

Bennett 100 Beacon

Cherishing the Past • Celebrating the Present • Embracing the Future

Winter 2026 • Volume 28/Issue 1

Alumni Edition

Bennett High School • 2885 Main Street • Buffalo, New York 14214 • (716) 816-4250 • (716) 308-5451 • www.bennettalumni.com

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-Marilyn Wittman, Faculty

Bennett's Alumni Power School to 100th Anniversary

Weekend Celebration Marks Revival Of A Buffalo Institution

by Ben Tsujimoto, News Staff Reporter

The school was designed to resemble London's Buckingham Palace. The athletic stadium behind the school appeared in an iconic baseball film,

"The Natural," is a stand-in for Chicago's Wrigley Field. Its alumni include basketball legend Bob Lanier, funk artist Rick James, Broadway director-choreographer Michael Bennett, and model Beverly Johnson. But at Lewis J. Bennett High School's 100th anniversary celebration this weekend, the magisterial confines and famous attendees of one of the city's oldest active high schools are the glossy cover to a story of grit and perseverance.

"It's a celebration of the people whose "blood, sweat, and tears" held it together even as its population evolved, its existence was jeopardized, its graduation rate oscillated, and its stairs began to crumble. One hundred years later, we're the ones holding the

legacy; we're the ones marking this anniversary," said Marilyn Wittman, principal at Bennett High School from 1984 to 2004, and a board member of the school's Alumni Association since 2008. "I think it's historic and a huge privilege."

The weekend has been packed with activities presented by the Alumni Association, which President Neil Lange said his group of about 50 alumni has been working on for 18 months. Friday featured a car show, a ribbon cutting to

showcase the new stairs leading up to the school, building tours, and the induction into the school

Sports Hall of Fame. Saturday featured a homecoming parade, pancake breakfast, and football game between Bennett and Hutch-Tech, capped by a dinner and dance at the Buffalo Convention Center. Sunday

is expected to feature a brunch at the LECOM Harborside. Sharon Belton-Cottman, the Ferry District Representative of the Buffalo School Board and the key cog in the group that fought for the school's existence in 2015, raved about the ongoing efforts of Bennett's alumni who also maintain an endowment fund, give out scholarships, provide field trips, hold ice cream socials and pizza parties for students, and advocate on the school's behalf. "There are consistent pulses. They connect us to



Continued on page 3

Our President Reports... Together We Make a Huge Difference for Bennett



Wishing each and every one of you the best in the new year. We have so many things to be grateful for!!

After almost two years of planning, we executed our 100th Anniversary Celebration Weekend with precision. This would not have been possible without all of the countless hours of planning and preparing

of our volunteer committees, and of course, all of the Bennett Alumni and friends who participated in all of the activities. Well over 1000 people joined in the fun. It was a great time to renew old friendships, to meet new people and to join in the tie that connects us all - Bennett High School.

Now we are back to our regular mission work - supporting the students and staff of our school. We continue to have much to do. Sadly, cuts to District budgets have significantly increased the number of students in classes. It has also reduced the amount of "extras" teachers have to enhance their lessons.

That is where we come in. Through your memberships and your increased giving, we are able to supply those materials that are so needed to reach our youth. In a troubled world, engaging our young people in education is of utmost importance. Together, we are truly doing miracles.

Through our Mini-Grant Program, we are able to provide educational materials and incentives to foster school spirit and educational excellence.

