



Alumni Council Newsletter

Rush-Henrietta Alumni Council

October 2016

RHAC Class Contacts

Before 1960
Volunteer Wanted
Contact Joe Bellanca

1960-1969
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1970-1979
Dianne Osgood Meli
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1980-1989
Martha Mack
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Brian Levy
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1990-1999
Ann Grabowski
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2000-2015
Volunteer Wanted
Contact Joe Bellanca

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Henrietta, NY 14467

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Alumni Council to Induct Three Grads into Hall of Fame

Rush-Henrietta alumni and community members are invited to attend the homecoming football game on Saturday, October 15, and welcome three new members to the district's alumni Hall of Fame.

The distinguished graduates are Eric Black '87, Jeanine Stewart Lupisella '83, and Nancy Robb Viola '61. They will be welcomed into the Rush-Henrietta Alumni Council Hall of Fame during the annual induction ceremony at Elmer Gordon Stadium at the Senior High School, 1799 Lehigh Station Road, Henrietta.

All district graduates are invited to attend this special event, which includes an alumni meet-and-greet at 1 p.m. in the tent near the entrance to Elmer Gordon Stadium, behind the high school. The Hall of Fame inductions are at 1:30 p.m. on the football field, preceding the annual homecoming football game.

"It is a real privilege each year to induct some very deserving Rush-Henrietta graduates into the Alumni Council Hall of Fame," says Dr. Ken Graham, superintendent of schools, and emcee of the event.

"Rush-Henrietta has an outstanding group of distinguished alumni and it's always exciting when we are able to celebrate their accomplishments," Graham says. "We encourage everyone in the community to attend

Join in the Alumni Fun!

When: 1:30 p.m.
Saturday, October 15

Where: Senior High School,
1799 Lehigh Station Road

Hall of Fame Ceremony at
1:30 p.m. (football game follows)

Honorees profiled on pages 2-3.

the homecoming football game and cheer not only for our team, but for our honored alumni. We look forward to welcoming them back to their alma mater, and into the Hall of Fame."

Next spring, the Rush-Henrietta Alumni Council will consider more nominees for the 2017 Hall of Fame. Names that were submitted this year will be considered again.

The Rush-Henrietta Education Foundation funds the annual Hall of Fame induction. The Foundation underwrote expenses for past recognition of Distinguished Alumni, now considered Hall of Famers.

For information, contact Joe Bellanca, Alumni Council president, at 585-334-5147 or via e-mail at cjbellanca@rochester.rr.com.



Three Graduates Named to Hall of Fame

Eric Black '87

Eric Black, a member of the Rush-Henrietta Class of 1987, is a successful attorney who is making his mark in the corporate world as well as in his community.

Eric graduated in 1991 from the University of Rochester with a bachelor's degree in economics. Three years later, he received his law degree at the University of Virginia School of Law.



With more than two decades of experience in the field of law, Eric serves as the vice president and assistant general counsel for EarthLink, a leading network services provider "dedicated to delivering superior customer experiences in a cloud-connected world." In these capacities, Eric manages a team and provides counsel on matters such as contract negotiations, real estate, risk management, human resources, customer disputes, and product development. He also serves as the company's HIPAA privacy officer.

His success has been recognized publicly in several ways. In 2006, Eric was named to the Rochester Business Journal's prestigious "Forty Under 40" list. That same year, he received the regional African-American Emerging Leaders Award. In 2008, he was recognized for his service to children with the Willie W. Lightfoot Youth Advocate of the Year Award.

When he's not in the office, Eric stays busy volunteering in his community. He is a member of the town of Henrietta Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. He also serves on the advisory board for The Center for Youth in Rochester and volunteers in the city schools. In addition, for the past decade, Eric has served as a volunteer assistant coach for Rush-Henrietta junior varsity basketball. He also has spent 12 years as an assistant coach for the Rush-Henrietta junior varsity and varsity football teams.

Those who know Eric cite his winning personality as one of his most endearing qualities. "I watch him with our children as a coach and mentor," says Trish Faggiano-LaRocca '86. "He coaches our boys both on and off the field. He has a big heart and will help any kid in need. He is able to give the boys confidence that some of them need not only to succeed in sports, but in life. The boys respect and trust him."

Eric lives in Henrietta with his wife, Jennifer, and sons, Eric and Nicholas.

Jeanine Stewart Lupisella '83

Jeanine Stewart, a 1983 Rush-Henrietta graduate, is known locally as a principal in the Honeoye Falls-Lima Central School District, but children who live thousands of miles away know and appreciate her for a different reason.

As principal of Manor Intermediate School in Honeoye Falls, Jeanine is recognized as a community leader who supports literacy efforts throughout her school district. She works tirelessly to support students and ensure that they display the knowledge, skills, and character needed to realize their dreams and succeed in a changing world.



While remaining focused on the needs of students at her school, Jeanine also works on behalf of children in Nicaragua. To support educational efforts in a country with limited economic resources and schools that do not compare to our own, Jeanine partnered with Enlace Group to form a team of volunteers and raise money to build new schools.

