

Blue 'n' Gold

Winter 2018

HVRHS Alumni Association

Volume 20, Issue 1

First Wall of Honor Members Inducted

Housatonic Valley Regional High School has sent off legions of students to lives filled with impressive careers, public service and strong character traits. Nine of them were honored November 29 during the first induction ceremony of the school's Wall of Honor.

Newly developed by the HVRHS Alumni Association in partnership with the school's administration, the wall recognizes the achievements of those who have passed through the school since its opening in 1939. A case now stands prominently in the front hallway displaying plaques with the first inductees' names, as well as a rotating video describing their accomplishments.

The nine are: Dorothy Winn Cecchinato, class of 1947; Richard A. Gustafson, class of 1959; Nathan Hart, class of 1954; Edward M. Kirby, class of 1945; John M. O'Hara, class of 1947; and Thomas F. Segalla, class of 1961. Three awards were given posthumously: Geoffrey D. Belter, class of 1999; Frederick T. Staples, class of

continued on page 2



Front row: Nathan Hart, Dorothy Winn Cecchinato, Thomas Segalla and John O'Hara. Back row: Claudia Staples Schena, Ellen Hart, David Segalla, Richard Gustafson, Hoot Belter, Susan Clayton, JoEllen Belter, Linda Fitzgerald, Ed Kirby, Christian Allyn and John O'Hara, Jr.

Housatonic's Beauty Recognized

Architectural Digest has confirmed what Northwest Corner residents have known all along. Housatonic Valley Regional High School is the most beautiful public high school in Connecticut.

In a fall issue, writer Stefanie Walek said September, when most students are returning to school, is a good time to take a closer look at the thousands of schools across the country. "While many high school buildings might be rather bland from a design perspective, there are others that are veritable works of art—we

wouldn't blame you for mistaking them as universities, private homes, or even castles, in some cases. Representing a vast range of architectural styles, from Gothic to Art Deco, these structures, both historic and modern, often represent the pride of a community."

When asked how they were chosen, Walek responded that she looked at hundreds of public high schools around the country, "methodically going through statewide school rankings to be sure I saw as many as possible. After viewing dozens of schools per state, I selected ones that were architecturally significant—typically historic buildings, though some modern ones stood out, too. And then I narrowed down my selection to one per state by making an aesthetic judgment."

Housatonic, which opened its doors in 1939 to students from the towns of Canaan, Cornwall, Falls Village, Kent, Salisbury and Sharon, was designed by architect Ernest Sibley. It is in the Georgian Revival style, and while there have been a number of renovations and additions to the structure, there has been a conscious effort to retain its historic look.



Housatonic is named the most beautiful high school in Connecticut.

continued on page 5

Wall of Honor from page 1

1940 and Peter Suzuki, class of 1947.

Candidates were nominated by family or friends, and the association, after reviewing the biographies, made the choices for induction.

In opening the ceremony, Principal Jose Martinez said the day should go down as one of the great days in the life of Housatonic. Assistant Principal Ian Strever, who worked closely with the association for the project, spoke of the alumni who left their marks across the hall and around the world. While he was pleased with celebration, he said the most meaningful time for him will be when a student, waiting for the late bus, quietly reads the names and views the video. "Hopefully that will be when ideas take hold and a fire is set."

For Willis "Hoot" and Jo Ellen Belter of Salisbury, the ceremony was most touching. They nominated their late son Geoffrey, describing his early childhood difficulties with reading and math, his eventual receipt of a doctorate in electrical engineering and his ascent to a top position at Apple. He died in an accident in August 2014. "We were told he solved hard problems calmly," they said, "And that he produced excellent work. We're proud of what he accomplished in his 33 years of life."

Cecchinato, now of Canaan, attended a two-room schoolhouse in Cornwall up until fifth grade and then went on to Cornwall Consolidated School and Housatonic. She worked as a secretary for General Electric before being hired by Region 1 Superintendent William Nolan to work in the high school office and as board clerk in 1965, retiring in 1991. She came back in 1995 and retired again in 2005. Presenter Susan Clayton said, "With impeccable grace, she

dedicated her life to Region 1."

