



DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS...



Charles Seaback, Class of 1972, President, The W. L. Gilbert Trust

Dear Alumni, Families, and Friends of The Gilbert School,

As we reflect on another successful academic year at The Gilbert School, I'm filled with pride and gratitude for all that we've accomplished together. Each passing year offers a new chapter in our proud history, and the 2024–2025 school year has proven once again that our commitment to excellence in education remains strong and enduring.

We were thrilled to celebrate the graduation of over 80 students this June, including a vibrant group of international scholars who brought unique global perspectives to our community. Thanks to your unwavering support, the W. L. Gilbert Trust Corporation awarded over \$120,000 in scholarships to deserving seniors and alumni—a tradition that began in 1919 and continues to transform lives more than a century later.

This year also saw continued growth in our international program. Our residence hall remains a valuable asset, helping us welcome students from around the world. With guidance from our dedicated admissions team, our reach continues in Europe, South America, and Asia—offering students not only a strong academic foundation but also a true sense of community here in Winsted.

We remain deeply grateful to the alumni and friends who contribute to the Annual Fund and to our scholarship initiatives. Your generosity ensures that The Gilbert School remains a place where opportunity and tradition thrive side by side.

On behalf of the entire Gilbert community, thank you for your trust, your loyalty, and your belief in our shared vision. We look forward to welcoming you back for upcoming events, reunions, and celebrations.









Greg P. Shugrue, Head of School, The Gilbert School

Dear Yellowjacket Alumni, Families, and Friends,

The Gilbert School is a truly special place, distinguished by its size and the strength of the connections we build within our school community. Our small, close-knit environment allows our educators and administrators to develop meaningful relationships with every student, providing personalized support and guidance throughout their

academic journey.

We are proud of our rich traditions and the incredibly dedicated faculty and staff who work tirelessly to ensure that each student receives a well-rounded, memorable, and impactful educational experience. Our focus goes beyond academics, we help students discover who they are, support their social and emotional development, and prepare them to meet life's challenges.

At the heart of our mission is a simple but powerful principle: students come first. We are committed to meeting the unique needs of every learner, understanding their styles, and encouraging growth in every aspect of their lives. We strive to create a safe, caring, and joyful learning environment for all students in grades 7 through 12.

Education at The Gilbert School is truly a partnership between students, families, faculty, and our valued alumni. We believe that collaboration is essential in delivering the best outcomes for our students. As we continue to move forward, we invite you to walk alongside us, united by a shared goal: to provide a rigorous, supportive, and inspiring education that equips each student with the tools they need for success and a lifetime of fond memories.

As I prepare to retire after this school year, I want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude. It has been a true privilege to serve The Gilbert School community. I am honored to have worked alongside such passionate educators and incredible students, and I am proud of what we've accomplished together. The spirit of The Gilbert School will always remain close to my heart.

Thank you for your continued support of our students and the entire Yellowjacket community.







Timothy Cronin, MBA, CEO, The W. L. Gilbert Trust

Greetings from The W. L. Gilbert Trust!

As we bring the 2024–2025 academic year to a close, it is inspiring to reflect on the continued growth and transformation happening across The Gilbert School and our programs supported by the Trust. Each year brings new opportunities, fresh faces, and renewed energy to our shared mission.

This year we welcomed a dynamic group of international students from across the globe, further diversifying our student body and enriching the cultural fabric of the Gilbert community. Students from Germany, Brazil, Vietnam, South Korea, and beyond brought their unique perspectives and experiences, creating a vibrant, global learning environment right here in Winsted.

The Gilbert School continues to thrive with the support of our dedicated staff and faculty. Our new team members have seamlessly joined the Gilbert family, and those who have transitioned into new roles have embraced their responsibilities with enthusiasm and care. Their work has helped create an environment where students feel supported both academically and personally.

The Trust remains committed to enhancing the learning experience through our Enhancement Grants, which are funded by the generous contributions from our alumni and community partners. These grants help make possible the "extras" that have a lasting impact. These are the investments that help our students excel inside and outside of the classroom.

As we look toward the future, our vision is clear: to continue building a school community that is inclusive, forward-thinking, and rich with opportunity. We are already preparing for a new year of growth and possibility—with new students, new programs, and new ways to connect with our alumni and supporters.

To our alumni and friends of The Gilbert School—thank you. Your involvement and support ensure that the legacy of this exceptional institution endures for generations to come.

Wishing you all a safe and restful summer.

PLEASE SUPPORT THE GILBERT SCHOOL! THANK YOU!





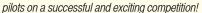
Gilbert Student, Teacher, & Alumni Basketball Game – On February 1st, Coach Kris Kelsey (Class of 2002) organized a fantastic basketball tournament that brought together alumni, students, and teachers for a day of fun and fundraising. The event featured Future Stars games, a Middle School Game, a spirited Teachers vs. Students matchup, and plenty of contests and prizes—all in support of The Gilbert School Basketball Program. A big thank you to Coach Kelsey and to everyone who participated, volunteered, and cheered from the sidelines. What a great showcase of Gilbert pride and community spirit!

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Views













Gilbert JBA5K 2025 - The Joseph & Brian Annual 5K Walk/Run for Suicide Awareness and Prevention took place at The Gilbert School on April 27th. Held in memory of two beloved family members of TGS staff and organized by social workers Shannon McGrane (Class of 2011) and Michaela Cutarelli, the event raised critical awareness and funds in support of suicide prevention. Middle and high school students, staff, and families came together to participate and volunteer, making the event a powerful and meaningful success. TGS student winners included 1st Place - Nathaniel Hackett, 2nd Place - Cassie Ash, and 3rd Place - Victoria Parent. Among staff runners, Scott Minnerly, Nikita Tarabara, Lauren Orr, Zack Penn, and Donald Crossman proudly represented TGS, with Zack Penn earning the Fastest Staff Member Award. Looking ahead to next year, organizers are considering the addition of a scholarship to support a TGS student pursuing a career in mental health or who has experienced personal mental health challenges. Congratulations to all participants—and thank you for helping to make a difference!



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PIXAR Field Trip – On May 23rd, students from The Gilbert School's Video and Animation program visited The Science Behind Pixar exhibit at the Connecticut Science Center. Led by Technology Education teacher Tom Lutka, students enjoyed a fun and engaging learning experience exploring the creative and technical process behind Pixar's animated films.







School News

Welcome New Head of School Michael Susi

By Patricia Martin

A fter four years of dedicated service, Greg Shugrue has retired as Gilbert's head administrator. It's time to now welcome new head of school Michael Susi, who joins Gilbert following an illustrious career that makes him particularly well suited to take the helm.

Mike officially joins TGS on July 1st. He most recently served as the associate head of school for finance and operations at Woodstock Academy. Previously, Mike was the principal of East Lyme High School for a decade, and before that he worked for two years as principal of Wheeler Middle/High School in North Stonington, and four-and-a-half years as assistant principal of Haddam-Killingsworth Middle School. He holds a bachelor's and master's degree from Southern Connecticut State University and an executive leadership degree from the University of Connecticut.

Holly Cassaday, chairperson of the W. L. Gilbert School Corporation, notes "Mr. Susi's extensive experience across public, private, and endowed academy settings will be a tremendous asset to the Gilbert School."

Mike is pleased to join The Gilbert School and says the timing for making the move is ideal. "My daughter is a senior at UConn and my twin boys just graduated from the Woodstock Academy and are heading to UConn to major in engineering," he states. "With the kids being independent, now is the perfect time for me to transition to this exciting new position. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to work with the people at The Gilbert School and its Board of Trustees and contribute to its legacy of educational excellence."

The search for a new head of school was facilitated by consultants from the Trumbull-based Cooperative Educational Services-one of six Regional Educational Service Centers established by the state legislature to provide support and services to school districts. Mike says, "I am deeply honored to be entrusted with this great opportunity to join The Gilbert School. I am eager to listen, learn, and grow in partnership with the Gilbert community."



"I am thrilled to have the opportunity to work with the people at The Gilbert School and its Board of Trustees and contribute to its legacy of educational excellence."

- Michael Susi, Head of School

AMP's Regeneration Project Gave Students a Space to Lead with Heart!

By Patricia Martin

Education, art, and environmental activism came together at The Gilbert School this year when art teacher Bridget Grady's students collaborated with the American Mural Project (AMP) on its Regeneration Project.

Located in Winsted and founded by renowned artist Ellen Griesedieck, AMP is a nonprofit organization, established in 2001, that focuses on giving dignity to the American worker and inspiring kids through educational programs. It celebrates American ingenuity and strives to invite collaboration, revealing to people of all ages the different contributions they can make to our culture.

At the center of AMP's three-acre facility stands a massive and impressive three-dimensional mural depicting a stunning historic overview of our nation over the past century through its workforce—from heart surgeons to steel workers, athletes to farmers, assembly workers to the fabricators of a Boeing 747, and many other careers. This ongoing work in progress is 120 feet long and five stories



Amp 3 Generations – photo credit, Sky Johnson, Class of 2019



Gilbert School Artists with Ellen Griesedieck and Regena, The Regeneration Whale

tall, earning it the distinction of being the largest indoor collaborative artwork in the world.

"Early on I saw AMP as the opportunity to inspire and challenge others, especially children, not only by depicting Americans at work but by involving them in the mural's creation," says Ellen. Through on-and off-site programs, Ellen has led projects in 17 states, working with children from preschool to high school, as well as adults.

Ellen was inspired by the best-selling book by AMP advisor Paul Hawken, Regeneration: Ending the Climate Crisis in One Generation, to initiate "Regeneration: Empowering Students to Tackle the Climate Crisis Through Art." Starting in October 2024, she invited over 100 students between grades 5 - 12 from 10 Connecticut schools to work on the Regeneration project and contribute original artwork, exploring environmental justice and the regeneration of our climate. Their collaborative pieces have now become a permanent part of the AMP installation.

"At the onset of the Regeneration project, when students arrived at AMP, it was

the first time many of them had been in our space or seen the mural," says Ellen. "Altogether and in break-out groups, the students and teachers discussed different ideas and approaches they could take. Their energy and enthusiasm were thrilling, and by the end of the day the kids headed to their buses with sketchbooks in hand, ready to start on their creations."

Students worked together throughout the school year brainstorming to create and refine their artwork. "The most exciting part is that we're hearing directly from the kids," says Ellen. "The designs, materials, and methods they chose in creating their pieces are totally up to them. The teachers are there to help them succeed with whatever they have in mind, but the kids came up with their own way of looking at climate. They all own the project."

Gilbert students totally committed to Regeneration, doing research and looking at possible solutions for addressing the climate crisis. Gilbert School Art teacher Bridget Grady observed that her class was focused and collaborative in their approach. "Ideas always change in creating any artwork, it's part of the process," says Bridget. "My class ended up making a giant whale using shredded cardboard, papier-mâché,

and other materials. Their emphasis was not just on saving the whale, though—it's much broader, encompassing the significance and impact of climate change."

Bridget's students were thoughtful and reflective in the way they looked at climate change and the Regenerative project. "Working on the Regenerative project really opened my eyes to how interconnected everything is when it comes to climate change," says Kamaya Sanchez. "Seeing the art come to life, and knowing it is sparking conversations about

solutions, has been incredibly rewarding."

"Working on the Regeneration project, I've learned how crucial it is to tackle climate change through innovative solutions," says Izabella Velasquez-Sarrach. "Seeing the art aspect come together highlighted the power of creativity in driving environmental awareness and action."

"This whale has taught me that we as people have so many duties to do, and we should conserve our amazing planet as one of them," says Jenaily Erazo. "This also taught me that we all have a voice and can make a change as a society against anything we believe and put our mind into!"

"Regeneration means putting life at the center of every action and decision," states Anaiya Cupid.

Along with Bridget's art class, students from Barkhamsted Elementary (Barkhamsted), Botelle Elementary (Norfolk), CHAMPS After School (Winsted), Mansfield Middle School (Mansfield) Northwest Regional 7 (Winsted), Renzulli Academy (Hartford), Roger Ludlowe Middle School (Fairfield) and Southwest School (Torrington) participated. They celebrated the culmination of their creations being installed in the mural during a special event held at AMP on May 31st featuring Paul Hawken, author, environmentalist, and entrepreneur, who flew to Winsted from the West Coast to address students. "Paul has inspired millions to take





AMP Mother and Daughter - photo credit - Sky Johnson, Class of 2019

meaningful action to reverse global warming—including these students!" says Ellen.

