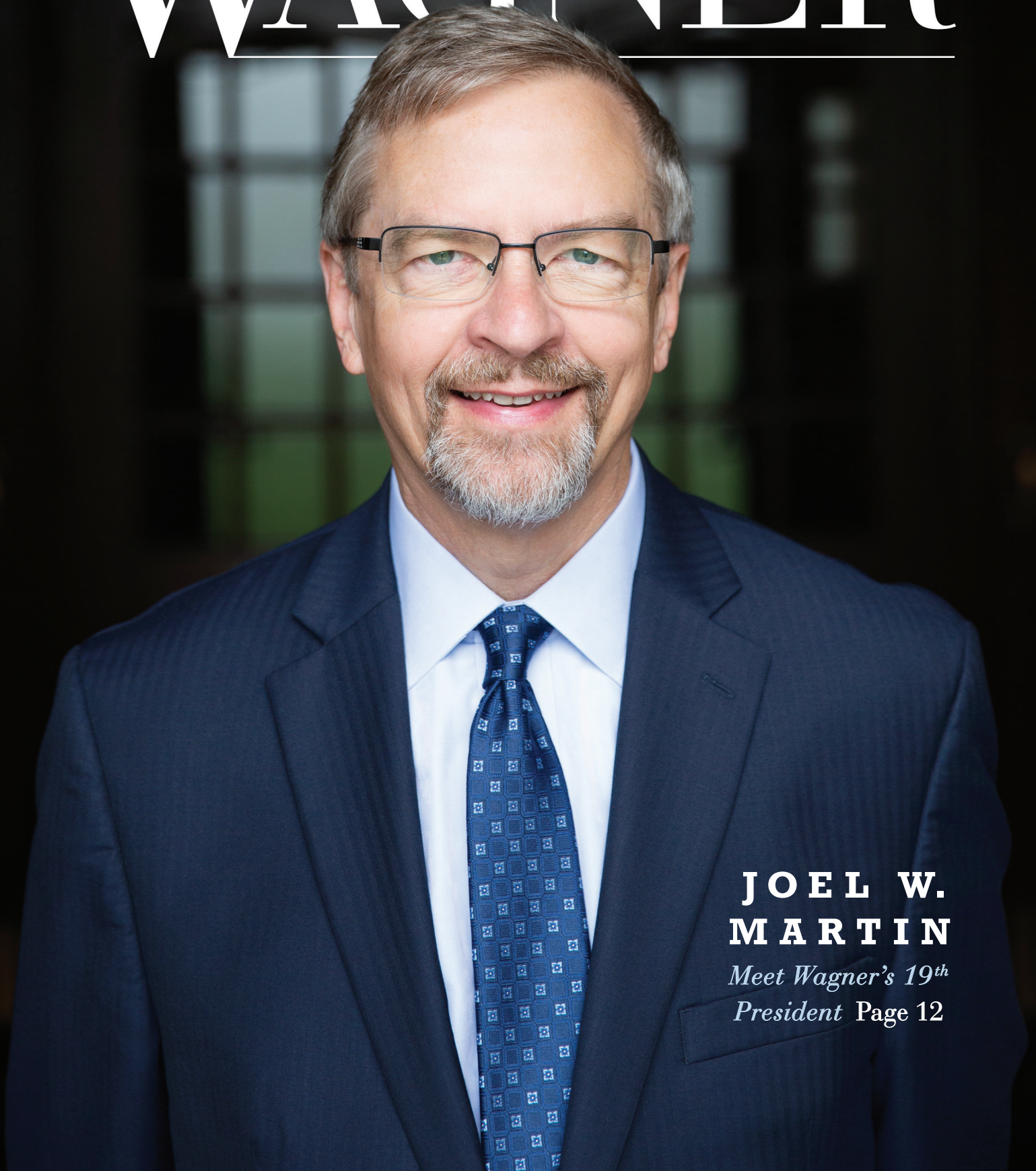


SUMMER 2019

THE LINK FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

WAGNER



**JOEL W.
MARTIN**

*Meet Wagner's 19th
President Page 12*

Contents

Wagner Magazine | Summer 2019

VOL. 16, NO. 2



Take It Easy

The whirlwind of finals and commencement is past. The rhythm of campus life is more stroll than slalom. It's summertime at Wagner.

PHOTOGRAPH: VINNIE AMESSÉ

FEATURES

12

Meet Wagner's 19th President

Joel W. Martin is a leader who starts with curiosity and respect.

20

Of Her Theatrical Lineage

An alumna finds a personal connection to Adrienne Kennedy, Wagner's 1963 Stanley Drama Award winner.

24

'The Most Important Year of My Life'

An Austrian author brings Wagner College, circa 1967, back to vivid life in a new book.

DEPARTMENTS

- 2 **From the President**
- 3 **From the Editor**
- 4 **From Our Readers**
- 5 **Upon the Hill**
- 28 **Alumni Link**
- 32 **Class Notes**
- 42 **In Memoriam**
- 44 **Reflections**

GETTING TO KNOW YOU Joel Martin chats with faculty, staff, and students at his presidential selection announcement.



From the President

Dear Friends,

Wagner College has a new president. I'm thrilled that it is me. From the very first visit to the campus as a candidate to the present moment, I have been inspired by the special charm and character of this great American college.

As the new president, I'm eager to see every corner of the campus; to meet every employee, student, and alum; to learn all I can as fast as I can. I know it's going to be a marathon, but I'm sprinting ahead. I am thrilled to be here — finally! — and very humbled by the trust invested in me as the 19th president of Wagner College.

My wife, Jan, and I are settling into the wonderful Nicolais House on Howard Avenue in Staten Island, where every morning brings a glorious sunrise over Brooklyn and the New York Harbor, and every evening a magical transformation as the city lights come into their own. We cannot adequately express our appreciation

for the way we have been received by all.

I know that I have a lot to learn about the College. One does not arrive fully formed as president, but can only truly *become* the president through listening, learning, and practice. To accelerate my

learning curve, I intend to immerse myself as fully as possible in the life of the College.

As a historian, I understand the importance of appreciating the past, especially if we hope to shape a better future. I encourage you, the readers of *Wagner Magazine* — our alumni, our retirees, our longtime supporters — to send me your favorite memories. What unforgettable moments, whether on or off campus, in the city or abroad, do you love to reminisce about? What has the Wagner experience meant in your life? Every story matters. Please share yours with me at president.office@wagner.edu.

I hope we will have the chance to meet in person as well. I encourage you to attend Homecoming on October 5. It will be a day of fun and festivities, and you can kick it all off by joining me for brunch at 11:30 a.m. Sign up at wagner.edu/homecoming.

Having been so warmly welcomed as your new president, it is now my privilege to welcome you to Wagner College, through this fine publication. Its pages and photos remind us of Wagner's storied past, documents its present prowess, and heralds what we all hope will be an even brighter future.

All the best, go Seahawks!


Joel Martin
PRESIDENT



“I can only truly *become* the president through **listening, learning, and practice.**”

From the Editor

My Second Home

In the spirit of President Martin's call to share our stories, I would like to share a bit about myself here. This bit will also serve the purpose of explaining why I was able to translate portions of Armin Thurnher's book, *Fähre nach Manhattan*, from German to English for the feature story "The Most Important Year of My Life" (see page 24).

In the summer of 1978, right before I started the second grade, my family moved to Germany. My father worked for the Army as a civilian, and he took a job in Frankfurt. We stayed in Germany for four years. I attended a local German elementary school in the village where we lived, Neuenhain am Taunus.

I remember my mother preparing me and my little sister for the move by showing us on a globe where America was and where Germany was. This notion of a bigger world was interesting and novel, and I was excited about the plane trip. But I grew afraid when some well-meaning adult told me, "You're going to become a little German girl." Nevertheless, it did happen. I became completely absorbed

in the local German community and culture. My mother had to ask my sister and me to remember to speak English at home, since my father didn't understand German.

We moved back to the U.S. in the summer before I began the sixth grade. I continued to speak and study German. I travel back there as often as I can. On every trip, it feels like returning to a second home.



CHILDHOOD BONDS Laura Barlament (left) next to her sister, Jennifer, with two German friends, near their home in Germany's Taunus mountains, ca. 1979.

Thurnher wrote his book as a way of reexamining his own incisive experience of living abroad. His book is a vivid portrayal of Wagner and New York City of the late 1960s, written with the freshness of perspective that only an outsider can bring. If you remember that time, I

hope you enjoy reliving it through Thurnher's words. But even if you don't, read it to experience a piece of the history of this place, which ties us all together.

Laura Barlament
EDITOR, WAGNER MAGAZINE

Laura Barlament
EDITOR

Natalie Nguyen
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

WRITERS
Nicolina Astorina
Laura Barlament
Maria Giura '90
Lee Manchester
Armin Thurnher
Pia Wilson '93

PHOTOGRAPHERS
Vinnie Amessé *Jonathan Harkel*
Ben Barnhart *Anna Mulé*
William M. Brown *Jack Robinson/*
Monique Carboni *Getty Images*
Deborah Feingold *Manfred Werner*

ILLUSTRATION
Curt Merlo

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Donna Sinagra

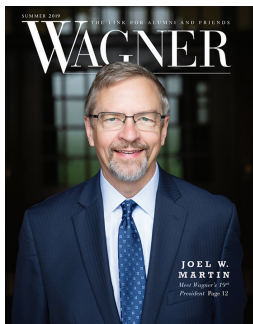
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Lauren Serrato '19

Wagner Magazine Advisory Board

Lisa DeRespino Bennett '85
Susan Bernardo
Jack Irving '69
Scott Lewers '97
Lorraine McNeill-Popper '78
Brian Morris '65
Hank Murphy '63 M'69
Andy Needle
Nick Richardson

Wagner Magazine:
The Link for Alumni and Friends
is published twice a year by Wagner's
Office of Communications and Marketing

Wagner Magazine
Wagner College
One Campus Road
Staten Island, NY 10301
718-390-3147
laura.barlament@wagner.edu
wagner.edu/wagnermagazine

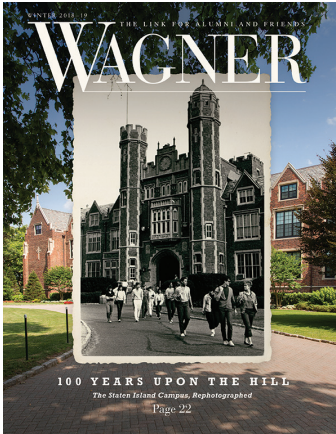


On the Cover

Joel W. Martin began his tenure as Wagner's 19th president on July 1, 2019. Learn more about his background and approach to leadership in our cover story, page 12.

PHOTOGRAPH: DEBORAH FEINGOLD

From Our Readers



“Wonderful history made ... a huge part of my story.”

Special Online Version: ‘100 Years Upon the Hill’



We created a special online version of our winter 2018–19 feature “100 Years Upon the Hill,” integrating archival photos with new photos of the same scenes. At wagner.edu/wagnermagazine/100-years-upon-hill, the scenes are displayed side by side. You can use your mouse or finger to move a slider back and forth over the photos, mapping them directly over each other.

In response to our Facebook post of this feature (facebook.com/WagnerCollege), readers left many enthusiastic responses:

- “Beautiful campus. Lived at Harborview and Guild Hall.” • **#WAGNERPROUD '87**
- “Thanks for the visit. Haven’t been back since graduation day!” • “Great memories.”
- “Wonderful pictures! Happy memories.” • “So thankful and a proud graduate of Wagner. My BSN has opened many doors in my career.” • “Remember my senior year in Guild Hall (1963), we had the corner window ... views of the Verrazzano Bridge under construction and the Statue of Liberty and NYC skyline ... definitely a million-dollar view.” • “Wonderful history made ... a huge part of my story.”

Vivid Memories

In the winter 2018–19 issue of *Wagner Magazine*, on page 4, there is a picture of a Wagner student playing on the women’s field hockey team. I am curious where you found this picture, because I believe that I am the Wagner student. I played on the Wagner team during my sophomore and junior years but had to stop playing in my senior year because of my nursing curriculum. We played our home games at Staten Island Academy. I will never forget playing in a game against a team from Brooklyn because those girls thought nothing of checking. I never wore shin guards while playing in high school, but I am sure glad I had them on during that Brooklyn game. My teammates, practicing on the Oval, and traveling up Todt Hill to Staten Island Academy are vivid memories. This year marks the 45th anniversary of my graduation from Wagner, and seeing that picture helps me reminisce about my time at Wagner. I, too, am happy to see women’s field hockey return to Wagner.

Debby MacFarland Vogel '74
DEVON, PENNSYLVANIA

EDITOR’S NOTE:
The photo is from the 1971 Kallista. Debby is the person on the right, wearing shin guards.



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

Laura Barlament, Editor
Office of Communications, Wagner College
One Campus Road, Staten Island, NY 10301
laura.barlament@wagner.edu



Upon the Hill

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



A Very Special Class

The College inducted 632 new alumni, including Richard and Carin Guarasci

AT THE 2019 COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY, Wagner College bid farewell not only to the 630 students who had earned their bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, but also to President Guarasci and his wife, Carin Guarasci.

Both Guarascis received honorary doctorates from the College, and Richard served as the keynote speaker. He retired in June as Wagner's longest-serving president and was named president emeritus by the Board of Trustees.

Speaking for the class of 2019, business major Kenya Z. Hyman described the growth that she had experienced and observed in her fellow students during her years at Wagner.

"The people who started this journey have only become more proficient, bright, and independent versions of themselves," she said.

Public policy major Daniel S. Smith also spoke on behalf of the class. He noted that he transferred to Wagner from a conservatory because he wanted a well-rounded education.

"Taking classes that are outside of your comfort zone and your personal interests opens your eyes to different ideas and concepts that you otherwise would have never approached. Not only that, but

THE NEWEST ALUMNI

President Emeritus Richard Guarasci H'19 and Carin Guarasci H'19 (left) received honorary degrees at Commencement. Kenya Z. Hyman '19 (top right) and Daniel S. Smith (bottom right) spoke on behalf of the class of 2019.

{ CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE }



First the Facts . . .

38

PARTNERS IN THE
PORT RICHMOND PARTNERSHIP

20

WAGNER FACULTY APPOINTED
PORT RICHMOND FELLOWS

{CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE}

it drastically alters your life trajectory for the better,” he said.

Richard and Carin Guarasci came to Wagner in 1997, when he was hired as provost. He was named president in 2002. Carin led a program called New Educators at Wagner, which provided mentoring and professional development for early-career teachers.

“I know that we will continue to be touched by the memories of the wonderful experiences we have had here, and of the wonderful people with whom we have spent time,” Carin said.

Richard spoke to the graduates about the elements of success — time management, openness to new ideas, problem-solving, and more — that they acquired through the Wagner Plan for the Practical Liberal Arts. He led the creation of this curriculum more than 20 years ago.

He also noted how serendipity shapes a person’s life. “You get to take advantage of luck, chance, the big opportunity, if you have prepared yourself first to recognize it, and, secondly, if you have built the habits, knowledge, and skills to succeed when it arrives,” he said. “My message is that you are prepared. You have the right stuff. You have acquired more skills and good work habits than you realize.”

In conclusion, he said, “I will think of you often; and, in some way, we will be together, rooting each other on.”



Watch all of the commencement speeches and see the photos at wagner.edu/newsroom/commencement-2019.



Sharing the Joy

Wagner honors Beverly Hoehne Whipple '62, a nurse and a scientist

BEVERLY HOEHNE WHIPPLE '62 received an honorary doctorate from her undergraduate alma mater this spring. She, in turn, gave back to the College a significant gift to advance nursing research at Wagner.

A professor emerita of Rutgers University, Whipple earned a bachelor’s in nursing from Wagner and a Ph.D. in psychobiology, with a major in neurophysiology, from Rutgers. She is renowned for her work on women’s health and sexual physiology, described in more than 250 books and scholarly papers. One book she co-authored, *The G Spot and Other Discoveries About Human Sexuality*, has been translated into 23 languages.

The honorary doctorate was presented at the Evelyn L. Spiro School of Nursing’s pinning and candle lighting ceremony, an annual pre-commencement program that inducts the new class into the nursing profession.

NURSING PRIDE Trustees Aletta Kipp Diamond '65 H'15 and Kim Spiro presented Beverly Whipple’s honorary degree.

Whipple spoke to the class about her career and the importance of nursing research.

“I’m sure you know that the public has rated nursing as the most honest and ethical profession in the past 16 years, so we are all proud to be part of the nursing profession,” she said. She has been a nurse educator and researcher for about 40 years and has spoken about her research in 93 countries.

“I want to share with you all the joy and fulfillment I have had by being part of research projects that had positive effects on people’s health. I encourage each of you to think about research questions as you are advancing the nursing needs of your patients.”

Whipple has made a gift to the Spiro School of Nursing to open new possibilities for research, especially for master’s and doctoral nursing students. The funds will be used to create and equip a cutting-edge space that caters to their needs for an individual and group research facility.

...Then
the Quiz!



How many more college degrees will Wagner help Staten Islanders earn by 2025? ANSWER ON PAGE 11

'He Was a Walking Smile'

Tyamonee Johnson '18 M'19
remembered at commencement

IN A WRENCHING MOMENT of the 2019 commencement ceremony, the parents and daughter of Tyamonee "T" Johnson '18 M'19 came to the stage to accept his master's degree, awarded posthumously.

