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*Sweet Home
Alumni Association*



*Distinguished Alumni
Wall of Fame*

2021

*Induction Ceremonies
Friday, May 21, 2021*

Despite the challenges from 2020, our Sweet Home Distinguished Alumni Wall of Fame tradition continues. Tonight's recipients are successful in their own fields - whether it is in music, education, media, or business. One common area links all four recipients: giving time to serve their local communities. Each recipient not only is respected within their chosen career, but each finds time to serve others who are less fortunate. To think that their beginnings derived from Sweet Home High School is inspirational to all who celebrate with us tonight.



Nominations for these impressive inductees were collected in the spring. Through the aid of a small committee comprised of veteran and retired teachers, administrators, alumni board members, alumni, and community members, tonight's nominees will be inducted.

Former teachers, classmates and family members accompany the recipients tonight (in person and virtually!) and support them in their passion to make a difference. These inductees have left an indelible mark on our school and community - one that will be commemorated for years to come.

Lisa LaBrake
Sweet Home Alumni Coordinator

PROGRAM



Sweet Home Distinguished Alumni Wall of Fame Induction Ceremonies

Friday, May 21, 2021

6:45pm Check-In

7:00pm Welcome & Introductions, Melissa Holmes,
Class of 2000, WGRZ-TV

- ◆ Mary Ellen and Jim Prentice, present
Paul Bascobert, Class of 1982
- ◆ Glendale Elementary Principal Joleen Dimitroff, presents
Jennifer Reid DePasquale, Class of 1990
- ◆ Lucy Drabczyk, Class of 1998, presents
Heather Bellini, Class of 1998
- ◆ Jennifer Reid DePasquale, Class of 1990, presents
James Foye III, Class of 2009

7:45pm Closing Remarks, Lisa LaBrake, Alumni Coordinator

Special thanks to the following people for their tireless efforts in ensuring that tonight was successful:

Roz Annunziato
Dave Barbalato
Kelli Bogacz
Bruce Corris
Anthony Day
Lucy Drabczyk
Don Feldmann
David Harrison
High School Custodial Staff
Scott Johnson
Gary Klenk
Lisa LaBrake
Catherine LeSage
Mike Lopardi
Trey Measer & Bee Group Newspapers
Pat Mergenhagen
Dan Murphy
Heidi Mussachio
Antonio Perry
Kristina Pinkowski
Tom Rackl
Shevonne Ramadan-Sikes
Darcy Spengler
Justin Sullivan
Roey Tacca
Steve Weingarten

Emcee for the evening:

Melissa Holmes, Class of 2000
WGRZ-TV

James Foye III Class of 2009



James Foye III graduated from Sweet Home in 2009 and was a member of Sweet Home's State Champion Varsity Football team and heavily involved in music in his community church. After high school, he relocated to Atlanta to pursue his music production career and obtain his Bachelor of Recording Arts degree from The Art Institute of Atlanta. While he was already active in the music production business, he made a promise to his parents to get the degree and he kept his promise - earning his degree in 2014. James is currently a Grammy Award winning, multi-platinum Music Executive, skilled in production, with over eight years of professional experience building chart topping records.

James has worked as Co-Chief Executive Officer of The Upperclassmen Music Group in Atlanta since 2012. His primary responsibilities include scouting, managing, and developing the careers of new artists, songwriters and producers. He has solely negotiated several hundreds of thousands of dollars in publishing, song writing and marketing deals for his clients. James has worked with many top talent artists including: Beyonce, Cardi B, Wiz Khalifa, Ty Dolla Sign, Chris Brown, YFN Lucci, Trey Songz, Wale, YBN Namir, City Girl, Tyga, Trouble, and City Girls. He has been featured in many major publications including The Source, Hip-Hop DX, Revolt TV and Billboard.

James has been nominated four different times for Grammy Awards winning one in 2019 for production on best rap album, Invasion of Privacy.

He is co-founder and creator of "Plug & Play", a yearly event for industry experts to scout and network with upcoming talent, songwriters, producers, managers and executives. James has worked hard to become exceptional in his career field while helping younger talent learn and develop under his guidance and direction. Throughout his journey, he continues to give back to the community through events called UC (Upperclassmen Cares) which provides the less fortunate with providing food, clothing and toiletries.

James has had so much professional success, but has never forgotten where he came from and continues to give back to his alma mater. He has spoken to students in both media and music classes at Sweet Home, offering his advice and answering their questions about his career path. He continues to connect with fellow graduates and always embraces his experiences at Sweet Home.

Paul Bascobert Class of 1982



Paul Bascobert graduated from Sweet Home Senior High School in 1982. After graduating, he was accepted at Kettering University (formerly General Motors Institute) in Michigan where he obtained a degree in electrical engineering. He later earned his MBA from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania.

Paul recently joined Blue Ocean Acquisition Corporation as its CEO. Prior to that, he served as the president of Gannett News which is the largest newspaper publisher in the United States and most notable for USA TODAY. Paul joined Gannett as its President and Chief Executive Officer in August 2019. From November 2017 through its successful sale in December 2018, Paul served as President of XO Group Inc., where he helped lead the company's transformation from a media to a marketplace business. Prior to XO, Paul was President of Local at Yodle Inc., where he led sales, service and marketing for the Local Businesses group and, before that, he was Chief Operating Officer of Bloomberg's media group. In total, Paul has over two decades of experience leading media and marketing organizations through his tenure at these companies as well as executive roles at News Corp. and Dow Jones. Paul also co-founded Vertex Partners, a services firm that leveraged data analytics to drive sales and product strategy for pharmaceutical and media companies.

