

# Yellow Jacket

AUGUST 2020

ALUMNI MAGAZINE OF THE GILBERT SCHOOL



## DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS...



**Dr. Anthony Serio, Head of School:** As a member of The Gilbert School Community and as the Head of School/Superintendent I have been reflecting on the challenges we face as a nation. I witnessed the unrest in our cities after the death of George Floyd, the protest and the riots. These are images that I also witnessed in my youth, a struggle for civil rights and equal justice. This quest is something that is deep rooted in all of us. We want equality and justice for all people. We must work against racism and establish societal values that we are all one people, a collective that seeks peace, healing the rift between people and finding our place in assisting all. I have great faith in our Gilbert students that they will contemplate the questions that underlie racism. How do you bridge the great fissures that have opened up in our society? Can you restore human dignity? Can we find kindness and caring and make them the mantra in the years of recovery ahead of us? I say yes we can and will but we must first heal by listening to one another. We appear so divided but I reflect on our students and the emphasis we place on social emotional learning and I am encouraged that we can come together in unity to end racism.



**Susan Sojka, Principal:** As Principal of The Gilbert School I recently had the privilege of celebrating the Class of 2020 at their graduation, wearing masks and socially distancing. This was The Gilbert School's 125th Commencement Ceremony, but, the first in a drive-in theater. Although the COVID-19 pandemic took so many things from this class, I believe our students gained more. The class of 2020 began a movement that showed a heightened appreciation for teachers, healthcare professionals and all essential workers who risk their lives everyday so that we can stay safe and healthy. They were forced to take a pause and reflect upon what is really important in their lives; family, friends and their education. With this time to reflect, they were given the opportunity to change the world. A change that begins by acknowledging, respecting and celebrating our differences, and learning that this country and the world needs to support one another by collaborating, and advocating peacefully for social justice. My wish for the Class of 2020 and all our students at The Gilbert School is that they continue to live life with an open heart and an open mind, being kind and compassionate.



**Charles Seaback, Class of 1972, President, The W. L. Gilbert Trust:** The School year is coming to a close under historically difficult times. It is a testament to our dedicated and imaginative Gilbert community that every student, including those who finished the year at home in their respective country, were able to continue their instruction via distance learning. Our caring community opened the dormitory to any students who chose to stay in the United States during the pandemic. We expect a few students to remain with us through the summer. Our seniors will enjoy the privilege they've earned by walking the stage to receive their diploma in full regalia, albeit at the local drive-in theater. Some long-standing traditions were more impacted. The Blue and Gold celebration of our alumni had to be cancelled. The public recognition of our students who were awarded scholarships was also canceled, but I am pleased to share that The Gilbert Trust awarded over \$141,800 in scholarships.

As we turn our focus towards the fall semester many challenges are emerging regarding the opening of the school. The needs will be great and the Gilbert Trust will endeavor to provide enhancement grants to ensure an exceptional education experience for every student. In order to do so, however, we need your support. These are unprecedented and uncertain times, and I urge you to generously support our annual appeal by making a financial contribution. Donations may be made on the Gilbert Website, [www.thegilbertschool.org](http://www.thegilbertschool.org) and you can become an active participant in The Gilbert Legacy program. Times of stress force us to reflect on the truly important elements of our life. If your Gilbert experience was important to your life journey, consider paying it forward to the students who are just starting to forge their future while here at Gilbert.

### *On the cover:*

**Principal Sue Sojka dressed in The Gilbert School Yellowjacket mascot costume to wish our students well.** On May 8, 2020, 50 decorated cars, filled with faculty, staff, and their families, paraded through Winsted in an appreciation parade. The school community wanted to let students, parents, and families know how much they missed and appreciated them during the closing of school due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



# School News

## Theater Thrives at Gilbert

Photos by Holly (Marchand) Cassaday, Class of 1990

*Arsenic and Old Lace* was performed in the fall of 2019. There were many students involved in this wonderful production, both onstage and backstage. Students in Scott Minnerly's Theater Tech I Class were the primary set builders, stage crew, painters, lighting crew, sound crew, and backstage crew. Director - English Teacher Francesca Daniele, Technical Director - Music Teacher Scott Minnerly, Stage Manager - Kyla Modore, Class of 2022.



*The cast and crew of Arsenic and Old Lace*

*Willy Wonka The Musical* was scheduled to run in March of 2020. The Coronavirus closed the official performances just before opening night. Our students worked tirelessly both on and backstage. A special socially-distanced performance was given for parents only. Director - James Donohue, Musical Director - Music Teacher Adam Atkins, Class of 1990, Technical Director - Music Teacher Scott Minnerly, Producer - English Teacher Katherine (Serafini) Wood, Class of 2004, Stage Manager - Kyla Modore, Class of 2022.



*The cast and crew of Willy Wonka The Musical*



# SPORTS SCRAPBOOK



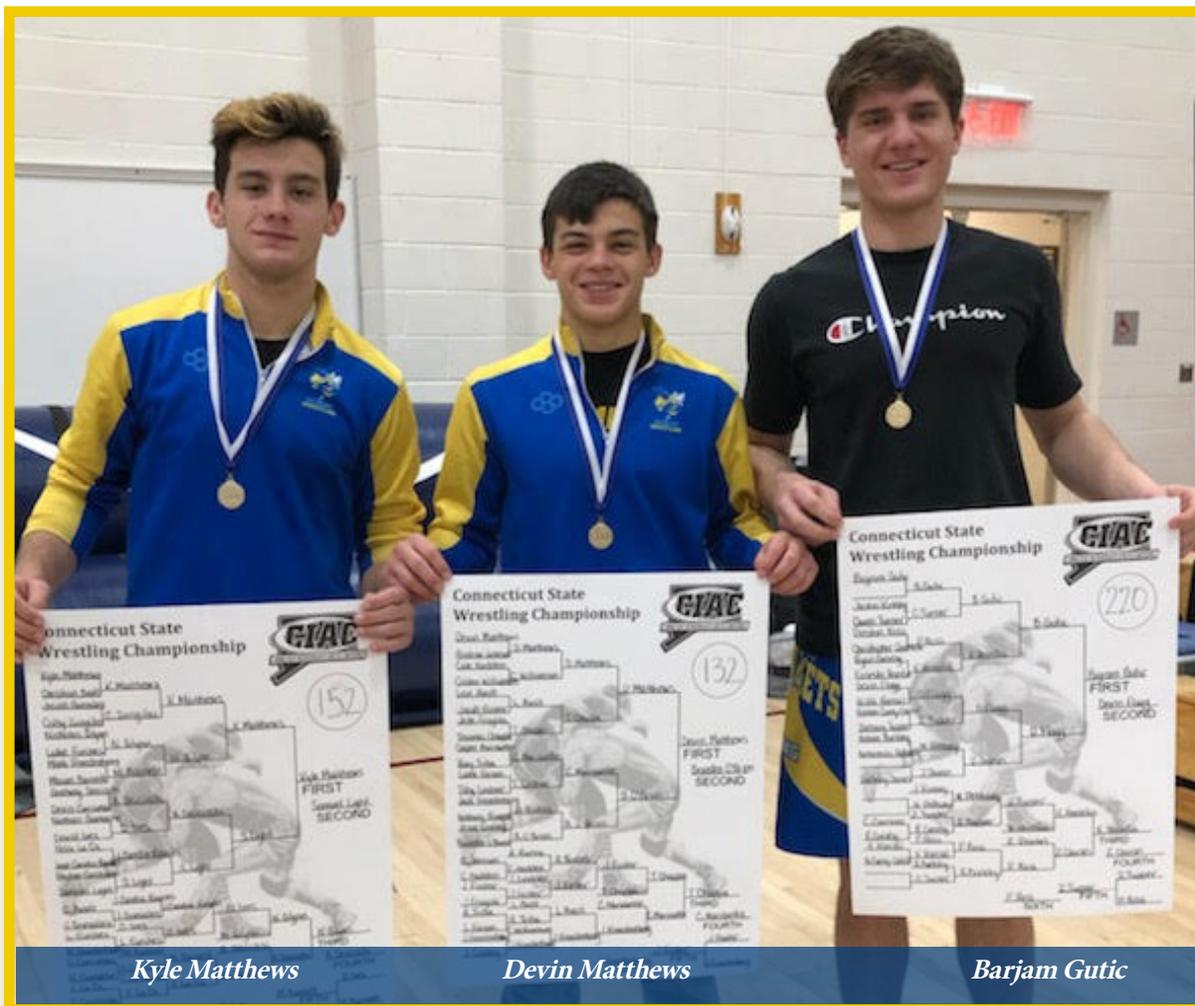
*The Gilbert School Yellowjacket Cheerleaders* cheered on basketball and football games all throughout the school year leading the crowds who attended games in school spirit.