Johnson had completed his bachelor's degree in business and one semester of his master's degree in accounting. He was also a key member of the Seahawks football team. But on the last weekend of 2018, when Johnson was at home with his family in Fort Washington, Maryland, for the winter break, he was shot and killed in nearby Oxon Hill.

On January 2, the Prince George's County Police Department arrested a 21-year-old man and charged him with first- and second-degree murder.

Johnson's death tore a great hole in the hearts of his family and his many friends at Wagner. It was a tragic loss of a life with untold potential for good.

The day he was killed, he could have been on a ski vacation with his parents, Thierno and Adrienne Johnson. But, he turned down the invitation. "He told us he needed to



UNTOLD POTENTIAL Tyamonee Johnson received his bachelor's degree in 2018 (above). At commencement 2019 (below), President Guarasci presented his master's degree posthumously to his parents, Adrienne and Thierno Johnson, and his baby daughter, Lauryn.

stay home and work, because he had the best shift on his valet job that weekend," recalls Adrienne.

At age 22, Tyamonee Johnson had embraced his responsibilities to his beloved baby daughter, Lauryn, and fiancée, Diamond Lyles. His desire to provide for them guided his work ethic.

A multi-sport athlete at the Bullis School in Potomac, Maryland, Tyamonee Johnson was recruited to play football at Wagner in 2014. At Wagner, Tyamonee became known as, simply, "T." Head football coach Jason Houghtaling remembers him as filled with energy and enthusiasm. "He had a positive influence on everyone," Houghtaling says. "He was caring. He was compassionate. He was competitive. He was loyal. He was respectful."

Johnson began his college career with an interest in music and arts administration, but then gravitated toward business and accounting. Business professor Peg Horan remembers him

as "a very smart student" who was quiet, but was ready with a clever quip when the occasion called for it.

She recommended him and another student for an internship with the Staten Island District Attorney's office, where he was exposed to the field of forensic accounting. He loved the work and hoped to pursue it as a career. And his supervisors were enthusiastic about him. "The feedback I got was, 'Love them, send me more students like those,'" says Horan.

Henry '71 and Beth '71 Cruz became close to Johnson through their work with MOVE Beyond the Bench, a career and leadership training program.

"The affection and respect that everybody had for Tyamonee was unmistakable," says Henry Cruz. "He was a walking smile. He looked for the good in everything. I never doubted he would be successful, because he was curious, he was passionate, he accepted responsibility, and he never stopped smiling."

Quote Unquote

“Faith is ... an ongoing source of tension.
Faith should be a source of challenge.
It should not be comfortable.”



Abraham Unger,
Professor and Rabbi

FROM “JEWISH
PUBLIC THEOLOGY,”
JEWISH STANDARD,
FEB. 28



IN 2009, Wagner College signed a five-year agreement with organizations serving a single neighborhood in Staten Island, thus inaugurating the Port Richmond Partnership. The idea was to connect Wagner students and faculty to this community, giving students hands-on learning opportunities while also building long-term relationships that would benefit Port Richmond in a deep and sustainable way.

Ten years later, these relationships are still growing and thriving, positive changes are happening, and the partnership continues to evolve with new approaches and possibilities.

The Port Richmond Partnership focuses on school improvement, economic growth, health care enhancement, and immigration reform. The Center for Leadership and

development, health concerns, gender and race discrimination, and other issues faced by Port Richmond and the rest of Staten Island.

One session, for example, showcased the film project *Conversations on the Avenue*. Kathleen Sforza, economic and community development coordinator with the Northfield Community Local Development Corporation, reached out to Wagner for help with showcasing the neighborhood’s strengths and assets. Philip Cartelli, assistant professor of film, assigned his students to produce short documentary films with interviews of Port Richmond business owners and community leaders. These films are featured on the website discoverportrichmond.com.

“It fulfilled a need I had, and it was a great learning experience for the students,” Sforza said.

“People say that Port Richmond is a bad neighborhood, but it’s not. You guys are bringing the light back on Port Richmond,” said Yareli Lazaro, a member of the La Colmena workers cooperative, another Port Richmond organization in the partnership.

The Port Richmond Partnership has developed a strong focus on schools, promoting college readiness and civic engagement among local students from elementary through high school. Wagner has established leadership academies within three schools – PS 21, IS 51, and Port Richmond High School – where these students are mentored by Wagner students, faculty, and staff.

“IS 51 is really positively impacted by the relationship it has with Wagner College,” says Principal Nick Mele. “The staff and students of Wagner College interact with my students, and that makes college into something they think is attainable.”

A Thriving Partnership

The Port Richmond Partnership celebrates its 10th anniversary

Community Engagement is the hub for Wagner activity that feeds the partnership. Arlette Cepeda serves as the CLCE director, while English professor Alison Arant was recently appointed as its faculty director. Sarah Scott, dean of integrated learning, oversees the center.

“In the coming year, we will be developing new projects and initiatives, and broadening our reach in the Staten Island community,” says Scott. “We will also be focused on engaging even more faculty and students in the partnership.”

This year’s IMPACT Summit and Civic Engagement Recognition Day, held in April, celebrated the Port Richmond Partnership’s 10th anniversary.

“Few institutions have been so focused and intentional to achieve measurable results on communities and in students,” said keynote speaker Barbara A. Holland, a prominent advocate of community engagement in higher education. “Wagner College is recognized widely as a leader in this field.”

Throughout the day, students and faculty from Wagner and other local colleges, as well as community members, gave presentations about their work on improving education, economic



UNITED Faculty and administrators meet at Wagner with representatives of Project Hospitality, Richmond University Medical Center, Port Richmond High School, PS 21, IS 51, the Borough President’s Office, and 30,000 Degrees.

WHAT'S INSIDE

The Nursing Resource Center

WAGNER NURSING STUDENTS get realistic hands-on experience in the Hi Fidelity Simulation Lab of the Nursing Resource Center. Catherine Boccanfuso '81 M'91, who is board certified in medical/surgical nursing as well as simulation certified, is director of the center. Michelle Conrad, Jamil Jefferson, and Elizabeth Higgins are three of the students in the Med Surg II Simulation Lab. Simulations are used across the nursing curriculum, allowing students to apply their learning and employ real decision-making in a safe environment.

1 The students read the monitor, administer treatment using a realistic medical dispensing unit, and practice their CPR technique.

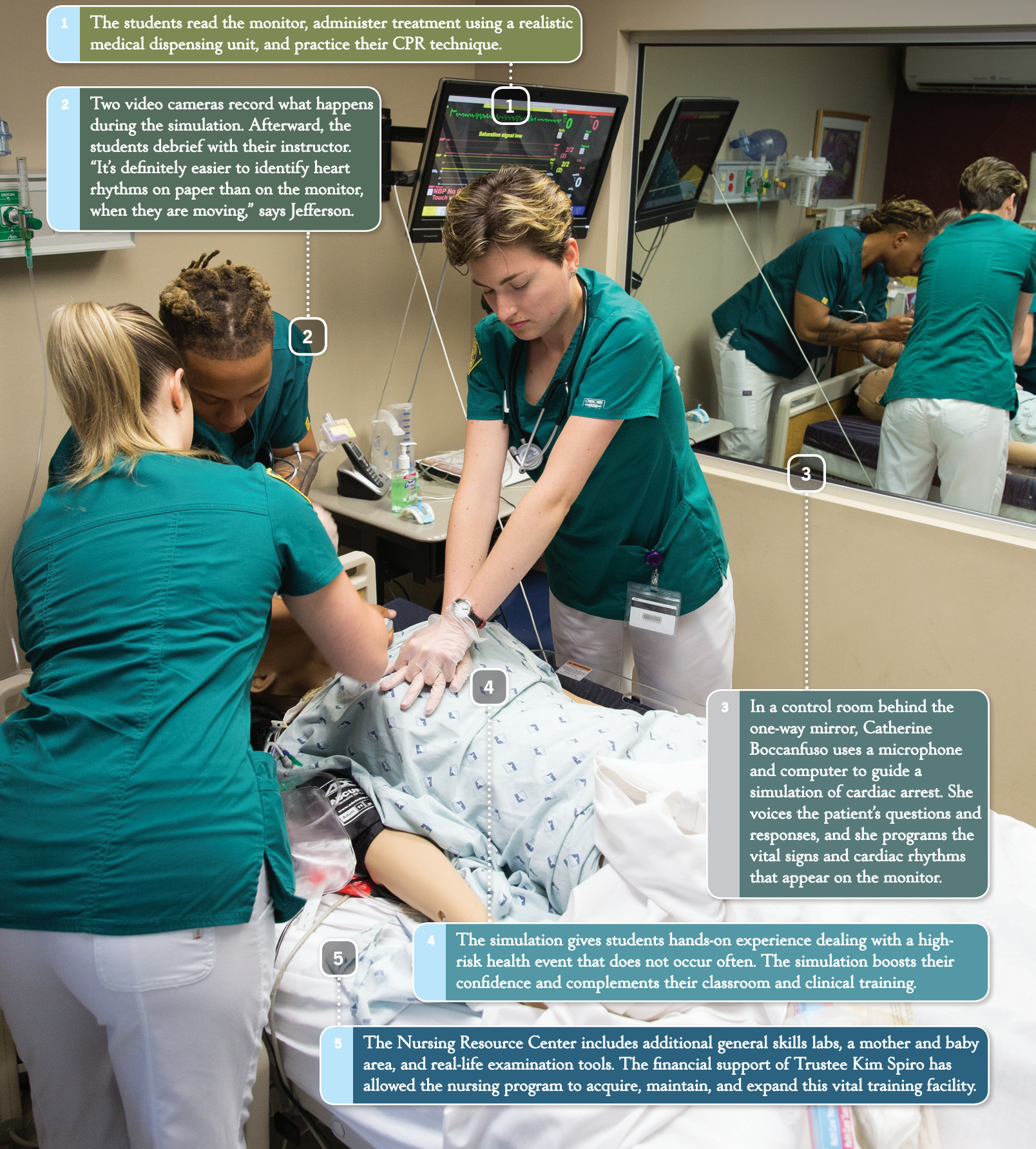
2 Two video cameras record what happens during the simulation. Afterward, the students debrief with their instructor. "It's definitely easier to identify heart rhythms on paper than on the monitor, when they are moving," says Jefferson.

3 In a control room behind the one-way mirror, Catherine Boccanfuso uses a microphone and computer to guide a simulation of cardiac arrest. She voices the patient's questions and responses, and she programs the vital signs and cardiac rhythms that appear on the monitor.

4 The simulation gives students hands-on experience dealing with a high-risk health event that does not occur often. The simulation boosts their confidence and complements their classroom and clinical training.

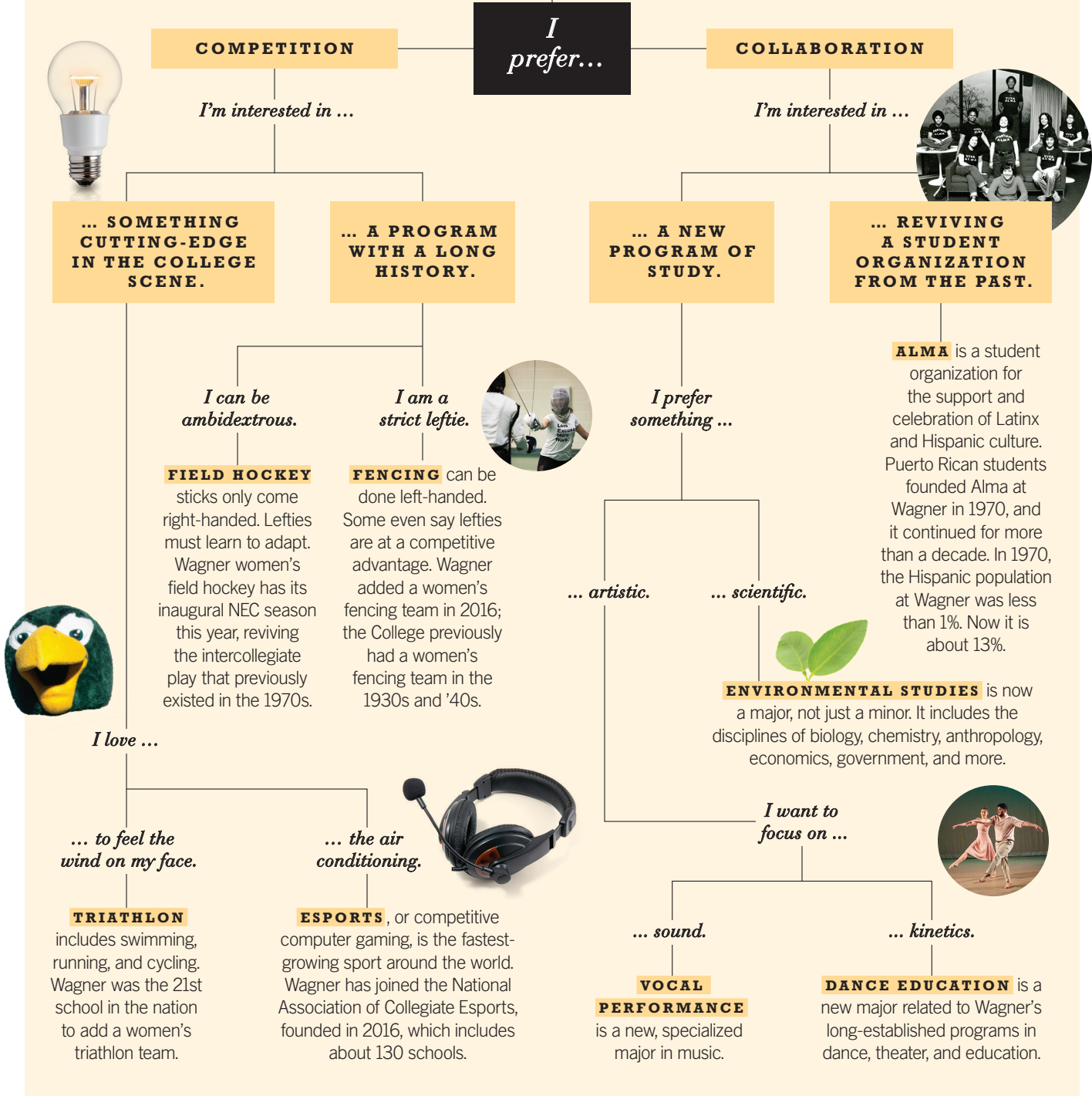
5

5 The Nursing Resource Center includes additional general skills labs, a mother and baby area, and real-life examination tools. The financial support of Trustee Kim Spiro has allowed the nursing program to acquire, maintain, and expand this vital training facility.



PICK YOUR program

Wagner has an array of new programs for students during the 2019–20 school year. What would you choose if you were a student today?



The Answer
QUIZ QUESTION
ON PAGE 7

Wagner is working with St. John's and the College of Staten Island to increase the number of degrees earned by 30,000 (see 30000degrees.org).



Margaret “Peg” Horan joined the Wagner business administration faculty in 1980. Over nearly four decades, she taught and mentored accounting students, many of whom have gone on to successful careers. She advised student organizations, served on a number of College committees, directed the graduate program in accounting, and brought her knowledge to the general public through a weekly column that was published in the *Staten Island Advance*. She served as the faculty marshal for the 2017 commencement.



Gordon McEwan, who served as a professor and chair of the Department of Anthropology, began teaching at Wagner in 1999. He is an expert on the Incas and earlier empires in Peru, and has four decades of field experience in that country's Valley of Cuzco. He appeared in documentary films shown on the



History Channel and Discovery Channel, and was featured in *National Geographic* magazine. He also gave Wagner students the opportunity to gain hands-on field experience by traveling with him to Peru. He authored or co-authored six books and numerous articles about the Wari and the Incas. He earned his B.A. in anthropology from Texas A&M University and his Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Texas at Austin.

Bill Murphy began teaching art part-time at Wagner in 1984, joining the full-time faculty in 1994 while earning his MFA from Vermont College. He studied art at Brooklyn College, the School of Visual Arts, and the Art Students League. A Staten Island native, he is known for his drawings, etchings, watercolors, and paintings based on Staten Island settings or other New York City locations. His work is held in significant collections including the British Museum, the New York Public Library, the New-York Historical Society, the Library of Congress, and the Brooklyn Museum. He painted the official portrait of Norman Smith, the College's 17th president.



Ian Wise joined the faculty of the Nicolais School of Business in 2014, after a successful career in the business world. He offered Wagner students the perspective that practitioners can bring to the classroom, enriching their experience at Wagner.



Art Never Ends

Art professor Bill Murphy may be retiring from teaching, but he's not retiring from art-making. During the summer of 2019, he mounted a show of his recent works in the Union gallery.

The show included a couple of self-portraits. One of them, “Self-Portrait, Summer,” an atypically color-rich piece for Murphy, is in acrylic paint.

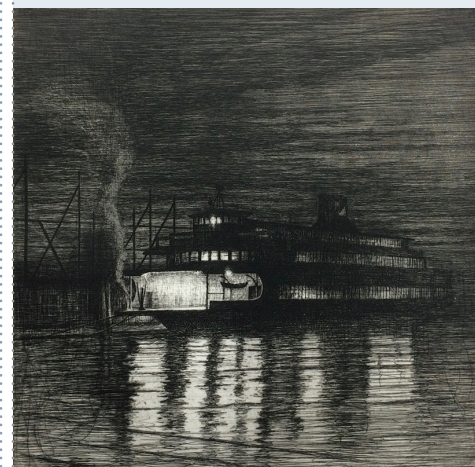
“I do self-portraits often enough,” Murphy says, “probably average one or two a year. ... Last summer, I started painting more, and I decided I wanted to try something straight on, painting from life.”