Mini-Grants that we are providing this year include:

- *Sweatshirts for Girls Tennis & Basketball Teams*
- *Tigers Den Items*
- *Prizes for Tiger Tickets Raffles*
- *PlayStation 5 for E-Sports Club*
- *Global 10 Exam Review Materials*
- *Piano Repair & Replace needed Studio Cables*
- *Earth Science Lab Supplies*
- *Rewards for Check-in / Check-out Students*
- *Senior Trip Bus*
- *Graduation Supplies*
- *Senior Breakfast & Class Day Supplies*
- *Class Set of Short Stories by Raymond Carver*
- *Field Trip to Spare Lanes*
- *Field Trip to Elevator Alley AT Buffalo River*
- *Supplies for Print Business*
- *Vocabulary Development for Biology & Earth Science*
- *Flexible Seating Supplies*
- *Delta Math Curriculum Enhancement Materials*

- *Essential Science Materials*
- *National Honor Society Induction Ceremony*
- *Printer/Copier Supplies*
- *Soccer Hoodies - Varsity Team*
- *Soccer Hoodies - Junior Varsity Team*
- *Basketball Team Hoodies - Varsity Team*
- *Basketball Team Hoodies - Junior Varsity Team*
- *Swim Team Hooded Sweatshirts -*
- *Boys Swim Team Hoodies*
- *Girls Swim Team Charm Necklaces for Seniors*
- *Boys Swim Team Senior Gifts*
- *Swim Apparel - Girls Team Hoodies*
- *Parent Hospitality Cart*
- *Tie Dye T-shirts and supplies*
- *Varsity Bowling Team Sweatshirts*
- *Bowling Equipment for Boys Varsity Team*
- *Bowling Equipment for Girls Varsity Team*
- *Bowling Bags, Shoes, Rosin Bags, Tape*
- *Aquariums for Biology Classes*
- *Senior Decision Day Supplies*
- *Biology Program - Magic School*
- *Biology/Environmental Science Supplies*

Beyond all of these grants, we continue to fund Educational Grants (scholarships) and funding for special programs that our administrative team sees as important to incentivize the students.

I am also happy to report about our successful **Boxes of Love** and **Holiday Bazaar** events. Under the leadership of **Tara Maj** and Bennett Social Worker **Linda Scinta**, and members of the National Honor Society, we were able to provide holiday gifts for over 200 students. Most of these young people would not be able to provide gifts for their families. Each year we transform the Alumni Room into Santa's Workshop. Each period throughout the day, students come down to "shop" for gifts. From toys to books, Christmas decorations and clothing and jewelry, each student was able to get four presents. Our volunteers wrapped each present. We also provided snacks and hot chocolate. Of all the things we do each year, this is truly my favorite. The students are so polite and really express their joy!

At this point of our membership year, we are significantly behind in members. I am not quite sure if this is a reflection on the amount of money that was spent on tickets to the 100th Anniversary Celebrations or if people simply have forgotten the importance of their dues to fund our programs.

Whatever the reason, I am hoping that all of our dedicated alumni will actively consider supporting Bennett and her current students. Our young people's futures are at stake!!

Each of us received so much during our years here. Together we do great work.

... from page 1

the past as we move forward," Belton-Cottman said. "They have the spirit of 'Sankofa,' referring to an African heritage term that means to learn from the past."

More than 500 people are expected to take part throughout the weekend, with many traveling from across the country. The scope has been internationally broad, with alumni donating money to sponsor 25 current students to attend the weekend programming. "Pricing for the activities was tiered to meet different income levels," added Lange, who taught special education at Bennett for more than three decades.

"It's the relationship then, and it's the relationship now. And that's why I am so grateful to be here and then be in touch with these people," Wittman said. "This is the pinnacle."

On The tBrink The best way to illustrate the might of the Bennett Alumni Association would be to rewind to 2014, when the high school was declared out of time by the State Education Department and was offered to charter schools by a majority of the Buffalo School Board. Several board members at the time intended to transition the building at 2885 Main Street as a new site for Tapestry Charter School.

Then it didn't seem like Bennett would reach its centennial celebration. Steps were taken to kick-start a transition despite rallies to stymie the movement.

"They came and measured the rooms to start redoing them," Wittman recalled.

Belton-Cottman, then in her second term on the Board, said she remembers praying about Bennett's continued existence and when she opened her eyes, saw on a television members of the US Senate filibustering. She called the District's General Council to inquire if that was a tactic the board could use to combat the closure momentum.

