

SUMMER 2023

THE LINK FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

# WAGNER

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**75 YEARS OF WAGNER MAGAZINE**

*Special anniversary issue*

# Contents

Wagner Magazine | Summer 2023

VOL. 19, NO. 1

## On the Cover

**VIEW FROM CHAPEL KNOLL, OCTOBER 1964** — A young couple sits on Chapel Knoll, where the Wagner Union now stands, overlooking the brand-new Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge one month before its completion. Photographer Burk Uzzle's in-depth photo shoot that October, consisting of 2,627 images, produced photo essays for six successive issues of Wagner College's alumni magazine, including cover shots. Uzzle later became one of the best-known documentary photographers in the country, famous for his cover photo on the "Woodstock" soundtrack album and his heart-wrenching images from the funeral of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. His life's work — 22 boxes of painstakingly documented negatives and contact sheets — are preserved by the Library of Congress. We visited the library this past winter, carefully studying the files from Uzzle's 1964 Wagner College shoot, including the contact sheet containing this photograph. Uzzle's contributions are an important piece of just one chapter in this issue's special feature, "Linked: Seventy-Five Years of Wagner Magazine."

## FEATURES

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### **Linked: Seventy-Five Years of Wagner Magazine**

For 75 years — through 215 issues — Wagner College's alumni magazine has kept Grymes Hill graduates in touch with their beloved alma mater. In this special anniversary feature, we reacquaint you with the people who have made Wagner Magazine a reality, again and again, since 1948.

# 38

### **From Classroom to Newsroom**

Wagner alumni have gone on to lead and serve at Staten Island's community newspaper, The Advance.

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# From the President



## Dear Friends,

For 75 years, Wagner Magazine has chronicled the stories of our institution, bringing to life the remarkable achievements of our alumni, students and faculty. In this special issue, the magazine itself becomes the story: a lens through which to explore the institution's 140-year history as well as the leadership, scholarship and service of our community members today.

This issue recognizes the contributions of those many Wagner colleagues who have produced this magazine, from founding editor Al Kraemer '27 in 1948 to distinguished retiring editor Lee Manchester today. It also celebrates the impact of Wagner graduates in fields ranging from journalism to public service to life science. Their contributions inspire us to continue to provide our students with the tools they need to succeed and make a difference in the world.

Wagner's history of innovative academic programs, a warm and welcoming campus, and a deep commitment

to community and country provides the foundation upon which we build today. The stories of our past, detailed in 75 years of Wagner alumni magazines, shape both what our college is today and what it will become in the next 75 years. You, our alumni and friends, are a part of the college's history, its present, and its future — and your support remains essential to our growth and success as we look forward to Wagner College's bright future. Thank you, as always, for your commitment and support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angelo Araimo'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'A'.

*Angelo Araimo*  
PRESIDENT

— Grow Wagner —

**Our Strength Is Our Community.** Together, we overcome new challenges, develop new ideas, and pave the way for the Wagner experience. With the support of the Wagner community, our students become leaders, givers, healers and teachers. This journey is only possible with you.

**Please help make a difference by supporting the Wagner Fund today.**



To give securely online visit [wagner.edu/give](http://wagner.edu/give), call Wagner College at 718-420-4551 or write to:

**Wagner College**  
Office of the Wagner Fund at Reynolds House  
One Campus Road  
Staten Island, New York 10301-9831

# From Our Readers

## 'Heroines of the Holocaust'

Thank you, professors Weintrob and Morowitz. Your work makes me proud to be a trustee at Wagner. We will never forget.

— *Eric Houser*

WAGNER COLLEGE TRUSTEE  
VIA LINKEDIN

I am so grateful to see this. In our day, there were not enough Jewish students to do anything like this. Thanks to all invited.

— *Dave Pockell '66*

VIA FACEBOOK

## Songfest: Then and Now

Songfest and Alpha Delta Pi are two of my fondest memories from my four wonderful years at Wagner. The "Ode to New York" and our "Sound of Music" presentations are still with me. Although I'm living in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, I'm still in "a New York state of mind"!

— *Kathleen Dunn Savarese '79 M'83*

VIA LINKEDIN

## Turn Around: Scott Fink '83

It's an honor to call you a friend, Scott. I knew you were going to be successful in whatever you did post-college. You were always a leader and a mentor to many, and you had a positive impact across the Wagner community. Your legacy is not the money; it is your kind heart and your unrelenting focus on helping others.

— *George Bailey '84*

VIA LINKEDIN



## Full Circle

Pat Tooker was a wonderful mentor for me at Wagner. She is an extraordinary human being!

— *Angela Conte '94*

VIA LINKEDIN

Pat Tooker is an incredible asset to Wagner, supporting students and enriching the community every step of the way!

— *Joy Gallagher '06 M'08*

VIA FACEBOOK

Pat Tooker is an amazing woman who I admire deeply. It's great to read about her continued success! I felt so lucky to have had her in my freshman L.C. and later throughout the nursing program. Kudos, Dr. Tooker. I miss you!

— *Mary Groch Engelbert '11*

VIA LINKEDIN

In my opinion, Pat Tooker represents everything that makes Wagner College such a very special institution.

— *Marc Lebovitz '91*

WAGNER COLLEGE TRUSTEE  
VIA LINKEDIN

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# Upon the Hill

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



## Guild has new crest

THE WAGNER COLLEGE GUILD has a new crest. The original idea was roughly sketched some years ago by alumni director and all-around Wagner booster John D. "Bunny" Barbes '39. Last year, the Guild hired an artist to take Bunny's idea and create a polished, final version, which was completed in January.

Not familiar with the Wagner College Guild?

Ever since Wagner College moved to Staten Island in 1918, the local chapter

of the Guild has provided support to the college and its students. In the early days, it provided meals for the college's hungry young men. In 1922, when a Pennsylvania miners' strike created a shortage of coal throughout New York City, Guild members paid an outstanding fuel bill to keep campus buildings warm. Guild dues and gifts have furnished dorm and infirmary rooms. Guild members have hosted holiday dinners for students who could not return home at Thanksgiving and Christmastime. In 1946, with postwar enrollment skyrocketing, Guild members pitched in to create a student luncheonette, the Guil-den, forerunner of the Hawk's

Alyssa Ahern '13 (*left*) speaks during an on-campus "Business Insights" panel alongside Victoria Natenzon (*right*).



**LEFT** The Guil-den snack bar in the Main Hall basement, May 30, 1946.

**RIGHT** Ave Holthusen Futchs, Wagner Guild president, speaks at the Guild Hall dedication on Dec. 1, 1951. Ave Holthusen Futchs was the daughter of Adolf Holthusen, the first Wagner president on Staten Island and first resident of Kairos House.

**BELOW, LEFT** The new crest of the Wagner College Guild.

Nest, that offered homemade soup and sandwiches. And in 1951, Wagner's new women's residence facility, Guild Hall, was dedicated. We could continue recounting the Guild's historic good deeds all day, but you get the idea.

Today's Wagner Guild, with about 50 regular members, meets four times a year for luncheon programs open to everyone, and an annual members-only reception at Nicolais House, the home of President Araimo. Past Guild fundraising has endowed the Lila T. Barbes '40 Wagner College Guild Scholarship, which is awarded to two students each year. Current activities support the Make a Difference Fund, which provides short-term, emergency financial assistance to students in need so that they may continue their education without interruption.

To find out more about the Wagner Guild — or to become a member — email Kaitlin Girton at [kgirton@wagner.edu](mailto:kgirton@wagner.edu).

## Adidas P.R. rep Alyssa Ahern participates in two student seminars

**ALYSSA AHERN '13**, a public relations professional and an active member of our Alumni Association board, participated in a pair of panels for current Wagner College students last October: one virtual, one on-campus.

Ahern has 10 years of experience in the P.R. field. After graduating, she became an account supervisor with Alison Brod Marketing and Communications, a lifestyle P.R. and marketing agency. Since 2019 she has been a senior P.R. manager for global newsrooms with Adidas.

In October, she hosted a virtual "Lunch & Learn" seminar for the Alumni Association's Women's Professional Network, talking with students about the journey from college to career life.

She also participated in an on-campus "Business Insights" panel sponsored by the Nicolais School of Business. The discussion with Wagner business students, moderated by Dean Aarti Ivanic, explored the complex and evolving world of marketing and public relations that Ahern knows so well. Also joining that panel was Victoria Natenzon of Salesforce, a former colleague of Ahern's at Alison Brod.

## Stage, screen star Renée Marino visits campus

**MASTER COMMUNICATOR RENÉE MARINO '04** shared her talents last fall during a campus visit.

A 2004 graduate of the Wagner College Theatre program, Marino can be seen in Clint Eastwood's 2014 film adaptation of "Jersey Boys," where she reprises the role of Mary Delgado that she played in the Broadway version. She has also performed on Broadway in "Pretty Woman," "Chaplin," "Wonderland" and "West Side Story." She has been featured in People Magazine's "One to Watch" as well as Variety and the Huffington Post.

The title of her new book is "Becoming a Master Communicator: Balancing New School Technology with Ol' School Simplicity," published last spring by Morgan James Publishing.





Donnie Crooks opens the 2013 Presidential Economic Symposium in the Sutter Gymnasium, featuring guest speakers Jack and Suzy Welch and Maria Bartiromo.

## Business professor Donnie Crooks retires

BUSINESS PROFESSOR Donald L. Crooks '68 M'72 retired at the end of the fall 2022 semester, capping a 19-year career at Wagner College.

When Crooks joined the Wagner faculty in 2003, he brought with him an extraordinary level of experience as a former managing director at Morgan Stanley and Lehman Brothers, a former member of the Competitive Review Committee of the New York Stock Exchange, and former chairman of the Disciplinary Committee of the American Stock Exchange.

Credited with creating New York State's first accelerated MBA program at Wagner College, Crooks was awarded the 2010 Faculty Service Award. The nominating statement for this award said, "Professor Crooks has transformed the MBA programs. He has enhanced the academic experience for all business students. His dedication to the department and the college are unparalleled."

Professor Crooks was one of the moving forces behind the creation of Wagner's annual Presidential Symposium lecture series in 2010, which brought significant figures from the national stage to Grymes Hill. Speakers included former New York Stock

Exchange chief Richard Grasso, Home Depot cofounder Kenneth Langone, former General Electric CEO Jack Welch, former New York Gov. George Pataki, and Kurt Landgraf, former CEO of Educational Testing Service, which administers the Graduate Record Examinations test.

In March 2012, after Greg Smith resigned from Goldman Sachs over claims that the bank no longer put clients' interests first, Crooks wrote an op-ed titled, "My Word is my Bond: Thoughts on Wall Street after Greg Smith."

"As an academic, it would be easy to pile on an entire industry," Crooks wrote, "but my career experience does not allow me to do that. Wall Street is not perfect, nor has it ever been, but to write it off as the embodiment of everything evil is not just simplistic — it's not *just*."

Later that year, Crooks joined forces with Wagner colleague Cathynn Tully and Elon University's John Burbridge to address potentially fatal flaws in the Social Security system. Their proposal would have stabilized Social Security by indexing the retirement age to increases in life expectancy, eliminating the cap on Social Security taxes for top wage earners, and partially privatizing individual Social Security investment accounts.

## PA students staff Guatemala clinics

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THREE YEARS, two groups of Wagner College physician assistant students made weeklong visits to Guatemala over the January winter break. Each group of senior-class students staffed clinics in four villages, seeing over 300 patients and providing general medical care under the supervision of two Guatemalan M.D.s. "They were very glad to see us," said Ann Ayers, Coordinator of Global Outreach for Wagner's PA Program, "and they can't wait for us to go back next year."

"During our clinic day in Sololá, the mayor came to speak and pray with us before clinic and he had some really impactful words," wrote a group member on the Wagner College PA Facebook page. "He said that these rural villages might have some of the poorest people, but they are also the kindest and most hardworking people and they deserve the same level of care and compassion as any other person."

"We are so grateful to have this experience and to connect with these people," the group member wrote, "and we know the class of 2024 and those to come will cherish this experience."







A group of PA students poses at a Lake Atitlan overlook, about a mile above sea level, a dormant volcano rising over the water behind them.

## PRESIDENT ARAIMO MAKES STATEN ISLAND POWER 100

**CITY & STATE N.Y.**, a magazine dedicated to New York's local and state politics and policy, has come out with its annual Staten Island Power 100 list of political royalty and VIPs.

Appearing prominently on this year's list, of course, is Wagner College President Angelo Araimo (#39).

"Araimo first joined Wagner College in 1994 as director of admissions," City & State says, "and has since been a lynchpin in the growth and development of the school. Wagner credits him for helping the institution weather historic storms.

"He kept the college's admissions and revenue afloat during the 2008 recession, and as senior vice president he helped the school adapt to the pandemic and safely return the student body to campus."

Araimo has plenty of Seahawk company on this year's S.I. Power 100 list:

- 1 Congresswoman **Nicole Malliotakis M'10**
- 10 Staten Island Advance Editor **Brian Laline M'72**
- 31 **Terry Troia H'05**, president and CEO of Project Hospitality, a humanitarian organization
- 41 **Ed Burke '80**, senior adviser to Staten Island's borough president
- 47 **Ken Mitchell '87**, executive director of the Staten Island Zoo
- 61 **Robert Scamardella**, president of the Wagner College DaVinci Society

Congratulations to all of them!



Jason Pennypacker | newjerseycoasters.net

## Professor Pawk plays Madame Morrible in Broadway's 'Wicked'

WAGNER COLLEGE THEATRE professor Michele Pawk joined the cast of the long-running Broadway musical "Wicked" on Dec. 12, playing Madame Morrible (*above, left*). The show, considered one of the most successful in Broadway history, is currently in its 20th year on the Great White Way.

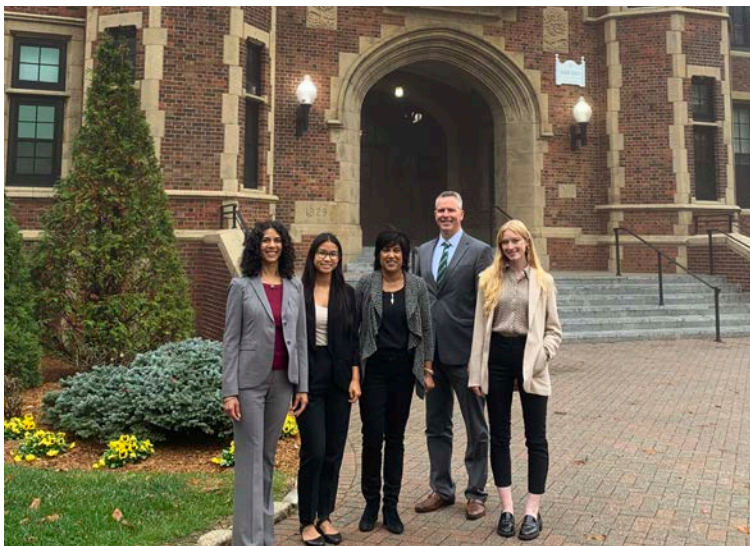
Since debuting on Broadway in 1988, Michele Pawk has been nominated four times for Drama Desk outstanding actress awards, winning the 2003 Tony for best featured actress in "Hollywood Arms."

After joining the Wagner College Theatre faculty in 2010, she immediately put her Broadway experience to work as the director of WCT's "Seussical." Ten years earlier, Pawk had originated the role of Mayzie LaBird in the Broadway version of "Seussical."

Pawk has continued directing for the Wagner College Theatre — including "Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder," "Into the Woods," "Urinetown," "Merrily We Roll Along," "Rent" and "Little Shop of Horrors" — while also teaching classroom courses like Acting V, Directing I and History of the American Film.

How does performing in a high-profile Broadway show like "Wicked" affect Professor Pawk's work at Wagner?

"It makes me a better teacher, in a way," Pawk says. "I have to go out and practice what I preach."



## KPMG Foundation awards grant

THE KPMG FOUNDATION awarded Wagner College a \$25,000 grant for the Nicolais School of Business Career Activator program. The grant is part of the inaugural year of the KPMG Foundation's Reaching New Heights program, which hopes to promote access and equity in higher education, increase awareness of pipeline diversity at institutions and create opportunities for collaboration between KPMG professionals and educators within our communities. In this photo, Anita Whitehead and Malika Adam of the KPMG Foundation (*second and third from the left*) came to the Wagner College campus to visit with Aarti Ivanic (*left*), dean of the Nicolais School of Business, and Patrick Mooney (*second from right*) and Annabeth Hinman '20 (*right*) of our Institutional Advancement office.



## Retired biology professor pens memoir



**WAGNER COLLEGE BIOLOGY** professor emerita Ammini Moorthy has published a memoir titled, “Immigrant Transformed: From the Land of Coconuts to the Big Apple.”

Professor Moorthy, a geneticist on the Wagner College biology faculty for 32 years, retired 10 years ago. A couple of years later, she and her husband, Sam, moved from Edison, New Jersey, to Grantham, New Hampshire. Among her steps in adjusting to retirement was a memoir-writing course at nearby Dartmouth College.

Growing up in the small town of Koovappady in the state of Kerala, on the southwest coast of India, Moorthy says that she listened to so many stories told by neighbors and family members that she developed a talent of her own for storytelling.

“Immigrant Transformed” is a collection of Moorthy’s stories about her own life from childhood, to school, to arranged marriage and immigration to the United States, to academic life at Wagner and beyond.

“This memoir should be required reading for anyone seeking inspiration, joy, honesty and laughter,” says Galveston biology professor Christina Perez. “Dr. Moorthy’s life reminds us to live with determination and persistence, even in the face of obstacles.”

“Immigrant Transformed: From the Land of Coconuts to the Big Apple,” by Ammini Moorthy, is available on Amazon.



## PRIDE COLLECTION COMES TO HORMMANN LIBRARY

THE HORMMANN LIBRARY is the home of a unique collection of over 2,000 titles on LGBTQ+ topics, both fiction and non-fiction, known as the Pride Collection. Created by the Pride Center of Staten Island, it is one of the largest such collections in the United States.

“The Pride Center was relocating to a new space, and it no longer had room to house these books at their headquarters,” explained Horrmann Library director Dennis Schaub. “Their operations director, Marcy Carr, reached out to Wagner College history professor Lori Weintrob, who then connected Marcy with the library.”

“Many of the books in the Pride Collection are classics and critical texts documenting the emergence of the LGBTQ+ movement,” said Weintrob, who is director of the college’s Holocaust Center. “A number of these texts dealt with the persecution of gays in the Holocaust and the emergence of the pink triangle as a symbol of the movement.

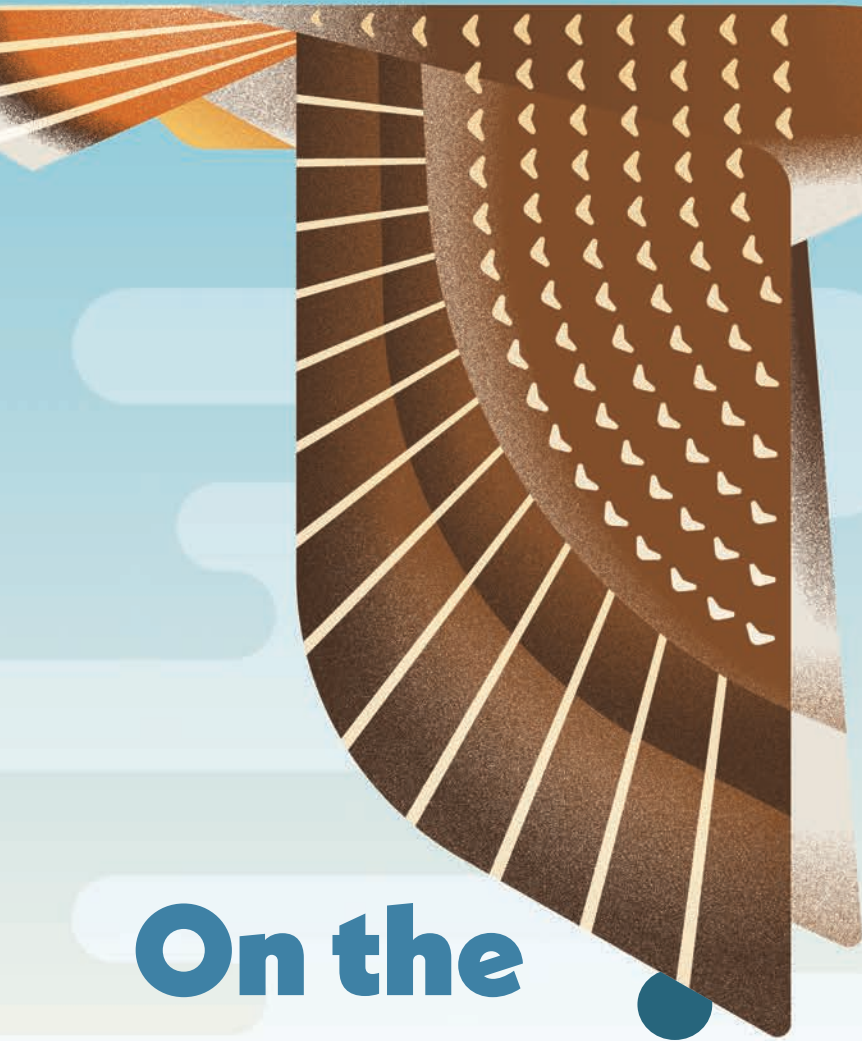
“The Wagner College Holocaust Center was honored to work with Daniel Perkins of the Horrmann Library to assist in hiring a student intern, Bryce Palmyra, to catalog these books and highlight particularly important works.”

Palmyra created an online library research guide to the Pride Collection that serves as a starting point for further research on LGBTQ+ issues and topics.

The Pride Collection is housed on the main floor of the Horrmann Library, near the reference area. If you visit the library, look for the rainbow-colored “Pride Collection” signs. All titles in the collection are searchable in the library’s online catalog and search engine.

📍 **Red-tailed hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis*

Red-tailed hawks are most likely the most widespread hawk in North America. They pass through the Wagner College campus frequently throughout the year and have even bred on Grymes Hill.



📍 **Ring-billed gull** *Larus delawarensis*

Ring-billed gulls are considerably synanthropic (associating with humans), frequently visiting parking lots, athletic fields, sewage ponds and garbage dumps as well as shopping centers and fast-food restaurants. They frequently fly over the Wagner College campus. Only occasionally, they may land on higher buildings. They rarely land on the ground.