Student Haelynn Derby summed up her experience and insights with a passionate statement. "Regeneration gave us a space to lead with heart," she explained. "We supported each other, took creative risks, and turned big climate questions into something human and hopeful. Through our art, we found our voice and used it to speak for something bigger than ourselves!"

New Faces at Gilbert

TGS is pleased to introduce you to the "New Faces" who joined Gilbert this year! They received a warm welcome from administration, staff, and students, immensely enjoyed their first year, and found it very fulfilling!



with a minor in Creative Fiction Writing. I earned my English Teaching Certification from the Alternative Route to Certification. Last year, as soon as I walked into The Gilbert School for my interview, I felt right at home. I could see from the positive interactions in the hallway that the staff and students were part of one big family. I was initially brought on as a long-term substitute from January through June of 2024 to fill in for a departing English teacher. By the year's end, I was offered a full-time position at Gilbert for the 2024-2025 school year and gladly seized the opportunity. I am currently assembling a collection of short fiction stories in a portfolio and will be applying for CT-based MFA programs in the next few months. I am thrilled to be working with a diverse collective of students and a staff with many years of experience. I am happy to be honing my teaching practice in this energetic school community!



TOM DURHAM, MIDDLE SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHER I have really enjoyed my first year here at Gilbert as a 7th grade language arts teacher. I began two months into the year, after working in another district for almost a decade. Everyone at Gilbert, from the administration, to my coworkers, and especially the 7th grade team, was supportive and welcoming. The transition went far more smoothly for me than I thought it would because of the strong container The Gilbert School has created. It's a great place to work and I look forward to my future as an educator here.



MADELINE "MADDIE" ZIEGLER, HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHER I am a first-year English teacher and new to The Gilbert School and Connecticut. I chose TGS because I really enjoyed the community I felt in the school during my interview. My parents have a house in Winsted so I was also happy to know the area around the school, it made the new start less daunting. In my first year I have continued to learn more about the community and the respect the students and staff have for each other. I am thoroughly enjoying my first year and feel very grateful to be a part of such a supportive team!



TOM LUTKA, CTE TEACHER I've been teaching for 15 years, working in schools in Connecticut and Manhattan, New York. I've taught nearly all areas of Tech Ed, but my passion is visual media. That's actually a big part of why I am so excited to be at Gilbert teaching Photography, Graphics, Animation, and Video. This first year I've been busy building relationships with faculty, staff, and students and figuring out how to best use my skills and the skills of my students to record and promote all of the many activities at Gilbert.



ZACK PENN, Long Term English Substitute Teacher This is my first year here at Gilbert as a long-term and daily substitute teacher. I have worked with kids my entire life but this is my first year in education. Over the summer I saw that there was a position open for an 8th grade Long-Term English Substitute and I figured that I would apply. I am currently working as well for the Gilbert Trust as one of the Dorm Parents or Residential Coordinators. Everything seemed to line up very well for me to work at Gilbert. The things that I appreciate the most are the staff being so welcoming and helpful, knowing that I did not have a background in teaching, and the students being so receptive. Every day we face challenges but the staff is there to help. As a whole the students have been very kind and willing to learn from me as well. They have shown respect and been very helpful in my transition to a long-term substitute. Overall, my first year has been great. Honestly, my experience has been amazing, and I have all of the TGS family to thank.



MIKE PELLETIER, FACILITIES DIRECTOR The sounds of humming machinery, the rhythm of a well-oiled system, and the satisfaction of a problem solved—these are what drive me. With a strong mechanical background and a passion for working with my hands, I feel like I am already making a tangible impact on campus operations. I have over two decades of experience spanning the automotive, manufacturing, and retail management industries and I have built my career defined by hands-on technical knowledge and a passion for problem-solving. I hold an Associate's Degree in General Studies from Tunxis Community College, with a focus on electromechanical repair. I am also ASE certified in Parts (P2) and earned my high school diploma from Lewis S. Mills High School, in Burlington, CT. When the opportunity to join TGS arose, I felt an immediate connection. It was the school's mission, its sense of community, and the chance to make a real difference that inspired me to come here. I have found TGS to be exactly what I was looking for. The best part has been the people. Everyone is so dedicated, and there's a genuine spirit of collaboration, which makes coming to work every day really rewarding. As I look ahead, I am excited about the future. My goal is to continue making positive changes, to ensure that TGS's facilities are not only functional but truly support the incredible work being done here. I'm just getting started.

Senior Spotlight Double Diplomas: Four Families Celebrate Twin Gilbert Grads

by Patricia Martin

Quite possibly a record has just been set at TGS for the greatest number of twins to graduate in the same year! That's because the Class of 2025 included not one, not two, not three—but four sets of twins! They were Brailey and Marella Ursone, Lola and Marley Fritch, Caralyn and Victoria Parent, and Bernardo and Izabella Aguiar. Of course, other schools have had twin graduates. According to The Guinness Book of World Records, New Trier High School, located just outside Chicago, holds the title with 44 pairs of twins who graduated in 2018. At the time, the school had a total population of nearly 4,000. But Gilbert's record is actually even more impressive—with a graduating class of 88, the eight seniors represented nearly 10% of the 2024-2025 graduates. Please enjoy meeting the twins below, from the oldest to the youngest pair!



MARELLA AND BRAILEY URSONE

Born January 2, 2007, Brailey and Marella have been together at TGS since 7th grade. During their years at middle school and high school, the twins were happily amazed they only had two semester classes that were different from each other. Best friends as well as sisters, they'll be attending UConn, majoring in the ACES program for undecided students, and plan to dorm together.

At Gilbert, Marella and Brailey have participated in soccer and cheer, are members of the National Honor Society, and student ambassadors. When it comes to sports, Marella played softball and Brailey was on the soccer team.

These twins acknowledge they are alike in many ways, and share many of the same interests. They love to try new things and spend time with family, friends, and pets. But while they are very similar, they have individual traits that set them apart from each other. "Marella is more of an intense person, and I tend to be more laid back," explains Brailey. "But we both have our moments, so you never really know what you're going to get!"

Brailey's favorite aspect of Gilbert is the international program. She explains, "It has exposed me to new cultures and people. Through the international dorm, I have made lifelong friends."

"I like the relationships I've been able to build with students and teachers due to the small size of Gilbert," adds Marella. "I feel as though bigger schools don't allow for these kinds of connections, which I am really grateful for."



LOLA AND MARLEY FRITCH

Born February 5, 2007, Lola and Marley have been at Gilbert since 7th grade. The duo plays on the Girls Varsity Soccer team, which Marley was captain of during senior year. Marley also runs Track and Field, which Lola manages. They are also part of the National Honor Society, Wingman, and Student Council, on which Lola serves as vice president. Together, the Fritch twins share duties as senior class co-vice presidents.

The pair are alike because they have the same sense of humor, and both said they can finish each other's sentences or look at the other and know exactly what she's thinking. They also share the same best friends.

As far as differences, "I have a more artistic/creative side and love doing hair while Marley is more into exercise/fitness and shopping," explains Lola. On the other hand, Marley says "Lola takes pain well and I do not!" And both agree that Marley is a pickier eater. Lola and Marley both enjoyed business classes at Gilbert and cited

Mrs. Zaprzalka and Mrs. Poirier as teachers who helped them tremendously in furthering their education in business and marketing. After graduation the twins will be attending Coastal Carolina University majoring in Business Management. After college, Lola plans to go to cosmetology school to become a licensed cosmetologist and Marley would like to become a realtor and eventually open her own brokerage firm.



VICTORIA AND CARALYN PARENT

Born March 20, 2007, Caralyn and Victoria started attending Gilbert in the 7th grade. The Parent twins are active students with a lot of interests and are musically talented. Caralyn is president of the National Honor Society, involved with Concert Band as band manager and woodwind section leader, is a member of the Rock/Pop Ensemble, Theatre Pit Orchestra, Berkshire League Band, DECA, and morning announcements crew. Victoria participates in cross county, indoor track, outdoor track, marching band, jazz band, symphonic band, Northern Region Choir, and Berkshire League Choir, and—like her sister—is involved in the DECA, the Rock/Pop ensemble, the theatre, and morning announcements crew.

"My favorite place to be is with the music department," says Caralyn. "Mr. Minnerly is my favorite teacher ever, and being around all the music students feels like home."

"I also really like the music department because I have a huge passion for music, and the staff in the department are very supportive of whatever I do," concurs Victoria.

Caralyn and Victoria outlined their similarities and differences. They both love music-related extra curriculars, have the same friend group, love the color pink and Mexican food, and enjoy doing things with each other. The ways they differ is that Caralyn is more outgoing while Victoria is more of an introvert and quiet. When it comes to sports, Victoria's favorite is Track and Field while Caralyn's is Softball.

They also note differences in their looks as Caralyn has brunette hair and brown eyes and Victoria has ginger hair and green eyes. But they admit they have similar smiles and face shapes.

Post-Gilbert, the girls plan to attend Central Connecticut State University, with Caralyn majoring in Nursing and Victoria focusing on Exercise Sciences.



BERNARDO AND IZABELLA AGUIAR

Born August 29, 2007, Bernardo and Izabella grew up attending a Brazilian Baptist church and love Brazilian food and music. They deeply value honesty and respect, which they say are principles they try to live by every day.

Bernardo has been at The Gilbert School since he was in 7th grade, and Izabella since 9th grade. Bernardo, who is somewhat shy, is athletic, participating in sports and playing soccer, while outgoing Izabella is a student ambassador who enjoys playing musical instruments. Izabella explains they're both caring, funny, supportive, and natural leaders. "I tend to be more responsible and a bit more stressed, whereas my brother is calmer and more playful," she says.

The Aguiar twin's mother owns Aguiar's Cleaning and their uncle runs a roofing company. Post-graduation the two plan on helping out with the family businesses.

TGS Gets High Marks from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges

by Patricia Martin

In October of 2024, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) committee sent a team to TGS to create a Collaborative Conference Visit Report that includes the findings of Gilbert's "Self-Reflection" study along with the association's analysis. The goal was to provide an assessment of our current standing in fulfilling

stringent academic and organizational criteria as well as creating a blueprint that guides us forward to continue to improve the quality of programs and services we provide to our students.



The NEASC committee is an educational organization that accredits private and public secondary schools, primarily in New England. Its accreditation is respected globally and founded on the principle that a school's comprehensive self-reflection followed by candid feedback from professional peers is essential to ongoing school improvement, growth, and transformation as well as ensuring students receive outstanding educational experiences.

The accreditation process involves five key steps: a school's self-reflection; a two-day visit by peer educators and NEASC committee representatives; development and implementation of a growth/improvement plan; a decennial accreditation visit; and a follow-up program to monitor the school's progress in addressing identified needs. In order to maintain accreditation, schools must participate in the NEASC committee's process over a 10-year cycle and demonstrate growth, evolution, and improvements in achieving the established goals.

Gilbert's last accreditation visit by the NEASC committee was in 2012, and our academic team was ready to make the most of the new opportunity. "It has been a distinct pleasure to work with the stakeholders of The Gilbert School," says Francis Kennedy, Associate Director for Accreditation and School Improvement, NEASC Commission on Public Schools. "The time and effort they dedicated to the Self-Reflection and their thorough preparation ensured a successful Collaborative Conference Visit."

"The NEASC committee's visit analyzed our school's many strengths in fostering a safe, inclusive, and supportive

environment while identifying key areas for improvement," says Greg Shugrue, Head of School. "By outlining Gilbert's many accomplishments and targeting areas for improvement the Collaborative Conference Visit Report ensures our continued growth and success."

EVALUATION OF GILBERT'S STRENGTHS

In reviewing their visit to Gilbert, the NEASC committee reported numerous strengths and benefits to our students. It stated that our staff creates and maintains a socially, emotionally, and intellectually safe environment, and that a noticeable sense of community defines our culture. The NEASC committee also commended our student-to-staff ratio as a great strength and noted that both students and staff feel safe asking for support and taking risks by stating opinions and asking questions. In addition, the NEASC committee reported that students are confident our teachers care about them and are responsive to their needs, and that the lines of communication among our staff, administrators, students, and parents are positive and productive.

Other strengths noted were that students have easy access to faculty and staff, and that the staff and faculty are familiar with each student and treat them with respect.

Importantly, TGS parents feel their children are safe at school and that our staff is responsive to students needing extra support.



