

CHADWICK SCHOOL



Alumni Brunch AND *Awards Ceremony*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2023

Distinguished Alumni Award

The Distinguished Alumni Award was established to honor Chadwick alumni for their contributions to Chadwick, the community and the world. The award is given to a person whose life experience embodies the core values of a Chadwick School education: compassion, fairness, honesty, respect and responsibility.

Award Recipients

2000	Dodd R. Young '45	2016	Jeffrey Earle '77
2006	Sheila Prell Sonenshine '63	2017	Lynne Rosenberg '81
2007	Peter F. Davis '53	2018	David Chadwick '42
2008	Sherre Zwelling Hirsch '87	2019	Peter Swartz '89
2009	Robert Roessler '40	2020	Anita Sircar '92
2010	Sam Brown '47	2021	Robert Rule '76
2012	Lance Bowling '66	2022	Daphne Sykes '81
2013	Richard Learned '62	2023	Susan McNary Johnson '65
2014	James Hall '64		



2023 CHADWICK DISTINGUISHED ALUMNA

SUSAN McNARY JOHNSON, PH.D. '65

Ask Chadwick School's 2023 Distinguished Alumna, Susan "Susie" McNary Johnson, Ph.D. '65, about her life, and she will tell you a story about Chadwick. Chadwick and its community, past and present, permeate all areas of her life. From her friendships to her psychology practice, to her contributions to the educational community, "Chadwick is always part of the story," says Susie. Her exemplary service to Chadwick itself only adds to the narrative.

A native of Torrance, Susie distinguished herself early on as the first baby born in the newly built "Christmas Lights" neighborhood — and on Christmas Day, no less. She was the third child of Tom and Dorothy McNary, the South Bay District Attorney, and the owner/broker of McNary Realty, respectively. Susie's brothers Barney and Davy were 11 and 13 when she was born.

Susie attended Miss Dawn's School in Redondo Beach from first through third grades, then the coeducational Marymount School in Palos Verdes from fourth through eighth grades.

"I loved all the wonderful nuns," said Susie. "But Marymount High School was all girls, and I wanted to attend a coed school. My parents selected Chadwick, and when I balked, they asked me to try it for a year. It turned out to be the best gift they could have given me."

While Susie was leery of Chadwick, the school did have three attributes that appealed to her: It was co-ed, mandated "free dress" instead of uniforms and allowed her to take the bus to school from Torrance.

"My first memory of Chadwick is arriving on campus and being greeted by Mrs. Chadwick. Two teachers I met that day, Mr. Simon, and Virginia "Danny" Daniels, reminded me of my brother Barney and my Aunt Gertrude, so I immediately felt at home," Susie said.

"The Chadwicks, their family and the faculty created a remarkably welcoming atmosphere and sense of belonging. Nobody was invisible at Chadwick, and that changed my life. I would have been lost in a big school.

"I wasn't an especially good student, but I had a wonderful high school experience. I was a cheerleader,

performed in musicals and the final 'Drama of the Ages'. I made so many great friends — people I never would have met without Chadwick."

According to Susie, her teachers were a treasured part of her Chadwick experience, especially P.G. Lee, "Danny" Daniels, Ed Ellis, Mr. Simon, Mr. Burke and Mr. Hamner. "They believed I could succeed even when I didn't," she said.

One class particularly intrigued her. "I took psychology from Dr. Fitzhugh Dodson as a senior," Susie said. "Everything about the subject fascinated to me. I decided I wanted to become a psychologist."

Following graduation, Susie matriculated to Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon, but disliked the gloomy weather. Fortunately, she found that Chadwick had prepared her well for college and her roommate was Chris Schaefer '64. "Chris was my saving grace," said Susie.

A summer studying at Stanford reignited Susie's love of learning. She applied and was accepted to Stanford as a junior transfer in 1967. Before she began in September, however, her boyfriend and Chadwick classmate, Alan Matthews '65, was killed in Vietnam. Grief-stricken, Susie deferred her Stanford entry.

