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Foundation, Inc.**

**PRESENTS**

# **9<sup>th</sup> Annual Distinguished Alumni & Friends of the Worcester Public Schools Awards**

**UNIBANK**

**November 6, 2019  
College of the Holy Cross**



# Colby

**“When you see these schools that have over \$40,000 a year price tag, how do you then turn to your mom and say ‘if you want me to achieve our dream, it’s going to take more than you make in a year?’”**

**—Misael Beltran-Guzman '22**

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# **Distinguished Alumni and Friends of the Worcester Public Schools 2019**

**MATTHEW ASELTON**

Entertainment Director

**PENELOPE BITZAS**

Performing Artist/Educator

**MEGAN CONDRON SMITH**

Investment Professional

**DIANNE BENSON DAVIS**

Conservationist/Author

**DR. DAVID GREENE**

Educational Leader

**MATT MATTUS**

Horticulturalist/Author

**REV. DR. LESTER MCCORN**

Educational & Spiritual Leader

**JOHN MORELLO**

Decorated War Hero (Posthumous)

**DONNA OLSEN RED WING**

Social Pioneer (Posthumous)

**JONATHAN STARR**

Investment Professional/Philanthropist

**FALLON HEALTH**

Friend of Education

November 6, 2019

Dear Honorees and Guests,

**W**e warmly welcome you to the 9th Annual Distinguished Alumni and Friends of the Worcester Public Schools ceremony. We are delighted that you have joined us in celebrating the accomplishments of individuals who have achieved at high levels and received their foundation here in our city's public schools. We are also recognizing Fallon Health that has been a steady and strong supporter of many programs that benefit our youth.

The Worcester Educational Development Foundation, Inc. (WEDF) is sincerely grateful to our many partners who make our work possible. From large foundation grants to corporate and individual donations, each and every contribution is deeply appreciated. WEDF has invested more than \$ 5 million in our most precious resource, the students of today who will be the leaders of tomorrow.

Tonight we honor talented and dedicated individuals who have brought great pride to their families and our community. As we read through their biographies, the WOW factor was evident many times. Thank you again for being here to celebrate their accomplishments.

Sincerely,

Stephen E. Mills  
Interim President

Louise Clarke  
Executive Director

# **Program**

## **November 6, 2019**

### **Reception**

#### **Burncoat High School String Ensemble**

under the direction of Mr. Dani Rimoni

Ioanna Tchangova – Violin, Liam Gates – Violin,  
Sienna Leone – Violin, Kim Nguyen – Viola,  
Elijah Villanueva – Cello, Amanda Wambui – Cello,  
Melina Iannacchione -Bass

**6:30**

### **Welcome**

Hank Stolz, Emcee

### **Welcome**

Tom Murray, Chairman & WEDF Board Member

### **Greetings from the City of Worcester**

Mayor Joseph Petty

### **Greetings from the Worcester Public Schools**

Maureen Binienda, Superintendent

### **Dinner**

### **Presentation of Awards**

Stephen Mills, President of WEDF, Tom Murray,  
Mayor Petty and Superintendent Binienda

Special thanks to the College of the Holy Cross for its  
generosity and hospitality

Special thanks to Holmes Shusas  
for the lovely centerpieces

# Distinguished Alumni and Friends of the Worcester Public Schools

## 2018

Rabbi Andrew Baker  
David Brunelle  
Cliff Goodwin  
Edward G. Hyder  
Steve Joseph  
Peter Kazanovicz  
Robert Moylan, Jr.  
Jo-Anne O'Malley Shepard, MD  
Andrew Ory  
Paul Proko  
Rev. Richard Trainor  
Friend of Education  
Susan & Cliff Rucker and  
the Worcester Railers

## 2017

Jaki Byard (Posthumously)  
Barbara Carroll (Posthumously)  
Dennis Dimitri  
Kimberly Haddad  
Sheila Haritty  
Mark Holden  
John Mirick  
Gail Radcliff  
John Vo  
Geoffrey Zakarian  
Unibank

