

Blue 'n' Gold

Winter 2023

HVRHS Alumni Association

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Wall of Honor 2023

FALLS VILLAGE –Housatonic Valley Regional High School's Wall of Honor induction ceremony on Nov. 5 showcased the contributions and achievements of 10 graduates. Hosted by the school's alumni association, the event provides a chance for the community to see what some who attended this small rural high school in northwest Connecticut accomplished following their days as students.

The ceremony is held every other year, alternating with the Athletic Hall of Fame. Nominations are sought and those chosen are invited to speak, as are their nominators. They are all listed in a display case in the school's front hallway, along with summaries of their lives, allowing current students the see what opportunities may await them. They also appear on the association's website, hvrhsalumni.org.

In his welcome, Principal Ian Strever noted that at graduation the students recite the Athenian Oath of Youth, which speaks about fighting for ideals sacred to the community, striving to quicken the public's sense of civic duty and leaving the community more beautiful than it was left to them. "These graduates are a reminder of the promise they made at graduation," Strever said. Association president **Patricia A. Mechare**, '64, said, "The honorees exemplify the core values of this institution."

Patricia Benedict Blakey, '52, and her husband, **Gerald Blakey**, '54, were nominated by **John Berti**, '56, who talked about the couple's decades of volunteerism, not just in their hometown of Cornwall, but elsewhere. For decades, they

oversaw a medical equipment program, providing free items to those in need. They also volunteered to build affordable houses in Mexico. "They have a pure generosity and desire to help their fellow man," Berti said.

Gerald Blakey, saying he's lived in the same town and been married to the same gal for 68 years, received a round of applause. "Is she clapping about that?" he quipped about his wife. He acknowledged he didn't know the word "no," when it came to volunteering.

Peter Smith, '54, was asked to speak about his friend, the late **Benjamin Foster**, '54, who had an illustrious career in education, teaching in Beirut, Lebanon, among other places. He also taught at Choate and Quinnipiac University. Later in the program, Smith's daughter Annika Miller spoke about her father's career in international education. Smith attributed his experience spending time in Germany as an AFS student from Housatonic to shaping his educational future.

William Godburn, '74, spoke about his son **Christopher Godburn**, '05, who at an early age showed an infatuation with movies. He went on to become a political reporter for NBC News, and now works for ABC. An Emmy-Award nominee, his focus is on climate change. Christopher Godburn praised the education he received at Housatonic, saying, "This environment helps you discover who you are."

continued on page 4



Honorees and nominators from the 2023 Wall of Honor are, back row, from left: John Berti, Gerald Blakey, William Godburn, Jo Loi, Erin Godburn Lamb, Tina Segalla Grant, Robert Kearcher and James 'Cricket' Jacquier. Front row: Christopher Godburn, Patricia Benedict Blakey, Kathryn Godburn Schubert, James Loi, Peter Smith, Donald Lamb, Jr. and Donald Meuten.

Celebration of Life for Ed Tyburski

Edward S. Tyburski served as a teacher, coach and athletic director at Housatonic for 37 years. It was a place he loved and now he will be forever remembered with the ultimate honor of having the gymnasium dedicated to him.

Tyburski died Jan. 21 and a celebration of life was held by his family at the school on Feb. 18, following a funeral Mass at St. Martin of Tours Church in Canaan. His wife, Betty, and their three sons, **Edward**, '78, **Michael**, '80 and **Jeffrey**, '82, welcomed his former colleagues, students and community members to pay tribute to the man who devoted his career to improving athletic endeavors for all.

Current athletic director Anne MacNeil served as master of ceremonies, noting "Ed Ty was a legend among these walls. His mark on athletics is everywhere."

A graduate of Ansonia High School in 1951 and what is now Southern Connecticut State University, Tyburski excelled in many sports. He came to Housatonic in 1961, transforming the sports program in many ways, including increasing the number of athletic offerings from six to 21. He was a strong supporter of Title IX, which opened up athletic offerings to women, and initiated and expanded a variety of recognition and awards programs.