Once again, her Chadwick community rallied around her.

"The Sartorius family scooped me up and sent me with Kim (Sartorius Mel '66) to live with Kim's grandmother in Manhattan for two months. It got me through a tremendously difficult time, and I'll always be grateful to them," Susie said.

Susie returned to Stanford and received her bachelor's degree in psychology in December 1969. She remained on campus until June 1970, taking classes in psychology and special education at the Stanford Graduate School of Education while working as a preschool and substitute teacher.

Susie moved on to USC, where she earned an elementary teaching credential, and master's and doctoral degrees in educational psychology and special education. Internships at McLaren Hall, Helpline Youth Clinic, the USC School of Medicine advanced her clinical training.

Following her internships, Susie worked at the Switzer Center for Educational Therapy for five years, first as a staff psychologist and then as Director of Psychological Services. "I learned about the Switzer Center through

the Heisman family, another serendipitous Chadwick connection," she said.

Susie earned her Clinical Psychology license in 1978 and opened a private practice in Redondo Beach in 1979, specializing in learning and personality. Her practice provided yet another touchpoint with Chadwick.

"Because I was working with students, I reunited with many of my Chadwick teachers, especially P.G. and Joanie Lee," said Susie. "I made many new friends among the Chadwick faculty, and I loved working with them to help students."

Now retired from her psychology practice, Susie describes herself as a student and teacher of the Enneagram and a "world-class Grammy"

In addition to her professional career, Susie has distinguished herself with her service to Chadwick and the greater South Bay Community. She served two terms as a Roessler-Chadwick Foundation Trustee from 1985 – 1994 and taught an elective psychology class at Chadwick. As Chadwick School's administration worked to increase the diversity of its student body beginning in the early 1980s, Susie provided valuable advice on how to support successful student transitions and well-being. She continues to be actively involved in Chadwick alumni circles.

Susie currently serves as the Vice-chair of the Board of The Switzer Center. She also served as a Torrance Memorial Medical Center Foundation Trustee for six years.

One of her most impactful contributions has been the founding of Renaissance School for the Arts and Sciences in 2004 to provide individualized education for students with learning differences. The school's philosophy emphasizes "learning to learn," providing support for specific learning challenges while facilitating achievement in areas of giftedness.

Susie currently lives in Palos Verdes Estates with her husband of 42 years, Bill Johnson. Bill joins us today to honor Susie, along with their grandsons, Sammy and

Charlie Johnson, and many Chadwick friends.

Alumni Athletic Award Honorees

The Athletic Hall of Fame recognizes and honors former student-athletes and coaches for outstanding contributions to athletics at Chadwick School.

Alyssa Norris '03	Gregory Crum '00	Orville Cope '51
Andrew Magee '08	Howard Coale '68	P.G. Lee '43
Bill Belding '63	Jeffrey Lepape '77	Philip Houser '66
Brian Ehlers '76	Jessica Tong Baron '92	Ralph Pursche '51
Carolyn Leach	Joanne Pacillo Foreman '79	Robert Schuchard '70
Christen Press '07	John Phipps '57	Roy Ledesma '82
Cris Hayes '83	John Thorrington '98	Sean Amberg '94
Daniel Armstrong '80	Johnny Marmelstein	Tarn Cooper '60
Diane Webber '99	Joseph Young '52	Thomas Midgley '54
Donald Fordiani '83	Kristin Cohoon Olin '02	Tim Bruinsma '65
Dylan Brown '93	Laura Murphy Schneider '03	Tim Casey '60
Edwin Ellis	Lawrence Williams '90	U.G. Smith
Erin Gilliland Cermak '00	Lindsay Davenport '94	William Gallas '65
Everett Trader '51	Lisa Hudson '83	William Leisk '41
Gary Horkey '64	Lyle Smith '52	William McKinnie '92
Geoff Prendergast '60	Max McFarland '09	

2023 ALUMNI ATHLETIC AWARD HONOREE

SEAN AMBERG '94

Sean Amberg, Class of 1994, came to Chadwick School as a first grader in 1983, following in the footsteps of his father, Larry Amberg '62. By the time he graduated, Sean's athletic prowess had made him a four-sport legend at Chadwick and a nationally ranked junior tennis player.

