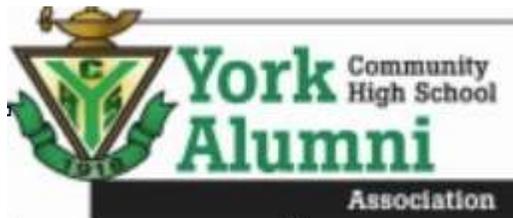


# York High School

## ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



York Homecoming on September 24, 2021 was a successful evening. York Community High School Alumni Association (YCHSAA) cheered on the Dukes in their win over longtime rival Lyons Township! YCHSAA enjoyed visiting with members of the Class of 1981 and 2001, who were celebrating their respective reunions. Many others from a wide range of graduating classes also stopped by. The pride of York Alums showed in their team spirit and excitement and captured the true essence of the 100-year-old traditions of York.

Join us at the YCHSAA tent at the York Alumni Football game on Friday, October 22 to celebrate former York football players. Please visit YCHSAA tent for a green glow stick and York Alumni sticker and cling while supplies last. We will have tee shirts celebrating York plus the Elmhurst Landmark woven throw for sale. (Items for sale online [here](#))



### **YCHSAA Board**

Kathryn Wilson President  
Debbie Linhart Bice President  
Lisa Fanelli Secretary  
Linda Aldis Treasurer  
Kristen Samuelson Membership

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*Dukes of Distinction*  
**2021**

The York High School Distinguished Alumni Committee is excited to announce the 2021 Dukes of Distinction honorees!

Recipients of this award have excelled through significant and/or extraordinary accomplishments, service, and/or outstanding contributions to society. Our exemplary alumni bring great pride and prestige to York Community High School, to Elmhurst

District 205, and to the larger community. Their leadership serves as an example for current and future York students.

Please join us for the 2021 York Distinguished Alumni Program (YDAP), on Thursday, November 4, beginning with a reception at 6:30 p.m, followed by a recognition program at 7 p.m. at York High School. The event is free and open to the public. [Click here](#) for more information about YDAP.

### **John Aravosis - Class of 1981**

John Aravosis is a lawyer, journalist and LGBT advocate. John created one of the first online grassroots networks in 1995 for the Children's Defense Fund and started his own global Internet consulting business in 1997. He went on to become The Economist magazine's first correspondent covering the Internet and society; and then launched an online media company, AMERICAblog, called "recommended-reading" by the New York Times, Rolling Stone, and PC Magazine. The Washingtonian magazine's annual "50 Best Journalists" issue listed John alongside CNN's Jake Tapper as one of "journalism's rising stars." John has also run a number of high-profile LGBT advocacy campaigns and was twice chosen for the "Out 100" as one of the most compelling LGBT people of the year. John received his Bachelor's in Rhetoric at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and joint Juris Doctor and Master's in Foreign Service from Georgetown University.

### **Dr. Joseph Collins - Class of 1972**

Dr. Joseph M. Collins is a 1972 York High School graduate who has had a distinguished career as a physician and teacher at the Mayo Clinic in Arizona. He received the Distinguished Mayo Clinician Award in 2004, a singular honor from his peers for his dedication to patient care and acclaimed expertise. A gifted and respected teacher, he has won a multitude of awards, including 2002 Educator of the Year in Medical and Laboratory Specialties; Outstanding Faculty Member in 2010 and 2014; Top Faculty Member 2016; Radiology Educator of the Year Award 2014, 2016, and 2018. He has more than 40 peer-reviewed published articles or book chapters and numerous national and international invited lectures. He has a Bachelor's from the University of Illinois - Urbana-Champaign and earned his M.D. from the University of Illinois. He studied at Queen Square in London, England and completed his residency in Radiology from the Mayo Graduate School of Medicine (Minnesota).