"Gilbert has

a great, caring, and collaborative team of academic professionals," says Deb Lewis, Principal. "The NEASC committee recognized that there is a high level of trust between teachers and administrators, fostering collaboration and the sharing of innovative practices. They also noted that we function as a Professional Learning Community—or PLC—which is a collaborative approach to teaching that improves student learning by discussing teaching practices, analyzing student outcomes, and developing solutions to challenges.

Academically, the NEASC report found that Gilbert students are encouraged, challenged, and supported, and that we have a high percentage of students enrolled in AP and honors classes. The association also commended

TGS for its robust technology infrastructure, which supports and enhances learning. Every student and parent have a PowerSchool account to access grades and assignments, and teachers have a Google Classroom for each class. In addition, our library/information services got high praise for offering flexible hours, modern spaces, and diverse resources.

IDENTIFYING AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

The NEASC report was invaluable in identifying and evaluating areas for improvement to align with the association's standards and support Gilbert in its ongoing quest for excellence, which the school is proactively focusing on addressing. By committing to making these improvements, we will ensure that TGS will maintain its accreditation. Overall, Gilbert was commended for having a campus that is a bright, open, and airy environment for teaching and learning, and the buildings and facilities are adequately sized. The NEASC report also noted that our state-of-the-art auditorium and lights and sound systems support our performing arts programs as well as enable the space to be utilized for community events.

Based on other
NEASC report
findings, recommended
safety measures and
improvements to our
facilities and infrastructure
will be addressed. In



particular, TGS will work to ensure our science labs meet OSHA standards by improving ventilation and designating a chemical hygiene officer. The school is in the process of redesigning the bus loop to enhance traffic flow, reduce parking constraints, and improve safety for student drivers and pedestrians. We will also make recommended upgrades to our HVAC system, update our gym and auditorium, and improve sports fields and other outdoor spaces to better support athletic and physical education programs.

Toward facilitating improvements and enhancements, Gilbert has short-term and long-term plans to address the repair and maintenance needs of its buildings and facilities. We have also developed and are implementing a capital improvement plan through 2029 to include building maintenance, material replacement, and educational space requirements that allow for the utmost safety of students and staff.

The NEASC report noted that Gilbert has a strong infrastructure and that we have collaborative partnerships, positive working relationships, and protocols with the police, fire departments, and other emergency services that contribute to proactive crisis response planning and training.

The NEASC committee reported that the school's security measures include cameras, blinds on windows and doors, and locked classrooms utilizing magnets that ensure fast and easy door locking. To further promote safety and well-being on campus, visitors are required to register with the office. Updated safety enhancements recommended by the NEASC report include strengthening visitor management procedures for enhanced security and eliminating blind spots in security camera coverage.

LEARNING CULTURE AND VISION OF A GILBERT GRADUATE

As stated in the NEASC's report, Gilbert provides a safe learning culture that ensures equity and fosters shared values of students, educators, families, and members of the school community. This promotes a spirit of collaboration, shared ownership, pride, leadership, social responsibility, and civic engagement. The NEASC also reported that our school community sets high standards for student learning, fosters a growth mindset, and facilitates continuous improvement to realize our core values and the vision of our graduates—the "Portrait of a Learner."

Gilbert's "Portrait of a Learner" was developed collaboratively from all levels of the Winchester and Gilbert PreK – 12 continuum, including teachers, parents, board members, administrators, and students. It focuses on four essential skills and four key dispositions that were identified as key to our students' future success, and which we strive to cultivate.

The "Portrait of a Learner" is featured on our website, and outlines the qualities most important for our students to embody. Vital skills we cultivate are: collaboration, communications, critical thinking, and creativity. Dispositions we value are: integrity, perseverance, having a growth mindset, and being an inclusive person. Gilbert is committed to fostering these qualities and skills. As noted by the NEASC's report, this focus will enable our students to succeed in college, career, and life.

IN CONCLUSION

The NEASC's committee's visiting team appreciated Gilbert's welcoming hospitality and enthusiastic participation. They expressed that our Self-Reflection Study document clearly identified our strengths and areas of need, and that the time and effort we spent in preparation ensured a very successful Collaborative Conference Visit.

Gilbert's Patrick Brintle Named 2025 Connecticut SCHOOL COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR

by Patricia Martin

Known for his boundless energy and enthusiasm, Patrick Brintle joined The Gilbert School as Director of Guidance in 2022. In just three short years, his professionalism, dedication, and vision have had a huge impact on TGS and earned him the distinguished title of 2025 Connecticut School Counselor of the Year!

Patrick attended the University of Connecticut, majoring in Human Development and Family Services. He received a Masters and 6th Year degree in School Counseling at the University of Hartford. Patrick's wife, Amy, is a school counselor at the Canton Middle School. The couple live in Canton with their two sons, ages 12 and 7 years old.

Gilbert counselors focus on three main aspects of development: academic counseling, college and career awareness, exploration, and planning, along with counseling services for students and their families.

Throughout the year, they implement sessions in classrooms, meet with students from all grade levels to address academic, social, and emotional issues and, when necessary, provide crisis intervention. The dynamic department provides unwavering support, recognizing the significant interplay between emotional wellbeing and academic success. Patrick and his team embrace students where they are in their journey while preparing them for a successful and fulfilling future.

"Gilbert is special, and I love the atmosphere," says Patrick. "There's an openness, a friendliness, and family feeling. And because of its size, the counselors and teachers can really connect with students and make a difference in their lives."

Being named the Connecticut School Counselor of the Year is the top honor of the Connecticut School Counselor Association (CSCA). It is awarded annually to "a current school counselor in the state who has shown extraordinary service to students and families, their school community, and the school counseling profession."



In light of receiving the award, Patrick has been submitted as a candidate for the 2025 American School Counselor of the Year.

Patrick was nominated as a candidate for the Connecticut School Counselor of the Year award by Principal Debra Lewis, School Counselor Kim Fiducia, and Mathematics Department Liaison Lauren Bannon, for his exemplary work and the ways the Guidance Department has grown and transformed under his leadership.

In her recommendation, Principal Debra Lewis stated that Patrick embodies everything the ASCA's Counselor of the Year Award represents. "Never has the department been as prominent, effective, and impactful as it has been since his arrival," she wrote. "Prior to his appointment, we were told that many of our students 'couldn't and wouldn't'

go to college, and less than 50% of students were even applying to college let alone filling out the FAFSA for free tuition to Connecticut State Community College Northwestern, right here in town. To me, this was unacceptable.

"Enter Patrick Brintle. In less than a year he had over 83% of our students applying and being accepted to colleges. He also sought out a Connecticut state grant for FAFSA completion, where our numbers rose to over 90% completion compared to a fraction of that prior to his arrival. For the first time in a very long time, Patrick made the college, military, and school-to-career processes transparent, achievable, and accessible. Never in my career have I seen anyone enter a school and directly and indirectly affect so many students' lives not only for the short term but for life.

"Being that we have such a small staff, I have been fortunate enough to have worked closely with him in many endeavors and witnessed his finesse, professionalism, and ability to create hope for students where there was none prior. Absolutely no one is more deserving of the title Counselor of the Year."



School Counselor Kim Fiducia said it was an honor to write a letter in support of Patrick. "One of Patrick's hallmark achievements has been his focus on improving attendance—a critical factor in student success," she says. "He has transformed the college and career readiness landscape at Gilbert. Under Patrick's leadership, we now celebrate record levels of student applications and enrollments in two-and four-year colleges.

"What sets Patrick apart is not only his professional expertise but also his unwavering commitment to every student's success. His dedication, vision, and ability to make a measurable difference in students' lives make him an outstanding candidate for this award."

Mathematics Department Liaison Lauren Bannon stated that Patrick's dedication, forward-thinking approach, and genuine commitment to student success made him an ideal candidate for the award. "Patrick arrived when students applying for post-secondary opportunities was at an all-time low. Our students needed someone to help guide and assist them in their post-high school aspirations. Patrick was the perfect fit for this need.

"In my role as a teacher/department liaison at The Gilbert School, I have had the pleasure of working alongside Patrick and witnessing his remarkable impact on our students and the school community. His dedication, vision, and genuine rapport with students make him an invaluable member of our school."

Patrick was surprised by the accolades and receiving the award. "I enjoy helping students and parents make informed educational decisions and empowering students to achieve their post-secondary aspirations," he explains. "I never thought of what I do as special," he says, "but I'll keep doing it!"





THE W.L. GILBERT TRUST INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM

A Year in Review By Lauren Orr, Dean of Student Affairs

This year our residency program received some great additions. We currently have Mr. Zachary Penn and his fiancé, Miss Ayanna Ray serving as Residential Coordinators, along with Mr. Emory Pittman and Mrs. Leyla Pittman. We were delighted to have such an active and involved group of international students this 2024-2025 school year. The Gilbert School's Residency Program received a group of students who were curious to learn about life in the United States. They took advantage of many opportunities to explore museums, participate in team sports, and offer their time and energy for community service.

Here are some highlights from this year...





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THE W.L. GILBERT TRUST INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM: A Year in Review



Students View the Local Winsted Car Show Luis Gomes, Vitor Tomaz, Mateus Rodrigues, Lars Nunes, Jiaye Yang, Jianrong Li, Sitian Xu, Yan Wang



Hibachi Dorm Family Dinner Jianrong Li, Zixuan Dai, Jiaye Yang, Lars Nunes



Sitian Xu, Thi Tra My Ho, Yan Wang, Jianrong Li



Corn Maze and Pumpkin Picking Pictured front to back Miss Ayanna Ray, Sitian Xu, Yan Wang.



SiTian Xu, Miss Ayanna, Yan Wang.



Jianrong Li



Marching Band Thanksgiving Football Game. Pictured above right is Jiaye Yang with YellowJacket band members.



Students Engaged in Art at The American Mural Project Pictured left to right Yan Wang, Thi Tra My Ho, Luis Gomes, Jiaye Yang with other students.



From left to right Thi Tra My Ho, Yan Wang, Luis Gomes, with other students.

THE W.L. GILBERT TRUST INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM: A Year in Review



Laser Tag Luis Gomes, Jiaye Yang, Thi Tra My Ho, Albert Wang, Mr. Emory, Jianrong Li

Mateus Rodrigues, Vitor Tomaz, Mr. Emory, Jiaye Yang, Lars Nunes, Luis Gomes, Zixuan Dai, Jianrong Li

Connecticut Museum of History and Culture Pictured front to back Jianrong Li, Albert Wang.



Students Made Mini Pinball Machines at The Whitney Museum Albert Wang, Jianrong Li, Jiaye Yang, Lars Nunes



Mateus Rodrigues, Vitor Tomaz, Yan Wang, Albert Wang, Sitian Xu, Lars Nunes, Miss Ayanna Ray, Amya Widdencomb



Pictured left to right, Zhiyu Liu, Xinwen Chang, Xiaoya Ma



24

Pictured left to right
Xiaoya Ma, serving
Albert Wang and Yan Wang



Students Organized their own Hot Pot Dinner to Celebrate the Lunar New Year Pictured left to right XuFeng Liu, Sitian, Xu, Jiaye Yang.



THE W.L. GILBERT TRUST INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM: A Year in Review

Students Building Gingerbread Houses Thi Tra My Ho, Jianrong Li

Albert Wang



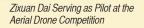
Left: Luis Gomes Back: Mateus Rodrigues Right: Vitor Tomaz

Students Bake Pretzels From Scratch Back to Front – Left: Jiaye Yang, Albert Wang Right: back to front: Lars Nunes, SiTian Xu, Jianrong Li



SiTian Xu & Lars Nunes

Zixuan Dai Serving as Pilot at the Aerial Drone Competition





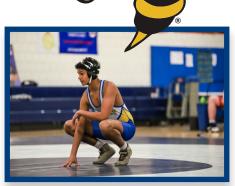
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THE W.L. GILBERT TRUST INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM: A Year in Review



Sports Scrapbook

















Sports Scrapbook







Sports Scrapbook









Fierce Gilbert Wrestler Scores Top Honors

by Patricia Martin

Known for being "fierce"
On the mat, Evan Schibi
made major sports history by
becoming Gilbert's first State
Open Champion and two-time
Class L Champion, along with
surpassing 100 career wins
before the end of his junior year.
His tournament titles make
his father, Darek Schibi—who
also happens to be the school's
wresting coach—extremely
proud.

A Gilbert alumnus who was also a state champion wrestler as a senior in 1999, Darek has been coaching the TGS program since the 2014 – 2015 season.