*Kyle Valickis, Son of Korie (Richards) Valickis, Class of 1985*, was named to the First Team for all Berkshire League Soccer.



This season varsity basketball player *Hunter Smith* scored his 1000th career point for the Yellowjackets. He also scored 54 points in one game, setting the scoring record for the most points ever scored by a Berkshire League player.



*Kyle Matthews*

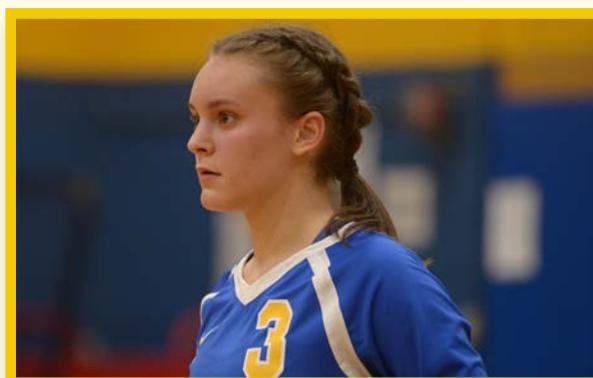
*Devin Matthews*

*Barjam Gutic*

*Twin brothers Devin Matthews and Kyle Matthews, sons of Michael Matthews, Class of 1988 and Shellie (Poley) Matthews, Class of 1993, won the Class S State Championships in their respective weight classes. Devin won at 132 pounds, pinning Braden O'Brien of Bacon Academy in 1:21. He was runner-up a year ago. Kyle pinned Samuel Light of Stonington in 1:49 at 152 pounds to repeat as state champion. Bajram Gutic was also Class S State Champion in his weight class, taking a 5-2 decision over Devin Flagg of Granby.*



*Senior Dylan Keith* received a very prestigious Scholar Athlete award. On behalf of the Doc Boisoeneau Northern CT Chapter of the National Football Foundation, Dylan was honored by being selected as a member of the 2019-20 scholar-athlete class.



*Sydney Kolosky, daughter of Peter Kolosky, Class of 1977, was named to the Second Team for all Berkshire League Volleyball.*



# THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM

*The Gilbert School Class of 2020 includes 11 international students. Three of our proud graduating seniors attended graduation ceremonies on June 16th at The Pleasant Valley Drive-In. Best wishes to all of our graduates! We know you will do great things and make us proud!*



**Danielle Dao** (Dan Thuy Dao) was the first Vietnamese student that has attended our international program. She was an amazing, happy, positive spirit at Gilbert. She studies the violin and while at Gilbert she took lessons from instructors at The Hartt School of Music. Danielle is ending this semester with all A+'s and will be attending Eastern Connecticut State University where she will study biochemistry and minor in music.



**Elton Wang** (Yitao Wang) is an international student from China. Elton's hobbies and interests include drawing, basketball, cycling, visual arts, and travel. Elton is an excellent student and a hard-working and enthusiastic learner. Elton will be attending university in California.



**Tracy Yao** (Chenyi Yao) is an international student from China who has spent all four of her high school years at The Gilbert School. Tracy is a straight A+ student who has enjoyed much academic success as well as participated extensively in school activities. She was a member of Chorus Angelicus Senior Choir, Concert Choir, Chamber Choir, School Drama Club, National Honor Society (Treasurer), Distributive Educational Clubs of America DECA (President), Student Ambassadors (Co-President), Peer Leaders, Leo Club (Treasurer) and the Nutrition Backpack Program. Tracy also participated in CT All-State Music Festival, CT Northern Regional Music Festival. She will attend Smith College in the fall and double major in Economics and Music.

# Appreciation Parade!

by Susan O. Sojka, Principal



Friday, May 8, 2020 was the last day of Teacher Appreciation Week, and we could not have thought of a more fitting way to celebrate our teachers, our students, and our families, than by hosting a parade.

With the help of our local police department, fire department, and EMTs, 50 cars adorned with streamers, balloons, and signs drove through Winsted to show our students that we miss them, and to show our teachers and families (who are now our co-teachers), how much we appreciate them. I was dressed in our yellowjacket mascot costume and waved through my sunroof window as we drove through town in an hour-long appreciation parade.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to teach our students from a distance, which has brought its challenges,

but the most difficult part of distance learning is the lack of face to face interaction with our students. The Gilbert School prides itself on being a school that builds positive relationships with students, and it is those relationships that are the foundation to our students' success. Not being able to be near our colleagues and students was and is difficult. On that day in May, faculty and staff met in the school parking lot to line up, and you would have thought it was the first day of school. The laughter, excitement and joy that permeated throughout was contagious. Although we wanted to hug each other and give high fives, we instead kept our distance and wore masks. But even with our masks on we could feel the smiles on our faces.



