



CHS Alumni Association, Inc.

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August 2021

Coventry HS Alumni Association Scholarship Recipients 2021

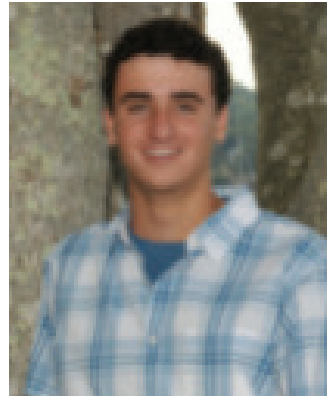
Brendan Dowling



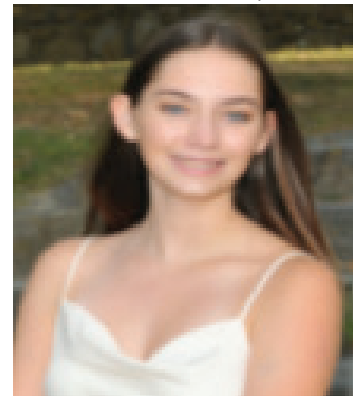
Bella Verrastro



Alex Burgjohann



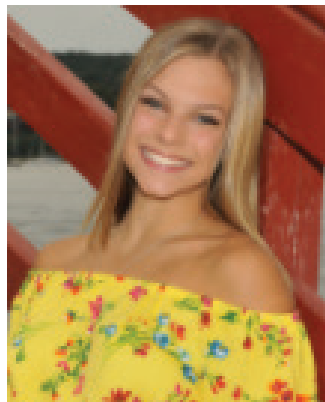
Avery Henley



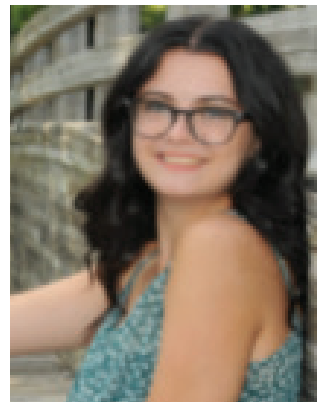
Allison Bailey



Crystal Yates



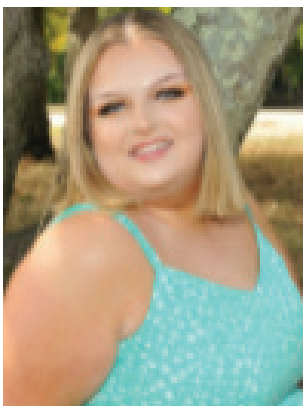
Emma Lemoi



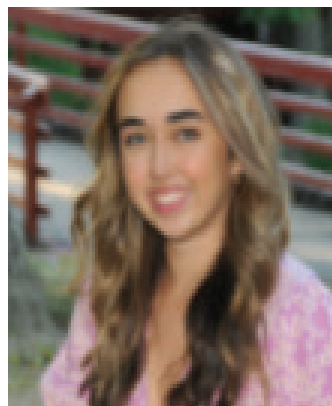
Ethan Silverman



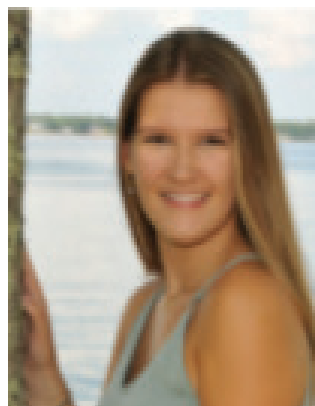
Evelyn Buffi



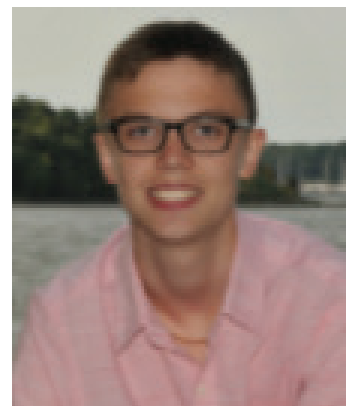
Grace Fernades



Katherine Medeiros

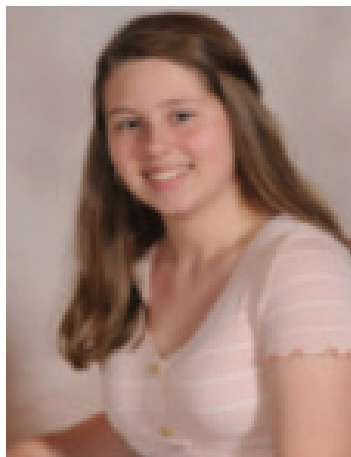


Francis Pelletier

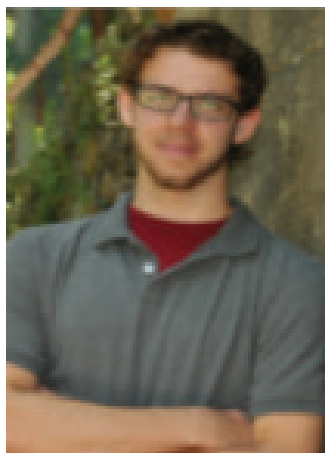


Coventry HS Alumni Association Scholarship Recipients 2021

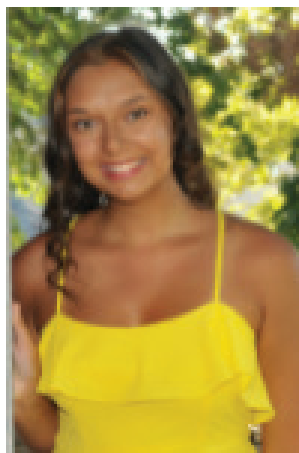
Hannah Killea



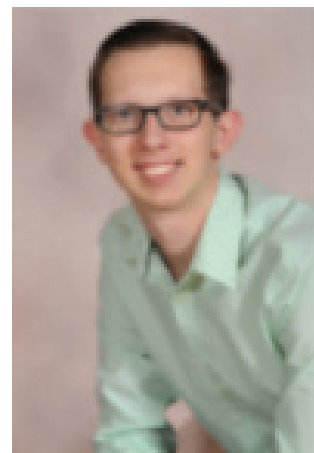
Jackson Perry



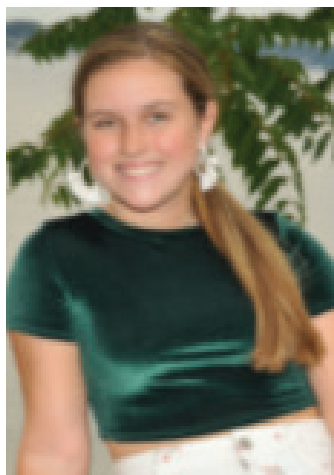
Jenna McNeil



Justin Mayers



Kylie Steinkamp



Madeline Brown



Nathan Cafaro



William Turner