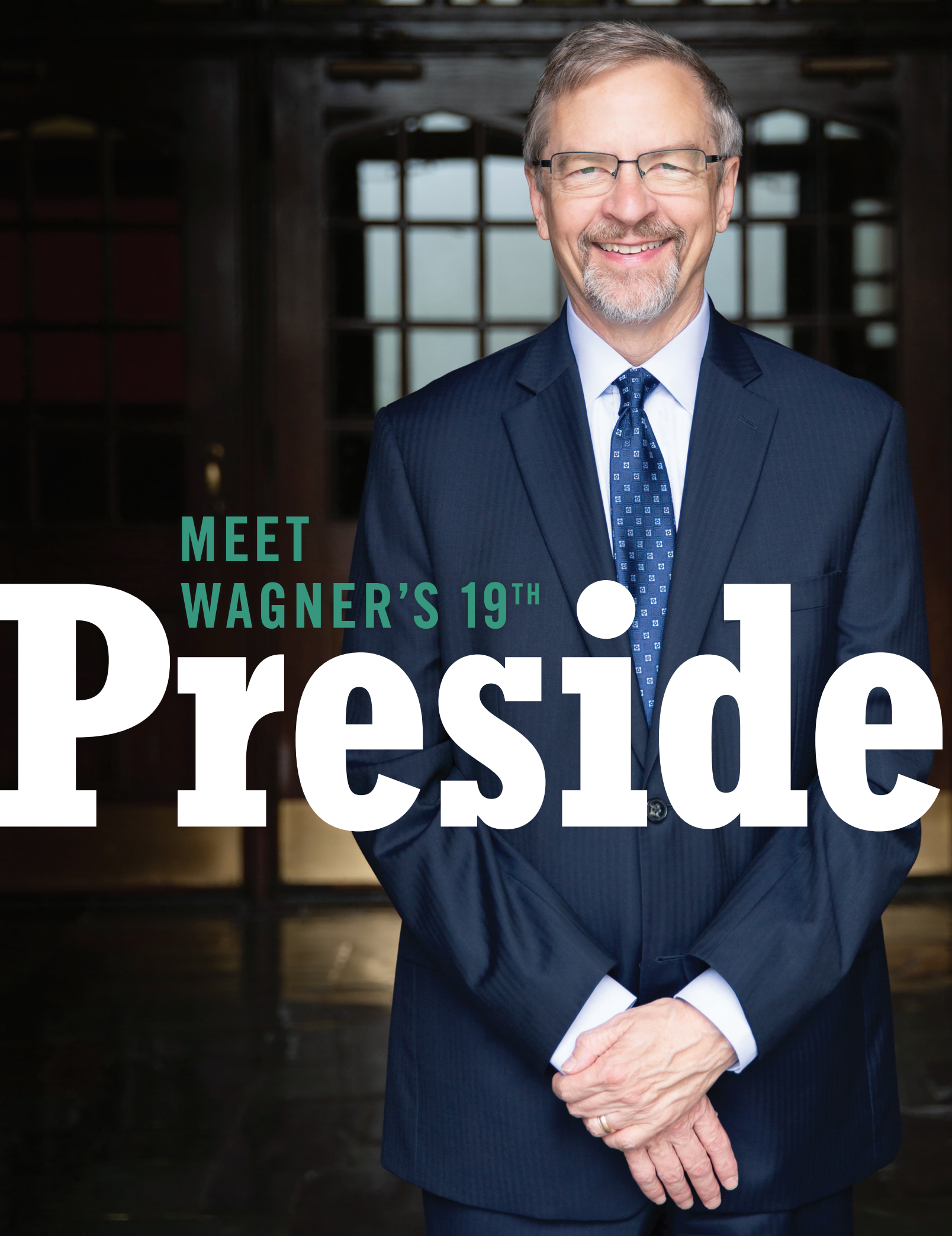
He limited his color choices to the black, white, red, and yellow ochre of the Zorn palette, named for the Swedish artist who popularized it, Anders Zorn.

“From those four colors, you can get a great variation of color,” Murphy says. “I played around with it last year, to paint portraits, flesh tones.”

Murphy also dipped into old imagery to create something new, with his etching “The Nightboat.” He first drew this scene for a commission in the late 1980s.

It shows one of the Staten Island ferry boats in the Kennedy class, all of which are scheduled to be retired next year. In this version, Murphy used lines to create a tonal image with deep blacks and gradations of light.





MEET
WAGNER'S 19TH

President

nt

Summer, 1973. Opelika, Alabama, population 25,000. A 15-year-old boy named Joel Martin lies on his bed, escaping the afternoon heat in the air conditioned house. This boy is obsessed with reading, with learning, with self-improvement. He has just found a window into a different world. He is reading *The New York Review of Books*.

Joel Martin,

A LEADER WHO STARTS WITH CURIOSITY AND RESPECT

By LAURA BARLAMENT *Photography* DEBORAH FEINGOLD

While he reads, he circles all of the words he doesn't know. There are a lot of them: "venality," "umbratile," "concinnity."

His older brother, Stan, is home from college, and he stops at Joel's door. "Hey, what are you doing?" he asks.

"Trying to improve my vocabulary," Joel replies.

It seems like Joel W. Martin was destined to become a professor. Opelika, his hometown, was small, but it was near a major center of learning, Auburn University. Martin loved school. He loved to learn, not just from books and magazines, but in the fields and forests, turning over logs and rocks to see what he could find. He also strove to hone his athletic skills, playing baseball in his home's front yard and shooting hoops obsessively on the driveway.



HOOP DREAMS

Joel Martin (#4) gives the victory sign. His team, the Opelika Tigers, won the local league championship.

Martin attended Alabama's premier liberal arts college, Birmingham-Southern, winning a competitive scholarship and majoring in philosophy. He attended the Harvard Divinity School for a master's degree. He earned a Ph.D. in the history of religions from Duke University.

But Martin always felt a need to connect his scholarship with current social problems. By following his instinct to use scholarly work to make a difference in today's world, he also discovered he had a talent for academic administration.

All of which has led him to Wagner College, home of "the practical liberal arts," to serve as its 19th president.

Family Heritage

MARTIN'S PARENTS, Bill and Patty, grew up in farming families in rural Arkansas. Theirs was a hardscrabble life in financial terms, but rich in community and family relationships. Besides being a very hard worker, Bill was also a gifted baseball player. He even had a short professional career as a pitcher, and it was baseball that took Bill and Patty to Opelika, Alabama. He played for two seasons for

the Opelika Owls of the Georgia-Alabama League, and when that ended, they decided to stay.

Bill worked in tough, dirty jobs for a paper company and a tire plant. Still, he told his son, it was easier than farming. While working, Bill also managed to earn his bachelor's and master's degrees in physical education from Auburn University. He held jobs as a teacher and a gas station attendant. Patty oversaw the household until later in life, when she became a successful real estate agent. Bill passed away last year, but Patty is still living independently in Opelika.

Both of Martin's parents fully supported their sons' educational pursuits. Patty and her mother, in particular, loved to read. Joel's brother, Stan, became a lawyer. He practices law in Opelika and also serves as the county attorney.

Times of Tension and Integration

AS JOEL MARTIN GREW UP, school integration was finally enforced in Alabama in the late 1960s, which had resisted so long under the influence of Governor George C. Wallace.

The white community of Opelika was unusual in its response to integration. Unlike the many Alabama communities where whites abandoned public schools for (nominally) private segregation academies, a group of white citizens in Opelika published an open letter in the town newspaper declaring their allegiance to the project of public education. Martin remembers having African American teachers in junior high school. By the time Martin reached high school, black and white students were being educated together.

This experience shaped him intellectually, he says. "It was a time of learning to relate to other people when there was a lot of tension in the air, as well as a lot of face to face sharing, forming a class together, going to school together, playing sports together, being in band together. It was a very powerful experience for an adolescent in that era. I also felt like we were part of a larger movement toward building a more just society, a truly democratic society. There was a lot of positive energy in it.

"It's a disappointment to see that what looked like an emerging success got eroded over time," he adds. "That's one reason why Wagner is so important,

because it creates the opportunity for people to learn how to live in a diverse environment, and encounter people from different backgrounds.”

A Scholar With a Mission

BEYOND THE STORY of blacks and whites in North America, Martin also grew up surrounded by the traces of a history even longer and older. “In Alabama, you can’t avoid at least a dim awareness of Native American history,” Martin says. The state of Alabama, after all, is named after the people who inhabited the area until the early 19th century. Opelika is a Muskogean word that means “big swamp.”

He also remembers taking a school trip to Horseshoe Bend National Military Park, 40 miles northwest of Opelika. There, he first learned about the bloody 1814 clash between the Muskogee tribe and federal troops, which played a pivotal role in the removal of Native Americans and expansion of slave plantations. Years later, this site became the subject of his Ph.D. dissertation and first book, *Sacred Revolt: The Muskogees’ Struggle for a New World* (Beacon Press, 1991).



“[Wagner] creates the opportunity for people to learn how to live in a diverse environment, and encounter people from different backgrounds.”

The faculty at Birmingham-Southern College greatly influenced Martin’s trajectory. During his first semester, he took a philosophy seminar with O. C. Weaver Jr., a revered, longtime professor of philosophy and religion at BSC. He was assigned to teach a class on Plato to his fellow students. “By the end of that, I got hooked on philosophy, on teaching, on education,” he says. “The faculty had such an impact on me, because they were focused on the students, and you wanted to understand what they were so passionate about.”

After college, Martin thought he would follow his brother’s footsteps into the law, and he was even offered a fellowship to attend the law school at the University of Alabama. But another college mentor, religion scholar Earl F. Gossett Jr., had a connection to the Harvard Divinity School. With Gossett’s help and encouragement, he was

accepted at Harvard for a Master in Theological Studies and chose to go there instead of law school.

While deepening his knowledge of religions, Harvard still didn’t offer quite what Martin was looking for. “Studying religion for the sake of religion alone felt a little bit arid,” he says. “I needed a context, I needed something grounded. I needed a problem to deal with.”

He headed back to the South, but this time to Duke University in North Carolina. That university and the nearby University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill offer unparalleled resources for the

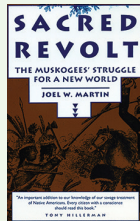
▲ OPEN DOORS

Joel Martin on the front steps of Main Hall. “Wagner is a portal to opportunity for anyone who dreams big,” he said at the presidential selection announcement.

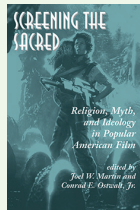
Joel Martin

BY *the* BOOK

Sacred Revolt: The Muskogees' Struggle for a New World (Beacon Press, 1991). "Every citizen with a conscience should read this book," said novelist Tony Hillerman.



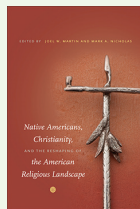
Screening the Sacred: Religion, Mythology, and Ideology in Popular American Film (Westview Press, 1995). Co-edited with Conrad Ostwalt, the essay collection uncovers the deep, implicit presence of religion in popular American films like *Rocky* and *Alien*.



The Land Looks After Us: A History of Native American Religion (Oxford UP, 2001). First published in 1999, it traces Native American religion's development from ancient burial mounds, through interactions with Europeans, and on to the modern rebirth of ancient rites and beliefs.



Native Americans, Christianity, and the Reshaping of the American Religious Landscape (University of North Carolina Press, 2010). Co-edited with Mark A. Nicholas, this collection reconsiders the history of Native American peoples' engagement with Christianity and Euro-American missionaries.



study of Southern folklore, history, and religions. "I just ate it all up, it was a smorgasbord," Martin recalls. It was the place where he was able to unite his love for the South, his concern for the problems of society, and his interests in research and scholarship.

As he considered his dissertation topic, he wanted to carve out a niche in Southern historical studies beyond the well-worn field of the Civil War. Recalling the landscape of his childhood, he looked farther back into the history of the Southern region, to the people who lived there before European colonization.

He settled upon a study of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, or Tohopeka (as it was known to the Muskogee) — from the Native Americans' perspective. What had motivated 1,000 Muskogee fighters to defy the United States, facing overwhelming odds? At least 80 percent of them died, making this battle the bloodiest for Native Americans in the history of warfare between Native Americans and the United States.

Martin used religion as a lens for understanding the Muskogee perspective. He also argued that this battle is a key to understanding United States history. It led to a treaty that opened millions of acres to the white population, enabling the creation of vast plantations and prompting the expansion of slavery.

"Telling this story was a work of passion," he writes in the preface. "I was concerned about hidden and repressed dimensions of American history, and subjugated populations and knowledges."

In 1991, the Gustavus Myers Center for the Study of Human Rights named *Sacred Revolt* to its list of Outstanding Books on the Subject of Human Rights.

Listening and Respecting

IN 1988, Martin had become a professor at the elite, historic liberal arts college Franklin and Marshall in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He taught, published articles and two more books, and became the department chair.

But in 2000, he left that job, seeking greater opportunities to make a difference in society. He moved across the country to the University of California Riverside, where a group of Native American tribes had established and generously funded the Costo Endowed Chair in American Indian Affairs, the first position of this type ever in the US. Martin was the first permanent holder of the Costo Chair.

Finding himself in an unprecedented position, as well as being an outsider in a new place and a new culture, Martin says he proceeded by showing respect, listening, and "saying yes to any invitation."

Over the next six years, he worked on a number of projects that coordinated the goals of tribal leaders with academic experts. He located historical photos and restored them to the community they came from. He developed a program to train tribal members as land development monitors, with the aim of protecting archaeological heritage and sacred sites. He established a project to preserve and revitalize the use of Native American languages. He produced a study on the impacts of gaming on tribes' economies and cultures.

“The reason I was successful working with communities where there was no trust is that I approached each community with deep respect.”



One day, he received a phone call from the university’s chancellor, France Cordova, who is now the director of the National Science Foundation. She surprised him by saying that she was looking for someone to serve as the interim dean of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences — and she wondered if he would be interested.

So began Martin’s trajectory in high-level college administration. As he said, “It wasn’t the goal; I never aspired to become the dean of a college. But, there is an arc to my journey. I was moving toward mobilizing universities and colleges to have a positive impact on society. Along the way I developed a skill set to help create coalitions around problems that matter.

“The reason I was successful working with communities where there was no trust is that I approached each community with deep respect.”

Land Grants

MARTIN WAS the interim dean at UC Riverside for two years. In 2006, he landed a permanent position as dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Martin points out that both UC Riverside and UMass Amherst are land-grant universities, founded with the purpose of bringing academic knowledge into practical service of the community. “I’m always drawn to universities that try to make a difference and have that practical side,” he says.

During his years in Amherst, Martin’s interest in the land, in the literal sense, led to an important

personal development in his life. He had always loved to garden, and he had a large property at his home in Amherst. He was also looking for ways to become more involved in the community, so he decided to start a master gardening certification program.

One Saturday, his master gardening class went on a tree tour in Childs Park in Northampton, Mass. There he encountered Jan de Ubl, a science teacher at White Brook Middle School in Easthampton, who had joined the tour seeking more knowledge that she could share with her students.

He asked her out for coffee. On their second date, they went to the Garlic and Arts Festival in Orange, Massachusetts. They married in 2015.

Becoming a President

LISTENING TO OTHERS, showing respect, and bringing groups together are qualities that many people have seen in Martin, as he continued serving in academic leadership positions.

Jim Staros, then-provost of UMass Amherst, was impressed with Martin’s work as a dean. When Staros needed to hire a vice provost for academic personnel in 2010, he recruited Martin. “He is a gifted negotiator, because he’s a great listener,” Staros says. He highlights Martin’s excellent work with a major donor, who made a \$2.8 million gift to establish the Endowed Chair in Nonviolent Direct Action and Civil Resistance. Then, Martin led an international search to fill the position. “This is a guy who has presidency in him,” Staros thought at the time.

JOINING HANDS

Joel Martin joins in a Muskogee stomp dance in Loachapoka, Alabama. In his book *Sacred Revolt*, Martin wrote about the tribe’s history and its removal, 200 years ago, from Alabama to Oklahoma.



remembers what Martin said at his inaugural town hall as provost in 2014. “He made a comment that the intersection of aspiration and realism is where strategy lives. I thought that was a very insightful perspective on academic leadership, and also a very helpful way to frame the process of strategic development at the college and among the faculty.”

In 2017, Joel and Jan Martin joined the Presidential Vocation and Institutional Mission program of the Council of Independent Colleges.

Among their mentors in that program were Joel and Trudy Cunningham. Joel Cunningham retired after serving as president of two liberal arts colleges, Susquehanna University and the University of the South.

“Joel Martin is a superb listener, a person who cares deeply about students, faculty and staff and is eager to support the development of individuals to achieve their full potential,” Cunningham says. “He will bring a good-humored, thoughtful ability to find direction from listening to others, helping the College to move ahead smoothly and well.”

For his part, Martin defines his work at Franklin and Marshall as “infusing some of the land grant DNA” of making a difference to society into a traditional liberal arts college. Wagner’s “practical liberal arts” focus, therefore, seemed like the perfect fit for him, a place where his lifelong interests in scholarship and service to society are deeply intertwined.

