

Bennett Beacon



Summer 2023 • Volume 25/Issue 2

Alumni Edition

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Class of 2023

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-Lawrence Levin, '57
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-Amy Visniesky, Faculty
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Class of 2024

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-Marsha Jadd, '58
-Mark Overall, '03
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Class of 2025

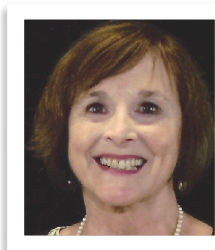
-Deby Fox-Hahn, '60
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-Jacqueline Hillary Jordan, '72

BY MARGARET LANZ PUZIO, '68 & FACULTY

The Power of Advocacy

Alumni Play a Key Role in Expanding

Lewis J. Bennett High School



Bennett students no longer need to share the campus at 2885 Main St. with other schools. For the past eight years, students at Lewis J. Bennett High School of Innovative Technologies have shared Bennett High School with two other high schools. Starting in September 2023, Bennett students and staff will be able to use the entire building. Your

Alumni Association played an important role in bringing this goal to fruition.

It comes as no surprise that we are passionate about public education and particularly education at our beloved Bennett High School. It's also no surprise that we are well organized to advocate for Buffalo Public School students. Our success at turning the tide came in 2013, when the District seemed headed to close Bennett High School and turn the building over to two charter schools. This speaks volumes about our organization's ability to advocate. One of our major strengths is our ability to partner with key decision-makers within the BPS on behalf of Bennett's staff and students. Our work involved many strategies:

1. Advocacy for public school students

We substantiated the need to expand the Lewis J. Bennett High School program allowing access to this successful high school to the hundreds of 8th-grade students who had to be turned away due to space constraints. More importantly, we highlighted the safety issues involved with having three different high schools on one campus. Each school had its own bell schedule, making it a challenge to access gymnasiums, cafeterias, library and auditorium. Athletes were required to travel to and from school late in the evening for athletic practices. Home contests had to be held at alternate locations. Because there were three separate schools, not every student could be well known by every staff member. We invested in Bennett's future by sustaining the District's attention on all of these important issues.

2. Building strategic relationships with District "decision makers" for change

Through dogged persistence and multiple changes in District leadership, the Alumni Association Redesign Team coordinated meetings with

See Advocacy...continued on page 3

Our President Reports... Four Very Important Words to Guide Us



What are the four words that come to mind when you think of the Bennett Alumni Association and Lewis J. Bennett High School? Questions of this nature are often used to help organizations discern where their focus should be. For me, the answers weren't that easy. Actually, I spent several hours debating what I should answer and why. Finally, I decided on **Traditions, Future, Relationships** and **Success**. It would take several pages if I were to offer deep explanations on why I finally chose these four words.

Suffice it to say, it finally dawned on me. We have a past. We have a future. Those two words are here because we have such great multigenerational interactions. I am constantly awed by how much people of the past care about our current and future students. And, of course, the relationships that we, as an organization and a high school, have formed and continue to form over almost 100 years are next to miraculous - the ties that bind!

Ultimately, **Our Traditions + Our Future + Our Relationships = Our Success** became the equation. Could why we do all we do be this simple? I was sure I had my article ready to go for the *Beacon*. I would sit down and finalize it right at the end of the weekend. Easy.

Then Sunday came. Listening to the sermon at church, a thought struck me, directly impacting where my article was going. At that instant, I was going to trash everything. Start over.

The sermon was entitled "The Patchwork Quilt" and there on the altar were three lovely quilts made by one of our members. As the story unfolded, I started putting a lot of pieces together (no pun intended).

The focus was about not ever really knowing what the outcome of events in your life will be. Just as with a quilt, we might spend days planning for a special event and, out of nowhere, everything changes. But still that one piece, although altered, is important. Without it, the quilt can never be completed.

Schools experienced a lot of unknowns over the last few years with the pandemic. Through good times and bad, somehow everything looks like it has come together.

I'm hoping that our Bennett quilt is never really finished. We have a quilt that continues to be put together with great care. I like that picture! I can imagine how many pieces are

already assembled. Pieces that, at the time, might have had no discernible direction. Delicate calicos that bring back a memory; maybe an errant blue and orange sports letter. Imagine a bit of a freshman fraternity pledge cap or ribbons of materials from caps and gowns.

And each time we reflect on Bennett, we continue to add to that beauty. Every one of you has added, in some way or another, a piece of your fabric. Some continue to add through their time, talents and treasures.

This past year saw fewer members than in the past. Sadly, some of our regular donors have passed away, their quilts completed. Others sent money solely to the Endowment Fund, which meant their contributions could not be used immediately to benefit the students. In any case, we have a great need to increase our contributions. Your dues, along with those of so many others through the years, make a huge difference in the lives of our students. Our mission is to support Bennett in all the ways that we are called to.