The Coventry High School Alumni Association presented scholarships to 20 Coventry High School seniors this totaling \$34,000. This represents a 13.3% increase over last year and was made possible through the generosity of donors that include the St. Pierre Family, The Murley/Jacobson Family, The Olde Theatre Diner; the WISE Scholarship sponsored by the Sweeney Family (Michele St. Pierre Sweeney '81) and Nicole St. Jean '04; 2 scholarships sponsored by Accel Lifestyles LLC, manufacturer of anti-bacterial athletic clothing (Megan Doucette Eddings '99); the Casacalenda family and West Warwick Auto Body (Phil and Carmella (Marsocci) '78); and the Macomber Family. For a complete list, check below.

Two new scholarships were added this year, one established by the children of Sonja M. (Murley) Jacobson and the other presented to the recipient of the Ardis W. Barbour Award, which honors former principal Ardis W. Barbour and which has been presented annually since 1971. Funds are being solicited for this scholarship to make it available into the future. \$7000 have been raised to date with a goal of \$10,000 to \$11,000 by the end of 2022.

Several scholarships also include a match of \$6000 by the Coventry Teachers' Scholarship Fund headed by Suzanne Tracy. We are indebted to the administration, teachers, staff, and employees of the Coventry Public Schools for their support and generosity.

These scholarships bring our total donations since 2011 to \$164,000.