The Tyburski Award is presented annually to a freshman in each sport who best exemplifies skill, sportsmanship, leadership and teamwork. He was also active on the state level, where he was inducted into the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors Hall of Fame in 2017.



The gym is now named in honor of Edward Tyburski, teacher and coach at Housatonic for many years. At the naming ceremony are his sons, Jeffrey, Michael and Edward, along with their mother, Betty Tyburski.

Thoughts of Tyburski evoked many memories. **Ron Dower**, class of '60, who taught at the school and coached under Tyburski, recalled that his mentor had only one technical during his career. "He was always very self-controlled, but I remember during one game at Lewis Mills, he threw a towel up in frustration and received a technical."

Dower and former Assistant Superintendent Robert Gutzman were young coaches under Tyburski in the 1970s. "We were playing against Gilbert and I got a technical," said Dower. "Ed was so mad he kicked the bleachers and broke his toe. He felt really bad after that."

Dower's wife, Denise, was a physical education teacher and coach who worked beside Tyburski for many years. She got emotional speaking about her former colleague, saying, "I was blessed to have him as a role model and mentor."

She spoke of his dedication and work ethic, someone who was known and respected throughout the state for his contributions to the world of athletics. She said she is so pleased that he was a chronicler and taught her how to save myriad photos through collaging.

"We always chuckled over the current pickle ball craze," remembered Dower. "He brought that to Housy 30 years ago. Ed was always ahead of his time."

David Bayersdorfer followed Tyburski as the school's athletic director. He could not be at the celebration, but Ron Dower read his tribute. "His was life well lived," he said of his predecessor.

Mike Guy was a longtime coach at the school who said, "I honed my skills while learning from the master." **Frank Hadsell**, '71, teared up relating a memory of Tyburski having to tell him he didn't make a basketball all-star team. "He teared up having to tell me and said, 'Frank, you'll always be an all-star to me.'"

Diane Chinatti's, '76, father, Roland Chinatti, was Housatonic's first athletic director. She talked about the close bond between the Tyburski and Chinatti families and the respect her father had for Tyburski. **Bunny McGuire**, '55, was the school's administrative assistant for many years. She had a deep admiration for Tyburski, saying, "He was like another brother to me. To Ed, the kids always came first."

Following a luncheon and the tributes, the crowd walked over to the gym, where the plaque naming the gym in Tyburski's name was unveiled. It will hang prominently at the entrance.

MacNeil credited plant manager and alumnus **Jeff Lloyd**, class of '78, with coming up with the naming proposal. Tyburski's three sons each spoke briefly about their deep appreciation of having this honor bestowed upon their father.

"This was Ed's classroom," said MacNeil.

Visiting with Some Graduates



Dianne
Stoddard Hamilton
Class of '76

"I always knew HVRHS was a special place, especially as the youngest of six kids who were part of the "Blue 'n' Gold"...it was a rite of passage and a sort of coming of age. I loved my time in high school. I had wonderful friends that came from a lifetime of local families going to school and playing on sports teams together. HVRHS teachers, school administrators and coaches were great mentors and taught me a lot both academically and socially. But truly I only came to appreciate

how important and special those experiences were after having kids of my own. While mine is a military family, I did my best to seek out and impart a similar type of coaching and mentoring in their lives that I experienced. Growing up in the Northwest Corner of Connecticut, I learned many life lessons, some (maybe most!) from making bad choices, but fortunately in this environment I was generally able to fall into the "safety net" set up by family, friends, teachers and coaches.

After high school, I went to West Point (in the first class that accepted women) and graduated in 1980. I met my soon-to-be husband on my first duty assignment in Germany. We got married, had three kids and through the course of 40-some years, we moved a lot, living in Germany and bases across the United States. I deployed to the Middle East for a year and have visited many countries, but I believe the Northwest Corner is one of the most beautiful places in the world.

Since my family no longer lives in Kent, I don't often get back to visit. However, in 2016, we held a "celebration of life" memorial in honor of my sister **Suzanne**, class of '65, and it was remarkable in that so many family friends came to pay tribute and reinforce the special quality of being a part of this community. This year brother **Trace**, class of '70, and I were in Kent and got to catch up with Ed and Ruth Epstein and Bill Potter. I also got to see **Pat (Pacocho) Marshall**, class of '76, and her family on a recent trip south.

