
Alumni Hall of Fame

Class of 2019

The Alumni Hall of Fame was established in 2009 to recognize and honor individuals who were educated and inspired by the Port Jervis School District.



Dr. Paul Horsman, '43

Dr. Horsman is well known in Port Jervis because his dental practice was open from 1954 to 2002, an amazing run of 48 years! He was a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Army-Air Force during World War II deployed in the Pacific Theatre from 1943-46. He then earned his Bachelor's degree from Hamilton College in 1950 and his D.D.S. degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1954. He is a past president of the Orange-Sullivan Dental Association and served on the medical staff of St. Francis/Mercy Hospital. He has been an eighty-year member and past president of the Port Jervis Rotary Club.



John Bell, '66

John was a social studies teacher at Minisink Valley for 35 years and coached football for 36 years. When he retired, he was the winningest coach in school history for both football and wrestling. In 1999, he was the Sunday Record's football "Coach of the Year" when his undefeated team won the Section 9 championship. In 2001, the football field at Minisink Valley was named Coach John Bell Field. He was also a long-time Town of Mount Hope councilman who was instrumental in the town's donation of land for the construction of the new Otisville Elementary School. He loved his family and the Minisink family with all his heart.



Debra Cassara '76

Deb graduated from Bucknell University in 1980. The same year, she became a math teacher at PJHS – 40 years and counting! She has been the curriculum coordinator since 2003 and has taught the Syracuse University calculus class at PJHS since 1981. She has been the senior class advisor and led spring break trips to Europe for more than two decades. She has also been the senior enrichment advisor for more than 35 years and the National Honor Society advisor for many years as well. She has a deep commitment to the betterment of all students at PJHS as well as her community. She serves on the board of the Humane Society and the BPW.



Ken Decker, '79

Ken was always the entertainer. He liked to make people smile. He loved to sail and had his captain's license. He was a six-time Emmy award winner in camera operations. He was an innovator of drone operations and the first to perform drone operations on network television. He was a cameraman of note on many shows including The Rush Limbaugh Show, The Rosie O'Donnell Show, the Olympics, Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, Macy's Fourth of July celebration, Christmas at Rockefeller Center, The Today Show, The Colbert Report, The Colin Quinn Show, Late Night with Conan O'Brien and the Wendy Williams Show.



Gary Rifkin, '81

Gary's PJHS graduation speech was entitled "Participation in Life". Over the next four decades, he followed his own advice and embraced every opportunity to be intimately involved. After moving to Dallas, Gary's career took off as a professional speaker, trainer and coach. His involvement in the National Speakers Association earned him the organization's most prestigious honor – the Dick Cavett Award. His love of music led to the creation of Sing for the Cure, a choral symphony devoted to breast cancer awareness. He is a founding member of Dallas' philanthropic choir, Resounding Harmony. Gary is the Chief Learning Officer at CoreClarity.



Anita Sharma, '90

Anita's career and interests have enabled her to work and travel around the world, visiting six continents. Anita has a Bachelor's degree from Syracuse, studied at Oxford, and has a Master's degree from Columbia. She began her career as a reporter then moved on to international issues including humanitarian response and development programs. She travels to many countries with organizations including the Carnegie Corporation, the Woodrow Wilson Center, the United Nations, and the UN Foundation, where she was the executive director for six years.



Patrick Dunn, '04

Patrick graduated from the University of Hartford's prestigious Hartt School of Music. Since then his talents have taken him to 51 countries. His first big break was playing Prince Charming on the Disney Cruise Line. He has played Jesus in Jesus Christ Superstar and also starred in Sara Bareilles' Waitress. He later earned a Top 5 ranking as an Elvis Tribute Artist that he parlayed into performing for "Legends in Concert" in Las Vegas and on a national tour. More recently, he has had more than 500 performances in the role of Phantom in the national tour of Phantom of the Opera.