# No Ordinary Day: *Graduation 2020*

by Susan O. Sojka, Principal



Valedictorian Sydney Kolosky



Emilienne Bouchard



Erik O'Meara



Principal, Susan O. Sojka

**Graduation day, June 16, 2020, was no ordinary graduation day for The Gilbert School Class of 2020. It was held in a drive-in theater during the COVID-19 pandemic. People wore masks, socially distanced, and sat in their cars listening to the ceremony through their car radios. Instead of applause, everyone honked their horns!**

There hadn't been a "normal" school day since March 12, 2020 for students at The Gilbert School. For months students, families, faculty and staff wondered if there would ever be a "normal" day again. Major events were canceled for our seniors such as spring sports, scholarship night, awards night, and prom, and there was the threat of canceling graduation. It became clear with Connecticut Governor Lamont's COVID-19 Executive Orders that we would not be able to hold our 125th Graduation Ceremony in The Gilbert School's auditorium as we had every other year.

We met with our seniors to get their input on what they would want IF we could hold a graduation. The overwhelming message from our seniors was that they wanted as traditional a graduation ceremony as they could have. They wanted to walk a stage, and be together. The Administrative team met often to brainstorm ideas and put a plan together that would ultimately be approved by The Department of Health. After putting together a plan, an alternative plan, and a contingency plan, the final decision was to have graduation at the Pleasant Valley Drive-In, in Barkhamsted, Connecticut. Through the generosity of Donna McGrane who runs the business, the drive-in was donated for our use. Without Donna's generosity, The Class of 2020 would not have had the graduation ceremony they deserved.



*Salutatorian,  
Maryellen Marino*



*Drive-In Graduation*



*Zachary Steeves*



*Superintendent, Anthony Serio*

“Pomp and Circumstance” played without a procession and the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance, and the singing of “The Star Spangled Banner” was done with only the graduates and speakers allowed to stand. After listening to speeches by Sydney Kolosky, Valedictorian and MaryEllen Marino, Salutatorian, Mr. Steven Sedlack, W. L. Gilbert School Corporation Chairman, gave an honorary diploma to Concetto Marino, 95, (grandfather of our salutatorian) and member of the class of 1944. Mr. Marino served in the Navy in World War II and was unable to receive his diploma. Dr. Serio and I then shared our well wishes for our graduates, and it was then time for what our students had waited for their whole school career -- to hear their names, receive their diplomas and walk “their” stage.

At the end, 77 students earned their diplomas, walked the stage, smiled for pictures and made history as the first graduating class at The Gilbert School to participate in a graduation ceremony at a drive-in theater during a pandemic. Just as brick and mortar does not make a school, a school auditorium does not make a graduation -- people do. The class of 2020 showed resilience, patience and trust and showed that they are and will forever be... Gilbert Strong.

*Congratulations to  
Our Class of 2020!*



# Making *Virtual Music* Together

by Scott Minnerly Music Teacher, Band Director



When we got word a couple of months ago that school was going to be closed for the rest of the 2019-2020 school year, and that classes would be taught online, I of course panicked! A few of my classes could be put online without too many issues, but the idea of rehearsing the high school and middle school bands seemed almost impossible.

There were a few different options for distance learning in music classes, but none of them really captured the essence of what band is.

Fortunately, I watched a webinar on running Virtual Rehearsals and instantly knew that was my best option. After doing an informal Google Meeting with the high school band, we decided that we would try a virtual rehearsal that next Wednesday. As that day approached, I felt myself getting more and more nervous. Would this be something worthwhile for the students, and would it feel like band? We had our share of technical glitches, but overall, the virtual rehearsals were successful and grew to feel almost normal!

The first question that everyone has about virtual rehearsals is “Can you hear the students when they play?” The answer is a resounding no! The way that the internet works, there is a variable amount of delay depending on the student’s connection. Hearing all the students playing at once is impossible right now. So, the next question I would get was, “If you can’t hear them, what is the point?!” Virtual Rehearsals essentially become large group practice sessions where students are taught how to practice properly while going through a typical rehearsal lesson plan.

Here’s how our typical Virtual Rehearsal worked. I would publish the rehearsal plan the day before, so that the students could get all the materials ready. All rehearsal materials were made available by clicking links on that plan. On the day of the

rehearsal we would begin the Google Meet at 11:00 am. I would spend that first bit of time catching up with any students that “came to class early”. Class would officially start at 11:10 when the bell would have normally rung. The next three minutes would be spent by the students warming up, getting music ready, and setting themselves up for rehearsal. Then at 11:13 am, again the time the class would have normally started, we began the rehearsal. We would progress through the lesson plan doing breathing exercises, warming up with long tones and scales, tuning and then rehearsing each of the pieces. While rehearsing the pieces we would focus on skills like articulation, dynamic contrast, and phrasing. After the first few rehearsals I sent out surveys to see what the reaction was:

*“It felt like normal rehearsal we have during school even though I couldn’t hear anyone else, it still made me happy and I’m looking forward to more :)”*

*“The rehearsal went pretty well it kinda felt like a normal day at band almost”*

After the success of the high school band, I began having virtual rehearsals with my middle school band as well! In a perfect world, I would never substitute our normal live rehearsals with virtual ones, but given the circumstances, rehearsing virtually allowed us to continue making music together, and that is the point! I cannot wait until I get to hear all the wonderful (and sometimes not so wonderful!) sounds of young people making music together in the same room! Until then, we will continue to rehearse and make music, just in new and different ways.

# HONORING OUR 2019 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

by Shaw Israel Izikson

*The Gilbert School is well known for nurturing and inspiring students to achieve their personal best academically, emotionally, spiritually for the benefit of their community. Each year, alumni are honored for their outstanding contributions to society. Five honorees were recognized during Gilbert Homecoming activities in October 2019. They join a special group of many men and women who have been honored in the past as Distinguished Alumni of The Gilbert School.*

## ALAN COLAVECCHIO, CLASS OF 1969

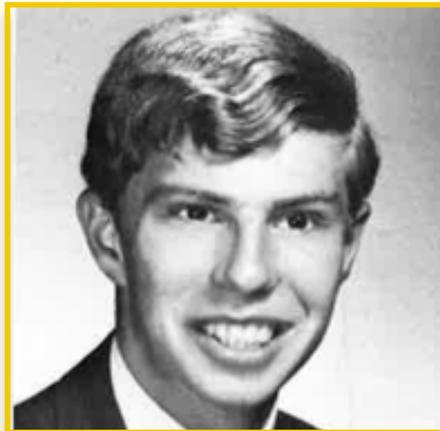
### THE W. L. GILBERT AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE

*This award is presented to an alumnus of The Gilbert School or to a member of our greater society. The recipient has displayed exceptional service toward the betterment of life within his or her own community or humanity in general. This award honors the significant humanitarian and philanthropic contributions made by William L. Gilbert, founder of The Gilbert School.*

Winsted native Alan Colavecchio has given back to his hometown and the Northwest Corner. He told *YellowJacket* magazine, “Getting involved in Winsted, giving back, comes naturally.”