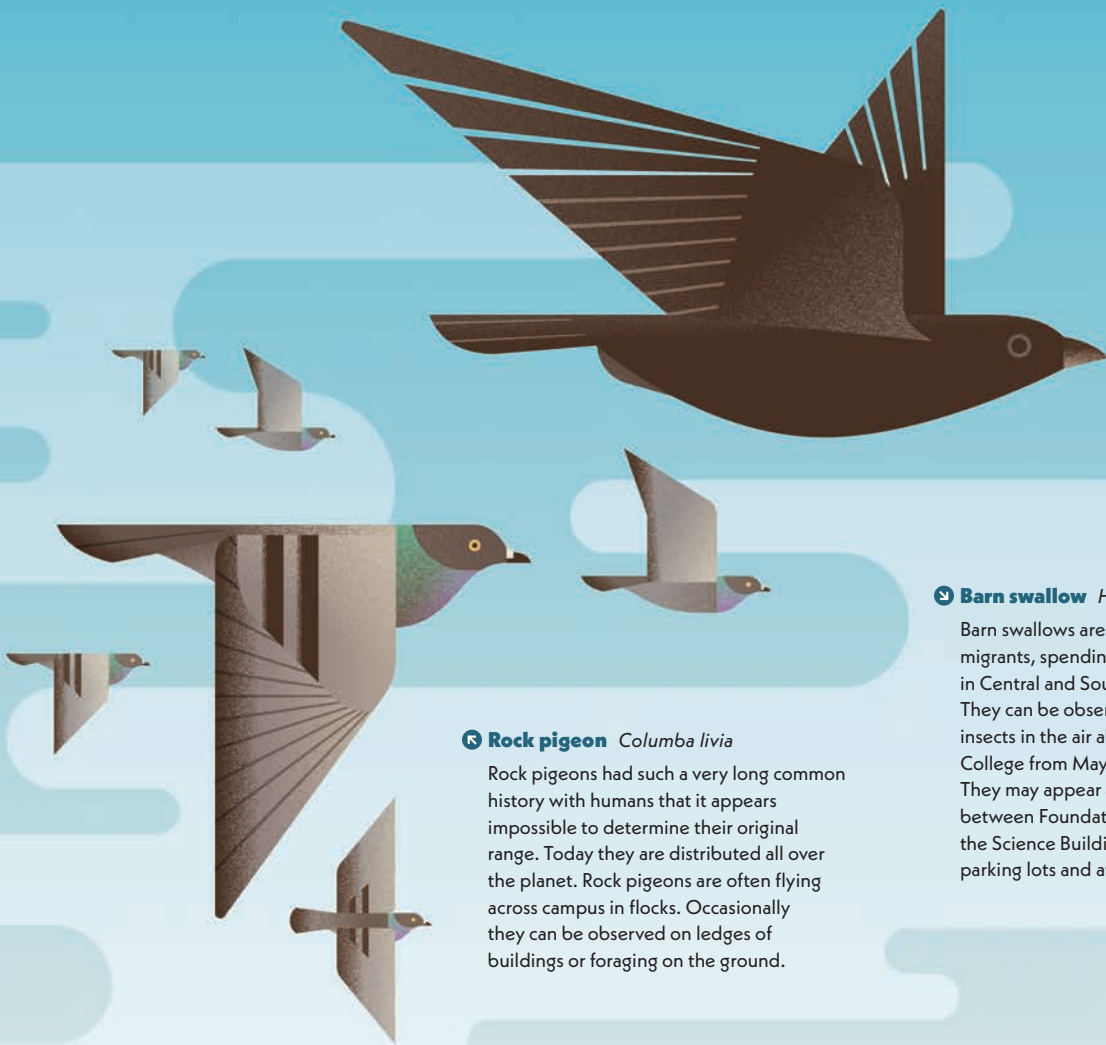
## **Biology professor publishes new book on the birds to be found on Grymes Hill**

The Wagner College campus is one of the natural marvels of New York City: a green, living oasis embedded in one of the world's great urban centers.

In our 2014 Wagner Magazine story, "Rooted in Grymes Hill," we took a broad look at our very own hundred-acre wood with the help of Wagner biology professor Horst Onken. You can still find the story on our website at [wagner.edu/rooted](http://wagner.edu/rooted).

Now, Professor Onken has produced a new guide to the natural life on our campus: a free ebook entitled "Birds at Wagner College," available in the Archives & Special Collections section of the Hормann Library website. Download it by visiting [wagner.edu/bird-book](http://wagner.edu/bird-book).

# **On the wing at Wagner**



← **American crow**

*Corvus brachyrhynchos*

American crows are very intelligent birds that occasionally use tools. They are very vocal and make a caw-caw-caw call. American crows are on campus every day of the year. They fly across campus and can be heard and seen frequently. They occasionally land in trees, on buildings or on the ground.

↘ **Barn swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

Barn swallows are long-distance migrants, spending the winter in Central and South America. They can be observed hunting for insects in the air above Wagner College from May to September. They may appear above the lawn between Foundation Hall and the Science Building and above parking lots and athletic fields.

↻ **Rock pigeon** *Columba livia*

Rock pigeons had such a very long common history with humans that it appears impossible to determine their original range. Today they are distributed all over the planet. Rock pigeons are often flying across campus in flocks. Occasionally they can be observed on ledges of buildings or foraging on the ground.



**A** **NIMAL PHYSIOLOGIST** Horst Onken, who joined the faculty of our biology department in 2006, was raised in northwest Germany, surrounded by the greenhouses and orchards of his family’s nursery.

“I enjoyed that a lot,” Onken told us in 2014. “It was right on the outskirts of town — on one side of us were fields; on the other, forests.”

Birds were, naturally, a part of the population of the Onken nursery.

“My parents had bird feeders in the window,” he recalls, “and they would teach us who was coming to visit there at the bird feeder.”

The idea for a book about the birds of Wagner College’s Grymes Hill campus had its genesis in the Covid shutdown of 2020.

“When Covid started, we suddenly had to stay home, and we had to teach from home,” Onken says. “I live in New Jersey,

and not having to commute to campus saved me an hour and a half every day.

“I am an avid walker; I like to walk more than to ride on a bike. In the spring of 2020, what I did with my saved time was I went for walks to the beach. I live a mile from the beach, and I live basically across the road from a state park where I saw all these birds, and that got me back into more serious birding.”

Onken’s walks — and his bird observations — during the Covid shutdown, combined with a new service responsibility, generated the idea for a bird book.

“About two years ago, I got a message from the Provost’s Office encouraging me to apply for the Martha Megerle Chair,” Onken told us.

The Megerle family had established the Martha Megerle and Eugen E. Megerle Chairs in the Sciences in 2011. The Megerle Chairs rotate every two years

among the faculty in biology, chemistry, microbiology, physics and anthropology. Faculty members who are awarded one of these funded positions in support of their research are obligated to create tools that will benefit the college community in some way.

Onken had two ideas for his Megerle Chair projects: the bird book, and an update of a 1974 booklet entitled “Woody Plants at Wagner College.” The 16-page mimeographed booklet, which covered just 33 varieties of plants found on campus, was a collaboration between biology professor Dean Christianson (1967–75) and student John Cain ’73, with leaf drawings by Paul Greccay ’74 and species location map by Alice Cook Taylor ’74. You’ll find a link to the booklet at [wagner.edu/woody-plants](http://wagner.edu/woody-plants).

The bird book came first.

📍 **Northern cardinal**

*Cardinalis cardinalis*

Male and female sing *birdie, birdie, birdie*, mainly in spring and early summer. The major call of cardinals is a characteristic, loud, metallic chirp. There are multiple pairs of northern cardinals at Wagner College. They may appear out of nowhere, but usually like to hide in shrubby areas and forest edges.

📍 **Blue jay**

*Cyanocitta cristata*

Blue jays are resident birds or short migrants. They are a constant presence at Wagner College. They forage through all parts of the campus and can be heard and seen every day of the year.

📍 **Black-capped chickadee**

*Poecile atricapillus*

Black-capped chickadees are curious and quick to discover bird feeders, which they visit subsequently. They are quite frequent at Wagner College and can appear on campus every day of the year. The chance to see and hear them is higher near the wooded areas at the margins of the campus.

## 'Wait, watch and listen'

Birding is evidently the observation and the recording of birds. It can be done by everybody. It can be done stationary, by observing a bird feeder, by sitting on a bench in a park, or by just looking out of the window. It can also be done by walking in any environment where birds are, which is virtually everywhere. The time input can be 5 minutes or 5 hours. It does not matter. I guess everybody is a birder. Most of us recognize the birds around us. What distinguishes a real birder from the rest of us is that birders record their sightings. — from *"Birds at Wagner College"*

In the front of Onken's book, he describes a simple set of tools you can use — starting with the book itself, which you might want to download onto a tablet computer for easy portability. In his "Introduction, or How to Get Lost in the World of Birds," Onken writes,

If used in the right way, ["Birds at Wagner College"] may provide many hopefully pleasant journeys through the "world" of birds at Wagner College.

Readers will find one-page descriptions for each of the 105 most abundant birds that at least occasionally visit the college campus.

Learn about their habitat, their food, their love life, how they nest, their behavior, their migration, about conservation issues ... you name it. Get lost in the world of birds!

Onken also suggests that you download a pair of apps onto your phone, Merlin and eBird — both created by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and both available on the major online app stores — which will

help you with identifying and recording your observations.

Merlin will help you identify birds you don't recognize, and eBird will help you share your observations with other "birders."

"Let's say you've seen a bird, but you don't know what it is," Onken says. "You can tell Merlin, 'Well, the bird was about this size,' give them the color ... they already know where you are, geographically, from the app's GPS tracking function. Basically, it's like a search engine that goes through all the checklists of the last time different birds were seen in your vicinity and matches them up with the description you've provided. You get all those, and then you look at pictures and pick the one out that you actually saw."

You can also use Merlin to match a photo you've taken of a bird, or an audio recording you've captured of a bird's song.

The second app Onken recommends, eBird, will help you record the checklist you will make of the birds you've seen.

"Anybody who wants to can sit in their yard or wherever they observe birds and make a checklist. You would say, 'Okay, at 1 p.m. I'm sitting here, and I'm going to sit for 30 minutes,' and you just write down all the bird species that you see, be they hopping around or flying by. Then you would go to your computer, make an account with eBird [go to [ebird.org](http://ebird.org)], log into your account, and record your checklist."

Onken suggests several places to watch birds on campus:

The center of the campus is a good choice for birds that are common at Wagner College and that are usually synanthropic, meaning that these bird species live near humans and benefit

from humans, or the environments created by humans. Think of house sparrows, pigeons, robins, starlings, blue jays, crows, gulls ... However, other bird species may be seen or heard in the center of the college campus.

At certain times of the year, birds are moving across the country to or from their breeding grounds and they hit the college campus to feed on insect larvae or whatever they can find. Look up to the branches of trees and discover birds [searching] for food in April and May as well as September and October.

The likelihood of meeting other birds increases in the following spots:

- Sit down on the guard railing of the lower Tiers parking lot and watch the "wilderness" below you. Wait, watch and listen.
- Sit down on the bench overlooking the tennis courts. Wait, watch and listen.

- Sit down on the rim of one of the planters beside the Powerhouse at Campus Road. Wait, watch and listen.

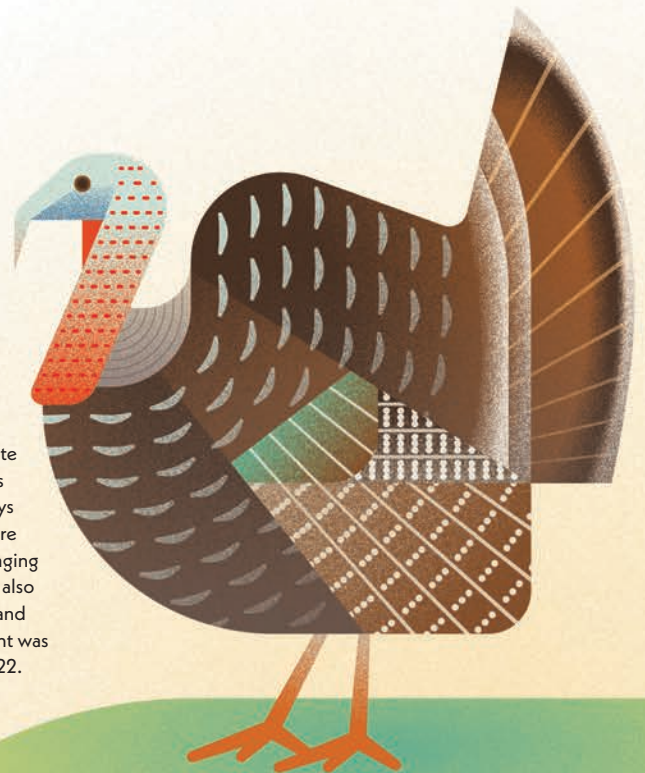
Raptors like hawks, ospreys, falcons, or eagles are usually only visible from spots that offer an open sky (parking lots or on the hill in front of Foundation Hall), because they just move by and do not regularly hunt at Wagner College. For any other bird species that just flies by (geese, gulls, crows) the same applies.

Students have been drawn for years to Wagner College's Grymes Hill campus for its unique combination of characteristics: just 45 minutes from virtually *anywhere* in New York City, one of the world's great metropolitan centers, but surrounded by open space, green lawns and wooded forests teeming with wildlife.

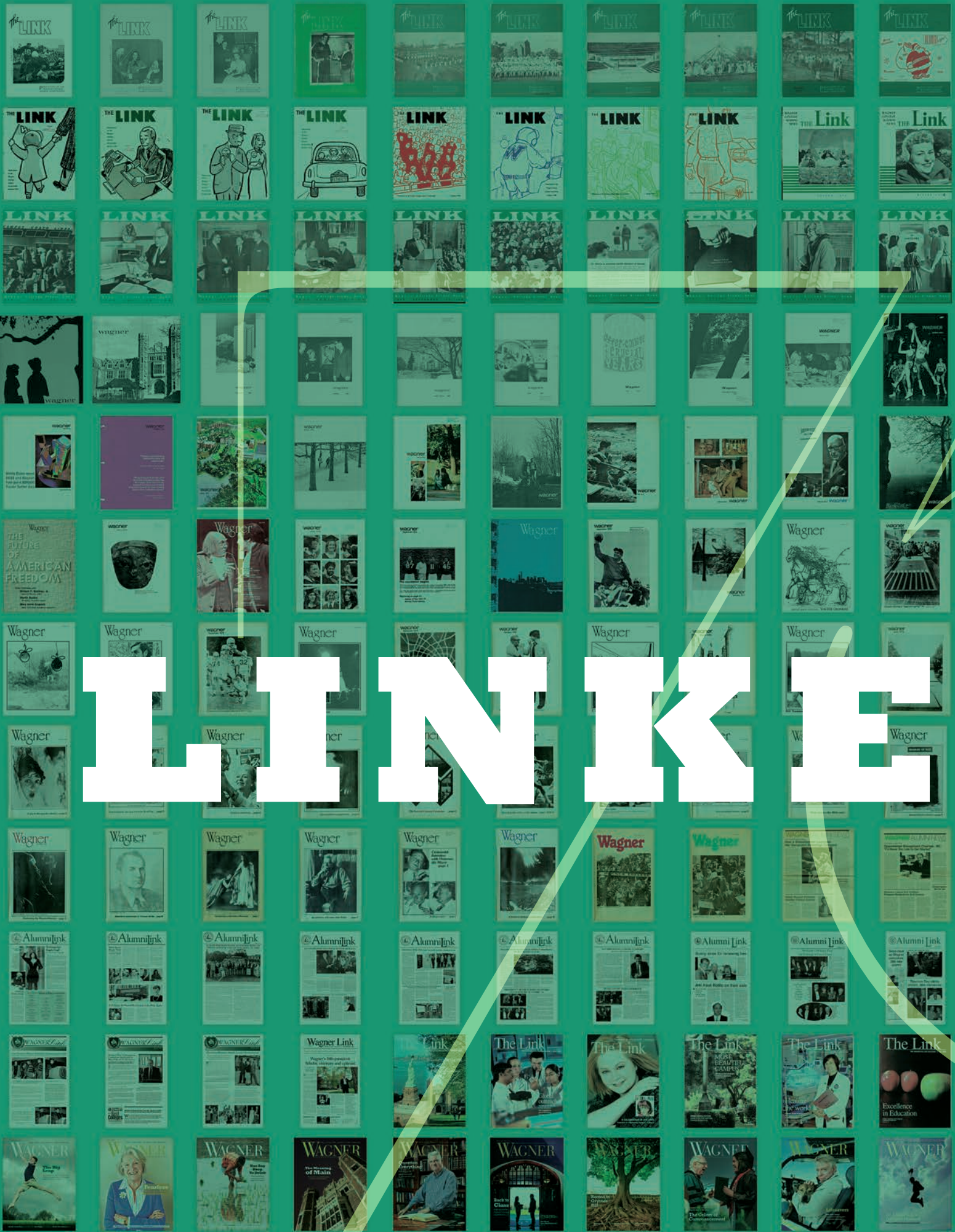
#### ➔ Wild turkey

*Meleagris gallopavo*

Flocks of wild turkeys move through forests and clearings in search of nuts, berries, insects and snails on the ground. Despite their scarce record on eBird, it is well-known for years that turkeys are common on campus. They are the largest birds at Wagner, foraging through the wooded areas, but also showing up regularly on lawns and walkways. Onken's highest count was 40 individuals on March 13, 2022.



# LINKS



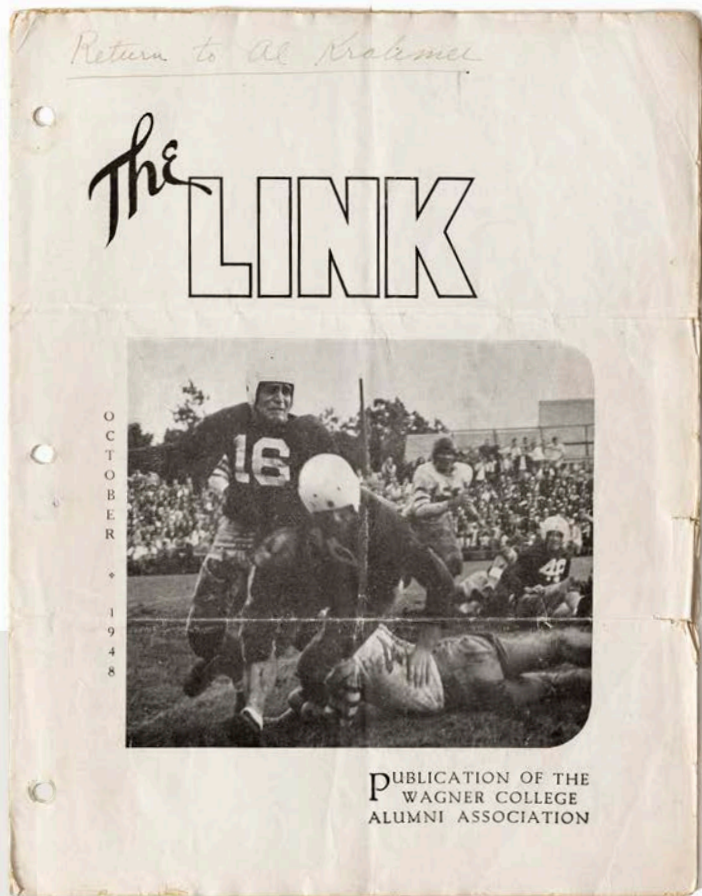


# D

## 75 YEARS OF WAGNER MAGAZINE

For 75 years — through 215 issues — Wagner College's alumni magazine has kept Grymes Hill graduates in touch with their beloved alma mater. In this special anniversary feature, we reacquaint you with the people who have made Wagner Magazine a reality, again and again, since 1948.

BY LEE MANCHESTER



← The first issue of *The Link: The Wagner College Alumni News*, published in October 1948.

Staten Island campus from 1923 to 1933 — which meant that Al and his family lived on the Grymes Hill campus in faculty housing while he studied for his Wagner diploma, his master's in English from Columbia, and his credentials from the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.

For 15 years, Al Kraemer held successive pastorates at two Lutheran congregations in Queens — but when his alma mater called in 1948, he answered.

For the next eight years, Kraemer dedicated himself to professionalizing Wagner College's alumni services, joining the American College Public Relations Association as well as the American Alumni Council.

During his first year, Kraemer had the first promotional film made about Wagner College, "Beautiful Upon a Hill," starring Robert Loggia '51, a Wagner student and future film and television star.

But Kraemer's biggest project was the transformation of the college's periodical communications. The Wagner College Bulletin, which announced Kraemer's appointment in March 1948, had not changed a great deal since its first issue was published in November 1920. The newsletter was nicely done, but it was nothing more than that: a nice newsletter.

In October 1948, Al Kraemer published the first issue of *The Link: The Wagner College Alumni News*.

"This issue introduces something new to Wagner alumni," Kraemer wrote in his introduction to the inaugural issue, "their own quarterly alumni magazine. We hope you like it. It isn't entirely as we would like

## IT ALL STARTED WITH AL

**T**HE YEAR WAS 1948. World War II had been over for three years.

The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 — a.k.a. the G.I. Bill — had utterly transformed American higher education, funding the college educations of millions of veterans across the country. Enrollment at Wagner Memorial Lutheran College on Staten Island had more than quadrupled, rising from 440 in 1945 to nearly 2,000 in 1948.

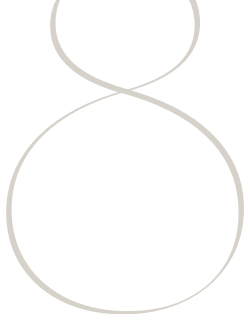
Wagner's first postwar president, Walter Langsam, had demonstrated his leadership skills as a spymaster in America's new intelligence agency, the Office of Strategic Services, created during the war to root out Nazi secrets. Likewise, his three successors — David M. Delo, Richard H. Heindel and Arthur

O. Davidson — had made remarkable contributions to the war effort as leaders in scientific manpower, public diplomacy and tactical training.

That same respect for leadership and expertise showed itself in the transformation of Wagner College's postwar approach to serving its alumni community.

That transformation was, to a large degree, thanks to the efforts of the college's new alumni secretary and magazine editor, the Rev. Alfred J. Kraemer '27 — known to everyone as just plain Al — who joined the Wagner administration in 1948.

Kraemer was a Wagnerian through and through. He had been a member of the campus newspaper staff for his four years as a student. His father, the Rev. J. Christian Kraemer, was an 1893 graduate of the original Rochester, New York, incarnation of Wagner. After graduating, *Vater* Kraemer taught Latin in Rochester from 1897 to 1901, and again at the new



it to be, but we'll keep trying to make it a magazine Wagner alumni will look forward to and read eagerly.”

