

William Floyd Alumni Association, Inc.



OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR
AWARDS DINNER
2026

OCTOBER 15, 2026

ROCK HILL GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB
MANORVILLE, NY

The Pride Continues...

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(INSIDE FRONT COVER)

William Floyd Alumni Association

***Outstanding Educator
Awards Dinner***

Rock Hill Golf & Country Club

October 15, 2026

Reception

Greetings

Jon J. Geraci, Sr. (1977)

April Coppola (1984)

Kevin M. Coster

Sandra (Cardella) Pagano (1987)

President, William Floyd Alumni Association

President, Board of Education

Superintendent of Schools

Chairperson, Outstanding Educator Awards

Presentation of Outstanding Educator Awards

Caroline Ceglio

Michael Whelan

Chris Ryon

Diana Brown-Hoppe

Louisa Markewitz

Dessert

Congratulations to all of our Outstanding Educator Awards recipients! Words cannot express what you meant to all of us. You mentored and inspired us. We looked up to you and you were our role models. As students we did not know how to say thank you. Tonight is a small token to tell you that you touched our lives and molded us into the people we are today. For that we will be forever grateful. Best wishes to you all and THANK YOU!

William Floyd Alumni Association, Inc.

OFFICERS

President.....	Jon J. Geraci, Sr.	(Class of 1977)
Vice President.....	Candace Gonzalez-Donin	(Class of 1986)
Secretary.....	Lauren M. (Melton) Muqattash	(Class of 2001)
Treasurer.....	Joseph Barone	(Class of 1975)
Director.....	Sandra (Cardella) Pagano	(Class of 1987)
Director.....	Kevin M. Coster	Superintendent of Schools

COMMITTEE

Chairperson.....	Sandra (Cardella) Pagano	(Class of 1987)
	Joseph Barone	(Class of 1975)
	Jon J. Geraci, Sr.	(Class of 1977)
	Lauren (Melton) Muqattash	(Class of 2001)
	Linda (Murphy) Barone	(Class of 1974)
	April (Alfonso) Coppola	(Class of 1984)
	Candace (Gonzalez) Donin	(Class of 1986)
	Wendy (Murphy) Gross	(Class of 1984)

William Floyd Alumni Association
2026 Outstanding Educators

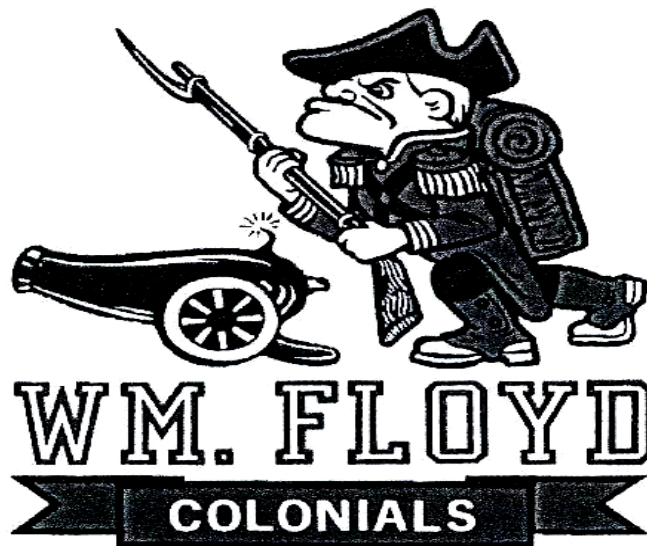
Caroline Ceglio

Michael Whelan

Chris Ryon

Diana Brown-Hoppe

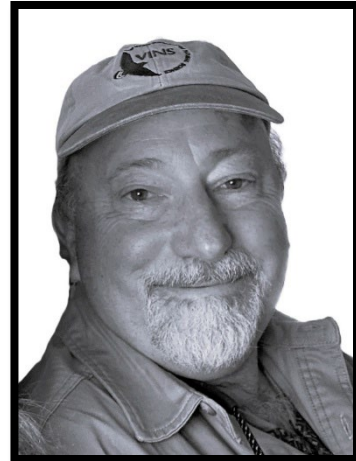
Louisa Markewitz



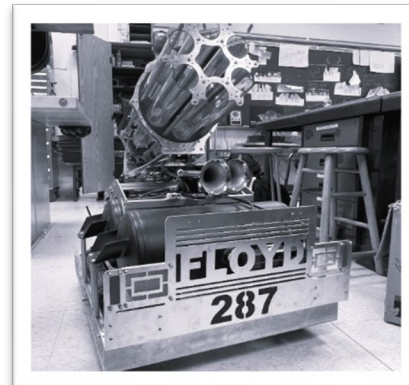
Chris Ryon

Chris Ryon is an educator and a community historian with a career spanning more than four decades of public service. He spent 30 years as a force in public education, beginning in 1985 at William Paca Junior High School's Alternative Education Program. Later he taught seventh- and eighth-grade science and the accelerated science program.

