The Alumni Iin

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Four Grads Carry On "For the Kids"

When confronted with the tragedy of a friend's death, four Sebring High School alumni not only turned to one another for strength but also for strategy. Tom Stryffeler '70, Bryan Bailey '96, Jeff Ruehle '94 and Mary Harlan '68 came up with a plan to keep alive the memory and important community work of fellow alumnus, Daniel Guy '81. A member of the Sebring Police Department for 33 years, Guy passed away on Jan. 9, 2018.

He was Danny to his friends and Officer Guy to Sebring's schoolchildren – children whom he loved and cared for as the school district's resource officer.

"Danny developed a trusting relationship with the kids of Sebring," Stryffeler said. "He was always there to give a pat-on-the-back or a nudge in the right direction."

Bailey commented on Danny's contribution of money. "From shoes for a child to a Christmas tree for a family to special awards for children on school safety patrol, Danny would help financially," said Bailey.

While on bicycle patrol, Danny would collect aluminum cans then have them recycled for slim profits that added up. Stryffeler said that when people asked Danny why he performed this above-and-beyond work, he would smile and answer, "It's all about the kids."

So Stryffeler, Bailey, Ruehle, and Harlan decided to continue collecting cans to recycle, using the profits for the children of Sebring, and have been successful in doing that and expanding the reach to neighboring West Branch and Alliance.

The nonprofit organization, Danny's Cans, was born. A collection trailer was set up at The Royal Star Diner, the group got the word out, and soon they were collecting aluminum cans. Partnering with businesses and organizations including The Royal Star Diner, The Brickhouse, Sebring American Legion, Alliance American Legion, Log Cabin, and Salem Eagles brought more donations of recyclable cans their way. In addition to the collection of aluminum cans, donors can find a trailer for scrap steel behind the high school parking lot on Virginia Avenue.

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Proudly, much has been accomplished since Danny's Cans began. Among other things, the organization has helped area families realize Thanksgiving dinner, given Santa a fuller sleigh of Christmas presents to deliver, purchased shoes for children who were staying in the Alliance Domestic Shelter, donated crosswalk signage for B. L. Miller Elementary School with a generous contribution from the Class of 2007 in memory of a deceased classmate, Stefan Guy, Danny's son.

You may have seen our schoolchildren in Danny's Cans hoodie sweatshirts, given to all K-12 students with the funds raised by Danny's Cans. This school year, look for students sporting another piece of apparel – long-sleeved T-shirts.

In 2021, Danny's Cans elected to begin bestowing monetary awards to graduating seniors, who, according to the group's Facebook page, ". . . demonstrated extraordinary work ethic in their four years of high school." The posting goes on to emphasize the award is not necessarily for someone going to college, trade school, or the military, but could be. The recipient could be someone immediately joining the workforce and in need of money to buy equipment and tools for the job, for instance. The main thrust of the award is for strong work ethic, dedication, and perseverance – attributes of Danny Guy.

The first year of the award saw one Sebring student granted \$500. In 2022, two \$1,000 awards were given – one to a Sebring student; one to a West Branch student. "We are on track," said Stryffeler, "to hopefully duplicate these awards in 2023."

The mission of Danny's Cans is to support the needs of children in Sebring. Stryffeler and Bailey appreciate donations of aluminum cans, scrap steel, fundraising event support, and monetary contributions, that are tax-deductible. For more information, check out Danny's Cans Facebook page, email the organization at dannyscans.org or follow #itsallabout the kids.

Donations from December 2022 to February 2023

Thank you, alumni, for your donations that support our scholarships, banquet, mailing, and more. The following alumni have donated from December 2022 to February of this year:

> Dr. Tommie R. Radd '68 Bill Baker '54 (2) Mike Harshman '90 (2) Ron Neafie '51 David G. Utley IMO Gerald F. Utley '54 and Thomas C. Utley '89 Judy Warren Howard '60 IMO Jeffrey Lynn Warren '74 Tyler Jones, M.D. '08 IMO Jeffrey Lynn Warren '74 Beth Barcus Myers '69 Joel '78 and Ann Domino IMO Susan Domino '75 (established a scholarship)



Association to Induct Four Distinguished Alumni '70s grads highlight annual brunch

The Distinguished Alumni selection committee met Feb. 6 and selected four graduates from the 1970s to receive the association's Distinguished Alumni award. The committee chose Debbie Baker Weibush '70, James Seffens '72, Sheryl Holt '73, and Suzanne Holt '73.

