

## Words of WELCOME

During Lincoln Avenue's 50th Anniversary Celebration  
by the elementary school's Third & Current Principal  
Dr. Michele LeBlanc



**W**ELCOME to Lincoln Avenue's 50th Anniversary Celebration!  
I would like to welcome our distinguished guests: Board of Education President John Verdone, Board of Education Vice

President Thomas Cooley, Trustee Norm deVenau, Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Walter Schartner, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, Dr. John Stimmel, and Assistant Superintendent for Business, Mr. John Belmonte. I would like to thank all of you, former students, parents, retired teachers and staff, administration, and Board of Education Members for being here this evening.

**S**o, believe it or not, as Lincoln celebrates 50 years, I am only the **third** principal to have had the honor to lead this building. As the two previous principals were unable to attend tonight, we asked them to send us a few words we could share with you. Mr. Don Wiley served from the start to 1985. He and the staff had some immediate challenges. Our corner stone located in the front hall reads 1967. However in February of that year, there was a bad storm with high winds, which compromised the construction completed to date; part of the wall of the hallway came down, there was not an existing roof at the time, delaying the opening of Lincoln Avenue to March, 1968. Here are Mr. Wiley's words:

*[FOR MR. WYLIE'S FULL LETTER, SEE THE PDF & JPEGS ON WEBSITE.]*

"...There was no cafeteria, no library, no office, no nurse's office, and the gym was barely usable when workmen were away for a while. Most classrooms did not have a door—"

*[Dr. Leblanc interjected: "Mr. Belmonte, are you ok? I can see these described hardships are making you pale. Mr. Belmonte runs a very tight ship and he is responsible for the latest construction projects here at Lincoln, which includes several new classrooms and a beautiful 4,000 square foot library media center, and he is currently overseeing our new boiler project. I would like to recognize Mr. Belmonte for his accomplishments and transformations here at Lincoln, and thank him for making them seamless!"]*

Back to Mr. Wiley and March 1968: "...With that tiny glimpse of how it was 50 years ago I will sign off by wishing every one of you—Lincoln Avenue School faithful faculty and staff and alumni—all the best from the bottom of my heart. Love, Don Wiley."

*(Continues on next page.)*

## A FEW HOUSEKEEPING ITEMS AND THANK YOU'S

- In just a bit, we would like to take photos of our retirees, our alumni, our past & current PTA presidents, and board members, and our past & current SBT members. Photos will take place right here on the risers.
- Please consider supporting our education foundation by purchasing a 50/50 raffle and t-shirt raffle. The winners will be announced immediately following the play, and please consider supporting our PTA by purchasing a reusable souvenir bag, with our 50th anniversary logo, created by our art teacher, Mr. Rick Michaels.
- We also ask that you sign your name or share a brief memory on the chalkboard wall located by the cafeteria. This was also created by Mr. Michaels. You may have gotten in trouble for writing on the wall, but this time we are begging you do so! We hope it remains as a permanent fixture for years to come.
- There were so many people involved in preparing for this night, basically the entire faculty, staff and student body. Please feel free to take a look at the students' work reflecting the decades in the hallways following the performance.
- I also want to thank our SBT, which has served as our "think tank" and would like particularly thank Mrs. Klein, Mrs. Bench and Mrs. McMackin for their hours of work. I must thank the PTA for the refreshments and support of this evening, and the Sayville Education Foundation for their financial support. I must thank Linda Mittiga, the District's Publicist, for her work with the invitation and getting the word out! More thank you's to come throughout the evening!

(Continued from previous page.)

Dr. Mary Ann Nolan served as principal from 1985 to 2003. She had a commitment in South Carolina and sends her regrets. I have to say, that I could not agree more to what she shares here, as my experience has been extremely similar:

*[FOR DR. NOLAN'S FULL LETTER, SEE THE PDF & JPEGs ON WEBSITE.]*

Though they are not here, I would like to thank both Mr. Wiley and Dr. Nolan for their work and for all they have built. Without further ado, I would like to introduce *[the following speakers who shared their thoughts.]*

- Our Board of Education President, Mr. John Verdone (See pdf below.)
- Our PTA President, Ann Marie DeGregoria (See pdf below.)
- Site Based Team Parent Chair, Karah Klein (See pdf below.)
- Representing our Retired Teachers, Janet Cozza (See pdf below.)
- STA Representative and Student Government Advisor, Melinda Moran



#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

As you know, Dr. Walter Schartner, our superintendent of schools, is retiring in June. We at Lincoln Avenue are celebrating our 50th, while Dr. Schartner is celebrating his 39th! He has served this community as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, and superintendent. His leadership, particularly through quite bit of turbulence, as our government has thrown the field of education some curve balls, has been nothing but steadfast and positive.



