

*Sweet Home
Alumni Association*

*Distinguished Alumni
Wall of Fame*

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20  15

*Induction Ceremonies
Friday, November 6, 2015*

Tonight marks another momentous event in Sweet Home history. These six alumni are worthy of the honor of being named a “Distinguished Alumni”. When you review tonight’s recipients, their impeccable work in education, fashion, criminal justice, business, sports writing, and medicine has effected many people across the United States and overseas. What is truly amazing is that these inductees began their journey at Sweet Home High School.



The nomination and selection process was an exciting time. A nomination form was devised and nominations were collected in the spring of 2015. Through the assistance of a small committee comprised of veteran and retired teachers, administrators, alumni board members, alumni, and community members, these six inductees were selected.

As Alumni Coordinator, I am proud of those who will be inducted tonight. Thank you to their friends and family members who will be accompanying them tonight to see them receive their special award. Thank you to their classmates from the classes of 1965, 1978, 1983, 1991, 1992, and 1998 for their support and to their teachers for shaping them into the people they are today. I look forward to seeing their plaques adorn our main hall so that all of our past and current students, staff, and community members can recognize their achievements.

Lisa LaBrake
Sweet Home Alumni Coordinator

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

Craig Allwes
Roz Annunziato
Gary Bainbridge
Dave Barbalato
Mike Baumann
Kelli Bogacz
Debra Coniglio
Bruce Corris
Anthony Day
Don Feldmann
David Harrison
Hermann Studios
High School Custodial Staff
Gary Klenk
Lisa LaBrake
Keith Langlotz
Mike Lopardi
Trey Measer & Bee Group Newspapers
Pat Mergenhagen
Mike Morrow
Dan Murphy
Heidi Mussachio
Kristina Pinkowski
Tom Rackl
Joleen Reinholz
Dave Sherman
Darcy Spengler
Roey Tacca
Steve Weingarten

Emcees for the evening:

Don Feldmann & Lisa LaBrake

PROGRAM



Sweet Home Distinguished Alumni Wall of Fame Induction Ceremonies

Friday, November 6, 2015

6:30pm Music and Check-In

7:00pm Welcome & Introductions, Don Feldmann, Membership Chair

- ◆ David Harrison, retired English teacher, presents
Thomas J. Reigstad, Ph.D., Class of 1965
- ◆ Pat Mergenhagen, past Alumni Coordinator, presents
Holly Henderson, Class of 1978
- ◆ Alan Camhi, retired English teacher, presents
Michael E. Harrington, Class of 1983
- ◆ Ronald Young, retired Sweet Home administrator, presents
Matthew R. Young, DDS, Class of 1991
- ◆ Diane L. Fiebelkorn, former marketing executive, presents
Eric Fiebelkorn, Class of 1992
- ◆ Lisa LaBrake, Alumni Coordinator, presents
Scott D. De Meester, Class of 1998

8:00pm Closing Remarks, Lisa LaBrake, Alumni Coordinator
Cake & Coffee Served

Thomas J. Reigstad, Ph.D. Class of 1965

Thomas J. Reigstad was a member of the Sweet Home Class of 1965. He was on the staff of the school newspaper, *The Blotter*, and worked on *Horizons*, an annual literary magazine. One classmate recalled him as a nice guy who was so smart that everyone wanted to sit next to him.



Following graduation from Sweet Home, Tom went on to earn his Bachelors of Arts in English from the University at Buffalo in 1969, Masters in English from the University of Missouri in 1971, Masters in English Education from Canisius College in 1975 and finally his Ph.D. in English Instruction from the University at Buffalo in 1980.

Tom has spent over 42 years teaching writing and literature – most of them at SUNY College at Buffalo. Tom has been a member of the faculty of Buffalo State since 1981 and has been an Emeritus Professor of English since 2007. While at the college, Tom has distinguished himself as an outstanding instructor, trainer of student teachers and as a nationally recognized Mark Twain scholar. He has earned seven major academic honors including the SUNY College at Buffalo President's Award for Excellence in Research Scholarship and Creativity in 2002.

His status as a researcher, lecturer and author in Mark Twain studies has marked his professional life. Tom is the author of dozens of articles on Twain and his most recent and arguably most prominent effort is the 2013 publication of *Scribblin' for a Livin': Mark Twain's Pivotal Period in Buffalo*. This book has been widely hailed as a major contribution in the field, providing carefully researched and eminently readable account of the vital role Buffalo played in Twain's transformation from newspaper editor to serious novelist.