## 2016

The Honorable John Anderson  
Erica Ayisi  
Amy Lynn Chase  
Edwin "Ted" Coghlin (Posthumously)  
Robert Goddard (Posthumously)  
James Leary  
Gail Randall  
Daniel Sedgwick, DMA  
Eric Sedgwick  
Marcy Supovitz

## 2015

Mary Aframe  
Phil Bolduc  
Arthur Chase, (Posthumously)  
Leslie Fish  
Laura Goldstein  
Stephen Mills  
Joe O'Brien  
Tony Simollardes  
Ann-Marie Soulliere  
Donna Williams

Gerry Weston & WICN  
Harvard Pilgrim Health Care

## 2014

John Conte  
Mary Beth Leonard  
Paul Gervais (Posthumously)  
The Honorable Mel Greenberg  
Dorothy Hargrove & Gordon Hargrove  
Mark Harootian  
Frances Perkins (Posthumously)  
William Soutra, Jr.  
Joshua Swidler  
UNUM Corporation

## 2013

Myrna Benson  
Laddavanh 'Anna' Boupavichith  
Deborah D. Cary  
Allan P. 'Kool Kojak' Grigg  
James Hogan  
Alexis Hyder  
Audrey Kurlan-Marcy  
Erin Moran McCormick  
Michael Orland  
The Pagano Family  
James Rushton  
Jonathan Silverman

## 2012

John Durkin, Ed.D.  
Jeffrey Greene  
Robert Harizi, M.D.  
Thomas Hehir, Ed.D.  
The Honorable Jordan Levy  
The Honorable Paul Mullaney  
Rachel Markarian  
Gladys Rodriguez-Parker  
Milton Peterson  
Ralph Santana  
The Hanover Insurance Group

## 2011

Charles Birbara, M.D.  
Joanne Feinberg Goldstein  
Lee Gurel  
Jarrett Krosoczka  
Helena & Christos Liazos  
Miguel Lopez  
Jessie Randall  
Stephen Pezzella, M.D.  
Isaac Spencer  
The Junior League of Worcester

# The Class of 2019



## **Matthew Aselton** **Entertainment Director** **Burncoat High School**

Matthew Aselton was born in Worcester in 1970. One of six Aselton children to attend Burncoat Senior High School, he played football and baseball, and served as class president. After Burncoat he attended Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts, graduating in 1993 with a degree in English Literature. At Williams, he played football with fellow Worcester natives Brian Predergast and Steven Power. His football teams enjoyed two undefeated seasons, and had only three losses in his four years. He was the solo captain of the 1992 team.

Following Williams, he moved to New York City and began work at Young & Rubicam on Madison Avenue, as a copywriter and eventually a creative director. He left the firm in 1999 and started writing and directing segments for Comedy Central and MTV.

He was signed by Epoch Films in 2002 and started directing commercials for Sony, Verizon, NFL properties, and Geico to name a few.

In 2008, he wrote and directed *Gigantic*, a movie starring John Goodman, Zooey Deschanel, and Paul Dano that went on to win the best narrative feature at the AFI festival, and had its premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival.

In 2011, Aselton started a bi-coastal production company called Arts & Sciences, known for TV commercials, music videos, and films. The company has been on the production company A list from *Creativity* magazine since its inception. He won a Cannes Palm D'or in 2014 for a Nike commercial saluting the end of Derek Jeter's career as a hall of fame NY Yankee. Along with the festival prize from Cannes, he's won Gold Pencils and Clios for several top named brands and companies.

In 2016, he wrote and directed his second feature film starring Emily Ratajkowski and Theo James, called *Lying and Stealing*, an art heist movie, that had its premiere in the summer of 2018 in New York City.

He lives in Brooklyn, NY with his wife Sara, and his two children, Juno and Obi.