Won't you continue to bridge the intergenerational distance? So many young people are counting on you! If you haven't been a member in the past, please consider making your contribution. Your piece of fabric, when combined with those of countless others, will create a most beautiful comforter!

May our united good continue to prosper our Bennett!

Board Member Cecelia Henderson Featured

The Uncrowned Queens Institute debuted a new exhibit at The Buffalo History Museum, "Say Their Names: Honor Their Legacies," which shares the stories, wisdom and insights of Buffalo's community elders. The exhibit features portraits, biographies and video interviews that capture the stories of a group of Buffalo's senior community builders.

Our own Cecelia Henderson was one of the featured leaders in the exhibit that ran through June at the Museum!

Congratulations, Mrs. Henderson!!!!

Your Alumni Association is forever grateful for those who make contributions in honor of or in memory of or in thanks for Bennett Alumni.

• Gifts Received in Memory of...

Gary M. Cohen, '61

- by Hon. Paul L. Friedman, '61

Terry Neugeboren, Social Studies Teacher

by Carol Newman Caserta, '60 & Faculty

David Krantz, '56

Joyce Shupe, '56

Nancy Shupe Biltekoff, '57

by Judy and Phil Brothman, '56.

• Gifts Received in Honor of...

the Memorable Class of 1960

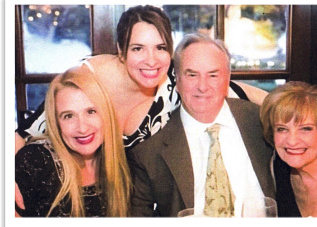
by Don Gilbert, '60

Math Teacher & 1942 Clayton Bihl's 100th Birthday

We Have Been Changed for Good

Steve Poliachik devoted his professional life to serving students in the Buffalo Public Schools. He spent decades as a special education teacher, coordinator, administrator, and coach at Bennett High School. His colleagues will tell you that there simply wasn't anyone better at talking to students, guiding students, and mentoring students than Steve Poliachik. He changed the lives of so many who were about to make life-changing decisions by counseling them with just the right blend of understanding and direction. Steve was a critical member of the administrative team that made Bennett a safe and secure place to learn.

Steve always said that the most rewarding, satisfying and humbling experiences came from his work as the coach of the Bennett girls in volleyball, basketball, and softball. He coached these sports for over 20 years, and his teams participated in the sectional playoffs multiple times. He encouraged girls to participate during this time when female athletes were taking their place on the teams that Title IX mandated. Steve was inducted into the Bennett High School



Remembering Steve Poliachik

Sports Hall of Fame for career achievement as a dedicated girls' coach.

Here are some quotes from those who knew Steve as a coach, teacher, and friend:

- "An amazing man. He taught me a lot during many years of softball, so much more than softball that still sticks with me today."
- "He is a part of my favorite memories of Bennett."
- "He was a father to me and always treated me like a daughter! You know he meant so much to me, as well as your whole family."
- "Just such an incredible person who always brightened up the room. I am so grateful to have known him."

The Poliachiks are a true Bennett family. Steve's wife, Clair, taught English for many years. Daughters Kim and Kristen graduated from Bennett. Kristen returned to teach at Bennett. We join them in missing our incredible colleague and friend. Steve will always be remembered fondly by those whose lives he touched.

Advocacy...continued from page 1

District personnel around the issue of space utilization, ensuring that key players were at the table for regular dialogue. We asked difficult questions about student safety and cited ongoing issues around gymnasium use and sports practices and contests. Whenever possible, we offered possible solutions, but most importantly, we kept the focus on our vision, enabling Bennett students to utilize the entire facility.

3. Raising Awareness through Communication

The Redesign Team authored multiple letters and emails to Board of Education members, the superintendent and other leaders, highlighting our concerns and emphasizing the fact that the number one obstacle to the future of our successful program is classroom space. It wasn't long before students and their families heard the good news about Lewis J Bennett's graduation rate and other successes. Hundreds of student applicants had to be turned away each year due to lack of space. Your Alumni Association members actively pursued multiple opportunities to speak out at Board of Education Meetings. After these public appearances, we were often rewarded with in-person meeting dates during which we could bring our concerns to the

attention of District personnel involved in these decisions, thus raising the level of awareness and accountability.

4. Monitoring Progress

We continue to meet with District leaders to monitor the process of enrolling new students and expanding staff and budget allocations. We are in continuous dialogue with Bennett staff and students so that we can be responsive to ongoing issues and apply steady pressure to the levers of change.

5. Celebrating Successes

At our April meeting with District leaders, the move of Middle Early College from the Bennett Campus was confirmed. We stopped briefly to pat ourselves on the back to acknowledge our hard work and success, but then immediately set to work on ensuring a smooth transition as Lewis J. Bennett's enrollment increases.

Your Alumni Association members are committed to a successful future for our students because *The best is yet to be.*

For the Best is Yet to Be!!!