Debbie, who attended the College of Wooster, Kent State University and Youngstown State University, is an educator, having spent a total of 42 years teaching. She first taught at Canton Central Catholic, then in Alliance City Schools, and then finished her career at SHS with her retirement in 2021. A teacher beloved by both students and staff, Debbie taught not only math and science, but she also advised the Ecology Club and the National Honor Society for many years. In addition, she established the Wind River Science Club at SHS that included taking students to the Teton Science School in Wyoming and the Marine Lab in Key Largo.

James or "Jim" as he was known to his classmates and teachers, is an artist who graduated with a geology degree from The Ohio State University. With his desire to create that had been instilled by his family, Jim opened a studio in Columbus following graduation but then moved to New York City in 1978. While producing and selling under his own name, he also collaborated with Cuban sculptor Nicolas Cortes for 14 years as they designed and built store displays for clients, including Saks Fifth Avenue and Bloomingdale's. Currently, Jim's areas of focus include wood construction, mixed media, modeling, visual merchandising, home interiors, and shadow box assemblages, among many others. His work has been featured on Antique Road Show FYI, and he exhibits his work in galleries and shows.

Twins Sheryl and Suzanne are both university professors, but they do not teach in the same field.

Sheryl is the director of the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at the University of Mount Union. She received her undergraduate degree in physical therapy from Georgia State University, her master's degree from The Ohio State University, and her PhD in rehabilitation science from the University of Kentucky. Sheryl has published many papers individually and with co-authors, while also serving as a physical therapy consultant for both the elderly and school-aged children. In addition, she is involved in extensive, ongoing research in the field of physical therapy.

Suzanne is a professor of Women's Studies and an online course developer at Kent State University. In her director's greeting to students, Suzanne says "Women's Studies is not a doctrine. It is a way forward." The minor in Women's Studies is a cross-discipline program. She has a B.A. from Cincinnati Bible Seminary, a B.A. in English from Milligan College, and an M.A. in English Language and Literature from Kent State. She received her PhD from Kent State's School of Communication. She has been at Kent State as a professor since 2002 and director of Women's Studies since 2007.

After the Distinguished Alumni submit their full biographical material for the banquet program, a complete biography on each of them will appear in the Fall issue of the Alumni Link.





With a spirit of gratitude, Kimberly Heck Stanley credits others for her success.

This is the third article in a series devoted to past Alumni Association Scholarship recipients and how your support helped them in their advanced education and careers.

Kimberly Heck Stanley has earned many "firsts" in her life. Valedictorian of her 1999 Sebring McKinley High School graduating class. Summa Cum Laude for her Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees. Youngest person to be named Executive Director of a highly regarded, non-profit organization.

But most important, Kim is the first to credit her success to a support system that includes family, church, school, and community.

Kim applauds her mother, 1969 SHS alumna Sharon Riggar Heck, for being a strong role model for Kim and older brother, Joe, a 1998 SHS alumnus who passed away in 2003 at the age of 24. Sharon was a single parent who instilled many valuable qualities in her children. Kim speaks glowingly about her upbringing as she says, "Mom taught Joe and me to be strong, caring, and independent. To treat others with kindness and respect. And to always do our best."

In addition to her mom, Kim says she was fortunate to be surrounded by many adults who were influential in her life. "I had amazing grandparents, neighbors, wonderful teachers and coaches, and parents of friends of mine," Kim said. "All had a significant role in encouraging, empowering, and molding me into the person I am today."

Attending Sebring Schools beginning in kindergarten at B.L. Miller Elementary, Kim went on in high school to become an awardwinning writer on The Echo staff, an officer for the Language Club and National Honor Society, a member of Key Club, SADD, and the Big Brother and Big Sister program. This member of IMPACT, the District's gifted program, was also a competitive athlete, playing softball and lettering in basketball. Kim played softball for the Sebring-West Branch slow pitch league, too.

Kim and her family were members of Sebring United Methodist Church. "I attended even before I was born," Kim chuckled. As a youngster, Kim took part in the church youth group. As she got older, she served as a Sunday School teacher and taught Vacation Bible School. As an adult, she was a lay ministerial leader and member of the church's Leadership Council. Other community volunteer activities included working with the Salvation Army.

Her senior year at Sebring McKinley High School brought multiple accolades, including being named Valedictorian, winning the Lady of Troy award for outstanding sportsmanship, and, of course, receiving the alumni scholarship. "I had no idea how expensive college textbooks would be," Kim remembered. "I used the money to purchase books. The alumni scholarship relieved what would have been a financial burden." And there were fond feelings that Kim shared regarding the alumni scholarship. "At the banquet, where I accepted the award, I felt incredibly honored," she said. "I remember looking at the plaques with the names of past award winners and realizing how successful those students had become. It gave me another boost of confidence that I could excel academically and professionally."