The strategy worked. After more than four hours of fighting, the board on February 13, 2015, approved Superintendent Donald Ogilvie's resolution to restart Bennett and three other embattled schools.

The work was not done,



though. An Alumni Association redesign team, including Lange, Wittman, Margaret Lanz Puzio, Nicholas Constantino, and John Vella, penned a 187-page plan to restart the school, which would later evolve to focus on computer science and software engineering when Kriner Cash became superintendent. By 2017, when the reimaged Lewis J. Bennett High School of Innovative Technology opened, 102 freshmen walked in and embarked on a new era. Over the ensuing eight years, the school has grown and shown promise, enrolling 435 students, achieving an 83% graduation rate in 2024-25, and winning a state championship in football in 2022.

Present State Alumni advocacy did not stop upon the reopening, however. A project to redo the concrete steps in the plaza that rises up a hill to Bennett's front doors took nearly three years, and if not for sustained pressure from Lange and the alumni, it might have been a close call for the anniversary celebration. District officials came through in the end. Lange said. Lakeside Contracting won a re-bid on the project and wrapped up the work last spring. Lange and a group of current students tended to the landscaping

over the summer, weeding and mulching, and district leadership was attentive in the days preceding the party.

Will Keresztes gets 100 gold stars from me, Lange said, applauding the district's Chief of Administration, who helped orchestrate painters, window washers, and electricians for cosmetic work. While it might lack the luster the school's oldest graduates might remember when a historian said there was no more eloquent architectural statement of the dignity of education anywhere in town, the Century Old School was ready to welcome scores of alumni.

"For me, there's always something magical about the school and having people come back," Lange said.

Optima Futura Cecelia B. Henderson, a former member of Bennett's faculty and currently on the alumni board, described an activity in which about 150 alumni will participate in a Sunday brunch.

On a sheet of paper, alumni will write a message and insert it into a time capsule. There is no specific prompt for the alumni to follow. The message on the sheet can contain:

- A message of encouragement to future students
- A nostalgic memory of their years at the school
- Something remarkable about Bennett's pride

The capsule will not be opened until 2050, the school's 125th anniversary, Henderson said.

In other words, the 100-year celebration is not the end of the school's rich history. The school's Latin motto -- "Optima Futura" -- means "the best is yet to be." After all, the closing activity fits a larger purpose that Wittman defines: that the Bennett community can continue to give students a wealth of opportunities in a sense of belonging, she says, that is challenging for today's youth.



From Our Principal

BY FRED SALES

Progress, Challenges, and Student Success at Bennett High School

I would like to share a brief update on the work taking place at Bennett High School each day. Our January Regents results were encouraging, with about 80 percent of repeat test takers passing the English Language Arts exam and strong results in U.S. History. We continue to focus on improving performance in Global Studies and the sciences, supported by ongoing after-school academic help for students.

I am also pleased to report that Bennett remains on New York State's list of schools in good standing. Our staff is carefully reviewing each senior's progress to help ensure that as many students as possible remain on track for graduation.

Like many schools, we continue to face challenges. Attendance remains a concern, with roughly 75 students struggling with consistent attendance.

At the same time, we are working hard to strengthen our school climate. Suspensions have dropped significantly, and our "Golden Ticket" initiative rewards students with good attendance and passing grades by giving them access to school events and celebrations.

Thank you to the Bennett alumni community for your continued encouragement and support of our students and school.



Thank-you!

Certainly there are not enough words to express our gratitude to Principal Sales! His help, guidance, assistance and support of all of our 100th Anniversary Activities was unparalleled.

Mr. Sales gave his all to make sure everything was

in place and that we could get everything we needed for the weekend. He also produced a stellar video recapping the history of Bennett.

On behalf of the entire Alumni Association, we thank Mr. Fred Sales for all he does for us!

Our 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!

*** For information about how your gift of \$250 or more can be used to sponsor a Memorial Garden paver, call Neil at 716-308-5451.

