nursing education*

**Marguerite B. White**, Wagner professor of nursing from 1957 to 1970, died on November 28, 2011, at her home in Heritage Village, Connecticut. She was 96. She earned her B.S. in nursing from Skidmore College, her M.S. in nursing education from Syracuse University, and her Ed.D. in nursing education from Columbia Teachers College. After teaching at Wagner, she became an associate dean of the University of Connecticut School of Nursing. Her published work included *Curriculum Development from a Nursing Model: The Crisis Theory Framework* (1983). She was predeceased by her husband, Willard White, and is survived by her daughters, **Ellen White Jeffrey** '63 and **Elizabeth White Fox** '69, as well as three grandchildren and a great-granddaughter.



# Beyond the Storm

*A year in Bregenz By Terry Baker Mulligan '66*

It was September 24, 1964, as I stepped onto the gangway of the *Queen Elizabeth* to begin my journey to Wagner College's campus in Bregenz, Austria. I was ambivalent about going. No one I knew well had applied to the program, and I didn't want to leave my boyfriend; plus, I was nagged by the knowledge that my Jewish friends from high school wouldn't go anywhere near Germany — or Austria.

Like me, the world was in turmoil that year. The American South was exploding over civil rights, Vietnam was on the verge of disintegrating into a bloody quagmire, we were locked in a Cold War with the Soviets, and Castro had a firm grip on Cuba. So, as I boarded the ship, I vowed to come home in a few weeks if this turned out to be a mistake.

But, like my fellow students, I was immediately intrigued. After the lifeboat drill, we raced around the ship. On our first night at sea, we ran into a storm that packed a wallop. Around 2 a.m., as the ship pitched and rolled, a china cabinet down the hall from our stateroom tipped over and crashed. At breakfast, my roommate and I were among the few to appear — amazingly, we weren't seasick. Around the empty dining room, waiters doused the tablecloths with pitchers of water to keep the dishes and silverware from sliding off.

Four days later, the ship sailed into Cherbourg. After two nights in Paris, we headed on to Bregenz. Motoring past snow-capped mountains and soaring emerald hillsides where billy goats magically clung to the earth at 45-degree angles, I was enthralled. Bregenz is a picture-postcard town, nestled between the Alps and the Bodensee, one of world's largest lakes. The old part of town dates back to the 14th century. Like all of Europe, Bregenz had endured hardships during World War II, so residents were used to doing without central heating, or using shredded newspaper when toilet paper ran out. People called me "*die Schwarze*" — "the black girl" — but not unkindly. Old ladies shook their heads disgustingly at the knee socks we wore with our skirts — not warm enough.



“Like me, the world was in turmoil that year.”

My world and its worries receded as I opened my eyes on a new world. I traveled all over Europe, often hitchhiking. I went to Fasching (Mardi

Gras) parties on Pfander Mountain; skied at St. Moritz, staying in a youth hostel; and hung out in *Biergärten*.

Before going abroad, I remember telling my Wagner music professor that the readings in his class complemented my world history text. He responded, “You’re seeing the interconnections of an education; you’ll make those associations again and again.”

What he said came true during my year abroad. I stood two feet from the *Mona Lisa*, saw where Michelangelo painted, and was encircled by pigeons on St. Mark’s Square, an inspiration for Thomas Mann’s *Death in Venice*. What was there not to like about Bregenz? I happily stayed the year. And as for that boyfriend I didn’t want to leave — today I couldn’t even tell you his name.

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*Terry Baker Mulligan '66 is the author of a memoir, Sugar Hill: Where the Sun Rose Over Harlem (Impulse Press, 2012). She lives in St. Louis, Missouri.*

## WAGNER COLLEGE



### **OH, THE PLACES THEY'LL GO**

Alpha Sigma Alpha won third place in this year's Songfest for their routine, "Oh, the Places You'll Go 'In Toyland.'" The annual contest, a longtime Wagner student tradition, pits Greek organizations and other student groups against each other in a much-anticipated dance spectacular. What are your favorite Songfest memories?

PHOTOGRAPH: ANNA MULÉ