He then moved to William Floyd High School in 1999 to teach biology and earth science. Chris, along with fellow honoree Mike Whelan, co-founded the high school's FIRST Robotics program in 1999. Along with the talented advisors, Chris continues to mentor students in the program today. He also started the successful forensics program with Dr. Martin Palermo. Chris also worked with the district's team on the Smaller Learning Communities grant, as well as partnering with Cablevision to help establish the MSG Varsity media training program. Alongside his career in the classroom, he spent 22 years at Brookhaven National Laboratory, where he led educational programs during the summer and created the widely popular Whizbang Science Show.



Following his retirement from William Floyd in 2015, Chris transitioned his passion for education into local preservation, serving as the village historian for both the Village of Poquott (11 years) and the Village of Port Jefferson for 11+ years. Chris has curated 22 historic photo exhibits at the Village Center Gallery. In Port Jefferson, he co-founded the Drowned Meadow Cottage Museum to highlight the area's American Revolution history. In 2025, he co-launched a non-profit for cemetery restoration to train volunteers in headstone and monument repair. Known locally, Chris transforms his home every October into the neighborhood's beloved "Spider House" featuring giant, homemade spiders. He has been happily married to his wife, Karin, for 40 years, and together they share two daughters and three grandchildren.



Caroline Ceglio

Born in Brooklyn, NY, to parents Bill and Carol McCartin, Caroline is the oldest of six children. Her family moved to Riverhead when she was four years old. She attended Riverhead schools and graduated in 1982. That summer, she met her husband Tony, but it would be seven years before they married; as Tony needed to complete his schooling and she was headed off to college.

Caroline attended SUNY New Paltz over the next four years and graduated in 1986 with a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology/elementary education. She then returned to Long Island and worked as a substitute teacher for the next year, primarily in Eastport.

In September of 1987, she got her first full-time position and taught second grade for the next two years at St. John of God in Central Islip. In 1989, she switched to kindergarten and continued there until 1991. She stopped teaching at that time to stay home to raise her three sons, Michael, Nicholas, and Matthew, while also pursuing her Master's degree.

Caroline completed her Master's in literacy and graduated from Dowling College in December of 2001. After graduation, she restarted her teaching career. In 2002, she secured a yearlong leave replacement as a literacy specialist in the Three Village School District.

In 2003, Caroline started her career in the William Floyd School District. She began as a permanent substitute at William Floyd Elementary School. That year was also the first year the district was implementing its full-day kindergarten program, and an additional class was needed. Shortly after that, she was selected as the teacher for that additional class and transitioned into a full-time kindergarten teaching position.

For 23 years, Caroline taught kindergarten and loved every second of it. Nothing brought her more satisfaction and happiness than watching her students go from learning letters and sounds in September to reading and writing in June.

Each year while her students grew, Caroline grew right beside them. She has held various roles over the course of her career. She taught a course on brain-based research through the William Floyd Teacher Center, served as an English Language Arts ambassador designing professional development to support her colleagues, and served as William Floyd Elementary School's building vice president for the teachers' union for 10 years. In 2019, she earned her administrative degree from Stony Brook University as well. Finally, her most recent role was with her building's school data team.

Through all of this, the main driver for Caroline has always been, and will always be, the relationships she developed with her students, their families, and her colleagues and friends in the school community. She has been extremely fortunate and is grateful for the opportunity to teach where she did for as long as she wanted. Receiving this award is the pinnacle of her career and she is incredibly thankful to have a moment like this. She would like to thank the William Floyd Alumni Association and her students and families for this honor.



Michael Whelan

Michael “Mike” Whelan’s career in education reflects his commitment to hands-on learning, innovation, and preparing students for success beyond the classroom.

After being discharged from the United States Army in September 1973, Mike used the GI Bill to attend SUNY Oswego, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree and certification as an industrial arts teacher. He later earned his Master’s degree from Stony Brook University. His years at Oswego provided the foundation for his career in education as well as many lifelong friendships. While there, he played rugby, a sport he continued to enjoy for years afterward.



Mike returned to Long Island and began his career at William Floyd High School in January 1980. In 1999, he became the Technology Department chairperson, a position he held until his retirement in 2008.