Krahmer edited 32 issues of *The Link* from 1948 through 1956 — more issues than any other editor has produced. The magazine's cover went through four designs, and the contents evolved over the eight years of Al's editorial leadership, but the purpose remained the same: to deliver news and features about Wagner College and alumni to our growing community.

When Al Krahmer resigned as *Link* editor in June 1956, the magazine sent mixed messages about his departure. In his parting editorial, Krahmer appeared to indicate that something was wrong, though he did not elaborate:

I am not going into the reasons why I'm leaving. I'm leaving because I feel I should, not because I'm mad at anybody. I have to confess to a little reluctance in leaving a work I loved, but my decision was based on a conviction that resignation was the only right thing for me to do.

A parting look at Krahmer's record by alumnus Les Trautmann '40, published in the Summer 1956 *Link*, contained no hint of discord.

A clue to the reason for Krahmer's departure from his beloved Wagner surfaced the following year when President David M. Delo suddenly resigned. A front-page article in the *Staten Island Advance* quoted trustee president Frederic Sutter as saying that “a difference of opinion on administrative

procedure led Dr. Delo to the conclusion that he has no alternative but to resign,” but Sutter did not elaborate, then or later. Delo himself said only that, “out of principle, I feel compelled to withdraw from the presidency at this time.”

An explanation for Delo's 1957 resignation came nearly half a century later, in his son's memoir:

Wagner College's board of [trustees] was composed of Lutheran ministers, so for the first time, my conservative father found himself far to the left of governing fiscal thought. After [five] frustrating years, he concluded that you couldn't improve without spending, and that for the health of his soul, he would be better off in another pond where the head fish were swimming in the direction he wanted to go.

One can only speculate how Krahmer was affected by President Delo's conflict with Pastor Sutter and the trustees — but no matter the reason for his departure, Krahmer became the public relations director for the Lutheran Welfare Association of New Jersey on July 1, 1956.

Shortly thereafter he began graduate studies at Rutgers University for his master's degree in library science, the next step in yet another career change. With M.L.S. in hand, Krahmer joined the library staff at Susquehanna University in 1960, retiring 10 years later.

Alfred J. Krahmer died in Dec. 1981. He was buried at Fairview Cemetery on Staten Island.

Al Krahmer '27 welcomes a student to campus in 1950.



Robert Loggia '51 starred in “Beautiful Upon a Hill,” the 1948 promotional film Al Krahmer produced for Wagner, before going on to a successful career in Hollywood.



Watch “Beautiful Upon a Hill” at [wagner.edu/1949](http://wagner.edu/1949).

Lois Dickert in the 1945 Kallista. ➔  
 Editor-in-Chief Lois Dickert sits in the  
 bottom row center of this Wagnerian  
 staff photo from the 1945–46 Kallista. ↓



**Before the war, it was almost unthinkable that a top student leadership position would go to anyone but a man.**

## DICKERT BECOMES THE FIRST, TWICE

**V**ERY FEW EDITORS work alone. Al Krahmer was no exception. When Al was putting together his plan for the college’s brand-new alumni magazine, he turned to Lois Katherine Dickert ’46 for help.

Like Al Krahmer, Dickert came from a Wagner family; she was the daughter of Rev. Henry B. Dickert, an 1899 Wagner College graduate from the old Rochester campus. Henry Dickert was serving as the pastor of Zion Lutheran Church in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, when his daughter Lois was born in 1925. When it came time for Lois to go to college, she naturally chose Wagner, where Henry was on the board of trustees.

From December 1944 until her graduation in June 1946, Lois Dickert served as the student newspaper’s first female editor-in-chief.

Before the war, it was almost unthinkable that a top student leadership position would go to anyone but a man. But during the war, when men were being drafted to fight in Europe and the Pacific, women began taking up the reins on Grymes Hill.

In 1945, Wagner College students elected their first female president, Evelyn Schaefer ’45, a year after the Wagnerian named Lois Dickert as its first female editor.

After graduation, Dickert worked as publicity director at Hartwick College. She resigned in July 1948 to join Al Krahmer and became the Wagner alumni magazine’s first assistant editor. From that time on, Lois Dickert worked for the rest of her life as a journalist, and a fairly high profile one at that.

Dickert left *The Link* in September 1950 to pursue a graduate degree at Columbia full-time, then worked as a freelance journalist in Paris for eight years. When she returned to the States, she moved to Los Angeles where she worked as a correspondent for *Time* magazine.

In late 1962 Dickert was in L.A. when an international crisis set the entire country on edge. The Soviet Union had begun placing missiles on the territory of its new ally, Cuba, capable of striking the United States in a matter of minutes — and, suddenly, the end of the world seemed like a real possibility.

In the midst of the Cuban Missile Crisis, a “false alarm” at Miraleste Elementary School in suburban Rancho

Palos Verdes, California, led teachers to believe that a nuclear strike on Los Angeles was imminent. The school’s dramatic evacuation became the subject of multiple news stories, including an L.A. Times article by Paul Weeks, titled “How Morning of Terror Hit War-Alerted School.” Lois Dickert’s interpretation of that story for the April 1963 issue of *McCall’s*, a prominent women’s magazine, struck a nerve with screenwriters Frank and Eleanor Perry. Dickert’s story became their inspiration for the 1964 antiwar feature film, “Ladybug Ladybug.”

Lois Dickert — who married Moses Bloom Armstrong in 1964 — continued working for *Time* magazine until she was recruited for the inaugural staff of a new celebrity-profile magazine called, simply, *People*. Over the remainder of her career, Dickert — now Lois Armstrong — wrote numerous cover stories for *People*, with subjects including Doris Day, Henry Winkler, Patty Duke and John Astin, Lee Majors and Farrah Fawcett, Shelley Duvall, and Marjoe Gortner. Armstrong became *People* magazine’s L.A. bureau chief.

In September 1996, while living in Santa Monica, California, Lois Dickert Armstrong ’46 died from cancer.

## LINK EDITORS 1956 to 1964

### FRED H. OLSON '54,

who began working in Wagner College's public relations office early in 1955, edited *The Link* for just **two issues**, Autumn 1956 and Winter 1957. Olson had served as a corporal in the Marines during World War II before enrolling at Wagner College; his education was interrupted by the Korean War, when he was recalled to active duty. After leaving *The Link*, Olson started a company that published high school yearbooks. He lived on Staten Island with his wife, Mary Elizabeth, and three sons. Fred Olson died on July 21, 1972.



### FRANCIS P. "FRANK" HANNIGAN '51

was initially hired by Al Krahrmer as an assistant editor for *The Link* two days after his graduation, but that tenure was interrupted the following year by the Korean War draft. Hannigan returned to Wagner five years later as *Link* editor, where he produced **12 issues** from Summer 1957 to Feb. 1961. After leaving Wagner he became information director for the U.S. Golf Association, which oversees the U.S. Open, the U.S. Women's Open and the U.S. Senior Open golf tournaments.

### NORMAN VOLK

edited **four issues** of *The Link*, from June 1961 to June 1962.



**ROBERT F. PRATHER** edited **five issues** of *The Link*, from October 1962 to July 1964.



Prather came to Wagner with a journalism degree from Ohio University and a Teacher's College doctorate in university administration. Except for two short stints in the Army, Prather spent his entire career in higher education, including top leadership posts with the Foundation for Independent Higher Education and the Texas Independent College Fund. He died in 2005.



↑ Photos by Burk Uzzle in "A Wagnerian World of Music" in the May 1965 issue.

→ Editor Gene Wilburn photographed at his typewriter by Burk Uzzle, October 1964.



## THE BIRTH OF WAGNER MAGAZINE

**A**FTER FOUNDING EDITOR Al Krahrmer left *The Link* in 1956, a series of four editors took responsibility for the magazine.

But in the fall of 1964, a new face appeared in Wagner College's information office: Gene Wilburn.

While he did not make any big changes in *The Link* for the first issue he edited (December 1964), his second issue was a groundbreaker. Working with associate editor Sal Asselta and art directors Fred J. Sklenar and Joe Knox, Wilburn waited until his second issue (April 1965) to launch what, in many ways, was a whole new alumni magazine, including a new name: *Wagner*.

Today, the name change seems like a no-brainer. After all, what college would *not* want its own name to prominently appear on the coffee tables of its alumni?

But to change the name of a beloved publication that had been around for 17 years — that was no small thing. Which is probably why that inaugural issue of *Wagner* magazine made a point of

emphasizing that the new name and format were fully supported by not only the college's trustees but also the alumni association.

The publication was completely redesigned, from front to back, starting with the page dimensions — from the old 8½ by 11-inch rectangle to a roughly 9 by 9-inch square. Modern graphics and page-design principles were applied throughout, giving it a "mod," Sixties feel.

Another big innovation spearheaded by Gene Wilburn was the hiring of a young documentary/news photographer from Brooklyn, Burk Uzzle, for an extended shoot of everyone and everything on the Wagner College campus. We don't know how many days Uzzle spent on Grymes Hill, training his eye on our classrooms, laboratories, athletic fields and public spaces — but we do know that the shoot took place almost immediately after Wilburn's hiring in October 1964, and that the images he captured were nothing short of iconic.

Uzzle's photos first appeared in a two-page photo-essay published in the December 1964 *Link*, Gene Wilburn's very first issue,



**The Burk Uzzle “brand” had two guiding principles: complete immersion in his “shoot,” and deep respect for the humanity of his subjects.**



and in all six issues of Wilburn’s Wagner magazine (April 1965 through June 1966) — even in the 1965 issue of Kallista, the college’s yearbook.

Uzzle would become one of America’s best-known documentary and news photographers.

In 1960, at the age of 22, he became the youngest photographer ever to be hired by Life magazine — and he had already been working for several years as a staff photographer for his hometown daily newspaper, the Raleigh (N.C.) News & Observer, and as a contract photographer for the internationally renowned Black Star Agency. In 1967 he was voted into the Magnum Photos cooperative, the famous member-owned agency; a decade later, he served as its president.

The Burk Uzzle “brand” had two guiding principles: complete immersion in his “shoot,” and deep respect for the humanity of his subjects.

From the earliest days of his career — including his very first magazine assignment for Jet magazine in 1958 to photograph young civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. — he was a dyed-

in-the-wool believer in the campaign for equal rights for all Americans.

His personal commitment to civil rights did not prevent Uzzle from visually examining the other side of the equality equation. The spring after Uzzle’s Wagner College shoot, Life magazine gave him an assignment that could have been very dangerous: to photograph Ku Klux Klan Grand Dragon Robert Shelton at a rally in the mountains of his native North Carolina. Shelton himself, convinced of Uzzle’s integrity, instructed Klansmen at the rally to let Burk do his work.

Today, two sets of his photos are instantly recognizable: the poignant shots he took at the funeral of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, and his emblematic 1969 photograph of Nick Ercoline and Bobbi Kelly embracing amidst the crowd at Woodstock, used on the cover of the movie’s soundtrack album.

When a reporter for the Bitter Southerner, a digital publication, asked Uzzle how he got such intimate, authentic photos from such varied subjects, he told her, “You spend time. You have enough meals with people, they know who you

are. You tell them about your kids and all that — so you’re just taking candid photographs and they’re not invasive.”

That is, no doubt, how Burk Uzzle gathered such personal, truthful images from his shoot on the Wagner College campus — although, truth be told, he could not remember the assignment well enough to comment on it when we spoke with him at the end of last year.

“That was so long ago,” he said, “I don’t even remember exactly where I was living then!”

In 2020, Emmy Award-winning director Jethro Waters released his loving documentary film, “F11 and Be There,” about Burk Uzzle’s remarkable life and career.

The complete photographic record of his Wagner College shoot — all 2,627 individual images of it — is on file in the 22-box Burk Uzzle Photojournalism Collection at the Library of Congress in Washington. Those several days in the fall of 1964 on Grymes Hill, as seen through the lens and the mind of this extraordinary photographer, had been preserved for all those years, just waiting to be found and examined again.



**ABOVE** selected photos from Burk Uzzle's Wagner College photography, housed in negatives at the Library of Congress. Notable Wagner figures pictured include Suzette Meyer, a biology professor (*top left photo*), and Spiro Loucas, a chemistry professor (*top center photo*).

**OPPOSITE PAGE** "Woodstock: Music from the Original Soundtrack and More" sold more than 2 million copies and the album cover featured Burk Uzzle's now iconic photograph.

## WAGNER MAGAZINE EDITORS, 1966 to 1975

Following Gene Wilburn, **JAMES L. TELFER** edited seven issues of Wagner magazine, from December 1966 to January 1968. Working (and writing) alongside him through most of those issues was his wife, Beverly Ann. We know almost nothing about James, and only a little more about Beverly because of her obituary, which was published after her death in March 2022. Beverly graduated from Denison University (Phi Beta Kappa), spending time on the west coast before returning to her native Ohio, where she was assistant to the dean at Wittenberg University. It was at Wittenberg that Beverly and James met and married. The Telfers came to Wagner in 1966. James resigned in early 1968 to become public relations director for the Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee.



**EARL W. JOHNSON** was an ordained American Baptist minister. Prior to working for Wagner College, he had been publicity director for the American Baptist Convention's capital funds campaign. At Wagner, he was responsible for producing the alumni magazine and other college printed materials. Johnson edited 27 issues of Wagner magazine, from March 1968 to June 1975, making him one of its five top-producing editors.

# 1975

## NEVER A BETTER JOB

**R**USS JOHNSON '67 M'72 may have been the only Wagner editor to have written his first article for the magazine while he was still a student, in the January 1967 issue. At the time, Russ had a work/study job in the college's Publications Office. Time magazine had named its "Man of the Year" as, collectively, American youth — and Wagner Magazine editor Jim Telfer wanted Russ to write a response.

"I think the article failed," Johnson wrote. "The big mistake is to assume that one can write about young people in general."

Russ Johnson, who edited a total of 29 issues of Wagner's alumni magazine and newspaper — from 1975 through 1979 — was born and raised in Graniteville, on the north shore of Staten Island, just a mile or so south of the Bayonne Bridge. A 1963 graduate of Port Richmond High School, a state regents' scholarship combined with a Wagner scholarship covered Johnson's tuition, and his work-study job helped with his other expenses. His father had died while Johnson was in high school; he lived at home throughout his college years with his mother and an older brother.

"Although I commuted all four years," Johnson says, "I spent almost all day and



**A new plan called for a brand-new alumni publication, Wagner News, to be mailed five times a year, starting immediately, while the more traditional Wagner Magazine would be published three times a year.**

- The first issue of the Wagner News, published in September 1975, and the October 1975 issue of Wagner Magazine.
- Russ Johnson '67 M'72 in the 1980 Kallista.



night on campus, and I never missed living in a dorm. I prefer peace and quiet.”

The combination of a full course load as an English major, along with his work/study job, membership in Kappa Sigma Alpha, work on the Wagnerian staff, leadership as Student Association president and competition on the track team kept Johnson more than busy.

It was at Wagner that Russ Johnson met his future wife, Nancy Pelcak ’70.

“I was a senior, and she was a freshman that September day,” he recalled of their fateful meeting in the parking lot in front of Cunard Hall. Nancy, moving into Towers on her first day, had driven down to campus with her parents from their home in the Hudson Valley.

Something must have clicked between Russ and Nancy, immediately and almost visibly. Her mother cautioned the newly minted collegian against getting too serious about anyone with four years of college life ahead of her, but to no avail.

“I met her that night in the dining hall,” Johnson said, “and we’ve been together ever since.”

After being awarded his B.A. the next spring, Johnson continued his studies at Wagner, working as a graduate assistant toward a master’s degree in English. The following spring in 1968, Russ and

Nancy became engaged — an engagement interrupted that October when Russ joined the Air Force. Commissioned in February 1969, Russ married Nancy the following December, though she would not join him on base in Missouri until graduating the following June. Major R.H. Johnson finished up his military service with a two-year stint (1972–74) teaching English at the Air Force Academy in Colorado before returning to Wagner as director of communications. The following year, when Earl Johnson (no relation) left Grymes Hill after editing Wagner Magazine for seven years, Russ Johnson took over.

The September 1975 issue, Russ’s first, marked numerous transitions:

- John Satterfield was introduced as the successor to Wagner College’s then-longest-serving president, Arthur Ole Davidson.
- Former registrar, admissions chief and night-school director Marguerite Hess, a fixture on Grymes Hill since 1935, died.
- And the format of the college’s alumni publication, which had been a magazine — and *only* a magazine — since its creation in 1948, underwent a fundamental shift.

Beginning with the September 1975 issue, a new plan called for a brand-

new alumni publication, Wagner News, to be mailed five times a year, starting immediately, while the more traditional Wagner Magazine would be published three times a year. Wagner News, while still including several feature and alumni profile articles in each issue, would focus on campus and alumni news-type stories, including the traditional Class Briefs section (now called Class Notes). The publication format for Wagner News was also a departure: It was a tabloid-style, newsprint periodical.

“All along, I felt the tabloid was more important than the magazine,” Johnson said in a recent interview. “We got lots of Class Notes — and, now, that’s what I look at first. With alums, that was more likely to resonate than the magazine.”

But the magazine was still an important aspect of the college’s connection with its alumni community. The biggest components of Wagner Magazine under Russ Johnson’s editorial leadership were the profile stories. Most of those profiles featured alumni or current faculty members, but Johnson added another element to the magazine’s lineup: Each issue featured a prominent guest interview, with personalities ranging from William F. Buckley to Walter Cronkite to Ronald Reagan.



... it is also true that some people who start as politicians end as leaders. There is the experience itself which sometimes transforms people.

— **WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.**,  
founder and editor-in-chief  
of National Review

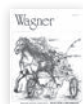


February 1976, page 16  
[wagner.edu/buckley](http://wagner.edu/buckley)



I think that the battle for honesty in the conduct of our public business is going to continue, and the battle for candor is going to continue.

— **WALTER CRONKITE**,  
longtime anchor of  
the CBS Evening News



February 1977, page 4  
[wagner.edu/cronkite](http://wagner.edu/cronkite)



I had never wanted to seek public office, but finally I said yes; and I have to tell you, it turned out to be the most fulfilling, richest experience of my entire life.

— **RONALD REAGAN**,  
then a rising Republican star who would be  
elected president of the United States in 1980



October 1978, page 20  
[wagner.edu/reagan](http://wagner.edu/reagan)

“That was my idea,” Johnson said. “Because the magazine took more time to produce than the tabloid, I wanted it to be sort of like Wagner’s version of People magazine.

“Wagner College was suffering from sort of a lack of respect. It wasn’t a Harvard; it probably wasn’t even a St. John’s — it was ‘little Wagner.’ In addition to profiling successful Wagner alumni, I thought the guest interviews might lend a little extra pizzazz to the lineup,” Johnson said.

Johnson continued as editor of Wagner News and Wagner Magazine through the June 1979 issue, when he was asked to take on new responsibilities.

“When [director of development] Dave Cornell left, [President] John Satterfield said, ‘We need to have you come over and be head of the fundraising area. Wagner needs to raise \$15 million or we’re going to go bust.’ And I said, ‘You know, given that, I’ll give it the old college try.’ That was the origin of the Second Century campaign,” Johnson said.

Russ Johnson served as vice president for development from the summer of 1979 through the fall of 1981, when he joined Merrill Lynch, an investment bank. Initially he wrote about the firm’s mutual funds, but he says that “eventually, I knew more about them than anybody but the marketing director and the CEO, so I became sort of a marketing guy on the

road — kind of like being kicked into the fundraising job at Wagner.”

His jobs in the finance industry kept “snowballing into better positions that were in marketing or management, which kept taking me farther away from the writing. By the end of my career, I was managing a bunch of investment advisory services,” he said.

Johnson became a managing director at Kidder Peabody in 1986, and founding chairman and CEO of Tower Square Securities, a Citigroup subsidiary, in 1995.

“I never had a better job than the one I had at Wagner, where I started in public relations and publications. I loved being on campus — the people I met during the day, the people I had lunch with, the kind of people I liked being with,” Johnson said. “I could write almost anything I wanted, and it was just a lot of fun. I never had more fun than at that job.”

Since retiring in 2001, Russ Johnson has maintained a fairly full schedule in two careers of his own choosing: writing and self-publishing novels, and painting watercolors.

“If you had to pick two occupations that are least likely to make any money, I doubled up on them,” Johnson said. “I do it now because I like it.”

At last count, 20 of R.H. Johnson’s novels were available on Amazon.

## MONTANA REVISITED



Wagner president Arthur O. Davidson pictured with the newly acquired Anchor in the September 1963 issue of the Link.



Sophomore Russ Johnson recharging his batteries, October 1964 (photo by Burk Uzzle).



Read the 1977 article  
at [wagner.edu/saffords](http://wagner.edu/saffords).



**“LIFE AT THE BAR DOUBLE J,”** which Jeff ’56 M’59 and June Safford ’59 wrote together for the June 1977 issue of the Wagner News, recounted their family’s adventures as New York City outer-borough transplants in rugged, rural Bozeman, Montana. Jeff and June, who bonded during a three-week tour with the Wagner College Choir, were married at Trinity Lutheran, the college church, by Pastor Frederic Sutter, Class of 1894, founder of the college’s Grymes Hill campus.

Jeff, who coached the Seahawk baseball team as a graduate student, returned to Grymes Hill after his military service to work in the college’s public relations office, where he not only wrote a story for The Link about the Cunard villa but was instrumental in acquiring the Anchor in 1963 as a gift to the college from the Cunard Steamship Company.

In 2019 June published a new book, “Bozeman from the Heart,” a beautiful, street-level visual and literary tribute to her adopted hometown. The book’s essays were by local Bozeman writers recruited by June; the illustrations were paintings June Billings Safford had made of scenes on Bozeman’s Main Street.

Revisiting the Saffords, a dyed-in-the-wool Wagner College couple if there ever was one, provides a unique perspective on what it meant to be lifelong alumni.

**Between Jeff and June,** Jeff was the first to enroll at Wagner.

Born in Manhattan’s Greenwich Village in 1934, Jeff Safford’s family moved to the south shore of Staten Island when he was a toddler. He attended P.S. 8 and Tottenville High, then won a baseball scholarship to Wagner College, where he majored in history and music. He enrolled in Wagner’s graduate program for teachers after earning his B.A. in 1956, but was drafted before he could finish.

Sent to Baumholder, Germany, as a chaplain’s assistant, Jeff married his Wagner College Choir crush, June Billings, while on home leave for Christmas 1957. Jeff completed his master’s degree after the Army and taught in Plainfield, N.J., before joining the Susquehanna University staff as assistant director for public relations and sports information.

