



# PORT NEWS

*Port Jervis City School District*

## **CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATE**

The 100-year-old Port Jervis Middle School is closed this school year for major renovations and an addition to the building. Considered to be one of the most beautiful and iconic buildings in the City of Port Jervis, it will be renovated from top to bottom and become a grades K-5 elementary school upon completion. The new addition to the building will include the main office, cafeteria, gymnasium and an elevator.

The school, located at 118 East Main Street, was a high school from 1922-1961 and then a middle school from 1961-2022. Grades K-2 from ASK Elementary will move into this school in the fall of 2023 or early 2024 while grades 3-5 will move into their section of the building later in 2024.

Phase two of the capital project will focus on the Route 209 campus. The athletic fields and tennis courts at the high school will be renovated during the summer of 2023. The playground area at ASK Elementary will be changed into athletic fields for the modified sports of soccer, football, baseball and softball, and be completed in the summer of 2024. Also taking place over the summer of 2024 will be the conversion of typical classroom space into technology education, family and consumer science, art, band and chorus rooms. The current ASK Elementary will become the grades 6-8 Port Jervis Middle School starting in the fall of 2024.

Having PJHS and PJMS together on one campus has many benefits. First, there will no longer be elementary students on campus with the older students. Second, middle school students will benefit by having access to better facilities and advanced courses. Third, it will be easier to share hard to fill teaching positions when both schools are under one roof and use the same bell schedule. Fourth, bus rides will be shorter since all the students are traveling to one location.

Go to our website: [www.pjschools.org](http://www.pjschools.org) and click on the "Capital Project" icon to see up-to-date photos and drone videos of the project.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE**

**Dr. John Bell**

It's great being back in Port Jervis! Thank you to the many people who have shared kind words and been so supportive of my return. This is my hometown and I want to help make our school district the best it can possibly be! The school year is off to a great start thanks to the hard work of our staff and students. I have been traveling around the district talking to staff, students and parents about current conditions as well as their hopes and dreams for our school district. We welcome your ideas to help make us better. Please see the article and survey link on page 4 to share your thoughts.

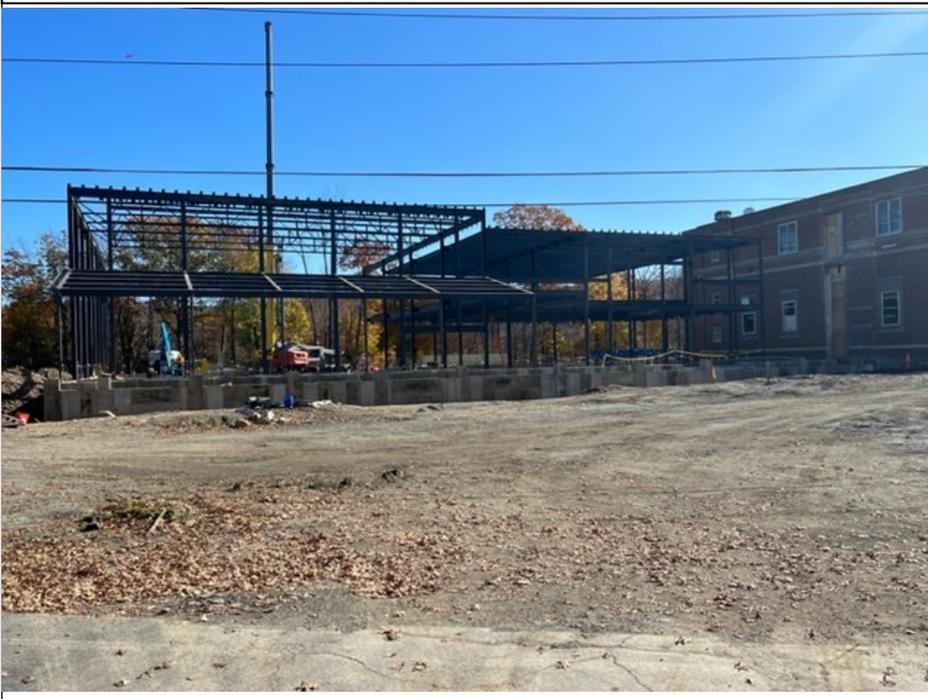
The largest capital project in school district history has begun with a complete renovation of the middle school in preparation of it becoming an elementary school. Please see the adjacent article for more information and see the construction pictures on our website.