One of Mike’s most lasting contributions to William Floyd was helping establish the FIRST Robotics Team 287 in 1999 with Chris Ryon. Known as “Floyd Robotics” and historically as “Hurricane Floyd,” Team 287 was created to give students opportunities to explore engineering, technology, design, public speaking, and teamwork. At a time when high school robotics was still a new concept, Mike helped recruit students, secure workshop space in the school’s technology wing, and build support for the growing program.

Under Mike and Chris’s guidance, Team 287 developed a reputation for creative design and strong teamwork. In 2001, the team earned both the Xerox Creativity Award and the DaimlerChrysler Team Spirit Award while also finishing as Regional Finalists. The team later received the prestigious Kleiner, Perkins, Caufield & Byers Entrepreneurship Award in both 2002 and 2004.

Team 287 taught students that robotics was about much more than building a machine. They approached the team like a business, giving students experience in engineering and fabrication as well as leadership, fundraising, communication, organization, and problem-solving. Through the FIRST Robotics Competition, students also had opportunities to work alongside mentors, engineers, and mechanics while designing and building industrial-sized robots for competition.

Mike continued leading Team 287 until his retirement in 2008. Throughout nearly three decades at William Floyd High School, he served as a teacher, department chairperson, and mentor who believed strongly in learning by doing. His legacy can be seen not only in the robotics program he helped build, but in the many students who gained confidence, skills, and opportunities through his teaching.

Since retiring, Mike enjoys playing golf, boating, and spending time with his family between Long Island and their upstate property. The programs he helped create and the students he mentored remain a lasting reflection of his dedication to education and the William Floyd community.



Diana Brown-Hoppe

Diana Brown-Hoppe is proud to serve as a music educator in the William Floyd School District, a community she has always known as home. Her musical journey began at William Floyd, where she started learning the violin in third grade. By fifth grade, Diana already knew she wanted to become a music teacher, and by middle school, her teachers encouraged her to tutor fellow orchestra students, an early opportunity that helped nurture Diana's desire to become a music teacher.

As a young musician, Diana took every opportunity to develop her craft. Representing William Floyd's music department, she was selected each year to participate in the All-County and Long Island String Festival Association honor orchestras, and in high school, she was accepted to the All-State Conference in Rochester. With the support of scholarships, Diana studied with several private instructors and continued to advance as a violinist. She attended summer programs at Saratoga Performing Arts Center, New York University's Chamber Music Festival and was a member of the New York Youth Orchestra, and the organization now known as Brookhaven Arts & Music.



Pursuing her dream, Diana studied violin and music in college, earning degrees in music education from Temple University and Stony Brook University. After finishing her undergraduate degree, she received a phone call from her high school orchestra teacher relaying a teaching opportunity at William Floyd. Soon afterward, Diana began her teaching career as the orchestra director at William Paca Middle School. Over the course of her career, she has had the unique opportunity to teach music at every grade level, from kindergarten through 12th grade. Drawing from each experience, Diana now embraces her role as director of the William Floyd High School Symphonic Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra. This year, Diana celebrates her 20th year as a teacher at William Floyd.

Professionally, Diana has devoted many years of service to the Suffolk County Music Educators' Association (SCMEA), having served as festival chairperson, assistant vice president, co-vice president for festivals, and membership chairperson. Most recently, she had the honor of guest-conducting a SCMEA Festival Orchestra. Musically, Diana continues to study violin and performs locally with several ensembles.

Apart from her musical endeavors, Diana is an avid runner. She has completed the New York City, Suffolk County, Long Island, Philadelphia and Chicago marathons, and looks forward to adding more to the list. She was fortunate to spend several years sharing her passion for running with the William Floyd girls' cross country and track teams as an assistant coach. Diana and her husband welcomed their son in 2023 and daughter in 2026. They enjoy family walks with their dog and quality time with their cat.

Diana is deeply honored to be recognized as one of William Floyd's Outstanding Educators. She considers it a privilege to serve the community in which she grew up and is grateful for the opportunity to teach, learn from, and make music alongside her students. For Diana, returning to William Floyd as an educator has brought her journey full circle, allowing her to share with her students the same joy of music that first inspired her there many years ago.



Louisa Markewitz

At just 15 years old, Louisa became a summer camp counselor. She loved teaching children sports, helping them discover new talents, and watching their confidence grow. She didn't realize it at the time, but that summer set her on a path that would shape her entire life.