Two years later, in 1962, he returned yet again to Grymes Hill, working in the P.R. office, “a very stressful job” (according to June) with lots of travel, since he was also serving as the choir’s tour director in 1963, ’64 and ’65. Finally, he enrolled in a doctoral program in history at Rutgers with his eyes on an academic career. Once he’d earned his Ph.D., in 1968, he accepted a spot on the faculty at Montana State University in Bozeman, and the family — now including the first two of their four children — was on the move cross country.

“For Jeff, moving to Montana meant fishing,” she said. “He had an uncle who took him fishing to the Penobscot River in Maine when he was a teenager, every summer, so he came to Bozeman just dying to get into the rivers. That was one of the reasons he took the job.”

But the job itself, and teaching, was Jeff’s biggest motivator.

“The most important thing to him was the fact that he was a teacher,” June said, “which he revered. Nothing came close to that calling. When we spoke about our tombstone, he wanted it to say something about that calling: ‘Blest to be teachers.’ ”

June had the same calling.

Raised in a Swedish family in Brooklyn, she said, “I came out of working-class people who didn’t know women went to college.” She attended Prospect Heights High School, previously known as Girls’ Commercial High School, which still had a strong curricular bent toward vocational training.

“People didn’t talk to me about school much,” she said. “They asked me at school what I wanted to major in. When I saw there was an art diploma, I thought, well, that would be really nice. It was four periods of art a day; that meant I wasn’t getting too much of a lot of other things. It was preparing me to become a graphic artist.

“Toward the end of my second year, a student who sat in front of me, Francine, showed me a form, saying, ‘I’m out of here, June. I want to go to college — and you can’t, not with this art diploma.’

“Well, I wanted to go to college, too!” June said. “The next day, I got a form for an academic diploma, and I had to make up classes. I was so lucky that I did it when I did; Francine saved my life.”

June says that her Swedish Lutheran heritage played a big part in choosing Wagner for her college education. Once enrolled at Wagner and singing in the choir, she found a strong supporter in director Sigvart Steen, who helped her *stay* enrolled at Wagner.

“My father had only promised me the first year,” June said. “I went and told Dr. Steen that, since I had to leave school, I would not be able to continue singing. He showed me much sympathy, not because he could not get another alto to replace me, I believe, but because he knew the importance of a college degree to this young woman, the first in her family to matriculate. Dr. Steen changed the trajectory of my life by giving me a voice scholarship, which meant I could go on to my sophomore year.”

June Billings majored in history — “and if you major in history,” she said, “the chances are you’re going to wind up teaching.”

And once the Safford family had settled down in Bozeman, Montana, she entered the education field as a substitute teacher, in 1970.

“The woman I subbed for was pregnant,” June said. “She was teaching a new elective course, creative writing. I had no background in creative writing, but she had a textbook ... When she finally quit, there was a job opening, and that’s how I started.”

One of her responsibilities was to serve as faculty adviser to Bozeman High School’s literary magazine, *Scribbling*, which had been published since the 1930s.

“It published all kinds of poetry from all kinds of young people,” June said.

One of those students was Sarah Vowell, who graduated from Bozeman High School in the late Eighties before enrolling at M.S.U. Vowell became a well-known humorist and essayist, working as a con-

tributing editor on the public radio series, “This American Life,” for a dozen years.

“Anything she turned in was amazing,” June said. “I don’t know that I added anything to her creativity, she came so loaded with it.”

Meanwhile, in addition to teaching, June continued painting, using skills she first honed mostly in high school.

June recalls one particular episode in her class with Tom Young.

“I started a watercolor, a still life, and it was coming along nicely,” she said, “and he came by and just decided to finish it! So I have a Tom Young hanging on my wall — he even signed it for me — though I don’t know how much of it is June and how much is Tom.”



**ABOVE** June Billings Safford and Jeff Safford, taken around 2011 near Freiburg, Germany, where they saw a “life bird,” very important for Jeff, who kept meticulous notes on birds. (A life bird is a species that a birder has seen and identified in the wild for the very first time in their life.) Jeff’s lifelong interest in birding goes back to his childhood in Staten Island, when his mother took him birding. The bird they saw was a *Bienenfresser* or Bee eater.

**RIGHT** Two oil paintings by June Billings Safford, published in “Bozeman from the Heart.”

“At Wagner, I took one art class,” she said. “It was watercolor with Tom Young.”

During his Wagner years — from 1953 to 1969 — Tom Young “became one of the founders of a group of up-and-coming artists in the Tenth Street Scene, which flourished in the 1950s and 1960s,” according to the short biography of Young prepared for a 2008 exhibition of his work at the University of New Orleans. “This post-World War II group of artists were influential in the development of American art, particularly the Pop Art movement that started in the early 1960s. ... Established artists such as Franz Kline, Willem de Kooning and Marc Rothko were friends of Young, and museum-goers will see the parallels between their works.”

June associated with other artists working in Bozeman, but didn’t always think along the same lines.

“I remember somebody saying to me, ‘I’m going to Florence and paint,’” she said. “I thought, well, why not stay *here* and paint — and that, in a way, is how my book got started. I didn’t really have a book in mind, just self-expression, but that’s why I got so involved in painting our town.”

June’s particular catalyst for painting streetscapes of Bozeman’s Main Street was a catastrophe that occurred on March 5, 2009, “the tragic explosion that took down three beautiful buildings on Main Street,” she explained in her foreword to “Bozeman from the Heart.” “The

iconic IOOF building — International Order of Odd Fellows — had captured my attention for years, and now that it suffered destruction, I felt compelled to transform a photo of it into a colorful subject in oils. The impetus to paint Bozeman kept me busy for six years.”

By the time she finished, June Billings Safford had an extraordinary collection

that’s so spectacular; I’m going to make sure we have some history of it.”

And that’s when the idea for “Bozeman from the Heart” really took hold, combining essays about the small city from resident writers with her Bozeman street scenes as illustrations.

“Because I was asking writers to write, I didn’t have to do too much editing,” June said, “but I knew I couldn’t do the book alone; I needed help.” Paula Beswick joined Billings as co-editor.

Beswick, a local expert in nonprofit organizations, was of particular help in lining up grant support, which was crucial. In the end, the book was published by Sweetgrass Books, the custom publishing arm of Farcountry Press, and was made possible by grants from the Bozeman-based Gilhousen Family Foundation and the Montana Arts Council.

Copies of “Bozeman from the Heart,” both new and used, are still available on Amazon.

**While June Billings Safford’s** Bozeman book was coming to life, her husband Jeff was beginning to approach the end of his.

Jeff Safford spent his entire academic career in the history department at Montana State University and retired with emeritus status.

It wasn’t until Jeff was around 75 years old, in 2010, that major health problems began, leading to a crisis while he and June were visiting Britain in 2016.

“He’d probably had Parkinson’s for maybe five or six years before,” June said, “but it wasn’t really evident until we were in Edinburgh, Scotland, and he got very, very sick. He had to be taken to the Royal Infirmary with, like, a 104-degree temperature and hallucinating and everything. He was there for five days, and when we left it was evident that things were going downhill for him; that was sort of the beginning of the end.

“He died on New Year’s Day 2021. He was ready and peaceful about it, totally, and he was very prepared and caring about

*my* being taken care of. He left me a sheet of paper, ‘What to Do when Jeff Kicks the Bucket,’ and there were 14 things he had typed there,” she said, holding it up.

“I’ve been alone in a four-story house, a split-level, that’s adjacent to a park that nobody uses,” she said, “and the deer come ... I have so many deer in my yard. I just saw a couple of them waiting for me to come feed the birds, because they like the seeds that I put out. I have a lot of animals in the yard, but I am alone.”

This new experience is feeding June Billings Safford’s creativity.

“I’ve written quite a few poems about him, particularly about his passing,” she said. “In fact, I’m working on a book with art and poetry. He was a real force in my life and in our children’s lives; we had four children, very wonderful young people who are making contributions to this world.”

One of her poems drew its inspiration from Jeff Safford’s love of birds and bird watching. Jeff recorded sightings of 654 North American species throughout his lifetime. In the poem, June says, she imagines him present, somehow, in the song of one of his beloved birds:

#### FROM UNDER A WOOLEN CAP

This February morning  
 from a shorn ash tree  
 above where I shovel snow  
 I keep hearing a singular song  
 sending winter a trilling message.  
 Despite wearing a woolen cap  
 I hear the notes of a bird  
 so-in-love as to up-end  
 my season of disbelief.  
 I’m still cold from the loss.  
 Who sent this bird anyway?  
 One solitary chickadee  
 on a naked limb above  
 announcing something so remote  
 a secret I could live with  
 from a sparked bird, unafraid  
 to issue his wild call  
 to a mate  
 still shaking the snow  
 from her feathers.

of oil paintings, street scenes capturing a moment in the life of a rapidly evolving mountain community. Fortunately for her, the Bozeman Public Library had an excellent exhibition space, the Atrium Art Gallery, where she was able to display the entire series.

“I had a very good response from the community,” June recalled, “and another artist said, ‘Well, I hope this will be a book.’ I thought, ‘I don’t know — a book? That would be pretty boring.’ But I began thinking about our town ... We were having articles in the newspaper a lot about how the town was growing without any plans, and the huge population — it’s maybe the fastest growing community in the country. Bozeman has something



# 1979

## 'WAGNER MAGAZINE IS DEAD! LONG LIVE WAGNER NEWS'

**I**F I COULD TRAVEL back in time and make one business decision over again, it would be to hire Sheila,” former Wagner Magazine editor Russ Johnson wrote recently. “She was simply the best. And we lost her way too soon.”

Johnson was not alone in his admiration for Wagner News editor Sheila O’Mara, who became Russ’s assistant editor in 1975. O’Mara became editor in her own right in 1979. She edited 29 issues of Wagner as Johnson’s assistant, and then another 26 herself.

Born in Manhattan in 1943, Sheila O’Mara earned her bachelor’s degree in English at the University College campus of St. John’s University in Brooklyn in 1964, where she worked on the staff of the student newspaper, *The Downtowner*. She taught eighth-grade English for a while at the Elias Bernstein Intermediate School 7 in Huguenot, Staten Island, before becoming a reporter at the *Staten Island Advance*. She joined the Wagner Magazine staff in 1975.

“She was the strongest #2 I ever worked with, before or since. Period,” Johnson wrote. “Sheila and I turned out five tabloids and three magazines per year. She and I wrote nearly 100% of the articles and features. We didn’t take bylines for everything, because that would have looked silly — but, together, we wrote it all.”

Following Russ Johnson’s move to the college’s fundraising operation in 1979, Sheila O’Mara presided over the mothballing of Wagner Magazine. For her first issue as editor of Wagner’s alumni publication (September 1979), she wrote an “obituary” for the old format, which had thrived for 31 years.



Sheila O’Mara, far left, and Erin Urban, second from left, in the 1983 *Kallista*.

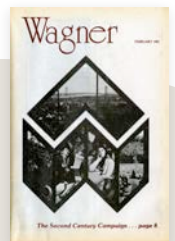
“The Wagner magazine, a three-time-a-year favorite, has been ‘done in,’” O’Mara wrote. “Born of the Wagner Alumni Association, late ’40s, a bright, informative magazine of campus life and life after the campus. Originally christened *The Link*. Led a genuinely successful life, changing its name to Wagner in the mid-60s, taking on a few different appearances as styles changed, and finally, in most recent years, introducing a new member of the family, the Wagner newspaper, a perfect complementary companion to the magazine, both timewise (appearing five times a year) and costwise.

“The perpetrator of the demise of Wagner magazine is a familiar foe: inflation. Wagner magazine is survived by Wagner newspaper, which will take up the slack and hit the mailboxes seven times each academic year,” O’Mara wrote.

The change in publishing format was obvious — from a letter-sized page to a tabloid page, and from plain or calendared paper to newsprint — but the content was not downgraded. Instead, the two publications that had been almost completely separate for four years, magazine and newspaper, were simply

**The magazine’s in-depth feature articles persisted, and so did the shorter news stories about current events on Grymes Hill as well as the Class Briefs section from the newspaper.**

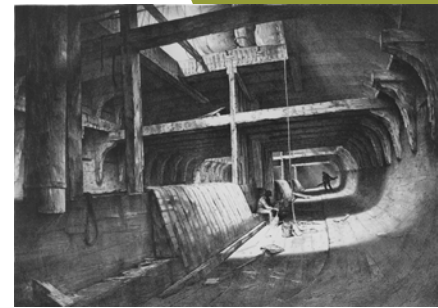
Read about the launch of the Second Century Campaign in the February 1981 issue at [wagner.edu/second-century](http://wagner.edu/second-century).





Erin Urban's full interview with artist John Noble appears in the June 1983 issue at [wagner.edu/john-noble](http://wagner.edu/john-noble).

John A. Noble (1913–1983), *Soul of Sail*, Lithograph, Edition 125, 1961, 15 1/8" x 21 1/8", courtesy of the Noble Maritime Collection



combined. The magazine's in-depth feature articles, mostly about Wagner alumni or current faculty members, persisted, and so did the shorter news stories about current events on Grymes Hill as well as the Class Briefs section from the newspaper.

"I was Class Briefs editor from 1979 to 1983," said Dawn Defibaugh Seaman '83, a Staten Island native and a work/study student in Sheila O'Mara's Office of Public Information and Publications. "I also wrote simple press releases and a few pieces for the magazine and spent plenty of time proofreading and poring over news-service clips for Wagner mentions."

"Sheila O'Mara was smart, creative, meticulous and a great writer," Seaman continued. "She was kind and soft-spoken, yet had a steely, determined manner when advocating for me, the magazine or her department's budget. I rarely saw a hair out of place, and she was always well dressed — except when deadline approached. Then, Sheila would spend hours and hours poring over the layout of the pages at her drafting table."

Seaman graduated into a 27-year career in the New York City public schools, followed by work on a divinity degree at New Brunswick Theological Seminary and 11 years as pastor of the Community Church of Keyport, New Jersey, from which she is retiring this summer. "Staten Island can be a small world," she said. "I eventually married Bill Seaman '72, another Wagner alum."

Erin Urban, O'Mara's assistant editor, joined the Wagner News staff about one year into the new editorial regime, in September 1980.

"I wasn't a graphic designer," Urban wrote recently, "I am a writer, like Sheila. With grace and humor, she let me grow into the work, writing and doing work

on the college's announcements, while I watched her, sometimes in awe. No one could ever surpass her cool, almost prim carriage; she had dignity.

"I was especially lucky in my later career at Wagner to watch the Second Century campaign and learn from it," Urban wrote, referring to a major fundraising campaign inspired by Wagner College's centennial celebration in 1983. "Sheila conceived the idea of each of us asking a 'famous' person to grant a 30-minute interview, with 10 questions, the answers to which they could edit. I suggested James A. Michener, and the college flew me to Austin, Texas. Sheila interviewed Mayor Ed Koch. Janet Skidmore [another O'Mara assistant] interviewed Joe Papp, founder and director of the Public Theatre.

"A friend of mine, artist Bill Murphy, suggested that we interview John A. Noble, an artist living on Staten Island — and I stumbled onto my next career and founded a maritime museum," Urban recalled.

Murphy began teaching art part-time at Wagner College in 1984, joining the full-time faculty in 1994. He retired in 2019.

Erin Urban wrote in more detail about her interview with Noble:

One night in 1982, Bill Murphy and I were driving along the Richmond Terrace waterfront when he spotted John Noble walking his dog on a rope.

"Someone should talk to him before he dies," he said. "He's got all of New York Harbor in his head."

Bill had met Noble from time to time, and Noble admired his art. They traded prints, and Noble inscribed one of his, "Coal Pirate," "to the etcher Bill Murphy, and the glory of his future plates."

I knew nothing about Noble or New York Harbor, but when I suggested we

interview him as one of the celebrities in our centennial-year issues of Wagner, Sheila O'Mara, its editor, was intrigued. She sent Bill Higgins, one of her photographers who happened to know Noble, and me to interview him, and what we expected to be "a 30-minute interview with 10 questions" turned into an all-day affair.

Looking back on that day, I laugh as I recall my first question: "So, Mr. Noble, what brought you to Staten Island?"

"The Harlem River brought me to Staten Island," he growled, and I suddenly felt very far out of my league. After several hours at his home, he suggested we visit his houseboat studio, which was docked in Bayonne. . . . We crossed the Bayonne Bridge in his Jeep convertible, which had not had a top in many years.

I was smitten, and so was Noble, I think.

Out of her league or not, she led a great interview with the artist and the two bonded.

Sadly, their connection was not meant to last.

"As the June [1983] issue of Wagner was going to press," Urban wrote in her preface to the published interview, "we learned of the death of John Noble on May 15."

"He haunted me," Urban said.

The following year, Urban left Wagner College for a position with Noble's estate.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



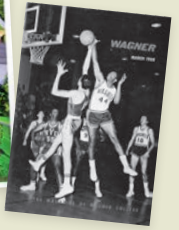
# LINK



## THE Link

### 1949-1964

The Link continues to be published with periodic changes in editorial leadership and design.



## Wagner

### 1965-1975

Wagner Magazine continues to be published with periodic changes in editorial leadership and design.



### APRIL 1965

The name of the magazine is changed to Wagner under editor Gene Wilburn.



### OCTOBER 1948

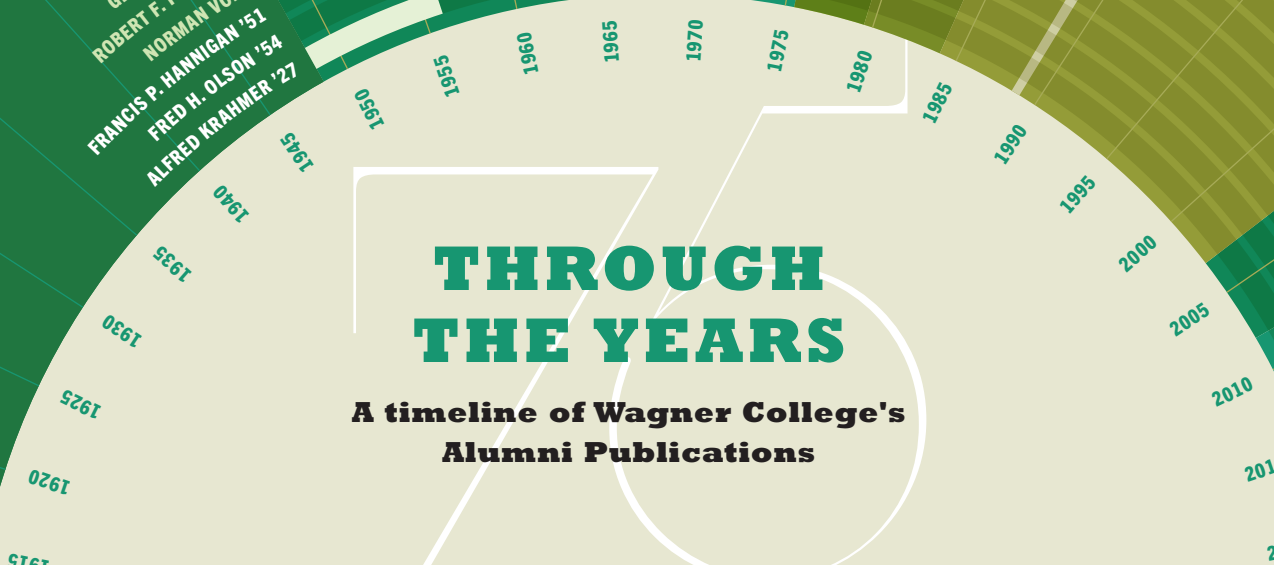
The first issue of The Link, edited by Alfred J. Krahrmer '27, is published. It replaces the Wagner College Bulletin, a newsletter first published in 1920.

### EDITORS, 1948-2023

- LEE MANCHESTER
- LAURA BARLAMENT
- JOHN ROSS
- KEVIN DAVITT
- IVANA PELNAR-ZAIKO
- LISA M. DE RESPINO (BENNETT) '85
- MONA J. MOTTE (WILDS)
- CLAIRE REGAN '80
- EDITORS UNKNOWN
- SHEILA O'MARA
- RUSS JOHNSON '67 M'72
- EARL W. JOHNSON
- JAMES L. TELFER
- GENE WILBURN
- ROBERT F. PRATHER
- NORMAN VOLK
- FRANCIS P. HANNIGAN '51
- FRED H. OLSON '54
- ALFRED KRAHRMER '27

# THROUGH THE YEARS

A timeline of Wagner College's Alumni Publications







**SEPTEMBER 1975**  
Under editor Russ Johnson '67 M'72, the alumni publication splits in two: Wagner Magazine and Wagner News.



**1979**  
Wagner Magazine is discontinued in favor of the Wagner newspaper under editor Sheila O'Mara.

# Wagner

**1984-1988**  
The alumni periodical continues to be published under unknown editors.



## The Wagner Link

### Wagner College Link

**1989-2002**  
After a gap of over a year, the alumni periodical returns in Spring 1989 as The Wagner Link under editor Claire Regan '80. It continues to be published with periodic changes in editorial leadership, name and design, with Regan returning as editor for the final two issues.



## Alumni Link

### WAGNER Link

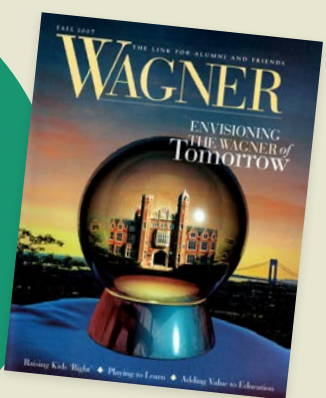
## Wagner Link

**WINTER 2003**  
The magazine returns as The Link under editor Claire Regan '80.



## The Link

**FALL 2007**  
The name of the magazine is once again changed from "The Link" to "Wagner" under editor Laura Barlament. It continues to be published under this name to the present day.  
  
Lee Manchester assumed the editorship beginning with the March 2021 issue, which was published after a gap of over 20 months due in part to the Covid-19 pandemic.



**EVERY ISSUE**  
of Wagner Magazine is available in the online archives of the Horrmann Library:  
[wagner.edu/magazine-archive](http://wagner.edu/magazine-archive)

“Alone in the Noble House on Richmond Terrace, I gradually awoke to Noble’s depth as an artist and writer,” she said. “Noble’s sons felt his houseboat studio was not what it had been. They wanted me to scuttle it, but people who knew it persuaded me to apply for not-for-profit status so that I could raise money to preserve it. When the state historian came to review my application, he said, ‘Erin, there is so much history here, the art, the writings, the artifacts — you could apply to become a museum.’”

The state granted the Noble Maritime Collection a museum charter, and today Noble’s houseboat studio is the centerpiece of the 28,500-square-foot facility that celebrates the people and traditions of New York Harbor. It is one of the anchor institutions of the Snug Harbor Cultural Center and Botanical Gardens on Staten Island.