“We have found our family,” Martin said to the Wagner community on the day that the trustees announced his selection as president-elect. “One of the faculty members on the search committee even said that to us when we walked in today. She said, ‘Welcome home.’ And I felt like that was the absolute truth. We feel that way about Wagner.”

“What do we want to do in our first 100 days at Wagner?” he continued. “We want to get to know each and every one of you. ... Working together, I don’t think there’s anything we can’t do.” ■

▲ **A GREAT LISTENER**

Kyle Viti '20 and Winona Scheff '20, the 2019 freshman orientation co-coordinators, are among those helping President Martin get to know Wagner.

But, before Martin got to that point, he returned to Franklin and Marshall College in 2014 to serve as the provost and dean of the faculty. F&M’s president at the time was Dan Porterfield, who is now serving as president of the Aspen Institute.

Porterfield says Martin stood out as a provost candidate for several reasons: “his extraordinary vision for the importance of higher education, his career of exemplary scholarship, his record of distinction as an academic administrative leader, and his genial, approachable personality.”

Porterfield highlights several successful initiatives that Martin led at Franklin and Marshall: the master planning for a visual arts quad and construction of a visual arts center; an effort to diversify the faculty and make pedagogy more inclusive, funded by an \$800,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation;

“We want to get to know each and every one of you. Working together, I don’t think there’s anything we can’t do.”

and the establishment of a Center for Lancaster to develop research partnerships between the college and its home community.

“It’s exciting to work with an academic leader who’s great at getting things done,” says Porterfield. He still

‘Involved and Supportive’

Jan Martin brings valuable expertise to the new presidential team

By Laura Barlament

WHILE PRESIDENT MARTIN has spent his career serving higher education, his wife, Jan Martin, is also an accomplished educator. She brings deep experience in K–12 teaching, specializing in science.

In addition, her personal warmth has immediately endeared her to members of the Wagner community.

“The first thing I noticed about Joel Martin was that he cared and came from a genuine place. It was clear he wanted to help,” said Dan Hughes ’19, the student member of the presidential search committee. “And Jan is, honestly, phenomenal. She did a fantastic job of stamping that approval for us.”

Jan Martin grew up in several locations, including Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York. She graduated

potential is released, the possibilities are boundless. That drives and inspires me.”

Most recently in her career, she has been organizing extraordinary, enriching experiences for students in York, Pennsylvania, and the surrounding region. She coordinated Penn State York’s annual Pathways to Your Future Conference, which aims to inspire girls to study

the sciences. She also helped lead a STEAM Academy — an enrichment program focused on science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics — within a York public school. A couple of years ago, this program became a full-fledged STEAM public school. Jan Martin led science teacher training, engaging students in project-based learning while also forging dynamic connections to community organizations and companies.

Jan Martin has three children who are all young professionals: Alyssa, an investment banker, and Liz, who works in private wealth management, both in Manhattan; and Michael, who enlisted in the Air Force.

“We really believe in Wagner College’s mission and promise.”

from high school in Pittsford, New York — a significant location in Wagner history. Pittsford is the Rochester suburb where the local Lutheran pastors held their initial meetings to plan the school that became Wagner College.

She attended the University of Pennsylvania for her bachelor’s degree in biology, continuing on to attain a master’s in science education. Then, she started her career as a science teacher at West Irondequoit High School in Rochester, New York. She ventured from there to teach on the Navajo reservation, where she lived with a Navajo code-talker.

Jan Martin discovered her love of teaching during her years at Penn. Since then, she has taught science in elementary, middle, and high schools.

“Every level I’ve loved,” she says. “I’ve loved to explore the potential of children. I feel like every child needs champions, and every child has extraordinary potential. Once their

Having learned to cook from her grandmothers, she enjoys trying new recipes, and especially baking. She says the term “procrastibaking,” which the *New York Times* food writer Julia Moskin has defined as “the practice of baking something completely unnecessary, with the intention of avoiding ‘real’ work” — perfectly fits her, because she enjoys using baking to bring joy to others and celebrate milestones in their lives.

She plans to put her “procrastibaking” experience to good use at Wagner. “My role right now is to get to know the Wagner campus and the people, so that I can be involved and supportive,” she says. “I’m there to support Joel and his initiatives. We really believe in Wagner College’s mission and promise.”



Of her THEATRICAL lineage

THE FIRST TIME Adrienne Kennedy submitted her one-act play, *Funnyhouse of a Negro*, to the Stanley Drama Award competition at Wagner College, she didn't win. Her groundbreaking play, which dealt with racism's effect on the African American female identity, was part of her application for Edward Albee's playwriting workshop at Wagner College in 1962. She lost out to Albee's boyfriend and fellow playwright, Terrence McNally.

The next year, however, she won, and it was a big deal — for her and for Black female playwrights to come, like me.

Fast forward about 45 years. I'm sitting in the Public Theater, watching Adrienne Kennedy's *Mom, How Did You Meet The Beatles*, a piece she had co-written with her son Adam P. Kennedy. I had just become a member of the Public's inaugural Emerging Writers Group. The staff at the theater is very excited about this production. It's the first thing Ms. Kennedy has done in a long time. I can feel in everyone's energy how important this is. I can see it in the joy and tension in their faces. It's important, though I don't know exactly why. So, I go, even though I'm very sick with a cold.

And I didn't get it — not the play, not why it was done at the Public, not why everyone had been so enthusiastically terrified. I didn't know who Ms. Kennedy was. But then, I didn't fully know who I was as a playwright either. At least, not at the time. I know now. I am of her theatrical lineage. And writing this essay has been like going through family history.

TOP: The Duchess of Hapsburg is a character in Adrienne Kennedy's *Funnyhouse of a Negro*, played in this 2016 Signature Theatre production by January LaVoy. **BOTTOM:** Pia Wilson's *Back to the Real* was produced by Crossroads Theatre Company in 2018, featuring Aaliyah Habeeb as Yolanda Keyes, Regan Sims as Mandy Locke, Landon G. Woodson as David Keyes, and Victoria Janicki as Katrina.

ADRIENNE KENNEDY AND WAGNER COLLEGE

WHEN MS. KENNEDY won the Stanley Drama Award, it was only a few years old. It had been established in 1957 by Staten Island philanthropist Alma Guyon Timolat Stanley to encourage and support aspiring playwrights, first through the New York City Writers Conference at Wagner, and then through the Wagner College theater department, which still administers the award annually.

In 1957, Ms. Kennedy was a 26-year-old wife and mother. She had finished studying creative writing at Columbia University the year before. By 1960, Ms. Kennedy and her husband were living abroad in Africa, and then later Italy, with their sons Adam and Joe Jr. What Ms. Kennedy saw and experienced in Ghana inspired her to write *Funnyhouse*. She and the family returned to the States in October 1961 with the play in tow.

Edward Albee led the playwriting workshop at the New York City Writers Conference, a 10-day program held each summer at Wagner College for aspiring fiction writers, poets, and playwrights. He exercised a magnetic force on Adrienne Kennedy and many others who entered his orbit. Decades later, Kennedy wrote of Albee, "He affected me like a tremendous narcotic ... his eyes ... his voice ... fame ... his wealth, his fierce celebrated work, I was spellbound [...]. He became the center of the Earth, his promise to produce *Funnyhouse* (it took two years) made me as crazy as anything had before or has since."

Albee, along with Richard Barr and Clinton Wilder, produced *Funnyhouse of a Negro* in January 1964 at New York City's East End Theater. It closed after 50 performances. Most critics and audiences didn't get the one-act play, which drew from Ms. Kennedy's African and European heritage. Henry Louis Gates Jr. describes it as an exploration of a "black woman's psyche, driven by personal and inherited psychosis, at the root of which is the ambiguously double failure of both rapacious white society and its burdened yet also distorted victims."



when **Wagner College gave the Stanley Drama Award to Adrienne Kennedy in 1963, it paved the way for future playwrights. Like me.** BY PIA WILSON '93

The critics didn't see what the judges for the 1963 Stanley Award — actor Shelly Winters, playwright Edward Albee, Living Theatre co-director Julian Beck, and Wagner College drama professor John Hruby — saw in her work. They didn't see the genius. It didn't sound like other plays. There was symbolism that they didn't, or perhaps couldn't, understand.

Time carried on.



KENNEDY'S PLACE IN THEATRICAL HISTORY

OVER THE COURSE of the next 55 years, Ms. Kennedy earned a reputation as a strong, poetic writer. *Village Voice* theater critic Michael Feingold wrote in 1995, "With [Samuel] Beckett gone, Adrienne Kennedy is probably the boldest artist now writing for the theater." Hilton Als, writing about Ms. Kennedy for *The New Yorker* in 2018, characterized her body of work as "shimmering" and "original."

"Taken together, Kennedy's twenty-odd plays form a long and startling fugue, composed of language that is impactful and impacted but ever-moving, ever-shifting, as her protagonists, usually women of color, stand on the precipice of disaster, madness, or loss," Als writes.

Funnyhouse is about a young woman named Sarah who is obsessed with whiteness. She's going mad with this obsession. The surreal play takes place completely in Sarah's mind, with historical figures like Queen Victoria and Jesus manifesting different aspects of Sarah's racial makeup. The audience can feel Sarah's pain, confusion, and anxiety as a light-skinned Black woman.

Wagner Literary Magazine published *Funnyhouse* in 1964. Willard Maas, who had been director of the New York City Writers Conference in 1963, when Kennedy won the Stanley, published the play in full in issue No. 4. (Fun side note: Maas and his wife, experimental filmmaker Marie Menken, were the inspiration for George and Martha in Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*)

In the African American community, **colorism**

Ms. Kennedy was active in the Black Arts Movement and was a founding member of the Women's Theatre Council in 1971. Her work was the feminine counterpoint to the masculine force that sparked the movement. As important as Amiri Baraka was to the movement by strongly rejecting racism and oppression against Black people, Adrienne Kennedy was important in her representations of Black women as vulnerable, sensitive human beings. Her plays laid bare the oppression they endure not only as Black people but as women. In 1964, Ms. Kennedy's *Funnyhouse of a Negro* received the Obie Award for Distinguished Play, while Amiri Baraka's *Dutchman* was named the Obie Best American Play.

DISCOVERING MY LITERARY LINEAGE

BY THE TIME I arrived on Wagner's campus, the literary magazine was defunct. We brought it back — *The Nimbus*, as it was called then. At least, that's the way I remember it. I published a couple of poems in *The Nimbus* under a ridiculous pen name that I'm too embarrassed to share.

For an English major who was plotting her path to becoming the next great American novelist, working on the literary magazine made sense. It's funny, though, how fate plays a hand: I really loved my major, but I hung out with so many theater majors that people thought I was one. Maybe all that love for theater sunk into my subconscious, into my soul, and after more than a decade, that love fashioned me into a playwright.

I'm doing all right by most accounts. I've won awards. My work has been produced. I was a Traveling Master for the Dramatists Guild last year! Most importantly, at least to the nerd in me, my work has been taught at the collegiate level. Earlier this year, students in the Black Arts Movement class at Franklin and Marshall College studied my work alongside that of Spike Lee and Jean-Michel Basquiat.

The students in the class linked the themes and techniques used in my plays with works created in the Black Arts Movement of the '60s and '70s. They did not look specifically at Ms. Kennedy's work, but having re-read some of her work these past few weeks, I can see the connection.

Much of Ms. Kennedy's work — like *Funnyhouse* — explores the Black cultural and historical experience in America. I, too, write about the American identity: what does it mean to be an American; who gets to call themselves American and why; what does it mean to be a Black woman in America.

To convey these ideas, I have even drawn on literary techniques similar to those found in Ms. Kennedy's plays. For example, *Funnyhouse*

is a legacy of slavery and a **wound** that may take a hundred more years to heal.

employs masks to subvert the legacy of minstrel shows. I likewise use masks in the beginning of my play, *Black Bee*, for the same purpose.

Another similarity between Ms. Kennedy's work and mine is that I explore not only racism but also colorism, which is the discrimination within communities of color, all around the world, based on skin color, with light skin being valued more highly than dark skin. In the African American community, colorism is a legacy of slavery and a wound that may take a hundred more years to heal.

My play *Back to the Real*, produced last year by Crossroads Theatre Company in New Jersey, took a close look at colorism through the framework of the relationships between two dark-skinned siblings and the two light-skinned women they are dating. One of the enduring ways colorism is exhibited in the African American community is through grading our hair. There is "good hair," which is closer to Caucasian hair, and "bad hair," which is associated with an African heritage.

Mandy, one of the light-skinned characters, introduces this notion in a dialogue that quickly turns into a dispute with dark-skinned Yolanda and light-skinned Katrina.

MANDY

Good hair, though. Automatically means Black hair is bad. It isn't. It's actually very delicate.

YOLANDA

It's not treated that way. Y'all have got good hair.

KATRINA

Why? Because our great, great, great grandmothers were raped more often.

MANDY

Well, I wasn't going to go there, but —

KATRINA

Why not? That's what so-called good hair is. Closer to white. And you know how we got so close to white? That's how.

YOLANDA

God bless your ancestors and mine, but let's not pretend y'all haven't had it easier than me and my nappy hair.

MANDY

I saw somewhere that our great-grandmothers' trauma are in our DNA. They leave little scars.

KATRINA

I'm not saying we didn't have it easier.

YOLANDA

Sounded like it. You don't know what it's like to be a dark-skinned Black woman in America.

KATRINA

Don't we though?

YOLANDA

What?

KATRINA

We hear it from you all the time. Look at how you just tried to shut down our pain. We're Black too. Back me up, Mandy.

MANDY

Well ... I was just saying —

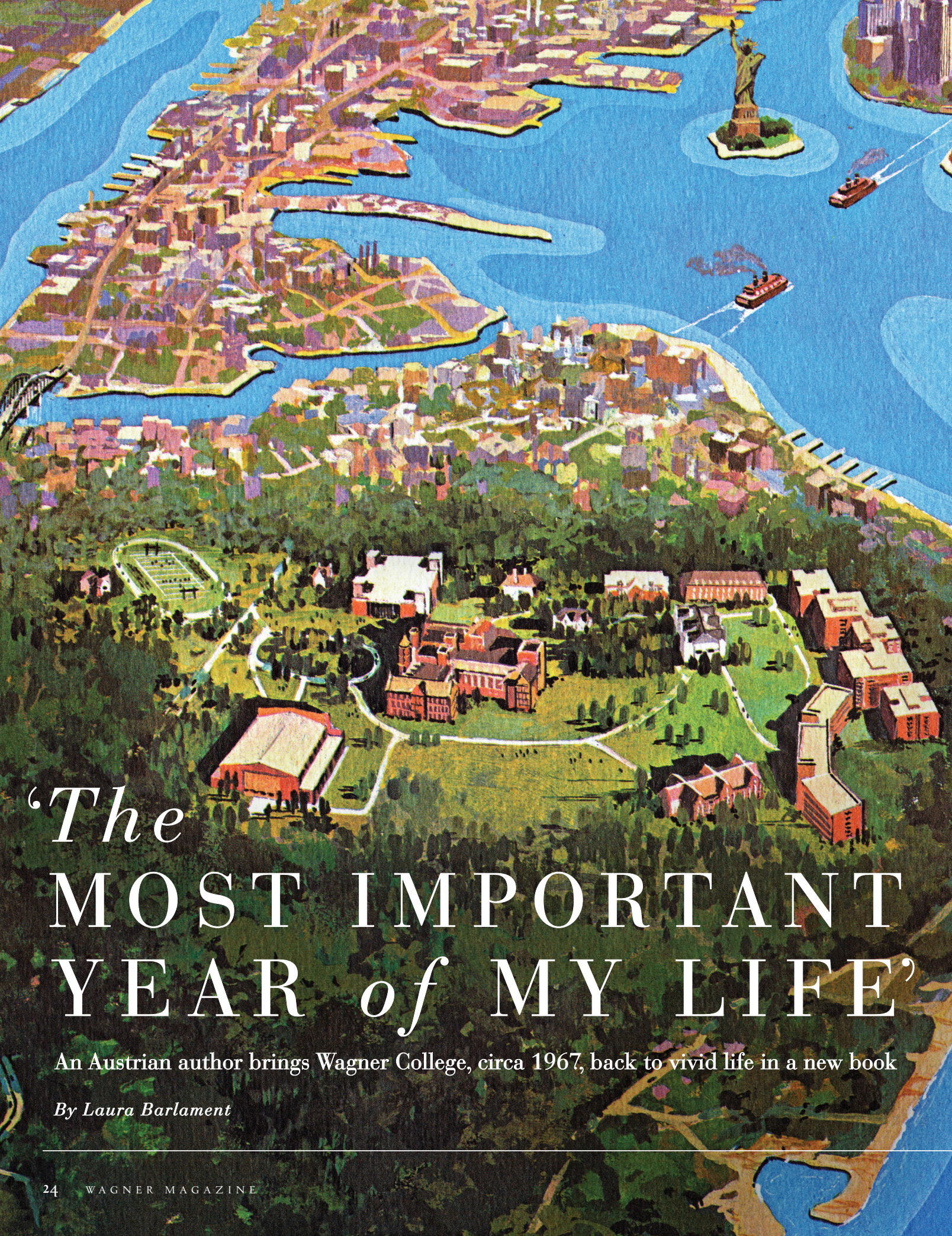
In *Funnyhouse*, hair plays a similarly complex role as a marker of color and identity. "In appearance I am good-looking in a boring way; no glaring Negroid features, medium nose, medium mouth and pale yellow skin," a speaker identified as "Negro" says. "My one defect is that I have a head of frizzy hair, unmistakably Negro kinky hair; and it is indistinguishable."