At 157 pounds, Evan's State Open victory was well deserved. "The 150-pound class was really tough, and very deep in competition," says Darek. "Evan didn't let up from start to finish, and when he got the final takedown, it sealed it."

Despite the tough competition, Evan was determined to succeed. "I knew the weight class was going to be strong, but I didn't let that change my mindset," he says. "I stayed locked in, focused, and confident."

Evan began wrestling when he was just four years old. "Right away, he was hooked," says Darek. "He's been pretty easy to coach. He knows what I expect from him, works hard, and leads by example. I am proud of him."

While the wrestling program is now thriving, there were some significant obstacles that had to be overcome. In particular, COVID-19 decimated Gilbert's sports programs in 2020—especially wrestling, with its close personal contact. Then there were also a diminishing number of participants in the sport.

To help revive the program, Darek was instrumental, along with Athletic Director, Josh Penn, in establishing a wrestling co-op

team by submitting a proposal to the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC). Called "GTO," the co-op consists of athletes from Gilbert, Torrington, and Oliver Wolcott, and now has between 24 to 30 student wrestlers. "The co-op has been good for the schools," says Josh. "It's gotten more kids involved in the program and gives them better opportunities to practice in their own weight class. This helps improves their performance and gives them greater confidence."







Darek is pleased with the co-op's success as a coach and as a father. "I wanted Evan to have a good program to come to here at Gilbert."

Another factor in the success of the program is the support it receives from TGS principal Deb Lewis and other members of the administration, as well as having two enthusiastic assistant coaches, Edward Desimas and Chris Marks.

Along with his father, Evan's mother Megan is also a great supporter. A Gilbert graduate of 1999, she and Darek were

high school sweethearts, and Megan is now the school's fall cheerleading coach. This schedule enables her to watch Evan compete during wrestling season.

Wrestling is known for being an intense sport. One mantra is "Fight through to the buzzer, or a pin—no matter what!" And in the words of legendary wrestler and coach Dan Gable, "Once you wrestle, everything else in life is easy!"

Coach Darek Schibi believes there is no other sport as demanding as wrestling. "It's the toughest sport there is," he says. "Once you participate and feel the benefits of mental toughness and physical toughness, there's nothing like it! I couldn't be prouder of all the boys on my team. They gave their absolute best effort and stuck with it."

Evan agrees with his coach dad. "What I love about wrestling is that it is such a challenging sport. I have played many sports throughout the years, and wrestling takes more hard work and dedication than any other. You need to be disciplined and willing to put in the work to get results." It's easy to see that the Schibi father-andson team are a dynamic duo. According to Athletic Director, Josh Penn, "Darek is one of the best coaches at Gilbert and Evan is the

best wrestler in Gilbert history."

This past wrestling season was legendary, and Josh Penn and Coach Schibi anticipate that 2025 – 2026 should be another blockbuster. "Even though we're losing a couple of seniors we have a lot of kids who were in the finals and did well last year, so we should be in a strong position," says Josh.

Not to mention, with YellowJacket Evan on the team, there will be no stopping the "GTO!"

"Unicorn" All-Star Athlete and Accomplished Student

by Patricia Martin

To call TGS senior basketball guard Emily Arel feisty is an understatement. According to Gilbert basketball coach Kurt Root, Class of 1985, who has known the varsity player and her family for many years, "She is very competitive and intense like her father Ray," he says. "Her instincts are above anyone I have ever seen. You cannot measure how aggressive she is! I cannot imagine another player having to go up against her or guard her."

Kurt should know. When he was running Winsted's fifth-grade travel team, Emily was in first grade when her parents convinced him to let her participate in their practices. By all counts she did all the drills and held her own. And by third grade, she started playing on the team with the fifth graders. According to Kurt, she was not only the youngest but also the best player.

Kurt once again coached Emily at Gilbert, having become assistant coach under Gerry Hicks in 2011, and then head coach two seasons ago. He observes, "She is physically strong and compact, and if she is told she cannot do something she will not stop until she does it. She is on another level, more so than 99% of the players she goes against."

Both Kurt and Gilbert Athletic Director Josh Penn have referred to the star as a "unicorn"—a sports industry term used to refer to exceptional athletes who possess a unique combination of skills, physical attributes, and versatility that set them apart from their peers.

Unicorns are recognized for

having the potential to revolutionize the game they participate in and leave a lasting impact on their respective sports. "She's a once-in-a-generation player whom I'm very proud of," says Kurt. Josh concurs, stating "She is a really unique athlete, the likes of which hasn't really been seen here before. She consistently gives 100%."

Standing at just 5'4", Emily has always been the top player on



the court, and an unstoppable force, regardless of her size. The coach knows she's a terrific ball-handler and passer, excellent outside shooter, and a tenacious rebounder. "Emily has always been naturally stronger than the rest of the players," says Kurt. "Her skills, combined with her aggressiveness, make her a force to be reckoned with."

Since entering Gilbert in seventh grade, Emily has racked up an extensive list of accomplishments in athletics as well as academics. She has been a member of First Team Berkshire League for the past four years and earned the distinction of becoming the second player in Berkshire League history to reach the 2K point mark. She's also a threetime high school basketball champ. Moreover, this year she became the leading scorer in Gilbert School history, surpassing Ellen Geraghty's record set in 1998 of 1,806 points.

Now that she's surpassed 2,000 points to earn a total of 2,407 points, Emily's name is recorded at the very top of the banner hanging on the wall along the baseline in the Gilbert gym, listing all of the 1,000-point scorers in school history.

Emily played on the Gilbert soccer team, playing on the First Team her senior year, as well as the softball team, but basketball has remained her focus. "Emily has dedicated her off season to basketball and practices and works hard for what she has achieved," says Kurt. "She's spent hours shooting, day in and day out."

Emily loves Gilbert and the

school community. "It means a lot to me because of how small and tightknit it is," she says. "Everyone knows everyone which means there's more support across the board.

"Coming into high school my goal was to get Gilbert back on the map and out of the reputation in the sports community it had for the past several years," she adds. "As my freshman year



continued on, there was much more support being shown and more and more people that were showing up to the games. The teachers and staff did so much for me over the years, and I am forever grateful for them all!"

Emily realizes that many younger Gilbert athletes look up to her, and she is proud to be a role model. "To me, being a role

model isn't about being the best at what you're doing, it's about how your peers and the younger generation perceive what you're doing," she explains. "I try to leave a positive impact every place I am.

"When I play my games, I'm

always being watched, whether that was by colleges during AAU season or kids during my high school season," she continues. "Knowing that some may look up to me means that they will also try to act the same as I do, so I want to portray a positive position no matter how hard things are. I was taught 'PMA' growing up, which stands for Positive Mental Attitude. I make sure that that saying is

drilled in the girls' heads that I coach."

Some of Emily's other achievements include high honors all four years in high school, serving as the Grand Marshal for Winsted's Pet/Laurel Parade in 2025, being a member of the National Honor Society, and a Locascio Scholarship winner which is a W. L. Gilbert Trust Scholarship Award given at the bequest of the late Phyllis C. Locascio of Winsted.

> Emily is looking forward to attending Post University in the fall, majoring in sports management and playing basketball at the Division 2 Level. After college, her plan is to become a women's basketball coach, working "wherever the wind blows!" she says.

As the star "unicorn" graduates, Emily's name is emblazoned at the very top of the banner hanging on the wall in the Gilbert gym, listing all of the athletes who scored 1,000+ points in the school's history. "I earned a total of 2,407 points, and now my name and score will

be up on the wall forever," exclaimed Emily. "Having 2025 up on that banner means so much to me."



"Go to Gilbert Awareness Week" Buzzed with Excitement

by Patricia Martin

It's only fitting that Gilbert's school pride and YellowJacket spirit should be abuzz with excitement during "Go to Gilbert Awareness Week!"

This year was the third "Go to Gilbert" initiative and the second year it was extended to a full week, taking place November 18th – 26th. The entire Gilbert School community had the opportunity to participate in career exploration and future thinking activities throughout

the special week-long event. On November 26th, it culminated with a special program to inspire and inform 8th graders and seniors by featuring a diverse group of Gilbert alumni who pursued various paths to success, including higher education, vocational training, military service, and entry into the workforce.

"Go to Gilbert" was conceived, coordinated, and organized by principal Debra Lewis and middle school guidance counselor Marijo Thompson. "With Go to Gilbert, our goals are to show students that they have the ability to be successful and fulfilled after graduation and expose them to the many career possibilities they can look forward to. We want to inspire them to look ahead to the bright future that awaits them," says Marijo.

There were numerous daily activities throughout Go to Gilbert Week. The day started with morning announcements mentioning famous Gilbert alumni, fun facts about TGS, and highlighting local businesses



Visiting Alumni left to right: Ian Scherer '15, Jay Case '88, Julien Gagnon '15, Mike Huber '13, Jacob Marchand '19, Evan Blass '21, Jeff Thompson '07, Brendon Kolek '07, Tyler Tucker '19, Anna King '19, Sean Smith '20, Conor Bailey '19, Molly Wilson '10, Emily Lapointe '24, Danica Poirier '24, John Devanney '23, Principal, Debra Lewis

owned by Gilbert alumni. There were also "Do Now" segments, which included mini lessons and information that made connections to themes of career guidance and future-oriented planning.

On Tuesday November 19th and Wednesday the 20th, presentations and Naviance assessments were administered to 8th grade students during English classes. This college and career

readiness platform helps students explore their interests and get prepared for college and careers, supporting them in self-discovery to help them make informed choices as they plan for their future.

There were also three days of "advisory" activities featuring high school students selected by different departments who visited with 8th graders to discuss all the great opportunities and exciting events they can look forward to when they enter high school at Gilbert.

More inspiration was offered to 8th and 12th graders during the alumni presentations. Students had the chance to take advantage of this unique opportunity to connect with alumni who once walked the same school halls. The alumni generously shared their time and their personal stories of the successes and challenges they experienced, detailing their journeys and offering insights into their experiences in college, trade schools, military service, and careers. The students also had the opportunity to ask the

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alumni questions and get advice about life after graduation.

Participating alumni represented many different fields and career choices, providing students with a wide variety of perspectives, insights, and inspiration. The alumni panels included:

Jay Case '88 (Northeastern University, CT State Representative); Brendon Kolek '07 (Keene State architecture; Estimator, R&M Insulation); Jeff Thompson '07 (Porter & Chester – electrical; Eversource Lineman); Molly Wilson '10 (Pace University – acting & costume design; Warner Theatre); Mike Huber '13 (University of New Haven – criminal justice; Conservation Law Enforcement DEEP); Julien Gagnon '15 (Central Connecticut State University – psychology, counseling); Ian Scherer '15 (Central Connecticut State University – history & public history; Building Substitute Teacher, The Gilbert School); Jacob Marchand '19 (Bryant University – human resources management & sociology; Travelers Insurance); Anna King '19 (University of New England - medical biology, PA & chemistry; Biologist, Lab Assistant); Conor Bailey '19 (Shenandoah University; Website Design); Tyler Tucker '19 (Bryant University – Marketing); Sean Smith '20 (University of Connecticut - statistics; concluded contract with Lockton and interviewing for next full-time

career); Evan Blass '21 (University of Hartford; junior); John Devanney '23 (Trinity – Economics; sophomore); Danica Poirier '24 (Quinnipiac University; freshman – Law in Society/PoliSci); Emily Lapointe '24 (University of Hartford; freshman).

The alumni welcomed the opportunity to return to Gilbert and connect with the up-and-coming students. "I encouraged upcoming TGS graduates to remain intellectually curious after graduation," said Jacob Marchand. "Whether they are pursuing trade school, the military, or an undergraduate degree, everyone can benefit from continuous learning."

"I can still clearly recall being in the students' exact position when I was a senior," said Sean Smith. "I told them to make the most of their time at Gilbert because before you know it, they'll be looking back and realizing how much they appreciated going to school here. "Things and people change, but taking the time to focus on yourself and your interests, as well as how you want to make an influence on society, will help you paint the picture of your future," he added.

Excellent advice from those who've "been there/done that" at Gilbert!

College Acceptances 2025

We are proud to announce that the following colleges and universities have accepted members of the Class of 2025.