Currently, my husband and I live in Alexandria, Virginia, and have recently retired from Department of Defense jobs. Our oldest son John is the Community Recreation Director in Stuttgart, Germany; son Chris is an attorney in New York City; and our daughter Suzanne works for FEMA, but will transition to Katterbach, Germany, with her husband, Zac, an Army pilot, along with our two grandchildren. So, I think we may move to Germany for a few years! Either way, I'll continue to come back to the Northwest Corner of Connecticut and hope to see folks connected to HVRHS and my roots. I will continue to appreciate having been a part of this community and to the Blue 'n' Gold.

Growing up in the small New England town of Sharon in the '50s and early '60s was pretty much idyllic. My dad was a teacher and principal of the elementary school and my mom worked at Sharon Hospital and later as head librarian of the town's Hotchkiss Library. I got enough of my mother's valedictorian genes so that I received acceptable grades without having to study too hard. This left lots of time for my favorite activity—almost any sport. Little League baseball, touch football on the town green in the fall, volleyball in winter and recess always consisted of softball or kickball.

From Little League on, baseball was my favorite. I always imagined myself replacing Yogi Berra as catcher of the New York Yankees. That never happened, but I did get to see my best childhood friend and HVRHS standout, **John Lamb**, '64, pitch for the Pittsburgh Pirates against the N.Y. Mets at Shea Stadium. A thrill I remember vividly to this day.

I played three years of varsity baseball at Housatonic, but never during that time did I ever get the steal sign from Coach (**Ed Kirby**, '45. I was such a slow runner the joke was "Nickerson had to hit a double just to get to first base." During football practice, when we did wind sprints, I always finished among the slower linemen. But there was one event that should have been a harbinger that I was a good runner; just the distance in baseball and football was wrong.

At the end of the first football practice senior year, Coach Tyburski had everyone on the team run a mile. He said if you ran in less than six minutes, you didn't have to run it the next day. Incredibly, I finished just under that limit and in front of our fastest halfbacks. The next day when Coach called out the names of those who didn't have to run, my name was not among them. When I protested, Coach just laughed, along with everyone else, since no one figured I had done it. I was first in the mile run that day and like any 17-year-old, jumped and shouted so Coach would not miss this accomplishment.

I started running a little when I was in the service. On returning to Connecticut, I lived just a quarter mile from Rockville High School. It had a track and for some reason (perhaps the football run) I decided to put on my sneakers (no such thing as running shoes in 1970) and run three miles at a six-minute mile pace. My training method was to run as far as I could at that pace, trying to extend the distance each day. (A horrible training method, by the way.) I finally accomplished my goal, put my sneakers away and didn't run again for several years.



Nick Nickerson and
his son Adam
Class of '64

Wall of Honor *from page 1*

David Moran, current chairman of the vocational agriculture department at the school, and Mark Burdick, who retired from that position, talked about **James "Cricket" Jacquier's** '91, contributions not only to that program, but his involvement nationally in the agriculture business. "There is not a more stalwart supporter of agriculture than Cricket," Burdick said, while Moran spoke of his highly successful management skills. Jacquier reminded the audience of the important role farmers play, noting that 2% of America feeds everyone. He touted the wonderful ag-ed program.

Erin Godburn Lamb, '01, introduced her husband, **Donald Lamb, Jr.**, '99, who is an aerospace engineer, publishing seven papers and creating 12 patents. In accepting his award, Lamb said he thought he'd be a carpenter and took every industrial arts class. In senior year, he realized his desire to become an engineer and he remembers teacher Deron Bayer telling him, "They don't make rockets out of wood. My time here gave me perspective."

Jo Loi, described her son **James Loi's**, '85, career as a naval officer, who reached the rank of commander and spent four years at the Pentagon. He worked for 22 years for the Department of State as a foreign service officer around the world. His mother said most of his grammar school friends went to private school and he could have too, but chose

Housatonic, where he was the lone Asian in the student body. "Housatonic had a deep and profound impact on my career choices and how I conducted my life," Loi said.

