

# West Babylon Alumni Foundation



Hall of Fame  
Induction Ceremony  
January 14, 2022

# ***Program***

## **Music**

Mr. William Doran, K-12 Music Chair  
Daniel Nguyen - Pianist

## **Presentation of Colors**

Sgt. John Sardiello Post 1634 of the American Legion

## **Pledge of Allegiance**

## **Welcome**

Ralph Rienzo '64, President  
West Babylon Alumni Foundation

## **Acknowledgment of Dignitaries**

### **Superintendent's Message**

Dr. Yiendhy Farrelly

### **Board of Directors' Award**

Charles Volpe

### **2021 Hall of Fame Inductees**

Dr. Mitchell Bellucci '73  
Commander Brian Kudrle '01  
Mr. William A. Miller '02  
Ms. Laurie O'Gara '71  
(accepting for Laurie, Scott O'Gara)  
Mr. Jerry Owenburg '69  
Dr. Vito Rizzo '74  
Mr. Mark Scheinberg '74

### **Closing Remarks**

Ralph Rienzo

Thank you to Brian Heaton of West Babylon Schools  
for video streaming tonight's ceremony.

## ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The West Babylon Alumni Foundation was established in 1997 and then re-organized in 2008. The Foundation is comprised of graduates from 50 years of students.

The purpose of the Foundation is to perpetuate the “*tradition of excellence*” in the West Babylon School District.

The Foundation has set goals of awarding scholarships, creating a “Hall of Fame” and establishing a website, as well as a grant program for student clubs and organizations.

## THE MISSION

The West Babylon Alumni Foundation, Inc. is a broadly based, non-profit organization whose purpose is educational and charitable to secure and distribute contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations for the benefit of the students in the West Babylon Public Schools and by doing so, perpetuate the unique experience and traditions.

### Officers and Board of Directors

Ralph Rienzo – President  
Chris Connors – Vice President  
Noreen Lico Wood – Treasurer  
Joan Datena Weinschenk – Secretary  
Elaine Billings Alexander; Patricia Boyce; Barbara Burrows; Robert Congiusta;  
Carol Modafferi Foisset; Rosemary Rizzo Menendez; Louise Pastore Scelza;  
Sheila White; and Anthony Cacciola, Emeritus Trustee

Foundation email: [wbalumni@wbschools.org](mailto:wbalumni@wbschools.org)  
Foundation Website: [www.westbabylonalumni.org](http://www.westbabylonalumni.org)

### Advisory Board

Donald Cowdell	Jonathan Reese
Robert Duggan	Judy Skillen
Thomas McAteer	Mozelle Thompson
	Jay Toner

# Hall of Fame Inductees

## 2009

Erica Crespi '88  
Jonathan Reese '86  
Mozelle Thompson '72  
Judy Skillen  
Senator Owen H. Johnson  
Helmer Petersen (posthumously)

## 2010

Thomas C. Teufel '88  
Dr. Charles Thompson '72  
Thomas McAteer '71  
Justice Ralph Costello '59  
H. Austin Sheldon, Jr. (posthumously)

## 2011

Dr. William G. Hawkins '87  
Lawrence Doyle '76  
Dr. Christopher Proto '72  
Dr. Daniel McCally '64  
Major Melvyn Kloor '59

## 2012

Dr. Debra Viti '77 (posthumously)  
Eric Kraft '61  
Silvio Impagliazzo

## 2013

Patrick M. Farrell '73  
Michael J. Rizzo '67  
Dominick Varrone '67  
Dr. John Bernardo '65

## 2014

Shannon Smith '08  
Harold Dieterle '95  
Patrick Halpin '71  
Vincent DiMartino '66  
Russell D. Van Brunt (posthumously)

## 2015

Dr. Mark Thompson '79  
Anthony Cacciola '79  
Constance Campanella '73  
Eileen Naughton Roberto '70  
John Zaruka '69

## 2016

Suffolk County Legislator Thomas Cilmi '82  
Benedict Reyes '64 (posthumously)  
Mary Myers Bruckenstein '63  
Leroy Douglas '60 (posthumously)