After he graduated from The Gilbert School, he attended the Newhouse School of Communications at Syracuse University, graduating in 1973. Just three days after his commencement, he began his career in advertising in the creative department of a Hartford advertising agency. For ten years Alan held positions in three Hartford advertising agencies before starting Colavecchio Design Inc. in 1983. He grew the business with clients in retail, healthcare, business-to-business, financial and nonprofit organizations.

In 1974 he married his Gilbert classmate Pamela Flaherty, whose father was longtime Gilbert teacher and coach Doc Flaherty. Pam had started her teaching career in the Winchester Public Schools in 1973 and retired in 2014. Pam thoroughly enjoys retirement and they love living in Winchester Center. Alan’s parents also



1969 Gilbert Miracle yearbook



Alan met with Gilbert students studying marketing



Charles Seaback, Class of 1970, President, The W. L. Gilbert Trust, Alan Colavecchio, Class of 1969, Steven Sedlack, Class of 1960, Chair, The Gilbert School Corporation

had met as Gilbert students: Dominic and Nancy (McCarthy), both Class of 1947, classmates after WWII when Dominic returned to finish at Gilbert after serving in the US Navy.

In 1983, as a new business owner in Winsted, Alan got more active in community activities and organizations—and is still involved in some of those same organizations today. Remembering the impact The Gilbert School made in his life, he was pleased to serve as a trustee of The W. L. Gilbert Trust Corporation for 20 years. He has since been honored by being named a Gilbert trustee emeritus. He currently serves on the Winsted boards of The Beardsley & Memorial Library, Foothills Visiting Nurse & Hospice, Winchester Land Trust and Friends of Main Street. He is also a director of Northwest Community Bank.

Regionally he is a member the board of directors of The United Way, Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce, and the advisory board of Wisdom House Retreat and Conference Center in Litchfield. He also served over ten years on the board of directors of the Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation.

“In some ways, my high school years don’t seem that long ago. My favorite memories of Gilbert are the people,” Alan told *YellowJacket* magazine. “I was pretty active at Gilbert and I made a lot of connections and long-term friends.”

Alan has been shrinking his business intentionally. Once with a staff of 12 or so employees, he is now working solo with outside resources and a smaller number of clients. His business and volunteer work keep him fully engaged. When asked about his thoughts on retirement, Alan hesitated and replied, “Not yet.”

## HONORING OUR 2019 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

### BOBBY GAGE, CLASS OF 1983

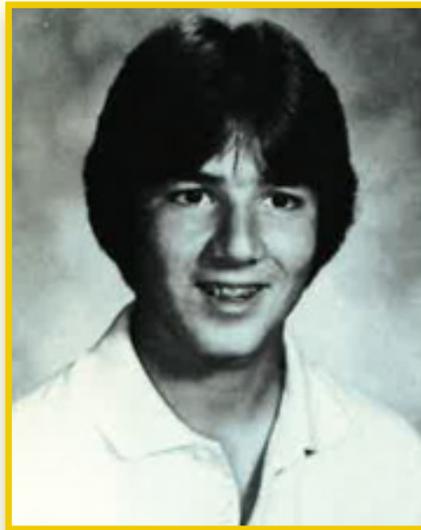
#### OUTSTANDING ATHLETE AWARD

*This award is presented to an alumnus of The Gilbert School who participated on a competitive sports team as a Gilbert student and graduated at least ten years prior to the year the award is given. He or she exhibited outstanding character, sportsmanship, and his or her own “personal best” skill level, while contributing to the overall achievements of the team. His or her positive attitude and team approach were evident and respected not only in competition, but also in the classroom and greater community.*

Gilbert School graduate Bobby Gage has come very far since he started playing baseball in Winsted when he was six years old. He was born and raised in Winsted by parents Charlie and Mildred Gage, and he was the youngest of five siblings. His sisters Charlene, Paula, Debbie and his brother Charlie are all graduates of Gilbert.

A major influence on Bobby was his father Charlie, who was an American Legion and Senior Little League baseball coach, as well as an umpire for all of the baseball leagues in Winsted. During his time at Gilbert from 1979 to 1983, Bobby played soccer, basketball, baseball, and golf. He started playing competitive golf during his junior year at Gilbert.

“I learned a lot from Gilbert and my favorite memories are all from playing sports,” Bobby said. “The camaraderie was great when I was playing on teams. It was such a small school and most of us played on all of the sports teams,” Bobby told the YellowJacket. “As you move up in athletics you start getting more responsibilities when you are a junior or a



1983 Gilbert Miracle yearbook



Bobby speaks with Gilbert students during his Homecoming 2019 visit



Bobby with members of a Gilbert Physical Education Class

senior. I think it carries into life because when you start moving up in your particular career, you gain more responsibility and you deal with it better. It starts right with high school.”

From Gilbert, Bobby attended the San Diego Golf Academy, a business school that prepares students to work in the golf industry. After graduation from the academy his career took off. He played golf at East Tennessee State University, winning seven Division I college tournaments – including the NCAA East Regional Championship and the Southern Conference Championship. During his junior year, Bobby earned the NCAA Division I All-American status and was named Southern Conference Player of the Year.

Bobby wrapped up his amateur career by being chosen to represent the United States in the Friendship Matches against the Japanese National Team in Tokyo—and by winning the gold medal, defeating the Japanese team. He went on to play for eight years on the Web.com tour, qualifying and playing as an exempt member of the PGA Tour. Golf has taken Bobby all over the world. He shared his love of the sport as the Director of Instruction at The Fountains Golf Club in Lake Worth, Florida, and recently has brought his 35 years of experience back to his roots in Winsted. (See page 25 – Class Notes)

Bobby said that he “wouldn’t change a thing” about growing up in Winsted. “I think going to a smaller high school and growing up in a small town was perfect,” he said. “To be able to know everybody in the school and spend so much time with them, it was a very special time for me and I will never forget it, for sure.”

## HONORING OUR 2019 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

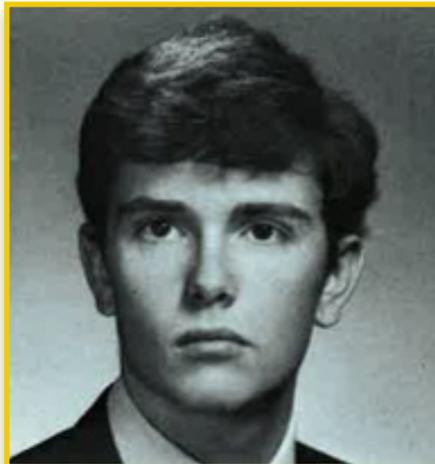
### THE HONORABLE EVERETT H. MADIN, JR. CLASS OF 1969

#### THE GILBERT HERITAGE AWARD

*This award is presented to an alumnus of The Gilbert School who, through significant personal or professional contributions or accomplishments during his or her lifetime, has distinguished himself or herself within the history of the school, bringing honor and pride to all alumni and representing the traditions and heritage of The Gilbert School.*

The late Everett H. Madin Jr., class of 1969, was honored posthumously by his family and The Gilbert School. Everett's father, Everett H. Madin, Sr., was a 1942 graduate of Gilbert. Everett Jr., or Skip as he was known at Gilbert, was born and raised in Winsted. After graduating from Gilbert, Everett went on to study art at Northwestern Connecticut Community College and then to Syracuse University. He graduated with honors from Syracuse in 1975 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. It was at Syracuse that Everett met his wife, Linda Albert. They married in April of 1976, had five children together and raised their family in Litchfield County.