Erin Urban left Wagner College in May 1984, just a few months after Sheila O’Mara edited her last issue of the Wagner newspaper in December 1983. When politician Ralph Lamberti became borough president of Staten Island in November 1984, O’Mara joined his staff. Following Lamberti’s term in office, which ended in 1989, she and her husband, journalist Chris Olert, moved upstate to Warwick, New York. She died in 2011 at the age of 68.



## THE CONSUMMATE PRO

**F**OR 35 YEARS, from 1948 to 1983 — ever since Wagner College started producing a full-fledged magazine for its alumni — Seahawk grads received a new issue, on average, every 2½ months.

After Wagner News editor Sheila O’Mara left the college, at the end of 1983, alumni communications slowed significantly. Over the next couple of years, only two issues of the Wagner tabloid newspaper went out — to the surprise of no one. The college’s resources were becoming steadily more scarce, and alumni communications were not the only area of Wagner operations to take a hit.

In January 1986, the tabloid became a newsletter, Wagner Alumni News — just 12 pages, and smaller pages at that. It was easier to produce, and it allowed the college to keep in touch with its grads more frequently. Another four newsletters were mailed over the next two years.

And then ... they weren’t.

Just as Wagner College drew dangerously close to the brink in 1988, so did the college’s alumni periodical. If you’re not familiar with this alarming era in Seahawk history, read President Emeritus Norman Smith’s memoir, “Top Tier.” For more than a year, from early 1988 to spring 1989, all grads heard from Grymes Hill was the chirping of crickets.

And that’s when Alumni Association leaders took things into their own hands. Raising the necessary funds and writing their own stories, they brought alumni communications back to life, just as a new Wagner president was rebuilding

the college’s fiscal underpinnings and beginning the long process of revitalizing our beautiful college upon the hill.

That first alumni newsletter of the Norman Smith era, dated Spring 1989 (*right*), was only four pages long — but they had to start somewhere.

“It’s been a while since you received an alumni newsletter from Wagner College,” a message on the front page read. “Too long, the Alumni Association decided. And so, with this issue, we are re-introducing the Wagner Link.”

The roster of association officers featured several alumni legends, starting with President Mildred Olsen ’50, backed by trustees Fred Witte ’49, Al Palladino ’61 and Kevin Sheehy ’67 — and supported by recording secretary and newsletter editor Claire Regan ’80.

BORN AND RAISED on Staten Island, both of Regan’s parents were teachers. Her father, James F. Regan, had been president of the New York City Board of Education as well as a Wagner College trustee.

Regan began working on the staff of Wagner College’s student newspaper, the Wagnerian, as a sophomore. By the time she was a senior, she had become the Wagnerian’s managing editor — experience that set her up for a job interview with the local daily newspaper, the Staten Island Advance. When the Alumni Association decided to revive the alumni newsletter, in 1989, Regan had been a working, professional journalist for the better part of a decade.

Initially hired by legendary editor and fellow Wagner alumnus Les Trautmann ’40 to write wedding stories, Regan quickly



The **NOBLE MARITIME COLLECTION** is not the only Wagner College link to Snug Harbor. Its botanical garden was actually founded in 1960 as the **STATEN ISLAND ARBORETUM**, whose original home was the Wagner College campus. By 1977, the Staten Island Botanic Garden, as it came to be known, had moved to Snug Harbor, which had been landmarked and purchased by the City of New York for refitting as a cultural center on Staten Island’s north shore.

# 1984-2006



**Raising the necessary funds and writing their own stories, [Alumni Association leaders] brought alumni communications back to life.**

learned as much as she could about the newspaper business. She told us about one unexpected incident at the Advance that opened up a whole new career avenue for her.

“I came in to the newsroom one morning and there was a note on my typewriter from Mr. Trautmann telling me I had been reassigned. He took me out of Lifestyle and put me on the night copy desk,” Regan recalled. “It kind of felt like I was being banished — but he was actually doing me a favor, because that’s how I learned to be an editor.”

Claire Regan put those editorial skills to work as an alumna volunteer, editing six issues of Wagner’s alumni newsletter from 1989 to 1992, until the Alumni Office assumed responsibility for the periodical for another decade — sometimes with layout and design help from Regan. Her design work for the Staten Island Advance later won multiple honors from the New York State Associated Press Association, in 2009 and again — twice — in 2013.

In the meantime, Regan expanded her involvement with her alma mater.

In 1989 — the same year Regan helped revive the alumni newsletter — she became the faculty adviser for

the Wagnerian, a responsibility she continues to fulfill today. Overnight, the Wagnerian’s design improved, going from pasted-up typewritten copy to professional-looking layouts.

Five years later, when United Nations journalist Peter Sharpe joined Wagner’s English Department, Regan worked with him to establish a journalism minor on Grymes Hill. Since then, she has taught two journalism classes each semester, winning the college’s first adjunct faculty excellence award in 2009. Her experience in the field — most recently as national president of the Society of Professional Journalists — has benefitted multiple generations of Wagner students.

But it wasn’t until 2002 that Claire Regan took up the editorial reins again at Wagner’s alumni newsletter, the Wagner Link. It was one of the most critical junctures in the college’s history, as the front-page headline made clear: “President Norman Smith to End 14-Year Tenure.”

The lead story in the following issue, dated Summer/Fall 2002, was equally momentous, introducing Smith’s successor: Richard Guarasci, the provost Norman Smith had hired five years earlier from Hobart and William Smith Colleges.

## ALUMNI PERIODICAL EDITORS 1984 to 2006

### Wagner News

**1984–85** — Following the departure of editor Sheila O’Mara, two final issues of the Wagner alumni tabloid were published, editors unknown.

### Alumni Newsletter Era

**JUNE 1986–WINTER 1988** — five issues, Wagner Alumni News, editors unknown.

**SPRING 1989 THRU FALL 1992** — **CLAIRE REGAN ’80** (pictured on opposite page) edits six issues of the alumni newsletter, variously named The Wagner Link, Wagner College Link and Alumni Link.

**SPRING 1993–FALL 1994** — **MONA J. MOTTE (WILDS)**, director of alumni and community relations, edits three issues of Alumni Link, with layout and design by Anne Bennett-Morse.



**FALL 1995–SPRING 1997** — Alumni director **LISA M. DE RESPINO (BENNETT) ’85** edits four issues of Alumni Link, with layout and design by Claire Regan.

**FALL 1997–SUMMER 2000** — **IVANA PELNAR-ZAIKO** is named as the editor of only one issue of Alumni Link, with layout and design by Word Power of Newark, N.J. — but as the college’s vice president for development and alumni relations throughout that period, she was probably also involved with Wagner Link for another five issues.



**WINTER 2002 & SUMMER/FALL 2002** — **CLAIRE REGAN** edits the final two issues of the Wagner Link newsletter.

### Magazine Reborn

**WINTER 2003–SPRING 2005** — **CLAIRE REGAN** edits the first five issues of Wagner College’s revived alumni magazine, The Link.



**FALL 2005 & SPRING 2006** — **KEVIN DAVITT**, the college’s director of communications, edits two issues of The Link.

**FALL 2006** — Communications consultant **JOHN ROSS** served as guest editor of The Link for one issue.





↑ Laura Barlament in Bangladesh with Wagner professor Mohammad Alauddin and a group of students. The trip was detailed in the Summer 2012 feature story “Water Water Everywhere, Nor Any Drop to Drink.”

**“The first choice for our readers was to read about other alumni — in their professions or in their lives.”**



## WAGNER MAGAZINE AS WE KNOW IT

**I**N HIS NEW ROLE as president, Richard Guarasci ushered in change for the communications team. New staff was hired, including the editor for *The Link* ... but only two issues of the magazine resulted. John Ross, a communications consultant, produced one more issue while he conducted a search for Wagner’s next marketing chief: Joe Romano, who had been heading up the communications operation at Sewanee, the University of the South, in rural central Tennessee.

Romano’s first job: put together a new marketing team on Grymes Hill. His easiest decision was who to hire as the next editor of *The Link*.

“I thought I was going there for an interview,” Laura Barlament remembers, “but actually President Guarasci did it like a sales job. I thought I would be grilled by the president, but instead he was just telling me all about Wagner College and why it’s so special and what his vision is for the college.”

Guarasci said, “My goal at that meeting was to say, I really want to have, not just a *good* magazine, but a *great* magazine. I want it to be not just a mirror of the campus; I want it to be a real piece of journalism, a real model of what a liberal education produces.”

Laura Barlament had never really thought, specifically, of looking for a job in New York City — but she *had* been thinking about making *some* kind of a move.

“When Joe took the job at Wagner, he told the entire department [at Sewanee] that if anyone wanted to come with him to New York, let him know,” Barlament says. “I was the person who took him up on the offer.

“I had been at Sewanee for four years and, although I loved the community, I also felt like I needed to live in a bigger city again. When Joe brought up this opportunity, I just kind of said, wow, New York — I could live in New York. That could be really cool!”

LAURA BARLAMENT was actually *born* in Sewanee, Tennessee. Her father, an Army officer, had gone to work as a professor at Sewanee Military Academy, a private residential school (now known as St. Andrew’s Sewanee); Barlament’s mother,

## Headliners

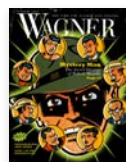
⊙ DAN STORMER '68

ROBERT MAZUR '72 ⊙

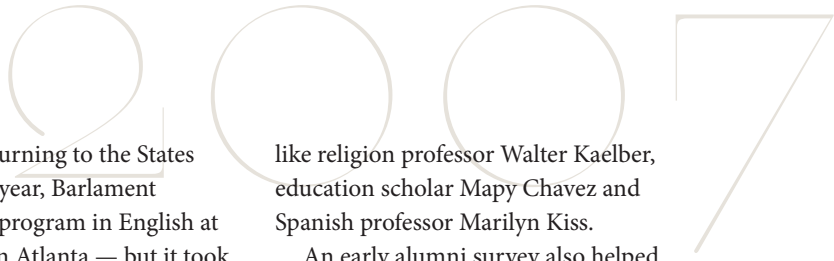
SHARON RICHIE-MELVAN '71 ⊙

**ALUMNI FEATURED ON THE COVER OF WAGNER MAGAZINE 2007-present**

⊙ EDNA AURELUS M'08



⊙ **WAGNER'S BROADWAY ALUMNI:** Betsy Joslyn '75, Randy Graff '76 H'01, Michael Portantiere '79, Vincent D'Elia '85, Matt Lenz '86, Janine LaManna '88, Buddy Thomas '91, Kathy Brier '97, Bret Shuford '01 and Haley Carlucci '08



whose family came from nearby Lebanon, Tennessee, taught French. Barlament's parents married in 1970, and she was born the following year.

"We moved to Frankfurt, Germany, when I was about to start second grade," Barlament said. "We spent just a short time on the base there, and then we moved out to a small town about 20 miles away. My mom decided that my little sister and I would go to the local German school, where I went through the fifth grade. We were the only non-German kids in my school."

For college, Laura Barlament enrolled at Agnes Scott, a women's college in metropolitan Atlanta, where she double majored in English and German and edited the student newspaper. During her senior year, she won a Dow Jones newspaper fellowship, copy editing at USA Today in Arlington, Virginia, the summer after she graduated. That fall, a Fulbright fellowship took her back to Germany for a year at the University of Constance — coincidentally, just across the Bodensee (about 70 km) from Bregenz, Austria, where Wagner College operated an overseas campus.

"Constance is such a beautiful place, the most beautiful I have ever lived in my life — it's just spectacular," Barlament said. "Years later, when I got to Wagner, I understood the affection of Bregenz alumni for that experience."

In 1994, after returning to the States from her Fulbright year, Barlament enrolled in a Ph.D. program in English at Emory University in Atlanta — but it took her so long to finish her doctorate that her support at Emory ran out. When her boyfriend went to Purdue University to work on a graduate degree, she followed, taking a part-time job in Purdue's marketing and communications office while she completed her dissertation.

"I really loved that," Barlament said. "Once I finished my dissertation, Purdue offered me a full-time job, and I kind of just left the whole academic track I had been on. I had always been interested in writing and editing and journalism, which naturally flowed into marketing and communications and publishing work."

WHEN IT CAME TO RESTARTING Wagner College's alumni magazine, early in 2007, Laura Barlament was working from scratch.

As a theme for that first issue, Barlament and her new teammates — which included this writer — took a close look at the year's hottest topic in higher education: the Spellings Report, a new policy document produced by the Bush administration's Department of Education. What made Barlament's approach uniquely *Wagner* were the people she chose to interview for the story: both new and well-established faculty personalities

like religion professor Walter Kaelber, education scholar Mapy Chavez and Spanish professor Marilyn Kiss.

An early alumni survey also helped guide content decisions.

"The first choice for our readers was to read about other alumni — in their professions or in their lives," Barlament said. "We also looked for content that would tug on people's heartstrings, and stories you don't want to put down because there's some suspense or there's something heart-wrenching that touches you emotionally. Those were the criteria."

Those ideas were borne out by an editors' readership survey put out by CASE, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

"During my time at Wagner, the CASE editors group created a broad set of standards for alumni magazines," Barlament said, "for what they should strive to be. I was very influenced by those ideas.

"The basic idea was that the alumni magazine competes for the attention of readers with all other media outlets and magazines and other forms of media, so it needs to be worth the paper it's printed on. It needs to be competitive in the broader media marketplace, so you should have compelling storytelling and beautiful photography and be thinking about the reader's interests and not just the interests of the institution; that's something I always kept in mind.

◆ LAURA GRAHAM '95 ◆



◆ PAT DUGAN '57 ◆



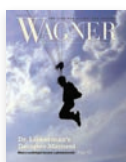
◆ CLAIRE MINTZER FAGIN '48 H'93 ◆



◆ ERIK UNHJEM '72 ◆



◆ SCOTT LIEBERMAN '83 ◆  
(Featured photograph)



◆ LONNIE BRANDON '78 ◆



◆ WAGNER'S PANDEMIC LEADERS: Ed Burke '80, Dr. Brian Mignola '84, Kathleen Oberfeldt M'98 D'17, Frank Cafasso '00 M'02 and Christopher Corbo '06 M'08 ◆



◆ PATRICIA TOOKER '79 M'95 D'16 ◆



◆ ANTHONY FREITAS '13 ◆  
(Featured ¼" scale model)





Read Lee Manchester's Wagner histories at [wagner.edu/books-about-wagner](http://wagner.edu/books-about-wagner).



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

"I just thought this was a lost opportunity, to have the name of the school on the cover of its magazine. Why wouldn't you feature the school's name, very large, on a beautiful magazine that's going to be sitting on people's coffee tables for a week or two?"

**"Wagner has the best people. The care and investment in the magazine, both in print and online, is a tribute to those people."**

"I think I benefited so much by being in the New York City media market," Barlament said. "I was able to hire some super-talented photographers and writers, because we didn't have an in-house photographer for most of the time that I was editing."

One of those creative pros hired early on by Laura Barlament was graphic designer Nina Ovryn, who created a complete template for the magazine, one that Barlament continued to lean upon well past her first four issues, when a full-time staff designer was hired.

IT WAS IN HER SECOND alumni magazine issue that Laura Barlament decided to unveil a major change, this one in the periodical's name.

The magazine began its life as *The Link*, a name it used for 16 years and 56 issues. When the Sixties, a decade of change, arrived, so did editor Gene Wilburn, who rallied the college behind a new name for

its beloved alumni magazine: *Wagner*. Just *Wagner*. Like Barlament, Wilburn waited until his second issue to unveil this innovation.

And the name stuck — for 97 issues over a span of 20 years.

And then came "the newsletter era" and a shifting array of names for the college's alumni mailing. But the name in longest use during that period, in one form or another, was *The Link* — in variations that included *Wagner Link*, *Wagner College Link* and *Alumni Link* — which continued into the resurrection of the alumni magazine. All told, this era spanned 18 years and a total of 30 issues of either the newsletter or the magazine.

It was in the Fall 2007 issue that the *Wagner Magazine* name was revived. The "new" name, Barlament explained in her editorial column, "aims to represent all aspects of Wagner College: the intellectual stimulation of the classroom; the engagement of Wagner's faculty, students and alumni with our contemporary world; the warm sense of 'family' that binds the community together through thick and thin."

And it stuck.

The resuscitated *Wagner Magazine* name has now been in use for 16 years, featured on the cover of 27 issues, including this one.

"I had a lot of support," she recalls. "I was kind of concerned about switching the name, because sometimes people get very attached to names, and then they get offended and upset if you change anything, but Joe and Richard just said, 'Do it.'"

ALTHOUGH THE LAST THREE YEARS seem like the longest in history, it *has* been just three years since Laura Barlament took the next step in her career, accepting an appointment as executive director of strategic marketing and communications at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. Her last day on Grymes Hill was Feb. 14, 2020.

Very few people had any real sense that Valentine's Day of the chaos that was about to be unleashed by the Covid pandemic. After all, the disease had only been *named* three days earlier.

But just a little over one month later, on March 17, Wagner College announced that the campus would be closing for the foreseeable future; classes would be conducted online for the remainder of the semester, and administrative staff would start working from home.

In addition to the nebulous atmosphere of fear that prevailed in the suddenly empty streets of New York City, Wagner College and universities across the world faced an immediate, existential threat to their fiscal viability.

The impact on *Wagner Magazine* was significant — but not fatal. But it would take a new team of familiar faces to champion its return.

IN MARCH 2020, students were preparing to leave for spring break, unsure of how long Covid-19 might keep them off campus. President Joel W. Martin called on Jonathan Harkel to lead Wagner's communications and marketing efforts.

Harkel was first hired by Barlament as director of digital media in 2016. As the principal photographer on campus, his work was quickly integrated into Wagner Magazine. He left Wagner in 2019 but accepted the call to return amidst an imminent crisis.

“The magazine wasn’t the top priority during a global emergency,” Harkel recalls, “but we were starting to hear from people who didn’t understand why they had stopped receiving the magazine, and they were the same people not receiving our weekly updates through the website and email. Many still connected with Wagner only through print, and they needed to hear from us.”

Harkel also sensed that the longer a magazine wasn’t produced, the more likely it was that it would be removed from the budget entirely.

“It’s too easy to cut projects and never bring them back, and the magazine was an easy target for budget relief,” he says. “We still trimmed costs, but we found a way to go to print and let everyone see we were going to be OK.”

In March 2021, more than 20 months after the last issue had been published, Wagner Magazine returned. The cover story, “Leading the Way,” featured Wagner alumni who helped the college survive the pandemic.

Harkel assumed the role of publisher — supervising content, design, freelance support, and print and digital distribution. Lee Manchester became editor and reported, wrote or edited the stories.

Both say, with equal emphasis, pointing to each other, “I couldn’t have done it without him.”

“Most importantly,” says Harkel, “all the compliments should go to Lee. I’ll take the complaints.”

LEE MANCHESTER, you already know — and you’ve known him for a while. He was one of the new Communications team members hired by Joe Romano in 2007, and he’s been a staff writer for Wagner Magazine for many years, writing alumni profiles and digging into Wagner College history.

Born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Manchester was raised in Detroit, Chicago, Ethiopia and Charlotte, North Carolina. His father, a lifelong YMCA executive, had served as an adviser to the Ethiopian Y for three years, before the revolution that overthrew the monarchy.

In 2007, when he was hired, Manchester had spent the last 20 years working in either nonprofit communications or the newspaper business.

He began his communications career at the Narcotics Anonymous World Service Office in Los Angeles’s San Fernando Valley, editing the organization’s international membership magazine, helping develop new recovery literature and acting as the fellowship’s liaison with researchers, national government agencies and the U.N.

Manchester’s newspaper career took him first to Lemoore, California, where he edited the town’s weekly newspaper, the Advance. In West Covina, California, he was a copy editor on the news desk at the San Gabriel Valley Tribune before moving cross-country to work as a feature writer and general assignment reporter for the Lake Placid News.

Initially hired by Wagner College to write stories for our online newsroom as well as the alumni magazine, he quickly became involved in planning for Wagner’s upcoming 125th anniversary in 2008, in the process becoming the college’s official historian. He created two books for the 125th anniversary:

a collection of alumni essays along with his own research, “Wagner College: Four Histories,” and a second volume based on a display of archival photographs he curated, “Founding Faces & Places: An Illustrated History of Wagner Memorial Lutheran College, 1869 to 1930.” He recently published a third volume, “Joy and Purpose: Profiles of the Presidents of Wagner College, 1883 to 2022.” All three are available to download from [wagner.edu/books-about-wagner](http://wagner.edu/books-about-wagner).

While he has served as the college’s press representative for many years, Manchester is probably best known on campus as the editor of Wagner College’s email newsletter, the Daily Bulletin, first distributed on Oct. 12, 2010.

Last year, Manchester announced his plan to retire this summer.

“When the 75th anniversary issue finally goes to print,” he said, “that will be my last day.”

The next issue of Wagner Magazine will have a new team, and the current duo looks forward to the publication’s evolution.

