West Babylon Alumni Foundation

Hall of Fame Induction Dinner

November 7, 2015
Program

Pledge of Allegiance
Welcome
Ralph Rienzo ‘64, President
West Babylon Alumni Foundation

Superintendent’s Message
Dr. Yiendhy Farrelly

Board of Directors’ Award
Barry Titone
Wally Alesse

Dinner

Hall of Fame Inductees
Anthony Cacciola ‘79
Dr. Mark Thompson ‘79
Constance Campanella ‘73
Eileen Naughton Roberto ‘70
John Zaruka ‘69

Closing Remarks
Ralph Rienzo

Dessert
Hall of Fame Inductees

2009
Erica Crespi ‘88
Jonathan Reese ‘86
Mozelle Thompson ‘72
Judy Skillen
Senator Owen H. Johnson
Helmer Petersen (posthumously)

2011
Dr. William G. Hawkins ‘87
Lawrence Doyle ‘76
Dr. Christopher Proto ‘72
Dr. Daniel McCally ‘64
Major Melvyn Kloor ‘59

2010

2013
Patrick M. Farrell ‘73
Michael J. Rizzo ‘67
Dominick Varrone ‘67
Dr. John Bernardo ‘64

2014
Shannon Smith ‘08
Harold Dieterle ‘95
Patrick Halpin ‘71
Vincent DiMartino ‘66
Russell D. Van Brunt (posthumously)

Thomas C. Teufel ‘88
Dr. Charles Thompson ‘72
Thomas McAteer ‘71
Justice Ralph Costello ‘59
H. Austin Sheldon, Jr., (posthumously)

2012
Dr. Debra Viti ‘77, (posthumously)
Eric Kraft ‘61
Silvio Impagliazzo
Hall of Fame Board of Directors’ Awards

2010
Dr. Robert J. Manley

2011
Martin P. Kennedy
Dr. Anthony Capone
Mathew Wilensky

2012
Frank Taplin

2013
Margaret (Peggy) Ehrensperger

2014
Phillip Ames

2015
Wally Alesse
Barry Titone
WALLY ALESSE
RETIRED MUSIC TEACHER

Although Mr. Alesse says he has little memory of the beginning of his musical life, he does recall his mother telling him that one night around midnight, she and his father were awakened by the sound of the family piano. She said she went to the parlor to find Wally playing the piano. He was 3 years old. It had no conformity to her, but in Wally’s mind, he was totally engrossed in what to him created great musical satisfaction.

In kindergarten, Wally gravitated toward the piano in the classroom. He says he must have impressed his teacher as one day after class, she took him to the auditorium to show him the 9-1/2 foot concert grand piano. Wally said he sat at the piano and was so totally captivated with its beautiful sound that he didn’t notice a gentleman had entered the auditorium. He learned later that the gentleman was the school principal who, throughout Wally’s elementary schooling, gave him encouraging compliments. Memories of Wally’s playing continue in Junior High School in Brooklyn where he played clarinet in the school orchestra. The JHS principal urged him to study the string bass as the orchestra was lacking that instrument. He continued to study and perform on string bass until he graduated. His mother wanted him to continue his musical studies in High School. However, at that time, high schools in New York City lacked music departments. Only the High School of Music and Art and the High School of Performing Arts offered music courses. Wally auditioned for the High School of Music and Art and was accepted. That school prepared him well for college. After World War II, he entered The Manhattan School of Music, under the GI bill, where he majored in piano and graduated in 1952 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. The following year, he returned to earn his Masters Degree with a major in Music Theory and Composition.

In 1958, Mr. Alesse joined the Guy Lombardo orchestra, performing at the Peter Stuyvesant Hotel in New York City where the television performances were created for New Years Eve. A year later, he left the band to return to college to earn a Masters Degree in Education. In 1962, he began teaching at the West Babylon Senior High School where he remained until his retirement in 1985. Mr. Alesse said his years at West Babylon were most rewarding! Working with the music students was a Joy!

Presently, Mr. Alesse is performing in Port Jefferson in the Wave Lounge at Danfords Hotel and Marina. At ninety-one years of age, he is still performing. Mr. Alesse said he is always surprised when patrons comment "you're ninety-one years old and you're playing the piano". His response "musicians never die they just fade away" always gets a chuckle.
BARRY TITONE
RETIRED MUSIC TEACHER

Born and raised in New York, Barry Titone attended PS 93 and Grover Cleveland High School. During his service in the US Marine Corp, he played with the Marine Band. He then went on to receive his ABS and MA degrees from the Manhattan School of Music.