Tom has also been a writer and editor for such publications as the *Buffalo Courier-Express*, *The English Record*, *Business First of Buffalo* and *Buffalo Bills Insider Magazine*.

Scott D. De Meester Class of 1998

While at Sweet Home, Scott D. De Meester, Class of 1998, was a leader in and outside of the classroom. He was always eager to learn, respectful to his classmates and staff, and motivated to excel in his academics, particularly any class related to writing or government.



In 1996 Scott joined the Ellicott Creek Volunteer Fire Company, where his grandfather was one of the original, founding members. He followed his father and two uncles into the Fire Company. After graduating from Sweet Home, Scott attended Niagara County Community College and earned a degree in liberal arts and criminal justice in 2001. He was an active member of the fire company and held an Officer position until he left in September 2001 to move to Atlanta.

Scott began his career with the Atlanta Police Department on September 11, 2001. Upon his completion of Police Academy, he was assigned to northwest Atlanta as a patrol officer, where he received a number of commendation letters for his work. In 2006, Scott transferred to the Atlanta Airport where he worked in an undercover capacity with Homeland Security due to the many high profile incidents that happened around the world at that time. He was promoted to Investigator in 2007, where he was assigned to a criminal investigation unit, investigating armed robberies and assaults.

In 2007, while working security at an apartment complex in Northwest Atlanta, Scott was alerted to an apartment fire with people trapped. He forced entry into the apartment and located a 5 year-old girl in an upstairs bedroom. Scott was successful in leading the young girl to safety and received the Atlanta Police Department's highest valor award.

In 2009, Scott transferred to the Special Victims Unit and, in March 2010, he began work in the Homicide unit, where he is currently still assigned. He has investigated over 40 homicides as the Lead Homicide Investigator and only 3 are unsolved. Scott has been featured in episodes of *COPS*, local media outlets and was part of the first casting of authorities in A&E Network's *First 48* which chronicles the intensity of the beginning stages of real-life homicide investigations.

In addition to his duties as an Investigator, Scott provides instruction at the Atlanta Police Academy and is a guest lecturer at Georgia State University.

Scott and his wife, Tiffany, have two children: Payten, 8, and Landon, 4.

Eric Fiebelkorn Class of 1992



The enjoyment that Eric Fiebelkorn, Class of 1992, experienced at Sweet Home High School has most definitely spilled over to his professional career with his outstanding work with schools and school age children.

In 1995 and only a few years out of high school, Eric started his own business in Western New York – a commercial janitorial and construction services company he named Bottomline Enterprises. Through hard work and personal connections the business grew and Eric decided to sell it in 2001. In 2002, Eric became a government account executive with Nextel Partners and worked his way up to District Sales Manager. In 2006, Eric joined Toshiba and immediately established it as a leader in the Western New York business community. He is currently the vice president and general manager of Toshiba's Buffalo office.

For excellence in his profession, Eric was named to *Business First's* Forty Under 40 list in 2012. Jack Connors, publisher of *Business First*, characterized Eric as an honoree that exemplifies all that is good with our community.

Outside of the office, Eric is currently the president of the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce and co-chairperson of the Board of Directors for the Grand Island Student Business Alliance. He participates in the Grand Island High School mentoring program and was presented with the "Friend of Education" Award by the district.

Eric is a member of the Board of Directors for Buffalo/Niagara March of Dimes since 2002 and Mikey's Way since 2011 who provide electronics to pediatric oncology patients who experience long-term hospital stays and care. He also actively participates in fundraising efforts for Cystic Fibrosis, American Cancer Society and American Heart Association, and is a long-time supporter of Sweet Home Dollars for Scholars. Eric has a long track record of outstanding community service across Western New York and his efforts have touched many lives.

Eric and his wife Alicia, who is a science teacher at Sweet Home High, have 3 beautiful children and live in Grand Island.

Holly Henderson Class of 1978



Holly Henderson, Class of 1978, is a creative professional and leading industrial technology expert with over 30 years experience in fashion design for apparel and textiles, private label retail product development, marketing, graphic design, corporate management and higher education.

After graduating from Sweet Home, Holly studied fine art, design, fashion and apparel at both the State University of New York College at Buffalo and Fashion Institute of Technology.

Holly was a pioneer in fashion technology and among the first to use a computer to program her designs. In 1987 Holly opened Deerwood Designs Inc., the first Computer Aided Drafting and Product Development studio in New York City. It was at Deerwood where Holly would work with many major companies including Liz Claiborne, Macy's, Talbots, Leslie Fay and Jones Apparel Group. She was instrumental in the launch of Tommy Hilfiger and NFL Properties and introduced many others to design technology.