"For my undergraduate degree," Kim said, "I attended the University of Findlay, and graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts in 2003." There was an extra level of difficulty as Kim earned that distinction while navigating a double major -- Spanish and Criminal Justice Administration. Being fluent in Spanish prompted the exciting opportunity to study for a semester at La Universidad Internacional in Cuernavaca, Mexico. "I loved every minute of the study abroad experience," Kim said. "The family I was placed with was very kind, loving, and treated me like one of their own. I still keep in contact with them!" she exclaims. Kim said she was able to immerse herself into the culture – experiencing traditions first-hand. While she spoke Spanish before her trip, Kim said, "I truly learned the language during this time. Señora Thagard always said that once you start dreaming in another language, you know you have mastered it. This happened to me!"

To earn her Master's degree in Social Work, Kim enrolled at The University of Akron, graduating Summa Cum Laude in 2009. Working toward this advanced degree, Kim also was employed with the Alliance Area Domestic Violence Shelter in 2004. A year later, having proven herself as a passionate and compassionate case worker, Kim was promoted to Education Services Coordinator. Then, in June of

2006, at the age of 24, our Sebring alumna was named the Executive Director of the organization, becoming the youngest person ever to be named an executive director of any non-profit domestic violence shelter in the state of Ohio. She served in this top leadership position until May 2022. During her distinguished 18-year career with the organization, she was lauded with awards including the 20 under 40 award, the Athena Leadership award, the Ohio Domestic Violence Network's Croucher Family Award for Excellence in Leadership, and the Sebring McKinley Distinguished Alumni Award, the highest honor bestowed by our Alumni Association.

"I experienced one of those 'coming full circle' moments during the Alumni Banquet when I received the Distinguished Alumni Award and spoke at the event," Kim said. "It hadn't been the first time I had had the honor of addressing a Sebring audience." The alumna had previously been invited to speak at a National Honor Society induction, then at an annual academic awards' ceremony. When she received the Distinguished Alumni Award and spoke to the gathering, she again gazed at the plaques on display. Now, with more worldly eyes. "Right there, in front of me, was my story. A story of how far I had come. A journey made easier because of the support I was fortunate to have throughout my life," she said appreciatively.

And her work life has taken her to a new position as Director of the Victim Witness Division at the Stark County Prosecutor's Office. Her new role, which began in May of 2022, sees Kim supervising 11 victim advocates who handle criminal cases at the three municipal courts, the Child Advocacy Center, and the Common Pleas court. "My team and I provide trauma informed services to victims of all crimes in Stark County," the Director said proudly. "I am also involved in about a dozen collaborations and coalitions across the county."

As for her personal life, Kim is married to Ed Stanley, a 1997 West Branch graduate. The couple wed in 2005, and have three children – Olivia, 10, Ivan, 9, and Everly, 7. Kim quickly adds to the list of family members, their four cats – Dobby, Bella, Rex, and Princess Fluffy. "Each of our children got to name a cat," Kim said with a smile, mostly in defense of Princess Fluffy. With a full and active family life, Kim and Ed spend most of their free time at sporting events like Ivan's soccer matches, Everly's softball, and Olivia's softball, basketball, and volleyball games. "Ed and I enjoy watching our children and cheering from the sidelines," Kim said excitedly. Family vacations take them from their home in Marlboro Township to great sightseeing hiking destinations and swimming venues. They enjoy the beach. Hilton Head Island is their favorite.

With her hectic schedule, Kim manages to squeeze in reading time. "I am always reading a book or two," she said. "I read between 30 to 40 books a year." Her favorite genre? The avid reader says, "I will forever be a learner and appreciate reading non-fiction to gain knowledge and insight on various subjects and others' experiences. For fiction, I mostly enjoy suspense and mystery." Some of Kim's recent reads include The Body Keeps the Score, Where the Crawdads Sing, Kite Runner, Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo, and many, many James Patterson books. "In addition to personal reading," Kim says, "I'm also reading the Harry Potter series aloud to my kids." She retrieves a 'fun fact' memory of the first time she herself read Harry Potter, reading the first three in the series in Spanish. "This time through," she mused, "is the first time in English."

During the interview, Kim again comes full circle when she reminisces about her formative years in Sebring. "I always loved and appreciated that Sebring is a small, safe community," she said. "Growing up, I had a great group of neighborhood friends who always got together for pick-up games, riding bikes, and playing until the streetlights came on," she wistfully remembers. "I had amazing neighbors who treated all of us kids like their own family members."

