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2021-22

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*Sweet Home
Alumni Association*



*Distinguished Alumni
Wall of Fame*

2022

*Induction Ceremonies
Friday, May 13, 2022*

Another Sweet Home tradition continues!
For over ten years, the Distinguished Alumni Wall of Fame has been an important part of the high school foyer, showcasing Sweet Home alumni's talents. Tonight's recipients are successful in their own fields – whether it is in education or music. One common area links both of our recipients: giving time to serve their local communities. Each recipient not only is respected within their chosen career, but each finds time to serve others who are less fortunate. To think that their beginnings derived from Sweet Home High School is inspirational to all who celebrate with us tonight.



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

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

Lisa LaBrake
Sweet Home Alumni Coordinator

PROGRAM



Sweet Home Distinguished Alumni Wall of Fame Induction Ceremonies

Friday, May 13, 2022

6:45pm Check-In

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

♦ Lisa LaBrake, Alumni Coordinator, presents
Peter Wachtel, Class of 1986

♦ High School Social Studies teacher Jordan Martin, presents
Jeff Martin, Class of 2000

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

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

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

Emcee for the evening:

Melissa Holmes, Class of 2000
WGRZ-TV

Peter Wachtel

Class of 1986

Peter graduated from Sweet Home in 1986. While a Panther, Peter spent time at Erie 1 BOCES in the graphic design program which set the foundation for him to work utilizing his creativity in the areas of design and teaching. Following graduation, Peter earned a bachelor's degree in industrial design from Columbus Art of College and Design and a master's degree in industrial design from Pratt Institute.



Following a short stint as Toy Manager at FAO Schwartz in New York City, Peter began his career in design and later teaching. Peter spent one year at Tyco Toys & Matchbox designing numerous product lines including Crash Dummies, Cadillacs & Dinosaurs, remote control cars and Matchbox vehicles. Peter then jumped to the area of education by developing and teaching toy and product design at Parsons School of Design from 1992-1994.

In August 1994, Peter went to work for Six Flag Adventure & Wild Safari and began to develop designs for roller coasters, amusement rides, retail signage, park design and landscaping and customer signage. While at Six Flags, Peter resumed his teaching career and taught toy design at Pratt Institute. During this time, Peter began designing toys and products for Toy Biz and Marvel Entertainment including the Spider Man and X-Men product lines. Peter was also part of a team to design the Spider Man Tri-Spider Slayer that was the top selling toy at the time.

In August 1996, Peter joined the ranks of Equity Toys & Marketing as Art Director. While at Equity, Peter designed unique fast food premium toys for several companies including Disney, McDonald's, Burger King and Dairy Queen. In January 1998, Peter went to work for Lanard Toys and designed the top selling water gun – the Pump Blaster.

In the 2000's Peter has worked as Senior Creative Manager and Director for Applause Toys & Dakin, Funrise Toys and Jakks Pacific designing and creating toys in a number of huge retail lines including Warner Brothers, Caryola, DC Comics, universal, Hasbro, Pokemon, Nickelodeon and EA Games. During that time, he also taught toy design at Otis College of Art and Design, Columbus College of Art & Design and The Art Institute of California. He also served as President of the Board of Directors of the Toy Association of Southern California.

Presently, Peter teaches architecture, product innovation and design at Adolfo Camarillo High School in Camarillo, California. In his free time, Peter is the Chief Creative Kid for KidToyology designing toys and products, advertisements and voiceovers for a number of clients.

Peter has designed over 500 toys and products, won numerous awards and is the owner of three toy related patents.

Jeff Martin

Class of 2000

Jeff Martin graduated from Sweet Home in 2000. Following graduation, Jeff went on to earn two bachelor's degrees: one in business and marketing from Niagara University and another in English Education from Immaculata University. During his collegiate years, Jeff was an integral part of a local band named This Day and Age. What started out as a local band, quickly grew into a career path for Jeff.



Jeff was the primary songwriter for This Day and Age for six years (2001-2007) and was in the lead role when the band was signed by an affiliate of Warner Brothers Studio, One Eleven Records. While affiliated with One Eleven Records, the band released three full length albums: Start Over on Monday (2002), Always Leave the Ground (2004) and The Bell and the Hammer (2006). Each of the albums sold over 40,000 copies and played over 500 concerts worldwide, including two tour stops in Japan. Jeff and the band toured with the likes of The Rocket Summer, Copeland, Mae, All Time Low, The Format, Sherwood and The Spill Canvas. The band's music was also featured on MTV and on the front page of MySpace, one of the largest social media platforms at the time.

Following his time with This Day and Age, Jeff has gone on to release two more albums Pompton Lakes - Rest (2012) and Coventry Woods - Page (in) Book (2021).

Aside from music, Jeff has made many outstanding service contributions to his local community. He has been actively involved in his church, Spring Valley Community Church, serving as a worship leader in music ministry, youth mentor and coach and small group leader.

Jeff and his wife, along with their three boys, presently live in Pottstown, Pennsylvania.