

# Bennett Beacon



Summer 2021 • Volume 23/Issue 2

Alumni Edition

Bennett High School • 2885 Main Street • Buffalo, New York 14214 • (716) 816-4250 • [www.bennettalumni.com](http://www.bennettalumni.com)

## 2020 - 2021 Officers

### BAA President

Irene McLeish Greene, '57

### Vice Presidents

Carol Newman Caserta, '60  
Neil Lange, Faculty

### Treasurer

Lawrence Levin, '57

### Recording Secretary

Marilyn Wittman, Faculty

### Corresponding Secretary

Jacqueline Hillary Jordan, '72

### Past Presidents

Phillip Brothman, '56  
Wayne Reilly, '47  
Dr. Leonard Katz, '53

### LJBHS Principal

Carlos Alvarez, Jr.

### Faculty Liaison

Richard Rittling

## DIRECTORS

### Class of 2021

-Linda Barker Moore, '68  
-Carol Newman Caserta, '60  
-Marsha Jadd, '58  
-Mark Overall, '03  
-Vacant  
-Vacant

### Class of 2022

-Deby Fox-Hahn, '60  
-Christopher Hough, '73  
-Neil Lange, Faculty  
-Irene McLeish Greene, '57  
-Marilyn Wittman, Faculty  
-Jacqueline Hillary Jordan, '72

### Class of 2023

-Cecilia Henderson, Faculty  
-Margaret Lanz Puzio, '68  
-Lawrence Levin, '57  
-Ryan Montgomery, '13  
-Sue Shaffer Gardner, '48  
-Kathy Bulluck, Faculty

BY CARLOS ALVAREZ, JR.

## From Our Principal's Desktop



**No one could have** predicted that COVID -19 would have changed lives the way it has. In February 2021, we were able to welcome a quarter of our students back in the building for traditional school instruction and the remaining students were permitted to return to the building in April 2021.

Although all students were offered the opportunity to return to the building beginning in April, less than half of our students actually returned for traditional instruction. Due to the many students that opted to continue with remote learning, our teachers sustained with incorporating innovative strategies to meet the needs of our students.

Due to the dedication and persistence of our staff and students, we continued to meet school-wide performance goals. Our students maintained their focus on academic achievement throughout the school year and continued to earn credits towards graduation. In fact, our unofficial graduation rate for the Class of 2021 is 89.2%. This will surpass the district's graduation rate for the last two consecutive years. Last year we surpassed the New York State graduation rate, and we look forward to topping this rate for consecutive years as well.

Our students continue to fulfill our expectations and our motto, "Demand More, Expect More and Achieve More!"

As we continued to work towards some level of normalcy, we were

able to conduct two graduation ceremonies in the auditorium, obeying capacity regulations. In addition, each student was able to invite two guests to attend the ceremonies. I began my Principal's address with, "What a day; What a year; What an accomplishment".

I believe that these were fitting words for all that our students have experienced over their four years of high school.

As we continue to build our school, we will be adding two additional Advanced Placement (AP) course offerings in September. These offerings will increase our AP courses to eight. We now will have:

- AP Language
- AP World History
- AP United States History
- AP Government and Politics
- AP Biology
- AP Computer Science
- AP Environmental Science
- AP Literature

See... *Principal's Desktop*

 It's time to start thinking about the Lewis J. Bennett High School 100th Anniversary in 2025. If you're like me, that seems so far away. In reality, it isn't. There is a whole lot of planning that needs to be done to guarantee the year of celebration our beloved school deserves.

To that end, we are starting a planning committee. We would like to hold the first meeting in early January 2022. Your suggestions of what you would like to see as we celebrate our century are needed now.

Please send these ideas to Neil Lange's attention in care of the school or to [nlange@bennettalumni.com](mailto:nlange@bennettalumni.com).

...Principal's Desktop

From Page 1

Our school continues to grow and forge an identity. It is hard to believe that three short years ago, we did not offer any Advanced Placement courses. Providing our students the opportunity to take these challenging courses will allow our students to be enrolled in college-level courses and earn college credits while in high school.

We will be welcoming nearly 120 incoming Freshmen to our school as we continue to increase student enrollment and our school becomes a destination for students throughout the City of Buffalo. Our student enrollment will be nearly 400 as we resume our pursuit of having 700 students enrolled.

We are excited to share that 48 of the nearly 120 incoming Freshman will be enrolled in our P-

TECH program. I have been communicating for three years that we have been working on this program and we are finally ready to implement this tremendous opportunity to our students! The P-TECH program integrates high school and college coursework, enabling students to begin college courses while in high school. Students also participate in a range of workplace opportunities that include mentoring, site visits and paid internships, which are designed to support students' academic and professional growth.

On behalf of our faculty, staff, and students, I would like to thank the Bennett Alumni Association for their continued support!

**Optima Futura**

**The Best is Yet to Be!**

BY MARGARET LANZ PUZIO, '68

## Bennett's Centennial Celebration Stories

**Much has changed since** my years at Bennett High School, but a continuous thread still connects me to the campus, the faculty, and the students whose lives are being shaped there now.

As part of our **Centennial Celebration of Bennett**, the Alumni Association would like to collect and publish reflections, memories, and photographs from alumni about their high school years, and especially how Bennett High School impacted those years and their futures. Each time I meet a Bennett grad or faculty member (and those meetings are many), I am struck by the significant impact our high school made on who we became as adults. Whether it was about sports, music, theater, academics, faculty members, or our social lives, we all have stories to tell.