**Penelope Bitzas**  
**Performing Artist/Educator**  
**South High School**

Mezzo-soprano, Penelope Bitzas is an Associate Professor of Music in Voice at Boston University and in 2007 she received the prestigious Metcalf Award, which is Boston University's highest honor for excellence in teaching. She received her Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance and Music Education from Ithaca College, magna cum laude and the Masters of Music in Voice Performance from The New England Conservatory of Music.

She has performed in a wide variety of musical genres, including opera, contemporary music, solo recital, orchestral performances and Greek music. She has appeared as a soloist under such notable conductors as Kurt Masur, Seiji Ozawa, Gustav Meier, Luciano Berio, Richard Westenberg and George Tsontakis. She has concertized in the United States, Germany, Cyprus, Turkey and Venezuela. As a frequent performer of new music and Greek music she has been heard at Alice Tully Hall, Merkin Hall, Jordan Hall and other venues.

Ms. Bitzas was a National Semi-Finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, a member of the Minnesota Opera Studio, the New Music Ensemble at the Banff Centre and the Blossom Music festival. She was also a vocal fellow for two summers at the Tanglewood Music Center. Her students have been winners and finalists of numerous competitions including the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, accepted into the Lindemann Program at the Met, recipients of the San Francisco Opera Adler Fellowships, the George London Competition, the Jose Iturbi Competition, the Gerdna Lissner Foundation, and many more. Her students also have gone on to have careers singing in Europe in Opera and New Music.

Ms. Bitzas has presented master classes for the Master Teachers of Singing at Westminster Choir College, University of Las Vegas, New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, Opera Theater of St. Louis, Ithaca College, Classical Singer Convention, NATS Convention, Boston Chamber Ensemble, Longy School of Music, the New England Conservatory Prep and the Walnut Hill School. She has been an adjudicator for the National Classical Singer Convention, National NATS Convention, and the Schmidt Vocal Competition. She served on the National Fulbright Voice Screening Committee in New York and served on an Opera Screening Panel for the National Endowment for the Arts. She has been on the faculty of the Amalfi Coast Music Festival in Italy and the Bel Canto Institute in Florence, Italy. In 2013 she took over the reigns as the director of the Boston University Tanglewood Institute Vocal Program. Ms. Bitzas has been on the faculty of Boston University since 1993 and has previously taught



at Gustavus Adolphus College, Wagner College and Ithaca College. She is the daughter of the late Loukia Sarando Bitzas, who was the Director of Music and Art and a teacher in the Worcester Public Schools for over 30 years and who was the catalyst for the development of the Burncoat Arts Magnet Programs and the late Rev. Thomas George Bitzas.



**Megan Condron Smith**  
**Investment Professional**  
**Doherty Memorial High School**

Megan Smith is the Director of National Accounts for S2K Financial, where she is responsible for facilitating relationships and selling agreements with broker-dealer clients.

Megan has been building relationships in the broker-dealer community for over twenty years.

Prior to joining S2K Financial, Megan was the Executive Vice President/ National Account Manager at KBS Capital Markets Group, a position she held for over eleven years. During her tenure at KBS, they rose from a startup sponsor in the alternative investments space to raising over \$6 billion in the independent financial broker-dealer community. In 2005, Megan was the National Account Manager at AXA Distributors, where she covered every area of distribution, including wirehouses, regional firms and banks and she built the financial advisor channel. Prior to AXA, Megan held sales and marketing positions at Liberty Funds Distributors, Fidelity Investment and the former Dean Witter Reynolds.

Megan is a native of Worcester, Massachusetts where she graduated from Doherty Memorial High School. She received her B.A. from Providence College, where she currently serves on their Board of Trustees. Additionally, she serves on the Board of IMPACT Melanoma. Megan currently resides in Boston.



**Dianne Benson Davis**  
**Conservationist/Author**  
**North High School**

In her words, Dianne Benson Davis observed, "The education I received from the Worcester Public Schools provided support, guidance and inspiration that continues to serve me to this day. At Tatnuck Elementary School, Miss Marjorie Smith, an Audubon instructor, was invited to our 5th grade class. She introduced me to the world of nature. The librarian at Chandler Junior High showed me the book, *Summer of the Falcon*, which heightened my interest in falconry and birds of prey. My guidance counselor, Mr.