The scholarships and their recipients are list below:

Last Name	First name	In honor/memory of	Amount
Burgjohann	Alex	Chet Kuipers	\$1,000.00
Medeiros	Katherine	Mary Ann Cantino	\$2,000.00
Perry	Jackson	Maureen Pontarelli	\$2,000.00
Cafaro	Nathan	John Macomber	\$2,000.00
Fernandes	Grace	James A. Blair	\$2,000.00
Mayers	Justin	David L. Parenteau	\$2,000.00
Pelletier	Francis	Megan Anne Alexion Mello	\$2,000.00
Steinkamp	Kylie	Erica Tremblay Shea	\$1,000.00
Killea	Hannah	Margaret St. Pierre	\$2,000.00
Verrastro	Bella	Olde Theatre Diner	\$1,000.00
Henley	Avery	Martha M. Barber	\$1,000.00
Buffi	Evelyn	Class of 1968, in honor of class members	\$2,000.00
Yates	Crystal	WISE Scholarship	\$3,000.00
Turner	Will	Accel Lifestyle, LLC Scholarship	\$2,500.00
Brown	Madeline	Accel Lifestyle, LLC Scholarship	\$2,500.00
McNeil	Jenna	West Warwick Autobody	\$1,000.00
Silverman	Ethan	Philip V. Casacalenda, Jr.	\$1,500.00
Lemoi	Emma	Laura Ann Marsocci '79	\$1,500.00
Dowling	Brendan	Ardis Barbour Award Scholarship	\$1,000.00
Bailey	Allison	Sonja M. (Murley) Jacobson Scholarship	\$1,000.00
		Total	\$34,000.00

*Green represents presentation on Senior Awards Night

4th Annual Breakfast Fundraiser Planned moved to the Fall of 2021

The CHSAA is planning to hold its 4th annual Olde Theatre Diner on Sept. 25 from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM assuming Covid-19 restrictions have been removed by that time. Tickets will be \$20 and fundraiser breakfast at the raffles will be held to raise additional funds. Please put this date on your calendar and plan to join us for this mini reunion. Have questions, contact Ernie DiMicco at chsaa2009@gmail.com. Tickets will be available in August.

Obituaries



Robert E. "Robb" Smith

SMITH, ROBERT E. "ROBB"

55, of Coventry, passed at Kent Hospital after a work-related accident on Tuesday, April 20, 2021.

Robb graduated from Coventry High School in 1984. He was an All -State and New England wrestling Champion. He earned RI and National Honor Society. Robb attended Brown University, RIC, and URI.

His true passion remained in wrestling. He coached at CHS for three years. He was a RIIL referee for 30 years at the middle school and High school levels. He also refereed youth wrestling for 35 years.

Hall of Fame Inductees Selected for 2020



Nancy Sprengelmeyer



Maureen Jendzejec '75



Michelle Sweeney '81



Myron Gadoury '71



Ken Grady '65

Congratulations to the new inductees to the Coventry High School Alumni Hall of Fame. Inductees for 2020 Coventry High School Alumni Hall of Fame were selected by the Selection Committee but have not been inducted yet due to Covid-19 concerns. The inductees include: Ken Grady '65, longtime English teacher and founder /advisor for WCVY (originally WCHS); Nancy Sprengelmeyer, a long-time English teacher at CHS and a member of the Juvenile Hearing Board and the Coventry School Committee until her death in 2013; Michele St. Pierre Sweeney '81 who has been a successful engineer, a supporter of young women entering the science field, a participant in community service projects, and a long-time supporter of the CHSAA; Maureen Jendzejec '75 and member of the Coventry Housing Authority Board, a Trustee and long-time project leader and current trustee at Sts. John and Paul Parish; a former member of the Central Coventry Fire District Board, and a committee member and treasurer of the CHSAA since its inception in 2009; Myron Gadoury '71 who has provided amazing service at the Emanuel Lutheran Church including its food bank and to the Joyful Noise Childcare Center for many years.

The induction ceremony has been delayed until November 4, 2021 at Quidnessett CC. Tickets will be available in September at <https://www.oakeralumni.org>.

Scholarship planned for the Ardis Barbour Award Going Forward

The Ardis Barbour Award the most important senior award at CHS other than the Valedictorian and Salutatorian. Ardis was the long-time principal at Hopkins Hill and when she retired, the award was established by the faculty at Hopkins Hill to honor her. The award was first given in 1971 to Karen Davie '71. The CHSAA is looking to lineup donors to give a scholarship to the winner of the award.

A few donors have come forward and we are researching the names of the recipients over the 50 years to see if we can get them to donate to the scholarship fund. To date over \$7000 has been donated or pledged to establish this scholarship.