“Wagner has the best people,” said Harkel. “The care and investment in the magazine, both in print and online, is a tribute to those people. We honor them through this work, and we want its quality to reflect our community.” ■

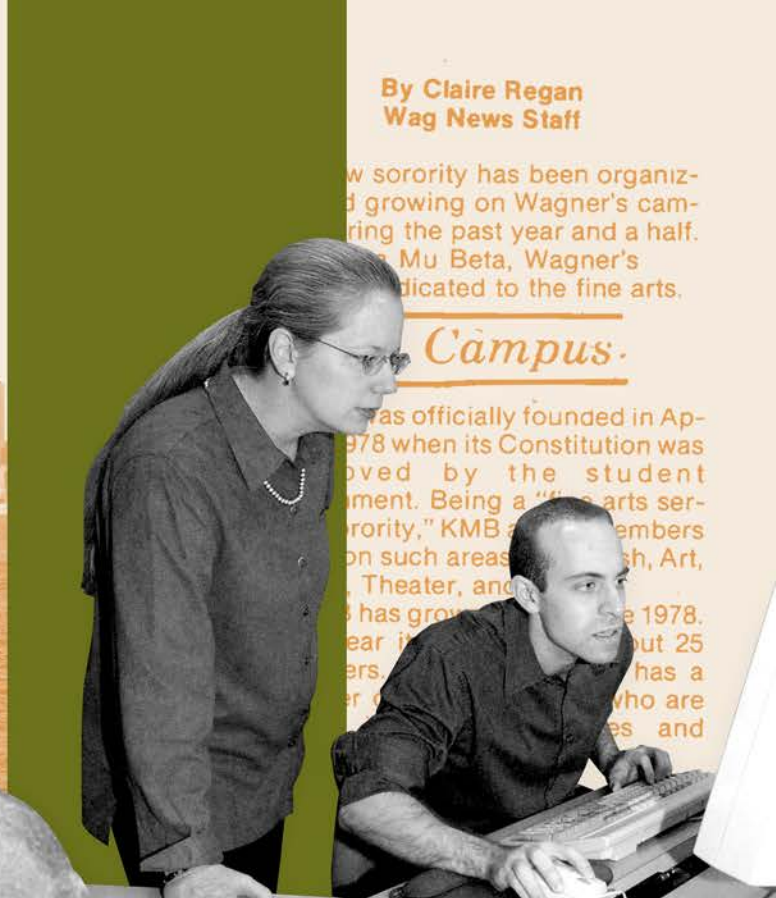


By Claire Regan  
Wag News Staff

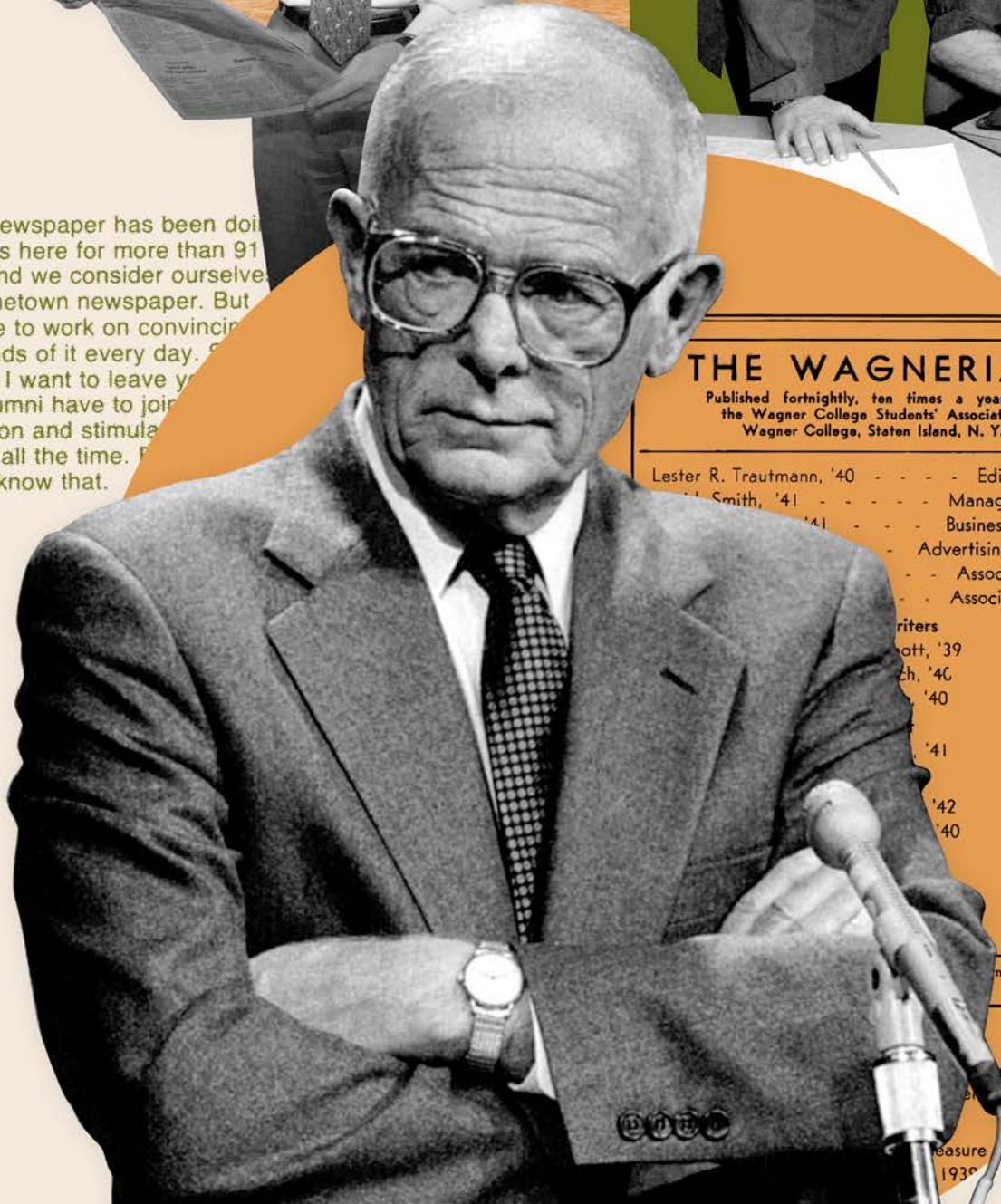
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## Campus

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Our newspaper has been doing business here for more than 91 years and we consider ourselves the hometown newspaper. But we have to work on convincing thousands of it every day. I thought I want to leave you this; Alumni have to join promotion and stimulate college all the time. You should know that.



### THE WAGNERIAN

Published fortnightly, ten times a year, by  
the Wagner College Students' Association  
Wagner College, Staten Island, N. Y.

- Lester R. Trautmann, '40 - - - - Editor-in-chief
- ... Smith, '41 - - - - - Managing Editor
- ... '41 - - - - - Business Manager
- ... - - - - - Advertising Manager
- ... - - - - - Associate Editor
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# From CLASSROOM to Newsroom

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BY DIANE LORE

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## Wagner alumni have gone on to lead and serve our hometown newspaper, the Staten Island Advance

Wagner College has longstanding ties to its “hometown newspaper,” the Staten Island Advance. For more than 80 years, a distinguished cadre of Wagner alumni has gone on to work as editors and reporters at the Advance. Many of them first honed their journalism skills on the staff of the *Wagnerian*, or through the Advance student internship program.

The Advance, published daily and Sunday, with its 24/7 website SILive.com, serves Wagner’s home community of Staten Island — a multi-faceted, diverse borough of New York City.

Three key Advance leaders — late Editor Les Trautmann ’40, current Editor Brian Laline M’72, and journalism professor Claire Regan ’80, a former Advance associate managing editor — are all Wagner alumni.

## The Trautmann legacy

PERHAPS NO WAGNER ALUMNUS did more to foster ties between college, community and journalism than Les Trautmann. His legacy is still felt, more than 30 years after his death.

There were three things Trautmann was passionate about: Wagner, Staten Island and reporting the news.

He never said “no” to his alma mater. Trautmann was president of the Wagner alumni board, a regular columnist for the alumni magazine, and served on the board of trustees (1982–86). In 1989 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from Wagner, conferred by then-President Norman Smith, who had just come on board.

In an essay published in the Fall 1992 alumni newsletter, shortly after Trautmann’s death, Smith acknowledged Trautmann’s crucial support in guiding the college through a difficult period of renewal, ultimately leading to Wagner being named one of the top tier colleges in the northeast in annual national rankings by U.S. News & World Report.

“Les Trautmann was one of the first Wagner alumni I met,” Smith recalled. “He was on the advisory search committee that screened dozens of presidential candidates. He was also one of the first Wagner alumni to give me advice after I was selected president.”

While he was Advance editor, Trautmann, who lived a few blocks from campus, “made it a daily habit to walk through the Wagner campus each

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*Opposite, left to right:* Brian Laline M’72 in November 2002, Les Trautmann ’40 in October 1990, and Claire Regan ’80 with Eddie D’Anna ’01 in September 2002. (Staten Island Advance/Jan Somma-Hammel and Hilton Flores)



**Les Trautmann is one of only a few people to have an outdoor space on campus named in his honor.**

*Above, top:* Trautmann Square. *Below:* Les Trautmann's photo from his October 1977 column in Wagner Magazine.

evening after dinner — his constitutional,” Smith said. “I would walk with him occasionally.”

“Les and I shared a vision for Wagner College,” Smith said. He believed “that Staten Island would benefit enormously if it was home to a prestigious private college, and should have had that status decades ago. [Wagner] should be among the prominent, small, private liberal arts colleges in the country,” Smith said.

Over the next two years, Trautmann's daily walks turned into inspection tours. “Les never hesitated to criticize, yet in my experiences with him he never held back credit where he thought it was due,” Smith said. “Thankfully, he liked what was going on at Wagner throughout the four years he knew me as the college's president.”

And, according to President Smith, Trautmann made it a point to report on the college's changes in the pages of Wagner's hometown newspaper. “There is no question in my mind that Wagner College would not have made so much progress in so short a time without the encouragement and support of Les Trautmann and the Staten Island Advance,” Smith said.

As reported in the Advance, a permanent testament to Trautmann's loyalty to his alma mater, Trautmann Square — with its distinctive clock tower — was dedicated on June 6, 1993. Les Trautmann is one of only a few people to have an outdoor space on campus named in his honor.

Born and raised on Staten Island — and always proud to be referred to as a “native Islander” — Trautmann was editor of the Advance for 27 years before his death in 1992. His interest in journalism was sparked during his senior year (1939–40), when he served

as editor of the Wagnerian and as a summer intern at the Advance. With his internship experience and his Wagner B.A. in English, he was accepted to the Columbia School of Journalism and earned a master's degree in his craft. He was hired as a full-time news reporter for the Advance and worked as a reporter for one year before Uncle Sam called. In 1942, was drafted by the Army to serve in World War II. While serving as a second lieutenant and stationed in the South Pacific, Trautmann put his journalism skills to use by founding seven different Army publications.

Upon his return to the Advance in 1946, Trautmann worked as an editorial writer, then left the paper in 1954 to become editorial page director of the St. Petersburg Times in Florida. He came back to the Advance a year later and was promoted to city editor in 1962.

In 1965 Advance Publisher Richard E. Diamond, citing Trautmann's newspapering and journalism skills and knowledge of Staten Island, promoted him to editor. Over the next 27 years Trautmann led the Advance in crusading against — and eventually defeating — several large-scale projects that he saw as being detrimental to the health and well-being of Staten Island residents. In the late 1980s, for example, he doggedly pursued New York State officials — even taking on the governor — over the state Power Authority's plans to site a massive fossil-fueled power plant in the community. Many months later the proposal was nixed after the state's own environmental protection studies were found to support the newspaper's stance.

Trautmann also had a keen eye for hiring new, young staff members who

were familiar with the community and its hometown newspaper. He hired both Laline and Regan not long after they earned their Wagner degrees.

“He cared about the community,” Publisher Richard Diamond said in a front-page Advance story published February 17, 1992, reporting Trautmann’s death. “He was also extremely proud that he was a teacher of young journalists,” Diamond added.

Trautmann suffered a heart attack and died in his sleep.

“Les was a great journalist who wanted the best for Staten Island, the Advance and Wagner,” said current Advance Editor Brian Laline. “As a journalist, Les understood what [Staten] Islanders needed to know and what they wanted to read; he knew instinctively what breaking news stories to follow, and what features to assign,” Laline recalled. “As editor, he was tough but fair with his staff, a stickler for accuracy, who pushed his staff to be their best.”

## After Trautmann

**BRIAN LALINE**, who was also born and raised on Staten Island, came of age during the Vietnam era. When a childhood leg injury kept him from being drafted, he began to think he might like teaching as a career. After earning his bachelor’s degree from LaSalle University in Philadelphia, he returned home to enroll at Wagner, earning a master’s degree in education in 1972.

“Going to Wagner was a wonderful experience. It was like a homecoming for me, after being in Philadelphia,” Laline said.



**“Wagner College would not have made so much progress in so short a time without the encouragement and support of Les Trautmann and the Staten Island Advance.”**

Gov. Mario Cuomo is greeted outside the Wagner College Union building. *Left to right:* Wagner President Norman Smith, Cuomo, Advance Editor Les Trautmann and Brian Laline, associate editor, Nov. 24, 1990. (Staten Island Advance/Steve Zaffarano)

While at Wagner, Laline took a class with Thomas Kendris, a distinguished English professor. Kendris, who died in 1995, influenced a generation of Wagnerians; Laline was one of them. Professor Kendris, Laline said, made him think seriously about writing. “We looked at different authors in his class. We read their works and discussed their writing style. He taught me that every piece of writing should have a flow, a rhythm, a style. I never forgot that.”

Instead of looking for a career in teaching, Laline thought of writing; specifically, a job with his hometown newspaper. “When I came in for an interview, Les loved the idea that I went to Wagner. He was asking me how I liked the experience,” Laline recalled.

He was hired by Trautmann in 1972 and spent his early years as a reporter and copy editor on the news desk. Laline said he’s grateful for those early years, when he learned the newspaper business from publisher Dick Diamond, from Trautmann, and from working alongside seasoned newsroom colleagues, among them Wagner alumni Mike Azzara ’57 and Phil Brittain ’52.

Laline was serving as Advance associate editor when Trautmann died, and not long after, publisher Diamond promoted him to editor. “Les was a tough act to follow, but he ran a tight ship and had built such a good team that we didn’t miss a beat,” Laline said.

“We all believed, as Les did, that a newspaper should make a difference in the community. We took on several



Advance Editor Brian J. Laline, left, Publisher Richard E. Diamond, center, and General Manager Caroline D. Harrison break ground for the construction of the new press hall in Grasmere in May 2001. (Staten Island Advance/Irving Silverstein)

**“We send [interns] out to cover news stories as we would any full-time reporter. They learn to do interviews, gather the facts, write their stories. And they get bylines, sometimes on front-page stories.”**

projects as a team that, today, I’m still proud of,” he said.

The newspaper sponsored a long-running anti-litter campaign known as Trashbusters, partnering with community organizations, Scout troops and the city’s Sanitation Department to clean up public spaces. Another community cause, the Staten Island Children’s Campaign, benefited nonprofits and agencies working with children and families in the community.

And after a 6-year-old girl was struck and killed crossing the street in front of her school bus, the Advance partnered with local education officials to launch a major school-bus safety campaign. The series of articles, published over several weeks, resulted in the installation of today’s red safety “STOP” sign arms on yellow school buses serving children in New York City, as well as the modification of school traffic laws. “We got results; we cut through the bureaucracy; we made a difference for kids, for the community,” Laline said.

Laline, who recently marked his 30th year as editor and his 50th year at the newspaper, said he is also proud of the Advance internship program, which carries on Trautmann’s commitment to mentoring young journalism students.

“Our interns hit the ground running. We don’t have them doing menial tasks; from the very first day, we throw them into the deep end of the pool. We pay them and treat them as staff. We send them out to cover news stories as we would any full-time reporter. They learn to do interviews, gather the facts, write their stories. And they get bylines, sometimes on front-page stories,” Laline said.

According to Laline, in its heyday, the Advance summer internship program, especially, benefited from Claire Regan’s teaching experience and organizational skills, both as an adjunct professor of journalism at Wagner and as the longtime faculty adviser to the Wagnerian. She coordinated the newspaper’s internship program for 25 years.

Every year at least a dozen young, eager students from Wagner and other colleges, home for the summer and hired from a pool of applicants, arrived at the Advance in early May for the eight-to-12-week internship program. Regan, in her role as associate editor at the Advance, would greet and meet the new interns, show them around, introduce them to staff and explain how the newspaper is put together day by day. Over the course of the summer she conducted weekly meetings with interns to discuss assignments, writing skills and journalism topics, and to foster a sense of camaraderie. “We wanted it to be more than a summer job. We tried to make it as much of a learning experience, to teach them skills they could apply when they graduated,” she said.

The arrival of the summer intern corps was something the full-time staff looked forward to each year. Experienced reporters and editors were eager to critique, share advice and swap stories with the young student journalists. Some of the interns would reapply and return the next summer; some were hired as full-time staff after graduation. Wagner students who began as summer interns and were hired full-time include current Advance staffers Eddie D’Anna ’01, who is now breaking news editor; sportswriter Charlie DeBiase Jr. ’93, and Sunday news editor, reporter and social media engagement manager Mark Stein ’10. Still other recent Wagner alumni, like Jodie Bonhometre ’22, applied their Advance internship experience to pursue different media job paths. Bonhometre is currently online coordinator for the Estée Lauder Companies Inc.

## Continuing the Wagner connection

WHENEVER REGAN introduces herself to her Wagner journalism students each semester, she says she breaks the ice with a few biographical facts, before getting to the point: “I stress to them that Wagner bonds last a lifetime and Wagner connections go a long way,” she said.

Regan was also born and raised on Staten Island; her parents had met while both were teaching high school. When she was an undergraduate in the late '70s there were no journalism classes at Wagner, so Regan majored in education, expecting to follow in the footsteps of her parents. Without realizing it, however, she was learning how to be a journalist by working on the staff of the Wagnerian.

It was a Wagner connection that helped Regan land her first job at the Advance after she earned her bachelor's degree in 1980. Longtime registrar Barney Jensen knew of her interest in journalism, and when his friend at the Advance, Lifestyle Editor Larry Miraldi '68, mentioned he was looking to fill a job, Jensen passed the word to Regan. She applied and was called in for an interview with Trautmann.

“I don't remember much about that meeting because I was so nervous, but I do remember that Wagner came up. ‘So, you're a Wagner grad,’ I recall him saying, as he leaned back in his chair and took a puff from his pipe.” Trautmann hired her as a wedding and engagement writer. It was a part-time, entry-level job, but she was determined to make it a learning experience. Correctly spelling dozens of names of bridesmaids, ushers and family

members established “a useful obsession with accuracy,” she said.

Regan said she's grateful for her years at the Advance, for allowing her to grow her own skills as a professional journalist while continuing to teach and mentor young people. “Les and Brian were great mentors. I learned so much from them and from all the seasoned editors and staff I had the opportunity to work with,” she said.

Like Trautmann, Regan remains committed to her alma mater, to journalism, and to mentoring and teaching young people the craft. She was recently elected national president of the Society of Professional Journalists and is active in the Deadline Club of New York, the local chapter of SPJ. Both sponsor networking and professional development opportunities for young journalists. Today her Wagner students have the opportunity to

pursue a minor in journalism while still getting hands-on experience through the Wagnerian. And through their internships at the Advance and elsewhere, they carry on Wagner's mission of uniting classroom learning with practical application through professional experiences in the workplace and community. ■

*Journalist Diane Lore covered the education beat, writing many news stories about Wagner College, during her 40-year career as a reporter for the Staten Island Advance. She is the proud mom of two Wagner alumni, Andrew Palladino '08 and Kathleen Palladino '18 M'19.*

Through their internships at the Advance and elsewhere, [students] carry on Wagner's mission of uniting classroom learning with practical application through professional experiences in the workplace and community.



The 2014–15 Wagnerian staff examines old issues to commemorate the 80th anniversary of Wagner College's student newspaper.



# AlumniLink

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

## Remember

### THE PAHNKES



LET US REMEMBER Gerda and Marie, the Pahnke sisters, two alumnae who left bequests to their alma mater.

Both were born on Staten Island.

Both attended Wagner College.

Both married fellow Wagner graduates.

And both became teachers.

Gerda Pahnke '45 married John W. Mentha '46. She was a primary school teacher — first in Ardsley, New York, then in Washington, North Carolina, where John's work as a pharmaceutical chemist had taken him. They were prosperous, thanks to John's work, and retired to a new house outside Raleigh, near their son and new granddaughter, where they spent their remaining days.

Marie Pahnke '52 M'53 married Philip D. Pflaum '50 M'54. Both Phil and Marie were lifelong educators in Bergen County, New Jersey — Marie in elementary school, Phil in math and science. After retiring, Philip joined the Bergen County Retired Educators.

All of them have passed on over the last few years — and both couples left substantial gifts to their alma mater. The bequest from Marie's estate will be used for scholarships for future teachers, while Gerda's gift will go toward the purchase of equipment and supplies for programs in the physical sciences.

ABOVE Marie (Pahnke) Pflaum and Gerda (Pahnke) Mentha in 2011.

CENTER Marie Pahnke in the 1952 Kallista.

RIGHT Gerda Pahnke in the 1945 Kallista.



## Major Murphy

WHILE STUDYING AT WAGNER to become an educator, Walter Murphy '58 of Staten Island joined the Platoon Leaders Corps, a Marine Corps training program.

Nine years after graduating, Murphy was teaching on Long Island when he received orders sending him to Vietnam.

Before leaving, he visited the famous McSorley's Ale House in the East Village and, being a military policeman, snapped a set of handcuffs onto the bar's foot rail, saying, "I'll be back for these" — but Major Murphy's heroism in the opening hours of the Battle of Huế, in January 1968, prevented him from fulfilling that pledge.

Earlier this year, on the anniversary of his death, Murphy's brother Hank, also a Wagner graduate and educator, visited two Staten Island watering holes with others who remembered Walter Murphy's sacrifice, leaving portraits of the Marine — and twin pairs of handcuffs clipped to the bars' foot rails — in remembrance.



Save the Date!



# INCLUSION MEANS

# all

## That's what **Andrea De Loney** learned as a student leader on **Grymes Hill** — a lesson she applies today as an **H.R. professional**

**ANDREA DE LONEY '10**, a rising professional in the human resources field of diversity, equity and inclusion — D.E.I. — traces the beginning of her career evolution to the leadership role she played in Wagner College's Nubian Student Union.

A native of Amityville, Long Island, De Loney had several connections to Wagner in her extended family and her church community before it was time to choose a college — but, like many other students, it was the campus visit that convinced her to come to Grymes Hill.

"I actually ended up falling in love with the campus," she says. "I remember when I came from my visit, I had met a number of people who were part of the Nubian Student Union — today, the Black Student Union — and I was like, 'Okay, this is really cool. Let's give it a try!'"

It was during De Loney's junior year at Wagner that the connection between current and past Black students was put to a critical test, when N.S.U. fielded a candidate for Songfest queen. Two incidents of vandalism against N.S.U.'s stage backdrop and candidate promotion flyer created a siege atmosphere among our Black students and their allies across campus, resulting in an investigation by the NYPD Hate Crimes Task Force and a strong show of support from the college administration.

"We needed the support of the alumni community — and, more specifically, the Black alumni community — to make it through that," De Loney recalls. "They showed up for us."

Not only did the Nubian candidate capture the 2009 queen's crown, but N.S.U.'s Songfest team won first place in the overall competition with a truly amazing stage performance, something to which this

writer can attest as one of the festival's three judges.

After serving as N.S.U. president during her senior year, De Loney took her business degree in marketing and management into the working world.

"When I first graduated, I worked as an adviser for the afterschool program in my home district," De Loney says. "I didn't become interested in the staffing field, in human resources, until I joined the Urban League Young Professionals. One of our board members — who is still my mentor today — was a leader over at Adecco Staffing. I started working at a competing company, which led eventually to Northwell Health."

De Loney spent 6½ years with Northwell, one of the major health care providers in the New York metropolitan area, working in various specialty fields of human resources.