Dr. Schartner has done something I have never seen a superintendent do, and that is to visit the buildings, and make time for the teachers, staff and students. His leadership has been nothing but intelligent as he has demonstrated forward-thinking, and has provided the support to all of us to make change happen. But likely, the most important thing you need to know about Dr. Schartner is that he is a man of integrity, and as I have often heard various Lincoln Avenue faculty and staff members state, "He is such a good man."



Our anniversary planning committee and Site Based Team wanted to do something to mark this evening AND the man who has left his mark on all of here at Lincoln Avenue. With that said, Dr. Schartner, we have named our courtyard, a courtyard where we celebrate, think deeply, and commemorate, the "Dr. Walter Schartner Courtyard." Thank you for *all you have done for all of us!*

*Please do not leave tonight without signing the commemorative wall located by the cafeteria doors. (Thank you Mr. Michaels and Ms. Volpe.) Please support our PTA and Sayville Education Foundation.*

This concludes our ceremony. Please join us as we continue the celebration with a performance by our 5th graders, **50 CHEERS FOR 50 YEARS**, in the cafeteria.

A Letter from Lincoln Avenue's First Principal  
Mr. Don Wylie

Please give my best wishes to all who've come to our school's 50th Anniversary Celebration. It is a wonderful thing you folks are doing, and I apologize for being unable to be there with you.

Thinking back to 1967, some who are there tonight may remember that Lincoln Avenue's children and faculty started September on split session at Sunrise Drive. [Yuk!!] Many weeks later we were so glad to move into OUR building even though it was only about seventy percent complete.

There was no cafeteria, no library, no office, no nurse's office, and the gym was barely usable when the workmen were away for a while. Most classrooms did not have a door. Electricity was turned off for the entire building by the Union Shop Stewart at exactly 3:00 p.m., but dismissal time was not until 3:30. These were only the major problems. Every few hours we had to ask some poor teacher to move the class to another room so that electricians or plumbers or other workmen could put finishing touches to the room.

Somehow the adversity brought us closer together as a team; "us against Them" you might say.

Right from the start this inexperienced principal was blessed with truly wonderful faculty! I felt as time went on that we became almost like a family.

With that tiny glimpse of how it was fifty years ago I will sign off by wishing every one of you—Lincoln Avenue School faithful faculty and staff alumni—all the best from the bottom of my heart!

Love,  
Don  
AKA Mr. Wylie - Principal 1967-1985



A Letter from Lincoln Avenue's Second Principal  
Dr. Mary Ann Nolan

To My Lincoln Avenue Family:

I am sorry that I cannot be there with all of you. I am in South Carolina until the end of March and had many commitments here before I knew about the Lincoln celebration.

I do know, however, that every person who walked the halls of Lincoln Avenue, teachers, support staff, clerical, custodial, parents, ALL the children and yes, even Principals, left his/her mark on that school. My 18 years at Lincoln Avenue were filled with laughter, tears and awe. My memories bring tears of joy and, at times, sadness. We have both lost and found colleagues and friends.

I was truly blessed to have worked with a diligent staff who deeply cared and polite, loving, talented children whose parents invested their time and energy to support a strong total education for ALL the children who walked those halls.

New ideas were embraced.

When I first interviewed in Sayville, I had the sense that I had come home. My years there showed me that I was right. Sayville and particularly, Lincoln Avenue was where I belonged.

Thank you for your friendship, the caring and the joy of being part of a truly wonderful ride.

Be well and Happy!!!!

With Deep Affection,

Dr. Mary Ann (Nolan) Griffin - Principal - 1985-2003



# 50 CHEERS FOR 50 YEARS

*Fifth-grade student-performance photos thanks to Lincoln's own Debra Wortzman*