Canaan native Gustafson received a doctorate in educational research and went on to become vice president of Keene State College and later president of New Hampshire College, now Southern New Hampshire University, where this year the Gustafson Center was named for him and his wife, Joanne Walters Gustafson, also a Housatonic graduate. He was presented by his classmate David Segalla. In accepting the award, Gustafson spoke of the principles to live by taught at Housatonic and the friendships of a lifetime made there.

Seventh-generation Cornwall native and farm boy, Hart was presented by his niece Ellen Hart, who told about her uncle's accomplishments as a college professor of zoology. His interest in science was spawned at Housatonic and led to a doctorate in the subject. In his acceptance speech, Hart said, "Each of these stories can be an inspiration and hope for students, parents and anyone passing through."

Housatonic has been a major part of Kirby's life, where he served as teacher, coach, principal and assistant superintendent of Region 1. Presenter Linda Rhoades Fitzgerald told about his many interests, including geology, the wild West and local history. He's written 11 books and numerous articles. Kirby, of Sharon, said that even though he was the school leader during a time of distress and change, the staff and student body were, for the most part, very cooperative.

John O'Hara, Jr., spoke with pride about his father, a successful attorney who has led a life full of integrity, character, truth, intelligence and love of

others. A Salisbury native, O'Hara has been inducted into the Motor Vehicle Hall of Fame. "He's my hero, best friend and if I could be half the man my father is, I'd be doing a lot better than most," said his son.

Fitzgerald also introduced Segalla, originally from Canaan, who is a partner in the law firm of Goldberg Segalla. His specialty is insurance law. Going to law school in 1972 after working in human resources, Segalla formed a small firm that now has 19 offices in nine states and one overseas, employing 350 attorneys. "As a realist, I can thank Housatonic and my family because you gave me the tools to look around the corner; the tools to someone who doesn't know who he is."

Claudia Staples Schena said her father, who was raised in Canaan, was a state trooper who went on to become a town manager of many New England municipalities. She didn't know too much about his time at Housatonic, but knew he "loved learning and strove for excellence, integrity and honesty" throughout his lifetime.

Alumni Association member Christian Allyn didn't know Suzuki, but learned he was a Japanese-American who was placed in an internment camp. Rather than turn his back on the United States, he embraced it and his fellow man and went on to receive a doctorate and become a college professor. "From what was said of him, it appeared he loved his students," Allyn said. "I hope to gain more knowledge of his great legacy."

The Wall of Honor ceremony will be held every other year, alternating with the Athletic Hall of Fame. Anyone wishing to nominate a candidate may do so by going to HVRHS.org.



View the Wall of Honor Ceremony

The Alumni Association has DVDs of the Wall of Honor ceremony which recognized nine distinguished graduates. It was a moving and enlightening tribute which served to reinforce the importance Housatonic played in so many lives. Copies of the DVDs are available by contacting Julie Lang at hvrhs.org.

☞ Thanks for Your Support ☜

Members of the Alumni Association are very gratified by the response received so far for donations to help keep the Blue 'n' Gold going. Envelopes to make it easy to contribute are again found with the newsletter. Please consider helping in allowing us to continue to keep you informed about your alma mater. Thank you very much.

Alumni News by Class and Decade

1950s

Larry McCabe, class of '52, attended Fairfield University after graduation and then received a master's in physics from Boston College. He worked as a physicist for the Department of Defense (Air Force) and spent the bulk of his career in air traffic management providing live flight data to the public for the federal Department of Transportation. Larry retired in 2001.

Ann Sartori, Ruth (Pierce) Adotte and John Luning, class of '58, took a 10-day cruise to the Netherlands and while in Amsterdam, they visited the Van Gogh Museum, which they said was a memorable experience.

1960s

Oops. **Richard Brown**, class of '60, thanks the Blue 'n' Gold for mentioning that he was going to perform the wedding of his daughters. "I am officiating the service for my granddaughters, not my daughters," he wrote. "They, thank goodness, are already happily married."