### **Dr. Rachel Elliott - Class of 1984**

Dr. Rachel Elliott is an aerospace engineer and an advocate for LGBT individuals. She also has a passion for lifelong learning, a trait, she said, was first instilled in her by the faculty at York. She earned her Bachelor's in Aerospace Engineering from Iowa State University in 1989, completed her Master's in Mechanical Engineering in 2011, and her Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering in 2021. Her first post-college job was supporting fighter jets in Texas. Since then, she has worked on commercial aircraft with Boeing, on an airborne observatory for NASA, and many other commercial and military aircraft programs. Dr. Elliott came out as a transgender woman in 2013, and since then has facilitated support groups for transgender youth and adults and has advised many public and private organizations on LGBT rights. She has testified before the Utah legislature and partnered with the U.S. Department of Justice to provide transgender

awareness training. She has also served on the Board of Directors of the ACLU of Utah, seeking to protect the constitutional rights of all Americans.

### **Bruce Mather - Class of 1965**

Bruce Mather has dedicated his life to his faith, his family, his vocation and his community. A 1965 graduate of York High School, he worked his way through college and graduate school as a youth minister and a part-time employee at Elmhurst Hospital. Positions of increasing responsibility prompted him to become a licensed engineer and a member of the hospital administration. In 1980 he became the Executive Director for Facilities Management at Elmhurst College. As a forward-thinking leader he worked to transform the college into a modern, beautiful and welcoming institution while developing the campus into a nationally recognized registered arboretum. His concern for the environment led to innovative programs and facilities which emphasize sustainability and conservation of natural resources. The college's West Hall received many awards including national recognition as a LEED Gold building for its green initiatives. He founded a regional facilities association and has served as an officer in national and international organizations. He has been a leader in various churches throughout his lifetime.

### **Jerome Rich - Class of 1956**

Jerry Rich is the architect and owner of Rich Harvest Farms, Sugar Grove, IL, a golf course that is consistently ranked in Golf Digest's "America's 100 Greatest Golf Courses." After graduating from Northern Illinois University in 1961 with a degree in mathematics and earth science, he joined his father's company, Rich Inc. In the 1970s, he revolutionized the way Wall Street trading is done, and still done today, with the development of the integrated trading terminal. Jerry is most proud of the Kids Golf Foundation of Illinois, a non-profit junior golf organization housed at Rich Harvest Farms, which he founded with lifelong friend Don Springer in 1998. Since its inception, the Foundation has introduced 250,000 kids throughout the state of Illinois to the sport of golf. In addition, Jerry has hosted over 50 amateur, collegiate, and professional tournaments during the past 20 years, including the 2009 Solheim Cup, the 2017 NCAA Division I Men's and Women's Golf Championships, and the 2021 Arnold Palmer Cup.

### **Dr. George Williams - Class of 1970**

George A. Williams, MD is Chief of the Department of Ophthalmology and Director of the Beaumont Eye Institute at Beaumont Health in Royal Oak, Michigan. He also serves as Professor and Chair of Ophthalmology at Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine and is Professor at the European School for Advanced Studies in Ophthalmology in Lugano, Switzerland. Dr. Williams has published more than 250 articles and book chapters in his field, has participated in more than 30 clinical trials and delivered 25 named lectureships around the world. As former President of the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) and active board member, he is a recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the AAO. He is an Associate Editor for Surgical Techniques for the journal RETINA. Dr. Williams is a recertified Diplomate (2005, 2016) of the American Board of Ophthalmology and an elected Fellow of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology.

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## **Join Us for Open House at Edison, Emerson**

Families, community members, alums and former teachers and staff are invited to Open Houses at both Emerson and Edison Elementary Schools to view the renovation work completed in the last year. We are proud of the work done, grateful to the community for supporting these initiatives, and invite you to share in our excitement. Parents, students, alums, neighbors, and community members are invited! You can take a self-guided tour and hear from students about their new, updated classrooms and future-ready spaces that are more conducive to student learning.