So please jot down one or two of your Bennett memories (300 words or less) and send them by email [mpuzio@bennettalumni.com](mailto:mpuzio@bennettalumni.com), or US Post Office (address below), or the comment form on the website [www.bennettalumni.com](http://www.bennettalumni.com).

Bennett Alumni Association Centennial Stories  
2885 Main St.  
Buffalo, NY 14214.

# REUNION TIME?

**IS YOUR CLASS PLANNING A REUNION?**

We can help.

If your class is planning a reunion, tell us about it.

Use the form on our webpage:  
<https://www.bennettalumni.com/bennett-high-school/upcoming-reunions/>

We can help you publicize your reunion on our Facebook and Instagram pages and in our print edition of *Bennett Alumni Beacon*. Send us your reunion information, and we will be happy to post it.

For further information, contact Neil Lange at (716) 308-5451.

## News From Our Second Vice-President

**What an eventful 2021** we have had so far! COVID didn't slow us down; it just changed how we operated. And ZOOM meetings have opened a whole new opportunity for us.

First, I need to send best wishes for speedy recovery to our president, Irene Greene. Also, healing wishes for Board member Sue Gardner as she recovers from three broken ribs! Wishing all of you the best! We so appreciate you!!!

Secondly, we are losing our recording secretary, Deby Fox-Hahn, as she has resigned from her position, but, fortunately, not from the Board. We are so indebted to her for all she has done for so many years. (I'm guessing at least 14!!!) Welcome to Marilyn Wittman, who has agreed to fill in the secretary position-for the time being!

Our Bennett Alumni Association is unparalleled. I dare say there are few high school alumni groups that are able to do as much as we do. What our organization does is rescue the lives of so many current students at BHS. Each of our DUES PAYING members make all the difference in the world. Your financial support guarantees programs that simply

could not exist in Bennett.

Our new DUES YEAR is starting and I would love to double the number of DUES PAYING members. Last year we finished with 606 generous Alumni paying it forward. Wouldn't it be great if we were able to have over 1000 alumni making a contribution? I hope you remember your days at BHS and contribute accordingly!

When I look at all the work we do, not only at our monthly meetings, but many times each month, I'm in awe! Our working committees have blossomed over the years, and we continue to grow as we work to meet the needs of our beloved *School on the Hill*! Take a look at all of your Bennett Alumni working groups! If you want to help beyond your dues, send a message to me at 716-308-5451, and I will be glad to discuss where you could lend some expertise!

Looking forward to hearing from you soon!



BY NEIL LANGE, FACULTY

## Working Committees of the Bennett Alumni Association, Inc. Showing Our Blue and Orange

**Redesign Team** – Marilyn Wittman, Chair. Carlos Alvarez, Jr., Kathy Bulluck, Carol Caserta, Maureen England, Julie Horn, Marsha Jadd, Neil Lange, Sue Lenzer Brown, Margaret Puzio, Joanne Szejbka.

**Nominating Committee**– Carol Caserta, Chair. Kathy Bulluck

**Finance Committee** – Margaret Puzio, Neil Lange, Co-chairs. Larry Levin, Marilyn Wittman, Chris Salamone

**Endowment Committee**– Neil Lange, Margaret Puzio, Co-chairs. Phil Brothman, Jack Bilenko, Sue Gardner, Len Katz, Larry Levin

**Facilities** – Christopher Hough, Chair.

**Honor Roll** – Sue Gardner, Cecelia Henderson, Co-chairs.

**Alumni Gathering Committee** - Neil Lange, Chair. Diedre Webb, Joe Caccamise, Michael Wright, Cynthia Collins, Deborah Collins McCarter, Jackie Jordan, DeShawn Dozier, Anthony Karagiannis, Andrew Haggerty, Teresa Nash, John Fracos.

**Alumni Beacon** – Carol Caserta, Chair. Neil Lange, Marilyn Wittman, Mark Overall, Margaret Puzio.

**By-Laws Committee** - Mark Overall, Chair. Marsha Jadd, Chris Hough, Kathy Bulluck, Jackie Jordan, Joanne Szejbka

**Membership Committee** - Linda Moore, Chair

**Good and Welfare** - Cecelia Henderson, Chair

**School Liaison / Site Based** - Neil Lange, Chair. Marilyn Wittman

**100th Anniversary Committee**- Neil Lange, Chair We need to really build this group as we near our 100th anniversary celebration!!!



Bennett Alumni Association, Inc. proudly announces...

# Our First Annual **ALL Bennett Reunion** and **Honor Roll Induction** **Wine and Cheese Celebration**



Friday, September 24, 2021

5:00pm - 8:30pm

• Honor Roll Induction at 5:00pm

All Class Celebration follows

6:00pm - 8:30pm.

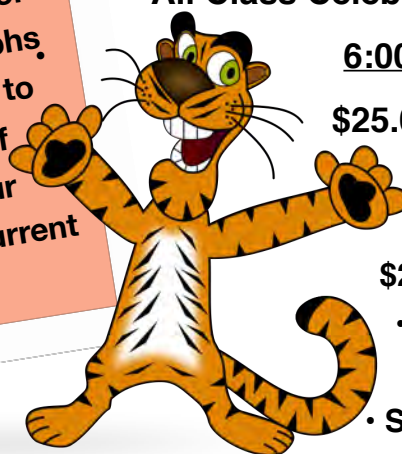
\$25.00 per person

Cash Bar

\$25.00 includes:

- Finger Foods,
- Gift Bag,
- Souvenir Glass,
- Soft Drinks
- Water

You are invited to return to your ALMA MATER and reconnect with old friends and former faculty members! In addition, we will honor eight alum for excellence. A Memory Board is being compiled for display. Please bring some photographs or memorabilia that you might want to have become a permanent part of our archives. Short stories of your days at BHS and tales about your current endeavors are welcomed!