## 2017

Shannon Romanchuk Saturno '01  
(posthumously)  
Christine Mowbray Manzi '96  
Jeffrey Mintz '75 (posthumously)  
Glenn Drewes '67

## 2018

Robert Weaver '83  
Panela Vaughn Valdez '75  
Richard Scheinberg '71  
Joseph Germano '64

## 2019

Dr. Jennifer D'Amico '98  
Justin Davies '94  
Thomas H. Weidemeyer '65

## 2021

Dr. Mitchell Bellucci '73  
Commander Brian Kudrle '01  
William A. Miller '02  
Laurie O'Gara '71  
Jerry Owenburg '69  
Dr. Vito Rizzo '74  
Mark Scheinberg '74

# Hall of Fame Board of Directors' Award

## **2010**

Dr. Robert J. Manley

## **2011**

Martin P. Kennedy  
Dr. Anthony Capone  
Mathew Wilensky

## **2012**

Frank Taplin

## **2013**

Margaret (Peggy) Ehrensperger

## **2014**

Phillip Ames

## **2015**

Wally Alesse  
Barry Titone

## **2016**

Melvin Noble  
Margaret Joan Haugen  
Emanuel Campisi

## **2017**

Jon Link

## **2018**

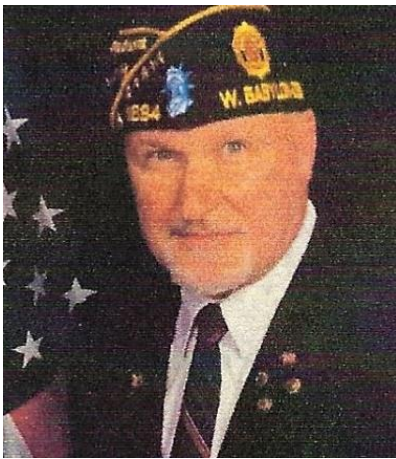
Christopher Haug  
James Egbert

## **2019**

Douglas G. Hassell Jr.  
Patricia Martin Farrell

## **2021**

Charles Volpe



**Mr. Charles J. Volpe  
Community Leader  
West Babylon Directors' Award 2021**

Mr. Charles J. Volpe, Commanding Officer of the Sgt. John Sardiello Post 1634 of the American Legion is humbled and honored to receive the West Babylon Alumni Foundation Directors' Award.

While not a graduate of West Babylon High School, Mr. Volpe has made a considerable impact on the West Babylon community since 1993. All three of his children are graduates of West Babylon High School and he credits the education they received there for all of their many achievements in life. He has been happily married to his wife Evelyn for 45 years and is the proud father of three children and grandfather of seven. He graduated from Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, NY with a BS in Accounting and Business Management.

His communications usually end with, "If there is anything you need, or anything I can help you with, don't hesitate to call". These words are the embodiment of Mr. Volpe's character and selflessness.

Mr. Volpe is a U.S. Navy Veteran, having served from 1970 to 1976. There, he learned many skills, gained confidence and learned the power of teamwork and forged many friendships along the way. He joined the American Legion in 1980 and the Sgt. John Sardiello Post 1634 in 1993.

Mr. Volpe's mission seems to be assisting those in need and helping the West Babylon community in any way that he can. While there are many volunteers and helping hands assisting him, Mr. Volpe is the heart and soul. Community relations and contacts with various local community groups and organizations are coordinated by Mr. Volpe and he proudly sits on the committees to organize the Post's many events such as the Annual Memorial Day Parade, placing American flags on the graves at the National Veteran Cemetery the Annual POW / MIA ceremony and overnight Boy Scout vigil at Babylon Town Hall Park and also providing West Babylon and Deer Park student scholarships and honoring our Police Officers and Fire Fighters at our Law and Order Night.