Jeauono, made me aware of the agricultural program, studying animal and plant sciences, at Burncoat Senior High which was not my quadrant's school. I was the only girl in the program. Burncoat provided me with a work study opportunity by earning credit at the Worcester Science Center as an animal caretaker and volunteer in a newly created Junior Naturalist program. After high school, the Science Center hired me as a zookeeper."

Dianne expanded her involvement with wildlife by becoming a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, the first female falconer in Massachusetts, and by co-establishing with her then husband, "It's an Animal's World", giving educational programs using live animals throughout Worcester County. In 1985, Benson Davis was asked by the Mass Wildlife to raise and release eight young bald eagles at Quabbin Reservoir as part of an effort to bring the bald eagle back to Massachusetts as a breeding bird. She lived alone in a pop-up tent trailer with no running water or electricity for three months in a remote site, caring for her eagles on a 30' nesting tower. Between 1982 and 1988, 41 eagles were released.

Dianne then moved on to Tufts Veterinary School where she taught students how to catch and restrain a variety of wildlife such as eagles, fox and snakes, do physical examinations, take x-rays, draw blood, bandage and how to get them to take medicine. As a single mom and working two jobs, she graduated from Worcester State earning a bachelor's degree in Natural Science. Her husband, Bill Davis, who was a biologist with Mass Wildlife, and she offered programs about endangered species and habitat needs in schools and brought with them a live, non-releasable bald eagle. After Tufts, Benson Davis worked as Natural History Guide for Mass Audubon. In 2002, she returned to the Science Center, now the EcoTarium, as their Certified Wildlife Veterinary Technician, caring for their animals including bald eagles, a polar bear, hawks, owls and reptiles. Twenty-seven years after her part in raising bald eagles at Quabbin Reservoir, she wrote a book about that and other wildlife experiences entitled: *Eagle One — Raising Bald Eagles, A Wildlife Memoir*. There are now over 80 pairs of eagles nesting in Massachusetts with 700 chicks raised and fledged over the last 30 years.

Retiring from the EcoTarium in the spring of 2018, Dianne continues to give educational presentations about wildlife to various groups and enjoys spending time outdoors volunteering for the Greater Worcester Land Trust and with her family. She says, "I am truly grateful to the people within those Worcester schools who took a personal interest in my education, well-being, and potential as they truly had a life changing impacts on my future."



**Dr. David Greene**  
**Educational Leader**  
**Doherty Memorial High School**

David A. Greene is president of Colby College, in Waterville, Maine, a position he has held since July 2014. Prior to his arrival at Colby, he held a variety of leadership positions in higher education, including executive vice president of the University of Chicago and vice president of Brown University. He earned his doctorate and two master's degrees from Harvard University and his bachelor's degree

from Hamilton College.

In his first five years at Colby, Greene has added several new academic programs and expanded the faculty, spearheaded a \$100 million investment in Waterville's downtown, and greatly enhanced access to Colby for talented students from all backgrounds. With substantial new support for financial aid, he has made it possible for students from families with incomes of \$60,000 or less to attend Colby at no cost to the family, and families with incomes of \$150,000 pay only \$15,000 per year, making Colby one of the most affordable private colleges for most Americans.

Greene is indebted to the Worcester Public Schools for providing the foundational education that allowed for advanced study and a fulfilling, meaningful career as an educator. He attended West Tatnuck and Flagg Street elementary schools, Forest Grove Junior High School, and Doherty Memorial High School. The caring, gifted, tireless teachers in the Worcester schools provided immeasurable and lasting value and changed the course of his life for the better. And the opportunity in the summer to mow the lawns of Foley Stadium and move furniture for WPS helped to defray college tuition expenses.