Tickets are limited to the first 200 replies.  
Dress is Business Casual



Tickets may be purchased by mail or online at [bennettalumni.com](http://bennettalumni.com). Include your name, address, phone number and your guests' names. Please make checks payable to Bennett Alumni Association, Inc. and mail to:

**Bennett Alumni All Class Reunion**  
2885 Main Street  
Buffalo, NY 14214

For more details or for questions - - - call Neil Lange at 716-308-5451!!!

### *Class Notes*

## The 1950s

**Roberta Allbert Dayer, '53** and her husband, **Roger, '51** celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on June 16, 2021! Congratulations!!

### *Class Notes*

## The 1970s

**Peter Cammarata, '75** retired as the long-term president of the Buffalo Urban Development Corporation on April 2, 2021 after more than 14 years leading the agency and 25 years in Buffalo's economic development efforts.

### *Class Notes*

## The 1980s

**Lamar Smith, '82** has been selected to the Greater Buffalo Sports Hall of Fame. The ceremony will take place on October 14, 2021 at the Buffalo Niagara Falls Convention Center. Lamar, a noted sprinter, set records at Bennett, Alabama and Buffalo State. According to the Buffalo News, he was "the greatest sprinter WNY has ever produced." His 200-meter record still stands after 39 years.

### *Class Notes*

## The 1990s



**Edwin Jackson, Jr., '98** also known as "Ed Nice", is a pioneer in community development and housing, as well as a multi-media personali-

ty and DJ for Power 93.7 WBLK FM, heard every day in the afternoon. After Bennett, Ed attended Buffalo State College, majoring in communications and history. Ed joined the Power 93.7 WBLK team in 2005 and has more than 15 years of continuous service with the station. In addition to his time at Power 93.7, Ed has spent time on-air with WPYO in Orlando, FL, KJMH in Lake Charles, LA, KKFR in Phoenix, AZ, and CKEY in Ontario, Canada.

Ed also serves as the Director of Housing and Community Development for the Buffalo Urban League. He has an extensive background in fostering relationships between the community and for-profit sectors to leverage assets that can be used for building and sustaining the local community. Ed has worked with some of the largest banks and non-profits in our region and since 2016 has assisted in the deployment of more than \$100 million in real estate investments in our community.

Ed lives in Buffalo and is the proud father of two sons, Isaiah and Anderson.

### *Class Notes*

## The 2000s



**Krystle Babbs, '02.** After graduating from Bennett, Krystle obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Counseling

with a concentration in Psychology from Buffalo State College. She currently is employed by Western New York Independent Living as an independent living specialist,

working with the mentally and physically disabled. Krystle is also an owner of The Buffalo Nickel Express, a catering company that produces cuisine items exclusive to the Buffalo region, such as Buffalo Wings and Loganberry. She credits her years at Bennett High School for giving her the ability to achieve her goals and expand her capabilities.



**Dr. Aneesah N. Farris, '00** was the Class Valedictorian. She attended Bethune Cookman University and graduated

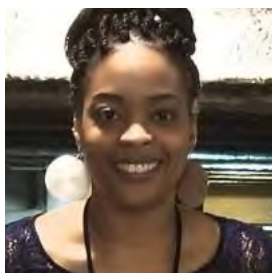
with a Biology degree in 2004. In college, Dr. Farris worked as a certified nursing assistant, where she first learned the art of compassion in health care. She subsequently earned her Master's in Health Care Administration from the University of Phoenix and her Doctorate in Chiropractic Medicine from the Palmer College of Chiropractic, Florida Campus. Since graduation, Dr. Farris has earned several alumni distinctions including being recognized as a 40 under 40 Award Recipient. Today, Dr. Farris is the proud owner of Helping Hands Family Chiropractic in Daytona Beach, Florida. A true servant leader in her community, Dr. Farris is an active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated and currently resides in Palm Coast, Florida, with her three sons, her daughter, and her husband, **Kevin Farris, '99**. In her spare time, Dr. Farris enjoys traveling, going to amusement parks, sporting activities, shopping, and reading together with her family.

### *Class Notes*

**Continued on page 6...**



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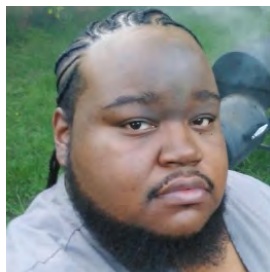
**Anna Cooke-Smith, '01** earned her Master's Degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration from Buffalo

State College. She is the Founder, Advisor, and Trainer of Black Mind Meditation and Coaching, an organization that provides consulting and training services for the higher education community, as well as for individuals in the areas of personal and professional development. As a college professor, she teaches classes focused on time management, career success, self-discovery, and self-reflection. You can explore Anna's work at [www.bmmandc.com](http://www.bmmandc.com).



**Tia Douglas, '04.** Tia attended University of Phoenix and obtained a degree in Business Administration. Tia loves to travel the

world singing as a professional background singer for many gospel artists. Tia currently serves as a Director in the PHP Agency, where she assists the community with obtaining financial services along with life insurance, retirement accounts, and credit repair. Tia's desire is to make sure that people within low-income communities are educated and financially set so they can be on a level playing field with everyone else. Tia is a proud wife and mother of two boys, ages 8 and 2.