Donald Meuten, '66, had two passions, said **Robert Kearcher**, '66, his nominator and friend since second grade—sports and animals. Kearcher outlined Meuten's credentials as a noted veterinarian, college professor and researcher, well known in the field of large animal pathology. Meuten's message was not to give up on kids who love sports. "Be patient and they'll have a focus," he said.

Erin Godburn Lamb also nominated her sister **Kathryn Godburn Schubert**, '99, who has worked in the area of eglislating for policies dealing with women's health. "My work," said Schubert, "has to do with how I grew up and how this high school shaped my formative years." A lobbyist now working to lower maternal mortality, she said, "Housy gave me far more than what I put into it."

The late **Julia DelTenno Segalla**, '43, was a well-known and respected educator in Region 1. Her daughter **Tina Segalla Grant**, '69, spoke of all her accomplishments, including her travels to 33 countries to learn about educational practices, including China and Russia.

Where are you now? What are you doing? Your classmates want to know. Become a part of class notes by sending an update to editor Ruth Epstein at kcsruthe@aol.com

Visiting with Some Graduates *from page 3*

On moving to San Francisco, I got caught up in the running craze of the late '70s and '80s. I often ran two or three races in a weekend and trained to run a couple of marathons, but ran many half-marathons without specific training.

When our older boy was diagnosed with autism in 1997 at the age of 8, we were devastated. At that time, there were no tested "best practices" therapies which are available today. Eventually we adjusted to his disability, but at 34 he still lives with us. He also has many allergies including dairy, wheat and gluten, corn and all derivative products (think high fructose corn syrup—try finding items in the store without this listing on the ingredients' label).

I wanted to do something to raise money to help find the cause of autism and naturally turned to running. I saw a story in Costco Magazine (of all places) about a guy who was running from Los Angeles to Washington, D.C., in 100 days. I wrote him to get advice about the process, since I was considering running across America and to my surprise, he called back a couple of days later. We live in North Carolina, so he invited me to join him when he passed through Virginia. On reflection, I was terrified, realizing at 70 my best running days were well in my rear-view mirror. Not wanting to slow him down so I could

get some valuable advice, I trained like a madman for the next few weeks. When we met and started running together, his first three words of advice, hollered through cupped hands, was "NICK, SLOW DOWN!!!"

I completed my 3,000-mile run on Jan. 12, 2020, in Washington D.C., in front of the U.S. Capitol. Adam held one end of the paper banner as I raised my arms and ran through it. My choice of location reflected the fact I had determined only the federal government can allocate the resources necessary to find the cause of autism.

My website is available for donations:

3000MilesForAutism.org, with pictures and descriptions of my run.

Editor's Note: *After high school, Nick went on to attend Springfield College, majoring in math education, and received a master's in computer science from RPI. He was in the U.S. Army from 1968 to 1970, spending one-and-a-half years in Hawaii. His career was in computers and real estate. He authored a novel titled "Clothing Optional-An Accidental Encounter," which may be purchased at nicknickerson.com. He and his wife, Annetta Monahan, are parents of Adam and Drew.*

Yearbooks Now at Your Fingertips

Graduates of Housatonic Valley Regional High School have a strong sense of pride and tradition for their alma mater. The small rural high school opened its doors to students from six area towns in 1939. Thanks to the efforts of its active alumni association, the latest project is helping to expand the connection between the school and those who spent their formative years walking its halls.

Just recently completed by the association is a months'-long project to digitize all the copies of the "White Oak," the school's yearbook. This was a collaboration with the Digital Technology Center at the Hartford Public Library, a state-of-the-art digital technology center serving archival initiatives throughout the state of Connecticut.

The books, beginning with the one from the class of 1941 up to the present, are available on the association's website at hvrhsalumni.org. In addition to all the annual class yearbooks, there are special editions commemorating the 50th (1939-1989) and 75th (1939-2014) anniversaries of the school's founding.