Sean was a standout in varsity water polo throughout his high school years. He also played three years of varsity soccer, two years of varsity tennis and competed in varsity swimming for two years.

A powerhouse in the pool, Sean earned Chadwick Water Polo MVP honors as a junior and was named Prep League MVP as a senior. He set the Chadwick School record for most goals scored as a senior and was named a High School All-American in water polo.

Sean also made major contributions to Chadwick's tennis and soccer programs. He was the tennis

team MVP in his sophomore year, as well as Prep League MVP as a sophomore. His national ranking as a Southern California Junior Tennis player was top 50 nationally and top 5 in Southern California. Three seasons of varsity soccer and two seasons of swimming rounded out Sean's Chadwick athletic career.

Even with four sports in the mix, athletics weren't Sean's only high school pursuit. He served as Junior Class Vice President and participated in community service with special education students at Redondo Union High School. He also enjoyed the outdoor education program, particularly the senior trip.

"The senior trip was a blast," said Sean. "It was one of the reasons I considered a career in outdoor education while I was in college."

Following graduation, Sean attended and played water polo at El Camino Community College. He spent his junior year at Prescott College, studying environmental science and participating in its acclaimed outdoor education program. Sean then

headed to the University of Oregon, once again competing in water polo. He received his bachelor's degree in environmental science/geography with a minor in philosophy from Oregon in 1999, planning to pursue a career in teaching and coaching.

Sean returned to the South Bay in 1999, restoring coastal sage ecosystems with the Palos Verdes Land Conservancy, substitute teaching in Chadwick's Village School and teaching tennis at the Peninsula Racquet Club.

Sean moved on to a fulltime Village School Teaching Assistant position and served as an assistant coach for multiple Middle and Upper School sports from 2000-2005. In the meantime, he pursued a master's degree in education and an elementary teaching credential from National University. Sean fondly recalls being honored with yearbook dedications by the Chadwick Classes of 2001 and 2002.

Finding the balance between his love of classroom teaching and his passion for tennis has been an ongoing journey.

Beginning in 2005, Sean taught second grade for the Clark County School District in Las Vegas, Nevada. He next spent seven years as a USPTA-certified Tennis Pro at Club Sport Green Valley in Henderson, Nevada, where he led the club's tennis program and managed USTA tournaments. Sean also coached tennis at Green Valley High School.

Missing teaching, Sean returned to CCSD in 2013 to teach second and third grades. In January 2023, his teaching and tennis careers merged when Sean was appointed Tennis Director at The Meadows School in Las Vegas, where he directs all facets of the pre-K through 12th-grade tennis program.

Sean hasn't scaled back his personal athletic adventures in adulthood. He has completed three Ironman and numerous shorter-distance triathlons, holds a first-degree black belt in karate and plays competitive tennis for a 5.0 Men's Tennis USTA League team.

We celebrate Sean's achievements as an educator and athlete today along with his mother, Ellie "Nurse Ellie" Fronauer, R.N.; stepfather, former

Chadwick varsity tennis coach and physical education teacher Rob Fronauer; brother, Matt Amberg '97; and father, Larry Amberg, M.D. '62.

2023 ALUMNI ATHLETIC AWARD HONOREE

DIANE WEBBER '99

Diane Webber, MPH, Chadwick School Class of 1999, was a stellar athlete at Chadwick throughout her high school years. A basketball powerhouse, she played varsity basketball all four years — years that saw the girls basketball team capture second place in the State CIF Division 5 championships, a CIF-Southern Section championship, a CIF-SS second place finish, and two Prep League titles.

"We were lucky to have a great team and a great coach in Heidi Oversier during those years," said Diane.

Diane's contributions were integral to the program's success. A Prep League All-League First Team honoree every year, she was selected to the All-CIF-SS First Team and the Daily Breeze All-Area Basketball Third Team as a senior. Diane was named both Prep League MVP and CIF-SS Player of the Year as a junior.