**Darren Jones, '03,** attended Grambling State University for two years. He is currently work-

ing on earning his Registered Professional Reporter certification with the Stenographic Institute of Western New York, culminating as a fully certified court reporter. Darren previously completed an apprenticeship to become a Master Barber and has been a practicing barber for nine years. He currently serves clients at Clipper God's located at 2236 Genesee Street in Buffalo.



**Felicia Dudley, '04** went on to earn a degree in Criminal Justice from Buffalo State College. She subsequently

joined the Buffalo Police Department in 2015 and has been protecting our community in this capacity ever since. Currently a six-year veteran officer, Felicia remains happy and humble and is a loving wife and mother.

**Isaiah McDuffie,** Football Team and linebacker at Boston College was selected by the Green Bay Packers in the sixth round of the NFL draft. This makes him the first BPS product to be drafted in eight years. His father, Steve, is head football coach at Bennett.



BY MARILYN WITTMAN

## We're Creating Incentives

### Redesign Update!

**In this school year** that was so different, the Redesign Team worked in conjunction with the Alumni Association to create some happy memories in adverse circumstances. Our goal was two-fold: increase the number of students who came to "in-school classes" and provide some smiles and fellowship with the Bennett Alumni Association. On random days, what we called "attendance incentives" were held during lunch periods. Each event was a surprise to the students. There was the Mexican Fiesta, Make Your Own Sundae, and Pizza/Wing/Trivia events. At each event, gift cards and cash prizes were awarded.

We observed that the number of students present has more than doubled over the time of these events. The students also have learned about the Bennett Alumni Association and how we care about them.

The Redesign Team is looking forward to a "normal" school year ahead. We will continue our work to support the academic success of our Tigers.

They need support to get back on track. We will be there to help them.



Arthur J. Thomas, '61

Esther Dillenbeck Prudden, '33, age 101,  
September 19, 2017

Marvin Schulman, '42, age 92, March 16,  
2018

Robert Roberts, '48, August 31, 2018

Judith J. Nadolinske, '59, October 11,  
2018

Roy H. Kinsey, '40, age 96, December 16,  
2018

Mary (Beth) Schweizer Whitehead, '61,  
February 20, 2019

Robert Schalk, '61, September 2019

Idrian N. Resnick, '54, April 3, 2020

Jacqueline Emmons Baltz, '52, March 5,  
2020

Patricia Martin Lynch, '64, May 22, 2020

Mary Lou Loucks Fredericks, '45, age 94,  
June 24, 2020

Judith Richard Hurley, '51, age 86, Sep-  
tember 5, 2020

Rev. Bernard F. Englehardt, '47, October

## • In Memoriam •

*(Reported since Winter 2021 Bennett Beacon)*  
**Your additions or corrections are requested.**  
**Please forward to the Bennett Beacon staff.**

1, 2020

Janice Atwood Anderson, '48, age 90, De-  
cember 12, 2020

Robert Dell, '48, age 91, December 31,  
2020

Francis (Si) Siano, '64, January 20, 2021

Carol Wendel Brucker, '58, January 26,  
2021

Florence H. Rembold, '47, age 91, January  
27, 2021

Bruce Wexler, '56, age 83, February 10,  
2021

Lloyd Hargrave, '57, February 18, 2021

Gail Simpson Sterlace, '70, age 69, Feb-  
ruary 19, 2021

Judith Maureen Echols, '62 and Faculty,  
age 75, February 26, 2021

Lois Ann Witkin Levine, '56, age 83, Feb-  
ruary 27, 2021

Geraldine Bewley Hobika, '52, age 89,  
February 27, 2021

Richard E. (Dick) Leous, '46, age 92,  
March 2, 2021

Frances "Jane" Wheeler Paul, '42, March  
19, 2021

Michael Anthony Renaldo, '99, March 27,  
2021

June Martin Collins, '44, April 19, 2021

Edward C. Schwartz, '41, age 96, April 22,  
2021

Madeline Davis, '58, age 80, April 28, 2021

G. William Gleasner, '54, age 85, May 11,  
2021

Alfonse F. Gambacorta, '59, age 82, May  
21, 2021

Dr. Robert Milch, '60, age 78, June 4,  
2021

### **Faculty and Staff**

Byron Vickery, June 3, 2020, Physical  
Education teacher

Diana Aboussir, French teacher

Ronald H. Moline, age 78, May 31, 2021,  
History teacher in 80s and 90s

James Foley, age 93, December 27,  
2020-Assistant Principal in late 60s



## **Remembering Mme. Aboussir**

**Sadly, we learned of the passing** of long-  
time teacher, Diana Aboussir.

Madame Aboussir came to Bennett in 1985. She taught French and was an integral part of the International Studies Magnet Program. She was devoted to her students from 1985 until her retirement in 2004. She took to the spirit of the school and quickly became part of the "Bennett family."

Madame Aboussir was serious about her French. No one dared utter a word in English once you passed through her classroom door. Her standards were high, and her students responded with respect and devotion.

We became friends with Diana's husband, Mo, and her sons, Tarik and Karim. They were just little boys when they came to the school with their mother. Ultimately, Karim became a teacher and taught at Bennett. Tarik has kept in touch, too.

Upon her retirement, Diana relocated to Florida and became part of a child advocacy program in the court system there.

The Alumni Association is grateful for a generous gift received as a memorial to Diana. All these years later, she is still helping students at Bennett.

## **Byron Vickery Swim Teacher**

We learned of the passing of  
Byron Vickery, long-time swim  
teacher and beloved coach.

