

Niagara Falls Education Foundation
16th Annual

SCHOLARSHIP & ALUMNI RECOGNITION DINNER



WEDNESDAY MAY 6, 2026

Niagara Falls Education Foundation

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DINNER

WELCOME
PRESENTATION OF SCHOLARSHIPS
NFHS CLASS OF 2026

EMERGING LEADER
DR. JAWDAT MUSTAFA
NFHS CLASS OF 2011

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD
ROBERT KAZEANGIN JR.
NFHS CLASS OF 1969

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD
MARK LAURRIE
NFHS CLASS OF 1980

CLOSING

Niagara Falls Education Foundation

EMERGING LEADER AWARD



DR. JAWDAT MUSTAFA

Dr. Jawdat A. Mustafa, MD, MPH, is a 2009 graduate of NFHS, is a primary care physician at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center’s Summit Healthplex. An accomplished primary care physician, Dr. Mustafa has his deep local ties to both the community and Memorial, reflecting his lifelong commitment to improving the health and well-being of Niagara Falls residents.

“Having Dr. Mustafa join our primary care team is a remarkable addition to our hospital and the entire Niagara Falls community,” said Joseph Ruffolo, Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center President & CEO. “His deep-rooted connection to this city, combined with his medical expertise and dedication to underserved populations, will undoubtedly make a lasting impact on the health and well-being of our residents.”

His professional success, dedication to service, and inspiring journey that have brought him full circle — from a student at Abate Elementary, LaSalle Prep School, and Niagara Falls High School to a physician providing compassionate care to the community that shaped him.

“Dr. Mustafa’s journey from a student in our classrooms to a distinguished physician returning to serve Niagara Falls is truly inspiring,” said Mark Laurie, Niagara Falls City School District Superintendent. “His achievements reflect the strength and potential of our students, and we are incredibly proud to see him recognized as an alumni who embodies the spirit of giving back to the community that shaped him.”

Niagara Falls Education Foundation

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD



ROBERT KAZEANGIN, JR.

Bob Kazeangin is the retired Circulation Division Manager of the Buffalo News; he was previously circulation director for the Niagara Gazette, and later, administrative assistant at the Niagara Falls Public Library. Born and raised in Niagara Falls, he served as member of the Niagara Falls Board of Education is a past president. He serves on the board of Oakwood Cemetery, and is a past president and is a former Board member of the Niagara Falls Public Library; He sat on the Board of Directors of the United Way of Greater Niagara and served as a member of the Audit Committee for the City of Niagara Falls City School District. He currently serves on the Board of the Health Association of Niagara County, Inc. (HANCI), and is a long-time member of the NF Education Foundation. He is a past member and director for the Niagara Falls Little Theater, where he performed in many productions as well as directed productions with his brother-in-law, Al Piccirillo.

He is a proud member of the local Armenian Community.

Bob was the 2019 recipient of the HANCI Chairperson's Award for Distinguished Service in recognition of his dedication to the HANCI mission.

Known for his warmth, friendly demeanor, and sense of humor, Bob has served the community in multitudinous ways for decades – even as Santa Claus! He has been married to Claudia for 52 years and is the proud father of Damian.

“My father taught me how important service to others and community always was,” Damian said. “He has always felt it is important every day to do your part to make your neighbors and community a better place, to lead by example and trust others will want to be part of what they help create.”

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD



MARK LAURRIE

Mark Laurrie has served as Superintendent of Schools since 2016. Starting his career as Special Education teacher, he served as dean, vice principal, principal, and deputy superintendent before leading the District.

In this role, he tirelessly served not only the District, but the whole community. A committed advocate for youth, he has devoted himself to equity and dignity for all students regardless of background, resources, identity, faith, race, or any other demographic qualifier.

Under Mark's leadership, academic achievement has improved, and a culture of acceptance has been a priority.

The recipient of countless awards from myriad organizations, Mark is first and foremost what he always has been: a native Niagara Falls guy committed to his hometown and its residents.

He is a proud husband of Laura and father to Michael, Matthew, and Katherine.