Mr. Volpe is not only the leader of the American Legion Post, but an avid community volunteer. For several years, Mr. Volpe has also volunteered his at the Our Lady of Grace Food Pantry and the Life Center of Long Island. His Post also sponsors and is home to the Sons of the American Legion, VFW, Ladies Auxiliary, Ladies Gun Club of Long Island, 2 Boy Scout Troops, Cub Scouts, West Babylon Chamber of Commerce, Blood Drives, Toys for Tots, Little League Team and Travel team. He will Notarize documents free of charge to all Veterans, first responders, educators, police, firefighters, EMS, and Senior citizens. Mr. Volpe is an extraordinary man who works tirelessly to help those around him.



**Dr. Mitchell Bellucci**  
**Class of 1973**  
**West Babylon Hall of Fame 2021**

After graduating from West Babylon High School in 1973, Mitchell Bellucci traveled to Nebraska for higher education and received a medical degree from University of Nebraska College of Medicine.

Moving back to the East Coast to practice medicine as an obstetrician gynecologist, he did his residency training at Women & Infants Hospital in Rhode Island. Then he established Women's Healthcare in Milford, MA in 1988.

Dr. Bellucci made his mark in advancing women's health care. During his 33 years in private practice, he helped over 10,000 patients and delivered over 3,500 babies. He patented a device that tests for fetal stress and helps to protect nurses from exposure to contaminants during delivery.

Dr. Bellucci is always looking for ways to help women throughout their life. When women reach the age of 50, their estrogen drops and he realized that bone density is an important component to women's health. The Milford Regional Medical Center didn't have a bone density unit at the time so he helped create one and taught primary care doctors the value of testing for it. He also helped develop the CO2 Surgical Laser that is designed to treat pre-cancerous conditions.

As part of the Milford community, he created a public access show called "Pasta Playoffs" which showcased another of his passions: cooking. The premise of the show is that numerous "grandmas" compete against him in making a pasta sauce. The final dishes were then judged by three randomly chosen clients at a local restaurant. To see the first episode, click: <https://youtu.be/pZnz5gqa0jk>. In addition, he gave back to the senior community. He helped a friend finance a therapy dog, Charlie, for a local nursing home. He would bring Charlie to two Alzheimer units in the area to meet and greet with the groups and conduct weekly music therapy classes for the residents.

After creating the Pasta Playoffs series of videos, he volunteered at the Italian-American Veterans Club Post 40. After just two months, he wanted to tell their stories. He created a local cable access show called "I.T.A.M. Vets, Local Heroes." (I.T.A.M. stands for Italian-American Veterans.) In this documentary, he interviewed five local residents who represented a different part of WW II, from the attack on Pearl Harbor, to the storming of Normandy, to the Battle of the Bulge, to Hiroshima after the atomic bomb was dropped. For more details, click: <https://www.milforddailynews.com/x2071997304/Cable-TV-show-highlights-Milford-veterans-stories>.

Dr. Bellucci retired last summer after 40 years of providing quality medical care. He thanks teachers who really listened and helped: Mr. Simpson, Mr. Lynch, Ms. Burke, and Superintendent Mr. Wilensky.





**Commander Brian Kudrle  
Class of 2001  
West Babylon Hall of Fame 2021**

Commander Brian A. Kudrle hails from Babylon, NY and graduated from West Babylon Sr. High School in 2001. He went on to attend the United States Coast Guard Academy earning a Bachelor of Science in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering and his commission as an Ensign in the United States Coast Guard. He currently serves as the Deputy Executive officer and Chief of Personnel and Support at Air Station Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

Following graduation from the Coast Guard Academy, Commander Kudrle married and attended flight school. Upon completion of U.S. Naval Flight Training in Pensacola, Florida, he was assigned to Sector San Diego, California where he flew the H60 Jayhawk Helicopter conducting Search and Rescue (SAR), migrant interdictions, and counter drug missions. In 2011, he was assigned to Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater, Florida where he commanded and instructed SAR and law enforcement missions in support of Operations Bahama, Turks and Caicos. In 2015, he transferred to Aviation Training Center Mobile, Alabama where he served as an H60 Standardization Instructor Pilot and was charged to uphold aircrew qualifications and standardizations for the entire Coast Guard fleet of H60 Aircraft. Following, he proceeded to his current duty station at Air Station Cape Cod, Massachusetts where he commands and instructs SAR and fisheries enforcement missions in challenging weather conditions over the dangerous seas of the demanding New England area.