He is the son of Richard and Dolores Greene and one of their seven children to attend the Worcester Public Schools, where both parents taught. Their passion for education continues to be infectious and inspirational. Richard served on the Worcester School Committee, was on the faculty of Assumption College where he helped oversee the education of the next generation of teachers, and later led two universities as president. Dolores taught kindergarten and adult education, and they both instilled values in their children about the essential role of lifelong learning, civic engagement, commitment to justice and equality, and throwing open the doors of opportunity. In 2017 David Greene and his wife, Carolyn, established the Richard and Dolores Greene Scholarship Fund at Colby College in their honor. David and Carolyn have three children who, because of their Worcester heritage, still think a water fountain is appropriately called a "bubbler."



**Matt Mattus**  
**Horticulturist/Author**  
**Burncoat High School**

Matt Mattus has been involved with horticulture throughout his career, which began as a 9 year old who wandered into Horticultural Hall after a weekly downtown piano lesson and decided that he, too, could grow marigolds and exhibit them. By age 10, and through the 1970's, he was exhibiting as a 'junior exhibitor' in the many plant society shows held at Worcester County Horticultural Society's Hall.

A lifelong passion for horticulture hasn't kept Matt from various governance roles. Presently, he is a trustee of the Worcester County Horticultural Society where he serves on the board of Tower Hill Botanic Garden (2015 – 2019) and sits on a number of committees including the Master Plan, the Children's Garden, the Mission Committee, as well as on their most recent CEO Search Committee(s). He is also the founder of the New England Dahlia Society.

Matt is also president of NARGS (the North American Rock Garden Society), a member of the Scottish Rock Garden Club, the Alpine Garden Society (UK), and the American Primrose Society (past editor). He also speaks frequently about his passions at botanic gardens and plant societies. His topics range from South African Bulbs to 19th century conservatory plants to high-elevation alpine.

As the author of the award-winning gardening blog GROWING WITH PLANTS.com, Matt often features many of his travels and in-depth horticultural projects ranging from English Sweet Pea culture to growing and training exhibition Chrysanthemums. His greenhouse and gardens have also been included in many popular magazines, blogs and books including *Martha Stewart Living* (November 2016, Chrysanthemums), *House and Garden* (November 2016, South African Bulbs), and *Better Homes and Gardens*, to name a few. Matt has written two books: *Mastering the Art of Vegetable Gardening* (December 2018) and *Beyond Trend: How to Innovate in an Over-Designed World* (2008).

Matt and his partner Joe live in Worcester with three lovable Irish Terriers, many chickens, Indian Runner Ducks and Tom the Turkey.

**Rev. Dr. Lester A. McCorn**  
**Educational and Spiritual Leader**  
**Doherty Memorial High School**

Rev. Dr. Lester A. McCorn is a visionary leader, activist, scholar and administrator. He was appointed as the Acting President of the College in June of 2017. He was elected by the Board of Trustees in August of 2018 and inaugurated as the 13th President on November 9, 2018. Clinton



College is a private historically Black college (HBCU) founded in 1894 by the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Zion Church. It is located in Rock Hill, South Carolina, just south of metropolitan Charlotte, North Carolina. Newly branded as “A Beacon for Leaders,” Clinton has experienced dramatic growth in student enrollment and has implemented new programs focused on student success, including a leadership/mentorship program called Everyday COACHES, the Department of Education Project Success

program, which provides emergency assistance to students in financial crises, and a new Academic Success Center. Eleven of the students published a book of poems and essays chronicling their journey from trauma to college entitled, “Shattered Glass: A Generation Explains.” Dr. McCorn was chosen in December of 2017 to be a part of a delegation of HBCU presidents to premier universities in China in order to expand the HBCU-China exchange program. At the 2018 commencement ceremony President McCorn awarded the Rev. Dr. Bernice A. King, the daughter of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Clinton College after she delivered the commencement address.