Niagara Falls Education Foundation

ART CALANDRELLI MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



Art Calandrelli played football at Canisius College and the University at Buffalo. He held the college punting record in the United States for 12 years for punting a 47.5 average per game.

He later became a Niagara Falls Schools football and track coach and served as athletic director for the Niagara Falls School District from the 1950s to the 1980s. He died in 2004.

His daughter, Ellen Latham, created a billion dollar empire; Orangetheory Fitness has franchises in 22 countries around the world. She credits her Dad with inspiring her, believing in her, and setting an example as the only member of a large Italian immigrant family to earn a college education.

Ms. Latham also is an inspirational speaker and author and a generous supporter of Niagara Falls students. In 2019, she purchased the naming rights for the stadium at Niagara Falls High School, which bears her father's name. She established this scholarship fund to inspire the next generation of student athletes.

Niagara Falls Education Foundation
**DR. NICHOLAS CAROSELLA
SCHOLARSHIP**



Dr. Nicholas Carosella was a generous benefactor of the Niagara Falls Education Foundation. He established this scholarship to give Niagara Falls students with an interest in science and medical health professions — like he once was — a helping hand as they begin their course of study at the college or university level.

A 1947 graduate of Niagara Falls High School, Nicholas Carosella was the son of Italian immigrants who, while attending Fifth Street School, was identified by his teachers as a candidate for what today we would call the Enrichment Program. He later attended North Junior High School. Even after graduation, he was one of a handful of youth chosen to be an International Ambassador, studying in France for a summer, as today's exchange student might do.

He graduated medical school at the University at Buffalo and worked as a doctor of internal medicine for more than 30 years in Lockport, and later at the Veterans Administration. He credited the Niagara Falls School system with his success.

“The school system was excellent through and through. I enjoyed my high school years intellectually and socially, and made friends for life.”

Dr. Carosella wanted to help today's students because he felt he was helped so much by the excellent teachers he had.

He and his wife, a retired nurse with whom he was married for 68 years, raised three sons and a daughter; the family have three doctors among them.

Dr. Carosella passed in August, 2022. His generosity of spirit is his legacy to our students.

Niagara Falls Education Foundation

MARK CERRONE, INC. SCHOLARSHIP



Mark Cerrone, Inc. was founded by Mark V. Cerrone in 1999. Mark was 25 years in the construction industry as both a laborer and operating engineer before he bought a used excavator and dump truck and went into business. Initially focusing on residential site work, the company grew and diversified over the years into one of the premier site contractors in Niagara County.

Mark earned a reputation as one of the hardest working men in the County and he continued to grab a seat in his excavator whenever possible.

Mark was committed to giving back to the community. The company began supporting local non-profits and charities, particularly youth programs, across Niagara County.

Unfortunately, Mark was taken from the community far too young due to cancer.

Today, under the leadership of George Churakos and Mark's brother Vincent Cerrone, Mark Cerrone, Inc. is one of the most successful civil contractors across Upstate New York and continues to work on the most visible construction projects in the area. This scholarship seeks to provide an opportunity for a Niagara Falls student to pursue an education in a construction-related field, combining Mark's commitments to hard work in the construction field and investing in the success of young people.

Niagara Falls Education Foundation

**JOSEPH R. ARGY
MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**



Joseph R. Argy was the son of Michael J. and Bernadette (Reagan) Argy. In 1947 he established “Argy Bus Lines” and he took pride in transporting groups to local attractions, including transporting the NU Men’s Basketball team .

In 1965 when Michael died, Joseph, took over the business, invested in school buses, and created Niagara Falls Coach Lines, Inc.

Joe built a great reputation as a business owner based on a handshake and his word. His first love, architecture, enabled him to become involved with restaurants, golf course developments and innovated industry systems throughout his life.

For decades, students of the Niagara Falls City School District have benefited from Joe’s philanthropy. From the Joseph Argy Scholarship Fund at High School, to the statue Student’s at Play at Niagara Street School donated in his honor, field trips to the Holiday Festival and NU Basketball games, to the sponsorship of the Niagara Falls Education Foundation Cataract City Classic, Joe continues to impact the lives of Niagara Falls students.

