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*Sweet Home
Alumni Association*



*Distinguished Alumni
Wall of Fame*

2024

*Induction Ceremonies
Friday, May 17, 2024*

We are Sweet Home! For over twelve years, the Distinguished Alumni Wall of fame has greeted all who have entered the high school foyer. Tonight's two inductees join that unofficial greeting committee.



Tonight's inductees are successes in this given field. Both serve their local communities, as well as furthering their reach to not only other states, but other countries as well. That they both received their foundations here at Sweet Home is something to celebrate.

Nominations for these inductees were collected throughout the fall and winter, and reviewed by a committee of current and retired Sweet Home teachers, administrators, fellow Sweet Home alumni and community members.

Thank you to everyone who came out tonight to share in celebrating two such worthy recipients. They are the epitome of Sweet Home Pride.

Nicole Kuss
Sweet Home Alumni Coordinator

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

Derek Baker
JoAnn Balazs
Dave Barbalato
Kelli Bogacz
Bruce Corris
Lucy Drabczyk
Don Feldmann
Mike Ginestre
David Harrison
High School Custodial Staff
Scott Johnson
Nicole Kuss
Mike Lopardi
Trey Measer & Bee Group Newspapers
Pat Mergenhagen
Dan Murphy
Heidi Mussachio
Kristina Pinkowski
Tom Rackl
Darcy Spengler
Roey Tacca
Steve Weingarten

String quartet:

Delaney O'Brocta, violin
Vivian Veneziano, viola
Lauren Silverberg, cello
Jim Marone, violin

Emcee for the evening:

Melissa Holmes, Class of 2000
WGRZ-TV

PROGRAM



Sweet Home Distinguished Alumni Wall of Fame Induction Ceremonies

Friday, May 19, 2024

6:15pm Check-In

6:30pm Welcome & Introductions, Melissa Holmes,
Class of 2000, WGRZ-TV
Scott Johnson, Board of Education Member
Dr. Michael Ginestre, Superintendent of Schools

- ◆ Hal Kingsley, presents
Lorean Mathien, Ph.D., Class of 1988
- ◆ Heather Bellini, Class of 1998, presents
Mark Rouse, Class of 1998

7:00pm Closing Remarks, Nicole Kuss, Alumni Coordinator

Lorena Mathien, Ph.D. Class of 1988

Following graduation from Sweet Home, Lorena Mathien, Ph.D., Class of 1988, embarked on a career in business that has led to a long and illustrious college teaching career. Mathien earned a bachelors of science degree in marketing management from Syracuse University in 1991, an MBA from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1996 and her Ph.D. in Operations Management & Strategy in September 2012.



Lorena's professional career began in 1992 with Rich Products Corporation where she served in the role of inventory planner, advancing to a team leader in 1997. While there, Mathien trained inventory planners in production planning and logistics in thirteen manufacturing facilities with over \$24 million in inventory. Following her time at Rich Products, Lorena moved to J.D Edwards World Solutions Company where she developed and trained clients all over the country in enterprise resource planning classes. She came back to Buffalo and Rich Products in 2003 working as a portfolio and project manager and was team leader that facilitated a \$36 million company acquisition. In July 2010, Lorena went to work at Buffalo State University where she assisted in the growth of Professional Science Masters programs in Applied and Computational Mathematics including marketing of the program, website development and creation of classes. Since 2002, Mathien has also run her own consulting firm, LDM Consulting, where she has created nine training modules for a State University of New York at Buffalo client.

Lorena's professional career offered opportunities to become involved in higher education and teaching. She has served as an adjunct professor at Niagara University (2008), Medaille College (2010-2011), Canisius College (2010-2011), State University of New York at Buffalo (2012), Houghton College (2019) and Buffalo State University (2011-2012). Buffalo State hired Lorena as an Assistant Professor Mathematics and Professional Science Master's Coordinator in 2012. From there, Lorena moved to Assistant Professor for Business (2105-2018), Associate Professor for Business (September 2018) and since September 2022, has served as Buffalo State's Business Department chairperson.

Dr. Mathien's ability to develop collaborations in diverse fields and in different countries has made her a unique resource for investigators in various disciplines. Her capacity to work across cultures was demonstrated by her award by the prestigious Fulbright Scholarship to teach and engage in projects at the International School of Business at the University of Economics in Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam in 2023. The faculty at Vietnam were so impressed with Lorena's expertise, she is invited to return at the University's expense to teach as a guest lecturer in the summer of 2024.

Dr. Mathien was also awarded the President's Medal for Excellence in Teaching in 2019 from Buffalo State.

Mark Rouse Class of 1998

Since graduation, Mark Rouse, Class of 1998, has become a pillar of the Western New York community. After his days at Sweet Home High School, Mark went on to study elementary education at Daemen University. Mark starred on Daemen's basketball team and was later inducted into the school's Athletics Hall of Fame. Mark's passion for service and strong faith led him to a career path in the church.



Starting anything is difficult. Starting a brand new church from scratch is next to impossible. But that is exactly what Mark did as the founder and pastor of Epic Church in September of 2013. The church began in a local movie theater and has grown to its current location on Transit Road with a weekly congregation of over 100 members.

Epic Church, under Pastor Rouse's visionary leadership, has been an instrumental partner in their efforts to support survivors of human trafficking. Through various initiatives, such as providing furniture for women who have experienced the unimaginable traumas of trafficking, supplying school supplies to vulnerable girls, and rehabbing a home for overcomers, Pastor Rouse has exemplified a deep sense of empathy and a genuine desire to make a positive impact on the lives of those in need.

What sets Pastor Rouse apart is not just his involvement in these initiatives but his pioneering spirit in being one of the first individuals to support Project Mona's House and the fight against human trafficking in the entire Western New York Region. His early recognition of the issue and commitment to addressing it speaks volumes about his character and dedication to social justice.

Mark has always dedicated himself to being teachable. He has continued to receive coaching and mentoring from more experienced pastors in the area. And just as he has been sharpened, Mark seeks to sharpen others so they can become high capacity leaders themselves. Through his involvement in Free Methodist Church USA and Next Level Relational Network, Pastor Rouse is not only coaching pastors in New York, but New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia.

Mark is also a Church Planting Coach for the Association of Related Churches to lead healthy and high impact churches across the United States and Canada.