In 1977, Everett began an 11-year career at the Hitchcock Chair Company, rising to the position of New Hartford plant manager. After the company was sold in 1988 he made a major career change and decided to study law at the University of Connecticut. In 1992, at 41 years old, he graduated third in his class and started practicing law at RisCassi & Davis. His work focused on personal injury, medical malpractice, and product liability cases. He achieved respect and recognition leading to his appointment



1969 Gilbert Miracle yearbook



Linda Madin, wife of the late Everett Madin

as a superior court judge in 2007 by Connecticut Governor Jodi Rell. He began serving in Superior Court Part A in Hartford, then moved to Litchfield Juvenile Court. His last assignment as a judge was at Torrington Juvenile Court.

"He found his niche in juvenile court as he saw it as an opportunity to make a positive impact on young lives," Gilbert Trustee and awards event host Craig Schroeder said about Everett at the October 2019 ceremony. "As accomplished as Judge Madin's career was, his priority was his family and his faith. He was known as a man of the highest integrity, moral character, and wisdom."

Everett passed away on December 2, 2008. Christopher Madin, Everett's son, accepted the award for his father. "I'm proud to be here on my father's behalf," Madin said. "We miss him every day. I think he would have been immensely gratified for receiving this award. Despite his distinguished career, my dad was a private and humble guy. One of the things that is hard to convey in a biography is the person my dad was. Some of you here knew my father before I ever even existed, and I heard some cool things about him today. Throughout his career, my father treated everyone with respect and integrity. He wasn't just a great lawyer. He was just a very kind person."



Fifth from the left, Chris Madin, representing his father at Gilbert

## HONORING OUR 2019 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

### CHRISTOPHER MOREHOUSE, CLASS OF 1989

#### DISTINGUISHED PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

*This award is presented to an alumnus of The Gilbert School who has demonstrated outstanding achievement in his or her professional life. The recipient has brought distinction to himself or herself and The Gilbert School through participation, commitment, and leadership in a chosen profession. The length and quality of career accomplishments, dedication to excellence, and respect among colleagues are all noteworthy.*

Throughout his career, Gilbert School graduate Dr. Christopher Morehouse has brought dedication and excellence to music education. Yet, with a host of accomplishments and accolades, he said that he still holds fond memories of his time at Gilbert and was pleased to return to his alma mater last year.

“Gilbert is the place that developed my passion for music. It influenced my decision to become a teacher and band director. Looking back, I most remember the opportunities I had while at Gilbert. To this day, music and swimming continue to be important in my life.”

Chris grew up in Winsted and as he moved on from Gilbert he pursued his love for music and teaching. He received his Bachelor of Music degree in music education from Ithaca College, Master of Music degree in wind ensemble conducting from the New England Conservatory of Music, and Doctor of Musical Arts degree in conducting, wind emphasis, from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.



1989 Gilbert Miracle yearbook



Dr. Chris Morehouse, visiting music students at Gilbert



Band Director, Scott Minnerly, Chris, Classmate Ray Robitaille, Class of 1989

He went on to teach for seven years in the Amityville Union Free School District as a Middle School Band Director and in the Belmont Public Schools as a High School Band Director and District-Wide Instrumental Music Instructor. Chris has also served as the conductor of the University of Dayton Symphonic Wind Ensemble, conductor and music director of the Cincinnati Youth Wind Ensemble, assistant conductor for the Concord Band, guest conductor of the Metropolitan Wind Symphony, and commissioned works project chairperson on the executive board of the Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association. He has been published in nine volumes of the *Teaching Music through Performance in Band* series.

Chris made his Carnegie Hall debut with the Southern Illinois University (SIU) Wind Ensemble at the New York Band and Orchestra Festival and toured the People’s Republic of China with the SIU Wind Ensemble and Concert Choir in May 2009. He is currently the Director of Bands and of Music at Southern Illinois University, in Carbondale, Illinois.

Recalling his Gilbert years, he said, “I remember the many hours on the bus traveling to swim meets and I still remember the time we beat Shepaug in our home pool.” He continued, “As for music, I distinctly remember the band trip to California and playing *Lassus Trombone* with the trombone section as a feature. I also remember playing Gustav Holst’s *First Suite, Italian in Algiers Overture*, and *Selections from Jesus Christ Superstar*, in addition to playing in the summer band.”

Chris added that he has fun remembering his time at Gilbert. “It is hard to believe that it has been 30 years since I graduated,” he said. “We certainly did grow up a lot during our four years.”

## HONORING OUR 2019 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

### AARON BUNEL CLASS OF 2001

### YOUNG ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

*This award is presented to an alumnus of The Gilbert School who graduated from Gilbert within the past twenty years. The recipient is chosen based on achievement of outstanding personal or professional success in business, entrepreneurship, or the community. Through such accomplishments, he or she serves as a role model for younger individuals.*

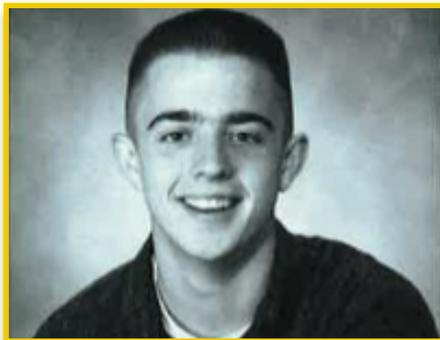
In the years since Aaron (A.J.) Bunel graduated from The Gilbert School, he has done great things for the music program at Thomaston High School.

Born and raised in Winsted, A.J. attended the University of Connecticut after he graduated from Gilbert. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in 2005 and went on to earn a Master's Degree in Education from the University of Bridgeport in 2007.

As part of his program for the University of Bridgeport, A.J. was placed as a full-time intern at Thomaston High School.

Upon completing his degree at the University of Bridgeport, he was hired to head the 7th through 12th-grade music department at Thomaston High School in the fall of 2007.

During his tenure at Thomaston High School he has helped grow the music program from 17 students in the first year to



2001 Gilbert Miracle yearbook



A.J. with Katherine (Serafini) Wood, Class of 2004, A.J.'s cousin, and an English teacher at Gilbert

over 100 students.

“With assistance from his former Gilbert teacher Scott Minnerly, Aaron was able to re-establish the Thomaston High School marching band which had not existed for over 20 years,” W. L. Gilbert Trustee Craig Schroeder said at the awards ceremony in October 2019.