In 1988, Joe established the Michael J. Argy Endowment Fund for graduate students of NU pursuing a teaching certificate Education and who are graduates of Niagara Falls High School.

In 2013, the Joseph R. Argy Memorial Scholarship was established in his name for students who have a love for Business as Joe did.

Joe had faith in every person’s ability to succeed and encouraged it through his generosity which continues through today.

Niagara Falls Education Foundation

**SANDRA KARCH
MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**



Sandra Karch was a dedicated health care professional who spent her life serving our community.

A 1964 graduate of Niagara Falls High School, she attended St. Mary's Hospital School of Nursing and became qualified as a Registered Nurse.

With a truly compassionate heart, she served in her long and successful career at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center as a candy striper, nurse's aide, floor nurse, head nurse, and Supervisor at Schoellkopf Nursing Home before retiring from the Hamilton B. Miser Primary Care Center.

Niagara Falls Education Foundation

LIVE NF SCHOLARSHIP



The LiveNF scholarship is given to a high school student interested in continuing their education or training in the pursuit of entrepreneurship. LiveNF is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating a sense of pride in the City of Niagara Falls. The organization has raised funds through its annual Makers Market to support students in their pursuit of entrepreneurship.

LiveNF seeks to bring residents together through events, social media and shared experiences. While it means something different to everyone, we know for certain that Niagara Falls, New York is home. Every project LiveNF works on or promotes starts as an idea from a resident of this city. LiveNF firmly believes that local creativity gives a community its own unique personality.



Niagara Falls Education Foundation

LYNN SCHIRO FUNK SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship is in honor of Lynn Funk, who dedicated decades of teaching service to the City of Niagara Falls City School District and touched countless lives through her compassion and commitment. Her deep care for others and unwavering belief in the power of education continue to inspire those around her every day.

This scholarship is a tribute to her legacy and a way to support students who embody her spirit of kindness and perseverance.




PHYLISS E. JAHN COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP

Phyliss E. Jahn was community-minded, sincerely interested in advancing the community and serving others. Whether through community-based organizations or her church, she was constantly seeking ways to assist people in whatever fashion she could. She passed away at the age of 100, after serving as a devoted assistant in the law offices of Hovey & Massaro for more than 40 years.

In her honor, Angelo and Louise Massaro established this scholarship to carry on her spirit of service and caring for others.

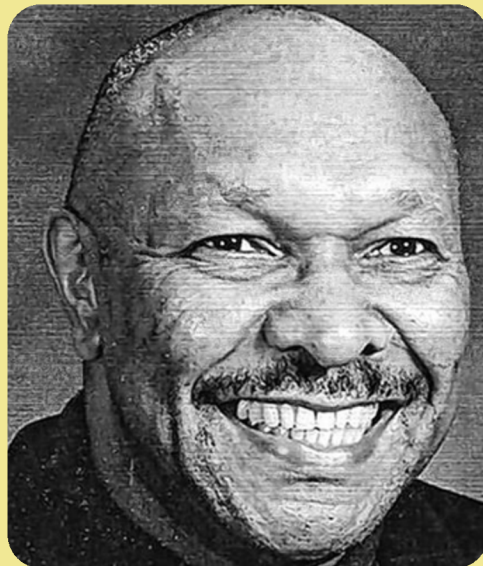
In addition, the Niagara Falls Education Foundation, Inc. also gratefully acknowledges that Mr. Massaro also contributes his services as special counsel.

The Niagara Falls Education Foundation, Inc., also provides two, \$500 scholarships, awarded at the LaSalle Education Foundation dinner.



Niagara Falls Education Foundation

REVEREND JIMMY ROWE SCHOLARSHIP



A priest in the Episcopal/Anglican tradition, Jimmy ministered primarily at Trinity Episcopal Church in Buffalo and was affiliated with Jericho Road Ministries. He had more than 40 years of experience in not-for-profit leadership, teaching, management consulting, and pastoral work.