Emerson Open House - October 16 - 10 a.m.- noon

400 N. West Ave., Elmhurst

Edison Open House - October 23 - 10 a.m.- noon

246 Fair Ave., Elmhurst

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York News

## **Football Alumni Recognition Night**

Friday, October 22nd at Halftime of the Varsity Game

Calling ALL York Football Alums! We will be having our first Football Alumni Recognition Night at the home game vs Oak Park River Forest (OPRF's head coach just happens to be a York Football Alum too!). Please e-mail Rob Wagner, Assistant Principal for Athletics [rwagner@elmhurst205.org](mailto:rwagner@elmhurst205.org) if you plan on attending the game! Recognition will be at Halftime! Please share this with any York Football Alums you know!

## **Duke Spotlight**

Erik Westerberg-Class of 2010

Erik was born and raised in Elmhurst in a home on South Street. He attended Edison Elementary School and Sandburg Middle School before attending York. In high school, Erik was a three sport athlete that included football, wrestling and track. He was chosen as one of a small number of York student representatives to the very selective J Kyle Baird program, a national program for high school athletes that were also exemplary students. Through the program, these students were given communication and leadership training along with service opportunities, with the ability to be involved throughout their high school years, as Erik was. Erik credits a math course taken his

junior year and taught by Mark Laurich, his freshman football coach, as somewhat of a turning point for him. Mr. Laurich made math interesting and expanded the subject beyond the classroom to real life. He didn't only teach math, but also taught life lessons. Erik found him inspirational, and the joy that Mr. Laurich brought to his profession had a profound impact on Erik.

After graduation, Erik attended Augustana College where he was recruited to play football, and did so for four years. He knew that he wanted to do something math related, but after taking an education course he was unexpectedly hooked and began to consider teaching as a profession. Armed with the positive influence of Mr. Laurich, and the words of his father encouraging him to do something he was passionate about, he pursued a double major in math and education.

Upon graduating from Augustana, Erik was hired by York as a teacher, honored to be colleagues with Mr. Laurich, the man that was such an inspiration to him. Erik also served as an assistant football coach at York for five years. As a teacher and a coach, it was a priority for Erik to enable "honest conversation" both in and out of the classroom and on and off the field. Equally important to the subject matter being taught was being there to help his students navigate what he refers to as that critical "time between sixteen and eighteen" when teens are making choices and decisions that shape them.

While a young teacher and coach at York, Erik pursued and received two Masters degrees. Nowadays, he serves as the Mathematics Department Chair at York. Though his role is more administrative, he still teaches one course to a group of very lucky students. He acknowledges that his current work is important and impactful in a broader sense, but he does confess to missing all the time he used to spend with students. He also misses coaching, a job he gave up for now in order to spend more time with his wife and two year old daughter. Erik's journey is full circle and his success and story are heartwarming. Both Erik and his sister, currently an instructional coach at York, are among those that have chosen to come back and make a difference. Through the years, the halls and classrooms of York have been filled with York alumni that have returned as teachers to impact the lives of those students that came after them.

Once a Duke, always a Duke. We thank you.

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### **York Drama presents *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*.**

York Drama presents *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. The production features an ensemble of 27 actors and showcases the tech work of dozens of York students. It will be presented at 6:30 p.m. Oct. 14-17 in a festival tent outside York High School. General admission tickets are \$12 and will be available at [www.yorkdrama.org](http://www.yorkdrama.org) beginning Oct. 1 at 8 a.m.

This critically acclaimed play, developed at the National Theatre in London and based on the best-selling novel by Mark Haddon, has received seven Olivier and five Tony Awards® including best play on both sides of "the pond".

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During these uncertain times, we will be maintaining updated information on the [Reunion page](#), located on the District 205 website.

If your reunion has been postponed or canceled due to COVID-19, please email your updates to [alumni@elmhurst205.org](mailto:alumni@elmhurst205.org)