Holly spent over five years of her career working with the Federal Merchandising Group as a knitwear designer of private label merchandise and later became the Manager of Creative Services including the marketing of the combined Federated / Macy's private brands.

She has served as a lecturer and adjunct professor at both Buffalo State College and the Fashion Institute of Technology. While at the Fashion Institute, she created and developed the "Red, White, Blue and Green" seminar series with the continuing goal to raise awareness in sustainability, environmental and social issues for US based companies. She was also the creator and event coordinator for the Fashion Institute's Annual Symposium on Sustainable Fashion that included many major players in fashion.

Since 1997, Holly has worked as a top industry consultant helping many retailers, apparel and textile manufacturing companies to streamline their design process and implement various types of design and product lifecycle management technology into their business.

Holly is also the founder of Simply Natural Clothing by Holly Henderson which utilizes alpaca fiber with a zero waste concept. Simply Natural clothing was launched in 2011.

Michael E. Harrington Class of 1983



Michael Harrington, Class of 1983, was a contributing writer to the school newspaper during his four years at Sweet Home High School. Following graduation, Mike went to Canisius College, where he earned his Bachelors degree in communications and media studies in 1987.

It was that same year that Mike began an internship at the *Buffalo News*. Shortly after graduation from Canisius, Mike was hired full-time and has been a sports reporter and columnist for the newspaper for the last 29 years.

Mike Harrington is currently the lead baseball reporter and columnist for *The Buffalo News* and has closely covered the Bisons in every season since the team moved downtown. The Amherst-native began his career at *The News* in 1987, took over as Bisons beat reporter in 1993 and debuted the Sunday "Inside Baseball" column in 2004. He chronicled the Bisons' championship campaigns in 1997, 1998 and 2004 as well as the 1998 Triple-A World Series in Las Vegas and the 2012 Triple-A All-Star Game in Buffalo. In 2006, he was made a voting member of the Buffalo Baseball Hall of Fame Committee and, in 2013, was enshrined himself.

Harrington is also a member of the Baseball Writers' Association of America and has covered more than 30 Major League Baseball postseason series, including every World Series since 2000. He has won several state and national awards for his stories and the Inside Pitch blog at Buffalonews.com.

Harrington has also covered college basketball and the National Hockey League during his tenure at *The News* and is a member of the Professional Hokey Writers Association, serving as the chairperson for the Buffalo chapter. He was a voter in the Associated Press Men's Top 25 from 1997-2007.

Mike has always had a special place in his heart for his alma mater - often coming back to speak to public speaking, journalism and digital media classes. He was instrumental in helping the High School's Sweet Home Sports Central club get off the ground and gain a tremendous on-line presence.

Mike and his wife Kim currently reside in the district and their son, Hayden, is a sophomore here at the High School.

Matthew R. Young, DDS Class of 1991



Matthew R. Young, DDS, Class of 1991, received his Bachelors of Science degree from Pennsylvania State University. He returned to his hometown to earn his dental degree from the University at Buffalo, graduating with honors in 1999.

Following dental school, Dr. Young entered the Albert Einstein Medical Center residency program in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. While there, Matthew won the prestigious Benjamin Leiby Award for Outstanding Resident of the Year in 2000.

After his residency, Dr. Young practiced in the Philadelphia area for seven years. He is active in many national and local dental organizations including American Dental Association, Academy of General Dentistry and American Academy of Implant Dentistry, and serves as an attending clinician at the Albert Einstein Medical Center residency program. Since 2007, Matthew has practiced in San Francisco, California.

Dr. Young has spent a considerable amount of time performing volunteer work with the group Operation Smile. These missions to Vietnam and Thailand include working on patients with cleft lips and palates and those in desperate need of dental care. A key component of these missions is to educate local dentists through hands-on seminars and formal lectures.

Matthew has had extensive postgraduate training through continuing education courses and is proficient in many aspects of dentistry. He has had extensive training in implant dentistry and has provided numerous lectures to dental professionals nationally and internationally on the topic.

Dr. Young has received many awards for both his academic and clinical excellence, but the award he is particularly proud of is the Thomas Labenski Scholarship which he earned in 1999. Qualifications for this award included: the desire to learn the maximum without compromising patient care, and consideration for patients, staff and peers. Patient comfort has and continues to be one of Dr. Young's prime concerns.

Matthew lives in Marina of San Francisco with his wife Sokie and son Joseph.