Albertus Magnus College American International College American University Bard College Bay Path University Binghamton University Bristol Technical Education Center Central Connecticut State University Clark University Clarkson University Coastal Carolina University Connecticut College CT State Community College - All Campuses CUNY Queens College Dean College Drexel University Eastern Connecticut State University Hampshire College Johnson & Wales University-Charlotte Johnson & Wales University-Providence Keene State College

Lesley University Lincoln Technical Institute-East Windsor Louisiana State University Loyola University Chicago Manhattan University Manhattanville University Marymount Manhattan College Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences Mercy University Mitchell College North Carolina Central University Pace University Plymouth State University Post University Queens University of Charlotte Quinnipiac University Randolph College Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Rhode Island College Rochester Institute of Technology Roger Williams University Rutgers University-New Brunswick Sacred Heart University Salem State University Seton Hall University Southern Connecticut State University

Southern New Hampshire University Springfield College Stony Brook University SUNY Buffalo State Syracuse University Temple University The University of Tennessee-Knoxville UCNJ Union College of Union County, NJ University of Bridgeport University of Connecticut University of Connecticut-Waterbury Campus University of Denver *University of Hartford* University of Maine University of Massachusetts-Boston University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth University of Massachusetts-Lowell University of New Haven University of North Carolina at Charlotte University of Saint Joseph University of Toronto Wentworth Institute of Technology Western Connecticut State University Western New England University Westfield State University Wheaton College - Massachusetts Worcester Polytechnic Institute

A True-Blue Gilbert Grad... and Then Some!

by Patricia Martin

Dorothy "Dotty" Wetmore Robbins is more than a "True Blue" Gilbert graduate she dedicated many years to our school, contributing in countless ways with her care, skills, and enthusiasm.

Dotty graduated from Gilbert in 1954 and went on to earn an Associate Degree in Business Administration/Secretarial Science at the University of Hartford. While she was in college she worked summers at Gilbert, helping Miss White, who was school secretary at the time. Dotty had just graduated when Miss White retired and she stepped in to replace her. "It just all worked out that I followed in her footsteps," says Dotty. "I was familiar with everything, had a good feel for what to do, and knew what to expect."

Dotty was dedicated to Gilbert, serving as school secretary/ executive assistant from 1956 until 2002. During those 46 years she worked for five different principals: Henry Moseley, David Nichols, Charles Fecto, James Steenstra, and Robert Gazda. "I was also involved with everyone!" she exclaims. "Vice principals, trustees, all the staff, as well as

students It was very intimate, with a real family feel, a sense of community. It couldn't have been better!"

Dotty recalls the great advice she got when she first started working at Gilbert. "The Principal, Mr. Moseley, said, 'when you start receiving a paycheck, pay yourself first.' He encouraged me to put money aside and invest in my future—which I did!"





Dotty at Gilbert upon her Retirement

Even after "retirement" Dotty stayed on at Gilbert for one more year, working part time in 2003. During that time, she assisted TGS's next executive assistant, Sandra Height O'Connor ('71) transition into her role.

In 2003 Dotty was also chosen to be the TGS graduation speaker. "I think I gave a different kind of message, more on the personal side," she says. "I recall the final thing I said was urging students to remember to acknowledge the people in their lives for all they do for them, including parents and teachers. Gratitude means a lot, and it's important to express appreciation." Dotty recalls that after the ceremony she observed that students made a point to seek out and thank their teachers before the night was over. "It was wonderful to see!" she says.

Once she retired, Dotty continued to stay connected to Gilbert. Until recently, she served as a hard-working volunteer on the Alumni Advisory Council. Current Alumni Director, Sandi Lynn Fratini Scherer ('85) said, "Dotty was the school secretary when I was at Gilbert. She is and was a delight, a school treasure!" And to this day there are still TGS teachers she stays in touch with, many of whom have retired as well.

"There are just so many, many things I liked about Gilbert," she says. "I enjoyed everything!"

Dotty has been married to her husband, Roger, for 69 years, who retired from the New Departure Division of General Motors in Bristol. The couple has stayed busy in their golden years. They volunteered for 10 years at the Torringford Elementary School, participating in a reading

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program for first graders. "We found this very rewarding," says Dotty. They also ushered at the Warner Theatre and remain very involved in the United Congregational Church. "I have been the church clerk for years and years!" says Dotty. "I'm still doing shorthand—would you believe it?!"

The Robbins like to stay active, and love traveling. "Around 1968 I took a month off during the summer," Dotty recalls. "We planned a cross-country trip, driving

10,000 miles and seeing most of the major national parks as well as visiting my aunt who lived in California."

Although she loved being a part of the Gilbert School Family, Dotty admits "I was ready to retire when I did. There were many things I wanted to do. But I am forever grateful I had that great job!"

Dotty will always be remembered fondly as "A True-Blue Gilbert Grad" and an important part of the school's rich, warm heritage.



Mrs. Robbins hard at work at TGS



Dotty with Deborah Glynn Jones, Class of 1970, Volunteering on the Alumni Advisory Council



Joe Dombrowski, Class of 1975, Dotty Wetmore Robbins, Class of 1954, and Sandy Height O'Connor, Class of 1971 at Dotty's Retirement Party



Motto for the New Space Age: "Gradatim Ferociter—Step by Step, Ferociously!"

by Patricia Martin

Gilbert alumnus Erik O'Meara, Class of 2020, has launched an exciting career with Blue Origin, a renowned American space technology company owned by Jeff Bezos, that focuses on commercial space travel. The organization's motto is "Gradatim Ferociter," which

translates to "step by step, ferociously."

"The phrase describes an approach that prioritizes careful, incremental progress with intense focus and determination," Erik explains. "We at Blue take it to mean that we should move forward with all that we do, taking each step needed to complete the task without cutting corners, but doing so ferociously, meaning that it may be a very bold or unconventional approach. But if it gets us going in the right direction, that is the step we will take! It is motivation for all of us at Blue to keep pushing forward and challenging the industry to advance."

Erik received his Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Engineering

from the University of Central Florida. With his passion for space accessibility and exploration, Erik now serves as a manufacturing engineer at Blue Origin's Orlando, Florida, facility, where he is an integral part of the team working on the New Glenn 2-stage orbital rocket.

"I have been at Blue for close to one year now," says Erik. "In my day-to-day life as a manufacturing engineer it is my responsibility to take engineering designs from the designers and interpret them into manufacturable components that can be built by our production team. I

do this through participating in reviews of new designs to ensure that they are producible, authoring work instructions for the technicians to follow, providing support to the production floor when issues come up, and anything else to help build the rocket."

AG ...

Erik at the launch of New Glenn, January 16, 2025

Named after astronaut John Glenn—the first American to orbit earth— New Glenn is a giant, reusable rocket that is engineered with the safety and redundancy required to fly humans and will move Blue Origin's vision forward of building a road to space for the benefit of all the earth. It features a vertical take-off and landing architecture, enabling the booster to be reused up to 25 times with minimal refurbishment, and is powered by reusable, throttleable, liquid propellant engines. At more than 320 feet tall, New Glenn is one of the largest vehicles ever built and has been selected as a National Security Space Launch Phase 3 Lane 2 heavy-lift provider for our country's most critical mission.

Erik is excited to be at the

forefront of Blue Origin's aeronautical innovations. "The best part of being a manufacturing engineer at Blue is that I get to be so involved and hands on with the hardware for New Glenn, working directly on parts that will be going to space and orbiting the earth!"

Blue Origin successfully launched New Glenn for the first time on January 16, 2025, from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida. Erik was able to witness the rocket's maiden voyage. "I was about five miles away at a Kennedy Space Center viewing location," he says of the

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historic moment." The rocket was in the process of being prepared for a second blast off in late spring.

Prior to graduation, Erik enjoyed his time at Gilbert, participating in soccer, swimming, indoor track, and track and field, and was a member of the National Honor Society. His parents, Tim O'Meara, Class of 1987, Kim Parisi O'Meara, Class of 1988, and older brother, Tim O'Meara, Class of 2018, are also Gilbert graduates.

Erik credits TGS for helping guide him toward a successful future. "My favorite part about Gilbert was the community and feeling like I was a part of one big family," he says. "Gilbert offered many challenging courses, most importantly many AP courses that helped prepare me for my time at the University of Central Florida as well as my role at Blue Origin.

"Furthermore, the teachers at Gilbert inspired me for my future, always challenging me and pushing me to do my best. They showed us that nothing is impossible if you work hard and set your mind to it. Having the support and motivation from teachers helped push me to great things!"

Erik plans to further his education by pursing a master's degree at the University of Central Florida, and plans to continue to grow in his role at Blue Origin. "I would like to take on more responsibility to have a larger impact on New Glenn and work toward Blue's mission," he says. "The company offers lots of opportunity for growth and career advancement, and I look forward to having a great future with them."

We have every confidence that Erik will carry on, step by step, ferociously!



Launch of New Glenn



Athletic Champion with a Free-Wheeling Spirit of Adventure

by Patricia Martin

There's no question Sam Goncalves is a hard-working, adventure-loving champion, which he has proven over and over again since his days at The Gilbert School.

In his freshman year, the pandemic cancelled Gilbert's wresting program, so Sam finally got on the mat as a

sophomore and took an immediate liking to it. "Mentally and physically, wrestling is probably the hardest sport I've done," he says. Sam was a Berkshire League Champion by the end of the season, and two more league titles followed. When he graduated in 2024, he once again helped the school score the Berkshire League team championship.

Sam also excels at another extreme activity: wakesurfing. He was introduced to the free-wheeling water sport when he was 10 years old by his father, who is an avid wakesurfer. Sam's dad searched out a board that could fit Sam's stature appropriately, which enabled him to gain

experience and develop his talent. "Once I had the right board, I really started to get into it," says Sam, who credits his father as his inspiration.

Wakesurfing is a demanding water sport in which a player rides the wake that is created by his or her partnering boat using a specially-designed board. The rider is barefoot and mounts the wake with the assistance of a tow rope, which he then drops, freeing his arms and allowing him to appear much like a surfer riding an ocean wave. Competitive wakesurfers are scored by performing a wide array of complex actions or "tricks." Many of the

moves are inspired by skateboarding and snowboarding maneuvers—two other sports at which Sam excels. Because they all require balance, strength, stamina, coordination, and overall body awareness, Sam's experience wrestling, skateboarding, and snowboarding helped hone

his talent for wakesurfing. Sam says that wrestling, in particular, was great preparation. "Wrestling helps you develop cardio capacity and strength as well as a focused mindset. I know it's helped me to succeed in competitive wakesurfing."

Sam and his dad often travel to wakesurfing events together and it's not unusual for his dad to man the tow boat for him. This has created a uniquely strong bond between the two. And when Sam's not competing, you'll often find the father and son out on Highland Lake in Winsted. "I love surfing on Highland Lake," he says. It's long, which is perfect for traveling a straight line, and reducing the 'chop' of waves created by other boats." Sam 's wakesurfing

adventures have brought him to points far and wide, including California, Arizona, Florida, Utah, Washington, the Carolinas, Georgia, Texas, Minnesota, Michigan, and all up and down the East Coast, as well as junkets to Canada and Japan.

Sam is a freewheeling competitive spirit and is renowned in the wakesurfing community as a "shredder." The term is slang for someone who is highly skilled and aggressive, executing intricate maneuvers, dominating the wave, and continually pushing the limits of wakesurfing by demonstrating new levels of complexity. Sam explains the



6 Alumni*News*

lure of wakesurfing. "When you feel the push of that wave with no rope in your hand and you're just flowing, it's a great feeling that I've never gotten from any other sport."

The wakesurfing season runs from April through October, culminating in the World Championship competition. In 2023, Sam finished the World Series of Wake Surfing tour, ranking Number One in the Pro Male Surf Division. In 2024, he once again scored as the World Champ, and hopes to earn the title for a third time by dominating the 2025 season. It's no wonder he's considered a shredder!

Because of his athletic prowess and achievements, Sam has attracted three sponsors. One is Phase 5, a company known for its innovative wakesurf boards, accessories, and gear. They also have a Phase 5 Wakesurfer Team, which Sam recently joined. "It's been a goal of mine to be a part of the Phase 5 Team," he says. "The reasons I joined are because of the quality of the boards and the family of riders and owners that make Phase 5 the best in wakesurfing!"

Sam is collaborating with Phase 5 to develop a pro wakesurf board, and he is currenting using the protype in competitions. The new model is expected to roll out in the next several months. His other sponsors include Centurion Boats, a manufacturer specializing in the production of water sports boats, primarily tow boats for wakesurfing and wakeboarding, and Neon Wave, a surf- and snow-inspired lifestyle shop.

Master of wakes will be conquering the sky!

Besides wakesurfing, Sam has an affinity for aviation. He is currently attending Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne, Florida, where he is majoring in aviation management with flight, and plans to become a commercial airline pilot.

