

HASTINGS HIGH SCHOOL  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, INC.

# HALL OF EXCELLENCE



October 21, 2023

"A school without a past has no history."  
Bernard "O-Bie" O'Brien\* '50 – Founder, HHSAA

## **THE HHS HALL OF EXCELLENCE**

est. 2009

The HHS Hall of Excellence was formed to recognize HHS alumni who have distinguished themselves in their field of work or study; made significant contributions in service to their community; or demonstrated a commitment to lifelong learning.

The first induction ceremony for the Hall of Excellence was held on October 17, 2009 – with the induction of five remarkable HHS alumni – including two distinguished Nobel Laureates. Subsequent inductions have included scientists, inventors, community advocates, philanthropists, and a renowned master ceramist – to name just a few of its celebrated members. The occupational and specific fields for induction into this notable, alumni academic organization have remained broad and varied. We believe in that sense, it may inspire future generations of HHS grads to take note of the many paths that can be taken in life, and in doing what brings a sense of purpose, happiness and meaning.

The members of the HHS Alumni Association are pleased to have this opportunity to honor our fellow HHS alumni in this meaningful way.

“The important thing is to find your true source of inspiration and to remain focused in the achievement of your goals.” – Sara Wellington

**WELCOME**  
to the  
**HHS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION'S**  
**HALL OF EXCELLENCE**  
**AWARD CEREMONY AND BANQUET**

Hastings Southside Social & Athletic Club  
113 Southside Avenue  
Hastings-on-Hudson, New York 10706

**Saturday, October 21, 2023**

6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

HONOREE	PRESENTER
John P. Chang	John P. Chang, Jr.
Anne Dekas	Kathryn Dekas '96
Elizabeth "Liz" Gaynes	Jane Finkeldey Stephenson '64
Debra Alligood-White	Craig Alligood '76
Clint de Ganon	Matthew de Ganon

Welcome to the 2023 HHS Hall of Excellence Award Ceremony.  
We are pleased to celebrate the life achievements of five  
outstanding HHS alumni. We hope you enjoy the evening.

**PROGRAM**

Welcome  
Pledge of Allegiance  
Dinner  
Presentation of Awards  
Closing Remarks

**JOHN P. CHANG – Class of 1966**

Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.)

Nominated by MaryAnn Zahurak Hogan '66

MaryAnn wrote, “John has displayed impressive dedication for the benefit of others throughout his life.”



John attended the Brooklyn College of Pharmacy where he achieved a PharmD degree. He became a Registered Pharmacist in the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in New York City – and provided 25 years of dedicated service to our veterans.

John’s military career began in 1980 when he joined the U.S. Army Reserves. He was deployed during Desert Storm (1990-1991) and Operation Joint Endeavor (1996-1997); and has served in several different positions at numerous military hospitals across the country and internationally. In 2005, John retired from military service with the distinguished rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Throughout his military career, John devoted himself to serving his country; and throughout his life, John has displayed an impressive dedication for the benefit of others. He is steadfast in his commitment to ensure equitable treatment for veterans and their families.

John continues to be actively involved in numerous veterans organizations – locally, state-wide and nationally – and has been a dual member of the Sons of the American Legion and the American Legion for more than 45 years. He is a life member and past Post Commander of the James Daley Post 200 in Hastings-on-Hudson. John sits on the Board of Directors for the Masonic Research Institute and is currently Director Emeritus; as well as an active member of the Tarrytown Fire Department.

John and his wife, Priscilla, live in Tarrytown, N.Y. They have two married children – daughter Lisa and son, Dr. John Chang, Jr. and three grandchildren – Desmond (13) Maxwell (6) and Evelyn (4).