Your Alumni Annual Dues Make the Difference

First, let me extend a hearty THANK YOU to members of our Alumni Association whose dues helped us level the playing field for current Bennett students. Our Bennett Alumni Association supports many key initiatives, not the least of which are our educational grants. Each June, the Scholarship Committee works with LJB staff to determine which students have distinguished themselves academically and should receive special recognition in the form of a \$1000 grant to be used toward their continued study at the college level. We use funds from annual dues to ensure that our grants, and those funded by distributions from other endowments, total at least \$1000 for the most deserving young scholars. Roughly \$10,000 were given in Educational Grants this year. You can see some of these scholars featured in this and upcoming Beacon editions.

The annual dues also support academic celebrations that build a sense of community and motivate students to set achievement goals for themselves each quarter of the school year. Students who achieve honor and merit roll status are invited to be part of celebrations held at the end of the first, second, and third quarters. These recognition events build a strong foundation for schoolwide academic excellence and are possible through the generosity of Alumni Annual Dues.

Another key area where your dues make a big difference is sports teams and E-Sports (developing and competing in online gaming). This year's sports teams, including our cheerleaders, benefitted from equipment, apparel, and season celebrations courtesy of our Alumni Association Annual Dues. Your dues made this possible.

Last, but not least, our Mini-Grant program allows our classroom teachers and club and activity advisors to enhance curricular experiences for their students. Field trips, science lab experiences, staff and student mental health supports, National Honor Society dues, cords and certificates, Class Day decorations and more were provided for this year's students through our Alumni Annual Dues. Your assistance has made a difference in the lives and futures of so many young people.

Please consider your annual dues an essential contribution to these very worthwhile educational causes. All of what we do for Bennett's current students depends on your kindness and generosity. Help us make the difference by sending your check or donating through our website (<https://bennettalumni.com/pay-dues-donate/>). Remember, the Bennett Alumni Association is a 501(c) (3) organization, making your donation tax deductible. We're counting on you.

The New Membership Year

Bennett Alumni Dues

Dues to the Bennett Alumni Association, Inc. make such a huge impact. Through your generous contributions, you have helped level the playing field for countless Bennett students. Your continued help makes a difference!

We thank you for your support!

**** See the back page for information about how your gift of \$250 or more can be used to sponsor a Memorial Garden paver.*

Please make checks payable to Bennett Alumni Association, Inc.

If you prefer, use PayPal! Visit us at www.bennettalumni.com

 \$75	 \$50	 \$25 • Basic Dues	 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!

Membership runs from September 1, 2023 until August 31, 2024

• In Memoriam •

*(Reported since Winter 2023 Bennett Beacon)
Your additions or corrections are requested.
Please forward to the Bennett Beacon staff.*

- John Lajudice, '50, age 77, January 19, 2008
- Michael Manos, '43, July 16, 2008
- Linda Weber Bernhard, '40, February 14, 2009
- Evelyn Levin Rosen, '40, October 20, 2014
- Harold R. Walker, Jr., '43, age 88, April 15, 2015
- P. Francis Sheridan, '56, age 77, September 17, 2016
- Hilda Soffer Anderson, '52, age 95, February 5, 2017
- Joseph A. Dee, '54, March 17, 2017
- John O. Ertell, '47, January 1, 2018
- Margaret A. Riso, '58, age 77, February 1, 2019
- Theodore Sullivan, '50, age 86, March 3, 2019
- Anthony Ditsious, '53, April 8, 2019
- Eli Maslekoff, '64, April 6, 2020
- Paul Gonson, '49, age 88, April 12, 2020
- Nancy Donohue Markiw, '67, age 72, November 22, 2020
- Bertram Breitbart, '50, June 28, 2020
- Nancy E. Parker, '60, age 80, February 4, 2022
- Lucille Tagliaferro McCarthy, '48, August 2, 2022
- Robert T. Nagowski, '41, age 99, August 29, 2022
- Eleanor Lavet Ponto, '40, age 100, September 16, 2022
- Sonya Guttman Breitbart, '50, October 21, 2022

- Lawrence D. Joseph, '51, October 1, 2022
- Jackie Ryan-Smith, '50, November 2022
- John F. Gallivan, '59, age 81, December 23, 2022
- Charles Stevens, '45, 2023
- Douglas Carstens, Faculty (Guidance), age 75, January 20, 2023
- Marlene Zubin DeCarlo, '56, age 83, January 26, 2023
- Donald S. Brusky, '60, age 81, January 29, 2023
- Stephen J. Poliachik, Faculty (Special Ed.), February 7, 2023
- Sharon Galinsky Krebs, '76, February 10, 2023
- Louis Kimmel, '46, February 12, 2023
- Marilyn Chapman Allison, '75, age 65, February 13, 2023
- Robert A. Riforgiato, '60, age 80, February 14, 2023
- Elaine Their Schweitzer, '47, age 94, February 20, 2023
- Gloria Gucker Malick, '46, February 26, 2023
- Patricia Ann Berst Cuvillo, '50 age 91, March 9, 2023
- Richard K. Volkert, '49, age 92, March 13, 2023