In addition to his outstanding professional resume, Paul is very supportive in the community. He has been on the Board of Directors of The Partnership at Drugfree.org since 2011 and been a multiyear Individual Benefactor of Hope Donor. Supporting this organization has been very important to him not only as a father of two, but as a role model in helping today's youth. He also serves as a Board Member of the MPA - The Association of Magazine Media, Column Software and Blue Butterfly.

Paul is very appreciative of the educational foundation he received at Sweet Home and considers it instrumental in his many successes. When back in town at his mother's home in the Glendale neighborhood, Paul always reunites with lifelong Sweet Home friends and that reunion is usually tied to a Sweet Home activity.

Jennifer Reid DePasquale Class of 1990



Jennifer Reid DePasquale, Class of 1990, quickly returned to her alma mater in 1995, not as a student, but as a science teacher. Following graduation, Jennifer attended Canisius College where she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in 1995 and later a Masters degree in 1999.

Jennifer quickly established herself as a hard-working, dedicated professional, who embodied Sweet Home's tradition of excellence. Early in her tenure at Sweet Home High School, she was instrumental in starting our In-School Alternative Program to meet the needs of non-traditional learners. This program has expanded each year and serves as a strong pillar in the foundation of our intervention framework allowing numerous at-risk students to graduate each year. She was also the trailblazer for our very popular Niagara University - NUSTEP Program. Her NU Forensics course has inspired over twenty additional NUSTEP course offerings, which have allowed our students to graduate with numerous college credits at a fraction of the college cost.

Additionally, she has served in many leadership roles including peer coordinator, curriculum developer and instructional trainer. In her role as peer coordinator, she encouraged input, engaged stakeholder groups, supported risk-taking, and empowered individuals by allowing them to solve problems and to receive credit for their efforts.

She has facilitated several professional development experiences for her colleagues and presented workshops on co-teaching and technology integration.

Outside of the classroom, Jennifer's service to community is unparalleled. When the Clarence Central School District was facing severe cutbacks, she rallied a group of parents to create the Clarence Schools Education Foundation (CSEF). She coordinated several events that generated nearly \$500,000 to fund experiences, technology, equipment, and classroom supplies. CSEF has been recognized as Clarence's Organization of the Year in 2020.

At Sweet Home, Jennifer coordinated many fundraising events to raise much needed money for specific students and families. She and her husband, Joe, have donated money in the form of scholarships for Sweet Home seniors. She also brought her experience of forming an education foundation to Sweet Home as one of the founding members of the Sweet Home Education Foundation which benefits those in need within the Sweet Home school community.

Heather Bellini Class of 1998



Following her graduation from Sweet Home High in 1998, Heather Bellini attended Villa Maria College in Buffalo from where she received an Associate's degree in Photography and Graphic Design in 2000. After completing Villa Maria College, Heather pursued a career in Mental Health. She received her BA Degree from the University of Buffalo in Psychology in 2006 and Master's Degree in Mental Health Rehabilitation in 2009, also from the University of Buffalo. Concurrently with her Master's, she earned a certificate in Nationally Recognized Supported Employment, Career Development, and Transition Planning. She worked full-time in the Mental Health field for a number of years and freelanced as a photographer on the weekends.

In June of 2013, Heather took a leap of faith and quit her full-time job as a Service Coordinator to become a full-time self-employed photographer, under the corporate name, Heather Bellini Photography, LLC. Heather is a multi-faceted photographer specializing in wedding photography, special events, and corporate headshots. Heather began working out of her home independently. Her business has grown over the years and she now employs a staff consisting of an office manager, administrative assistant, photography editor, album designer, one associate photographer, and 4 assistant photographers.

In Fall of 2016, Heather decided to return to school to learn ways to further develop her business. She was accepted into the Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership at the University of Buffalo and completed a one year long certificate program. Heather was contracted then as the official headshot photographer for the University at Buffalo and now provides headshot services for companies such as JP Morgan Chase Bank, Pepsi, Zillow and The Buffalo Niagara Partnership.

Heather also uses her skills to benefit the community. She provides photography services to Brighton Place Library, Lime WNY, WNY Women's Foundation, Taste of Technology and is an official sponsor of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership Athena Awards. Heather is also the co-organizer of "I DO Love Buffalo," which was the first wedding and business event to focus on the needs of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community.

Heather is also a member of the Alumni Board at Villa Maria College. Heather freely volunteers to provide complimentary photography for alumni events such as the annual Handbag Bingo and has participated in career panel discussions that are geared toward the student body. She serves as a mentor for photography students by inviting them to intern in her studio. Recently, Heather has partnered with mass media students at Sweet Home to provide them with professional learning experiences and support on class projects.

Professionally, Heather has served as an Executive Board Member of the Buffalo Bridal Association in 2016 and 2018. She has been the recipient of multiple awards for excellence in her field including Wedding Wire Couples Choice Award from 2012-2016.