Louisa's love of teaching continued when she became a water safety instructor at the Patchogue pool. She was amazed by how quickly children could learn when they were encouraged, supported, and believed in. That realization stayed with her and inspired her to pursue a career in education.



Louisa graduated from St. Joseph's College with a degree in elementary and special education. After graduation, Betty Leupp, a former William Floyd teacher, encouraged her to apply for a teaching position at William Floyd – and the rest is history.

She began as a Resource Room teacher, where she had the privilege of working one-on-one with students of all ages. When an opportunity arose to teach first grade, she was hesitant. She wondered if she could really spend her entire day with six-year-olds. It didn't take her long to realize that she had found her place.

“There is something magical about teaching a child to read. Seeing the excitement on a child's face when they sound out their first word, read a sentence or realize, ‘I can do this,’ never gets old,” said Louisa.

She later earned her Master's degree in computers in education from C.W. Post University. At that time, technology in the classroom was just beginning. She worked with Apple IIe computers and dot-matrix printers and was later honored with the opportunity to pilot the first interactive whiteboard. She recalls how exciting it was to see how technology could transform learning and inspire new ways of teaching.

Along the way, Louisa married her college sweetheart, and together they built their home in Aquebogue and raised two wonderful children. Today, her daughter is a high school math teacher, and her son, a nephrology fellow, recently married his medical school sweetheart. Her daughter and son-in-law have also given her a beautiful granddaughter who has completely stolen her heart.

After 32 years as a teacher, Louisa retired with a heart full of memories and gratitude. She was fortunate to teach so many wonderful children and to work alongside dedicated colleagues, supportive parents, and administrators. The relationships she built over those years remain

among the greatest gifts of her career.

Retirement has given her the opportunity to stay connected to the William Floyd community through the Retiree Chapter, where she served as secretary and continues to enjoy spending time with former colleagues and friends. When she looks back, Louisa realizes that teaching was never simply a career; it was a journey of helping children believe in themselves – and, in the process, they taught her just as much about life, perseverance, and joy.

Louisa is grateful for every student, every parent helper, every family, and every moment that made her 32 years so meaningful. And if she could leave one thought behind, it would be this:

“The greatest gift a teacher can give a child is the belief that they can succeed.”

Louisa is honored to be remembered and recognized as an outstanding educator.



William Floyd Alumni Association

Outstanding Educators

Past Recipients

2010

Bill Hennessy
Karen Poidomani
Michael Merolla
John Raptis

2012

Michael Cordaro
Donna Gaspari
Paul Longo
Marge Sabbeth

2014

Ron Gross
Laura Mole
Bill Pike
Mary Schultz

2016

Patricia Casey
Richard Horton
Joseph Hurley
Dori Orofino
Denise Robertson

2011

Robert Feeney
Flora Metrick
Philip Scotto
Phyllis Siano

2013

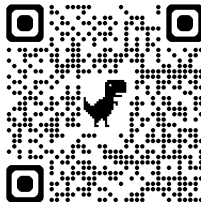
Jude Bouer
Chip Ezelius
Ed Pinto
E. Marianne Ritz

2015

Mary Arslanian
Candy Carro
Beth Cutrone
Stephen Stengel

2017

Richard Daly
Keith Fasciana, Ed.D.
Ruth Trimble
Frank Turso



Scan the QR code to see a list of all Outstanding Educator honorees!

William Floyd Alumni Association Outstanding Educators

Past Recipients

2018

Peter Clarry
Alfonse Leonette
Terrance Phelan
Nikki Stallone

2019

Linda Czarnomski
Kristen Drury
Toni Komorowski
Victoria Lampese-Terry
Matthew Miller

2022

Joseph Bagnoli
Kerri Coudrey
Jacqueline Giacalone
Michelle Montalbano
Barbara Sapanaro

2023

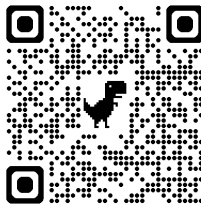
Joseph Cordaro
Judy Flynn
Maryellen Fonti
Victor Longaro
Anthony Mecca

2024

Frank LaBianca
Barbara McAdams
Debra Flynn
Brian Heinz
Sue Hersh

2025

Silvio LaTassa
James Giattino
Carrie Farra
William Kiriazis
Carmella Currao



Scan the QR code to see a list of all Outstanding Educator honorees!