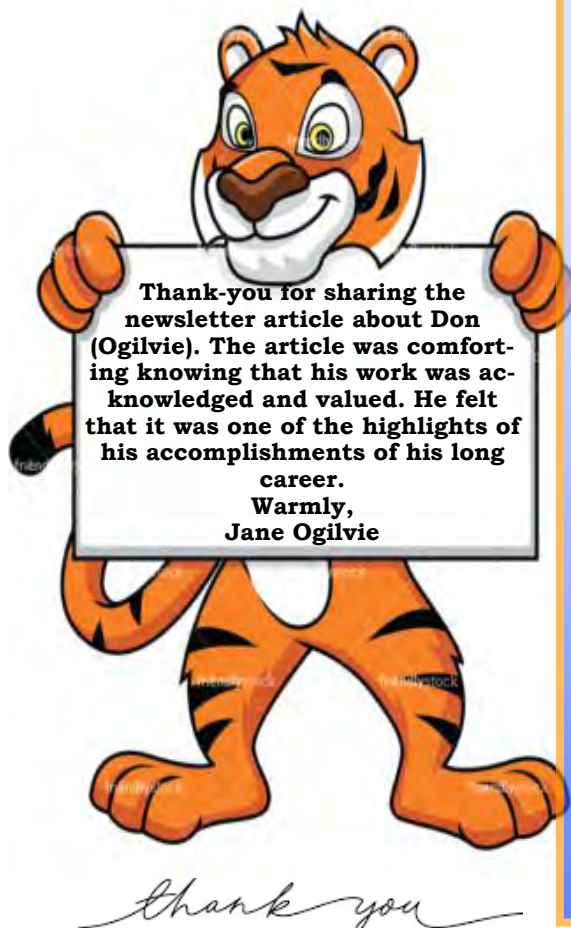
Byron, who was born in  
Wales, and spoke with the  
Welsh brogue, taught most of  
the swim classes during his  
tenure at Bennett which start-  
ed in 1963. He was also the  
coach of many fine teams in  
cross country, swimming and  
tennis. HE had the trifecta in  
1978 with titles in all three  
sports.

He retired to Florida, split-  
ting his time between Wales  
and the U. S.



## Class of 1970 Reunion Delayed

The 50 year Reunion that was scheduled to take place last year, and delayed by COVID, will finally take place July 9th and 10th, 2022. The dinner Saturday evening will be held at the Grapevine Restaurant. Email Janice Spector at [janicemichele52@gmail.com](mailto:janicemichele52@gmail.com) for information.



**Your Alumni Association** is forever grateful for those who make contributions **in honor of or in memory of or in thanks for** Bennett Alumni. Here are some that we received since our last edition! Please see the form on the insert page for honoring your classmates!

### •Gifts Received in Honor of...

Sybil Lorbeer, '60 "Get Well" - by Carolyn Weil, '60  
Bennett's Tiger Den - by Teresa Nash, Bennett Friend  
Paul Wexler, '63 - by Mark and Mary Wexler  
The Class of 1960 - by Barbara Krigstin, '60

### Gifts Received in Memory of...

Jacqueline Emmons Baltz, '52 - by Louis John Baltz, '51  
Marcel & Jacques Lissek - by Dr. Cantor Leon S. Lissek, '56  
June Martin Collins, '44 - by Robert & June Collins  
Diana Aboussir, Retired Faculty - by friends and neighbors  
John Brummer - by Julie Christiano, Retired Faculty  
Jackie Jordan's mother - by Julie Christiano, Retired Faculty  
Gerry Bewley, '51 - by Sally Laurie Murphy, '51  
Michael Illuzzi, '60 - by Roger D. Batt, '60  
Donald Brunner, '60 - by Charles ('60) and Dianne ('62) Bayless  
Bruce Wexler, '56 - by Dick Wexler, '64  
- by Ronald Wexler, '51  
- by Mark and Mary Wexler  
- by Steve Wexler  
- by Jonathan Tamari & Tracy Horton  
- By Sharon Willig  
- by Barry Singer  
James Hogan - By Arlene (Susie) Hogan, '58

### Gifts Received in Thanks for...

Carol Newman Caserta, '60 - by Glenn Kraemer, '68  
Bennett Redesign Team - Marilyn Wittman, Principal

### Other Gifts Received...

Linda J. Greenberg Shohet, '68  
Carol Wolkind Weingerten, '65 - to support the students of Bennett High School



# The History of Bennett High School

**The moment had come.** It was September, 1925. Two thousand two hundred students enrolled. New freshmen came and transfers from Hutch and Lafayette populated the upper grades. A solemn dedication was held on November 24, 1925. At the ceremony, Principal Rhodes introduced the symbols that he had developed and would become the traditional hallmarks that have unified students through the decades.

The population of Central Park was growing more rapidly than even the big school could handle. Five annex classrooms were placed behind the school with a capacity of 40 students each. Clearly, a more permanent solution had to be made. The plan was another new high school, Kensington, and the start of an intense rivalry between the two student bodies. It wasn't

until 1938 that Kensington finally opened.

Kensington joined with Bennett to set an attendance record for a high school football game. In 1948, 52,000 fans came to cheer. The Bennett stands grew quiet as the Tigers were defeated. The score may have been unfavorable, but the attendance record has become part of our shared history.

World War II came to the doorstep of Bennett and every other high school in the 1940s. The fun of growing up was interrupted by the seriousness of global conflict. Hundreds of students signed up to fight. They served in Europe. They served in the Pacific. They fought the Nazis. They fought the Japanese. Their names are proudly displayed

in the front hall. Sadly, 78 died. They are memorialized by a plaque still hanging at the entrance.