White Oak has special meaning, also being Connecticut's state tree—the Charter Oak. It is estimated the tree that stood tall and mighty on the campus was 265 years old when the school opened. Legends abounded about the tree, endearing itself to legions of students. The school grew and expanded around the tree and it eventually became the centerpiece of the senior courtyard.

During two construction projects at the school over the years, plans were modified to ensure the community's demands that the tree not be touched. But on July 5, 2004, a strong storm caused it severe damage and it had to be removed.

It's no surprise that since its inception, the school's yearbook has been called "The White Oak."

Over the years, there have been requests for old yearbooks by those who've lost them and while a few copies are stored at the school, alumni association members thought



Alumni/staff members loading yearbooks to be taken to Hartford to be digitized are, from left: Katie Wood Sherwood, Jacquie Rice, Carol Arrigoni, Julie Marshall Lang, Jeffrey Lloyd, Sara Sinclair Jack and John Christinat.

digitizing them and making them available to all would be welcomed. They were right. Comments made on social media show many positive remarks.

Patricia A. Mechare, chairman of the association and a member of the class of 1964, said, "When the board of directors began discussing this project, I knew it would be a hit and that has proven to be so. I can't imagine not getting a kick out of looking back at your yearbook or those of others."

She said those who graduated in earlier years will enjoy seeing the changes made at the school over the years.

Association member **Tracy Atwood**, class of '62, said, "Digitizing the yearbooks was a wonderful idea that moved quickly to reality. Our time in high school is our history and now it is our legacy available to all through this digitization. Our children and grandchildren have instant access to our high school story."

NOTES FROM THE BOARD

The board of the alumni association has launched its first formal annual fundraising appeal. Letters have been sent to previous donors, and emails have gone out to hundreds of alumni and friends. The association sponsors many initiatives at the high school including this "Blue 'n' Gold" newsletter, the HVRHS "Blue & Gold" Facebook page, and annual scholarships to outstanding seniors. Recently initiatives include:

Revitalizing the association's website at www.hvrhsalumni.org

- Funding the reconstruction and upgrades for the Ed Kirby Baseball Field
- Sponsoring the Alumni Wall of Honor recognition program
- Completing the digitization of all the White Oak yearbooks for website access.

The board has also established the **HVRHS Legacy Circle** to encourage and recognize alumni and friends who make a defined commitment to the **Endowment Fund**. Membership in the Legacy Circle is extended to those who make accumulated gifts of \$1,000 or more, or who make a planned gift via their will or estate.

If you have not already made a gift, we ask that you consider a donation that can be directed to support our annual expenses, or to our newly created **Endowment Fund**. Our long-range plan is to have a significant portion of our annual expenses covered by income from the fund.

The enclosed envelope may be used to send a check, or donations may be made by credit card online via our website at www.hvrhsalumni.org under Donate.

Housatonic Plays a Role in History

Our high school played a role in the Civil Rights movement back in the 1950s, a fact not widely known even among local residents.

The story was told by a group of current students as part of the second Troutbeck Symposium held last spring. More than 200 students from schools throughout the area gathered as they did last year to present their projects at remote Troutbeck in nearby Amenia, N.Y., where civil rights activists met in the early 1900s. Owned then by Amy and Joel Spingarn, the farm hosted two conferences, one in 1916, and another in 1933, which centered on interracial cooperation and social and political concerns impacting African-Americans. Black activists, including W.E.B. DuBois, were among the attendees.

“The Lost Year” refers to the 1958-59 academic year when high schools in Pulaski County, Arkansas, were closed in an effort to block desegregation. Then-Gov. Orval Faubus invoked a newly passed law in 1958 after he’d used state troops to thwart federal court mandates to desegregate Central High School in Little Rock. Nine Black students integrated the school, now a National Park site, after the Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas decision declared racial segregation violated the Fourteenth Amendment.

To forestall further integration of Little Rock schools, Faubus closed four of them, including the Black Horace Mann High School. More than 3,600 students, both white and Black, were denied a free education that year.