Mr. Titone taught music in West Babylon for 25 years, retiring as the High School Music Department Chairman. He stated: "One quarter of my life was spent at West Babylon, where I had wonderful students who, to this day when I think of all of them, brings a smile to my face. It gives me great pleasure to know that so many went on to become professional musicians! Ed DeIulio and I built a music department that was the envy of many local schools!" During the summer, Mr. Titone taught music at The University of Idaho.

Mr. Titone performed on several jazz cruises with select jazz musicians. Most notably, Mr. Titone performed for many years with jazz legend Lionel Hampton. In fact, he performed at many presidential inaugurations with the Lionel Hampton Orchestra. Lionel Hampton expressed a distinct admiration for Long Island, saying that over the years a number of his musicians came from West Babylon High School. Hampton praised both Barry Titone and Ed DeIulio. Lionel Hampton stated: “Local schools like West Babylon are a good source of musical talent. You hear about them throughout the music business.”

Mr. Titone retired to Florida and still performs with The Hernando Jazz Society and at local jazz clubs and concerts.
Anthony Cacciola is a 1979 West Babylon graduate. He began working for the West Babylon Schools in 1976 when he was in 10th grade earning $2.85 an hour as a part-time custodian. His father worked as a custodian there and his mother as a cook. His goal was to save for college and study to become a music teacher. When his mother died during his senior year of high school, and his father in poor health, Cacciola, an only child, decided to attend college locally. When he graduated in 1979, he attended Suffolk County Community College during the day and signed on as a full-time custodian for the school district, cleaning buildings at night. He then attended Long Island University to pursue a degree in music education. In 1983, with only his student teaching left to go, he quit college when the district offered him a position as head custodian in charge of Santapogue School. Cacciola quickly worked his way through the department. Three years later, he was promoted to chief custodian, overseeing the operation and maintenance of the West Babylon Junior High School. He was promoted in 1989 to superintendent of buildings and grounds, overseeing the district’s physical facilities and capital projects. With the encouragement of his mentor, Dr. Dorothy Pierce, Cacciola went back to C. W. Post to finish his bachelor’s degree and pursue graduate study in school business administration. He received a master of science degree in educational leadership and administration in 1994. When Dr. Pierce retired as assistant superintendent for finance, Cacciola assumed the role of school business administrator in 1993, followed by his appointment to assistant to the superintendent for finance, a position he held for five years before becoming assistant superintendent for finance. Mr. Cacciola served as president of the Suffolk County Association of School Business Officials from 2004-2005. In 2007, Mr. Cacciola was named the district’s superintendent of schools, a position he held until his retirement in January, 2015. In 2008, Mr. Cacciola received the New York State Association of School Business Officials Starfish Award, given to only one school business official in New York State to recognize exemplary service in the field of school business administration. In 2014, Mr. Cacciola served as president-elect of the Suffolk County School Superintendents Association. Mr. Cacciola also served as an adjunct assistant professor at Dowling College and Long Island University where he taught various graduate courses in school district administration and finance. He has provided inspirational speeches for organizations and articles on his career appeared in Newsday and The New York Times and was televised on ABC News.

Mr. Cacciola is very proud of his involvement in the West Babylon School District for a period of 38 ½ years. He has never worked for another employer and had perfect attendance for 28 years. He is particularly proud of leading the district during the most challenging fiscal times and leading the district during the South Bay Fire, the largest school building loss in New York State history. He is also proud of his work with the West Babylon Alumni Foundation and the West Babylon Main Street Organization.

Mr. Cacciola left the district fiscally sound with a “sense of pride and accomplishment and with rewarding memories and experiences.” Although he moved to Florida, he will always call West Babylon his home. He will also never forget the motto “Once an Eagle, always an Eagle.”
Mark K. Thompson graduated from West Babylon High School where he was an outstanding member of the Class of 1979. He continued his education by graduating from Harvard University, and thereafter, received his medical degree from Tufts University Medical School where he served on the student council and received the Community Service Award.

Mark completed his residency in neurosurgery at The Temple University Hospital and a fellowship in complex spine surgery at The University of Toronto. From early in his medical training, Mark developed a keen interest in bringing first tier medical care to underserved communities. As a result, Mark worked at New York inner city hospitals becoming Director of the Sarah and James Brady Brain Injury Program at the Jamaica Hospital Center and then Chief of Neurosurgery at Kings County Hospital. He also served as Vice Chairman of Neurosurgery at SUNY Downstate Medical School where he has trained new generations of doctors.

Mark's commitment to public service is evidenced by his history of involvement in many student, community, and institutionally based organizations. He has been recognized as an Outstanding Young Man of America and acknowledged by Who's Who. His service has also been recognized by the U.S. Army, from whom he received the Commander’s Service Medallion and the NYC Police Department where he serves as an Honorary Police Surgeon.

Mark gratefully acknowledges the important educational foundation provided by the fine teachers of the West Babylon Schools.