Dr. McCorn was recently chosen to be a part of the 2019 cohort of the Harvard University Seminar for New Presidents. The HBCU Campaign Fund named President McCorn as one of the “Ten Most Dominant HBCU Leaders of 2019.” As Clinton College prepares to celebrate its Quasquicentennial (125th) Anniversary, President McCorn will be leading an aggressive capital campaign to construct new start-of-the-art residence halls, academic buildings and an athletic complex to accommodate a growing student population and expanded campus. He commissioned a commemorative portrait by renowned artist Synthia Saint James entitled, “A Beacon of Light” in honor of the 125th anniversary. The College has adopted the mantra, “Excellence Without Excuse.” Clinton students, known as the Golden Bears, now proudly wear “The Clinton Blazer” for the weekly “Beacon Forum” campus assembly on Wednesdays and for other special occasions. The College has also established a chapter of Alpha Beta Gamma Business Honors Society. President McCorn was inducted as an honorary member in 2018.

Rev. Dr. Lester A. McCorn is an ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and a former pastor of churches in Baltimore, Atlanta, Chicago, Boston and New Haven, Connecticut. He is an alumnus of Morehouse College, Yale Divinity School and Chicago Theological Seminary, he holds the Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) from United Theological Seminary. He is currently a candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Ethical and Creative Leadership, with a concentration in Martin Luther King Jr. Studies and Social Change, at Union Institute and Uni-

versity in Cincinnati, Ohio. He is married to Mrs. Charlene M. McCorn, an elementary school teacher in Fort Mill, South Carolina. They are the proud parents of three adult children William Elijah Benjamin, Maliaka (Mal-LIE-ah-kah) Kenyetta, and John-Charles Wesley.

### **John Morello** **Decorated War Hero (Posthumously)** **North High School**



John Morello was born in Worcester and graduated from North High School. In 1940, when President Roosevelt instituted the Selective Service in 1940, John enlisted and served in the United States Army as part of the First Division.

Similar to many war veterans, John did not speak much about his World War II until 2001 when his granddaughter asked to video him. He had quite a story to tell.

John was one of the first 19 young men in Worcester County who volunteered to serve in World War II. From his first training at Fort Devens and then traveled on the Queen Mary to Scotland and England. During the war he was also sent to Africa where he was involved in active combat and witnessed many casualties. His division traveled from the snowy mountains to the hot desert. He contracted malaria and was allowed to stay with his company.

Later, separated from outfit because of an infection, he was sent to Sicily where he manned antitank guns and carried the wounded down the mountains. In Sicily he shot the muzzle off a German tank from 100 yard for which he received the Silver Star for valor. He returned to England and was in France during the invasion of Normandy. Due to a third bout of malaria, he was not in combat during the invasion and reflected that malaria saved his life. In Germany's Huertgen Forest, a shell exploded, he picked up a fragment and was sent to field hospital in Belgium.

For his bravery in World War II, John Morello earned the following awards: The Purple Heart, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, World War II Victory Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Theater Campaign Ribbon Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, American Defense Medal, and American Campaign Medal. John returned home, married Mary, had four children, was a letter carrier, and spent his weekends enjoying his family, garden and day trips to the lake or beach.



## **Donna Olsen Red Wing Social Pioneer (Posthumous) North High School**

Donna Olsen Red Wing (1950-2018) was born in a Salvation Army women's shelter in Worcester in 1950. Moving frequently in her early childhood, her family ultimately settled in public housing at Great Brook Valley in 1959. From there Donna attended Burncoat High School where she began a lifetime promoting social justice and human dignity by participating in protests against the war in Vietnam. Donna furthered her studies at Quinsigamond Community College and went on to earn a B.A. from Assumption College and an M.A. from Clark University.

After leaving Worcester, Donna emerged as national leader in the quest for equality of all types, with a particular focus on the LGBTQ community. In 1992, she effectively led the fight against a ballot measure in Oregon seeking to declare same sex relationships as "abnormal, wrong, unnatural and perverse". Donna's work was recognized by the national publication *The Advocate* which named her Woman of the Year in 1993. Her work on the campaign was also featured in the Sundance award winning film, *Ballot Measure 9* (1995).