A Buffalo resident, Jimmy served the people of Niagara County through a series of leadership roles beginning in 2006. He briefly worked as executive director of the Niagara Community Center on Centre Avenue, which was described as “the heart of the entire Black community.” He then joined the Health Association of Niagara County Inc. (HANCI) as a project director, launching grant-funded efforts to improve the wellness of children and older adults. He loved building collaborations and partnerships.

Jimmy earned a master’s degree in social work and education administration from the University at Buffalo. Jimmy worked at Niagara University as an adjunct faculty member and as co-founder of the Certificate Program in Applied Urban Ministry, which provided learning and development for faith leaders from throughout the Buffalo Niagara area. He relished the opportunity to supervise social work interns and help them prepare for careers in health and human services. Jimmy published more than 40 peer-reviewed articles in the areas of healthcare, patient encounters, pastoral care, and compliance.

Jimmy was known for enthusiastically greeting friends and strangers alike with his trademark phrase: “Blessings and joy!” His faith, humor, optimism and persistence were his calling cards. Above all, his firm commitment to social justice was a constant reminder that racial equity and inclusion are always worth fighting for.

Niagara Falls Education Foundation

STELLA MARIE WROBEL SCHOLARSHIP



Stella Marie Wrobel was an educator in the Niagara Falls City School District for over 40 years. She was a graduate of Niagara Falls High School and Niagara University, and also earned a degree in music from Rosary Hill College.

Ms. Wrobel was a passionate elementary teacher who brought music, the arts, and cultural learning to thousands of students during her tenure on the Niagara Falls School District.

The idea for the scholarship originated with her sister, Albina Wrobel Murawski, who always loved and admired Stella's many musical talents and her love of the arts, as well as her students, her school and her community.

The scholarship came to fruition through donations from Wrobel family members.

Niagara Falls Education Foundation

THOMAS R. VITELLO SR.
MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



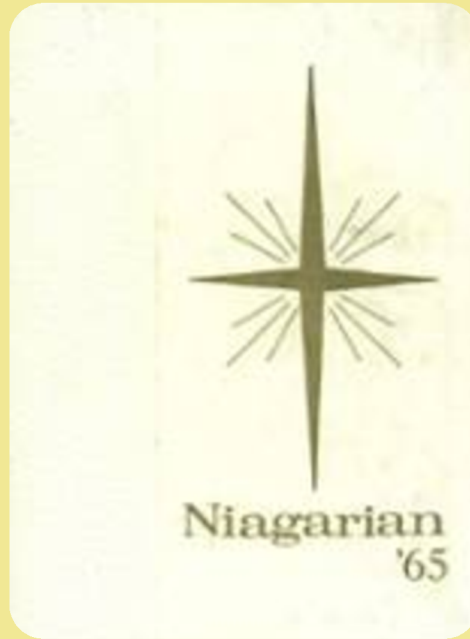
Thomas R. Vitello was a 1969 NFHS graduate. He served as union president of the United Steel Workers Union Local 9434 for eight years and worked at several public and private sector jobs and retired as an employee of the NF Wastewater Treatment Plant. He was an athlete who played football and baseball for Niagara Falls High School, and golf later in life. He passed away in 2014.

His family established this scholarship fund, with funds to be provided by the annual Thomas R. Vitello, Sr. Memorial Scholarship Golf Outing. The Vitello Memorial Scholarship is awarded annually to two NFHS seniors for outstanding academic and athletic achievement.

“This scholarship means Mr. Vitello’s message of community and the importance of athletics will ring on in the lives of our young students who excel at both,” said Niagara Falls City School District Superintendent Mark Laurie. “Many of our graduating seniors face challenges in paying for higher education. Gifts like this scholarship are life-changing for many of our students.”

“It is an honor for my family and my father’s friends and colleagues to be able to contribute this sum of money to the Niagara Falls Educational Foundation to continue to award scholarships in memory of my father, Thomas R. Vitello, Senior,” said Thomas Vitello, Jr. “My dad was a coach for a few sports in the school district and a physical education teacher in the school district for several years. It is only natural that through this scholarship we remember him in the school community, one he was so proud to be a part of for so many years.”