Salisbury resident Catherine Aller knew of the situation and invited two women to stay at her home. She also contacted Dr. Paul Stoddard, principal of Housatonic at that time, and he arranged for Carolyn Porter and Essie Knowles, two incoming seniors from Horace Mann, to attend the school.



Carolyn Porter (left) and Essie Knowles (right) as they appeared in the 1958 White Oak.

Students in social studies teacher Peter Vermilyea’s Early College Experience dual enrollment course took on the project of telling that part of Housatonic’s history. They did extensive research and created posters and a video. In it, Porter (who is now Carolyn Perry) gives some remembrances of that year.

“I didn’t know what to expect,” she said, about coming to the Northwest Corner. “But no one was hostile; I felt accepted.” They were driven around and were struck by the beauty of the countryside, which was so different from Little Rock.

She remembers it as a good experience, but one that didn’t define her. She knew she would be successful because she had a good foundation from her upbringing.

Both women were named to Housatonic’s National Honor Society, went on to attend Boston University, attain doctorates and have successful careers, Vermilyea said.

Porter is a doctor and Knowles entered the field of education.

Richard Gustafson, ’59, president emeritus of Southern New Hampshire University, was a classmate of the two women. He said the community has always been welcoming and he didn’t think most students gave much thought to the new seniors when they arrived. “They were just two more kids in the class.”

Gustafson, who is an active alumnus, said both of them returned for the class’s 50th reunion and he keeps in touch with them. “These were remarkable young women. They made a huge shift and flourished.”

Vermilyea said he’s never seen students work so hard and passionately on a project. He basically let them discover the material and present it on their own.

Keynote speaker at the symposium was Hasan Kwame Jeffries, associate professor of history at Ohio State University and brother of Hakeem Jeffries, the minority leader of the U. S. House of Representatives. He gave his thoughts on each of the projects.

Of the Housatonic submission, Jeffries told the students, “Your film destroys the myth of inevitable integration.” He also spoke of massive reform movements, “but in the end, individuals control their own destiny.”

“Faces of Adversity: HVRHS at Dawn of the Civil Rights Movement,” can be viewed on the association’s website, hvrhsalumni.org. Click on ABOUT, and scroll down to Histories, then to Faces of Adversity.

In Memoriam

Julia Del Tenno Segalla, '43
Emma Carberry Paley, '45
Janet Hedden Wildman, '46
Ernestine Euvrard Trimble, '48
JoAnn Remer Godburn, '50
Steven Lee Kallstrom, Sr. '50
Dolores Branche Johnson, '52
Marjorie Wehmeyer Grossman, '52
Walter Hall, '52
Joan Johnson Palmer, '52
Sarah Jane Hansell Rudd, '54
Victor Peter Fulco, '56
Stanley W. Jennings, '56
Mary Pitcher Lamb, '56
Audrey Faltermeier Nash, '56
Francis Segalla, '56
Richard Kenney, '58
Robert Petricone, '58

Karin Zetterstrom, '58
Joanne Peterson Boardman, '59
Thomas Higgins, '59
Laura May Atwood Hainisch, '60
George Wilbur, '60
Nancy Chase Morey, '61
Shelley MacNeil Strid, '61
Donald "Whitey" Schreiber, '62
Shirley Hall Barton, '64
Donald Cokely, '64
Bruce Delaini, '64
Gregory Ford, '64
Shirley Sterling Hurley, '64
Patrick K. Rutledge, '64
Claudia Golden Lamb, '65
Kathleen Larkin, '65
Harold Posselt, '65
Susan Harper Bohlmann, '66

Karen Parsons, '69
Mary Fitch Blass, '70
Sharon Delaini, '70
Marshall Miles, '71
Ruth Ammerman Wheeler, '71
Linda Gatti, '73
Timothy Joseph Kenny, '74
Paul Collier, '75
Ellen Schaefer Kloke, '77
Catheryn Ford Musselman, '77
James Sager, '81
Matt Paniagua, '17
Justin Michael Carroll, '01
Christopher Jordano, '01
Jessica Reid, '08
Brandon Chiacchia, '23

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