Bob "Nick" Nickerson, class of '64, writes that he recently started a nonprofit called "3000 Miles for Autism." His plan is to run 3,000 miles over the next two years with a goal of raising awareness and money to help find the cause of autism before it becomes the "Disease of the Century." His 28-year-old son Adam is autistic. Nick's journey began last April 2, the 10th Annual World Autism Awareness Day. "Initially I was going to run across America, hence the name "3000 Miles for Autism" and the logo (see it on my website). Looking at the logistics,

time and expense, I realized it is a massive undertaking, so I have decided to cover the same distance, but in training runs and a few races in the local area of Chapel Hill, NC. At 71 years of age, running 30 miles a week is extremely challenging and extremely rewarding. But it is nothing compared to having an autistic child and I don't want any family to have to go through that ordeal if I can help prevent it." He asks that his website: 3000MilesforAutism.org or his Facebook page, [facebook.com/3000MilesforAutism](https://www.facebook.com/3000MilesforAutism), be visited for current updates and that alumni "Like" or "Follow" his Facebook page.

2010s

Dylan Vadakin, class of 2010, graduated from Berklee School of Music in Boston last May with a bachelor's degree in music. Securing a grant from the Martha Boschen Porter Fund for Artists Awards through the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, Dylan arranged an eight-piece jazz band performance of "Charlie Brown's Christmas Special" at the Center on Main in Falls Village in December. They played to a packed house.

Cody O'Brien, class of 2015, joined the U.S. Army following graduation and is now stationed in Savannah, Ga., specializing in satellite communications.

Leading the 2017 class in academics were **Kyra, Mari and Eve Cullerton**, triplets who ranked first, second and third.



The Class of '72 enjoyed a reunion this year.

VISITING WITH SOME GRADUATES

Helen Wike Humeston, Class of 1940

Helen, a member of the school's first graduating class, took to the skies, literally, upon receiving her diploma. She pursued her passion of aviation and learned to fly a Waco biplane which she, her brother Edward and two friends owned. Tragically her brother was killed in an aviation accident in 1942.



Helen Wike Humeston with her granddaughter and great-granddaughter enjoying a game at Fenway this year.

Realizing that flying was not a viable career for women in those days, she enrolled at Henry W. Bishop Memorial School of Nursing, receiving her initial nursing experiences at hospitals in Pittsfield and Boston. She graduated with her RN in 1944 and returned home to Sharon to work at what was the Canaan Hospital, now Geer.

Helen married John D. (Don) Humeston in 1946 and they welcomed their first daughter Donna in 1948. Their second child Lynn arrived in 1952. Helen was a fulltime mother during those years, also caring for her elderly father.

In 1971, she went to work in the Sharon assessors' office, later earning her certification as a municipal assessor; the first one in Sharon. She went on to serve a chairman of the Board of Assessors until her retirement in 2003 at the age of 81. During this time, she also received her certification as an Emergency Medical Technician, serving with the Sharon Fire Department Ambulance from 1978 through 1993.

Helen has had many hobbies over the years. She enjoyed horseback riding and hunting wild turkeys, but perhaps golfing topped the list. She and Don played in a local league for many years and vacations centered around golfing destinations with South Carolina and Ireland being the most frequent favorites. Although she is no longer able to get out on the course, Helen has a pitching wedge that sits by the door and on pleasant days she may be found swinging the club out in the yard. That is, after she finishes mowing the lawn on her trusty John Deere lawn tractor.

Helen lost the love her of life and best friend when Don passed away in 2007.

Always an indomitable spirit, Helen and her daughters have successfully preserved their family farm (Wike Brothers' Farm) with the help of the Sharon Land Trust and the Connecticut Farmland Trust. At age 95, she spends time enjoying her grandchildren, great-grandchildren, canine "grandchildren" and occasional outings with family. Always exhibiting a wide variety of interests, she recently went with Lynn, her granddaughter Becca and Becca's family to see Lady Gaga in concert at Fenway Park.