Donna continued her work promoting social justice in top leadership roles in such well-known organizations as the Interfaith Alliance, Human Rights Campaign, One Iowa, and the Eychaner Foundation, among others. She also served as the co-chair of the Obama for America 2008 LGBT Leadership Council. In 1999, Donna was the inaugural recipient of the Walter Cronkite Faith & Freedom Award which recognizes individuals who courageously promote democratic values, defend religious freedom and reinvigorate informed civic participation. Subsequent individuals bestowed with this honor include Bill Moyers, Judy Shepard, Tom Brokaw and Peter Jennings.

Although consistent and steadfast in her views, Donna always reached out to see the humanity in her opponents. As the culture wars were waging across the country, Donna forged a most unlikely friendship with Bob Vander Plaats, the president of the ultra-conservative advocacy group *The Family Leader*. Their surprising strong personal connection, which was initiated by Donna's overtures, became the subject of astonished columns and news pieces from the national press. In an era of deep cultural and partisan divides, Donna's example of civility and dignity is truly inspirational.

Although many of Donna's accomplishments took her to places far away from Worcester, she remained tethered by memory and affection

for the Heart of the Commonwealth. She waxed nostalgically in a local blog that she remembered Worcester as *"a magical city at night in the wintertime. I remember taking the bus downtown on the Wednesdays when the stores stayed open. I loved to go to go to Denholm's with its twinkling Christmas tree all the way up to the roof... Scharfman's Jewelry displays were magnificent. I saw the Rolling Stones at the Auditorium, Van Morrison played the Comic Strip. And J. Geils and the Grateful Dead played Clark University ... It was a working class city that beat with the heart of working people."*



**Jonathan Starr  
Investment Professional/  
Philanthropist  
Flagg Street and Forest Grove  
Middle School**

Jonathan authored *It Takes A School*, published by Macmillan Henry Holt in February 2017. It tells the story of Jona-

than's founding and heading the Abaarso School of Science and Technology, a non-profit educational organization in Somaliland. Abaarso School has broken a decades long drought in Somali education with unprecedented success, including placing students at Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Brown, and MIT. In total the school has sent 150 students to continue their education globally. Abaarso's success has been covered by CBS's 60 Minutes, MSNBC's Morning Joe, Bloomberg BusinessWeek, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, CNN, CBC's The Current, and BBC.

In 2017 Jonathan co-founded Barwaaqo University in Somaliland, the first all-female boarding university in the country. In 2019, he co-founded Kaabe Schools, with the mission of spreading high quality Montessori-inspired K-12 education throughout Somaliland and beyond. Jonathan has spoken at The World Bank, The Nantucket Project, and several school campuses. In 2018, he spoke at Marist College as part of Marist selecting *It Takes a School* as its first-year student required reading. From 2004 – 2008, Jonathan founded and led Flagg Street Capital, a private investment firm that managed \$170 million of investor assets. Prior to Flagg Street, Jonathan worked at SAB Capital, Blavin and Company, and Fidelity Investments. In addition to his full-time professional responsibilities, Jonathan sat on the Board of Directors of Pomeroy IT Solutions, a publicly traded US information technology company.

Jonathan graduated from Emory University, where he received a B.A. Summa Cum Laude in Economics and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa.



## **Fallon Health**

### **Friend of Education**

#### **Fallon Health's commitment to our community**

As a mission-focused organization, Fallon has developed a strong tradition of supporting the communities it serves. Each year, Fallon fulfills its mission by contributing more than \$1.2 million in grants, sponsorships, in-kind donations, hunger relief funding, advocacy and volunteering efforts throughout the Commonwealth. These initiatives are aimed at improving the health and well-being of residents in communities across the Commonwealth.



Our commitment to supporting the Worcester Public Schools and the Worcester Educational Development Foundation (WEDF) is an important part of that mission. It extends over a decade through donations, community involvement and volunteering. These efforts include contributions to and participation in WEDF's events and celebrations. In addition, Fallon has built, restored and replenished food pantries within several Worcester Public Schools and continues to maintain them with annual grants and restocking.