Involved parents/guardians make a difference in the education of a child. We thank you for all you do to support your children on a daily basis. We would love to see you at parent-teacher conferences on Monday, November 21. Please see the article on page two for more information.

In closing, I want to reiterate the four student goals I outlined in the district calendar that was mailed home this summer. We ask all students to push themselves academically, have great attendance, exhibit outstanding behavior, and get involved in extra-curricular activities. This is the recipe for student success.

## **WHAT'S INSIDE**

- 2** Parent Conferences  
Fall Sports Update
- 3** New Administrators  
Alumni Hall of Fame
- 4** How Can We Improve?



## INTRODUCING OUR NEW ADMINISTRATORS!!

All organizations rise and fall on the quality of their people. We are very excited with three recent additions to our administrative leadership team:



**Tanya Duryea** is the new Director of Pupil Personnel Services (PPS). The PPS office, under Mrs. Duryea's leadership, oversees all aspects of special education as well as related services such as psychology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, vision and speech. She also oversees the pre-kindergarten program, homeless student education, English as a New Language (ENL) and nursing/health services. Mrs. Duryea was the director of PPS at the Monticello Central School District for the past eight years. Prior to Monticello, she was a special education teacher at Minisink Valley and Port Jervis. She was also the Committee on Special Education (CSE) chair at Port Jervis for 5 years.



**Peggy Fitzgerald** is the new assistant director of PPS. Ms. Fitzgerald previously served as Supervisor of Special Education in the Arlington Central School District for the last 5 years. Prior to Arlington, she worked in Port Jervis for 11 years as a special education teacher and 3 years as the CSE chair. As you can tell from the long list of programs and services listed above, the PPS department requires two highly qualified administrators. Tanya and Peggy are going to make an amazing team and dramatically improve the programs and services offered to our students.



**J.J. Gass** is our new athletic director. Mr. Gass comes to us from the El-dred Central School District where he taught physical education, coached multiple sports and later served as athletic director during his 16 years of service. He is a leader among Section IX athletic directors and we are very fortunate to have him join our team! He replaces legendary Port Jervis teacher/coach/AD **Ray Holyk**, who devoted more than 50 years to our school district. Thank you, Ray, for your decades of service. Once a Raider, always a Raider!

## FALL SPORTS UPDATE



Congratulations to the **Football Team** for winning the Section IX Class B championship on November 11 against New Paltz by a score of 34-7. This is Coach Damien Striharsky's fourth Section title in his four years at the helm. The Raiders record is now 10-1 heading into the state quarterfinal playoff game versus Pleasantville from Westchester County in Section 1. The Big Red Machine looks to avenge last season's state quarterfinal loss to Pleasantville on a last second field goal.

Congratulations also go out to the **girls' Volleyball Team** for winning the OCIAA

division title and advancing to the Section IX Class B semi finals before falling to Spackenkill. Coach Kasey Stankunas' team is a model of consistency by posting a winning record year after year.

Kudos go out to Coach Christine Addy and her senior football **cheerleaders** for qualifying for the Varsity Spirit Spectacular in Disney World! This is a great honor for our seniors as their cheer careers conclude.

Special thanks also go out to the **soccer** teams and **cross-country** teams for working hard and having competitive seasons. All of

the fall athletes and coaches give up part of their summer vacations to start fall sports in August. We appreciate their hard work and dedication especially our seniors who have played fall sports for the last time. Once a Raider, always a Raider!



## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2022 PJHS ALUMNI HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES:



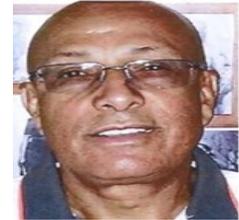
**Dr. Harry Faller**



**Dr. Frank Simpson**



**John "Jack" Flynn**



**Nelson Keys**



**David Simmons**



**Arthur Trovei**



**Lisa Cohen Cooper**



**Kelly Decker**

### Dr. Harry Faller, Class of 1928

Harry graduated from Bucknell University in 1932 and St. Louis University Medical School in 1936. He opened his medical practice in Port Jervis in 1938 but his career was interrupted by World War II during which he served in the Medical Corps of the 32nd Infantry Division, earning the rank of Captain. He served as Chief of Medical Staff at St. Francis Hospital for many years and retired in 1987 after 46 years of service to our community. Harry was a member of Temple Beth El, the VFW, the American Legion, the Elks, and served on the Port Jervis Board of Education for 13 years. He passed away in 1991.