Niagara Falls Education Foundation
CLASS OF 1965 SCHOLARSHIP



The Class of 1965 turned a modest \$4,500 reunion surplus from their 57th reunion into a visionary scholarship endowment through the Niagara Falls Educational Foundation, led by four dedicated classmates, who pledged ongoing support. Their goal of raising \$26,000 by June 2025 was surpassed, thanks to widespread generosity among classmates, allowing them to award their first \$2,500 scholarship in honor of their 60th anniversary to a deserving student. Now, with their eyes set on a larger endowment, they aim to sustain and grow this legacy of giving for future generations.



DAN & PEGGY KELLY
FAMILY FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

The Dan and Peggy Kelly Family Foundation was created in honor of the Kellys, who dedicated their life to giving back to the community. Its mission is to support our community by empowering students and providing the opportunity for higher educational resources for growth and self-sufficiency.

With compassion, integrity, and a commitment to equality, we will create lasting and positive change.

Niagara Falls Education Foundation

NF EDUCATION FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

Niagara Falls Education Foundation Scholarships are awarded directly from Foundation funds, which are raised throughout the year. In this close-knit community, former Powercats, Engineers, and Explorers give generously to support today's Wolverines. The Foundation also benefits from generous corporate gifts and legacy gifts.

Each year, the Cataract City Classic, basketball and hockey tournaments, also raise funds to help graduating seniors on their way as they begin their next phase of academic life.

Begun in 2002, the Foundation has awarded tens of thousands of dollars in scholarships. The Foundation is proud honor its awardees and all the awardees tonight, and wishes success and happiness to the entire Class of 2025.



ART CALANDRELLI
MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



CIANA LAMAR
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NY AT BUFFALO
CRIMINAL JUSTICE

ART CALANDRELLI
MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



AMAYAH COWART

*DAEMEN UNIVERSITY
PSYCHOLOGY*

DR. NICHOLAS CAROSELLA
SCHOLARSHIP



SARAM HASSAN

PRE-MED

DAN & PEGGY KELLY FAMILY
FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP



MASSIAH RESPRESS

*BUFFALO STATE UNIVERSITY
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT*

DAN & PEGGY KELLY
FAMILY FOUNDATION
SCHOLARSHIP



ETHAN BULLARD

*ERIE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
SPORTS MANAGEMENT*

DAN & PEGGY KELLY
FAMILY FOUNDATION
SCHOLARSHIP



ALEXANDRA VENTRY

*NIAGARA UNIVERSITY
MARKETING*

DAN & PEGGY KELLY
FAMILY FOUNDATION
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CLASS OF 1965
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BUSINESS*

**SANDRA KARCH
MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**



SOPHIA CONTENTO
*STATE UNIVERSITY OF NY AT BUFFALO
PHYSICIAN'S ASSISTANT OR SPEECH PATHOLOGIST*

LIVE NF
SCHOLARSHIP



ROSE BRIGHT

*BUFFALO STATE UNIVERSITY
BUSINESS*

PHYLISS E. JAHN
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SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY*

THOMAS R. VITELLO SR.
MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



LEO NADROWSKI

*NIAGARA UNIVERSITY
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION*

THOMAS R. VITELLO SR.
MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



MEERAB SHAZAD

*UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER
BIOLOGY*

STELLA MARIE WROBEL
SCHOLARSHIP



NIC'KEYA LEVICK

SUNY NIAGARA

ART

CLASS OF 1970 SCHOLARSHIP



QURAT AIN

*STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO
LAW*

NF EDUCATION
FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP



JEFFREY THOMAS

*NIAGARA UNIVERSITY
CYBERSECURITY*

NF EDUCATION
FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP



DAVID HEDGEPEETH

*BIOLA UNIVERSITY
BIBLICAL STUDIES*

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FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP



SAMARRA KOCHAN
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NF EDUCATION
FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP



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ADOLESCENCE TEACHING 7-12*

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COMPUTER SCIENCE

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CHILDHOOD EDUCATION*

NF EDUCATION
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*STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO
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