In fall 2014, A.J. was named the high school's basketball coach and in fall 2015 he was named the high school's co-athletic director. Outside of Thomaston High School, he has worked in musical theater and has served as the music director for various productions at the Warner Theater, Thomaston Opera House and the Connecticut Repertory Theater.

“Many hands went into molding me into being this distinguished young alumni that you see today,” A.J. said at the awards ceremony. “However, there are no two people more important than my parents. My parents have loved me, challenged me and inspired me every day of my life.” A.J.'s parents are also proud Gilbert alumni: Charles “Pink” Bunel, Class of 1966 and Regina Serafini Bunel, Class of 1970.

A.J. also gave thanks to the rest of his family and Gilbert music teacher Adam Atkins, Class of 1990. “Mr. Atkins, aside

from my parents, is as integral in my professional success as anybody,” A.J. said. “He took a concerned watch over me, although at the time I didn't deserve it. He influenced who and how I wanted to be as a teacher. He empowered students to become autonomous in his class and to think critically.”



A.J., right at home with Gilbert students

# REUNIONS

## Class of 1943 ~ 76th Reunion

The Class of 1943 celebrated their 76th reunion with a luncheon at Green Woods Country Club on October 3, 2019. They gathered with their guests and heard a short program by Dr. Anthony Serio, Head of School, Susan Sojka, Principal, and Craig Schroeder, Gilbert Trustee and Liaison. These invited guests provided information about the changes at Gilbert, the International Residency Program, and answered many questions about the status of The Gilbert School.



*Margaret O'Brien Riiska, Barbara Palmenberg Reidy*



*Carol Brady Gaylord (Class of 1969), Magdalena Brady, Shirley Kolega Moore*



*Susan Moore Belle-Isle (Class of 1970), Carol Brady Gaylord (Class of 1969), Magdalena Brady, Shirley Kolega Moore, Dr. Anthony Serio, Craig Schroeder*

# REUNIONS

## Class of 1955 ~ 64th Reunion

Members of the Class of 1955 got together for their annual luncheon on July 19, 2019 at Green Woods Country Club. They had a great time, talking about the past, present and future. They all agreed that because they had such an enjoyable time, they would have another reunion luncheon gathering on July 17, 2020. Of course COVID-19 has put a hold on their plans, but they are considering a virtual reunion sometime in the future, in lieu of an in-person event!



*Front Row Seated: Josephine Radocchio, Jim Foster, Syliva Noel Bovi, Hubert Parmelee  
Standing: Bill Ritchie, Marcella Casey Miller, Rose Marie Brady Smith, Greg Woodworth,  
Suzanne Turner Dooley, Robert Sturm*

# REUNIONS

## Class of 1969 ~ 50th Reunion

The Class of 1969 celebrated their 50th reunion on Gilbert's Homecoming Weekend. They enjoyed a buffet dinner and much merry-making at Green Woods Country Club on October 26, 2019.



*Carole Correnti Swanson and Germaine Thibault Drennen*



*Members of the class who came to Gilbert from St. Anthony School*



*Members of the class who came to Gilbert from Hartland.*

# REUNIONS

## Class of 1979/1980 ~ 40th/39th Combined Reunion

The Class of 1979 celebrated their 40th class reunion together with the Class of 1980s 39th class reunion. The classmates and friends gathered for food, music, games and raffles at Maasser Park on August 17, 2019.



*Classes of 1979 and 1980*



*Class of 1979 and spouses: Laura-Jean Case Whitford, Sharon Cadrain Riccucci, Kim Gallant Washington*



*Amy Gifford-Knapp (1985), Mike Kane (1980), Kathy Hilbert Venezia (1979), Phyllis Kaplan (1980), Joe Onion (1980), Sandra Carpentier Bray (1979), Candace Williams (1980)*



*Tito Martinez (1979)  
Joann Young Leifert (1980)*



*Diane Gubetta Ruopp (1979) and husband, Kurt Williams (1979), Jeanne Phillips Anthony (1979)*



*Class of 1979 Maureen McCarthy-Magill and Janine Lafountain*

*Class of 1979/1980 40th/39th Combined Reunion Continued...*



*Class of 1979 Debbie Ortman Baril  
Robbin Schnier Beauchamp,  
Todd Parsons and his wife Beth*



*Class of 1979 Rick Goulet and George Rose  
and spouses*



*Class of 1979 Marcel Baril and  
Debbie Ortman Baril*



*Class of 1980 Joe Onion and John Menard*



*Some Class of 1979 and 1980 Attendees*



*Class of 1979 Robbin Schnier Beauchamp,  
Susan Gomlinski Maloney, Maureen  
McCarthy-Magill and Tito Martinez*



*Chris Battista (1979), Jeff Sesko (1980),  
Jeanne Phillips Anthony (1979),  
Dennis Dombrowski (1980)*



*Nadene Stein, Sandra Carpentier Bray*



*Class of 1980 Gilliam Magee Fenton,  
Mary Battista Johnson, Michael Kane,  
Carrie Cox Borgman, Nadene Stein*



*Brett Wahlberg, Darlene Jacobs Wahlberg  
(1979), Tom Lavieri (1978)*



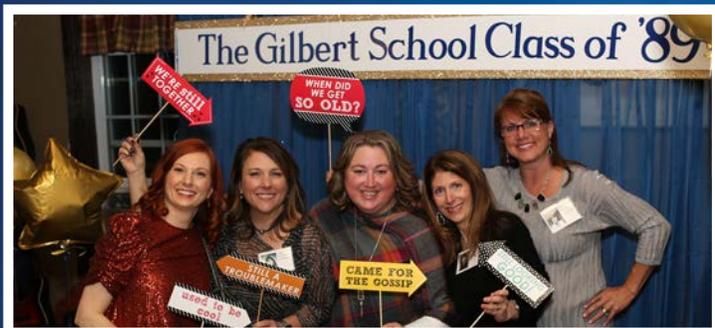
*Amy Gifford-Knapp and husband, Rob Riiska,  
Dave Pavlak, Jeff Dombrowski, Ron Pfaefflin*



# REUNIONS

## Class of 1989 ~ 30th Reunion

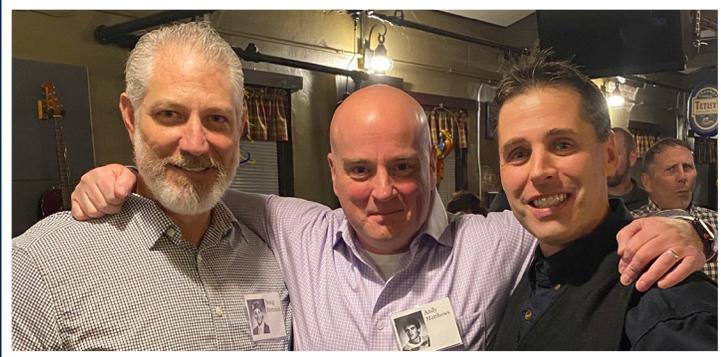
The Class of 1989 celebrated their 30th reunion at the Parrott Delaney Tavern in New Hartford, on November 30, 2019. They had over 50 classmates and spouses attend, along with four of their former teachers, Mrs. Welcome, Mrs. Barber, Mr. Schroeder and Mr. Cox. They enjoyed a buffet dinner, a Gilbert themed sheet cake for dessert and a signature cocktail – The Stinger! The reunion committee created a memorial table to remember the classmates they have lost, a trivia game with prizes, a fun selfie station, and a class memories slideshow set to music. A wonderful time was had by all!