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***

*** See note above



Diamond \$500+

Name _____ Maiden Name _____ Class _____

Address _____ Vocation _____

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, 2025 until August 31, 2026

• In Memoriam •

*Your additions or corrections are requested.
Please forward to the Bennett Beacon staff.*

(Reported since Summer 2025 Bennett Beacon)

MaryLou Emiliani Taurgrasso, '73,
age 69, December 3, 2024

Thelma Ann Nedell Lettman, '57,
December 31, 2024

Lois Smith Moeser, '51, Summer 2025

James Guderian, '51, March 25, 2025

John Venneman, '65, April 3, 2025

Marjorie Beahan Vandennack, '50
June 5, 2025

Joseph (Dick) R. Andrews, '58,
June 10, 2025

Peter Paul, Jr., '61, age 82,
June 14, 2025

Richard Weiskopf, '67, age 75,
June 16, 2025

Peter Ferraina, '60, June 17, 2025

Marilyn Moscato Gallivan, '55, age 88,
June 21, 2025

Carl Nuermberger, Jr., '51,
June 26, 2025

Marcia Segal Gold, '60,
July 6, 2025

Kevin J. Carriero, '65, age 77,
July 14, 2025

David E. Hampton, Faculty (History),
age 80, July 14, 2025

Patricia Militello Thomas, '53,
July 20, 2025

Elaine Emma Kolbe Mattar, '56, age 86,
July 30, 2025

Tasha Ervin-Garner, '91, July 31, 2025

Dr. Carl Gugino, '52, age 96,
August 4, 2025

Donald Vincent, '51, August 10, 2025

Marcia Mitchell Soden, '63,
August 15, 2025

Donald A. Doino, '51, age 92,
August 26, 2025

Warren F. Glover, '56, age 87,
August 31, 2025

Susan Silverman Carrel, '60, age 83,
September 22, 2025

Bernard (Bernie) B. Freedman, '57,
September 30, 2025

Harriett "Sis" Anderson Switzgale, '44,
age 99, October 16, 2025

James Maisano, '64, age 79,
October 20, 2025

Roberta Faxstein Handel, '51,
November 2, 2025

Antoinette Deveso Harrington, age 85,
December 16, 2025

Ronald S. Cohen, '47, age 96,
December 18, 2025

Florence V. Miles Barnett, '63, age 81,
December 23, 2025

Joyce McMahon Scherer, '51, age 92,
December 27, 2025

Kathleen E. Robson, '69, age 69,
December 28, 2025

Samuel Schwarzberg, '74, age 70,
January 1, 2026

Allen Yasgur, '60, age 83,
January 3, 2026

Lawrence (Larry) Singer, '60, age 84,
January 14, 2026

Robert Maxick, '61, age 82,
January 16, 2026

Nicholas Altemoos, '16, age 28,
January 16, 2026

Judith Peterson DiPasquele, '60,
age 84, February 2, 2026

In Memory of Janet Severance Reynolds, '61

We received a note from Linda M. Scheffer letting us know of the passing of the Class of 1961 treasurer, Linda G. Severance Reynolds on June 24, 2024.

Linda let us know, "true to her nature, she requested a celebration of life in lieu of a traditional funeral. She said to feel free to wear colors that represented her vibrant spirit as everyone gathered to remember her."

I am willing to bet there was a fair share of Bennett Blue and Orange represented!



Boxes of Love

It has been Our Alumni Association's practice to brighten the holidays for those who might otherwise have little. To that end, we ask our



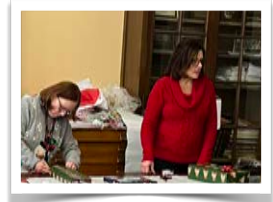
alumni to donate money and gifts to be given back to our students.

What a magnificent day it is when over 200 young people come down to the Alumni Room to go "shopping". The ex-

citement and the thankful comments fill one's heart. We make a world of difference.

After shopping, our alumni volunteers wrap the presents for the students.