Sam's interest in flight is not new. He started flying at the end of his senior year at Gilbert and during summers, training at Interstate Aviation, located at Robertson Airport in Plainville, which is the oldest airport in Connecticut.

Sam will be competitively wakesurfing until he graduates college and launches his aviation career. "I enjoy mastering new tricks," he says. "The competition out there is stiff, and there are a lot of good riders, so you have to keep training and working hard not to lose your edge."

With his focus, talent, and dedication, Sam will keep ruling wakes before moving on to conquer the sky!





SUPPORT YOUR BLUE & GOLD!



Contact Athletic Director Josh Penn if you have any questions

Tournament

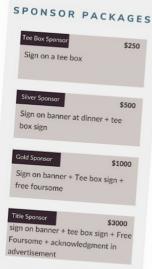
Dinner & Raffle

pennj@gilbertschool.org 860-379-3721 To register to play and/or become a Sponsor visit: gilbertschool.org

All Proceeds Support TGS Athletics

BLUE & GOLD TOURNAMENT SPONSORS

All Proceeds go toward the benefit of Gilbert athletics.



pennj@gilbertschool.org.



ABOUT OUR TOURNAMENT

The Blue & Gold Golf Tournament serves as a vital fundraising event for our Athletic Department, providing essential resources for equipment, uniforms, travel expenses, and facility maintenance. By becoming a corporate sponsor, you will not only demonstrate your commitment to supporting youth sports in the Winsted community but also gain valuable exposure and recognition among our extensive network of students, parents, alumni, and supporters.

BENEFITS

All donations and proceeds from the Blue & Gold golf tournament will fund uniforms and equipment for:

Soccer, Golf, Volleyball, baseball, E-Sports, softball, the welding and installation of the football field net and other expenses incurred by the athletic department. To discuss sponsorship opportunities or to learn more about how you can support The Gilbert School Athletic Department, please contact Josh Penn at pennjagilbertschool.org. We would be delighted to provide you with further details and answer any questions you may have.





REUNIONS

WE ARE CELEBRATING REUNIONS!

When you are ready, let us know how we can help. Contact us at: gilbertalumni@gilbertschool.org

CLASS OF 1955 - 70TH CLASS REUNION

The Class of 1955 celebrated their 70th Class Reunion on May 3, 2025 with a luncheon at the Tributary Restaurant in Winsted. They let us know that they observed a moment of silence for their deceased classmates and all shared interesting stories of their past and of the many things that have happened since their graduation day. One of the graduates has visited every continent in the world except for Antarctica. They have continued to get together for luncheon gatherings quite often over the years and we hope to hear from them at their next reunion!



Graduates standing in the back are: Philip Ostapko and Robert Sturm. Sitting from left to right are: Katherine Lambert Sobol, Josephine Radocchio, Silvia Noel Bovi, Beverly Navin, Jim Foster, Hubert Parmelee, and Greg Woodworth.

CLASS OF 1974 - 50TH CLASS REUNION

The Class of 1974 became our newest Golden Graduates as they celebrated their 50th Class Reunion with a weekend of fun! They met on Friday, October 11, 2024 at Norbrook Farm Brewery to gather and catch up. On Saturday, October 12, 2024 they enjoyed a buffet dinner at Green Woods Country Club and an evening of laughter and making new memories. They are an active class with a top-notch and involved committee and they look forward to their next gathering! This extremely generous class donated two beautiful benches to The Gilbert School in honor of their 50th Class Reunion. Please see the story in the Donation Section, page 54 of this issue.



Class of 1974 – 50th Reunion

CLASS OF 1979 – 45TH CLASS REUNION

Members of the Class of 1979 gathered at Norbrook Farm Brewery in Colebrook, on Saturday, September 14, 2024, for their 45th Reunion. The weather was perfect. Everyone had a great time and they are looking forward to planning for their Golden 50th!





(L to R) Front Row: Scott Dillion, Laura Bement Saldarini, Brenda Stenman Reginatto, Mike Fixer (kneeling) Pam Rollins, Barb Richardone Ohlheiser, Sharon Cadrain Riccucci, Sandy Carpentier Bray, Kathy Hilbert-Venezia, Diane Gubetta Ruopp, Mark Dings, Craig Schroeder (Teacher) Second Row: Andrea Phipps Tracy, Todd Parsons, Ron Pfaefflin, Rick Aust, Tom Kelsey, Shari-Lynn LaForge Cormier, Joe Brochu, Laura Case Whitford, Kim Gallant Washington, Debbie Bowles Darr, Tito Martinez Third Row: John Smyth, Jeff Dombrowski, Kurt Williams, Chris Battista, Bill Julian, Jeanne Phillips Anthony, Bill Ritchie, Scott Griswold, Last Row: Shawn O'Neil, Ash Sen Missing From Photo: Todd Sullivan, Rick Stow, Rick Goulet, Dan Nelson, Sue Gomlinski Maloney / Teachers Missing From Photo: Cindy Ryan Reznick. Bill Lanican

6 Alumni*News*





On August 31, 2024, the Classes of 1980 through 1989 gathered at the Little Red Barn in Winsted for a very special Decades Reunion! The incredible event, a year in the making, was spearheaded by Class of 1984 Reunion Committee Chair, Alyson Gunzinger, with the assistance of many classmates, including, Joanne Burke Berlinski, Class of 1988, Willis Whalen, Class of 1984, John Sessa, Class of 1989, and Valerie Mongeau DiMauro, Class of 1986. More than 220 alumni attended, traveling from as far as California, Colorado, Louisiana, and Florida to reconnect and reminisce with fellow graduates.

Alyson shared that Nils Johnson, owner of the Little Red Barn, along with his entire team, were exceptionally accommodating—offering the majority of the event space as well as outdoor overflow to ensure a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere. It proved to be the perfect venue for such a meaningful gathering.

The reunion featured a memory table honoring classmates who have passed, as well as a touching slideshow tribute produced by Class of 1984 graduate Willis Whalen. All ten "Miracle" yearbooks were on display, offering attendees a chance to revisit fond memories from their time at Gilbert.

Guests enjoyed a delicious buffet, signature drinks, and a raffle featuring generous prizes, including New York Yankees tickets, a stay at The Manor House in Norfolk, local brewery gift baskets, and football memorabilia. Proceeds from the raffle benefited a scholarship established by the Classes of 1980–1989, which was awarded at the Gilbert School Scholarship Event in May to a graduating senior pursuing a university education.

Longtime Gilbert School teacher Craig Schroeder joined the celebration, sharing updates on the school's current happenings and sparking conversations filled with nostalgia and laughter.

When the night at Little Red Barn came to a close, the festivities continued across the street at JT's Café, owned by Class of 1985's Tommy Hagarty. The celebration carried on with even more stories and laughter, capping off a memorable evening.

A wonderful time was had by all, and plans are already underway for the next Decades Reunion!





















UPCOMING REUNIONS – Save the Date!

CLASS OF 1965

Celebrating our 60th Class Reunion!

We are trying hard to get a reunion planned! We need your help!

Please contact Barb Hawley at seagalbarb66@hotmail.com

Let's not let this special celebration pass us by!



CLASS OF 1969

Celebrating our 56th Class Reunion!

Saturday, October 25, 2024 1:30 pm – 5:30 pm Knights of Columbus 122 Marshall Street, Winsted

We look forward to seeing you in October!

For questions, please contact either Mimi (Janet Jones) Baker at jbaker6379@gmail.com or Jim Barber at jimmy03@att.net



CLASS OF 1975

Celebrating Our Golden 50th Class Reunion!

Saturday, October 11, 2025 5:00 pm – 10:00 pm Fairview Farm Golf Course 300 Hill Road, Harwinton

Come Catch Up! Celebrate With Us! Keep in Touch! We Can't Wait to See Everyone!

For questions, please contact Lynnette DeSanti McCarthy at mccarthyfive@yahoo.com



UPCOMING REUNIONS – Save the Date!

CLASS OF 1978

Celebrating our 65th Birthdays!

Saturday, August 9, 2025 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm Ma'asser Park Our Usual Stomping Grounds!

Let's Party Like it's 1978!

The Class with the Class!

ALL CLASSMATES ARE WELCOME AND ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND!

For questions, please contact Julie DeAngelis Love at <u>julied5683@gmail.com</u>





CLASS OF 1985

Celebrating our 40th Class Reunion!

Saturday, October 11, 2025 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm Little Red Barn Brewers 32 Lake Street, Winsted

Come and make it the best reunion ever! We look forward to seeing EVERYONE!

For questions, please contact The Gilbert School Alumni Department at gilbertalumni@gilbertschool.org or log onto the reunion Facebook page



CLASS OF 2015

Celebrating Our 10th Class Reunion!

Saturday, August 23, 2025 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm World of Beer Blue Back Square, West Hartford

Light food available with tickets. We look forward to seeing you in August!

For questions, please contact Julie Vincent at <u>julesavincent@gmail.com</u>



Class Notes ~ Where are they now?

Items included in the *Class Notes* Section of the *YellowJacket* are submitted directly to us by alumni or are gathered from public sources such as local newspapers. The purpose of alumni news is to pass on good news, good wishes, and to recognize your accomplishments. The more information we receive from you, the more fun and informative we can make this section, so PLEASE keep us up to date on your latest news!



1968 Patrick **Kilpatrick writes:** I have recently returned from the Berlin International

Film Festival, where I presented a new streaming series at the Largo.ai Main Stage event. I am currently appearing in Nessie, Black Creek, and Hole Shot, and part of the award-winning ensemble cast of Catalyst (now streaming on Amazon Prime and Apple TV). My wife, Heidi and I are also producing Dying for Living, an action film starring Cynthia Rothrock, Chuck Liddell,

Nina Bergman, and others.

A devoted supporter of The Gilbert School,



Patrick continues to share resources and inspiration. Learn more about his recent work in the **Beverly Hills Times** and watch the **Dying for Living teaser** Congratulations, Patrick!



1980 JoAnn (Young) Leifert: JoAnn writes to let us know that she and Mike are enjoying their

new home in Fort Myers, Florida one step closer to retirement! Great to hear it, JoAnn!



1984 Mark Sommaruga writes: The only thing that I have noteworthy to report right now is the 6th edition of my book on the

Connecticut Freedom of Information Act (aptly entitled Understanding Connecticut's Freedom of Information *Act*) was released at the end of 2023. While there was some publicity, including a **Hartford Courant story in** which I was labeled a "FOIA Nerd", I am not quitting my day job as an attorney with Pullman & Comley. My favorite "job" responsibility remains being dad to my ever-growing son, Spencer, who will soon be 15 years old (my wife, Monette Goodrich, deserves most of the credit for raising Spencer). Thanks for keeping in touch, Mark!



Shelly Sindland: Shelly Sindland has written, illustrated. designed, and self-published a children's book called Ole the Onion. Congratulations, Shelly!

1987



2023 **Jeb Leach:** Jeb writes to check in and let us know that he just finished his junior year at the

University of Rhode Island. Best wishes Jeb, and keep in touch!



Continued 46

(B) AlumniNews - Class Notes



Emily Arel '25 and Ellen Geraghty '98

Ellen Geraghty, Gilbert's all-time leading basketball scoring record-holder since 1998, congratulated new record holder Emily Arel as part of a ceremony at The Gilbert School. Emily reached the 2,000 point mark in a win over Housatonic on January 21, 2025.



Superfood for Superheroes!

Shannon (Bailey) Centrella '06 and Taylor Amery '22 are the coowners of Sidekick Snacks, a Winsted-based snack company with a mission to fuel everyday heroes. What began as a homemade treat quickly gained traction through local favorite Rooted Market—a health food store in Winsted owned by Shannon and her husband Shane. Today, Sidekick Snacks is a thriving business powered by the creativity and collaboration of two Gilbert alumnae. To follow their journey or try their delicious, nutrient-packed snacks, check them out on Instagram or visit their website.



Homecoming 2024 was extra special with the spirited addition of our alumni cheerleaders!

Led by Coach Megan (Lovetere) Schibi '99, this enthusiastic squad brought fun, grace, and school pride to the sidelines as they cheered on our football team. Thank you for bringing the Jacket spirit to life — we can't wait to see you again at Homecoming 2025. Go Jackets! Left to right: Jillian (Shandra) Pignatello '01, Amelia Nichols '01, Marisa (Lovetere) Fontaine '97, Megan (Lovetere) Schibi '99, Katelyn Bailey '11, Rachel (Gabelmann) Decker '01, Shannon (Bailey) Centrella '06.