- Wayne D. Littman, '65, March 14, 2023
- Doris M. Kabel Getman, '45, age 96, March 20, 2023
- John Rogers Robson, '51, age 89, April 8, 2023
- Donna Gubala, Faculty (Math), age 79, April 10, 2023
- Marlene Alter Joseph, '52, April 11, 2023
- Sally Parr Mix, '61, age 79, April 12, 2023
- Joyce Shupe, '56, age 85, April 15, 2023
- Carol Colucci, Faculty (Special Ed.), age 80, April 26, 2023
- Alfred D. Price, '65, age 75, May 2, 2023
- Bela S. Petho, '59 & Faculty (Computers), age 84, May 10, 2023
- Nancy Shupe Bileteckoff, '57, May 14, 2023
- Gerald T. Hooley, '45, age 93, June 1, 2023
- Charles G. Inman, '47' age 94, June 6, 2023
- Eunice Hutton Taylor, '51, age 89, June 13, 2023
- Donald Fineberg, '60, June 15, 2023
- Dr. Roger S. Dayer, '51, July 6, 2023
- Richard W. Bronstein, '59, age 82, July 10, 2023
- Malcolm Nisberg, '51, age 90, July 16, 2023
- Dennis J. Campagna, '64, age 76, July 22, 2023

Bennett Moving Forward Committee

BY MARILYN WITTMAN, RETIRED PRINCIPAL

Modernizing Operations for the 21st Century

The Bennett Alumni Association has a "Moving Forward" committee to streamline the organization and keep it up-to-date with 21st-century standards. The committee has already made a number of changes, including:

- Streamlining financial records and enrolling in mobile banking
- Converting the Bennett Alumni Room to a Zoom room so that members who cannot come to Bennett can still attend meetings
- Digitizing all Association documents for

the past five years and storing them on Google Drive

- Creating a new website, www.Bennettalumni.com
- Developing a comprehensive database of over 11,000 graduates

These initiatives have allowed the Association to stay connected with alumni locally and all over the world. The Association is committed to providing alumni with opportunities to network, stay informed about Bennett, and support the school.



News From Our Principal

BY CARLOS ALVAREZ, JR.



I am excited to share that our Class of 2023 has earned an unofficial graduation rate of 87%. This graduation rate, will once again, surpass the Buffalo Public Schools average graduation rate and likely

will surpass the average graduation rate for New York State. Our students are achieving prominent levels of academic success due to the work of our teachers and non-instructional personnel. Our Class of 2023 accumulated just over two million dollars in scholarships money and students will be attending 27 colleges and universities across the country.

We are excited to share that our 11th grade PTECH students will have an opportunity to experience taking college classes on campus this year. Many of the PTECH incoming juniors have already earned several college course credits while taking classes on our campus. They are now prepared to complete additional courses on the campus at Erie Community College. We continue to be extremely excited about the collaboration and support provided by Erie Community College and IBM.

We will be welcoming 142 new freshmen to our school during our Freshman Orientation in August. In addition, we will also be hosting a three-day Summer Bridge Academy for our in-

coming PTECH Freshmen. This will be the first summer in which our older PTECH students will be working side by side with our incoming PTECH students during the Summer Bridge Academy. The goal is for our older students to be able to mentor and support our younger students as they transition into a rigorous high school academic program.

We will also be adding two Advanced Placement courses for this academic school year. Students will have an opportunity to enroll in Advanced Placement Statistics as well as Advanced Placement Seminar. Our Advanced Placement offerings have increased to nine. It is hard to believe that five 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.

Our school continues to grow and is becoming a school of destination in the City of Buffalo. We will resume our pursuit of having 700 - 800 students enrolled as we regain classrooms within our school building. I am excited to share that this Fall, we expect to recapture the entire building!

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

Optima Futura - For the Best is Yet to Be!!!

Transforming Education

BY MARILYN WITTMAN, RETIRED PRINCIPAL

Redesign Team Works to Enhance School Experience

The Redesign Team is a committee of the Bennett Alumni Board. It is made up of educators whose goal is to assist administrators in building on the solid programs in place by suggesting, implementing, and making progress with the Buffalo Public Schools to ensure that our students experience school at the highest possible level. Here are examples of the work the Redesign Team did this year.

Bennett has shared its campus with Middle Early College High School for six years. Both programs are hugely successful. Happily, for both schools, Middle Early College will get its own building beginning in September. This move will give Bennett the opportunity to increase its enrollment. There is a high demand among students and parents to attend.

The Redesign Team believes in Restorative Justice as a way to create a positive school climate where students feel a sense of belonging. It is our goal to establish a Restorative Justice program that links our students to our school Student Support

Team (counselors, psychologist, social worker) and to outside community agencies that can work to help our young people solve problems and keep them focused on staying in the Bennett community of learners.