We are looking to put together between \$9000 and \$11000 to build a sustaining fund for the scholarship so we won't have to raise funds every year. The scholarship for 2021 was presented on Senior Awards Night to Brendan Dowling in the amount of \$1000,

You can help by making a donation or by helping us to compile the list of recipients. The incomplete list of Ardis Barbour Award winners is printed below:

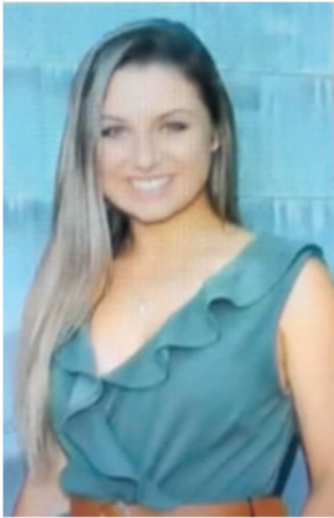
2021 Brendan Dowling, 2020 Jaya Joyce, 2019 Rylee Campbell, 2018 Deanna Cerce, 2017 Jason Hoskins, 2016 Trevor Campbell, 2015 Kathleen Cronin, 2014 Andrew LeCampion, 2013 Patrick Shea 2012 Katie Auld, 2011 Allison Bousquet, 2010 Lindsey Myers, 2009 Michaela Tracy, 2008 Lindsey Paiva, 2007 Aimee Belanger, 2006 Caitlin Smith, 2005 Kaela Adams, 2004 James Daley, 2003 Zachary Clark, 2002 Christopher Schayer, 1989 Erin McCarthy, 1978 Suzanne Criscione Tracy, 1977 Marc Bourret, 1976 Steven D. Moore and Anne Robertson, 1972 Susan Dutilly Wieboldt, 1971 Karen Davie

Please contact us at chsaa2009@gmail.com if you have a name for us or you would like to donate. Donations can be made at www.oakeralumni.org.

CHSAA Funds Courtyard Redesign Project at CHS



The landscape design and wood classes under the direction of Mr. Joseph Fagnoli working with Mr. Jaime Cotnoir's welding class are redesigning and repurposing the courtyard to make it more inviting and useful to students. When finished, it will include new planting, furniture, benches and a small stage. The project was funded by a \$2000 grant from the CHSAA. Mr. Fagnoli hopes to finish the project in the Fall. Many thanks to the faculty members and students involved in this project especially given the challenges presented by COVID-19.



Alumni Update

Caitlin Randall is the 2020 recipient of the WISE Scholarship sponsored by the CHSAA

Beginning a new chapter in my life, especially when the previous chapter hadn't ended as I expected, made me apprehensive to begin college. I felt as though mentally adjusting to this new phase was my greatest challenge. Although coming to its conclusion, the pandemic altered the trajectory of my transition from high school to college. I missed prom, I missed my senior outdoor track season, I missed getting to be team captain, I missed graduation and saying goodbye to my lifelong friends and the teachers that all influenced who I am as a person. However, missing these life milestones, constants that I thought I could rely on if all else failed, reminded me that life isn't merely a conveyor belt where we had a standardized or "right" human experience. Still, this mindset shift didn't make me feel any more prepared to begin college, but despite being nervous and feeling entirely unprepared, I dove in full force and moved in at the earliest possible move-in date.

Although the seemingly "safe" option, URI was still a complete shift of reality and I was both fascinated that I was in a place with so many vibrant people who were all my age and completely new and different; I was also certainly overwhelmed. I was overwhelmed with the change of social structures, where rather than simply attending classes with my peers, I lived with them, ate alongside them, and essentially lived in a world of almost entirely people in my generation. I was also overwhelmed with balancing school with work and managing my schedule to ensure that all of the multi-part assignments for each class were completed whilst still working until 4 am many nights and then having to attend my only in-person class at 9:00 am. Admittedly, I struggled with organization and keeping track of every assignment, every website, every online access code, communicating with professors, and trying to form some sort of connection with classmates. Although I was surrounded by people similar to me and theoretically all of which could be my friend, I felt extremely isolated and struggling to keep up with the volume of academic assignments and the confusion of online classes. I couldn't correlate which course went with which website and having had no classmates to ask for clarification, I oftentimes spent hours simply trying to locate my assignments.