As you go through the year, be thinking of what you might donate for this year's event!



Celebrating Our Tiger Football: More Than a Winning Year! It was a Statement!

From opening kickoff to the state semifinals, the Tigers played with grit, discipline, and belief. They finished the regular season with a winning record, advanced through multiple rounds



of postseason play, defeated higher-seeded opponents, and emerged as one of the final teams standing in their class across New York State.

One of the most memorable moments of the

season came on September 20, 2025, when Bennett hosted its spectacular 100th Anniversary football game against long-time rival Hutch Tech Engineers. In front of a large and energized crowd of alumni, students, and friends, the Tigers rose to the moment, delivering a decisive victory that honored a century of Bennett football tradition and set the tone for the remarkable run that followed.



Statistics tell part of the story. The defense consistently limited scoring in key matchups and delivered momentum-changing stops. The offense showed balance and poise, sustaining long drives in high-pressure moments. Several playoff victories

were decided by one score, a testament to preparation and execution under pressure.

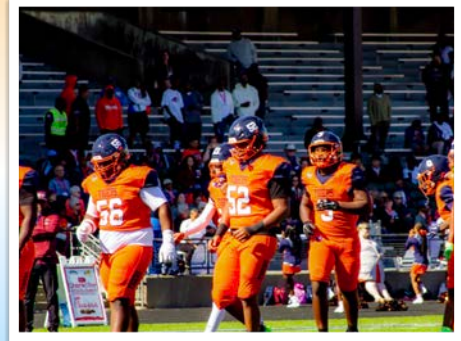


But the heart of this season lived beyond the numbers. These student-athletes balanced demanding practices with academics and showed up for

one another week after week. Coaches built a

culture rooted in accountability and pride, and the Bennett community responded with growing support and enthusiasm.

Reaching the state semifinals placed the 2025 Tigers among the most successful teams in recent Bennett history and signals a program on the rise.



Sustaining this momentum required continued investment in equipment, training, travel, and player development. This season reminded us of what is possible. With the continued support of alumni and friends, it can also mark the beginning of something even greater.

Your Alumni Association is forever grateful for those who make contributions in honor of, in memory of or in thanks for Bennett Alumni or anyone you wish to recognize.

• Gift Received in Memory of...

Sheila Trossman, Math Teacher

Eileen Carrell Kessler, '55

by Janice Siegel, '59

Roberta Faxstein Handel, '51

by Sally Laurie Drake Murphy, '51

Gloria LeBlanc, Latin Teacher

by Julie Christiano

• Challenge Gift by

Central Park Homeowners Association, Inc.

Bennett Endowment Fund 2026 Major Donors • \$1000.00+

Thomasina R. Stenhouse, Ph.D., '68

Robert S. Fink, Ph.D., '65

Christopher H. Wende, '68

For details on making your contribution to the Bennett Alumni Endowment Fund, please call Neil at 716-308-5451

We apologize in advance for any errors. Please let us know by calling Neil.



Mini Grants

Meeting Our Students Needs Your Contributions at Work!

On December 10, 2025, Mr. Jesionowski and Mrs. Kiblin took their Senior CTE Graphics Design class to Spare Lanes at 500 Pearl.



During the first half of the field trip, employees from 500 Pearl led a very informative tour on what 500 Pearl has to offer and various jobs that are potentially available to LJB Seniors once they graduate. Some topics that were discussed during the tour were safety training, customer relations and professionalism, marketing and graphic design.



Once the tour was over, Mr. Jesionowski, Mrs. Kiblin & the Seniors

had the opportunity to experience the customer side of the business. They were able to bowl while they enjoyed pizza, wings, cookies and soda.



A big THANK YOU goes out to Mr. Lange and the Bennett Alumni for making this field trip possible. Thank you for your support!

Our 100th Anniversary Coin Toss Squad:
Jeff Arnone,
Dan Conley,
Peter Cammarata and
Larry Veronica.