These transformations in infrastructure and the implementation of a Restorative Justice program reflect Bennett's commitment to providing an exceptional educational experience that meets the needs of students and fosters a supportive and inclusive learning environment. The Redesign Team is an example of your Alumni Association doing all it can for current Bennett students.

We Have Been Changed for Good

Remembering Carol Colucci



Carol Colucci, a dedicated Special Education Teacher at Bennett High School, has left an indelible mark on the lives of countless students. With

her compassionate nature, she brought out the best in each individual, teaching them valuable life skills and fostering their creativity through arts and crafts. Carol's unwavering love and care made her students feel genuinely cherished and supported.

Beyond the classroom, Carol actively worked to raise awareness about the importance of Special Education, touching the lives of numerous families and leaving a lasting impact on the community she served.

Her legacy as a compassionate educator, who instilled a sense of belonging and brought joy to her students' lives, will continue to inspire future generations. Carol Colucci will be deeply missed, but her memory will forever live on in the hearts of those fortunate enough to have known her.

Carol passed away on April 26, 2023. The Bennett Alumni Association sends its deepest sympathy to Carol's husband, Leon, and her entire family.

Dear Alumni Association,

I just wanted to send a quick note to thank you for the lovely All Class Reunion held on June 9, 2023.

Seeing so many teachers and administrators that I worked with was a treat.

I would especially like to thank the "Magic Five" - Mr. Lange, Mrs. Nash, David Block, Andrew Block and Tyler Perkins.

As always, your hard work is greatly appreciated.

Keep me informed of upcoming events.

Luci Buell
Retired Business Teacher.

We Have Been Changed for Good

Remembering Donna Gubala



It is with sadness and fond memories that we mark the passing of Donna Gubala, a long-time math teacher and De-

partment Chair of Mathematics at Bennett. She was a passionate educator who dedicated her professional life to teaching and helping her students succeed. Mrs. Gubala was known for her tireless efforts in creating an extensive data tracking system that moni-

tored student progress and ensured they met all graduation requirements. Mrs. Gubala's commitment to her students was unwavering, and as a result, students passed her classes and graduated in high numbers. Donna Gubala's leadership contributions to the Bennett community were invaluable.

The Bennett Alumni Association sends our heartfelt sympathy to her family. It assures them that her legacy lives on through the many students who graduated due to her personal effort.

We Have Been Changed for Good BY BARRY KREBS, HUSBAND

Remembering Sharon Galinsky Krebs, '76

I only knew Sharon since 1986 as I was born in Toronto and only knew some of the Buffalo High School students from the former Quiz Show "It's Academic". So anything I know is from what she told me through the years.

Sharon attended Bennett from 1972 to 1976 and while there, she was basically a quiet, shy student who got average grades. While there, she told me that except for an incident that occurred in 1972, for the most part, pretty much everyone after that first year got along regardless of who that person was. Sharon got along with everyone regardless of who they were.

I did mention that Sharon was shy, but that didn't stop her from taking part in activities that would later shape her career. She was a member of the Future Secretaries of America and she did volunteer work in the attendance office. I believe she told me that a course in Public Speaking was offered and Sharon ultimately signed up for it. In the end, public speaking slowly

began to help her with overcoming her shyness.

It was because of these things that she ended up attending ECC City Campus and thereafter began a 42 year career with New York State.

Her friendships were minimal, but that did not stop her with being friends with the late Diane Dzielski. The two had been best friends for years on end till her untimely passing during the height of the Covid Pandemic.

Because Bennett had a sizable Black student population, Sharon developed an appreciation for Soul Music. I later learned from Sharon that Rick James and Warren Epps, two people she talked about continuously, also attended Bennett.

I am glad that I was able to take part in some of the reunion activities that were offered pre-Pandemic, including a tour of the school and seeing All High Stadium for the first time. Sharon was able to be a part of the Bennett Alumni Association and do so much to keep the organization strong! For this, she was grateful!

Class Notes

The 1940s

John E. (Gene) Garrison, '49, reflects fondly on some of his teachers while at Bennett. He remembers science teacher Alma Schelbach, Foreign Language teacher Eleanor "MA" Sherman and Coach Fred Braun. Gene is a member of our Founders' Circle of the Bennett Alumni Endowment Fund.

Class Notes

The 1990s



Candice Crosby, '99, earned her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Clark Atlanta

University in 2003. She subsequently graduated from the Continental School of Beauty in 2004. Today, Candice is the proud owner and operator of Hair Candy 716, an upscale salon located in the Elmwood-Bryant area of Buffalo. Candice can routinely be seen speaking and presenting at various community events.



Dr. Melodie Baker, '99. Our Bennett family would like to congratulate Dr. Melodie Baker for earning her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology and Quantitative Analysis from the University of

Buffalo and for being the 2023 recipient of both the Excellence in Research Award and the Delbert Mullens "Thinking Outside of the Box" Award. Go Melodie!