Mark is also eternally grateful for the outstanding upbringing provided by his parents: the late Charles and Eiko Thompson; support of his siblings: Charles Jr., Mozelle and Berdette Thompson, and his friends and fellow alumni from West Babylon.
Constance "Connie" Campanella is a 1973 graduate of West Babylon High School. She later graduated from Adelphi University with a degree in Speech Arts. While entering Adelphi on a full scholarship to study Speech Pathology and Audiology, Connie's long held fascination with politics and public policy found purpose in a campus organization she eventually led as its Chair.

In 1976, Connie was honored to serve as New York State Youth for Reagan Chair and led a caravan of college students to Kansas City for the Republican National Convention. Early that year, while interning for U.S. Senator James Buckley, she was invited to deliver a re-nomination speech for the Senator, on behalf of the youth of New York State, at Town Hall in New York City. Joining her on stage was the late Congressman Jack Kemp (R-Buffalo), a free-market icon who invited her on-the-spot to interview for his Washington, D.C. staff -- an invitation she accepted in 1977, shortly after moving to Virginia.

In 1978, Connie left Capitol Hill to work for a national, bipartisan association of state legislators. Sharing responsibility for fundraising, membership development and events management, she also had the opportunity to testify before the U.S. Senate and to lead a national public policy campaign impacting state authority under the U.S. Constitution.

She then moved to the Reagan Administration in 1981, then back to Capitol Hill as Chief Legislative Assistant for Oklahoma Congressman Mickey Edwards (R) and then back to the Reagan Administration as Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Transportation in 1982. In 1984, she was offered the opportunity to return to the state legislator association as its Executive Director. Among her achievements as Executive Director, Connie initiated the creation of a national organization of free market-oriented state think tanks and served as its first President. The organization remains in existence today.

In 1988, Connie accepted the opportunity to work as a state government relations consultant to RJR Nabisco. Setting up shop in a spare bedroom of her apartment, Connie discovered that a national policy-focused approach to state government relations was in demand. Soon, RJR Nabisco was joined by General Electric, Philip Morris, Dow, 3M, Rent a Center and other clients.

Today, 27+ years later, Stateside Associates is the largest state and local government relations consulting firm. With a staff of over 50 in service to 140 corporate, association and U.S. government clients, Connie now holds the title, Chairman Emeritus as she works toward retirement in December, 2015. Stateside Associates has been called "a behemoth of state lobbying," and its many innovations in the creation and delivery of state government relations services have served as benchmarks for almost three decades. While Stateside Associates has been successful in many respects, Connie is most proud of the fact that over a dozen employees of the firm have moved on in their careers to become clients. Connie's professional leadership credentials include membership on the Boards of Directors of the Public Affairs Council and the Washington Area State Relationship Group. In 2006, Connie served as an Adjunct Professor for the George Washington University Graduate Program in Political Management, teaching a course about State Government Relations. Throughout her career she has been a frequent lecturer and author about the strategies embodied in successful state and local government relations.

When not working at Stateside, Connie has dedicated herself to her husband Kevin, their family, their dogs and to wild birds and other wildlife. An avid birder, she serves as a member of the Board of Directors of New Jersey Audubon and previously served as a Director of the American Bird Conservancy where she co-led an initiative to reduce the harvest of horseshoe crabs in the Delaware Bay in order to preserve a critical food source for migrating shorebirds.

In 2014, Connie co-founded the Race 4 Birds Foundation, Inc., a tax-exempt, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting youth birding competitions as a means of encouraging young people to become more engaged with birds, other wildlife and the outdoors. Connie serves as President of the Race 4 Birds Foundation.

Connie also serves her adopted home community of Cape May Point, New Jersey as a member of the Board of Directors of the Cape May Point Taxpayers Association and as a member of the Civic Association.
EILEEN NAUGHTON ROBERTO, RN
CLASS OF 1970

Eileen Roberto graduated from West Babylon High School in 1970. While raising her three children, she attended evening college and earned her RN degree in 1982. Eileen’s passion for improving end-of-life care began as a staff nurse on the oncology unit at Good Samaritan Hospital. She became a clinical bedside leader and advocated for patients in every possible venue. She sat with patients and families and developed the skills to initiate difficult conversations that other health-care providers often avoided. She enlightened administrators and nursing leaders on the unique needs of the dying patient. Eileen advanced to the role of clinical coordinator of the Breast Health Center. Seeing the positive effect of supporting the breast cancer patient and family from diagnosis through treatment, she recognized the need to further advance this philosophy of care and expanded this service to include patients with other illnesses. Thus began her journey into palliative care. She began with a nurse-driven consultation service to help support patients and their families facing serious illness. This philosophy of care quickly gained the expertise of a Palliative Medicine physician and an entire interdisciplinary team. The program became the model for growth for Palliative Care Services. Eileen is now the Administrative Director of Palliative Care for Catholic Health Services of Long Island.