Shannon (Bailey) Centrella '06 shows us her YellowJacket Spirit!

(B) Alumni News - Class Notes

Annual Homecoming Alumni Volleyball Game

The Gilbert gym was filled with energy and Jacket pride as an incredible group of women returned to the court for the Annual Homecoming Alumni Volleyball Game. This beloved tradition is more than just a game—it's a meaningful part of Homecoming Weekend that brings generations of alumni together to celebrate their shared Gilbert experience.

We extend a heartfelt thank you to Mary Ellen Staszowski Vaccari '72 for her help in organizing this special event. This year featured several mother/daughter alumni pairings, making it even more touching and memorable for participants and spectators alike.

Our alumni are the heart of Homecoming, and events like this show how strong and lasting those Gilbert connections truly are. We'd love to see even more spectators next year—come cheer on these amazing athletes, reconnect with old friends, and meet the next generation of Yellowjackets. It's a joyful time to reminisce, share stories, and create new memories with classmates and their families.

We hope to see you in 2025!



Lisa Mangione Brochu '84, Ali Brochu '17, Karley Padin '19, Liz Wexler '18, Marci More Fritch '98, Abbey Beecher '21, Lori Hague Beecher '82, Emily Griswold '08, Debbie Case Green '84, JoAnn Young Leifert '80, Jessica Leifert Elias '01, Mary Ellen Staszowski Vaccari '72



JoAnn Young Leifert '80, Jessica Leifert Elias '01, Lisa Mangione Brochu '84, Ali Brochu '17, Abbey Beecher '21, Lori Hague Beecher '82





Lori Hague Beecher '82, Abby Beecher '21



JoAnn Young Leifert '80, Jessica Leifert Elias '01

(5) AlumniNews - Class Notes



Second Annual Alumni Basketball Tournament

Kris Kelsey '02—coach of Gilbert's Varsity Men's Basketball team—organized the Second Annual Alumni Basketball Tournament on February 1. The event brought together alumni from both the Men's and Women's teams for a fun, high-energy day of games, including a Blue vs. Gold alumni match, contests, prizes, and a Future Stars game featuring middle school athletes.

The tournament served as both a fundraiser for the basketball program and a meaningful way for alumni to reconnect with each other, current students, and staff. Special thanks to Principal Debra Lewis for her key role in promoting the event. All proceeds benefited The Gilbert School Basketball Program—and plans are already underway for next year's event!







CALLING ALL ALUMNI! SEND US YOUR NEWS FOR THE NEXT ISSUE!

Whether you've recently married, celebrated an anniversary or an addition to your family, received a promotion, changed occupations, started a business, written a book, won an award, went on an adventure, or just want to send greetings to your classmates, – we want to know! Photos for publication are always welcome! Send your news to the Alumni Department at gilbertschool.org. Let us hear from you!

DONATIONS

Thank You Alumni and Friends for Your Generosity!

THE FOLLOWING DONATIONS WERE RECEIVED BETWEEN JUNE 16, 2024 - JUNE 15, 2025.

Every effort to ensure accuracy has been made. However, if you locate an error or omission, please accept our apologies and notify the Alumni Office at gilbertalumni@gilbertschool.org

ENRICHMENT DONATIONS

Gilbert Circle (\$1000 +)

Dr. Joan Centrella, 1971 & Dwight Allen Eliazer Hernandez, 1974 JoAnn (Young) Leifert, 1980 Attorney Ellen Cormier Marino, 1983 Mark Vaccari, 1977 Charles & Ellen (Vaccari) Seaback, 1972

Blue & Gold Club (\$500 - \$999)

Janet (Jones) Baker, 1969 JoAnn T. Briggs Theodore E. Davis, 1956 Paul B. Manchester, 1960 Peter, 1988 & Jennifer (Hanson) Marchand, 1993 Dorothy (Wetmore) Robbins, 1954

Patrons (\$200 - \$499)

Anonymous David, 1978 & Siobhan Battista Susan (Moore) Belle-Isle, 1970 Jack & Patricia Bourque Andrew J. Brady, 1973 Holly (Marchand) Cassaday, 1990 Paul & Beverly (Petersen) Davis, 1957 Peter & Deborah DiMartino Karen (Horn) Dooks, 1960 Heather (Case) Dzielak, 1986 Michael Fortuna, 1983 Claudia (Moore) Helm, 1974 Mary Ann (Belladella) Holmes, 1951 Neil, 1948 & Elizabeth (Dings) Kelsey, 1950 Salvatore Marino, 1961 Shirley (Kolega) Moore, 1943 David V. Poucher, 1968 Robert C. Provan, 1956 Paul, 1960 & Linda Svetz Amanda (Hills) Weddle, 1989

Yellow Jackets (\$100 - \$199)

Lee A. Atwood, 1971 Mary C. Avery, 1954 Joseph Carrozzo, 1954 Catherine (Cormier) Cleaveland, 1977 L. Hunter Davis, 1957 James J. DiMartino, 1964 Jacqueline (Hunt) Flagg, 1954 Grace Fracasso, 1965 Richard J. Gayer, 1953

Michele (Walter) Glass Philip & Nancy (Groppo) Groth, 1972 James D. Hamilton, 1963 Lisa M. Holmes, 1978 Janice (Mazzochi) Howells, 1966 Christine (Wiarda) Hurley, 1987 Paula (Voight) Jause, 1970 Dr. Michael Kelley, 1976 John B. Kolasinski, 1981 J. Thomas Light, 1958 Frank, 1964 & Joanne (Cannavo) Marzullo, 1970 Fred T. Marzullo, 1959 Gerald Morton, 1965 Jeannette T. Neary, 1957 Josephine (Staszowski) Ochotnicky, 1943 James A. Pettit, 1971 Carlton C. Roberts, 1958 Roland C. Seymour, 1963 Dr. Nadene Stein, 1980 Mary Ellen (Staszowski) Vaccari, 1972 Paul, 1966 & Linda Vaccari Matthew C. Watson, 1977 Michael T. Zonghetti, 1976

Boosters (\$50 - \$99)

Anonymous Meghan (Kane) Ambrozaitis, 2014 Christopher R. Atwood, 1973 Joseph C. Barber, 1989 Joseph C. Bazzano, 1960 George, 1966 & Diana (Radocchio) Beebe, 1967 Douglas W. Brand, 1976 Carol Sue Chapman, 1959 Barbara (Lynch) Collins, 1947 Deirdre (Houlihan) DiCara, 1973 Peter J. Fracasso, 1966 Herbert G. Isaacson, 1954 Eric C. Jones, 1982 Neil S. Kelsey, 1976 Jebediah Leach, 2023 Robert E. Lee, 1958 Roger Leighton, 1972 Wendy (Vaill) Lewis, 1964 Joseph G. Mangione, Jr., 1987 Carol (Hamilton) Miles, 1963 Joan Silverio Denise (Casesse), 1977 & Mark Torson, 1976 Karin Torson-Thompson, 1971

Sandra Young, 1978

Laurel Court (\$1 - \$49)

Thomas A. Bordonaro, 1967 Barbara (Miner) Bremer, 1978 Joanne (Finn) Casey, 1958 Matthew F. Connole, 1963 Joseph S. Fasciano, 1952 Jean (Dudley) Hoagland, 1960 Frances (Perna) Hodgson, 1953 Gail M. Hoxie, 1962 Grace (Patch) Kelly, 1975 Peter, 1977 & Laurie Kolosky Frank P. McCann David Neal, 1979 Steven P. Pettit. 1975 Rebecca Lynn (Beach) Schrock, 1963 Michele (Garbus) Sultaire, 1970 David Torson, 1968 Alanne (Kennedy) Turina, 1968 Louise Van Alstyne

SCHOLARSHIP DONATIONS

Lauren Bardino Memorial Scholarship

Lauren Bardino Memorial Foundation Stephen, 1981 & Rita (Andrews) Bardino, 1983

Jason T. Boutin Memorial **Scholarship Fund**

Thomas & Arlene (Brady) Boutin, 1971 Andrew Brady, 1973 Michele (Boutin) Cousins, 1999 **UBS Matching Gift Program**

Timothy M. Casey Scholarship Fund

Joanne M. Aliano Brandon M. Casey Matthew C. Ryan Ali Williams, 2009

The W. L. Gilbert Trust Scholarship Fund

Mark Sommaruga, 1984

Myah & Jaime Irick 1992 **Endowed Scholarship** Jaime, 1992 & Myah Moore Irick

Irving S. Milano Scholarship William & Gayle (Milano) Gemetro, 1964

Edwin M. Ryan Memorial Scholarship William Ryan

The Alice V. Schroeder Memorial Scholarship Fund Ellen (Barrett) Cunha, 1962

Terrence Hastings Tirrell 1973 Memorial Scholarship 53rd Annual Terrence Tirrell Open Golf Tournament Heather Adams Lt. Col. Robert F. Ryan

FUND DONORS

Donations to The Fred and Mary Centrella Fund, For Student and Faculty Enrichment Dr. Joan Centrella, 1971 & Dwight Allen

Donations to The Draper
Foundation Fund,
a fund of the Northwest Connecticut
Community Foundation
Jim & Shirley Draper

Donations to The Mary & John Fracasso Fund for Student Activities John P. Fracasso, Jr., 1975

Donations to The Susan Gifford-DeLeon Memorial Endowment Fund Lida Gifford, 1987

Donations to the Edward Keeley Memorial Fund David Dombrowski, 1977 & Family Donations to The Student Emergency Fund Jean (Smith) Gauthier, 1973

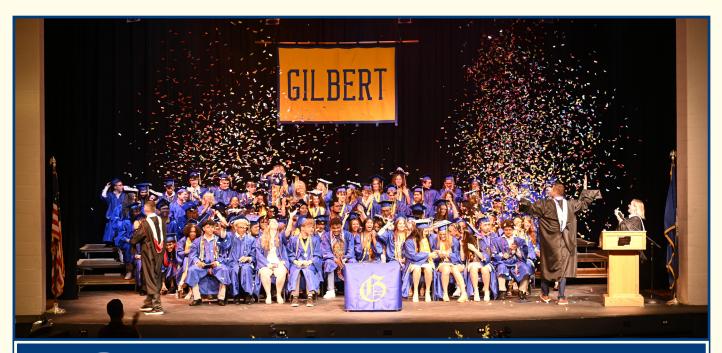
Donations to The W. L. Gilbert Endowment Fund Robert, 1990 & Liza (Vaccari) DiMartino, 1993

MEMORIAL GIFTS

Andrea (Darcey), 1982 & Alex Ellinger
In Memory of Dominic Colavecchio, 1947
Lance, 1970 & Barbara (Ford) Fradette, 1974
In Memory of Frederick Silverio, 1951
Leo, 1971 & Karen (Ford) Nardi, 1975
In Memory of Frederick Silverio, 1951
Karel E. Rubinstein
In Memory of Frederick Silverio, 1951

CLASS GIFTS

The Class of 1979
In honor and celebration of their
45th Class Reunion





You Can Make a Difference!

Gifts of every size positively impact The Gilbert School community! Visit www.gilbertschool.org to make a secure online donation today. Contact us at (860) 379-1245 or gilbertalumni@gilbertschool.org.

SCHOLARSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

THE W. L. GILBERT TRUST SCHOLARSHIPS

In May, the W. L. Gilbert Trust proudly awarded over \$122,000 in scholarships to Gilbert alumni and graduating seniors during a special ceremony. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the generous donors who make these opportunities possible. Most importantly, we honor those who continue the proud tradition of civic service and generosity that reflects the enduring legacy of our founder.





Technical Study Scholarship - Ruthann Bruno Horvay ('68), CJ Marino ('23)



Classes of 1980 - 1989 Reunion Scholarship -Senior Victoria Parent, Alyson Gunzinger ('84)



Jason T. Boutin Memorial Scholarship -Arlene Brady Boutin ('71), Senior Lola Fritch



Northwest Community Bank Scholarship – Pam Dean, Senior Ella Szewczak



John Adam Groth 2006 Memorial Scholarship – Bud Groth, Senior Brailey Ursone, Joanne Groth

THE PHYLLIS C. LOCASCIO SCHOLARSHIP



Timothy Cronin, CEO of The W. L. Gilbert Trust Corporation, presents The Phyllis C. Locascio Scholarship to 2025 recipient, Emily Arel. This generous scholarship was established in 2009 by the late Phyllis Locascio, Class of 1932, in memory of her parents, Salvatore and Maria (Gurnia) Locascio. The Locascio Scholarship is granted at an amount of \$10,000 per year, renewable for up to four years of undergraduate education, for a total award of \$40,000. This year's recipient, Emily Arel, will be attending Post University in the fall and majoring in Sports Management.