Kenya K. Hobbs, '90, has been hired as director of community engagement and equity initiatives at the Buffalo Niagara Partnership.

Class Notes

The 2000s



Christian Pope, '01, entered the workforce determined to succeed upon her graduation from

the Computer Magnet. Today, she serves as District Manager for Jeffrey Ops LLC, a franchise of the McDonald's Corporation, and is the only Black woman in the City of Buffalo to hold that title. In her spare time, Christian likes designing websites.



Jeanette Edmonds, '01. After graduating from the International Studies Magnet Program,

Jeanette earned a certification as a personal trainer and health coach. Today, she serves as a gallery host at Hyatt Place Buffalo/Amherst. Jeanette is also a plus-sized model under her own brand, Jubilant Beauty LLC.

Mia Clark, '01, a Law Magnet graduate, went on to earn a BS in Sociology from the University



at Buffalo. Today, Mia serves as the Director of Family Preservation at Child and Family Services. She was also a graduate of the 2022 cohort of the Emerging Leaders Program at Leadership Buffalo.

Yolanda Smith, MHC, '03, was recently promoted to the C-Suite, now serving as Chief Program Officer at the Buffalo Federation of Neighborhood Centers. Go Yolanda!



Steven Costner, '04, went on to earn his undergraduate degree from the University of Buffalo. Today, Steven serves as an Assistant Director of Health and Human Services and is the proud owner of Southern Tier Cleaning Company LLC.

Maria Reid, LMHC, '01, went on to earn a BA in Health and Human Services from the University at Buffalo and an MS in Mental Health Counseling from Canisius College. Today, Maria serves as a licensed mental health counselor and has been working in the mental health field for fifteen years.



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Alicia Souleman was presented the Steve Poliachik Scholarship by Principal Carlos Alvarez at graduation on June 22, 2023.

We'd love to report about you! Please send your updates to us. Your friends would love to know what you're doing. We'd love to know about your accomplishments!

Contributing in Memory of Joseph Alexander, '69 MD

As a Bennettonian and lifelong Buffalo Bills fan, I was ecstatic when our Tigers won the State Championship. Congratulations again and again for your leadership and football acumen.

On behalf of myself and "baby Brother" David H. Alexander, we are contributing \$1000.00 to the Bennett High School Tigers Football, in memory of our older brother, the late Joseph S. Alexander, '69, MD, who played on the magical team of 1968. We were in the stands when the Tigers won the big prize.

Joe attended BHS for one year, 1968 - 1969, contributed to the championship victory, and was voted to both All-High and All Western New York teams. He LOVED his football experience at BHS; while playing as a Yale freshman, Joe seriously injured his left knee, which dashed his dreams of playing NFL football like Yale predecessor Calvin Hill. Instead, Joe opted for med school, but his love of the game lived on; Joe was my football mentor. He practiced dermatology in Houston, Texas, until succumbing to leukemia in December 2000, two weeks before his 50th birthday.

Please accept this gift in his memory. We look forward to following Tiger Football this fall and will plan a Buffalo visit around a Tiger football game.

Keep up the excellent work - our kids need you!!!
Best!
Renee T. Alexander, '70 Ph.D.

BY MARK OVERALL, '03

Get All Your Flowers Now. You Deserve Them.

In various capacities within my service to the community, I am often tasked with identifying individuals to receive some kind of award or recognition. Some responses that I routinely receive when asking whether someone would be willing to be recognized are "I don't think I've done enough" or "Isn't there someone else more deserving of this recognition?"

According to a 2021 article published by The Center for Community Solutions, 70% of Americans suffer from Imposter Syndrome. Imposter Syndrome can be loosely defined as the feeling that you are not intelligent enough or deserving enough to be in a particular space despite your achievements.

While anyone can suffer from it, the article expressed that Black peo-

ple especially experience Imposter Syndrome in daily life. This can be the result of being the only minority at your job, being followed closely by workers in stores, or only seeing one Black character as a sidekick in movies and television shows (an outdated reference, in my opinion).

Let this article serve as a gentle reminder: there is never a shortage of people to recognize in any given industry. If someone offers you flowers for your achievements, take them. No one is perfect and life will always be full of people who will not hesitate to criticize you. Therefore, when someone wants to offer you praise or acknowledge something you have done, accept it with grace and humility.

We are on this earth but for a moment. Get your flowers while you are still alive to smell them.

Hello from Texas!

Sorry I won't be able to attend the All Class Reunion event on the 9th, but I will be thinking of all the fun times I had at Bennett. Besides, if I ever went through the doors at Bennett, I probably would feel the need to get a pass to the nurse's office so I could cut class and leave early.

Big shout out to Mrs. Carol Caserta who always seemed to catch me at my locker when I was leaving early.

She always has, and always will, hold a very special spot in my high school memories.