Commander Kudrle holds a Master's in Military Operational Art and Science from Air University, the United States Air Force Air Command and Staff College.

Commander Kudrle is married to the former Alexandria Issing (also a WBHS alum) from West Babylon, NY. They are the proud parents of 4 wonderfully talented children: Justus (14), Brooke (12), Hannah (10), and Samson (8).





**Mr. William A. Miller**  
**Class of 2002**  
**West Babylon Hall of Fame 2021**

William A. Miller was born and raised in West Babylon. From JFK to WBSH, he walked these halls with his brothers and sister. Billy obtained a BS in History Education at SUNY Albany, supporting himself along the way in the restaurant industry, a field he was familiar with from the age of 15. Billy went into teaching and earned a Masters in counseling.

Along the way, he found his passion lay in helping others. In 2018 he combined that passion with his absolute skill in the service industry, and along with his wife Nicole, opened Restoration Kitchen & Cocktails. The premise is simple – to

Be the Good you want to see in this World.

Since opening, Billy and Nicole have partnered with 14 local charities, bringing awareness and awarding \$185,798 in profits to good causes.

More importantly, they welcomed a beautiful baby girl named Emma in June of 2020 and are expecting a second baby girl in February of 2022.

According to Bill, “During my years at West Babylon High School, I never imagined I would be selected to be inducted into the West Babylon Hall of Fame. I wasn’t exactly the model student. It just goes to show you, there is a little bit of good in all of us. It takes an idea and the drive to put it all to good use.

Thank you for this amazing acknowledgement. It is truly an honor. Once an Eagle...!



**Laurie O'Gara**  
**Class of 1971**  
**West Babylon Hall of Fame 2021**

After graduation in 1971, Laurie took off for California with her boyfriend John. There she fell in love with silversmithing and brazing jewelry and small sculpture. In 1972 she moved to Cincinnati and went to work for General Electric. She certified as a turbine specialist in specialized metals and was the first woman to work in a power house. Over the next 3 years she worked in many powerhouses around the country. Chicago Bridge and Iron offered her a job if she got her underwater license. Laurie graduated hard hat commercial diving school in 1978. Another first for women. She then broke into the NYC Dock-Builders Union where again she was the first woman trades person. Working on permit for all the heavy construction trades, Laurie wrote a program to bring women into the unions and get them trained in the trade schools. She became the first woman superintendent in the heavy construction trades.

Laurie spent 9 days in the water with Physty the whale in 1981. In 1986 Laurie married and had 2 children. She taught steel and clay sculpture at the Purnell School, a girl's high school and opened a backyard studio where she taught private classes in clay and pottery. Laurie has many sculptures and pieces of art in private collections as well school campuses. Laurie is divorced and lives in Englewood Florida where she teaches small boat sailing as a certified US Sailing Instructor.

You can see Laurie's art at the following locations:

The Northwind Undersea Museum, City Island, NY  
Old Farmer Road School, Long Valley, NJ  
Gill St. Bernards School, Gladstone, NJ  
West Babylon Public Library, Long Island, NY  
Holocaust/Genocide Center, Raritan Valley Community College, NJ



**Mr. Jerry Owenburg**  
**Class of 1969**  
**West Babylon Hall of Fame 2021**

Jerry Owenburg moved to West Babylon in 1954 at age 4. He went through West Babylon Schools and played all sports in school with football being his passion. He was in the Marching band where in 1967 he met wife. She was a Majorette in the band and he was the Bass drum player. After 51 years, they have three children and seven grandkids. In 1969 he graduated West Babylon High School and then worked 32 years on the Town of Babylon Highway Department.