On the home front, Bennett's students sold War Bonds, enough to buy a Curtis airplane for the effort. It was an all-consuming endeavor embraced by every student and staff member to raise such a large amount of money. The reward was a Commando airplane with the Bennett Tiger symbol flying and joining the Allies in defeating the enemy.



## 2021 Major Alumni Donors

*\* As of June 30, 2021. We apologize for any omissions or errors.*

### Diamond Club - \$500+

Marland L. Berdick, '49  
Dr. Joseph Chazan, '52  
Robert S. Fink, Ph.D., '65  
Linda J. Greenberg Shohet, '68  
Charles Guardalibene, '56  
Julie Horn, Faculty  
Philip H. Hubbell, '56

Robin McNallie, '56  
Robert A. Russell, '63  
Timothy J. Schroeder, Friend  
Bruce R. Thielking, '66  
Richard L. Wexler, '64  
Ronald Wexler, '51  
Marilyn Wittman, Faculty

**Our Major Alumni Donors Recognition continues on the insert!**

# BPS Gets High Marks for 'Acceleration' Approach

BY JEFFREY SCHAPIRO,  
'67 & FACULTY

*(ed. I was so happy to see this editorial in the Buffalo News on Friday, July 23, 2021. I worked on the 4th floor where the Law Magnet program was housed and got to see how this approach worked. It was a program based on the highest standards and based on developing responsibility and relationships. Many of our young people from the Law Magnet have gone on to distinguish themselves in our community and throughout the country!)*

I was pleased to read that the Buffalo Public Schools have finally come to the realization that students benefit more from an "acceleration" approach, rather than repeating a grade. (Buffalo News, July 19). Unfortunately, it took this long to come to that realization.

Thirty years ago, as coordinator of the Bennett High School Law Magnet Program, I, along with the staff in the program, believed in such an approach. We instituted a program where the students had the same teachers for their four years in high school. The teachers had to agree to teach four levels of the same subject, as to do so would violate the teachers' contract.

These educators were visionaries and agreed to the new idea. The theory behind this new approach was that no student would fail a grade. When they would return in September, they would have the same teacher they had at the end of the last school year. The teacher would know what subject matter

they had mastered and would carry on from there. Students, of course, were at different levels, but there was no such thing as failure.

After four years of high school, everyone graduated. Our students had tremendous success and were at the top of the list academically. Not only did this system benefit our students in regard to subject matter, having the same teachers for four years helped forge a bond between student and teacher. These relationships helped provide for a more positive learning environment.

Many outside of our program labeled our system elitist because our students were so successful. We weren't elitists, we just cared about providing each student with the best possible education. Kudos to the Buffalo Board of Education for finally trying something we did 30 years ago.

## Mission Statement of the Bennett Alumni Association, Inc.

We, the Bennett Alumni Association, Inc., believe in the power of education to transform lives. We are committed to educational equity, dignity and social justice for all. We will strive to remain mindful of our ever-changing society and its effect on our students.

The Bennett Alumni Association, Inc. supports students, parents, staff, and administrators in their work toward graduation for all. It endorses the creation of an atmosphere of affirmative problem-solving to create and maintain positive relationships among students, faculty, administrators and the community.

The Bennett Alumni Association, Inc. is committed to being substantive and creative and to continually evaluate the fulfillment of our mission. We are proactive as well as preventative in establishing and maintaining the belief system and values of our Alma Mater.

The Bennett Alumni Association, Inc. respects the traditions of the past, is engaged in the issues of the present, and has aspirations for a great future for we know "The Best Is Yet To Be."

## Caveat Emptor

**... not every website that calls itself "Bennett Alumni" is a not-for-profit!**

And, once again, I got the call. "I paid my LIFETIME DUES to the Bennett Alumni Association." Then I have to start explaining! We don't have a lifetime category in our dues.

"But, I sent a check for \$75! Why do you keep sending me Dues Reminders?"

I check my records and then I have to do the, "You joined a for profit site that is very well done and very slick. Sadly, nothing they do benefits the students at our beloved Bennett."

Please, please, my friends in **ORANGE** and **BLUE**, make sure you are sending your dues to the only not-for-profit Alumni site...

**[bennettalumni.com](http://bennettalumni.com).**

Call Neil at **716-308-5451**  
if you are not sure!

# 2021 Scholarship Recipients

Your Alumni Association is proud to be able to consistently fund scholarships to help deserving graduates in their higher education. The following graduates from the Class of 2021 have been accepted at colleges and the monies will be administered through college bookstores to provide materials needed for the upcoming academic year.

<b>Avery Nordee</b>	\$1000 Alzena Wright Scholarship
<b>Wasif Khan</b>	\$1000 Marilyn Wittman Scholarship
<b>Francis Sagnia</b>	\$297 Charles Elbert Rhodes Scholarship
<b>Sabiha Akther</b>	\$843 Leonard Sikora Scholarship
<b>Sahara Ali</b>	\$843 Lloyd Miller Scholarship
<b>Safa AlDulaimi</b>	\$843 Lloyd Miller Scholarship
<b>Sabiha Akther</b>	\$252 Emmons B. Faraar Scholarship
<b>Aye Aye Win</b>	\$144 Bennett Alumni Association

Where amounts are less than \$1000, it indicates that the Scholarships are housed in separate lines in the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo and the Bennett Alumni Association augments these awards to our minimum scholarship level of \$1000. There are other Scholarships besides these that we fund, as well.