Glenn Kraemer, '68

Alumni Honor Roll

2024 Nomination Form

please use this form to make your nomination to honor an alumni

Check Category:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting | <input type="checkbox"/> Forestry | <input type="checkbox"/> Music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Government | <input type="checkbox"/> Nursing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Artisans & Crafters | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Professions | <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Higher Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Politics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Historic Preservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Principals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clergy | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance | <input type="checkbox"/> Superintendents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching | <input type="checkbox"/> Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Science/Aerospace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dentistry | <input type="checkbox"/> Management/
Consulting | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports Professionals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Media | <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> Medicine | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel/Hospitality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First Responders | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteerism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food Careers | | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing |

Nominee _____ Class of _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
 Phone _____ E-mail _____

Please include a brief description of the person's achievements.

Information of person submitting the nomination.

Name _____ Class of _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
 Phone _____ E-mail _____

Please feel free to duplicate this form and send in as many nominations as desired. We would like to recognize all those Bennett Alumni who have done so much for our community. Please submit your nominations before December 31, 2023!

Return this form to: Bennett High School Alumni Honor Roll
 2885 Main Street
 Buffalo, New York 14214

BY ROSLYN RIGHETTI, '74

Bennett Sports Hall of Fame - October 7th

The Bennett Sports Hall of Fame is back! After several COVID-cancellations, six new members of prestigious individuals will be inducted on Saturday, October 7, 2023. The evening starts with light refreshments at 4:00 pm and is followed by the ceremony at 5:30 pm.

The Class consists of Jonathan Baker, '89 (Swimming), Timothy Baker, '87 (Swimming), Starling H. Bryant, '73 (Basketball), Lorenda Chisholm, '94 (Track) and Kharmen Wingard, '00 (Basketball), along with Elizabeth White Ahmed, '68 (Volleyball, Basketball, Female Athlete of the Year) (posthumously).

The tickets for the evening can be purchased online at www.bennett-alumni.com or by mailing a check made payable to Bennett Alumni Association, Inc. for \$25.00 per person to:

**Bennett Sports Hall of Fame
 2885 Main Street
 Buffalo, New York 14214**

Please include the names of all your guests. Tickets will be mailed to you for the evening.

The committee is also looking for program advertisements and sponsors. Imagine your business, or even yourself, having exclusive naming rights for our Sports Hall of Fame event!!! As a way of defraying the costs of this event, we need your help. Program advertisement information can be obtained online at our website or by calling Neil Lange at 716-308-5451.

We Have Been Changed for Good



Bela Petho, a computer teacher, passed away peacefully on May 10, 2023. Always smiling and calm, he had remarkable intelligence and built great relationships with students and staff. Bela was devoted to creating a computer curriculum that would prepare students for the future, leaving a lasting impact on the

Remembering Bela Petho

educational community. His warm spirit and dedication to advancing computer education will be cherished, and his legacy as a brilliant educator will continue to inspire generations of learners.

The Bennett Alumni Association extends its deepest sympathy to his wife, Kathleen, his children, and his entire family. Bela was a true and lasting Bennett Tiger.

2022 - 2023 Major Alumni Donor

Diamond Club - \$500+

Dr. Renee T. Alexander, '70
Marland L. Berdick, '49
Donald S. Blanke, '57
Joan Broderick Mooney, '64
Philip Celniker, '54
Philip H. Hubbell, '56
Dr. Leonard Katz, '53

Sally Laurie Murphy, '51
Bruce A. McNallie, '56
Donald H. Meyncke, Jr., '49
Robert A. Russell, '63
Bruce R. Thielking, '66
Gordon T. Warme, '66

Platinum Club - \$200 - \$499

Anonymous
Phillip Brothman, '56
Elaine Diringer, Faculty
Frank G. Emerling, '60
Robert S. Fink, Ph.D., '65
Terrence Gamble, '65
John E. (Gene) Garrison, '49
Stuart A. Gellman, '54

Don A. Gilbert, '60 & Faculty
Judith Lynn Green Brothman, '59
Christopher J. Hough, '73
Salvatore J. Illuzzi, Ph.D., '64
Robert L. Johnson, Jr., '68
Glenn Kraemer, '68
Dr. Ed & Linda Lazzaro, Faculty
Dr. James D. MacLowery, '53
Corinne Elliott Marillo Carter, '53

Kenneth W. Matasar, MD, '60
Eva Roeder MacLowery, '53
Ann Rynne Lozeau, '60
Leslie Ann Sapecky Gray, '69
Linda M. Scheffer, '61
Rhoda Stein Greenwald, '59
Robert C. Sugarman, Ph.D., '57
Deirdre L. Webb, '89