Left to right: Jeannette (Giannatasio) Brennan, Katie (Hanrahan) Anderson, Kelly (O'Dell) Longhi, Marianne (Iacino) Vacca, Lisa (Horvath) Gaglione



Mrs. Welcome, Mrs. Barber



Doug Brennan, Andy Matthews, Mike Roy



Kristin (McCorison) Dalla Valle, Deidre (Bibeau) Plaskett



Astrid (Haskins) Robitaille and Ray Robitaille



Mr. Cox, Pat Cooke, Carm D'Urso

# REUNIONS

## Class of 1999 ~ 20th Reunion

Gilbert's Class of 1999 celebrated their 20th year high school reunion on Saturday, October 19, 2019. The event was held at Green Woods Country Club in Winsted. About 50 Alumni were in attendance. The class enjoyed a nice buffet dinner and danced the night away to JP's Legacy (a local band who also happen to be Gilbert alumni). Mr. Cox and Mr. Schroeder were also in attendance. Mr. Schroeder gave a wonderful update of all the changes happening at Gilbert. It was a fun night of catching up with fellow classmates! Classmates can't wait until the next one!



*Amy (Douglass) Jeannette, Megan (Lovetere) Schibi, Melissa (Leifert) Lillie, Rachel (Hurlbut) Incillo, Eden (Chapman) Tycienski, Katie (Donovan) Mangione*



*Reunion planning committee: Katie (Donovan) Mangione, Eden (Chapman) Tycienski, Amy (Douglass) Jeanette, Melissa (Leifert) Lillie, Megan (Lovetere) Schibi, Tiffany (Winn) Holcomb*



# A College Graduate Reflects on Covid-19

*Essay by Isabell Rein, Class of 2016*



*Isabelle Rein, Class of 2016 with her sister, Penelope Rein, Class of 2019*

**I**sabelle Rein, a 2020 College Graduate of Lafayette College shared her thoughts with us.

2020— not what any of us expected. On New Years Day, I celebrated the advent of the new year with a dear friend who had already graduated— someone whom I admire deeply. We spent the night before, talking about what 2020 would be like. It was the year in which I’d finish my thesis research, spend my last semester on campus, celebrate my graduation and embark on new adventures. It would be a year of celebration.

There was no way to be prepared for this. It feels dramatic to talk about how COVID-19 has affected me because I know that many others have experienced greater losses than I. Nevertheless, my losses are real.

When I was young, my parents told me to always work hard. When I experienced success, they reminded me not to become complacent. For as long as I can remember, college was my future. I

was always excited to think about where I would go to school and what I would study. I had such fun imagining my future and the exciting milestones that were ahead.

I expected to cherish my last months on campus with friends and professors, defending my honors thesis and celebrating an accomplishment I’ve anticipated my entire life. I expected to have time to say goodbye to my friends. I didn’t get the chance. I was angry. I grieved the abrupt end to my college career and the disorienting routines of “Zoom University.” I grieved the celebrations and walking across a stage at commencement, something I’ve been working toward my whole life. These are real losses, for all of us, and our families. We needed to grieve the discrepancy between what we imagined this year would be like and what it actually ended up being.

My college degree will still open doors, even though I’ll get it in the mail instead of having it personally handed to me. Although the lack of a commencement

ceremony feels as though it lessened my accomplishment, I know that it should not. It still required hard work and sacrifice, in a very challenging time.

The world as we’ve known it has changed drastically in the last three months. As a new college graduate expected to embark upon her professional life, it has been rather discouraging to enter adulthood while the world is full of grief, hatred and ignorance. It’s hard to know how I can make a difference, but it won’t keep me from trying.

For now, I am in working in Badlands National Park in South Dakota, as a natural resources interpretive assistant with the Geoscientists in the Park (GIP) program. Living in the park has helped me reset mentally and given me new purpose to use my degree and teach people about geology and our beautiful, natural world. I hope to be able to engage with park visitors again once it is safe to do so and help them find comfort in the outdoors during this unnerving, unprecedented time.

# ClassNotes

*Alumni News 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!*



**1998 Ellen Geraghty**  
Ellen is being inducted into the Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame for

2020. She is still the all-time leading scorer at Gilbert with 1,806 points! Ellen set the Gilbert record with over 600 assists as a point guard, was a four-time All-Berkshire League, and three-time all-state selection. This new award is one of many for Ellen. She was selected by The Gilbert School as one of our Distinguished Alumni and been inducted into the Hoop Zone Hall of Fame by the *Waterbury Republican-American* as one of the “best players of

all-time” from area high schools. After Gilbert, Ellen played collegiately at the University of Maine, helping the Black Bears to three America East Conference Championships, going undefeated in the conference regular season her senior year and earning bids to the NCAA tournament twice and once to the WNIT. Ellen was also a team captain for two years. During and after her time at Maine, she played on several touring teams with Athletes in Action in the USA, Czech Republic, Spain, and Colombia. She has a variety of experiences both domestically and internationally providing team building and mental training experiences for teams and camps including Florida State, Gordon College, Uppsala Basket and working with the Colombian Women's National team at the Pre-Olympic Tournament. Congratulations, Ellen!



**2017 Arlene Blackwell**  
Arlene has been named a Scholar-Athlete and a member of the Little East Conference

Academic All-Conference Team. Arlene just completed her junior year at Eastern Connecticut State University. She plays on the Women's Indoor Track & Field team and majors in Environmental Science. Congratulations, Arlene!

## *Congratulations Jake and Kerry!*



*Jake Smith, Class of 2008, shared this beautiful photograph of his wedding to Kerry Hayes, on June 12, 2020. Congratulations Jake and Kerry! From left: Jake Smith, Kerry, and Jordie Smith (2008).*



*Jordie Smith (2008), Jake Smith (2008), Ted Smith (2012), and Tim Smith (2016) – brothers and Gilbert School Alumni.*

# ClassNotes



**1990  
Holly Marchand  
Cassaday**

This year, the High School Yearbook staff presented Holly with the 2020 Miracle

Dedication. Throughout the year, Holly has taken pictures of many events at Gilbert, including football and basketball games, most team sporting events, school plays, band competitions, along with so many other important school events. Thank you and congratulations, Holly!



**1983  
Bobby Gage**

Bobby has returned to Winsted's Green Woods Country Club where his professional golf career began, as

the new head golf pro. He will spend his winters teaching golf at The Fountains in Lakewood, Florida and continue to enter regional and state golf tournaments. Welcome home, Bobby!