I am surprised at how Ms. Kennedy and I have pulled identical things out of the creative ether at different times. I feel honored to be in the African continuum with her, of the same lineage as her: writing with a poetic bent, trying to answer the enduring questions of Black identity in America through theater, including the Public Theater and, of course, Wagner. ■



Pia Wilson's produced plays include The Flower Thief, Generation T, Turning the Glass Around, Back to the Real, and Down Neck.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *In this piece, we are following Pia Wilson's preference for the capitalization of "Black" to describe people who have features indicating African ancestry.*



'The
MOST IMPORTANT
YEAR *of* MY LIFE'

An Austrian author brings Wagner College, circa 1967, back to vivid life in a new book

By Laura Barlament



◀ **TEAM PLAYER** Armin Thurnher helped the Seahawk soccer team to achieve a winning season in 1967. The team photo in the 1968 *Kallista* includes him, sitting between Vincent Provenzano '74 and Uwe Haendler '69.

IN THE FALL OF 1967, an 18-year-old Austrian named Armin Thurnher took his first trip overseas, to spend the academic year at Wagner College.

Since then, Thurnher has become a celebrated writer and magazine editor in his home country, known for his sharp criticism of Austrian politics and media culture.

But he's still thinking about that year in America. When his publisher suggested he write a book to be published in honor of his 70th birthday, he decided to return to that time. *Ferry to Manhattan: My Year in America* (*Fähre nach Manhattan: Mein Jahr in Amerika*) was published by Vienna's Paul Zsolnay Verlag this year.

"The most important year of my life was when I came to the States in 1967, from a small town in Austria, to the world's first city, New York City," he said in a Skype interview I conducted with him this spring. "This was the year that changed my life completely."

Combining research and memory, some elements of fiction based on fact, the book presents the young Thurnher confronting a different culture, new experiences, and the turmoil of American society in the late 1960s. It's not all a pretty picture, but it is lively and colorful.

Thurnher grew up in Bregenz, a city where Wagner College had a campus abroad from 1962 to 1989. Thurnher knew Wagner students, and that connection explains how he learned about Wagner and received a scholarship to study there.

The book details his experiences learning about football and jockstraps,

homecoming and dorm life, Abbie Hoffman and the hippies, subways and the Lower East Side, the anti-Vietnam War movement and racial injustice, and much more.

He joins the soccer team.

He listens to Bob Dylan and Janis Joplin with his hallmates in Towers dormitory. He takes classes in British and American literature, art, and psychology. He goes to the bar at the foot of the hill, eats hamburgers, and drinks American beer. He meets girls.

His relationship with his politically radical roommate, Bruce, is the heart of the narrative. Through continual debates with Bruce and another nonconformist student, Brooke, his conservative worldview and idealism about America start to erode.

"I am a heap of shards," he writes in one of the last chapters. "Or maybe I'm just noticing that that's what I always was. I've been shaken like a kaleidoscope. I see the world in a new way, not with kaleidoscope eyes, but put together in a new way."

The narrative ends in December of 1967. With enthusiastic reviews as encouragement, Thurnher is now working on volume two of the memoir, covering the winter and spring of 1968. He hopes to complete a trilogy, with the third volume focusing on his hitchhiking trip across America in the summer of 1968.

The book is only available in German, but working with Thurnher, I translated a few excerpts. (If you want to know more about my longtime relationship with the German language, read my editor's note on page 3.)

ARRIVAL ON CAMPUS, INTRODUCTION TO ROOMMATE BRUCE

THE TAXI conquers the steep hill and drives up to a wide, neo-Gothic, three-story building. It has two small outer towers and two asymmetrical central towers. It doesn't need a sign that says "Main Hall." The huge doorway and broad stairway speak volumes. The epitome of college architecture, higher education in building form.

No one is visible. All of a sudden, I feel a bit tired as I watch the taxi drive away. By all rights, I should have received a tip instead of the driver, in exchange for listening to the entire family history of the good-humored Italian American, who knew from the start that he would be able to overcharge this greenhorn.

Where are the towers of Manhattan?

Nowhere to be seen.

What I see here is idyllic suburbia, sunny, peaceful, and green. A patrol car with open windows slowly drives toward Main Hall, almost noiselessly and with an aura of vague threat. The police officer neither removes his mirrored sunglasses nor changes his facial expression, and glides by at a walking pace.

Behind Main Hall, there are several buildings, small cottages from the 19th century, a villa, modern buildings, and four six-story towers connected by hallways and made of glass, concrete, and red brick. A bridge leads to the main entrance. On the bridge is a small wooden bench.

A couple sits in the afternoon sun. It's a beautiful late-summer day. The leaves of the giant oak and beech trees are already changing color. As I draw nearer, I see that it's a pair of men, holding hands.

Welcome to New York. It's hard to believe of someone who grew up close to the Catholic Church, but I had no idea about homosexuality. I accept the sight and, eager to get rid of my heavy suitcase, I introduce myself.

One is the hall administrator, Mr. Applebaum. He explains that I am standing in front of my living quarters for the next 10 months, but I have arrived too early. The college is expecting the freshmen to arrive next week.

I did write a letter, I say.

Mr. Applebaum goes into his office and looks for it.

I didn't find your letter, but I do have your name. All right then, since you're here already. Welcome to Towers Dormitory! Your room number is B 607, just to the right, on the sixth floor.

He gives me the key. Indeed, a room with two beds. The bed is made.

Who will be my roommate?

Bruce, who else?

That is good news. Bruce is the first American I met in my hometown. Bruce is a bit off-beat, a little crazy, not like the other Americans. He always made an effort to speak German, loudly, roughly, incorrectly, and — unlike me — without any concern about his errors. Bruce takes me seriously. When my family invited him to dinner, he started calling my mother "Mom" right away, which she liked. Bruce is, in some respects, a freak. Always curious about how life works wherever he is. Always on the side of the little guys. Always away from the horde of Americans. Always off the beaten track, always right in the middle of things.

FIRST TRIP TO MANHATTAN AND FERRY RIDE

VINCE, I need to go to Manhattan. How do I do it?

Take the bus on Victory Boulevard to the ferry. The bus stop is right down there, you can't miss it. The ferry is at the end of the bus line. Take it to Manhattan.

People are continually pouring through, moving quickly toward or away from the ferries, continuous metallic noise from coins upon coins, and behind it the noise of street traffic on one side and of the sea on the other.

And then?

Then take the subway to go uptown. You'll figure it out.

I bravely sit in the bus and look at the cute little wooden houses, the strangely atavistic cables on wooden telephone poles and utility poles, and the huge cars, moving slowly. There are few people along the street. As we go down the hill, the buildings become larger and closer together. Traffic increases. Last stop.

The ferry terminal is gigantic. There are dozens of turnstiles, opened by throwing a nickel into a plastic

chute. People are continually pouring through, moving quickly toward or away from the ferries, continuous metallic noise from coins upon coins, and behind it the noise of street traffic on one side and of the sea on the other.

I stand amidst the turmoil. I'm the only one standing and staring, which makes me stand out.

You?

Brooke?

We look at each other in astonishment. Then we hug. I know lovely Brooke from my hometown. But she looks completely different. She still has her bobbed hair. But she's wearing delicate leather sandals on her bare feet, silver bells around her ankles, straps tied high up her calves, a short, striped skirt showing off her fantastic legs, and a loose, low-cut silk blouse that makes it no secret that she is not wearing a bra. To me she looks exotic, in some indecipherable way. Strange and beautiful. She also has spiral-shaped ornament on her cheek.

What are you doing here? We ask each other simultaneously.

I got the scholarship.

Oh, yes.

And you?

I'm going to Manhattan to buy beads.

Would you like to come along?

I nod. I stand and can't stop looking at Brooke.

Of all the beautiful American girls, she always seemed to me to be the strangest one, because she was the least approachable. Witty, sharp-tongued, intellectually superior. In my hometown she dressed in cashmere pullovers and narrow-legged wool pants in discreet colors, gray-brown, with horn-rimmed glasses on her snub nose, which made her look especially sexy. The glasses have disappeared.

I stand and look. Brooke takes me by the hand like a child, pulls me through the turnstile and onto the ferry. She finds a seat on the front left side of the top level, because she knows what I need. Exactly, we are passing the Statue of Liberty, my first time. The best part is that I know, when I see the bluish-green symbol of world power — famous, but neither especially charming nor impressive — that I will see it on every trip from now on. Meaning, often.

Brooke points forward. We are walking on the platform of the ferry's bow, separated from the blue water by only a folding grille. Over the grille we see the southern tip of Manhattan. Slowly the skyscrapers appear. The familiar, never-seen skyline, dominated by the Empire State Building, is finally visible, coming ever closer, rising out of the water with threatening speed and size.

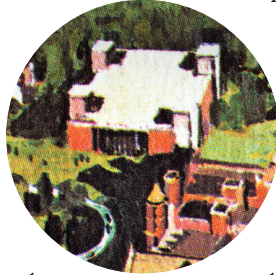
The sea becomes white with foam between the pier, with its wooden piles, and the boat. Then the boat docks with a jerk, ropes are lashed, steel ramps are extended over the gap. Brooke walks forward toward the darkness of the subway, pulling me behind her since I can't stop staring in amazement.

A shrill, noisy, rusty monster, a steel worm on wheels pushes around the curve, emitting thunder and lightning at earsplitting volume. Talk is impossible in this noise. The worm is the subway. The doors open, Brooke pulls me in after her. My mind is wheeling. My defenses destroyed by the sight of the skyscrapers, overwhelmed by the rusty ruckus, I just stand, holding on to a pole, and submit to being completely rattled.

A LIBRARY WHERE BOOKS ARE CELEBRATED

THE HORRMANN LIBRARY is a modern red brick building with eight large plate-glass windows on the south side, which bring light into the three-story building and through which one enters it. It is a reference library. The books are on open shelves on all three floors, and there is plenty of space in the ground floor. There are more than a dozen round tables for five to six people; in front of the windows, there are shelves with the latest magazines and newspapers. I go there to read the *New York Times*, which is always available because there are several copies, as well as *Time* and *Newsweek*. I go there to see what the *Staten Island Advance* has written about our soccer team, perplexed by the attention it pays to a better high school team.

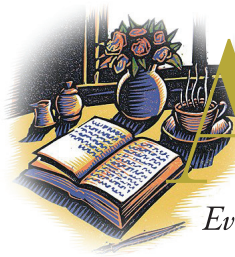
You can just take books off the shelves and put them back when you're done. You're not allowed to check them out. What a contrast to the libraries I'm used to! Narrow, musty, with a librarian who views himself as someone who's there to scare you away from books rather than enchant you with books. In my church library, you paid a schilling to borrow a Karl May novel for a week, packed up in brown paper and given to you through a narrow slot. In the tiny school library, a grumpy curator acted like every question was a personal affront. The cloister libraries in Baroque monasteries flaunted their untouchable showpieces, sumptuous volumes in stiff white leather that no layperson could ever open. Here, on the other hand, books were celebrated. Here, they were read communally. Here there is light, air, openness. The library is one of the prettiest spots at the college. ■



Fähre nach Manhattan: Mein Jahr in Amerika by Armin Thurnher, copyright 2019 Paul Zsolnay Verlag Ges.m.b.H., Wien. Translated and published with permission.



MORE EXCERPTS ONLINE Read Thurnher's descriptions of Dean Adolph Stern, dorm life in Towers, and conversations in the Hawk's Nest. wagner.edu/wagnermagazine



AlumniLink

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



SEAHAWKS UNITE Lorraine Cucciniello Da Silva '79, Lauren Patsos '07, Sarah Braun '14, Sean Murphy '02, Kellie Griffith '14, Marta Cedeno '89, Randy Webb '69, and Marilyn Dobbin Kinelski '69.

The night ended with a group sing of “We are Family” by Sister Sledge, a perfect song to conclude the first day of Reunion Weekend.

THE NEW CLASS OF GOLDEN SEAHAWKS

On Saturday, we celebrated the Golden Seahawks at a luncheon, honoring the Class of 1969’s 50th reunion. (All classes celebrating their 50th graduation anniversaries and beyond are counted among the Golden Seahawks.)

“It was wonderful connecting with friends that I haven’t seen in the 50 years since I graduated,” said **Jean Salthammer Christensen '69**. “We both loved visiting Wagner and walking around to see the campus. We even went into the library to visit the exact spot **Ed** (class of 1967) and I met my very first week at Wagner.”

Ann Taranto Giordano '69, alumni board member, presented her classmates with the newly created Golden Seahawks pin, as a symbol of their lifelong bond to their alma mater.

‘We Are Family’

Reunion Weekend 2019 was filled with singing and dancing, laughing and crying with friends old and new

TRAVELING FROM near and far, alumni, family, and friends returned to the Hill May 31 through June 2 for Wagner’s premier alumni event — Reunion Weekend.

Since 2003, Reunion Weekend has been bringing alumni back to reconnect, reminisce, and make new memories with one another. This year, nearly 300 people made their way back to the Hill.

“In today’s world, it can be easy to virtually catch up with classmates via social media,” says Karen Moran, director of alumni relations. “However, no version of social media can replace the feeling you get hugging a friend you haven’t seen since you walked across that graduation stage, in the place where it all began.”

BONDING AND SAYING GOOD-BYE

On Friday evening, more than 100 Seahawks joined us at the Welcome Reception, hosted for the final time by President Richard and Dr. Carin Guarasci. It was a bittersweet time, as many of our guests said goodbye to a family that has been at the heart of Wagner for more than 20 years.

Alumni and friends mingled well into the night at the Seahawk Social. The fun continued at a Karaoke After-Party in the Reynolds House Coffeehouse.



OFF TO THE RACES

Later that evening, a Cinderella-style horse and carriage pulled up at the side of Main Hall so alumni and friends could enjoy a ride around Main Hall, setting the tone for a fun-filled, exciting night. The Grand Celebration featured a Belmont Stakes theme, with alumni sporting their bow ties and fancy fascinator hats. Cocktail



GOLDEN GLOW The new Golden Seahawks seen above are Elliott Sweetser, Helen Page Browne (with her husband, Robert), Deborah Drew, Marilyn Dobbin Kinelski, Margaret Cole Harriman, Thomas Thurston, Ann Taranto Giordano, and Linda Barbes Stein. The column of photos features Campbell Mills '73 and Anne Lutkenhouse '79 at the Nurnberger Bierhalle for the Bregenz reunion; Dr. Nicholas Rossos '69 and his wife, Noreene, at the Golden Seahawks luncheon; Kirsten Karlsrud '79 and Kathleen O'Brien Ellis '81 at the Belmont Stakes-themed cocktail hour.



hour on Trautmann Square preceded a night of dinner, dancing, photos, and more in the Main Dining Hall. The ambience was set with colorful decorations, linens, flowers, and lighting reminiscent of jockey silks.

The dinner began with **Carolina Silva '16**, alumni board president, welcoming all guests and announcing that the class of 1969 had won the Reunion Class Giving Challenge. Reaching 89% of their participation goal, 62 donors from the class of 1969 raised \$34,800 for the College in honor of their 50th reunion. Collectively, this year's reunion milestone classes (years ending in 4 and 9) raised \$205,000 as part of the challenge.

LOVE, TEARS, AND LAUGHTER

Reunion Weekend concluded with the Alumni Association Awards Brunch. This year, the following distinguished alumni were recognized for their achievements and commitments to Wagner College:

Service Awards



Elisabeth Cardello '06 M'07, the John "Bunny" Barbes '39 and Lila T. Barbes '40 Wagner Alumni Laureate



Charlie Siedenburg '95, the Dr. Kevin Sheehy '67 M'70 M'92 H'99 Alumni Leadership Medal

Achievement Awards



Anita Carroll Sabatino '69, the Distinguished Graduate of Wagner



Monette McKay '07, the Wagner Alumni Key




Marilyn Dobbin Kinelski '69, the Reverend Lyle Guttu Award

Charlie Siedenburg '95 summed it up well. "I have lived, loved, and learned on this campus," he said. "It is my home away from home. Most of all, Wagner College is a family."

Cailin Kelly '08, a first-time attendee of Reunion Weekend, added that she was "blown away by the weekend. I really enjoyed how there was a wonderful balance between a relaxed atmosphere and well-organized events. It was fun to get dressed up and dance with alumni from all years. I really enjoyed myself and look forward to attending next year's weekend!"

Plans are already underway for next year's Reunion Weekend, which is scheduled to take place from Friday, May 29, to Sunday, May 31, 2020. So, mark your calendars as we invite the entire Wagner family to come back to the Hill to join Seahawks who graduated in years ending in 0 and 5, as they celebrate their milestone reunions.
— *Nicolina Astorina, Alumni Coordinator*

 **READ MORE ONLINE!** Go to wagner.edu/wagnermagazine for the full weekend story, the Alumni Award winners' bios, and links to a complete photo album.

History Makers:

Guy V. Molinari '49 H'90 represented Staten Island through thick and thin

GUY V. MOLINARI, a lawyer who entered public service in midlife, made an outsized impact on Staten Island life and politics.