Thanks to our 100th Anniversary Week- end Major Sponsors!!!

We are deeply appreciative of our community leaders and our Bennett Alumni who have stepped forward to sponsor events during our 100th Anniversary Weekend. Their community spirit guaranteed the success of our 100th Anniversary weekend!

Car Show Sponsor -



Friday Evening Reception Sponsor



**Wayne Reilly Foundation
in memory of our Second
Board President Wayne
Reilly.**

Parade Sponsor -



Football Game Sponsor -



Gala Dinner / Dance Sponsors -



Alumni Brunch Sponsors -

**Lorraine Huber Repicci, '55 • Melvin Chafetz, '63
Sally Laurie Drake Murphy, '51
Richard Dattner, '55
Tom Freudenheim, '55 • Mark Evancko, '81
Robert Kloner, MD, '67
Leon S. Lissek, '56**

Bennett Sports Hall of Fame

Some ways that YOU can help expand our Induction Ceremonies!

Sports Hall of Fame *Nomination Form*

Please use this form to nominate an outstanding athlete or team.

Check Category:

- | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Football | <input type="checkbox"/> Volleyball | <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cross Country | <input type="checkbox"/> Track & Field | <input type="checkbox"/> Wrestling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis | <input type="checkbox"/> Basketball | <input type="checkbox"/> Cheerleading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baseball | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming | <input type="checkbox"/> Golf |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Softball | <input type="checkbox"/> Bowling | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

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 Athletes who have done so much for our school!. Please submit your nominations NOW!!

Return this form to: Bennett Sports Hall of Fame
2885 Main Street
Buffalo, New York 14214



Donna Amico, '79

Swimming & Softball



Dr. Jeffrey T. Evans, '74

Football & Track



William Iannaccone, '59

Baseball



Dominic Dantonio, '78

Football

Not Pictured

Jimmy Hill, '79
Track



Would you like to JOIN our Committee?

We are always looking for new Committee members to help locate new inductees, plan the ceremony and solicit ads for our program.

Please send your NAME, Address, Phone Number and email address to:

Roslynrighetti@gmail.com

or call Neil at 716-308-5451

or mail to the above address.

Bennett High School Centennial Alumni Honor Roll

The 100th Anniversary of Bennett High was an amazing and exciting time! We honored our tradition of excellence, "Cherishing the Past, Celebrating the Present, Embracing the Future".

The culmination of this milestone weekend event was the Alumni Honor Roll Brunch. Everyone enjoyed fellowship and connecting with alumni, faculty and friends, followed by a delicious breakfast buffet and the presentation of Alumni Awards.

Alumni were recognized for their outstanding careers and contributions to society since leaving Bennett High School.

The 2025 Alumni Honor Inductees were:

Daniel W. Conley, '77

- Teaching and Coaching

Dr. William F. Iannaccone, '59

- Health Professions

Valata Jenkins-Monroe, Ph.D., '69

- Forensic Psychology

Claudia A. Marshall, '69

- Theatre Arts

Francesca B. Mesiah, '75

- Health Professions

During the Honor Roll presentation, each inductee shared remarks reflecting their memorable time at Bennett High, and thanked the faculty, staff, and students who made an indelible impression on them!

Claudia Marshall was unable to attend. Alumni Cheryl Pleskow, her classmate and friend, accepted on her behalf.

It was my honor and privilege to serve as Mistress of Ceremonies, and the opportunity to congratulate and celebrate the 2025 Alumni Honorees, as well as other alumni, faculty and friends during the Centennial Celebration. This was truly a memorable occasion!

Thanks to everyone who assisted and supported this event.

To nominate outstanding alumni, please see the form on this page. You can self-nominate or submit classmates, etc...



Alumni Honor Roll 2026 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"/> 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 May 1, 2026!

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

2025 - 2026 Major Alumni Donors

Diamond Club - \$500+

We are so deeply appreciative of those Bennett Alumni Members who have distinguished themselves as a part of the Diamond Club. Their outstanding generosity amounts to a combined total of \$12,725.00 - directly impacting our students! For the BEST is Yet to Be!!