Jerry's Father-Law was a Volunteer Firefighter with West Babylon Volunteer Fire Department and in 1970 asked him to join Rainbow Hose Co. 1. In 1973 Jerry became Lieutenant of the Company. In 1974 the Owenburgs moved to Mastic, where, of course, he joined the Mastic Fire Department. He rose to the rank of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. In 1980 they moved back to West Babylon. Again, he joined the West Babylon FD Co 1 and the Rescue Squad and became an EMT. Jerry rose through the ranks. In 1998 he became Chief of the Department. After Chief he became involved in many Firematic Associations such as First Firemen's Assoc. of the State of New York known as FASNY where he served on many committees.

Jerry then went onto Suffolk County Volunteer Firefighters Burn Center at Stony Brook Hospital where he served as President. At the same time, he was a member of the Suffolk County Fire Safety Educators. There, at a Fire awareness Hazard House display he became the voice of Sparky the Fire Dog at many programs in Nassau and Suffolk. At the same time Jerry was part of the Suffolk County Volunteer Firemen's Assoc. where again he became President. While there, he fought for more training for the Volunteer Fire Service. For the past 14 years, Jerry organized the Long Island Day at the FASNY Volunteer Firemen's Home. On that day Suffolk and Nassau Volunteer Firefighters and their Families visit our Brother and Sister Volunteer Firefighters in a Nursing Home just for Volunteer Firefighters and Spouses and Ladies Auxiliary. In 2013 he became a Trustee for said Nursing Home where he is now President of the Trustees. Jerry is a member of Southern New York Firemen's Assoc. and serves as a Suffolk Director. One more group dear to his heart is the Firefighter's Cancer Support Network where he is the Care Givers Coordinator. The Network mentors Firefighters and their Families through the many tough times of Cancer treatments. One Firefighter taking care of another Brother Firefighter.



**Dr. Vito J. Rizzo**  
**Class of 1974**  
**West Babylon Hall of Fame 2021**

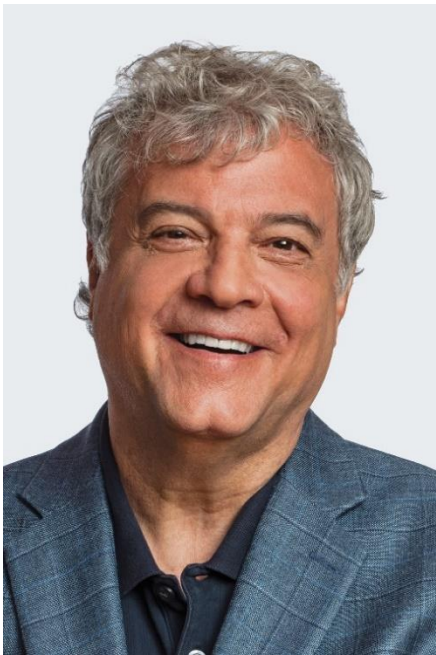
Vito J. Rizzo, DPM, graduated from West Babylon Senior High in 1974. He attended SUNY @ Buffalo and graduated there in 1978 with a degree in Biology. He then attended the New York College of Podiatric Medicine, graduating from there in 1982. His career as a Podiatrist has spanned almost 40 years. He is Board certified in Foot and Ankle Surgery and is a Fellow of the American Professional Wound Care Association and a Fellow of the American Society of Extremity Nerve Surgeons. Recognized as a specialist in the Diabetic Foot and the resultant complications Dr. Rizzo maintains a philosophy of education, prevention and early intervention geared to the avoidance of limb threatening developments. Besides maintaining a private practice, Dr. Rizzo has been on the teaching staff of the New York College of Podiatric Medicine as an associate Clinical Professor. He has maintained his involvement in education throughout the years as Director of Residency Training at Southside Hospital in Bay Shore and as an Attending Surgeon at Good Samaritan Hospital in West Islip. He is auxiliary faculty of the Dr. William M. Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine; a Student Ambassador at the Arizona Podiatric Medical Program at Midwestern University, a student Mentor at the NYCPM. He has been a lecturer on surgical techniques to his peers through various programs nationwide.

Beside his professional work he served on the Board of the New York State Podiatric Medical Association for 13 years and became state President for a term in 2011-2012. He was instrumental in passing legislation in Albany to expand the scope of practice for Podiatric Physicians during his tenure.