Diane also competed in varsity girls volleyball for three years, where she was a Prep League All-League First Team selection. In recognition of her accomplishments, Diane received Chadwick's Sartorius Award as a senior.

Athletics were just one of Diane's Chadwick pursuits. She enjoyed ceramics, tutored in the community service program and served as an Admiral. She especially loved the outdoor education program.

"Outdoor ed was a highlight for me," said Diane. "I still talk about the senior trip often. That was special about Chadwick — providing that experience and perspective to students. Chadwick provided many opportunities to try new things, sparking curiosity among its students, and the small class sizes contributed to the closeness among classmates and lifelong friendships."

Diane matriculated to Columbia University, graduating in 2003 with a bachelor's degree in operations research with a minor in economics. She also began playing women's rugby on the club team at Columbia, going on to play on the U.S. Women's Rugby National Under-23 Sevens Team the summer after she graduated.

Diane's growth mindset extended to her professional career. Upon graduation, she became an analyst at J.P. Morgan Chase but remained interested in teaching and coaching. That resulted in a stint coaching basketball at the Episcopal School in Virginia with her former Chadwick coach and mentor Heidi Oversier.

The death of her brother, Dennis Webber '03, in 2005 caused Diane to reassess. She returned to Los Angeles, working at Wells Fargo Foothill on the syndications team for two years.

"Banking was fine, but it wasn't fulfilling," said Diane. "I was seeking something more personally meaningful. I was always interested in nutrition, so I shifted careers and went to CSULB in 2008 to study nutrition and dietetics."

Diane completed the Didactic Program in Dietetics in 2010, graduating as a member of Phi Beta Kappa and the Golden Key Honor Society. While providing health coaching to private clients, she joined Chadwick in 2011 as a physical education teacher and basketball coach. She also served as an assistant volleyball coach under another mentor, Coach Anita Drennen.

"After Chadwick, I wanted to work on health policy issues at the macro level," Diane said, "but I needed to expand my knowledge and earn additional credentials." She earned a Master of Public Health in Health Policy and Management from UCLA's Fielding School of Public Health in 2015.

She now works at L.A. Care Health Plan, which provides Medi-Cal health coverage to more than two million low-income residents in Los Angeles County. Diane serves as a Product Manager, serving on the COVID Command Center during the pandemic and now working on special projects and regulatory changes. She's excited about the expansion of health care coverage to residents of all

immigration status in California and is working to ensure a smooth transition for that population.

With Diane's wide-ranging knowledge and determination to make a difference, L.A. County's residents are in good hands. The Chadwick community is proud to honor her as both an athlete and a changemaker.

Diane currently lives in Palos Verdes, and her family, partner, and friends from Chadwick and beyond join us to celebrate her today.

2023 ALUMNI ATHLETIC AWARD HONOREE

LAWRENCE WILLIAMS '90

Lawrence Williams, Chadwick Class of 1990, attended Chadwick for three years, entering as a sophomore in 1987. Although he graduated more than 20 years ago, his Chadwick experiences still shape his path, his athletic achievements still inspire awe, and his Chadwick friendships are still central to his life.

Lawrence played varsity boys basketball all three years at Chadwick, where he was integral to the team's success. At 6' 7", he made a big impression as a high-scoring center. He was honored with the prestigious John Wooden Award as a senior and was also named to the All-CIF First Team.

While basketball and academics were major priorities, Lawrence also tutored special needs students through Chadwick's community service program. As the son of an educator, Lawrence saw the difference a dedicated teacher could make for students — his mother, Sherilyn Williams, taught kindergarten for 36 years in the Los Angeles Unified School District. (In fact, both Lawrence and his sister, Chiniqua Williams, are now teachers themselves.)

Lawrence also valued the faculty mentors he found at Chadwick, including his computer science teacher, Keith "Doc" Stephens, English teachers Terry Andrews and Karen Stephens, biology teacher Mary Ann Braus and varsity basketball coach Tom Maier.