Family of Marland L. Berdick, '49
David M. Braunstein, '70
Joan Broderick Mooney, '64
Philip Celniker, '54
Peter Dustin, '63
Frank G. Emerling, M.D., '60
Robert S. Fink, Ph.D., '65
Jeffrey M. Freedman, '68

Hon. Paul L. Friedman, '61
Christopher J. Hough, '73
Douglas A. Lang, '56
Margaret Lanz Puzio, '68 & Faculty
Robert A. Russell, '63
Gordon T. Warme, '66
Molly Wesling, '85
Judith Zent Deck, '59



Darnell Haywood Jr. - AVP, community responsibility officer, BankOnBuffalo, a division of CNB Bank

Congratulations to Darnell, '05 for your continued excellence and representation in the Buffalo Community. We are so proud of you! Following Bennett, he received his bachelor's in business administration and marketing at Bryant & Stratton College

Born in: St. Louis, Missouri, Darnell resides in Buffalo. He has been with BankOnBuffalo since 2017.

His community involvement extends to President, Buffalo Urban League Young Professionals; boards of Beau Fleuve Music & Arts, Persistence Preparatory Charter School, Board Strong, and Queen City Clean Water (Buffalo Sewer Authority).

If time and money were no object, he would explore and travel the world, learning about different cultures and foods.

Darnell explains, "One of my spiritual leaders always says, 'Pursue excellence until excellence is achieved.'"

He is very active and able to balance life and work.

"I enjoy making a difference, and I also get to enjoy life while doing it."

One thing he wants to accomplish in the next 10 years is to submit a charter for a minority-owned bank within the region.

"I am well aware of the systemic barriers minorities face in accessing banking and lending services. Being able to understand and build generational wealth and financial wellness would be amazing for the communities we serve.

Connections!

After a week of being sick, I needed to venture out to have a blood test. There, I noticed that the name before me was Maria Assad. Could this be my French teacher from Buffalo State? Sure enough, it was. Eighty-seven years old, she was accompanied by her son. We had a lovely reminiscence.

Then I heard, "Mr. Langel!", but it wasn't the receptionist, it was Bianca Bassett, Class of 2000. We had a great catch-up and I got her information for the data-base!! A great time chatting before I was called.

I got in and found the nurse was a friend of my brother Andrew from their early days at Kenmore Mercy. We had a great chat.

Then it was on to get a new wash-machine. (Oh, I forgot to mention that was a part of my bad week!) At the end of the sale I noticed that the salesman's name was Chris Mathibe. I asked him if he was any relation to Rhonda, a former teacher at Bennett. Indeed it was her grandson.

Connections are so amazing!!!

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Most importantly, Sandy has devoted much of his life to the global effort to end blindness. Together with his wife, Sue Greenberg, his high school sweetheart and fellow Bennett graduate, he has supported major research initiatives, including the Sanford and Susan Greenberg Center to End Blindness at Johns Hopkins University.

For the Bennett community, honoring Sandy at the Centennial Gala was a moment of great pride. His life stands as a powerful reminder that determination and vision can turn adversity into an opportunity to improve the world.

Our Outstanding Alumni of the Year - Sandy Greenberg

While a student at Columbia University, Sandy lost his eyesight after a medical misdiagnosis. Rather than allowing blindness to define his life, he made a promise that he would help find a cure for blindness. With determination and support from friends and family, he returned to Columbia and graduated Phi Beta Kappa as class president. He later earned advanced degrees from Harvard and Columbia and went on to become an entrepreneur, inventor, public servant, and philanthropist.



What a delight to meet **Sandy Greenberg, '58** and his charming wife, **Sue Rosenberg, '58** at our 100th Anniversary Gala Dinner and Dance at the Buffalo Convention Center, where he was honored as Bennett's Outstanding Alum.

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