Growing up in a generation of technology, I should be capable of excelling in online courses, but quite the opposite was true. The University of Rhode Island did a great job of adjusting to the major shift of semantics, as did the professors and academic advisors, but I did not. Having been diagnosed with ADHD in October, it was increasingly obvious that how I learned best did not align with online learning. I had lost my passion for learning because assignments seemed as though they were never-ending and I had no escape from screens. If I was expected to have a social life without physical contact, I had to depend upon my phone or laptop. My source of entertainment was displayed on a computer monitor that was used as a TV or via scrolling mindlessly on my phone. Then, I was expected to produce the same quality of work when the only learning I had done was through a one-dimensional screen. I felt disconnected and disinterested. However, after I had figured out a routine that worked for me I was able to improve my mental health and garner motivation to not only genuinely learn but also enjoy life beyond a screen. I communicated more with my professors and if I was unsure of anything I now felt comfortable enough to contact them and ask for repeated clarification if I still had questions. I began going to the gym daily, I made time to go skateboarding to watch the sunset over the nearby agriculture fields, and to go on scenic runs outside to enjoy the changing leaves. I spoke to people in line at the dining hall rather than keeping my AirPods in and my head down. I had to put more effort into finding enjoyment with the process of learning, especially with almost entirely online learning coupled with ADHD, but I simply did what I had to do and didn't let apprehension or doubt or a lack of motivation or time interfere. I brought my laptop to work and studied when it was slow, I brought a book with me while I ran on the treadmill, I made sure I was eating properly and taking care of my physical and mental health, and I stayed on top of my assignments, formed study groups, and I focused on truly learning the material.

I applied to URI with an undeclared major but I was able to hone my interests and find what I am truly passionate about. My major is now Biological Sciences and I intend to utilize this degree to go to medical school and work towards my goal of becoming an orthopedic surgeon. In spite of difficulty adjusting to an online curriculum, I am entering my sophomore year 62% complete with my academic progress, and have the opportunity to graduate early. I can confidently say that I am more than excited to return to in-person classes and the quality of learning and human interaction that I felt so deprived of for my first semester of college. However, taking responsibility for my own academic and personal success and prioritizing my mental health are valuable skills that got me through my first year of college.

CHS Former Leaders...



Reuel A. Sheldon

SHELDON, REUEL A., 94, of Coventry, served as an educator for 43 years before retiring in 1982. Mr. Sheldon was a 1937 graduate of Brown University and held a master's degree in secondary school administration from Rhode Island College. As a member of the American Federation of Teachers he was also first president of the local branch of this organization. He was a member of

the Rhode Island Secondary School Principals Association, the New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, and the Rhode Island Association of Business Managers. He was a former member of the Barnard Club and a charter member of the Coventry Lions Club. He served as merit badge counselor for the Boy Scouts of America.

From 1938 to 1942 Mr. Sheldon was a teacher of mathematics at Coventry High School. From 1942 until 1969 he was principal of Coventry High School. He served as business manager of the Coventry School Department from 1969 to 1971 and as staff assistant and specialist at the R.I. Department of Education from 1971 to 1982.

Mr. Sheldon remains as the longest serving principal of CHS. He passed away on November 11, 2010 at the age of 94 years old.



James A. DiPrete, Principal Emeritus of Coventry High School, came to our school in the Fall of 1972 as its fourth principal. Under his leadership, a new bond issue was passed to complete construction of a new building, setting the stage for the end of double sessions and the beginning of a golden age for CHS. Some years later he presided over a building addition which houses a Language Lab dedicated in his honor. Mr. DiPrete worked to revise and strengthen the curriculum and to revitalize the extracurricular programs. While principal, Mr. DiPrete networked with the educational community as: president of the RI Association of Secondary School Principals, chairman of a number of NEASC visiting committees, and as a member of the National Association of Student Councils Executive Board. His efforts have brought Coventry High School to new academic heights and to national recognition as a school of excellence. Mr. DiPrete retired as principal of CHS in 1993 but has continued to serve the educational community, over a period of 10 years, as chairperson of the RI Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education and as a member of the RI Board of Governors for Higher Education. In addition to teaching on the university level, Mr. DiPrete has also served in numerous interim positions around the state of Rhode Island, and is a Trustee of John Cabot University in Rome, Italy.