An Interesting Blog

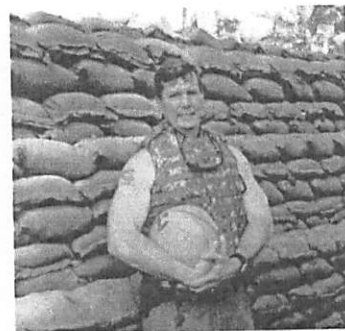
If you long for some memories of your hometown area, "I Remember North Canaan When..." is a great way to sit back and view scenes from the past. It's a big hit and comes highly recommended.

John Mulligan, Class of 1977

Raised in Cornwall, John went on to Villanova University on a Marine Corps ROTC scholarship upon graduating from Housatonic. He then served as an officer in the Marine Corps from 1981 to 1987 and was honorably discharged with the rank of captain. During his military years, he was awarded several unit and personal decorations that included the Navy Achievement medal in 1984 for his life-saving actions that involved a critically injured Marine.

John went on to become a special agent for the FBI, serving from 1988 to 2013. His experiences are what movie and book plots are made of. In 1992, he arrested and subsequently

obtained confessions from, and convictions for, two brothers who ambushed and murdered a New York state parole officer seven years earlier. This led to his induction into the New York City Police Department's Honor Legion. He later arrested a fugitive rapist/murderer within approximately one hour of receiving information on the man's possible whereabouts. That case was profiled on "America's Most Wanted." In 2000, he received a Jersey City Police Department Commendation for Valor for arresting two armed individuals who had ambushed and non-fatally shot two city police officers.



John Mulligan

John's career took him overseas, when in 2002 he was deployed to Karachi, Pakistan, as the investigative team leader regarding the kidnapping and murder of *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl. John was responsible for identifying, arresting and convicting the responsible individuals, for which he received the FBI Director's Award, its highest recognition extended. He also participated in several raids of Al Qaeda safe houses with the Pakistani military which resulted in multiple arrests and the seizure of large amounts of cash and explosives.

The list of John's commendations continues. In 2004, he investigated and arrested two "armed and dangerous" bank robbers responsible for six take-over style robberies throughout Burlington County, NJ, for which he received the Florence, NJ, Police Department's Commendation for Professionalism and Valor, and in 2007 he investigated and arrested several members of a violent Trenton Street gang for the arson/murder of a narcotics trafficker and his two young daughters, receiving the Federal Law Enforcement Foundation's "Investigator of the Year" award.

Back overseas in 2008, John embedded with the Iraqi National Police, where, among other missions, he planned and led a multi-agency operation that resulted in the capture of 17 terrorist operatives responsible for murders, rapes, kidnappings and several attacks on U.S. military convoys.

continued on page 5

Housatonic's Beauty

from page 1

Former Falls Village First Selectman Patricia A. Mechare, who is chairman of the school's alumni association, said she is so pleased that a prestigious magazine has recognized a building the locals for so long felt was a fine example of architectural design. She was especially happy that the article complimented the fact that additions to the building have kept the original style. "The building committee charged to oversee those additions did a fine job of fitting the new with the old," she said.

Frank Perotti, chairman of the Standing Building Committee, said slate was used for the original roof and while it's cost-prohibitive now, there has been a practice to use it on the front section of the main building.

Visitors to the area have remarked about the stately looks of the building. Scott Fellows, chairman of the school's math department, recalled coming out one evening and some hikers calling out to him. "What does it cost to go to that school?" they asked, sure it was a private institution.



The Class of 1952 held a reunion this year.