With regard to her formal Sebring education, Kim said, "I obtained an excellent education at Sebring schools. I loved the small class sizes, teachers who are well-qualified and invested in their students' success, and the relationships you can develop. The value became clearly apparent when I went to college and felt well-prepared to succeed, not only in the classroom but also in life." And it was clearly apparent to our scholarship selection committee back in 1999, that they were choosing a young woman who would make all of us proud to call an alumni scholarship winner.

Please help the Association to continue awarding scholarships to our best and brightest. It is only through your contributions that we can continue this important role in graduates' lives. Each year, the scholarship fund presents two \$1,000 scholarships to graduating seniors and smaller awards of recognition to outstanding elementary and junior high school students. Please help by sending in a check or money order. Or, if you are comfortable with electronic payments, use Venmo, PayPal, or CashApp. All instructions are on the form that follows.

Thank you. The Sebring McKinley High School Alumni Association's existence and its ability to serve would not be possible without you.

SHS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION **Trojans Helping Trojans Donation Form**

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Two inducted into Athletic Hall of Fame

Game and ceremony dedicated to the late Joe Amabeli '05

Matt Johnston '79 and Jillian Faudree Schleuder '09 were inducted as the Class of 2022 into the Sebring Athletic Hall of Fame on Jan. 13. The induction ceremony was originally set for December, but a basketball scheduling change moved it into January.

Matt was a four-sport athlete, beginning with golf his freshman year in which he earned three letters. Matt also earned three letters in track, two in basketball, and one in football.

Matt was a state qualifier in track his senior year as he set records in Mahoning County and in sectional competition. He set the record in the 300 hurdles at 40.1 seconds and was the champion in both the high and low hurdles at the county meet. In 1979, his senior season, he qualified for state competition in the high hurdles, with a time of 15.1 seconds. He was the both the sectional and regional champion in the high hurdles that year. During his junior year he was the sectional champion in the high hurdles while he also set a school record in the low hurdles. In both years, Matt earned the high point award for the track team.

As a golfer, Matt was a member of the 1977 district qualifying team that won the sectional championship. That year the team was also first runner-up in the Tri-County League, and Matt was the runner-up medalist.

As a junior and senior on the basketball team, Matt and his teammates were sectional and district champions both years. In 1979, the Rick Brook-coached team was the runner-up in the regionals in Canton, just missing a trip to the state tournament. Matt was one of six senior players named as Most Valuable Player.

With his speed and athleticism, Matt was urged to go out for football his senior year. He made the honorable mention team for the TCL and was named the team's Outstanding Football Player.

While in high school, Matt was a member of the National Honor Society and served as an office aide and visual aide. He was class treasurer, the Government Day mayor, and a delegate to Boys' State. Matt was also named to Who's Who Among American High School Students and to Who's Who in Foreign Language Students in Ohio.

Following high school, Matt attended the University of Akron where he earned a bachelor's degree in mass media and communications in 1984. He has been a sales consultant for Duval Spirits (1984-1987), for Gil Schwartz Distributors (1987-2002), and for Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits from 2002 to the present.

Matt has a 14-year-old daughter Madeline who is a student at Holy Family Middle School in Poland. Matt said she loves art and is extremely talented at it. Madeline placed third in an art contest, which included students up to the 12th grade in all of Youngstown. She intends to study art at the Mahoning County Career and Technical Center next year.

"I would like to thank all of my coaches who were instrumental in my success in athletics and life," Matt said. "Basketball—Rick Brook; football—Ed Casey; track—Terry Kornbau; and golf—Howard Friend."

Matt was nominated for the Hall of Fame by current SHS track coach and Hall of Fame committee member Kyle Billingsley.

Jillian was a standout in softball, volleyball, and cheerleading throughout her high school career, earning four letters in both softball and volleyball and three in cheerleading.

Jillian was an All-Ohio second team and an All-Northeast Ohio first team selection for softball her senior year. Her exceptional speed led her to numerous stolen bases throughout her career. An ITCL (Inter-Tri-County League) All-Star for two years, she also gained a spot on the first team for Northeastern Ohio her junior year.

After playing junior varsity volleyball for a short time, Jillian was moved to the varsity team her freshman year where she

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played with her sister Kayla (Faudree Heimann), who was a senior. As a junior Jillian was named to the second team for District I, Division IV. Then as a senior she made the ITCL All-Star team and was a Student Athlete of the Week.

En route to earning three varsity letters in cheerleading, Jillian was a member of Sebring's three-time state championship team in the Division IV mount category from 2006 to 2008. She was also a nominee for 2009 Cheer Time Athletics Cheerleader of the Year.