# Boys Basketball Champions

**The Tigers won** the Section VI basketball championship in their division for the 2020-21 season. Bennett was the only Buffalo Public School team to win in this year's competition.

The team had to experience the excitement of winning in their own gym without spectators. COVID protocols meant playing without the usual enthusiasm of fans in packed bleachers.

There was a celebration, however. Coach Khalil Cottman had the traditional water pouring over his head. Principal Alvarez was awarded the game ball by the team.

We are celebrating the championship for another reason.

Through the challenges of virtual learning, the players all achieved academic eligibility by passing all their classes. Our senior players are all on track for graduation.

We can't wait to raise the 2020-21 Section VI Basketball Championship banner in the gym. We are so proud of our basketball Tigers.

**For the Best is Yet to BE!!!!**



Bennett's Jerrold Skillen defends an Olean guard in the first half of the Class B-1 game.

**Have you considered supporting Bennett High School and the Bennett Alumni Association, Inc. in your will?**  
**Please contact Neil Lange at 716-308-5451 to learn how you can make a difference.**



# Alumni Honor Roll Candidates Announced

The **Bennett Alumni Board** of Directors and the Alumni Honor Roll Committee are pleased to announce the Alumni Honor Roll Recipients for 2021. They are accomplished in their careers, dedicated, and have served in numerous roles and positions since graduating from Bennett High School. We are proud to acknowledge the following recipients:

**Peter Cammarata, '75** – Management/Consulting

**Dennis Clark, '59** – Business

**Jamil Crews, '99** – Media

**Dr. Aneesah Farris, '00** – Medicine

**James F. Neal, '73** – Business

**Mark Overall, '03** – Community Service

**Linda M. Scheffer, '61** – Volunteerism

**Peter D. Trooboff, '60** – Law

We hope you will join us for our first hybrid ceremony on Friday, September 24, 2021 at 5:00 pm at Bennett High School, or on zoom. Additional information regarding the virtual platform will be provided when you purchase tickets or make a written request for the Zoom link. Questions? Call Neil at 716-308-5451.

BY CECELIA HENDERSON, FACULTY



**Class  
of  
2021**



Time Sensitive Publication  
AUGUST 5, 2021

**Bennett Beacon**  
2885 Main Street  
Buffalo, New York 14214



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## Platinum Club - \$200 - \$499

Barbara Aaron Snyder, '57  
Dr. Renee T. Alexander, '70  
Kenneth L. Barley, '50  
Roger D. Batt, '60  
Sheldon M. Berlow, '50  
Joan Broderick Mooney, '64  
Phillip Brothman, '56  
Philip Celniker, '54  
Melinda Chilcott Wolcott, '63  
James Douglas Crawford, '46  
Richard Dattner, '55  
Frank G. Emerling, '60  
Lance Fogan, M.D., '58  
Jeffrey M. Freedman, '68

Hon. Paul L. Friedman, '61  
Terrence Gamble, '65  
Gwendolyn Garr, '66  
Stuart A. Gellman, '54  
Elaine Goldstein Neuman, '56  
Judith Lynn Green Brothman, '59  
Sanford Horwitz, '69  
Salvatore J. Illuzzi, Ph.D., '64  
Robert L. Johnson, Jr., '68  
Elaine Kaiser Kellick, '59  
Dr. Leonard Katz, '53  
Richard A. Killinger Jr., '64  
Carolyn "Cookie" Kulick Weil, '60

Sally Laurie Murphy, '51  
Dr. Ed & Linda Lazzaro, Faculty  
Corinne Elliott Marillo Carter, '53  
Bruce A. McNallie, '56  
Donald H. Meyncke, Jr., '49  
Robert B. Mooney, '48  
Dr. Robert Allen Nover, '57  
Anne Osborn Krueger, '50  
Linda M. Scheffer, '61  
Owen W. Schultz, '92  
Rhoda Stein Greenwald, '59  
Gordon T. Warme, '66  
Donna Weber Wattman, '59  
Carole Wolkind Weingarten, '65

## Gold Club - \$101 - \$199

Roberta Allbert Dayer, '53  
Louis John Baltz, '51  
Charles D. Bayless, '60  
Laurence T. Beahan, M.D., '48  
Pat Burke Young, '55  
Peter M. Cammarata, '75  
Alan S. Carrel, '60  
Richard F. Carver, M.D., '55  
Carol Cicarell Ottaviani, '60  
Beverly Davis Blue, '61  
Cynthia Dayer Erb, '80  
Ronald K. Dollman, '60  
Lois Edwards Johnson, '60  
John P. Emerling, '64  
Helene Farber Bailey, '68  
Robert P. Fine, '61  
Larry Fink (River), '68  
James Friedman, '65  
John E. (Gene) Garrison, '49  
Don A. Gilbert, '60 & Faculty  
David S. Goodman, '60  
Mary Gordon Perkins, '52  
Jacqueline Hillary Jordan, '72  
Gretchen Himmele Munroe, '56

Trudy Holzka Gurn, '58  
Christopher J. Hough, '73  
Pamela Hough Alvarez, '68  
Carmen J. Iannaccone, '57  
Paul J. Jacobs, Jr., '67  
Linda Konrad Byers, '60  
Glenn Kraemer, '68  
Douglas A. Lang, '56  
Neil J. Lange, Faculty  
Lawrence H. Levin, '57  
Rona Lichtman Tananbaum, '60  
Leonard Ludwig, '55  
June Martin Collins, '44  
Kenneth W. Matasar, MD, '60  
Andrew G. Mesches, '64  
Teresa R. Nash, Mother  
Yardley Nelson Hunter, '71  
Carol Newman Caserta, '60 & Faculty  
Marilyn Newman Walsdorf, '53  
Mario Nunez, '66  
Nancy Paull McKeever, '57  
Katherine A. Phillies, '54