His family moved to Staten Island soon after his birth in 1928. After graduating from New Dorp High School in 1945, he enrolled at Wagner College.

"My father was adamant that his sons would go to college," Molinari wrote. "As an Italian immigrant, he believed that the key to success in America was obtaining a college education."

After graduating from Wagner in 1949, he enrolled at New York Law School, earning his J.D. in 1951 — but, with war raging in Korea, Molinari enlisted in the Marines. It would be another two years before he took the bar exam.

Two decades passed. Molinari married, fathered a daughter, built a successful real estate law practice, and began dabbling in Republican party politics. He served as campaign chairman three times for other candidates, but an argument with a longtime Republican state assemblyman pushed him to declare his own candidacy for office in 1974; he was 46 years old. Running as an insurgent against his own party's standard bearer, Molinari put together a grassroots campaign that gave him the first of 10 straight electoral victories, winning three terms in the Assembly, five Congressional races, and three stints as Staten Island borough president. The only race he lost was for Richmond County district attorney.

One of his first major achievements came in 1981, when he was a freshman congressman. The new Reagan administration



MR. STATEN ISLAND When arson fire damaged PS 36 in March of 2000, Borough President Molinari secured temporary classroom space for the children at Wagner. Photo courtesy of the *Staten Island Advance*.

was closing Public Health Service hospitals across the country, including the one on Staten Island. Molinari helped steer legislation through the House facilitating the hospital's sale to the Sisters of Charity of New York, which kept the facility open, renaming it Bayley Seton Hospital.

Almost from the first day of his political career, Molinari wanted to close the massive New York City landfill on Staten Island's west shore, but lacked the political clout until fellow Republicans captured both the state governor's mansion and the New York City mayor's office. With Gov. George Pataki and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani

in power, however, Borough President Guy Molinari was able to emcee the ceremony closing the Fresh Kills dump on March 22, 2001 — nine months before being term-limited out of office.

"That date can be described as one of the greatest days of my political career, if not the greatest," Molinari said.

After leaving office, Molinari presided over a Republican club on Staten Island that played a crucial role in local politics, making it possible for a party outnumbered 3:2 by Democrats to exert disproportionate influence in local, state and national affairs.

It's no wonder, then, that even a Democratic Party icon like Chuck Schumer would acknowledge the legendary politician's importance when speaking at the 2004 dedication of the Staten Island ferry boat named for the former assemblyman, congressman, and borough president: "If ever there was a Mr. Staten Island, it is Guy Molinari."

Guy V. Molinari died last year at the age of 89.

Hire a Student!

cace@wagner.edu

The Center for Academic and Career Engagement (CACE) welcomes alumni to share internship and entry-level job openings to be promoted to Wagner students. Please email cace@wagner.edu with information about such positions within your company or organization.



BRAGGING RIGHTS Adrienne Ferretti '76 and Lou Vastola '75 painted this mural 45 years ago.

A Term Paper for the Ages

How the biology department got its evolution mural

IN THE FALL OF 1973, Adrienne Ferretti '76 and Lou Vastola '75 proposed to their biology professor, Walter Kanzler, an alternative to their final term paper for their class on evolution. Could they instead paint a mural depicting evolution on the science building's fourth floor, home of the biology department? "Yes, as long as you promise to finish it," he told them. "You can't quit in the middle."

They ended up spending two years on it, including many late nights in the building, until they both graduated. But in exchange for their pains, now they have the bragging rights: What other undergraduate term paper is still being looked at every day, 45 years later?

On a recent visit to Wagner, Ferretti and Vastola explained that they didn't know what they were getting themselves into when they made their proposal to Dr. Kanzler. They were both biology majors. Vastola was an art minor, and Ferretti had taken one art class.

They planned to paint a mural of each period from the Cambrian until the Pleistocene sequentially down the hallway. They stopped with the

Cretaceous period, centering on a *Tyrannosaurus rex*, in one of the largest mural panels.

They based their paintings of ancient creatures, ranging from trilobites to triceratops, on whatever resources they could find in the library or in textbooks.

The murals also contain some inside jokes. Vastola points out a cockroach in the Mississippian panel. Why? Because Dr. Kanzler loved cockroaches. He often carried Madagascar hissing cockroaches to class in his lab coat pocket.

After college, Ferretti went to dental school at New York University. She is still practicing dentistry on Staten Island. Vastola went to the New York Chiropractic College and had a family practice in Vermont for 25 years; he then studied anti-aging and functional medicine, and had a practice in that field in Manhattan. Now he lives in Queens and practices as a natural healer and medical intuitive.

Another student, whose identity is not known, finished the mural, dating it 1977. That student had an impish sense of humor, painting the *Homo sapiens* emerging at the end with a cigarette dangling from his lips.

To this day, the mural explodes with life on the walls between doors and underneath bulletin boards. The mural lends the biology department's hallway a playful and creative flair, in contrast to the sober, regimented patterns of the building's Brutalist architectural style.

Upcoming Events

AUGUST

First Day of Classes
August 26

Last Day of the Wagner College 2019 Fiscal Year
August 31, wagner.edu/give

SEPTEMBER

**Wagner Jazz Ensemble:
Hispanic Heritage Month Concert**
September 26, 7 p.m., Union Atrium

Seahawk Marching Band Alumni Day
September 28, Wagner v. LIU home football game

OCTOBER

Wagner College Theatre: Evita
October 3–13, Main Stage

Homecoming
October 5

Chamber Choir: Viva Italia Concert
October 20, 7:30 p.m., Music Performance Center, Campus Hall

**Wagner College Choir and Summit Chorale:
Mozart's Requiem**
October 27, 7:30 p.m., Calvary Episcopal Church, Summit, N.J.

NOVEMBER

Chamber Choir: Reformation Concert
November 2, 7:30 p.m., Music Performance Center, Campus Hall

**Seahawk Marching Band:
Veterans Day Parade**
November 11, 11:15 a.m.–3:30 p.m., Fifth Avenue, Manhattan

Wagner College Theatre: She Loves Me
November 14–24, Main Stage

Wagner College Concert Band: Fall Concert
November 18, 7 p.m., Staten Island Technical High School

DECEMBER

**Music Department Concert:
Home for the Holidays at Wagner College**
December 2, 8 p.m., Wagner College Theatre

Stretto: Vocal Jazz Concert
December 4, 8 p.m., Music Performance Center, Campus Hall

CHANGE HAPPENS. Please call the Office of Alumni Relations at 718-390-3224 or check wagner.edu/calendar for updates.



ClassNotes

Updates from old friends across the generations

1953

In her retirement, **Dorothy Schmidt Boesch** has become involved in the Friends of the Library in Huntington Beach, Calif.; the Corona del Mar Baroque Music Festival; and oil painting classes.

1954

Wanda Schweizer Praisner '54 M'57 gave a poetry workshop and reading for the faculty and students of Caldwell University in Caldwell, N.J., on March 19. She is a poet in residence for the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, and her latest book, published in 2018, is *To Illuminate the Way* (Kelsay Books).

1955

Grace Brill Glenn attended Wagner for two and a

half years, but did not graduate in 1955 because of a serious illness. In 1975, however, she went back to school at Fairleigh Dickinson University and graduated with degrees in art and psychology. She also earned credits in social work from Rutgers, and she was a social worker until her retirement. In the 20 years between Wagner and FDU, Grace married Bruce Glenn, who died in 2011. She notes her pride in her children, grandchildren, and her 15 great-grandchildren. She remembers her time at Wagner fondly and enjoys keeping in touch.

1956 and '57

Daniel V. Malloy '57 and his wife, Eleanor, celebrated

their 60th wedding anniversary on May 3, 2019. **Al '56 and Maryann '57 Schroeder** returned to their home in Houston, Tex., after being displaced for more than one year because of the flooding from Hurricane Harvey.

1958

Elizabeth Ebers Press wrote to the magazine about **Ruth Lopez Anderson**, who died in November of 2018, calling her a "fellow classmate, fellow ADP sister, fellow 50th Reunion Committee pillar!, etc." She also enjoyed the old and new campus photos in the winter 2018–19 magazine issue, noting that her senior year dorm room was on the left side of today's Pape House, home of Wagner's Office of Admissions. **Paul West** conducted a performance

of the Bethune Big Band on November 13, 2018, at the John Birks Gillespie Auditorium in New York, in tribute to his brother, **Charles "Lonny" West** '58, who died on June 3. Lonny was the founder of the Bethune Big Band. Paul plans to make this tribute performance an annual event.

1959

In November 2018, Col. **Ralph DiLullo**, USMC, Retired, was named a Federal Aviation Administration Master Pilot in honor of his 50 years of accident-free flying.

1961

One of the daughters of **Ingrid Arend Buswell**, Carrie Buswell, wrote to tell us the sad news of the passing of Ingrid on April 18, 2018.

Keep in Touch!

Email: alumni@wagner.edu

Web: wagner.edu/alumni

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

Deadlines: This issue reflects news received by May 30, 2019. The deadline for the fall 2019 issue is October 1, 2019.

Content: Wagner welcomes your news and updates, and we will happily share them with the Wagner family. We ask

that you send us announcements of weddings, births, and graduations after the fact.

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

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

Ingrid was a Wagner nursing graduate who loved her profession and worked in many different positions with hospitals, organizations, and schools in and near her home in Bethlehem, Conn. She and her husband, Jeremy, raised two daughters, and her life was also filled with raising cattle, sheep, pigs, and ducks; keeping a large vegetable garden; and engaging in many cooking and craft projects. “She loved visits with her children and [three] grandchildren and doting on her dogs. In short, she embraced the life within and around her,” Carrie said.

1962

William '62 and Janet M'71 Greaves celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary this year. **Beverly Hoehne Whipple** received an honorary doctorate at Wagner's nursing pinning this spring. Her husband, Jim, her two children, some of her five grandchildren, and her best friend and Wagner classmate **Barbara Shengle Scheufele** joined her on this special occasion.

1965

Rev. **Marjorie Oughton** is a deacon at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Wallingford, Pa. She retired as chaplain at Holy Redeemer St. Joseph Manor.

1966

Elizabeth "Lissa" Barker is working in health missions in rural Jamaica and in rural

Honduras. In Honduras, along with two other nurse practitioners, she has established a school of nursing. The first of its kind in Honduras, the school has received accreditation and will graduate its first class next January. In 2018, Elizabeth received the Chair Award for her service and dedication to the Fellows of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners. Fellows are selected based on outstanding contributions to clinical practice, research, education, or policy. Col. **Ronald Sarg**, USAF, Retired, served 23 years in the Air Force as a dentist and clinical commander. After retiring as a full colonel, he taught at the University of Pennsylvania until 2003. He is very active with the Military Officers Association of America and is stepping down after a 14-year tenure as president of the Dover, Del., chapter of MOAA. Ron continues to work with other state commissions and veterans programs in Delaware.

1967

Edward Christensen and **Jean Christensen '69** celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on December 21, 2018. **Russ Johnson '67 M'72** published his 10th novel, *Hollow-Point Diplomacy*, in January 2019. In this geopolitical thriller, Russia and Iran plot to take over the world. Eight of Russ's 10 novels fall into the crime/thriller category.

1968

Chuck Cascio wrote an article for his blog entitled “Choosing the Right College ... and a Glimpse of Wagner College.” He discusses the pressures students face to pick the right college, and he outlines his criteria for the ideal college: comfort, enthusiasm, and personal development potential. Chuck calls his decision to attend Wagner “one of the best decisions of my life.” Read more of Chuck's work at www.chuckcascioauthor.com. **MaryAnn Sellenthin DeFrancesco '68 M'69** is a Board of Education retiree, and she lives in Staten Island. She wrote to the College, expressing how her education at Wagner helped her throughout her career as an educator. “I owe so much to my wonderful foundation in elementary education and minor in English I received at Wagner,” she wrote. “My heart holds so many fond memories of my professors — among them Dr. Norbert Leeseberg and Dr. Virgil Markham.” Dr. Markham, in particular, taught her the value of detail and precision in writing. She continues to write in her free time for the Community Agency for Senior Citizens in Staten Island, and has won three prizes for her poems, which she dedicates to Dr. Markham. Her daughter **Marie DeFrancesco Malviya '98** earned her nursing degree from

Wagner and now works as a certified registered nurse anaesthetist for Johns Hopkins Hospital in Maryland. MaryAnn and her husband, Phil, have eight grandchildren.

1969

Jean Christensen and **Edward Christensen '67** celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on December 21, 2018.

1970

Peter Rapp is an emeritus athletic director in his 50th year teaching at Staten Island Academy. His daughter, Terri Lynne Rapp, MD, is the third generation of the Rapp family specializing in OB/GYN. Peter's father, **Michael Rapp '34**, was the first, and his brother, Lynn B. Rapp, is also an OB/GYN doctor. Peter is a proud father and doting grandfather to three grandchildren.

1971

Janet M'71 and William '62 Greaves celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary this year. **Lawrence Stetler** is a practicing small animal veterinarian in New Jersey. He has owned the Wayne Animal Hospital for 38 years and has been in practice for 42 years.

1972

Alonzo "Lonnie" Brandon was one of three recipients of the MLK Agent of Change Award from Wagner College,

Crib Notes



Anthony Duni, born on April 7, 2019, to **Laura '07 and Christopher '07 Duni**, and welcomed by his older sister, Natalie, and brother, Christopher.

Vincenzo James Intoccia, born on November 16, 2018, third son of **Mark '05 and Amanda Concilio '08 Intoccia**.



We'd love to see your baby's face. Please see page 32 for publication guidelines.

revered as a teacher. Many people respected him. I can never thank you enough. Your words were full of courage. Your courage was the birth of mine. A great blessing on you, Edwin Cortez. Thank you."

1975

Joanne DiMango-Orr '75 M'77 is retired from teaching in Tinton Falls, N.J. She lives in Manalapan, N.J. Joanne also noted that she has two children.

1976

Donna Lupardo is a New York State assemblywoman representing the 123rd District, which includes the city of Binghamton, as well as the towns of Vestal and Union. In January, she was announced as the new Agriculture Committee chair of the New York State Assembly. "I am focused in general on the economic recovery of upstate New York and strongly believe that agriculture is one of the central building blocks," she said. She was first elected to the legislature in 2004. Before entering politics, Donna was a lecturer in the School of Education and Human Development at SUNY Binghamton for 10 years. She is the first woman to represent Broome County in the state legislature.

1977

On March 13, **Phyllis Barone Ameduri** visited Wagner College to discuss

during a ceremony in honor of Black History Month, on February 12. He played football for four years at Wagner and was the founder and president of Black Concern, a student activist organization. Lonnie is retired from the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs in Montclair, N.J. After holding a series of positions of increasing responsibility with parks and recreation in Montclair, he was named the departmental director in 1992, the first African American department head in that town. He has received many other awards for his innovative work and many achievements. There is even one annual award named for him, the Alonzo "Lonnie" Brandon Service Award, given by the youth

mentoring organization Brother to Brother in Montclair. Lonnie and his wife, Jacqueline, are doting grandparents to three grandchildren. **Michael Tadross** hosted a master class for the film and media studies program at Wagner College on April 11. Michael's producer and production manager credits include *Ocean's 8*, *Winter's Tale*, *Cop Out*, *Sherlock Holmes*, and *Hitch*.

1973

Edwin Cortez died on October 6, 2018. In tribute to him, **Gene Barfield '76** wrote about an incident he remembered at Wagner and its impact on him. Gene recalls sitting in the dining hall for a special event in the spring semester of 1971. "At some point

in the evening, someone, a faculty member perhaps, was standing and speaking, and s/he must have said something about learning about our families. Suddenly, Edwin Cortez stood up and asked, demanded actually, to know why those families to receive such attention included none like his. When the professor asked him what he meant, Ed introduced another young man as his life partner and therefore his most intimate family member." Gene wrote that it was in that moment that he felt accepted and welcomed at Wagner. Gene wrote, "His life was successful. He had a distinguished professional career, reached the pinnacle of academic success by earning a Ph.D, was sought-after as a speaker, a talent consultant, an author, and

her new historical novel, *Never Ruled by Man*. The book focuses on Mary Ann Bascombe, Phyllis's great-great-grandmother, who overcame personal and societal obstacles in order to become a businesswoman, lay lawyer, neighborhood activist, and politician in 19th-century Staten Island. "She was a woman who did not let men dictate to her who and what she could be," Phyllis wrote. "Mary Ann was a woman ahead of her time."

1979

Dr. **Victor Dolan** opened a new chiropractic practice in Cape Coral, Fla. He has practiced in Staten Island as a doctor of chiropractic for more than 35 years. Victor was the first Staten Island doctor to work in the Pan American Games, Caribbean American Games, World Sport Games, and to treat United States Olympians. The Rev. **Paul Egensteiner** was named bishop-elect of the Metropolitan New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The decision was made following a vote at the organization's annual assembly, held May 16–18 in Tarrytown, N.Y. Paul was pastor of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Pleasantville, N.Y. "From spearheading community initiatives such as disaster relief, hunger committees, and environmental stewardship, to focusing on inclusion of

immigrants and celebrating LGBTQIA+ congregants, and shepherding his parishioners and nurturing their faith, I could not think of a more capable leader to continue our church's radically welcoming path forward," said Bishop Donald McCoid. The formal rite of installation will take place on November 16 in New York City, following a period of transition and mentorship with former Bishop McCoid. **Sarah Traynor Goebel** has retired from social work, after 34 years of providing counseling to veterans and their families. She lives in Bemus Point, N.Y., and is teaching part-time at Jamestown Community College. Sarah has three adult children and is looking forward to grandchildren someday. **Ann Marie Stanger Henderson** was inducted into the Moore Catholic High School Hall of Fame on May 3, 2018. During her time at Wagner, Ann Marie majored in bacteriology and was a star athlete on the softball team. After graduating, she returned to Moore Catholic as a science teacher and the varsity softball coach. Ann Marie became the chair of the science department and led her softball team to two Catholic High School Downstate Championships. She left Moore Catholic in 1986 to attend Brooklyn Law School and received her Juris Doctor in 1990. Ann Marie now serves as the chair of the board of trustees at Moore Catholic and is an associate general counsel

for Hackensack Meridian Health in Edison, N.J.

