

# *Watchung Hills Regional High School Hall of Fame*



**Barbara Vitarius**  
*Community Member*

For the past 40 years, Barbara Vitarius has been a woman ahead of her time. She has dedicated an immeasurable amount of energy contributing to the greater good. This honoree is known for her commitment to three main causes: quality education, civic engagement, and community service. The greater Watchung Hills community has been her focus, but her influence has been felt throughout New Jersey.

This lifelong passion for giving back began in 1972, when Barbara joined the League of Women Voters of Warren/Watchung. Her membership coincided with her roles in the Somerset County League and the New Jersey State League. Barbara recognized the importance of teaching young children to understand the voting process and the value of being an active citizen. One of the highlights of her service was being chosen to join with ABC News' national political correspondents to help report the 1980 early returns for the Presidential election. Barbara recruited Watchung Hills student volunteers who continued to work on subsequent Presidential elections.

In 1973, Barbara volunteered at the Watchung Hills Career Center, which later became the Watchung Hills Adult School. She was a member of the original Corps of Career Center Volunteers, and became President of the Advisory Board from 1985-1990; she continued to promote lifelong learning and champion literacy. Barbara worked tirelessly and developed a network of volunteers and paid professionals to help meet the evolving demands for specialized career counseling, creative curriculum, and professional development programs.

For over 40 years, Barbara was willing to sacrifice her time to become an unwavering advocate for individuals who were past high school age, but needed a GED, a second chance, or a new direction. The Watchung Hills Adult School existed before the internet, and it provided invaluable resources because of Barbara's commitment and vision. The school was able to serve thousands of needy students over her tenure because of her ability to pivot with new information and find instructors to teach new courses in days not months. The League of Women Voters and the Watchung Hills Adult High School were two organizations where she embraced volunteerism before it was mainstream, and she saw the needs of the community one student at a time. All who have known Barbara Vitarius or have been the recipient of her leadership and kindness are grateful for her untiring contributions to improving lives.