Phyllis C. Locascio Scholarship Recipients – Kaitlyn Crowley '23, Patricia Wiarda, niece of Mrs. Locascio, Emily Arel '25, Liana Masangkay '22. Missing from photo – Zackary Richardson '24.



The Class of 2024 Locascio Scholarship Recipient is Zackary Richardson. Zackary is attending Western New England University and majoring in Civil Engineering.



The Class of 2023 Locascio Scholarship Recipient is Kaitlyn Crowley. Kaitlyn is attending the University of Massachusetts Amherst where she is studying Public Health on a Pre-Physician Assistant track.



The Class of 2022 Locascio Scholarship Recipient is Liana Masangkay. Liana is attending Southern Connecticut State University where she is majoring in Nursing with a minor in Wellness.



LOCASCIO SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS. YOU CONTINUE TO MAKE US PROUD!

Donor Highlights

CELEBRATING THE GENEROSITY OF THE CLASS OF 1974

We are so fortunate to have generous alumni who continue to support The Gilbert School not only with their donations, but also with their time, talents, and thoughtful gifts.

This year, in honor of their 50th Class Reunion, the Class of 1974 came together to give a truly meaningful and lasting gift to their alma mater. After many hours of research, discussions, and visits to various craftsmen, the reunion committee and classmates unanimously decided to purchase two beautiful handcrafted benches made from reclaimed oak barnwood. These 60" benches have been placed just outside the library and media center—an area where students often gather between classes or while waiting for buses, yet where seating has traditionally been limited.

Each bench carries a special dedication plaque: one

honoring the Class of 1974's 50th reunion, and the other in memory of their classmates who are no longer with us.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to every member of the Class of 1974 who helped bring this vision to life. Your thoughtfulness and generosity will be appreciated by students and faculty for many years to come. These benches are more than just furniture—they are a reflection of the strength, unity, and enduring spirit of your class.

As one class member, Mary Anne Casey said so beautifully: "Our benches are a reflection of who we are—strong, durable, and long lasting."

If you find yourself back at Gilbert, be sure to stop by and see them for yourself. Thank you again, Class of 1974, for all you do to keep The Gilbert School such a special place to learn and grow.







Class of 1974 50th Reunion Committee with their class gift. From left to right: Mary Casey, Mark Lamoureaux, Charlann Zecchin Smith, Linda Youmatz, Laura Brochu Winn and Clarance Parks. Missing photo are committee members Sandy Soucy Griswold and Barbara English



YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Gifts of every size positively impact The Gilbert School community! Visit www.gilbertschool.org to make a secure online donation today. Contact us at (860) 379-1245 or gilbertalumni@gilbertschool.org.

In Memoriam.

1937

Olga Cornelio Murkette January 26, 1990

1942

Mary Lou (McKusick) Clark June 21, 2024

1945

Anthony J. Bosco June 13, 2022

1945

Mildred (Hazard) Cole December 23, 2024

1945

Dale Parsons-Marchione February 14, 2025

1946

Mary (Romano) DeAnzeris April 28, 2025

1946

Roselie "Jennie" (LaPlaca) Poucher October 15, 2024

1947

Dr. Avery C. Manchester November 3, 2024

1948

J. Alfred "Al" Dombrowski February 1, 2025

1949

Henrietta (Smith) Reed July 22, 2017

1949

Tina (Fasciano) Whitman October 16, 2024

1950

Warren J. Hughes, Jr. November 20, 2024

1950

Jean (Woodward) Partridge May 5, 2025 1950

Ella R. (Lloyd) Sweeney June 30, 2024

1951

Patricia (Dotson) Mishico June 27, 2024

1951

Frances (Buzinsky) Pace October 24, 2024

1951

Frederick John Silverio December 29, 2024

1953

Donald L. Atkins February 8, 2025

1953

Nancy (Beeman) Dautrich June 19, 2024

1953

Norma (Pease) Harss April 22, 2025

1953

Dr. John Vincent Pappalardo October 22, 2024

1953

Mary (Sturm) Sullivan December 14, 2024

1954

Frances (Holt) Millahn February 18, 2025

1954

Florence (Hoxie) Nagy March 20, 2025

1954

Leon H. Veretto November 24, 2024

1954

Joyce (Silverio) Youmatz March 5, 2025



1955

Josephine (Hart) Genova September 9, 2024

1955

Francis "Frank" Miller June 5, 2025

1955

Kevin Michael O'Connor July 5, 2024

1957

Harold Miller Dayton, Jr. January 7, 2025

1957

Ernest L. Holmes February 3, 2025

1957

Ann (Chamberlin) Jones May 11, 2025

1957

Sandra (Tomer) Padilla April 16, 2025

1958

James Louis Corso March 17, 2025

1958

Barbara (Bensle) Desrochers August 23, 2024

1958

Nancy (Jenkins) Guglielmetti July 3, 2024

1958

John "Jack" A. O'Brien January 1, 2025

1959

Joseph J. Mangione December 17, 2024

1960

Mary "Cookie" Carnevalini February 27, 2025

In Memoriam.

1960

Irene (Chryznowski) Dakin February 6, 2025

1960

Peter B. Keefe January 6, 2025

1961

Joseph Clark, III October 2, 2024

1961

Thomas Mazzarella November 3, 2024

1962

Michael George Clark December 4, 2024

1962

Glenn Kenneth Roberts January 2, 2021

1963

Albert William Landi July 21, 2024

1964

Gary Charles Dayton November 18, 2024

1964

Peter P. Tycineski, Jr. January 7, 2025

1965

Sharon (Hurlbut) Barbero June 16, 2024

1965

Robert L. Baxter June 27, 2024

1965

John C. Devanney April 22, 2025

1965

Linda (Howard) Hackett June 11, 2020 1965

Gary Hamilton September 30, 2025

1965

David D. Tanner January 8, 2025

1967

Steven James Skaret September 14, 2024

1967

Lee E. Williams June 15, 2025

1968

Gregory Hughes November 7, 2024

1968

Wayne Anthony Tazzara January 17, 2025

1970

Maurice "Moe" Fitzgerald April 16, 2025

1972

Catherine Rhoades June 16, 2025

1974

Brenda Anne (Nadeau) Gibbons February 25, 2025

1975

Joseph Anthony Cannavo January 25, 2025

1975

Karen (Margelot) Coon June 5, 2025 1975

Frank Edward Hoxie March 6, 2025

1976

Cindy (Hubbard) Day September 8, 2024

1976

Brian Hoffman May 15, 2025

1976

Kathleen (Carotenuti) Lampron October 18, 2024

1977

Wayne John Lovetere November 14, 2024

1980

Ronald J. Diulio April 12, 2025

1982

Shirley (Veranis) Henning August 11, 2024

1987

Richard A. Lee August 19, 2024

1988

Michele (Ensminger) Sindland February 27, 2025

1993

Michele Lee Palmer June 14, 2025





FACULTY AND STAFF





MR. WILLIAM J. BAZYK

January 5, 1941 - January 14, 2025

Mr. Bazyk taught Industrial Arts at The Gilbert School from 1965 to 1993. He is fondly remembered by colleagues and former students as a wonderful and patient teacher, known for his kindness, quiet strength, and dry sense of humor that kept everyone on their toes. A passionate and dedicated educator,

Mr. Bazyk spent over 25 years sharing his knowledge and love of technology with generations of Gilbert students. His legacy lives on in the lives he touched and the skills he helped instill.





MR. WILLARD C. MINTON

June 3, 1945 - December 31, 2024

Mr. Minton served as a dedicated music educator at The Gilbert School from 1969 to 2000. He began as Choral Director in 1969 and later became Band Director in 1996, retiring in 2000. Among his many achievements, one of the most memorable was leading the Gilbert Band in a concert on the steps of the

U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., in 1994. Will's passion for music extended far beyond the school. He facilitated summer band programs for students and adults, offered private lessons, and served as choir director at Second Congregational Church of Winsted. He co-founded several beloved local ensembles, including the Valley Swing Shift big band and the Harmonious Brass Choir, and was a sought-after musical director for productions at both The Warner Theatre and The Theatre Guild of Simsbury. One of his most cherished traditions was directing the Star Band, a group that gathered once a year to perform in Barkhamsted's July 4th Parade. Will generously shared his talents throughout the community, often singing or playing trumpet at weddings of staff, faculty, and former students. His deep musical legacy and heartfelt service to others left an enduring impact on all who knew him.





Mr. John "Jack" William Reynolds

April 23, 2025

Mr. Reynolds taught English at The Gilbert School from 1967 to 1994, also coaching swimming and tennis during his tenure. Known for his vibrant spirit and engaging style, Jack left a lasting mark on generations of students. After his retirement, Gilbert proudly presented the annual John W. Reynolds Book

Award, honoring his "Dedication to Enthusiasm and Excellence" in teaching. Jack and his wife, Maryann (Paonessa) Reynolds—who taught Art at Gilbert and passed away in 2020—were beloved mentors who shaped lives both in and beyond the classroom. Together, they led unforgettable cultural outings: from schooner trips and art fairs to rock concerts and New York City adventures, they broadened their students' worldviews in meaningful ways. One of Jack's most iconic contributions was his senior elective, The Poetry of Rock, a legendary course that blended his love of literature and music and became a student favorite. Jack will be remembered for his warmth, wit, and inspiration, and for the countless lives he touched with grace and imagination.



FACULTY AND STAFF



MR. BILL RICHMOND, "The Voice of the Yellowjackets"

December 19, 1962 - May 5, 2025

It is with a heavy heart that we share the news of the passing of Bill Richmond, affectionately known to many as "The Voice of the Yellowjackets." For over 20 years, Bill's passionate and distinctive voice brought life to Gilbert basketball and football games, making him an irreplaceable part of our community. Bill was more than just a sports announcer — he was a local legend and a beloved figure whose enthusiasm

and warmth resonated far beyond the stadium. Alongside his role at Gilbert athletics, he co-hosted the popular TV show *Just Sports*, sharing his love for sports and the athletes who played them. His occasional dad jokes and memorable catchphrases not only entertained but helped support Gilbert's sports programs through local sponsorships. Known for his calm and knowledgeable demeanor, Bill had a unique talent for putting the spotlight on our athletes, recognizing their achievements not only on the field but also in the classroom and community. His passion for celebrating the whole student-athlete made every broadcast special. Bill Richmond passed away suddenly on Monday, May 5, 2025, just days before he was to host The Gilbert School's annual sports award banquet — an event he had faithfully supported for two decades. On May 30, at the GESPYs awards ceremony, a plaque honoring Bill was unveiled and placed alongside the greatest Yellowjacket sports heroes. His legacy will forever be a cherished part of The Gilbert School family, and his voice, smile, and zest for life will be deeply missed. There truly is no replacing Bill Richmond, the exuberant "Voice of the Yellowjackets." His spirit will continue to inspire us all.



Ms. Nancy Jean Thompson

May 18, 1963 - November 22, 2024

Nancy Jean Thompson served in The Gilbert School cafeteria from 1998 to 2013, where her infectious spirit, kindness, and childlike heart brought daily joy to students and staff alike. Her warm smile and caring presence made the cafeteria feel like a second home for many, and she will be fondly remembered for the happiness she shared with the Gilbert community.



Ms. Laurie Jean Gagnon

June 5, 1958 - July 22, 2024

Laurie worked in The Gilbert School cafeteria for nearly 30 years, proudly serving generations of students as Gilbert's beloved "lunch lady." Known for her bold nature, quick wit, and great sense of humor, Laurie brought laughter and energy to every lunch period. Her presence was a daily highlight for many students and staff, and her legacy of warmth and fun will not be forgotten.







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Keep the Buzzzz Coming! Alumni! We want to hear from you!

Did you get a new job? Earn a degree? Write a book? Welcome a child or grandchild? Win an award? Retire? We will share the good news with our alumni and friends!

Interested in writing an article for the *YellowJacket?* Send in your first-person story for consideration. Let your fellow alumni know where your path has led you since graduation and how your time at The Gilbert School has influenced your decisions.

This is YOUR magazine. Make YOUR voices heard!

Please send your updated email address to us at: gilbertalumni@gilbertschool.org

How Can We Help?

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