1980

Ed Burke, Staten Island deputy borough president since 2006, was named No. 21 on the Staten Island Power 100 list for 2019, published by *City & State*. **Claire Regan** was honored with a 2018 Woman of Distinction Award from 2nd Chance International, in an event held on December 9, 2018, at the Staten Island Hilton Garden Inn. The event highlights "unsung female heroes and female leaders from the different parts of the world," says Emmanuel Randolph Wheagar, founder of 2nd Chance International Women of Distinction Magazine and of 2nd Chance Youth Empowerment Project. Claire serves as a professor of journalism at Wagner and has done extensive work with the Mandela Washington Fellowship at Wagner, which allows young leaders from Africa to enhance their knowledge and abilities in non-profit work.

1987

Ken Mitchell, executive director of the Staten Island Zoo, was named to the Staten Island Power 100 list for 2019, published by *City & State*.

1988

Richard Negrin '88 H'17 was named vice president

of regulatory policy and strategy for the Commonwealth Edison Company, or ComEd, in Chicago, in November 2018. He is responsible for rate strategies, regulatory policy outcomes, retail tariffs, processing of customer complaints, engagement with the Illinois Commerce Commission, regulatory compliance, and alignment with other Exelon energy delivery companies. Richard had most recently served as partner and chair at the law firm Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel in Philadelphia. For six years, he was the managing director and deputy mayor of the City of Philadelphia. **Andrew Ostrowski** is continuing his work as the director of the Real Live Relic Hunters, a nine-person team that searches for ancient relics throughout the world. "The team is gearing up for an anticipated prime-time television series" set for this fall, Andrew writes. Find out more at www.realliverelichunter.com.

1990

Lou Anarumo was hired as the Cincinnati Bengals defensive coordinator in February. He previously was the defensive backs coach for the New York Giants.

1994

Melissa Donahue was nominated for the James Beard Award for Best Chef: South on February 27. Although she didn't win

the award this year, it was quite a feat to be included among the 20 nominees in the south region, which extends from Arkansas to Puerto Rico. As the executive chef at Sweet Melissa's Cafe, Melissa is the first chef from Lee or Collier counties in Florida to be nominated. Sweet Melissa's Cafe has already been awarded Best Dining in Lee County by *Gulf Shore Life*, and highlighted by *USA Today* as one of the 10 Best Restaurants in South Florida. In March, **Joe Johnson** M'94 was recognized by the Ohio Athletic Trainers' Association as the Athletic Trainer of the Year. He is the first athletic trainer from the East District of Ohio to earn the award. After working as an athletic trainer at Wagner College, Joe returned to his alma mater, Maysville High School, and has been there for 25 years. He works full time at the school, teaching health classes and working with student athletes and coaches.

1995

Rosa Alaimo Quinn serves as the treasurer for the board of Friends and Angels, an organization founded by **Tracy Vicere**. **Rosie Gioia Van Nostrand** '96 serves as the communications director, and she pointed out that when we featured Friends and Angels in the winter 2018–19 issue of *Class Notes*, we didn't mention Rosa. Friends and Angels has raised over \$125,000 to support patients receiving treatment in the Division of Hematology/Oncology and Stem Cell Transplant at Steven & Alexandra Cohen Children's Medical Center of New York. In March, **Charlie Siedenburgh** was appointed the director of alumni relations at Moore Catholic High School, his alma mater, located on Staten Island. He also works as a publicist for Staten Island theatrical productions and organizations such as Wagner College Theatre, the Minty Awards, Spotlight Repertory Theatre, and Ghostlight Productions.

1996

Tony Correnti married Sylvia Lubberts in a small ceremony on October 20, 2018. **Leslie Schipa** officiated the ceremony, and **Becky Wallo-Rose** was also in attendance.

1997

Robyn Nolan Howlett has been promoted from firm attorney to partner at Weinberger Divorce and Family Law Group in Parsippany, N.J. She joined the Weinberger firm in 2012, and she leads the firm's Freehold and Mount Laurel offices. She is certified as a matrimonial attorney and is a trained collaborative divorce attorney. Robyn is admitted in New Jersey, New York, and the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey. She is also a member of the New Jersey State, American, Mercer County, and Monmouth County bar associations; the American Trial Lawyers Association; and New Jersey

Collaborative Divorce Group Professionals. **Deanna Salafia Marco** '97 M'99 is the founding principal of PS 9, the Naples Street Elementary School, on Staten Island. **Claire Regan** '80 wrote a feature article about the school, "At PS 9 in Concord, the Key to Learning Is Through the Arts," for the *Staten Island Advance* in November 2018. The school focuses on integrating the arts into all subjects. After opening in 2013 with 92 students, the 2018–19 school year was the first full-enrollment year with 326 students through grade 5. Deanna previously served as assistant principal at PS 295, the Studio School of Arts and Culture in Park Slope, Brooklyn, for two years, and principal for six years.

1998

Marie DeFrancesco Malviya is a certified registered nurse anesthetist at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Maryland. Marie married Ravi Malviya on June 2, 2018, in Ellicott City, Md.

1999

Frank De Blasi was featured in the *Asbury Park Press* for his service to a teen suffering from cancer in Ocean Township, N.J. Frank himself is a cancer survivor, and his philanthropic organization, Ballsfest, "lifts the spirits of children, young adults, and their families affected by cancer." Through Ballsfest, he provided a dream trip

we are **SO CLOSE.**

The Wagner Fund supports everything that goes into the incredible learning environment at Wagner College.

wagner.edu/give
888-231-2252

Generous donors have brought us to **90%** of our **unrestricted Wagner Fund goal**. With your help we can reach 100% of these essential funds as we approach the end of the 2019 fiscal year on August 31.



to California for 15-year-old Augustus Maggio, who has been battling brain cancer since 2016.

2000

Jedediah Bila was named a permanent co-host of *Fox & Friends Weekend*. Her debut as a co-host was on April 27, as she joined Pete Hegseth on the weekend version of the number-one-rated morning show in cable news. She formerly served as the co-host of ABC's *The View* from 2016 to 2017, where she won two Daytime Emmy Award nominations for Outstanding Entertainment Talk Show Host. In 2018, Jedediah released her most recent book, *#DoNotDisturb: How I Ghosted My Cell Phone to Take Back My Life*.

2001

Adam Fuller M'01 joined the University of Memphis football program as defensive coordinator in January. He made this move after six seasons at Marshall University. In the 2018 season, Adam's defense at Marshall was one of three in the nation to not allow a 100-yard rusher in any games. Seven of his players earned Conference USA postseason honors in 2018. Adam played football and graduated with a bachelor's degree from Sacred Heart University in 1988, earning his master's in secondary education from Wagner in 2001. **Josh McBride** founded a startup called Upsider,

which allows recruiters to leverage AI technology to identify the ideal candidate based on their business and role requirements. Upsider is one of eight tech startups to receive a \$220,000 investment, free work space, and expert mentorship from Newark Venture Partners.

2002

Amy Lisojo participated in Denver Fashion Week for the first time on March 23. She partnered with Denver street artist Chris Haven for the opening show, Fashion x Art. Amy is also the co-creator of the brand Love Child, a clothing line inspired by her love for music, street art, and urban culture. In the future, Amy and her partner are working on a retail experience in their studio and plan on opening in the fall of 2019. Their brand is sold at Staten Island's Richmond Hood and online at www.lovechildnyc.com.

2004

Jeannine Romano Distefano published a new novel in May 2019, *A Really Bad Idea*. One blogger wrote, "This book made me laugh and smile. It also made my stomach drop and it brought all the nerves. Overall, I give this a 5/5." Under the pen name Jeannine Colette, Jeannine has become a prolific author, with many standalone books and series such as "The Abandon Collection." Jeannine was

a segment producer for television shows on CBS and NBC, but she left the television industry to focus on her children and pursue a full-time writing career. She lives in New York with her husband, **Bryan Distefano** '03 M'05, her three children, and a rescue pup named Wrigley. Learn more about her at www.jeanninecolette.com. **Teresa Jackson** has her own private chiropractic practice, Total Health & Injury Specialist LLC, in Decatur, Ga. She earned her Doctor of Chiropractic degree in 2007 and practiced in three different offices for nine years before opening her own practice. A cross-country and mid-distance runner, she has become a bodybuilder as well.

2005

Jacob Browne '05 M'08 married Wilvin Andrew Perry on April 5, at San Francisco City Hall. Jake lives in St. Petersburg, Fla., and works at Eckerd College.



Mark Intoccia and **Amanda Concilio Intoccia** '08 welcomed their third son, Vincenzo James Intoccia, into the world on November 16, 2018. See Crib Notes, page 34, for a photo. **Edward "Ted" McLaughlin** married Megan Kathleen McCarthy on March 9 in a self-uniting ceremony at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in

Philadelphia. Until 2018, Ted was a real estate asset manager, focusing on commercial real estate at Cushman & Wakefield in New York. Megan is the vice president for major gifts at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; she formerly worked in fundraising for the New Museum and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. According to the *New York Times*, "They met on Bumble, and then had their first date on quiz night at a pub in Astoria, Queens."

2006

Elisabeth Cardiello '06 M'07, founder of the coffee company Caffe Unimatic, launched a series of "Brave Conversations Over Coffee." In 2019, she is committed to hosting more than 50 Brave Conversations. In her blog, Elisabeth writes, "We believe that 'Brave Conversation' is key in unlocking the shift we need to remedy the complex and deeply rooted issues that we face today." She is looking for volunteer participants. Find out more at www.caffeunimatic.com. **Kara Plant McEachern** was selected as one of the Boston Bruins national anthem singers for the 2018–19 NHL hockey season. She performed at the Boston Bruins home game against the Detroit Red Wings on December 1, 2018. Out of more than 600 applicants, 52 finalists were chosen for live auditions, and Kara is one



Connor Gibbs '17

Composer

CLAIM TO FAME Connor Gibbs '17, a high school chorus teacher by day, uses much of his free time to compose music for voice and all kinds of instruments. Although it has only been two years since he finished his bachelor's degree in music, his works have been performed at his collegiate alma mater and around the world.

MUSICAL JOURNEYS In 2018, Gibbs traveled to Texas, England, and Cyprus to participate in composition workshops and hear his music performed. This spring, one of his works for string orchestra was premiered in Lviv, Ukraine, while the Wagner College Choir premiered a choral work in Staten Island. This summer, he is traveling to Boise, Idaho, and Pavia, Italy, for more concerts featuring his songs and a string quartet.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK "I do hope that the musical events will lead to further opportunities for me to write new music and see it brought to life," he said. "It can be a little addicting to get some special treatment on your own artistic creation, especially in a world where music and the arts can be underappreciated."

INSTRUMENTAL ARRAY Gibbs has written pieces for all of the instruments shown in the photo, taken in the chorus room at Springfield Central High School in Western Massachusetts, where he teaches. Gibbs is holding a bassoon; to his right are an alto saxophone and a French horn; behind him, a violin, cello, and bass. Next to his left foot lie an oboe, clarinet, and flute. Behind the flute is a waterphone. One side of a glockenspiel is peeking from the photo's right edge, and the small pianos are part of the expanded toy piano project that Gibbs created.

EXPANDED WHAT? Gibbs has created an instrument that links together five toy pianos, modified to produce pitches across nine octaves, giving the array a range greater than that of a grand piano. He has incorporated the waterphone, which can be bowed or drummed to produce an ethereal sound, into a piece called "Void" that also employs the glockenspiel and toy piano. "I get interested in weird stuff," he admits.

INSPIRATION Gibbs loves exploring the full variety of instruments, from E-flat clarinet to alto flute, in order to learn more about them. But his main aim is to entertain his listeners and create memorable moments that linger in the ear. He is inspired by the Impressionist music of Claude Debussy and the melodies of Franz Schubert. Go to his website, www.connorgibbs.com, to enjoy his music for yourself!

of five singers who were chosen. She is the office manager for the Plymouth Philharmonic Orchestra and the choir director for St. Francis of Assisi Church in New Bedford, Mass.

2007

Laura and Christopher Duni welcomed their third child, Anthony, on April 7, 2019. He is loved and adored by older sister, Natalie, and brother, Christopher. See Crib Notes, page 34, for a picture. **Nicole Giammarinano**, director of education and research for the Northwell Health Office of Patient and Customer Experience, co-authored a research study published in the *Patient Experience Journal* in November 2018. She also completed a collaborative narrative, which was published in the *Nursing Management Journal* in February 2019.

2008

Laura Ahern, a standout Wagner basketball player, was inducted into the 2019 class of the Roxbury (N.J.) High School Athletic Hall of Fame. During her high school career, Laura scored 1,632 points, making her the highest scorer among both boys' and girls' basketball teams at Roxbury. During her senior year, her team completed the season with a perfect 16-0 record. **Amanda Concilio Intoccia** and **Mark Intoccia '05** welcomed their third son, Vincenzo James Intoccia, into the



Christopher DeCarlo '07 and **Rachel Dunn '09** were married on July 28, 2018, in Hazlet, N.J. Pictured are the bride and groom with alumni from the classes of 2006 through 2012, including **Laura Garofalo '12**, **Christie Acquazzino '12**, **Danielle Modifica Collyer '11**, **Kristina Santoro Tuscano '09**, **Cassandra Bray '10**, **Tara Igneri Arnone '06 M'08**, **Sean Hazzard '06**, **Lauren Cascio '07**, **Adam Jacobs '07**, **Julia Gallagher Clancy '07**, **Jessica Knudsen Aloisio '08 M'09**, **Peter Aloisio '07 M'09**, **William Rodriguez '05**, **Ethan Kraft '12**, **Ryan Lynyak '06**, **Molly Lynyak '06**, **Kevin Rush '09 M'11**, **Danielle Diodati Rush '09**, **Chris Marino '08 M'09**, **Sean Piotrowski '06**, **Louis Berardocco '06 M'07**, **Mike Tuozzo '08**, **Danielle Blatchley '07**, **Matthew Mastriani '07 M'08**, **Alison Ginty Schmerler '07 M'08**, and **Lauren Rabadi '08**.



Kristen Dalto '09 M'11 and **Michael Pinto '10** were married on December 28, 2018, at Our Lady of the Sea Roman Catholic Church in Staten Island. The reception was at the Westmont Country Club in Woodland Park, N.J. Standing left to right: **Ruta Shah-Gordon**, **Gina DeSantis '00**, **David Gordon**, **Gerry Sliger**, **Joseph Cardone M'11**, **Christine Cardone '12 M'14**, **Harry Jackson III '09**, **Laura Dellavilla '09**, **Lana Herzig '12**, **Christina Moore-Avena '12**, **Michael Coppotelli '05**, **Nicholas Buchholz '17**, **Charlie Siedenbug '95**, **Joseph O'Malley '16**. Seated: **Dr. Louis De Santis '80**, **Maddy Sliger**, **Michael Pinto '10** and **Kristen Dalto Pinto '09 M'11**, **Carin Guarasci H'19**, and **Richard Guarasci H'19**. Photo by Cristina Calvi, Monarch Photography NY.

Nicole D'Orazio '11 and **Patrick Larkin '08 M'09** were married on February 22, 2019, in Playa Del Carmen, Mexico. Patrick had made a surprise proposal to Nicole at Wagner's Homecoming 2017, where he went on stage dressed as the Seahawk mascot.



world on November 16, 2018. See Crib Notes, page 34, for a photo. **Kevin Richard**, vice president of investment banking at NatWest Markets, visited campus on November 28, 2018, to host a seminar on what he wishes he had known about Wall Street when he was still in college.

2009

Kimberly Cantoni married Dr. Frank DiRoma on May 11 at the Church of St. Rita in Staten Island. Kimberly is the Monster Jam host for the live show production company Feld Entertainment. She was a New York Jets cheerleader for five seasons. She was a captain, Veteran of the Year, and the all-star cheerleader for the 2018 Pro Bowl. Frank earned his doctorate in osteopathic medicine from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, and he is a resident physician of general surgery for New York University Lutheran Hospital in Brooklyn. The couple plans to settle in Washington, D.C. **Danielle Sinagra '09 M'10** married Adam Montecalvo on July 13, 2018, at the Church of the Holy Child in Staten Island. Danielle has been working at New Dorp High School in the Institute of Health Sciences since she graduated.

2010

Caitlin McGee has been cast as the female lead in NBC's upcoming new series, *Bluff*

City Law. In this character-driven legal drama set in Memphis, Caitlin plays lawyer Sydney Strait opposite Jimmy Smits as Sydney's father, Elijah. The father and daughter have a tumultuous relationship, but they work together on controversial civil rights cases. Previously, Caitlin appeared on *Grey's Anatomy*, *You're the Worst*, and *I'm Dying Up Here*, among other shows.