"I struggled academically at first at Chadwick," said Lawrence, "but I had teachers who were welcoming

and encouraging. Doc Stephens always had kind words.”

While the adjustment was tough, Lawrence said, “Chadwick gave me confidence. It taught me that if I work hard and I really prepare, I can pretty much slay anything. It also gave me the confidence to rub shoulders with different types and of folks from all different backgrounds and to relate to anyone.”

Following Chadwick graduation, Lawrence went on to the University of San Francisco and then to San Francisco State University, where he competed in varsity basketball for the Gators for four years. During his career as a forward at SF State, Lawrence was a three-time NCAA Division II All-West First Team selection and a four-time Northern California Athletic Conference First Team selection. He was honored as a Collegiate All-American in 1995.

Lawrence holds several long-standing Gator basketball records including career points scored (2,090), career rebounds (951) and career blocked shots (222). He was inaugurated into the San Francisco State University Athletics Hall of Fame in 2006 and remains the only Gator basketball player ever to score more than 2000 points.

After receiving his bachelor’s degree in urban studies in 1995, Lawrence remained at SF State to pursue graduate studies and a teaching credential in special education. He joined the Oakland Unified School District in 2007 and teaches Special Education at Montera Middle School.

The friendships Lawrence formed at Chadwick continue to play a huge role in his life — in fact, he chats with Chadwick friends “almost daily” via texts or a Facebook group. Dennis Brown ’90, Eric Dyson ’93, Joe Giacomo ’90, Dylan Brown ’93 and Jason Ambrose ’90 are among his closest friends. “I enjoy playing golf with my Chadwick friends when I’m in L.A.,” said Lawrence, who took up the sport five years ago. I also saw Cyrille Kaufman ’90 in Paris not long ago.”

“I think the small class sizes at Chadwick are one of the reasons Chadwick friendships tend to last,” said Lawrence. “Each class is really one big cohort, not a group of separate cliques. We shared so many experiences as classmates — academics, athletics,

carpools, community service, outdoor ed — and that creates strong bonds.”

Lawrence lives in Oakland with his wife, Gail, and daughters Peyton (9) and Ellis (6), who join us today to celebrate his inauguration.

2023 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION FACULTY TRIBUTE

MARK WIEDENMANN

Affectionately known on campus as “Wieds,” Mark joined Chadwick School in 1981 as a member of the history department. While continuing in that capacity, he became the Upper School Dean of Students in 1987 and the Director of the Upper School in 1992. During his time at Chadwick, Mark created Chadwick’s community service program which, in 1988, was recognized by U.S. News & World Report and IBM as one of the six best community service programs in the country. Mark also created Chadwick’s wellness program, developed Chadwick’s teacher evaluation program and initiated Chadwick’s approach to curriculum design based on Grant Wiggins’ “Understanding By Design.” His tenure at Chadwick also includes coaching cross-country and teaching AP U.S. History, Democracy and Ancient Greece, History of India, Comparative Religion, and Philosophy of Religion.

Before coming to Chadwick, Mark taught at Thacher School in Ojai, California. Mark grew up in northeastern Ohio, and attended Western Reserve Academy in Hudson, Ohio. He went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts in history at the University of California at San Diego, a Master of Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, and a Master of Divinity at Yale Divinity School.

During his time as Chadwick Director of the Upper School, Mark helped to shape the lives of countless students, guided and mentored many faculty and staff members, created and influenced numerous programs, built everlasting bonds with our alumni, and worked tirelessly in support of Chadwick, its Mission and its Core Values.

Margaret Lee Chadwick's philosophy
for the school she founded in 1935
can be seen on the hornbooks
at the main entrance to the school:

*"Here in this country school both boys and girls may find
excellent instruction, plenty of outdoor life and
good companions."*

*The school accepts pupils from grades one through twelve and
strives earnestly to discover and develop the special gifts
which each individual possesses."*



CHADWICK
S C H O O L

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