The group's work in Central America is done under the name of Linking Hands for Learning, a non-profit organization she and her husband lead. For the past five years, Jeanine has worked with community members to garner more than \$100,000 in financial donations and build a network of volunteers who travel each year to Nicaragua. Her key partners in this effort include Rotary International clubs throughout the region.

Together, Jeanine and the volunteers build replacement schools in remote locations using only hand-held tools and their ingenuity to make life better for others. The money they have raised has been invested in six different communities, resulting in the construction of seven schools. Jeanine also collects educational resources that are provided to schools to support teaching and learning.

Her outstanding volunteer work has not gone unnoticed, here or abroad. "This Rush-Henrietta graduate has donated countless hours, significant financial resources, and lots of love and compassion to the children of Nicaragua," says Jeanine's sister, Renee Bernhardt. "If not for her efforts, many children would not have a school to attend."

Jeanine lives in Mendon with her husband, Rob, and their children, Elise, 13, and Caroline, 11. She also has two sons - Jordan Reakes, 25, and Brian Reakes, 24.

Hall of Fame Con't.

Nancy Robb Viola '61

Nancy Robb Viola, a 1961 Rush-Henrietta graduate, is a retired teacher and school administrator whose work on local and state committees helped level the playing field for female high school athletes.

Her love for physical education spans decades of change. As a female athlete at Rush-Henrietta in the 1950s, Nancy remembers the early days of boys and girls sharing the same courts and fields. She watched with great interest as rules began to change and girls basketball, in particular, evolved into the game we recognize today.



Nancy started her career in education at Rush-Henrietta. From 1965 to 1981, she taught students at all age levels. She later moved to the Batavia City School District, where she served as the director of athletics, health, and physical education from 1981 to 1998.

Nancy was the Section V girls' basketball chair for 22 years, serving from 1975 to 1997. During her first year in this capacity, she recalls, some schools did not provide uniforms for their female student athletes. That began to change after the implementation of federal legislation known as Title IX, and the popularity of girls basketball soon began to grow.

Nancy recognized that interest in girls sports was growing quickly, both in terms of skill level and spectator interest. She was instrumental in getting the Section V finals moved from high school gyms to what is now known as the Blue Cross Arena at the Rochester Veterans Memorial, a move that accommodated the huge crowds that wanted to watch.

From 1978 to 1981, Nancy also served as New York state girls basketball chair. Thanks to her inspired leadership, the first complete New York State Public High School Athletic Association girls' basketball tournament was held in 1981, right here in Monroe County.

A member of the Section V Basketball Hall of Fame, Batavia City School District Athletic Hall of Fame, and Rochester Red Wings Walk of Fame, Nancy now takes her place as a member of the Rush-Henrietta Alumni Council Hall of Fame.

Nancy also helps to organize her class reunions. In fact, she will be celebrating her 55th class reunion with members of the Class of 1961 the same weekend she is honored by the Alumni Council. She lives in Piffard, Livingston County.

In Memoriam

This past summer, two longtime music teachers with deep roots in the Rush-Henrietta Central School District passed away. We would like to remember and thank them here.

First, Mr. Paul Camicata, a beloved Rush-Henrietta teacher who founded the exemplary choral group, R-H Singers, died at 78. He leaves behind a loving family and hundreds of former students who remember him with fondness.

Mr. Camicata oversaw R-H Singers from its inception in 1972 through his retirement in 1996; more than 400 students participated during that time. Under his direction, the group won numerous awards and enjoyed outstanding opportunities to perform while traveling the world. R-H Singers continue to wow audiences today under the direction of Christine Sargent. Continuing the tradition established under Mr. Camicata, the group traveled to Europe to perform this summer.

So revered was Mr. Camicata that more than 180 former R-H Singers gathered in 2010 for a reunion concert to celebrate his leadership and a mutual love for music.

In addition, Mr. Don Tirabassi also passed away this summer. He was a hometown boy, graduating from our district in the early 1970s. His teaching career in East Rochester and then in Rush-Henrietta spanned 37 years. He retired four years ago after completing his final assignment as a strings teacher working with beginning orchestra students at Winslow Elementary School.

Mr. Tirabassi was more than a music teacher, though. He was a skilled theater director and performer. During the 1990s, Mr. Tirabassi could be found spending his summers overseeing the summer drama program for the town of Henrietta recreation department. He also served as music director at Calvary St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Rochester's South Wedge, where he regularly invited his music students to perform.

"He will forever be remembered as a loving husband, proud father, a dedicated teacher, a mentor and a fierce and loyal friend," his obituary reads. "The innumerable amount of lives he touched and changed will help his memory live on for years to come. he will be missed tremendously not only by his family, but by everyone who had the privilege to know this unique and wonderful man."

These stories were posted on the district Facebook page at www.facebook.com/rhschools. Please "like" the district page to stay informed about the latest news, whether it involves today's schools or important people from our past.