### Nelson Keyes, Class of 1965

Thanks to his accomplishments at PJHS, Nelson received a track scholarship to North Carolina Central University. He was then drafted into the Viet Nam War where he joined the 173rd Airborne Brigade. After two years of service and a Bronze Star, he returned to NCCU, where he graduated in 1971. Nelson was a world class runner and set a world record with his brothers, Salih and Steve. He was an accountant by trade and worked with famed labor lawyer, Theodore Kiel, for more than 40 years. He co-founded the Metro Eagles of Queens, NY fame with fellow PJHS and NCCU alum James Wilkerson. The Eagles won six AAU National Track Championships. He passed away in 2016.

### Lisa Cohen Cooper, Class of 1979

Lisa graduated from Syracuse University in 1983 and the Syracuse College of Law in 1985. She started her career in environmental law with Nixon Hargrave in Rochester. She then moved to Raleigh, NC to work for Carolina Power/Progress Energy (which became Duke Energy) from 1993 to 2007 where she served as associate general counsel then Director of Environmental Health and Safety and finally as Vice-President. Her next venture was as CEO and general counsel of PMI Ash Technologies, which specializes in the conversion of coal ash into building materials. She was the first female chair of the American Coal Ash Association.

### Dr. Frank Simpson, Class of 1947

Frank graduated from Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine in 1953. In 1954 he opened the Tri-State Veterinary Hospital on Neversink Drive in the Town of Deerpark where he served our community with honor and distinction for many decades. He also served on the Deerpark Planning Board and Zoning Board Commission, and helped spearhead the development of the Neversink Valley Area Museum and County Park in Cuddebackville. He served on the Orange County Citizens Foundation, Port Jervis Heritage Commission and PJ's Operation Depot. He is a recipient of the Union-Gazette Progress Award, the Malcolm Booth Medal for history preservation and the Graham Skea Quality of Life Award.

### David Simmons, Class of 1966

Dave taught sixth grade in the Port Jervis schools for 33 years. He also coached football at PJHS for 33 years - 10 years as JV assistant under Joe Vigione and 23 years as varsity defensive coordinator under Bob Corvino. He was also the varsity wrestling head coach for 17 years where his teams earned 157 dual meet victories and four Orange County League national conference championships. His wrestlers earned 28 Section IX titles, 18 NYS place finishers and one state champion. The team finished second in NYS in 2001. He passed away in 2019.

### John "Jack" Flynn, Class of 1957

Jack devoted 43 years of federal government service to our nation in counter-intelligence, counter-terrorism, and emergency management. During his lengthy tenure, Jack received numerous awards for outstanding service and he carried Secret or Top-Secret compartmentalized clearance for 35 years. After his active duty in the Air Force, he was a career crash rescue/structural firefighter and emergency medical technician at Stewart International Airport, and fire chief for the VA Hudson Valley Medical Center. He has served as the emergency management director for the Town of Deerpark for over 25 years and has been a volunteer firefighter and past chief with the Sparrowbush Fire Department for more than 50 years.

### Arthur Trovei, Class of 1970

Artie was a four-year wrestler at Wilkes College where he was a two-time All-American and a NCAA Division III national champion. He was captain of the 1974 Wilkes team that won the Division III national team title. He is the owner of Arthur Trovei and Sons, Inc., which was founded by his grandfather. He has given back to his community by serving multiple terms on the Deerpark Town Council.

### Kelly Decker, Class of 1985

If you've ever met Kelly, you know of his deep love of Port Jervis. He served over 22 years in the New York Air National Guard which included combat in Panama for "Just Cause" as well as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq for "Desert Shield/Storm." Simultaneously, he served the area as a Deerpark and Port Jervis Police Officer for over 22 years where he was a popular DARE Officer and the school district's first School Resource Officer. In "retirement", he has served as a social studies teacher at the PJ Middle School since 2012. He also served the past 8 years as the Mayor of Port Jervis, where his major accomplishments include the Downtown Revitalization project, Watershed Trails development and the Neversink River Bridge replacement.