In 2012, Mr. DiPrete was inducted into the Coventry High School Alumni Hall of Fame

Mr. DiPrete's people-centered brand of leadership and caring style have endeared him to all who have had the pleasure to work with him. His legacy has endured well beyond his tenure and continues to inspire all who know him. Mr. DiPrete and his wife Pina still live in West Warwick and continues to be a support of CHS through the CHSAA



The left photo is from the 1966 yearbook picturing Ernie DiMiccio and Mr. Sheldon. The bottom photo was taken in November 2009 just prior to the 75th Reunion, one year before Mr. Sheldon's passing.



Jim DiPrete pictured with Michael Hobin at the Hall of Fame installation in 2013.

Class of 1972 News - 50th Year Reunion in the Works



The members of the class of 1972 will begin our Event on Friday, May 27th, 2022 with a Cocktail party at a classmate's property. Start time to be announced. Everyone is invited from the class with their spouse or significant other. There will be some light snacks, water, beer and wine. Everyone is welcome to bring a treat of their choice to put on the table to share. The best part of this evening is we have so many wonderful musicians in our class, many have already agreed to play and entertain us. All classmates and partners are invited to join in the musical fun. If you are local and can bring your instrument, Great! If not, you are welcome to use what is available. It will be for sure a great time!

Saturday night the 28th there will be dinner and dancing at the Radisson Hotel on Post Road near the airport. We have reserved rooms that you can book if you are from out of town OR if you just don't want to drive home after the party. There will be a wonderful buffet with lots of food, coffee & tea, dessert. We have hired a duo DJ Team that will complete our night. We are hoping everyone will come - please send us your e-mail or phone number so we can reach out. We would very much like to do an e-mail blast with more information, the ticket price to reserve your two-night class celebration. 50 years only comes once!!! SEE YOU ALL THERE.

Please contact Debbie (Forrest) Guthrie (dgguthrie@gmail.com) or Andrea (Bache) Nectow (andreanectow@icloud.com) if you have questions

First Scholarship to Honor Sonja M. (Murley) Jacobson Awarded by the CHSAA on Senior Awards Night



The children of Sonja Jacobson, Diane M. Kenny, BS, RN, Miss Lisa A. Murley, Career Legal Assistant, Lieutenant Norman A. Murley WWFD, Retired, and Patrolman Ronald B. Jacobson, Jamestown Police Department, have established a scholarship through the CHSAA to honor their mom. The scholarship was first presented on May 21st to Allison Bailey in the amount of \$1,000. Many thanks to the Murley/Jacobson family for honoring their mom in this way while helping CHS students finance their education.

About Us

The Coventry High School Alumni Association (CHSAA) is a nonprofit, 501-(3)(c) tax-exempt organization founded in 2009. Our mission is to: 1) provide scholarships for CHS seniors, 2) provide funds for school educational projects, and 3) recognize successful and community-minded individuals who have attended CHS, been employed at CHS, or who have been benefactors to the CHS community.

Since 2011, the CHSAA has awarded \$164,000 in scholarships and donated \$8050 to school projects over the last three years. Our goal is to help students identify their career pathways before leaving high school to minimize the wasting of time and money by changing colleges or majors, extending the time, and increasing the cost of college.

All of the committee members are volunteers, so virtually all the money raised through fundraisers or donations goes to the students of CHS. Our website is www.oakeralumni.org and donations may be made there via credit card or by mailing a check to: CHSAA P.O. Box 705 Coventry, RI 02816. Several individuals have also arranged bequests to the organization to help ensure that future CHS seniors will continue to receive support through CHSAA Endowment and other investments. Please consider helping us.

A Debt of Gratitude...

Many thanks to the members of the CHSAA committee, the Alumni Hall of Fame Selection Committee, and all our generous donors. Members of the committee give generously of their time and personal resources to help make the scholarships and grants possible.

CHSAA Committee members: John Ball, Jim Kuipers '85, Mary Ann Cantino, Kathy Lavallee '83, Amanda Lavallee '12, Mary Vandervelde '76, Maureen Jendzejec '75, Andrea Hopkins '64, Kate McCarthy Barnett '85, Suzie Chorney '64, Stacy Ferrara '83, Kevin Dolan '80, Pat Johnson '81, Jean Boucher '68, Ernie DiMicco '66, Jo-Ann Passarelli '80, Lori DiCostanzo, Sarah Charette '95, Helen Gray '64, and Diane and Robert Tremblay, James Hopkins '58, and Stephen Bestwick '80