Visiting with Some Graduates

from page 4

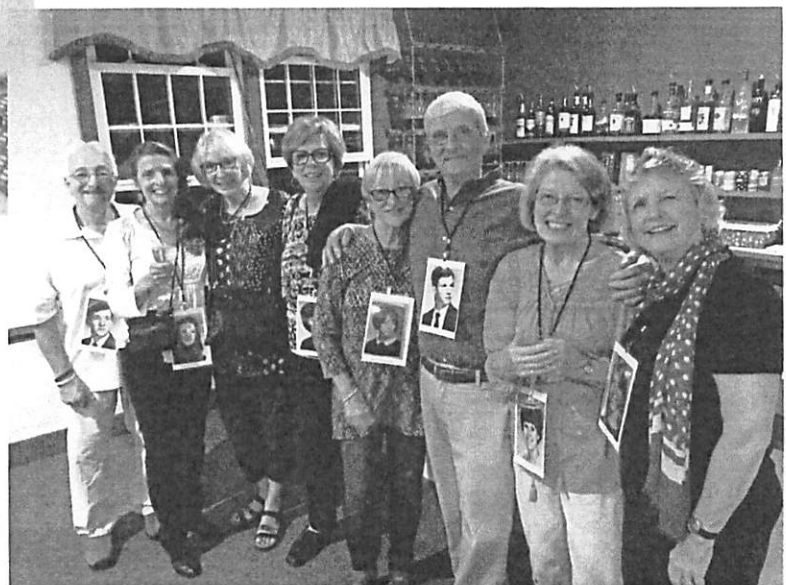
John was a member of the FBI SWAT Team as an additional duty covering New York City and Long Island for nearly 10 years. In addition to its regular duties, the team trained once each month and would be activated for high-risk entries, armed and dangerous arrests and dignitary protection details when needed. Most members were proud Marine Corp veterans and John said he considered this to likely being the most rewarding and exciting period of his career.

With his extraordinary accomplishments that includes 1,000 felony arrests, three meritorious promotions and more than a dozen FBI commendations in his almost 26 years of service, John is quick to note that in all the cases mentioned, he was the primary investigator or case agent, but feels strongly that none of the results could have been achieved without help from his team members, partners and other task force officers.

John has been married for 34 years and boasts of his three daughters and two granddaughters. He and his wife reside in New Jersey and never quite fully relinquishing the reins, he is currently employed as a detective with the Hunterdon County prosecutor's office, responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Joint Fugitive Task Force.



***Support Your
Alumni Association***



Some members of the Class of 1967 enjoy their reunion.

We Know You're Doing Interesting Things

Housatonic alumni are talented, interesting and vibrant. You are involved in all sorts of jobs, travel, civic and family activities. Why not share that news with all the others who have walked through the halls of our school? Send your items. Bragging is absolutely permissible.

In Memoriam

Samuel Gorkovsky, '40

Gloria Hayde Kane, '41

Mary Marcon Stanton, '41

William Wilbur, '41

Marion Emmons Pratt, '41

Phyllis Derigon, '43

Barbara Coons Giddings, '44

Irene Vanicky Zabranski, '45

Adele Middlebrook Casey, '46

Jean Hayden Frink, '46

Richard Stanton, '46

Stephen Furchak, '53

Richard Carley, '55

Art Lamb, '59

Linda Walters Haring, '59

Carl Pallok, '60

Barbara Cruikshank Roy, '60

William O'Dell, '61

Wayne Patterson, '61

David Marks, '62

Helena Mae Derwin McLain, '64

George Parsons, '63

Wayne Brandt, '64

Stephen Pitcher, '66

Thomas Stone, '66

Charles "Chip" Lovell, '67

Patricia Holst-Grubbe Zatanzaro, '69

Edwin Streckas, '69

Mary Jane Thurston Shufelt, '72

Pamala Becker Tharp, '76

Richard Masters, '80

Donald Matson, '83

Faculty

Keith Bond

Morris Rainville

Walter Burcroff

T00287
03/16/2018



JULIE LANG
31 O HARA LN
SALISBURY CT 06068-1413

Non Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit #5

HVRHS Alumni Association
c/o HVRHS
246 Warren Turnpike, Falls Village, CT 06031
To reach the Editor: Ruth Epstein
Telephone: 860-927-4057; Email: KCSRuith@aol.com