Kristen Poliachik Rodriguez, '89  
Nancy Preston Broderick, '36  
Carolyn Price Singletary Ph.D., '66  
Hon. Rev. Darius Pridgen, '80  
Melvin L. Reinheimer, '62  
Jacquelyn D. Rettke Parkinson, '67  
David A. Rosen, '71  
Leslie Ann Sapecky Gray, '69  
Rebecca Savage Jones, '63  
Patricia Schlehr Frizelle, '55  
Barbara Schwartz Krigstin, '60  
Louise Seereiter, Faculty  
Clifford L. Shisler, '56  
Natalie Shupe Abramson, '57  
Susan Silverman Carrel, '60  
Harold Simon, '66  
Suzanne Simon, '65  
Barry L. Singer, '65  
Scott L. Slesinger, '68  
Donald R. Smith, '57  
Alvin H. Spector, '71  
Jean Travis Boccuti, '57  
David Valley, '72  
Leslie Wright Jones, '60

## Century Club - \$100

Linda Barker Moore, '68  
Nancy Becker Kuhn, '59  
Dr. Al B. Benson III, '68  
Donald S. Blanke, '57  
Katharine S. Bundt Maxwell, '63  
Julie Christiano, Faculty  
Harold I. Cohen, '51  
Anthony Cox, '71\* Honorary Grad  
Joel L. Daniels, '56  
Hugh J. Devine, '55  
Francis J. DeYoung, '57  
Leah Dukes Ingram, '68  
Toby R. Fink Laping, '56  
Scott W. Gehl, '70  
Jerome M. Giordano, '54  
Seymour Gitin, '52  
David K. Grant, '60  
Jeannette Guardalibene Rodak, '59  
Phyllis Hanes Vogt, '53

Cecelia B. Henderson, Faculty  
Merle Katz Goldstein, '55  
Sandra Krape Cryst, '65  
Karen Kreinheder, '65  
Kenneth A. Kreinheder, '57  
Jacqueline Kushner Finkelstein, '53  
Margaret M. Lanz Puzio, '68  
Marshall Lapp, '50  
Kathleen Lappin Calabrese, Ph.D. '65  
James S. Linderman, '47  
Dr. Cantor Leon S. Lissek, '56  
Suzanne Marvin Flynn, '44  
Irene McLeish Greene, '57  
Donna Moslow Lawler, '60  
Kim Nablo Jordan, '84  
Danis J. Norman Gehl, '70  
Harry L. Powazek, '73  
Don W. Rappold, '63

Roslyn M. Righetti, '74  
Elaine C. Rubenstein, '67  
Charles E. Rush, Jr., '57  
Ann Rynne Lozeau, '60  
Iris E. Segal, '58  
Janet Severance Reynolds, '61  
Sue Shaffer Gardner, '48  
Robert Shleser, Ph.D., '57  
Herbert M. Siegel, '54  
Robert L. Sloan, '53  
Gloria Van Riper Askren, '56  
Lawrence A. Veronica, Faculty  
Nils A. Vigeland, '68  
Frederick J. Wallace, '50  
Mark & Mary Wexler, Bennett Friend  
Sharon Willig, Bennett Friend  
Frances Willner Spitzer, '57  
Gary L. Wolfe, '68  
Judith Zent Deck, '59

*Please let us know if there are omissions or errors in our records. We'd be happy to check!*

# A Gift that Lets Someone Know How Much You Care!



**Do you know someone** who is celebrating a **special occasion** and you can't find that perfect gift? Have you ever thought that it might be nice to **honor the memory** of a departed classmate? How about sending a **thank-you** for all that someone has done for you or a classmate?

We are starting a new feature in our efforts to augment our **scholarship fund**. This past year, we were able to assist seniors with almost \$10,000.00 in monies for college. We'd love to be able to do more!

## Bennett Alumni Association, Inc. Scholarship Fund

☐ In honor of \_\_\_\_\_ on the occasion of \_\_\_\_\_

☐ In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

☐ In thanks for: \_\_\_\_\_

Please notify: Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: **Bennett Alumni Association, Inc.**

Your Gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ will be Placed in the Scholarship Fund. (A \$10.00 minimum would be appreciated.)

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Bennett Alumni Association, Inc • 2885 Main Street • Buffalo, NY 14214

CARING



## It's Time to Invest in Our Bennett Students!

## Bennett Alumni Dues

Membership runs from September 1, 2021 until August 31, 2022

We had a great year for contributions in the 2021 school year. Just look at our MAJOR DONORS list, and you can see all of the funds we were able to use to support our students! We are looking forward to doing much more as Bennett returns to regular instruction! If you haven't joined before, we hope you will consider adding to the growing membership!

Please make checks payable to **Bennett Alumni Association, Inc.**

If you prefer, use PayPal! Visit us at [www.bennettalumni.com](http://www.bennettalumni.com)

☐ Basic Dues • \$20 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Century • \$100 ☐ Gold • \$101 - \$199 ☐ Platinum \$200 - \$499 ☐ Diamond \$500+

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Maiden Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Mail to:** Bennett Alumni Membership  
2885 Main Street  
Buffalo, New York 14214

\*\*\* For any questions about your DUES, to make additional contributions, or to find out about our legacy program, call Neil Lange at 716-308-5451!