Dr. Rizzo has had a full life. During medical school he was a waiter and bartender at the world-famous Copacabana in New York City. During his career he has had the honor to serve on a number of community boards focusing on Diabetes education and wellness in general. He loves to travel. He loves his family and especially his wife, JuliAnn and his 9 grandchildren.

Dr. Rizzo has been a supporter of West Babylon educational efforts. Many students have shadowed at his office where they were exposed to a possible career in Medicine. He also would insist that the student recite the Alma Mater at the end of their time with him hopefully instilling in them the notion that "Once and Eagle, Always an Eagle".





**Mr. Mark Scheinberg**  
**Class of 1974**  
**West Babylon Hall of Fame 2021**

Mark Scheinberg is recognized nationally as an advocate for the underrepresented and a ground-breaking educational innovator. With his 1981 acquisition of the Data Institute, a small Hartford business school, he embarked on a journey that would reimagine higher education and change the futures of countless students.

Discovering that many of his students encountered difficulty transferring their hard-earned credits to four-year colleges, Mark undertook the challenge of transforming the Institute into Goodwin College. This was the first of many unorthodox steps to ensure that his “undiscovered students”

— working adults and first-generation college students — received the recognition they deserved.

Mark’s visionary thinking surprised the traditional world of academics. In 2002, he gave up millions in personal assets to recreate Goodwin as a nonprofit college overseen by a board of directors. This decision helped secure its future and expand degree options for students. Among Goodwin’s offerings, the nursing program became a flagship and helped eliminate the state’s alarming shortage of nurses. Comprehensive advanced manufacturing programs, an innovative magnet school system, and master’s degree offerings continued to expand Goodwin’s reputation and welcome an even wider range of learners.

Another landmark occurred in 2020, when the College stepped up to university status. The following year, Goodwin University acquired the University of Bridgeport, realizing Mark’s educational vision of serving students statewide.

Educational, government, and community organizations have recognized Mark’s leadership. He has promoted the greater good by serving in roles with the Accrediting Commission of Independent Colleges and Schools; Capital Region Workforce Development Board; Legislative Task Force on Teachers’ Professional Standards; Connecticut Board of Governors for Higher Education; Connecticut Council of Independent Colleges; New England Board of Higher Education; and Young Presidents Organization.

Despite the accolades, Mark points out that students remain at the center of all he does. “Students” are prominently at the top of the University’s organizational chart, above even trustees. Of Goodwin as a community, he offers, “There’s something magical that happens when so many different people share such a common sense of mission.”

**Major Sponsor**

**Suffolk County Federal Credit Union**

**Sponsors**

Frank Bellavia, Arnold Chevrolet Buick; Bunny Classic  
Don Cowdell (in honor of Dr. Mitch Bellucci & Frank Taplin)  
Town of Babylon Democratic Committee; West Babylon Fire Department  
West Babylon Fire Chief's; West Babylon Lion's Club  
West Babylon Rainbow Hose Company; West Babylon Teachers' Association

**Donors**

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Dr. Robert & Kay Manley (in honor of Classes 69, 71, 73, & 74)  
Terry McKenna; Pierce Murphy (in honor of Ralph Rienzo)  
Melvin & Ruth Noble (in honor of all honorees)  
Scott O'Gara (in honor of his sister Laurie)  
Doris Puglisi  
Jack & Genie Scharf (in honor of Dr. Vito Rizzo & Mark Scheinberg)  
Tim Selg; Sunrise Counseling Center  
Mozelle Thompson  
Jerry Toner  
Arthur Vaughn, Jr.  
Sheila White; Claire Wilensky  
Robert Yonkers (in memory of Thomas Bolk)

**A very special Thank You to the West Babylon School District  
Superintendent of Schools, Yiendhy Farrelly, Ed. D.**

Mr. Scott Payne, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction  
Mr. Shawn Hanley, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources  
Mr. Steve O'Leary, Principal, Senior High School  
Mr. Mark Palminteri, PAC & Student/Alumni Coordinator

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