"Eventually, I found myself moving back into a corporate role, and that's where I transitioned into diversity, equity and inclusion," she says, "which was interesting because this was pre-George Floyd, before D.E.I. was something that everyone wanted to put on their LinkedIn."

We asked De Loney, what does D.E.I. actually mean in the workplace?

"It's about ensuring that you have diverse representation across all levels of leadership as well as all functions within an organization," she says, "making sure that if there's a board of directors, there's diverse leadership so that different experiences are part of those conversations ... making sure that when anyone and everyone shows up at work, they really feel that they're embraced, respected and protected, that they can really shine and be unapologetic about who they are."

Since January 2022, Andrea De Loney has been the global D.E.I. program manager for Warner Music Group, one of the "big three" record labels (along with Universal and Sony).

"Working in health care, before and during the pandemic, certainly took its toll," she says. "I was ready for something different, and moving into a global D.E.I. role has been incredible: being able to travel, to learn about different cultures and things that are going on around the globe and work with leaders to implement different programs and opportunities ... It's been really exciting."

In addition to her professional involvement in the diversity field, De Loney has been active as a volunteer in her community, including the local chapter of the NAACP and the D.E.I. committee of the Amityville school board. Both her professional and her volunteer experience led to her recognition in April by the Suffolk County Legislature, her home county's governing body, as one of its 2023 Champions of Diversity.

And throughout De Loney's career development since graduating in 2010, she has been actively involved in alumni initiatives at her alma mater, including the Black Professionals Alliance and the Women's Professional Network.

"I think it's important, as an alum, that you give whatever you're able to the next student generation," she says. "One of the beautiful things about Wagner is that you build these relationships, and friends become family. I have alumni friends who feel like literal family members — we've travelled together, attended weddings together ... one of them even married my cousin."

"I'm proud to have Wagner as part of my family today."



*of us*



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AND RESTED IN HIGH FAVOR.**  
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# ClassNotes

Updates from old friends across the generations

## 1949

In the Class Note from **Egon “Ed” Wendel** that was published in our last issue, he was characteristically modest in detailing the roles in which he had served his alma mater, both as a professor and an administrator. Ed was recruited for Wagner’s Education Department faculty in 1962, quickly working his way up to full professor. After serving as department chairman for four years (1965–69), he provided administrative leadership to the college as a whole for 11 years in a variety of roles — acting dean of the college, dean of the faculty and academic vice president — followed by another 10 years in the education faculty. Upon his retirement in 1990, Egon Wendell was named emeritus professor of education. Though it’s impossible for Wagner College to fully

express its gratitude for the contributions Egon Wendel made to his alma mater over the years, let us say, for now: Thanks, Ed!

## 1954

**Wanda Schweizer Praisner** ’54 M’57 was cited in New Jersey Digest as one of “Nine New Jersey Poets to Read in 2021.” Her poem, “Reading ‘The Magic Mountain’ During the Pandemic,” was a finalist in the Atlantic Review 2021 International Poetry Competition; three other poems by Praisner were semi-finalists. Her poem, “Departures,” won third prize in the 2022 Allen Ginsberg Awards.

When the Hoboken Historical Museum was given a collection of 3,600 postcards with postmarks from Hudson County (running along the Hudson River from North Bergen to

Bayonne) dating from 1894 to 1917, **Dorothy Randall** volunteered to catalogue them. “After I retired from Schering Pharmaceutical Corporation in 1998,” she said, “I was manager of a retreat house at Art Omi, a large art center in Ghent, N.Y. I subsequently directed their annual NYC theater benefit. When Covid hit, the theater was no more, and I came to Bob Foster [director of the Hoboken Historical Museum] and asked him for something constructive to do. Rand Hoppe, the collection manager, smiled and handed me eight boxes of postcards. I’ve been at it for a year now, and it should take at least another year to have them completely catalogued and entered into the museum’s database.” She noted that, at the turn of the 20th century, postcards “were used much as texting is today,” citing one message that read, “See you

Thursday for dinner. I will bring the chicken.”

## 1956

“My 95-year-old father **John Joseph Scott** graduated from Wagner College in 1956,” Mary Anne Scott wrote in a recent email. “I thought you might be interested in a video interview of him now posted on YouTube because, while it primarily deals with his time serving in the Navy during WWII, in the later part of the interview [around the 12-minute mark] he speaks of how he ended up attending Wagner College. He started college after his service in WWII, but his college attendance was interrupted when he was called back to active duty during the Korean War.” To watch the 14-minute video on YouTube, search for “John Scott’s WW II Experience.”

### Keep in Touch!

**Email:** [alumni@wagner.edu](mailto:alumni@wagner.edu)

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

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

**Deadlines:** This issue reflects news received by February 15, 2023.

**Content:** Wagner welcomes your news and updates. We ask that you send us

announcements of weddings, births, and graduations after the fact.

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

**Photo Quality:** Photos must be clear and of good quality. They will be returned at your request (please attach your address to the photo). Low resolution images will not be accepted.

## 1964

Last summer, the Housatonic Museum of Art in Bridgeport, Connecticut, featured a retrospective of paintings by **Vincent Baldassano**, titled “To Be Continued.” Recently retired as an art professor at Gateway Community College in New Haven, Baldassano grew up on Staten Island. For more information, visit [vincentbaldassano.com](http://vincentbaldassano.com) on the web.

Over the last couple of years **Robert Hauptman**, a retired reference librarian and professor emeritus of learning resources and technology services, education and information media at St. Cloud (Minnesota) State University, has published two new books with Academica Press, “A Popular Handbook of the Emotions” (2021) and “Debunking Scholarly Nonsense” (2022).

## 1966

**Jeffrey D. Forchelli**, managing partner at the legal firm of Forchelli Deegan Terrana LLP, was selected by his peers for inclusion in the 29th edition of “The Best Lawyers in America” for land use and zoning law. He has been recognized annually since 2018. Forchelli is chairman of the Wagner College Board of Trustees.

## 1967

Since the last issue of Wagner Magazine, **Russ Johnson** '67 M'72 has published his 21st and 22nd novels, “Moscow’s Ashes” in the Travis Delta

series and “The St. John Dead,” a Detective Pete Nazareth novel. A former Wagner Magazine editor, Russ is one of those featured in this issue’s extended 75th anniversary retrospective story.

## 1968

Last December, NASA/JPL Solar System Ambassador **Harold Kozak** lectured at Staten Island’s Clay Pit Ponds Nature Center on “The Latest Search for Extraterrestrial Life.” About 7% of the stars in our galaxy could have planets with liquid water, he said, “and where there is liquid water, there could be life.” Kozak was an adjunct professor of astronomy at his alma mater from 1996 to 2019.

## 1970

English major **Thomas L. Norris** recently published two books, “A Fresh Cup of Counseling: A Handbook of Spiritual Counseling” and “A Fresh Cup of Tolerance: Universalism, the New Religion of Tolerance,” both published by Resource Publications, an imprint of Wipf and Stock. Rev. Norris is a Universalist minister and has been a social worker, psychotherapist and now pastoral counselor for 52 years. He currently teaches in the religious studies department of Florida International University.

## 1971

On Nov. 5, **Beth Hartung Cruz** and **Henry Cruz** celebrated

# 1962 BREGENZ



**BOB HAUPTMAN '64** sent us a few lines from the latest — and, perhaps, the last — reunion of the original cohort of Wagner Bregenzers:

*In the fall of 1962, 58 students went to the Wagner Institute in Bregenz, Austria, most on an ancient liner that took about 10 days to reach Europe. We were the first group, and the most amazing aggregation of people imaginable. It was a wonderful, joyous year. Since then, every few years, we have met up again. Of the 58 original students, 10 are lost and 15 have passed away, which leaves 33 — of whom eight\* met in northeastern Pennsylvania last fall for a four-day reunion. We talked, visited museums and ate. This was mooted to be our final formal reunion.*

\*First row: Mary Lou McClure Marcussen '64, Judy Cushman Quick '63. Second row: Dave Hill '66, Bob Litzenberger '64, Elaine Hampfler Williams '64, Daphne Frazee Bainbridge '64, Bob Hauptman '64, Judy Steeves Kulzer '64



Above: The original Bregenzers and their spouses.

Left: Visit to “Moka” factory, hand-crafted premium coffee and chocolate from Cameroon.

# seahawk SIGHTINGS

1. Naofall “Ming” Folahan '14, associate head coach of the men’s basketball team at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, connected with his old friend, Patricia Tooker '79 M'95 D'16, the Kimberly H. Spiro Dean of Nursing and a former Seahawk women’s basketball player. Ming was attending the Wagner men’s basketball home game against Gwynedd Mercy on Dec. 22.



2. Four Seahawk women’s basketball alumnae — three from Staten Island and one from North Jersey — met up for a team mini-reunion at the WBB game on Jan. 8 in the Sutter Gymnasium to support their successor student athletes. *From left to right:* Mary Gormley '81, Patricia Hoff Dillon '79, Cathy Viverito '78 and Karen Lynch '80.



3. *Left to right:* Rev. Ed Voosen '68, Ruth Sandberg '71, Elaine Recklet '66 and Peter Recklet '66. Elaine shared this photo, taken Aug. 14 at St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church in Marlborough, Massachusetts. “I am a member there,” Elaine told us, “and since we are looking for a new minister, Pastor Ed has been the presiding minister at two services this summer.”



4. Cheering on the Seahawks at an away game against Rutgers last September were Linh Truong, Cailin Kelly '08 and Stacey Trent '94.

**FORTY-SIX YEARS AGO**, the New York Giants moved into their new stadium in the Meadowlands — and, ever since, a gang of Wagner alums has gathered each year for a picnic commemorating the event! This year’s picnic reunion, held Sept. 18 in the Wagner Union’s Faculty Dining Room, was the second reunion to take place on campus.

*Front row:* Elaine O’Keeffe, Joan Feeney, Dee Williamson, Jodie DiLullo, Cynthia Nuzzolese, Christine Palladino '64, Marian Ufferfilge '61, Mary McNerney. *Back row:* Jack Smiechowski '63, Frank Spero '63, Matty Tricorico '63, Fred Williamson '64, Dennis O’Keeffe '64, Ralph Dilullo '59, Paul Feeney '64, Paul Nuzzolese '60, Ron Bibbo '64, Al Palladino '61, Fred Ufferfilge '61, Wally Pagan '61, John Campi '62

the wedding of their youngest daughter, Liz, at the West Side Presbyterian Church in Ridgewood, New Jersey. The reception that followed at the Ramsey Country Club featured emcee Patrick Mooney '21, an admissions counselor at Wagner — proving yet again that Seahawks of all generations know how to enjoy a good time!

## 1972

The Christmas Day edition of the Staten Island Advance featured a story celebrating the golden wedding anniversaries of two brothers and their brides: Michele and **Anthony Ferreri**, and Caroline and Joseph Ferreri. Both couples renewed their vows during a Mass last June celebrated by Cardinal Timothy Dolan.

## 1973

In 2020, after a long, successful career in movie producing, **Richard Baratta** returned to his first love, making music, with the release of a jazz-inspired album, "Music in Film: The Reel Deal." Last August, he followed that up with "Music in Film: The Sequel," with jazz renditions of 11 musical tracks from Austin Powers, Star Wars, Willy Wonka and more.

Last fall **John Mincarelli**, a fashion merchandising consultant living in Port Ewen, New York, published a mystery novel, "Give a Girl a Gun." It is Mincarelli's second novel (following "Twice Forgiven: A Romance in Florence," 2021), and it's available on Amazon.

## 1976

Education graduate **Charles Bauer** has published his first children's book, "Adventures of a Toddler: Jack Do It!" It's the story of a three-year-old boy trying to find his wings, and his parents' fear of the dangers lurking on his playground. Available on Amazon.

## 1980

Journalist **Claire Regan** has had quite a year. She won first prize in the 2022 Journalists Association of New York awards for her Staten Island Advance story, "Richard Prideaux, a 1960s Force for Racial Equality on Staten Island, Dies." And in October, she was sworn in as the 106th president of the Society of Professional Journalists at the national trade organization's annual convention. Regan is profiled in two other stories appearing in this 75th anniversary

issue of Wagner Magazine: one about Wagner alumni at the Staten Island Advance, the other about former Wagner Magazine editors.

## 1982

**Courtney Bennett**, executive director of the nonprofit organization One Hundred Black Men of New York, was named earlier this year as the new director of the Manhattan District Attorney's Harlem office. Bennett, a member of the Wagner Alumni Association board, will focus on deepening ties with local residents and community leaders and building on the Harlem Office's immigration fraud, domestic violence and gun violence prevention work.

## 1983

**Scott Fink** was presented with a special lifetime achievement award in November at the 2022 Philanthropists of the

Year awards, sponsored by the Tampa Bay Business and Wealth magazine. Fink's philanthropy was the subject of an alumni profile in the Fall 2022 issue of Wagner Magazine.

## 1988

In January **Rich Negrin** '88 H'17 was appointed secretary of Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection by incoming Governor Josh Shapiro. Negrin was formerly managing director and deputy mayor of the city of Philadelphia under Mayor Michael Nutter.

Last summer **Andrew Ostrowski** published what he calls "my fairytale story about a tiny little town in upstate New York," entitled "Tales of Bayberry Village: The First Fellowship." "During her life, my aunt Barbara was a big fan of the story," he told us. "I can still remember how she envisioned all of" *(Continued on page 54)*

**Alexandra Jacobs Wilke** '07 was recently named to the Northern New York Business "20 Under 40" list, recognizing the leadership roles she has taken on in her home community of Potsdam, New York. The former Wagnerian editor worked for three years as a reporter at her hometown newspaper, the Watertown Daily Times, before joining the communications team at SUNY Potsdam, where she is currently the public relations director. Since 2019 she has also served on the Potsdam Village Board of Trustees, which involves her in many aspects of village life and operations. "I've been very involved in projects related to smart growth and sustainable development," she said. The instincts she honed as a reporter have served her well as a public servant. "If there was anything going on that I was wondering about, I'm the one that likes to ask and find out. It's the old reporter in me. I care a lot, and I've had to learn that it's a blessing and a curse," she told NNY Business.



Alexandra Jacobs Wilke '07 (left) with Northern New York Business magazine editor Holly Boname at the NNYB '20 Under 40' awards ceremony.

# GLOBAL HEALTH GUARDIANS

By Tim O'Bryhim



**If nothing happens, it means alumnus Chris Cappelli has done**

**SOME PEOPLE** might call you lazy if you went to work every day hoping you had nothing to do for the next few months. But for Chris Cappelli '09, that is the sort of thing that would earn him high praise from his bosses.

As a behavioral health scientist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Global Health Center, Cappelli's job is to help various countries' ministries of health prevent outbreaks of disease.

If nothing happens, it means he has done his job right.

"The most difficult thing about public health is having to say, 'We are successful because this didn't happen,'" Cappelli said. "It's much easier to convince people you are successful if it *does* happen and you respond effectively to it and get rid of it quickly. But that's not the goal. The goal is to work ourselves out of a job."

As a boy, Cappelli always knew his career would involve the sciences.

"I had a microscope, and I would try to get things out in nature to look at under the microscope," he said.

When he enrolled at Wagner College, he knew he would study biology, but an experiential learning opportunity in Bangladesh with chemistry professor Mohammad Alauddin opened his eyes to the field of public health.

"The arsenic contamination in Bangladesh is the largest natural mass poisoning in the world," Cappelli said. "Arsenic occurs naturally in the Himalayas. It contaminates the groundwater accessed by village wells throughout Bangladesh."

Cappelli and his fellow students spent time in the capital, Dhaka, and journeyed to various villages, studying air and water filtration systems and the public health interventions taking place.

He was hooked.

After earning his bachelor of science degree in biology at Wagner, he went

on to acquire a master of public health degree from Emory University and a Ph.D. in educational policy studies at Georgia State. He then acquired relevant job experience at Georgia Tech's Center for Education Integrating Science, Math and Computing.

Cappelli's 10 years at Georgia Tech, the experience in Bangladesh, and his Ph.D. work on social science methodology earned him a two-year evaluation fellowship at the CDC that became the full-time job he has now.

"All of the work I'm doing is to ensure that we in the U.S. are protected from infectious diseases and other public health problems





## Alumna Yuliya Johnson helps keep her adopted country safe from pandemics, bioterrorism

IN EARLY 2020, U.S. Navy Lieutenant Yuliya Johnson '09 landed her dream job: running her own molecular microbiology laboratory in the pathology department at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

A scant three months later, she and her lab were smack dab in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"We were the testing center for anyone coming to the hospital for treatment, and we also supported the whole national capital region. It was a busy, high-stress situation for a few years," Johnson said, "but honestly, an insanely incredible experience, too."

Her path to both the military and microbiology started shortly after she and her family immigrated from Lithuania to Staten Island in August 2001, when she was 12 years old. The following month, on 9/11, Johnson's concerns switched to more than just learning English.

"We had been in New York for just a month at the time," Johnson said. "It makes you become part of the community a lot faster than you expected you would be — and then wanting to give back to the country that took us in, that was part of it."

That desire to give back would eventually lead her to the Navy. But another associated event piqued her curiosity about microbiology.

"The anthrax attacks of 2001 ended up fueling a lot of my interest, career-wise, later on," she said.

Young Johnson became intrigued with the process of responding to, identifying and stopping bioterror attacks. Finishing high school at the age of 16, she headed to Wagner, where professor Kathleen Bobbitt's Microbiology 200 cemented her interest in that field.

"Microbes are cool! I never learned about them in so much detail: how they caused disease and what kind of effect they have on people and the environment. I was hooked. I didn't look back," Johnson said.

After graduating from Wagner with a B.S. in microbiology, Johnson earned a master of public health degree in infectious disease and microbiology at the University of Pittsburgh, and then a Ph.D. in emerging infectious disease at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.

Since October 2021, Johnson has been practicing her twin passions of microbiology and biosecurity at the Naval Medical Research Command in Silver Spring, Maryland, where she leads the Agile Vaccines and Therapeutics Department.

It is there that Johnson can make real her youthful dreams of stopping epidemics from impacting the civilians and servicemembers of her adopted country. Her department focuses on developing vaccines and therapeutic countermeasures against infectious diseases like dengue fever and Covid.

The old problem of malaria is also a focus of the lab. Johnson and her team are working

**"Microbes are cool! I never learned about them in so much detail: how they caused disease and what kind of effect they have on people and the environment. I was hooked. I didn't look back."**

to develop a vaccine that works for people like the troops who deploy overseas.

"We have servicemembers and warfighters who serve all over the world. They encounter pathogens we don't normally see in the United States," Johnson said, "and these are pathogens that can cause disease and, potentially, mortality, so we need to be able to protect them."

With a resume like Johnson's, she's exactly the right person to do it.

## his job right

happening in other parts of the world," Cappelli said.

Last summer, Cappelli spent six weeks in Africa alongside CDC colleagues and officials from Uganda's ministry of health conducting a tabletop simulation designed to prepare for future Ebola outbreaks.

Cappelli believes that, if it were not for the CDC, diseases could spread more rapidly than ever — from a rural village in Africa, for instance, to New York City — because global travel is commonplace.

For Cappelli, none of this would have been possible if not for his experience with Professor Alauddin in Bangladesh.

"The only reason I got into public health was because of Wagner," Cappelli said.

If his work is successful, you'll never hear his name again.

He wouldn't want it any other way.

LEFT Chris Cappelli (right) visits a field hospital in Uganda as part of his work with the CDC.

# Alumni *in the* 2022 ELECTIONS

**DURING LAST NOVEMBER'S GENERAL ELECTION**, four Wagner College alumni threw their hats in the political ring.

**Donna Lupardo '76** was re-elected to the New York State Assembly for a 10th term representing Binghamton, New York, and the neighboring Broome County townships of Vestal and Union. She previously served on the Broome County Legislature, the county's elected governing body, in 1999 and 2000.

**Christopher R. Robertson '88** ran for the Connecticut state senate for a second time. Both runs were against strong incumbents; neither resulted in victory.



**Wes Moore H'15**, our inspirational 2015 commencement speaker, was elected governor of Maryland.

**Nicole Malliotakis M'10** won re-election for a second term in the U.S. House of Representatives from Staten Island and part of Brooklyn. In both elections she defeated Democrat Max Rose, the 2020 incumbent.



Malliotakis's political career began with stints as community liaison for state senator John Marchi (2003–04) and Governor George Pataki (2004–06). In 2010 she won her first election for New York State Assembly, running against two-term Democratic incumbent Janele Hyer-Spencer. She won re-election to the Assembly four times, though she was trounced in her 2017 bid against Bill de Blasio to become mayor of New York City.

In the new Congress, Malliotakis sits on the House Ways & Means Committee and the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Malliotakis may be the only one of these four Waggie politicians to have a deli sandwich named for her. Called the Malliotakis American Dream Panini, its ingredients are meant to reflect the congresswoman's Greek and Cuban heritage. It's served up hot at the Panini Grill in Staten Island's West Brighton.

(Continued from page 51)  
the town's doings, from sunup to sundown. The book is dedicated to her." "Bayberry Village" is available on Amazon.

## 1991

**Jenny Sena '91 M'93**, former graduate coordinator of the PA Program at her alma mater, was named dean of the Berkeley College School of Health Studies this January.

## 1999

Last August, **Luke Timmins** made an appearance on a reboot of the classic TV game show, "Password." Timmins, assistant principal at Edwin Markham I.S. 51 on Staten Island, was a \$20K winner on another TV game show, "Who Wants to be a Millionaire," in 2017.

**Barbara Bellesi Zito** has published her first novel, "Lucky Stiff." While the main character, Wagner alumnus Larry Sortino, has been laid off, and his wife (also an alum) is having an affair with his best friend, Larry has won a multimillion-dollar lottery — hence, the title. (A reliable source tells us that Wagner College is mentioned 13 times!) Zito, a freelance writer living on Staten Island (barbthewriter.com), worked at Wagner's academic and career advising center from 2013 to 2017.

## 2005

Last August Concentric AI named former Fidelis Cybersecurity sales executive **Daniel Emanuele** as its first



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# FRIENDS & FAMILY



**IT WAS A GRAND OLD SEAHAWK TIME** on July 16, 2022, at the Gardener Ranch in Carmel Valley, California, for the wedding of Andrew Mizerek '10 and Sarah Kauffman '10! *In the photo, roughly from left to right:* Theresa Barrilli Orecchia '10, John Orecchia '04, Elizabeth "Izzy" Hedges-Goettl Hodnett '09, James Hodnett '08, Gabe Zabatta, Danielle Boisvert '14, Anthony DeNicola, former Wagner trustee and mother of the bride Nanci Kauffman, Steven Meservey '10, Jacob Shore '10, groom Andrew Mizerek '10, Brian Santos '08, bride Sarah Kauffman '10, Joe Catapano '09, Nicole Mahoney '10, Emily Visnovsky '10, Don Rahl '10, Erin Fitzpatrick '10, Kelsey George Hambleton '10 and Kelly Byrd '08.