Through our continued partnership, we have engaged hundreds of Fallon Health employees, providing both financial and in-kind resources to transform spaces within the Worcester Public Schools. More recently transforming several new spaces at the Elm Park Community School to help their most underserved families and students. Building a new pantry, clothing boutique, multi-purpose classroom, meeting space and a welcoming waiting area for school guests.

In addition, Fallon employees have assisted in helping students in completing their College Applications in the Fall and with making the SAT's more accessible to all. We continue to make contributions towards the Worcester Public Schools in hopes of creating brighter futures for all our school children and their families.

Fallon Health is proud of our commitment to the Worcester Public Schools and the Worcester Educational Development Foundation as an integral part of our mission of making our communities healthy.

Founded in 1977, Fallon Health provides health care services designed to meet the unique and changing needs of all we serve. Fallon is both an insurer and provider of care.

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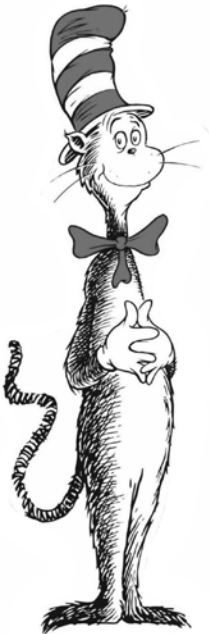


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# COMING THIS FALL



## **Worcester Public Schools Alumni Network**

**Working to connect alumni  
for the next generation**

SEE old friends  
MAKE new friends  
HELP support today's students  
in the Worcester Public Schools



Facebook: Worcester Public Schools Alumni Network  
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Website: WEDFWPS.org



- To work for the welfare of school children, the advancement of education and, the improvement of instructional opportunities for all.
- To advance the interest of the schools and to raise the standards of the professional and non-instructional personnel.
- To form a representative body able to speak with authority for the membership.
- To improve the conditions both of professional and non-instructional personnel relative to their employment and to bargain and enter into collective bargaining agreements for the benefit of the members.
- To cultivate a spirit of understanding and good will among the membership and the community.



## **WEDF BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2019-20**

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## **It's all about the children.....**

The Worcester Educational Development Foundation, Inc. (WEDF) is here for the children of Worcester.

Established in 2005, our mission is to support the programs and initiatives of the Worcester Public Schools as its administrators and teachers work to ensure that every student has a strong educational foundation and is ready for post-secondary education and the world of work and citizenry.

This year, WEDF continues to focus on four key areas: Arts & Culture; Health & Wellness; College & Career Readiness; and STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics). Through the generosity of local foundations, 22,000 students will engage with cultural institutions through classroom preparation followed by grade-level field trips. Coats for Kids will distribute warm winter outerwear to 3,000 students; AVID, funded by Hanover Insurance, will begin preparing students for high level courses beginning in elementary school; memorial scholarships will be distributed; and WEDF will offer mini-grants for classroom teachers and district personnel.

WEDF depends on a caring community to carry out our mission. To embrace more support for the Worcester Public Schools, this year WEDF is initiating an alumni network. If you are interested in joining the alumni network, or if there is a particular area you would like to support through a contribution, please contact WEDF at [execdir@wedfwps.org](mailto:execdir@wedfwps.org). To learn more about WEDF, please visit our website at [wedfwps.org](http://wedfwps.org). To make a donation, please make checks out to: WEDF, Suite 224, 210 Park Avenue, Worcester, MA 01609.



**We deeply appreciate your continuing support.**



**The Worcester Educational Development Foundation, Inc.** was established to support the educational offerings of the Worcester Public Schools. Through a host of partnerships with foundations, corporations, organizations, and individuals, WEDF is able to enrich programs and provide support through materials and

awards. WEDF needs your support to help us strengthen our work. Gifts of all sizes make a difference to students. Please consider giving to assist in nurturing our most precious resource, our children.

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