**1984  
Barbara  
Battista Silverio**

Barbara, Principal of Pearson School in Winsted has been named the state's

2020 Elementary School Principal of the year by the Connecticut Association of Schools and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. Congratulations, Barbara!

**1968 Ruthann Bruno Horvay**

A parade was held to honor retiring Winchester School District educator Ruthann Horvay on May 24, 2020. The parade was a surprise for Ruthann and was co-organized by her daughter, Bridgit Horvay Espinoza (1999). Participants in the parade drove by Ruthann's house and wrote messages to her that they put onto her lawn as they drove by. Ruthann started her education career in the Winchester School District in 1996 when she was named the first director of the Winsted Family Resource Center, which included the Parents as Teachers program for families with children prenatal to kindergarten entry. Over time she has served as the coordinator for the school district's Cradle to Classroom, an adjunct faculty member of Northwestern Connecticut Community College's Early Childhood program, a Kindergarten Transition Director for the school district, and an educational consultant to EdAdvance Head Start Prenatal to Five programs.



**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, - we want to know! Photos for publication are always welcome! Send your news to the Alumni Department at [gilbertalumni@gilbertschool.org](mailto:gilbertalumni@gilbertschool.org).

# In Memoriam

**1930**  
Alice L. (Bonhotel) Lewis  
December 5, 2019

**1935**  
Stanley A. Staszowski  
September 30, 2019

**1935**  
Nathan E. Woodworth  
December 14, 2019

**1938**  
Mildred "Minna" (Raydenbow) Passini  
March 9, 2020

**1939**  
Noela (Marquette) Berry  
December 15, 2019

**1940**  
Roland J. LaReau, Sr.  
March 1, 2018

**1942**  
Mary Kay (Coffey) Davey  
November 2, 2019

**1942**  
Mae (Gillette) Fecto  
November 12, 2019

**1942**  
Josephine LaGamba  
October 13, 2019

**1942**  
Ruth (Allen) Rogers  
April 14, 2020

**1942**  
George Santolin  
June 20, 2019

**1943**  
Mary (O'Dwyer) Welz  
February 22, 2020

**1944**  
Richard L. Nassif, Sr.  
June 11, 2019

**1944**  
George Nichols  
November 4, 2019

**1944**  
Ellen F. (Scalise) Wurfl  
March 5, 2020

**1946**  
Thelma (Pedersen) Dalene  
October 29, 2019

**1946**  
Michael Noviasky  
December 14, 2019

**1946**  
Mary Pappalardo  
November 13, 2018

**1947**  
Margaret "Peggy" (Sampson) Carcano  
December 15, 2019

**1947**  
Maurice "Moe" Grasso  
December 30, 2019

**1947**  
Delma (Desci) Perry  
November 7, 2019

**1947**  
Barbara (Corser) Welcome  
June 10, 2020

**1949**  
Shirley (Nanni) Guerard  
June 25, 2020

**1949**  
Paul F. Julian  
April 7, 2020

**1949**  
Sylvia (Pinney) Mullen  
February 15, 2018

**1949**  
Marion (Pease) Naegelen  
December 3, 2019

**1949**  
Jeanne (Lachat) Wilcox  
May 26, 2020

**1950**  
George C. DeMars  
February 17, 2020

**1950**  
Mary (Sequenzia) Dileo  
October 31, 2019

**1951**  
George C. Centrella, Sr.  
April 18, 2020

**1951**  
Ann (Kenney) Lizotte  
January 2, 2018

**1951**  
Kathleen (Nulty) Simmons  
April 16, 2019

**1952**  
Arthur Sampson  
December 2, 2019

**1953**  
Maurice "Moe" Asselin  
November 22, 2019

**1953**  
Yvonne Beaudoin  
December 3, 2019

**1953**  
Mary (English) Mastrobattista  
March 2, 2020

**1953**  
Ann (English) Bodey Travaglini  
December 23, 2019

**1954**  
Curtis K. Case  
January 17, 2020

**1954**  
Henry W. Haburey, Sr.  
September 19, 2019

**1954**  
James H. Wadhams  
April 4, 2020

**1955**  
Robert D. Herdling  
November 9, 2019

**1955**  
Norma (Lovely) Jarvis  
June 10, 2020

**1955**  
Ellenjayne "EJ" (McCurdy) King  
August 4, 2019

**1955**  
Nancy (Busher) Murphy  
May 14, 2020

**1955**  
Truda (Wilber) Tanner  
November 20, 2019

**1956**  
Beverly (Jenkins) Odell  
November 26, 2019

**1956**  
Vincent Vogellus  
January 28, 2020

**1957**  
George Koenemund  
January 5, 2020

**1957**  
Garfield "Gary" LaFountain  
February 27, 2020

**1957**  
Wilbur Smith  
August 8, 2019

**1957**  
Paul Stotler  
September 23, 2019

**1957**  
Edward N. Weaving  
May 4, 2020

**1957**  
Carolyn A. (Robbins) Zucco  
December 1, 2019

**1958**  
Michel G. Francis  
April 6, 2020

**1959**  
Judith (Wetmore) Puhalski  
June 10, 2019

**1959**  
Margaret "Peggy" (O'Neill) Veretto  
August 27, 2019

**1961**  
Richard E. Simmons  
May 15, 2020

**1962**  
Cheryl (Beecher) Morris  
July 11, 2019

**1962**  
James D. O'Meara  
August 28, 2019

**1962**  
Gail (Roarke) Sindland  
April 13, 2018

**1963**  
Arnold L. "Skip" Travaglin, Jr.  
July 24, 2019

**1964**  
David Millard  
April 30, 2019

**1967**  
Richard Kemp  
January 28, 2020

**1968**  
Elizabeth E. (Walsh) Troy  
March 7, 2020

**1969**  
John P. Stone, Jr.  
May 20, 2020

**1970**  
Alan Beauregard  
March 2, 2018

**1970**  
Ronna Emery  
July 8, 2019

**1970**  
Frank J. Lambert, Jr.  
November 4, 2019

**1970**  
Francis "Fran" J. Pettit, Jr.  
March 14, 2020

**1971**  
Wade E. Cole  
March 15, 2020

**1971**  
William McCarthy  
November 23, 2019

**1973**  
Charles "Skip" Marsh  
October 30, 2019

**1977**  
Kirby Dale Gagnon  
December 30, 2019

**1988**  
Joyce (Dalene) Andrighetti  
November 21, 2019

**1988**  
Michelle M. Martin  
February 11, 2020

**1989**  
Tyler J. Morris  
January 1, 2020

**1991**  
Jeffrey T. Carroll  
July 26, 2019





# THE GILBERT SCHOOL

HERITAGE. INNOVATION. OPPORTUNITY.



Adam Atkins, Faculty, Class of 1990, congratulates the Class of 2020

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## Keep the Buzzzzz 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](mailto:gilbertalumni@gilbertschool.org)

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