**WELCOME TO THE WORLD,** Luca James Maguire-Losanno, born Nov. 11 to parents Ralph Maguire-Losanno '05 and Michael Maguire-Losanno!

senior vice president of sales. Concentric AI is a leading vendor of intelligent AI-based solutions for autonomous data security posture management solutions.

## 2006

Last November **Andrew Bailey** was inducted into the South Jersey Baseball Hall of Fame. Bailey, the 2009 American League Rookie of the Year, played eight seasons in the majors. He is currently the pitching coach for the San Francisco Giants.

Last August **Christopher Corbo** '06 M'08, former assistant provost for academic affairs and chairman of the Department of Biological Sciences at Wagner College, was named dean of the Jacksonville University College of Arts & Sciences.

## 2007

**Nicole Filippazzo Giammarinaro** was promoted to assistant vice president for operations with the Northwell Health System Office of Patient and Customer Experience.

## 2008

Last summer **Andrew Daly** was named head coach for the men's lacrosse team at SUNY Oswego. He'd been head men's lacrosse coach at Wells College since 2015.

## 2009

This January **Joshua Phillips** M'09 was named head football coach at Sarasota (Florida) High School. He was previously defensive coordinator for the Manatee High School football team in Bradenton, Florida.

## 2010

Last fall Wagner College Theatre graduate **Molly Burnett** began a run as Detective Grace Muncy on the NBC series "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit." She previously appeared in a long-running role (2017 to 2021) as Kelly Anne Van Awken in "Queen of the South" on the USA Network.

Last August **Jorel Joseph**, director of business development for Keolis North America, was named to Mass Transit Magazine's "40 Under 40" list. Keolis operates public transportation contracts in both the U.S. and Canada, including commuter rail systems in Virginia and Massachusetts and fixed-route and shuttle-bus systems in several states.

Last November **Kevin Kearney** published his debut novel, "How to Keep Time,"

with Thirty West Publishing House. The story about families and endings is set in New Jersey's Pine Barrens.

Arts administration graduate **Jake Shore's** new play, "Hit the Wall," had a four-week run last summer at the Kraine Theater in Manhattan. The show is about a world-famous but anonymous graffiti artist who is being challenged by his protégé. Shore was an adjunct English professor at his alma mater from 2012 to 2017; he is currently the director of the Academic Advisement Center at St. Joseph's University, where he also teaches English. "Hit the Wall" was Shore's 10th play to be staged in New York.

## 2012

Last summer **John Garrish** was named the 2022 National High School Strength Coach of the Year. Garrish is a teacher at



From left to right: Paul DiGiacomo, Linda Messo and Kenda Damate, Messo's stepmother and a retired NYPD detective. (Photo courtesy RUMC)

Wagner College nursing graduate Linda Messo '18, a nurse at Richmond University Medical Center on Staten Island, was honored for saving the life of off-duty NYPD Detective Michael Caccioppoli, who was in cardiac arrest on the side of a highway last July. A neurologist at Staten Island University Hospital, where Caccioppoli was taken for emergency care, said that because Messo performed CPR so perfectly, he didn't lose any motor functions. For her heroic actions, Messo was recently honored with an award by Detectives Endowment Association President Paul DiGiacomo.

## 2020

In December the Saskatchewan Roughriders signed Seahawk lineman **Charbel Dabire** to a contract extension for the 2023 season. Dabire was first picked up by the Riders during the 2019 Canadian Football League draft.

## 2021

**Divya Khanna**, who took Prof. Benjamin Marshall's fall 2020 playwriting class, wrote to her former professor late last summer with some good news: her new, short play, "Anything," would be staged that fall as part of the Emerging Artists Theatre New Work Series at Tada! Theater on West 28th Street in Manhattan.

Seahawk baseball player **Ben Montenegro**, pursuing his J.D. at Vermont Law School, has been coaching the Sharon Academy high school basketball team for the last two years, and was elevated in 2022 to head coach.

Seahawk basketball standout **Alex Morales**, a two-time Northeast Conference Player of the Year, was signed last October by the Orlando Magic after playing with the Golden State Warriors in the 2022 NBA Summer League.

Last summer Wagner College Theatre graduate **Miles Wilkie** scored a place on the highly competitive roster of performer/servers at Show Place Ice Cream Parlor in Beach Haven on New Jersey's Long Beach Island.

North Broward Preparatory School in Coconut Creek, Florida, and is head coach of the boys' track and field team.

## 2013

In October **Jenny Giacomo Kelly** was given a Community Service Award at the Wagner College DaVinci Society's 17th annual scholarship dinner.

Last summer Wagner College Theatre grad **Chris Luner** became artistic director for the Upper Darby Summer Stage's 47th season. Luner, who was born and raised in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, was a frequent Summer Stage participant throughout his youth and then a regular staff member for nearly a decade.

## 2014

**Brian Falduto** may be known best to the non-Wagner world for his portrayal of "Fancy

Pants," the young wardrobe master in the 2003 film, "School of Rock." But last year this Wagner College Theatre and arts admin grad broke new ground in the country music world, recording tracks for his upcoming EP, "Gay Country," featuring the single, "Same Old Country Love Song." (Spoiler alert: It's not the same old *anything!*)

Last August **Eric Mathias** was named vice president for commercial investments at Federal Capital Partners, leading FCP's commercial investing efforts in the Southwest. Prior to joining FCP, Mathias was a New York-based vice president at Goldman Sachs focused on investing in real estate secondaries and co-investments. He began his career on the real estate debt capital markets team at Goldman Sachs, where he was primarily responsible

for sourcing and structuring financing for principal real estate investments.

In January **Kristen Matteoni** was named vice president and associate counsel for Whittier Trust Company in Reno, Nevada. She had previously served as an estate planning attorney at Snell & Wilmer LLP in its private client services department.

## 2017

This winter **Daniel Marconi** performed in "The Outsiders" at the La Jolla (Calif.) Playhouse, playing Randy and understudying Ponyboy.

## 2018

In October singer **Charles Poveromo** '18 M'21 was given a Community Service Award at the Wagner College DaVinci Society's 17th annual scholarship dinner.

# In Memoriam

*Celebrating lives that enriched the Wagner family*

## A L U M N I

Roy A. Cutter '41  
Beatrice Werner Jensen '41  
Dorothy A. Deal Morten '43  
Diana V. Marsh Holland '47  
Fred A. Scholz Jr. '48  
Esther "Pat" Patterson Dillman '49  
Patricia A. Montgomery Lindheimer '51 M'61  
Frederick J. Brockmann '52 M'54  
Howard M. Norris '52  
Joan Sweeney Wall '52 M'54  
Gordon Brinkman '53  
Joan Bansemer Ehren '53 M'55  
Rolf W. Eschke '54  
Janice Comeforo Miller '54  
Guna Mezveveris Gregors '55  
Charles F. Harreus '55  
Robert A. Klumpp '55  
Thomas Lloyd '56  
Edward F. Moran M'56  
Guy F. Brennert '57  
Thomas A. Mangino '57  
John S. Saia '57  
Ira Pisetznier '58  
Alfred J. Bacchi '59 M'64  
Walter J. Barnes Jr. '59 M'62  
Charlene Connell Hewitson '59

Alice Elaine Johnston Keuter '59  
Robert S. Kotterman '59 M'64  
Kenneth N. Hodgins '60  
Karl A. Kamp '60  
Allan J. Ferrie '61 M'67  
Joseph W. Rosendale M'61  
Louis R. Trella '61 M'67  
Frank A. Wall '61  
John Johnson '62  
Robert S. Plotkin '62  
Richard Rice '62 M'69  
Henry J. Sumfleth '62  
Larry J. Williams '62  
Nancy W. Welter Ottati '64  
Thomas Cekoric '65  
Ronald G. Sarg '66  
Barry Silver '66  
Charles L. Breiner '67  
James E. Donovan '67  
Susan Rissmiller Bittler '68  
Beverly Bryant Edelman '68  
Dennis Anderson '69  
Paul B. Forchelli '69  
Virgil J. Bagdonas '70  
Frederick Fachner '70  
Stephen Leon '71  
Howard O. Wunderlich Jr. '71

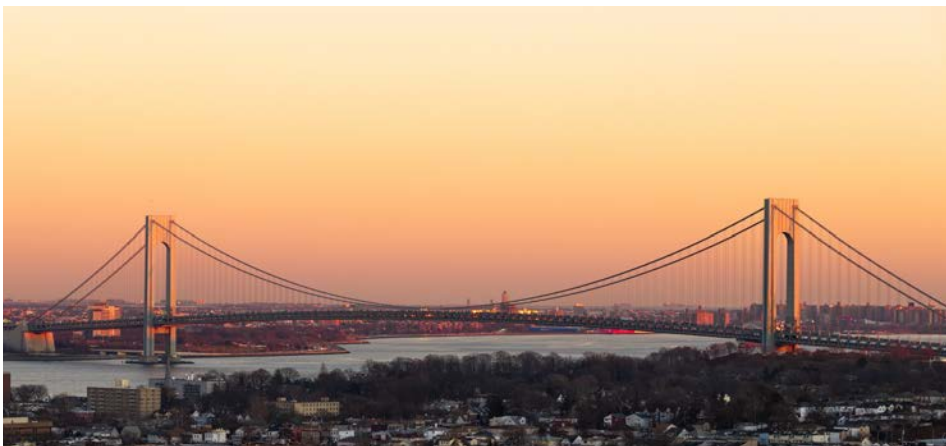
James K. Munnely '72  
Bruce S. Bainbridge '73  
Linda Truett Carullo '73 M'77  
Edith J. Pacifico Knudson '73  
Claire M. Stephens Drinnan M'74  
Edward Westwood '76  
William F. Martin Jr. '77  
Victoria Gentile '78  
Bruce A. Patrick M'79  
Dwight J. Hutchinson '80  
Ruth Anna Perri '80 M'84  
Stephen R. Semuta Jr. '80  
Joseph W. Shelley '80  
Joyce V. Gasparo M'81  
Cecelia M. O'Connor McGivney '82  
Joseph G. Bennett M'87  
Edward Baldwin Self III '95  
Rebecca Sassaman Roman '97  
Maryalice Cassidy M'98  
Harry S. Jackson III '09  
Jean M. Fazio M'10

## FRIENDS OF THE COLLEGE

Charles Bunning  
Rosemary Callahan  
Norma D'Arrigo  
William G. Drinnan  
Robert Fackelman  
Allan Firestone  
Maria Giron  
Anthony J. McComiskey  
Jane Oldham  
James E. Pianta  
Barbara Pisetznier  
Daniel Rothfeld  
Egon J. Salmon  
Kathleen Wedemeyer

## FACULTY & STAFF

Ernest Luther Steen  
Douglas Waldmann





## Egon Salmon

Egon Salmon died Sept. 7, 2022, at the age of 98. Born in Rheydt, Germany, the son of a prosperous textile manufacturer, Salmon and his family were forced into exile after the Kristallnacht pogrom of 1938. First denied sanctuary in the United States as passengers of the ill-fated M.S. St. Louis, the Salmon family eventually made its way to Staten Island in 1940. After serving in the U.S. Army during World War II, Egon Salmon created Salmon Real Estate, a thriving realty business operated today by his sons, Henry and Jon Salmon. Egon Salmon and his wife, Marie, were steady supporters of the Wagner College Holocaust Center, establishing the Egon J. Salmon and Family Commemoration of Kristallnacht and the St. Louis in 2016. “Egon Salmon was gracious and dignified,” said Holocaust Center director Lori Weintrob. “His presence commanded respect, but he was warm with students and displayed a sense of humor. He was the first Holocaust survivor to speak on campus, and a catalyst for the Holocaust Center.”



## Fred Brockmann '52 M'54

In the Class Notes section of the Fall 2022 issue of Wagner Magazine, Fred and his wife, Lee (Schriever) '53 Brockmann, shared some happy family news with their fellow alumni, adding, “Fred and Lee are alive and proud in Sarasota, Florida, and celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on June 8.” But shortly after the fall issue was mailed, Lee wrote to us again, this time with very sad news: “Fred contracted Covid (after being thoroughly vaccinated and boosted) on May 25. He died on Oct. 15.” Fred Brockmann was 92 years old. Fred, a career educator, and Lee moved to Sarasota in 2007 after nearly two decades as “snowbirds.” Deeply committed to racial and social justice, Fred was chairman of the Peace & Justice Network at his church; in 2018, the Brockmanns were honored with Equality Florida’s “Voice for Equality” award. Watch Fred Brockmann’s Celebration of Life online at <https://bit.ly/3RZKYK6>



## Harry Jackson '09

Former Wagner College Student Government Association president Harry S. Jackson III died last July in a terrible car crash. Just 33 years old, Jackson was already a partner in the Atlantic City law firm of Fox Rothschild and co-chair of its American Indian Law Practice. A member of the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation, Jackson had been elected in 2014 to its nine-member tribal council, serving as secretary and lending his legal expertise to the group that oversees tribal governance. “Harry garnered the respect of both students and administration, always putting a smile on everyone’s face,” said his friend Michael Pinto '10, who succeeded Harry as SGA president. “Harry was just a joy to be around,” recalled Wagner College President Angelo Araimo. “He was one of those rare students from whom you learned as much as you taught.”



## Jean Fazio M'10

Jean M. Fazio, an adjunct professor who earned her master's degree in nursing at Wagner, died last June at the age of 71. Professor Fazio, who taught in the Evelyn L. Spiro School of Nursing for eight years, from 2011 to 2019, was president of the Wagner College chapter of Sigma Theta Tau, the international nursing honor society. She and her husband, Dr. Richard Fazio, built a gastroenterology practice on Staten Island and in Brooklyn. They had three children, enjoying annual family trips to Disney World and weekends on Long Beach Island.



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## Vincent J. 'Vinny' Mandala '80

Vinny Mandala, an FDNY deputy chief, died on May 31, 2022, at the age of 63, succumbing to illnesses sustained during his work on "The Pile" at Ground Zero following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. "Vincent J. Mandala was born to be a firefighter," wrote classmate Claire Regan '80 in an obituary tribute for the Staten Island Advance. "He took the city [firefighters] exam as an 18-year-old freshman at Wagner College — and passed — three years before he could qualify for the FDNY Training Academy." According to Regan, Vinny met his wife, Joan DeGennaro Mandala '81, at a TKE mixer in Towers, where he couldn't stop telling her about the Fire Department. Mandala served 42 years in the FDNY, earning multiple promotions, before his 9/11 illnesses forced him to retire. "I don't have any regrets," he told his wife. "We had a great life. We were blessed, and I wouldn't change a thing."



# Walking through our history

By Lee Manchester

**W**hat did you want to be when you grew up? A firefighter? A doctor? A space explorer? Me, I wanted to be an archaeologist. As a kid, my favorite reads were about Heinrich Schliemann's excavation of the nine buried cities of Homer's Troy, and Hiram Bingham's rediscovery of Machu Picchu.

My favorite vacation trips? The Anasazi cliff dwellings of the desert southwest, and the ancient Mayan temple complex of Chichen Itza on the Yucatan peninsula.

So it's probably no surprise that, when I became a community journalist — first in central California, then in New York's Adirondacks — I did a lot of writing about local history. In fact, I may have written more about Lake Placid-area history than about its present-day schools, politics, sport and economy.

A region's history can tell you a lot about how the world you see around you, right now, was created — the heartbreak it embodies, the conflicts it has resolved, the people whose tragedies and triumphs it reflects. A day spent researching and writing about regional history never seemed like a wasted day.

Imagine my happy surprise when I took a job in the Communications Office at Wagner College in 2007 and learned that the following year would be the school's 125th anniversary.

I started digging in to the college's creation story, looking for angles that

**“A region's history can tell you a lot about how the world you see around you, right now, was created.”**

would help us explain how Wagner had become such a special place. I didn't have far to dig, and the surprises were both thrilling and abundant.

We were able to reconnect Wagner College with the original Wagner family, uncovering both school and family records long forgotten — including the only known photograph of the young man for whom the college had been named, all those years ago: J. George Wagner Jr. With President Guarasci, we travelled to Rochester, New York, the college's original hometown, and laid a memorial wreath on young George's gravestone. We learned that typhus had killed that son of German immigrants before he could realize his dream of going to college and becoming a pastor — a tragedy that had motivated his father, a well-to-do contractor, to buy our college's first campus as a gift to his own pastor, one of the school's two cofounders.

The research on Wagner College's roots, begun in 2007, continued to bear fruit over the years. In the Fall 2014 issue of this magazine, biology professor Horst Onken helped us learn more about the rich, natural life on Wagner College's parklike Staten Island campus in a story, “Rooted in Grymes Hill,” that connected horticulture to history.

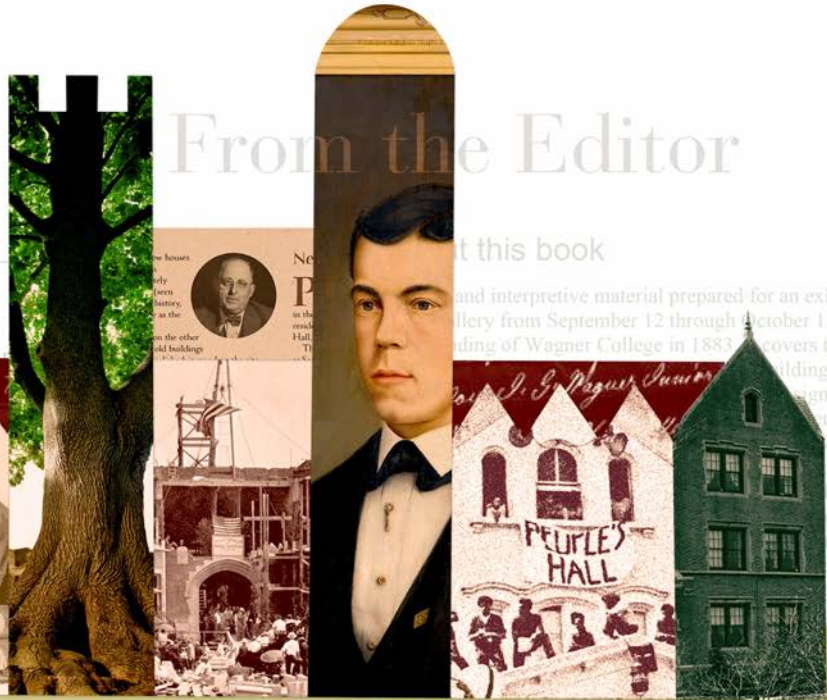
And then, of course, there was the three-part “Wagner College History Tour,” published in 2016–17, where we literally walked through the genesis and development of the college. Just as in Schliemann's Troy, our history comes in layers, each with its own buildings, its own actors, its own drama. We looked at the way our campus had evolved, from the buildings left by a summer resort colony in 1918 to a modern liberal arts college with thousands of students, ranked in the top 25 percent in its region.

To me, that multi-stage tour felt a little miraculous: walking through time, seeing things around us as they had been a hundred years earlier and learning to appreciate them as they are today all the more for it.

I had similar experiences with the work that led to a couple of other historical stories. In one of them, we looked into the campus rumors about a wildly creative — and, let's face it, just plain *wild* — English professor and his wife, an avant-garde filmmaker, who were supposedly Edward Albee's inspiration for his unforgettable

## From the Editor

I'm one of those guys who "bleeds green and white." I've spent a third of my adult life — since February 2007 — working in Wagner's Communications office. I've served as the college's press representative for the new building project for the college campus. I really got into it when I was at Grymes Hill.



*By Lee Manchester*

early masterwork, "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" I dug and I dug, talking to former colleagues, students and collaborators of Professor Willard Maas until I was sure: The stories were true! In the process, we were able to bring back to life a particularly creative episode in the history of Wagner College.

A second story looked into a troubling chapter in the college's evolution: the conflict between our historically segregated, virtually all-White campus culture and the influx of Black and Latinx students in the 1960s. At the center of this conflict were two incidents orchestrated in the spring of 1970 by Black Concern, a new student advocacy organization: the occupation of Cunard Hall, and a confrontation with Dean Harold Haas after the college reneged on promises it had made to end the Cunard occupation.

The details of the conflict had never been told in their entirety ... and the personal story of the student leader behind the incidents, alumnus Lonnie Brandon, was unknown to most of his fellow alums. We were able to recover this history, both institutional and personal — and bring you along for the ride.

So, with my retirement beginning just as this issue hits the mail, how have things worked out for me?

The boy who wanted to become an archaeologist — has he been satisfied?

The answer is, yes.

Everything hasn't been perfect, either in my career as a journalist or in my communications job at Wagner College — but through all the years, I've been able to travel in time, back and forth, with the support of the people I work for and the folks I write for: you. I've seen how

at this book

and interpretive material prepared for an exhibition gallery from September 12 through October 15, 2008, in the building of Wagner College in 1883. It covers the period of the building project to the signature. The Wagner College Archives of New York State prepared the material of the time who could not be out the rising in

simple, hopeful plans have been nurtured over the years into a substantial, enduring institution of higher learning, equipping generation upon generation of civic scholars and community leaders. And I've seen new classes of graduating students shepherded into the worlds of responsible, fruitful business, scientific exploration and artistic expression by those who went before them: you, their predecessors, the Wagner alumni community.

Thank you, Seahawk alums, for the past 16 years. Given a hundred other choices, I wouldn't have spent them anywhere but on Grymes Hill — with you.

*Former journalist Lee Manchester has written for Wagner Magazine since 2007. He is retiring this summer.*

WAGNER COLLEGE

## THE LINK. The Wagner College Alumni News

Vol. I

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No. 1

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ALFRED J. KRAHMER '27, Alumni Secretary, Editor

LOIS DICKERT '46, Assistant Editor

The masthead from the first issue of Wagner's alumni magazine, then known as "The Link," photographed from the archives of the Wagner College library. Seventy-five years later, the spirit of the introduction resonates throughout this special anniversary issue you now hold. We hope you like it.

### ***An Introduction***

This issue introduces something new to Wagner alumni, their own quarterly alumni magazine. We hope you like it. It isn't entirely as we would like it to be, but we'll keep trying to make it a magazine Wagner alumni will look forward to and read eagerly. Help us in this effort with your suggestions and criticisms. Help us, too, with news items, latest addresses, etc. The Link is intended to be what its name implies — the link between Alma Mater and her alumni.