Gold Club - \$101 - \$199

Jeffrey Arnone, '79
Linda Barker Moore, '68 & Faculty
Nancy Becker Kuhn, '59
Roger H. Bennett, '60
Peter M. Cammarata, '75
Richard F. Carver, M.D., '55
Barbara C. Chamberlain Lyons, '57
Carol Cicarell Ottaviani, '60
Roger E. Dayer, '82
Ronald K. Dollmann, '60
Laurence D. Edelman, '57
Rachel Fabiano, '96
Robert P. Fine, '61
Larry Fink (River), '68
Linda Franklin Harris, '60
Hon. Paul L. Friedman, '61
James Friedman, '65
Marna Gale Burstein, '54
Scott W. Gehl, '70

Jerome M. Giordano, '54
Seymour Gitin, '52
Maxine Y. Herring Hall, '62
Jacqueline Hillary Jordan, '72
Ada Hopson Clemons, '70
Sanford Horwitz, '69
Pauline Jacobson Rogers, '43
Christine Beebe Jehle Whitman, '68 & Faculty
Robert J. Klein, '68
Carolyn "Cookie" Kulick Weil, '60
Douglas A. Lang, '56
Neil J. Lange, Faculty
Lawrence H. Levin, '57
Evelyn Miller Swarts, '59
Kenneth J. Munro, Jr, '57
Carol Newman Caserta, '60 & Faculty
Marilyn Newman Walsdorf, '53
Danis J. Norman Gehl, '70

Nancy Paul McKeever, '57
Harry L. Powazek, '73
Carolyn Price Singletary PhD, '66
Don W. Rappold, '63
Margie Redstone Rosenstock, '65
David A. Rosen, '71
Allan H. Rosenblitt, '65
Rebecca Savage Jones, '63
Owen W. Schultz, '92
Harvey S. Serota, '61
Clifford L. Shisler, '56
Frances Siskar Dickman, '57
Alvin H. Spector, '71
Jean Travis Boccuti, '57
Beverly Valvo LoTempio, '60
Lynn S. Weissman Klein, '68
Richard L. Wexler, '64
Marcia Weymouth Coleman, '61

Century Club - \$100

Barbara Aaron Snyder, '57
Essie Ablove Schloss, '61
Gregory Dale Abram, '71
Roberta Allbert Dayer, '53
Marilyn Bass Buxbaum, '54
David M. Braunstein, '70
Karima Carol Aiken Amin, '65
Dr. William E. Clack, '61
Harold I. Cohen, '51
Tony Cox, '71*
Joel L. Daniels, '56
Hon. Crystal Davis Peoples-Stokes, '69
Francis J. DeYoung, '57
Michael K. Ferber, '62

Thomas L. Freudenheim, '55
Daniel M. Gerstman, '66
Lynn Gilmore Canton, '66
Jeannette Guardalibene Rodak, '59
Gwendolyn Hanes Daugherty, '47
Cecelia B. Henderson, Faculty
Kenya Hobbs, '90
Joanne Kaplan VanDerveer, '71
Merle Katz Goldstein, '55
Kathleen Kinney, '91
Kenneth A. Kreinheder, '57
Margaret M. Lanz Puzio, '68 & Faculty
Leonard Ludwig, '55
David E. Manch, '60

Carolyn Milius Weber, '55
Donna Moslow Lawler, '60
Kim Nablo Jordan, '84
Cheryl I. Pleskow, '69
Diane Popper Pachman, '53
Paul H. Riester, '70
Janet Severance Reynolds, '61
Sue Shaffer Gardner, '48
Hon. Shirley Troutman, '78
Lawrence A. Veronica, Faculty
Gary L. Wolfe, '68
Daniel Wood, '04
Leslie Wright Jones, '60
Judith Zent Deck, '59

As of July 20, 2023. Please let us know if there are omissions or errors in our records. We'd be happy to check!

Bennett Alumni Memorial Garden and Walkway



The new gardens are resplendent in our school colors - blue and orange. Hydrangeas, day lilies, cone flowers and dogwood were added this summer!

Dedicated in 2015, our beautiful Memorial Garden and Walkway received a much-needed sprucing up on July 14, 2023. All of the gardens were replanted with beautiful blue and orange flowers and the beds were completely re-mulched.

In addition, the memorial pavers were all scraped and cleaned. After one more scraping to ensure all of the weeds are removed, the pavers will be resealed to keep them beautiful for years to come.

With this, we are launching another campaign to sponsor the pavers. Our 8 x 8 pavers make up the letter "B" when seen from above. With a membership donation of \$250, you can sponsor a paver with four lines of text. Each line can consist of no more than 13 letters.

We believe this is a unique gift to honor or thank people who have just about everything. It is also a perfect way to memorialize a classmate or teacher.

Please include your text when you use the membership form on page 4. Please PRINT clearly. This opportunity will help us continue our mission of providing a level playing field for our students.

Granite benches can also be sponsored.

As always, if you have any questions about our Memorial Garden and Walkway, feel free to call Neil Lange at 716-308-5451. Prices are available for other sponsorship opportunities, as well.

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Time Sensitive Publication
August 18, 2023