She also partnered with nursing colleagues from hospice and home care to form the Long Island Chapter of the Hospice and Palliative Nurse Association and served as President. Joining forces on a national level, she has been a presenter at conferences across the country. She was the recipient of the “2009 Project on Death in America Nursing Leadership Award” and the “Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council Award for Nursing Excellence” as well as other honors. In addition, she served a six year tenure as the volunteer Administrative Vice-President of the Long Island Chapter of the Make-A-Wish Foundation.
JOHN ZARUKA  
CLASS OF 1969

John and his sister, Irene Zaruka (Carjonga), grew up in Babylon and attended West Babylon Schools starting at South Bay Elementary and graduating from WB High School in 1969. John’s was an idyllic childhood with his wonderful parents Bill and Alice. He lettered in four sports at West Babylon while maintaining an advanced course load. He was a member of the first golf team and has the honor of hitting the first shot in that program, (maybe into the lake?). John began his hospitality career at Cedar Beach where his parents had a beach concession and golf course. Along with John, many other local kids got their first job at “Cedar” where they learned work ethic and the basics of business, guest service and, of course, surfing and golf. He loved the hospitality industry and was fortunate enough to be accepted into the Cornell University Hotel School, graduating in 1973. Immediately after graduation, John went to work for Winegardner & Hammons operating hotels throughout the US. His first assignment was in Boise, Idaho, where he met his love, Linda.

In 1984, the Zarukas decided to move back west and, in 1986, purchased their own business, a failing restaurant at a public golf course. The business plan was to develop a banquet only business and to deliver quality F&B to the golfers. Starting with no guests and no employees, the Wedgewood Wedding and Banquet Center brand is now the largest banquet chain in the country, with over thirty facilities hosting nearly ten thousand events a year with $50 million in revenue and employing over 700 employees in five states. The Wedgewood is a family enterprise. Son Bill joined the company full time in 2002 and as President, has overseen this rapid expansion and daughter Stacy resides as the General Manager of the original Wedgewood where she has worked for 25 years.

The Zaruka family believes in sharing their success. For more than thirty years, they have become well known philanthropists in Ventura County, contributing time, money, and effort raising millions of dollars for charities such as FoodShare, Boys & Girls Club, Ventura County Medical Foundation, the Unforgettable Foundation, and the Turning Point Foundation. John is Director Emeritus of the California Restaurant Association, a 30 year member and Past President of his Rotary Club, and a FoodShare Director. He is currently President of the Tower Club of Oxnard.

John and Linda currently reside in Camarillo, California, but John still considers 17 Ross Road as his home base. Alice still lives there as she has for all of John’s 64 years.
ABOUT THE FOUNDATION
The West Babylon Alumni Foundation was established in 1997 and re-organized in 2008. The West Babylon Alumni Foundation is comprised of graduates from 50 years of students.

The purpose of the Foundation is to perpetuate the “tradition of excellence” in the West Babylon School District.

The Foundation has set goals of awarding scholarships, creating a “Hall of Fame” and establishing a website, as well as a grant program for student clubs and organizations.

THE MISSION
The West Babylon Alumni Foundation, Inc. is a broadly based, non-profit organization whose purpose is educational and charitable to secure and distribute contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations for the benefit of the students in the West Babylon Public Schools and by doing so, perpetuate the unique experience and traditions.

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You can find the Foundation on the school district’s website at:
www.wbschools.org and also at  www.westbabylonalumni.org

Register as an alumni ~ See Reunion listings ~ Get Foundation Information

Or contact us at:
wbalumni@wbschools.org
2015 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

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Mr. Robert C. Gamba
Miss Cassie Anne Lazzaro
Miss Melissa A. Riback
Mr. Taylor Shannon

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Miss Nadine Doerbecker

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**WEST BABYLON ALUMNI FOUNDATION CLASS OF 1986 MEMORIAL ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP**
Miss Kolette Bodenmiller
Miss Alyssa Campbell
Sponsors

West Babylon Lions Club—Tony Orrino, President
West Babylon Fire Department—Chief’s Office Peter Mc Ardle, Chief
Cosmo’s Service Station—Joseph Barbieri ‘72
Joan & Thomas Weinschenk

Donors

The Cannizzaro Family (in honor of Anthony Cacciola)
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Wally Alesse & Barry Titone)
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(in honor of Anthony Cacciola, Wally Alesse & Barry Titone)
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Mr. Mozelle Thompson (in honor of Dr. Mark Thompson)
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West Babylon String Ensemble
under the direction of Barbara Kelly