We would like to extend a huge

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William Floyd Community Summit

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**Congratulations to the
William Floyd Alumni Association**

Outstanding Educators

2026

Diana Brown-Hoppe

Caroline Ceglio

Louisa Markewitz

Chris Ryon

Michael Whelan

*Thank you for inspiring the minds and hearts
of countless William Floyd students!*

William Floyd Board of Education

April Coppola, President

Angelo Cassarino, Vice President

Joseph Barone

Jennifer Heitman

Lorraine Mentz

Kevin Meyer

Luis J. Soto

Kevin M. Coster

Superintendent of Schools

William Floyd School District

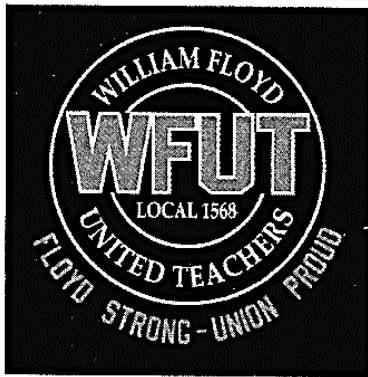
CONGRATULATIONS

***CHRIS
DIANA***

***MICHAEL
CAROLINE***

LOUISA

**WE ARE VERY PROUD OF YOUR
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William Floyd United
Teachers

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Congratulations to:

Mr. Chris Ryon

Ms. Caroline Ceglio

Ms. Diana Brown-Hoppe

Mr. Michael Whelan

Ms. Louisa Markewitz

for being recognized as an outstanding educator.

**You have touched many lives in this community and
deserve to be honored for all the hard work you do.**

Thank you!

Matt, Connie and Barbara Kruk

AO – Alumni Owned

Congratulations to this Year's Honorees!



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**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF OUR
OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS**

A Special Thank you to



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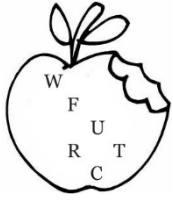
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William Floyd United Teachers--Retiree Chapter

Congratulations

to the

2026 Recipients

of the

Outstanding Educator Awards

Chris Ryon

Michael Whelan

Louisa Markewitz

Diana Brown-Hoppe

Caroline Ceglio

***This well-deserved recognition is the result
of your tireless dedication to the education
of the William Floyd students.***

www.wfutrc.org

Joseph Barone Income Tax

Shirley NY 11967

Owner

631-281-8291 office & fax

631-487-2235 cell

josephbarone@aol.com



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**Congratulations
& Best Wishes
to the
2026
Outstanding
Educators**

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Your

William Floyd Alumni Association

is searching for new members
to become the future of this association.

If you are interested in setting up events like
Outstanding Educators, Distinguished Alumni,
or the Author Fair, and/or helping with
middle school donations, scholarships and
funding for CTE and STEM, and more,
please contact us.

**For more information, contact Jon Geraci at
(631) 879-2034 or email
JGeraci713@Gmail.com**

***Thank You So Much For All You Have Done
For The Students Of The
William Floyd School District.***

The Pride Continues...



From the Officers and Members of the
William Floyd Alumni Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 536

Moriches, NY 11955

www.FloydAlumni.org

**THE
WILLIAM FLOYD ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
SENDS A BIG**

THANK YOU

TO ALL OUR

HONOREES,

**WE APPRECIATE YOUR
DEDICATION AND PATIENCE,
YOU ARE TRULY OUR**

**OUTSTANDING
EDUCATORS**

William Floyd Alumni Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 536 Moriches, NY 11955 – 0536

OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR AWARDS

The William Floyd Alumni Association is accepting nominations for the **Outstanding Educator Awards**.

All William Floyd K – 12 teachers, administrators, and staff members are eligible for nomination. You can nominate someone tonight via the form below or online at

<https://www.wfsd.k12.ny.us/parents-and-community/floydalumni>

or you can scan the QR code on the previous pages.

CRITERIA FOR NOMINATION

The Outstanding Educator Selection Committee requests that the following criteria be considered when determining a potential candidate's eligibility. A nominee must:

- Have made a positive and long-lasting impact on the individual or individuals nominating them.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- The nominator must provide a narrative of no more than one page in support of the potential nominee.
- The nominator and the successful candidate are required to attend an induction ceremony.

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Nominee's Name: _____

Teacher / Administrator / Staff Member:

(Circle One)

On a separate page, in narrative form, please answer questions 1-2. Please include the narrative with the nomination form.

1. How has this teacher/administrator/staff member made a positive and long-lasting impact on your life? Please be specific.
2. In what way(s) is the nominee a positive role model for students?

NOMINATOR INFORMATION

Name of Nominator: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Email Address: _____

Telephone Number of Nominator: () _____ - _____

Congratulations,

Outstanding

Educators!



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OUTSIDE BACK COVER

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