2012

Nicholas Suppes '12 M'14 married **Julie Liss '14** on October 6, 2018, in Tarrytown, N.Y. The couple met at Wagner College in 2014.

2013

In February, **Travis Boucher M'13** was appointed the chief financial officer at Speare Memorial Hospital in Plymouth, N.H. He previously served as the chief financial officer at New Hampshire Hospital in Concord. Travis has also been a member and former president of the New Hampshire-Vermont chapter of the Healthcare Financial Management Association for over a decade. **Brittany Punzone** married Tim Ryan on April 14, 2018, at Sacred Heart Basilica in Newark, N.J. Brittany, who earned her second bachelor's in nursing from Wagner, is a registered nurse for Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in Manhattan. Tim is an

assistant vice president, property placement, for Willis Towers Watson in Manhattan.

2014

Alyssa Brown is working as the letters editor, copy editor, and page designer for the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. On April 15, the newspaper staff was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Breaking News for its coverage of the Tree of Life Synagogue shooting, which took place in October 2018. "I am overwhelmed with emotion," Alyssa wrote. "The continued coverage joined the community in a time of mourning, and the story of Pittsburgh, my hometown, was shared across the nation and even the world." Alyssa attributes her journalism career to her time on the *Wagnerian* staff and the guidance of Professor **Claire Regan '80**. "Before Wagner, I had no idea what I wanted to do as a career. But from the first Monday night *Wagnerian* meeting, I found my purpose. I am so thankful for everything I learned during my time at Wagner and the *Wagnerian*," she wrote. **Julie Liss** married **Nicholas Suppes '12 M'14** on October 6, 2018, in Tarrytown, N.Y. The couple met at Wagner College in 2014. **Samantha Weinstein**, a licensed real estate salesperson with Bohemia Realty Group, presented an apartment-hunting seminar at Wagner geared to graduating seniors

during the spring 2019 semester. She gave valuable tips for those who are looking for apartments in New York City.

2015

Kerri Lee Alexander, a doctoral student at Howard University and the education and public history fellow at the National Women's History Museum, curated the online exhibit "Sojourner Truth: A Women's Rights Activist." This exhibit, commissioned by Google Arts & Culture, was featured on the Google homepage in honor of Black History Month on February 1. Visit the museum's website, womenshistory.org, to find the exhibit.

2016

Devon Jones '16 M'17 has joined the RE/MAX Central Allentown (Penn.) office as an associate real estate agent. **Ben Ruta**, a former Wagner baseball standout, was recognized by the Minor League Baseball website, MiLB.com, as one of the New York Yankees Organization All-Stars in 2018. He played 83 games for the Class A Advanced Tampa Tarpons and the Double-A Trenton Thunder. This season, he continues with the Trenton Thunder, near his hometown, West Windsor, N.J. He is having a great season. "The Thunder outfielder is

finding the opportunity to live at home and commute to the very ballpark he frequented in his youth to be a convenience at a crucial juncture in his career," wrote Craig Forde for MiLB.com in May.

2017

In January, **Gabryel Masina-Oloapu** was named New Zealand Water Polo's Rookie Coach of the Year 2018. After graduation, she returned to her hometown, Auckland, New Zealand, where she has coached at the Diocesan School for Girls, Marist College (a Catholic secondary school for girls), and Auckland Normal Intermediate School.

2018

Jordan Gonzalez was accepted to graduate studies at the University of Southern California. Jordan will enter USC's Master in Curatorial Practices and the Public Sphere and Master of Urban Planning dual degree program. **Mary Helen Gustafson** was promoted to assistant producer with Schirmer Theatrical, a company that produces live symphonic experiences with organizations like the New York Philharmonic. In addition to her new job, Mary is planning on attending law school and will be taking the LSAT soon. **Armend Lajka** was accepted into Columbia University's MA in economics program.

In Memoriam

Celebrating lives that enriched the Wagner family

ALUMNI

Mrs. Margaret "Peggy" Gibson Fish '44

Mr. Ira Wells '48

Mrs. Hope Miralles Reeves '49

Dr. Evelyn Lindfors Spiro '49 H'92

Mr. Edwin Blaauw Jr. '50

Mr. Anthony J. Cicero '50

Mr. Theodore Doerzbacher '50

Mr. James E. Downing '50

Mr. Leonard E. Spalluto '50

Dr. Howard Storm '50

Ms. Florence M. Seidler '51

Mr. Palmer B. Thompson Jr. '51

Mrs. Marguerite C. Sprenger Schaedlich '52

Mrs. Margaret A. Rauffer Vogel '52

Mr. Edmund M. Diaz '53 M'57

Mr. Richard L. Dury '53

Mrs. Kathleen Ellen Gibbons Plourde '54

Dr. Harold G. Thompson '54

Dr. Royce A. Watson '54

Mrs. Dorothy Harris Lapnow '55

Mr. Louis A. Marciano '57

Dr. John Tice '57

Mrs. Ruth Lopez Anderson '58

Mr. Frank C. McLoughlin '58

Ms. Grace A. Petrone '58

Mr. Alfred C. Wagner '58

Mr. John W. Cafaro '59

Mr. Stephen W. Fedor '59

Mr. Frederick E. Preuss '59

Mrs. Joanne F. McAnn Rotmans '59

Mrs. Dianne P. Goetz Russonello '59

Mrs. Claire Lallier Safford '59

Mr. Frank J. Baldassarre '60 M'63

Mr. Thomas R. Cataneo '60

Mr. George F. Scarpato '61

Mr. Donald F. Jensen '62

Mr. Joseph S. Masterson '62

Mrs. Doris "Nancy" Blomstrom Carlton '64

Mr. David J. D'Agostino '64

Dr. Arthur L. Penchansky '64

Rev. John "Jack" Hicks '65

Mrs. Geraldine Uranga Beyfuss '66

Mrs. Dorothy Lichtenberg Steele '66

Mrs. Connie Burr Kiefer '67

Mr. Allen Eastby '68

Mr. Jim Gillick '68

Ms. Leslie W. Howard '69

Mr. John Curcio '70

Ms. Suzanne L. Felder '71

Mrs. Karen Kelly Bayersdorfer '72

Mr. John J. Klosin III '72

Mr. George A. Laszlo '72

Mrs. Katherine M. Sanfilippo Barbera '76

Ms. Donna A. Stockhoff '76

Mr. Michael Celardo '80

Mrs. Rita A. Melfi Labita '80

Mr. Reynold P. Stupler '80

Rev. Dr. William E. Bogholtz '81

Mr. Joseph P. Wainwright '81

Mr. Harry A. Trismen M'82

Mr. Gregory A. Nellis '84

Ms. Elizabeth A. Stitley M'97

Ms. Sarah A. Richer '98

Mr. Tyamonee A. Johnson '18 M'19

STAFF

Mrs. Lucy Calabrese

Mrs. Bernadette Crea

Mrs. JoAnn Venturella

WAGNER LEGACIES

Dr. Evelyn Lindfors Spiro '49 H'92

Nursing alumna Evelyn Lindfors Spiro '49 H'92 died on March 23, 2019. She was 90 years old.

Her husband, Dr. Donald W. Spiro '49 H'88, chairman emeritus and lifetime member of the Wagner College Board of Trustees, predeceased her in 2017.

"The Spiros have meant so much to our Wagner community, and we are particularly grateful for Evelyn's contributions," said Dr. Warren Procci '68 H'17, chair of the Board of Trustees.

In 2005, the College's nursing program was named the Evelyn Lindfors Spiro School of Nursing, recognizing the lifetime contributions of Evelyn and Don.

"The School of Nursing will forever value her love of nursing and her desire to position Wagner's nursing program at the forefront of quality education," said Dr. Patricia Tooker '79 M'95 D'16, dean of the Evelyn L. Spiro School of Nursing. "We will continue to make her proud, each and every day."

Evelyn Lindfors met Donald Spiro when they were students at Wagner College, both graduating in 1949. Evelyn was one of the earliest graduates of the nursing program. She went on to become the youngest operating room supervising nurse in the history of Staten Island Hospital. She and Donald had three children: Donald, a 1975 Wagner graduate; Corylee; and Kimberly, a Wagner College trustee.

"The list of what *wouldn't* have been at Wagner College, had it not been for the Spiros, is enormous," wrote Chaplain Lyle Guttu in his 1992 citation for Evelyn's honorary doctorate. "Evelyn Spiro reminds us all that sharing one's good fortune is essential to sustain the foundation of a civilized society. She has demonstrated this repeatedly, from her support for the hospice program nationally, to her leadership role in the renovation of Carnegie Hall and, most significantly, to the renaissance of Wagner College."



Professor Al Wagner '58



Alfred Carl "Al" Wagner died on December 6, 2018, in Fort Myers, Florida. He was 86 years old. He worked at Wagner College for 34 years, serving as the director of audio and visual services and also teaching courses in theater and education.

Al Wagner was born in Brooklyn, New York. He served in the Marine Corps before attending Wagner College. Following his graduation in 1958, he worked as the designer and stage manager for a summer theater program on Long Island. There he met his future wife, Carole Sutton. The two were married the next year and moved to Pennsylvania, where Wagner worked in the theater department at the University of Pittsburgh while pursuing a graduate degree at Carnegie Tech (now Carnegie Mellon University).

In 1961, he started working at Wagner College while also completing his master's degree in educational theater at New York University.

Professor Wagner's colleagues and students remember him for his passion for theater and dedication to his work. Walt Kristiansen '63 met Al Wagner during his freshman year through the Varsity Players, the student theater group, which put on performances for the College and church groups throughout New York City.

"Al was instrumental in the audio and visual department, and truly instrumental in the theater program at Wagner College," Kristiansen said.

In 1996, the Wagners retired and moved to Cape Coral, Florida. They worked with the Cultural Park Community Theatre until Carole's death in 2003. In his final years, Wagner served as the director of the drama ministry at Burnt Store Presbyterian Church in Punta Gorda, Florida.

Wagner's passion for theater led to more than 60 years of contributions to various organizations and productions. He designed sets and lighting for over 460 productions, while also directing more than 120 of them, for summer theater, off-Broadway shows, colleges, a touring religious theater group, the First Avenue Playhouse in Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey, and numerous other church and community theaters.

"He loved theater," said Gary Sullivan, Wagner professor of arts administration in the Department of Theatre and Speech. "That's what floated his boat. He was an unabashed buff."

Professor Donald Krug



Retired professor Donald Krug died on January 26, 2019. Krug taught sociology and anthropology at Wagner from 1964 to 1996. Krug was born in 1936 in St. Albans, Queens. He earned his BA at Queens College and his MA at New York University, where he also completed some doctoral work. According to his daughter, Kelly Krug Fackelman '87, he loved to paint and garden; was

involved in Trinity Episcopal Church in Roslyn, New York; and was a docent at Mill Neck Manor House for many years. "He took really good care of all his kids," she said. Besides Kelly, his children include Kevin Krug and Perry Krug, and he had one cherished grandson, James Krug.

Professor Suzanne Hevner



Suzanne Hevner, adjunct professor of theater, died on January 4, 2019. She had been an adjunct professor since 2015, teaching courses such as Acting for the Camera, Improv, and Public Speaking. She was featured in television series such as *Law and Order*, *Orange Is the New Black*, and *Master of None*. According to theater department chair Felicia Ruff, Hevner contributed

greatly to the department and to students. "She moved easily from advanced acting students to non-majors and was a major force in our department and our profession in a quiet, quirky, and fiercely smart way," Ruff said.

The Book That Changed My Life

It opened my eyes to the lives of others, including those of my own family

By Maria Giura '90

In my sophomore year of high school, I took a course titled Literature of New York with Mr. G., who was so handsome my all-girls school buzzed. He wore glasses and a three-piece suit, was smart and soft-spoken. We read stories like Albert Halper's "Scab!" about the taxi unions and J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. While the image of Holden Caulfield trying to save children about to fall over a cliff is forever engraved on my brain, it wasn't this novel that made me cry or that helped chart my trajectory as a writer. It was Pietro di Donato's *Christ in Concrete*.

I still remember the classroom, how, even though it was the spring semester, the trees outside our window were naked with winter. I remember the anger I felt as I read the book, the tears rising up the inside of my nose: *How could people do this to other people, to children?* Published in 1939 — the same year as John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* — *Christ in Concrete* also became one of the year's most heralded reads. It's about an Italian immigrant bricklayer named Geremio, who dies on Good Friday when he falls from the building he is helping to build. Geremio is swallowed by the concrete, which crushes him as it dries around him, his arms outstretched like Christ's on the cross. Di Donato's own father died in a construction accident on Good Friday in 1923, when di Donato was 12. *Christ in Concrete*

“The impulse to write stems from our need to be heard.”

is about the emotional, spiritual, and economic suffering that Geremio's wife and their seven children, especially their oldest son, 12-year-old Paul, endure after Geremio dies. It's a gruesome death that could have been avoided if it had not been for the greed of the American business owners, who allowed terrible working conditions, and also the greed of some Italian-American *padroni*, middle men who looked the other way. It's also about the widespread, blatant discrimination against Italians. When Paul goes to the police precinct to identify his father's body, one of the cops calls out, "What? — Oh yeah — the wop is under the wrappin' paper in the courtyard!"

Christ in Concrete was one of the first books to *show* me people's suffering, to tenderize me and move me beyond myself. I had never before seen immigrants, especially Italian immigrants, as characters in a book. I had never experienced an Italian dialect on the page. I had certainly never seen in print the broken English

I sometimes heard my grandparents speak, which di Donato elevated to literature. It was also the first time I read a novel that showed great tenderness for Christ's broken body by describing Geremio's. I experienced such a strong sense of recognition and pride. The novel became deeply personal. It woke me up to the poverty that my parents and grandparents endured in southern Italy during World War II and made me appreciate their tenacity before and after they immigrated to America in the 1950s. It eventually made me want to learn and write about their lives. It made me want to go in search of other authors like di Donato. It made me want to become one of them or at least something like them.

It wasn't until my late twenties, when I was pulled to the Italian American Writers Association, that I began to listen to the desires of my heart. Part of what IAWA did was help connect me to other writers, including the acclaimed poet Maria Mazziotti Gillan. For the first 40 years of her life, Mazziotti wrote poems that mimicked the English Romantic male poets; she thought that was what she was supposed to write, that those were the only kinds of poems that existed. But after 40, she started writing what she really wanted to write: autobiographical free verse about the tight-knit, blue-collar, Sicilian American immigrant home she grew up in. Although in

that home she felt loved and proud and happy, outside that home she was always afraid “the Italian word [would] sprout from [her] mouth like a rose.” In Mazziotti’s poetry, I recognized that the impulse to write stems from our need to be heard, to give witness to our lives, to help give witness to others’ lives.

Because of her, I started writing a lot and often. I learned that poetry can be autobiographical, angry, tender. I learned how emotion is done well on the page, that it must be done well. The best writing is the kind that gives you chills up your back or makes you cry like *Christ in Concrete* did for me. It’s not distant or general; it’s rich, sensual, imaginative. It tells the truth even if it’s fiction. In addition to helping me tap into and trust my own voice, Mazziotti was also a bridge to a long list of other authors who write about the experience of being a female immigrant or “hyphenated” American, women whose work became a focus for my doctoral studies, including Helen Barolini, Toni Morrison, Barbara Grizzuti Harrison, Louise DeSalvo, Tina DeRosa, Alice Walker, Esmeralda Santiago, Jamaica Kincaid, Amy Tan, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Naomi Shihab Nye, Louisa Ermelino, Sandra Cisneros, Josephine Gattuso Hendin, Edvige Giunta, Rita Ciresi, Kym Ragusa, Jhumpa Lahiri, Mary Cappello, Veronica Chambers. They tell stories of displacement and adjustment, suffering and hope. They give readers an opportunity to inhabit a world, to understand.

In *A Wrinkle in Time*, Madeleine L’Engle writes: “A book, too, can be



a star, explosive material, capable of stirring up fresh life endlessly, a living fire to lighten the darkness.” Sometimes the darkness comes from not knowing or understanding other people’s plights; sometimes it comes from not knowing our own families’ plights. All these years and degrees later, so many books — including many of these women’s books — have brought me into greater light. And it all began in that cinderblock classroom in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn. If I saw Mr. G. today, I’d thank him for the book that helped change my life, that led

me to so many others, that made me care for more than my little world.

If I saw Mr. G. today, I’d tell him I had a crush on him, too.

Maria Giura '90 delivered a version of this reflection to the Italian American Women of Staten Island at their 2019 Women in History Luncheon. Her first book, What My Father Taught Me, published by Bordighera Press, is a finalist for the Paterson Poetry Prize. Her second book, a memoir, is forthcoming from Apprentice House Press in October. www.mariagiura.com

WAGNER COLLEGE



Not Too Far from Home

The Wagner College Seahawk Marching Band has appeared in a couple of movies already over the past few years. This year, they made their debut in a genuine summer blockbuster in the Marvel series: *Spider-Man: Far from Home*. They made a video about how the band (including the Seahawk) prepared for the role. (Spoiler alert: It's not as high-tech as Hollywood.) We've posted it at wagner.edu/wagnermagazine.

PHOTOGRAPH: JONATHAN HARKEL