In addition to being an outstanding athlete throughout high school, Jillian was a member of the National Honor Society and was an office aide. She was on both The Echo newspaper staff and The Trojan yearbook staff, while also being a member of SADD, Hi-Teens, Language Club, and Spirit Crew. Jillian also served on the prom committee.

After high school, Jillian received an associate degree in applied science/medical technology from Youngstown State University. From 2012-2020 she worked as a lab technician at Salem Regional Medical Center, Medcentral in Shelby, and Mercy Medical Center, which has offices in several cities.

Currently Jillian and her husband Jon operate a State Farm insurance agency and a property management business. In addition, she runs a part-time travel agency of her own. She and Jon reside in Canton and have two daughters: Daisy, 9, and Charlie, 22 months. They also have a white Lab named Jake and two orange tabby cats named Fred and George.

"I would like to thank Sam Mathias for recognizing my speed, which led me to have one of the highest stolen base percentages in our league," Jillian said. "I'd also like to thank (softball volunteer) Todd Jones for never giving up on my swing, which led to numerous home runs."

Jillian also expressed thanks to coach JoAnn Jones for "giving me my first varsity opportunity in volleyball as a freshman, which was super special because I got to play with my sister." JoAnn nominated Jillian for her award.

"And, of course," she continued with her thanks, "Nicole (Herm) Mathias for being an awesome cheer coach and cheerleader in my other sports with her support."

During the ceremony, the HOF committee honored Joe Amabeli '05. Joe was serving on the committee when he passed in May 2022. The committee recognized Joe's outstanding contributions to Sebring Schools, the Sebring community, and the neighboring communities., Joe was a member of the Hall of Fame as both an individual and as a member of the 2004 boys' basketball team that made it to state. As a class president, he was relentless in his efforts to have the Alma Mater painted in the new gym. As a policeman, he served on the Alliance police force as well as surrounding areas, including Sebring. As a councilman, he worked for the good of the Sebring citizens. As a parishioner, he volunteered at St. Ann's pierogie sales. Anything Joe did showed his selflessness.

The basketball team, which beat Western Reserve on HOF night, dedicated the game to Joe and presented Joe's widow Jenna and their two children Joey and Tori with the game ball. Then they stood in front of the Amabeli family and friends—including Joe's mom, sisters, and extended family—and sang the Alma Mater. In Joe's memory, the team and cheerleaders have decided to make that a tradition following each game.

The Hall of Fame committee would like to thank Tracy Ferguson '78 for donating a pair of Cleveland Cavalier tickets every year as the HOF's primary fundraiser. The committee sells raffle tickets for the tickets and usually nets between \$500 and \$600. Keith Sprout was this year's lucky winner. Don Green '86 sold the winning ticket.







Annual brunch set for April 22

It's time to make those phone calls and send those texts to classmates so you can gather at the 22nd annual alumni get-together.

The 2023 Alumni Brunch will be held on April 22 at the Almost Home Event Center in Sebring. Doors will open at 10 a.m. for socializing, and brunch will be served at 11.

The brunch menu consists of egg strata, cheese omelettes, country potatoes, sausage, bacon, sausage gravy and biscuits, yogurt and granola, fresh fruit, two kinds of soup, and tossed salad. Coffee, hot tea, iced tea, and water will also be served.

Following brunch is the business meeting during which attendees will elect officers for 2023-24, and current officers will give reports and answer any questions.

The highlight of the brunch will be the introduction of the four Distinguished Alumni who have been selected for 2023 (see related article).

In addition, the class of 1973 will be recognized for its 50-year celebration, while the association will also recognize the 25-year class of 1998. Each attendee's class will also receive recognition.

The cost of the brunch is \$22 per person. Alumni and guests who wish to attend can fill out the form in this newsletter and send it with a check to the Sebring McKinley High School Alumni Association, P.O. Box 141, Sebring, Ohio 44672. Other payment options are those listed on the donation form that is also included in this newsletter. Please be sure to include name, year of graduation, and phone number if you choose an electronic means of payment.

BRUNCH RESERVATION FORM SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 2023 ALMOST HOME EVENT CENTER CORNER 12TH STREET AND CEORCI

CORNER 12TH STREET AND GEORGIA AVENUE (FORMERLY HERITAGE OAKS)

DOORS OPEN 10 A.M. BRUNCH AT 11 A.M.

NAME(S) AND YEAR(S) OF GRADUATION _____

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PLEASE ENCLOSE \$22 PER PERSON AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

RESERVATION DEADLINE: MONDAY, APRIL 10, 2023

CHECKS PAYABLE TO SHS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION. MAIL TO: P.O. BOX 141, SEBRING, OHIO 44672.

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