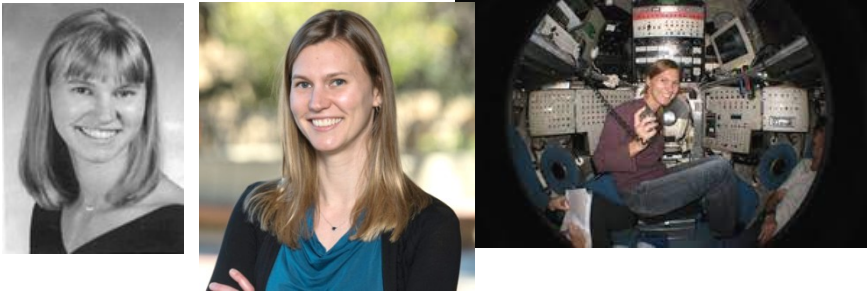
**ANNE DEKAS – Class of 2000**

Assistant Professor/Earth Science Dept.– Stanford University  
Geomicrobiologist/Researcher

Nominated by Nancy Trafford Cuppek '70

Nancy said, “I can’t imagine anyone more qualified for this distinction!

Anne’s professional accomplishments simply blow you away.”



Anne is Geomicrobiologist and Assistant Professor of Earth System Science at Stanford University. She researches how microorganisms in the environment collectively shape the chemistry and climate of our planet. Anne has authored more than 35 scientific publications on topics including microbial cycling of greenhouse gases in marine waters, and she has participated in 20 ship-board oceanographic sampling expeditions around the world, serving as the Chief Scientist for six, and including three dives in the deep-sea submersible, *HOV Alvin* (deepest dive to 1410 m water depth). At Stanford, Anne manages a molecular microbiology laboratory, trains and mentors student researchers, and teaches classes including *Fundamentals of Geobiology*, and *Life at the Extremes: From the Deep Sea to Deep Space*. Before joining the faculty at Stanford, she was a Lawrence Postdoctoral Fellow at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL), and a National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellow at the California Institute of Technology, where she received a Ph.D. in Geobiology. She has an A.B. in Earth and Planetary Sciences from Harvard University. Anne has performed research at three NASA centers—Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Ames Research Center, and Goddard Space Flight Center. She has received awards for her research from NSF, LLNL, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Kavli Institute, and the Simons Foundation.

Anne currently lives in Redwood City, CA, with her husband and two young children, and enjoys hiking in her free time.

**ELIZABETH “LIZ” GAYNES – Class of 1964**

Senior Fellow at the New York Women’s Foundation.  
Criminal Justice Advocate/Criminal Defense Attorney

Nominated by Jane Finkeldey Stephenson ’64

Jane said, “Liz spent her career lobbying and establishing family-focused services for families affected by the criminal justice system.”



Liz arrived in Hastings in 1955, when she was in the 3rd grade and sister Susie was in kindergarten. Her parents built a house on Burnside Drive where they lived the rest of their lives, and where Liz returned 17 years ago. Her parents chose Hastings because of its artists and its welcoming of Jewish and Black homeowners who were closed out of many Westchester towns.

After graduating from HHS, Liz went on to Syracuse University, where she got her Bachelors and law degrees. She began her legal career as a defense attorney for the Attica Brothers (involved in the 1971 Attica Prison Uprising which ended in a state-sponsored massacre). She left law in 1984, when she became CEO at the Osborne Association, a nonprofit criminal justice/prison reform organization. Under her leadership, Osborne grew from three people to a staff of more than 350. With headquarters in the Bronx and community sites in NYC, Newburgh and Buffalo, Osborne provides employment, family and treatment services to thousands of justice-involved people, including in 30 NY prisons and Rikers Island jails. She was named Champion of Change for Children of Incarcerated Parents by President Obama, and since stepping down as President and CEO last year, became Senior Fellow at the New York Women’s Foundation.

Her daughter Emani and granddaughter Ataliah moved from Hastings to California last year; son Ari is now living in Hastings. Liz stayed connected to many HHS friends despite long distances and has no plans to leave the home in which she grew up.

**DEBRA ALLIGOOD-WHITE – Class of 1978**

General Counsel and Chief Strategy Officer  
The Studio Museum of Harlem

Nominated by Craig Alligood '76

Craig said, "I admire my sister Debra and have always been so proud of all of her accomplishments. She is a winner!"



After graduation from HHS, Debra attended Harvard/Radcliffe College, where she majored in Government and Afro-American Studies and graduated magna cum laude. Before attending UCLA School of Law, she worked in economic development for the Koch Administration for seven years. Debra joined The Studio Museum in Harlem in December 2021 as its General Counsel and Chief Strategy Officer. In her role as a senior leader of the 55-year old institution, Debra manages legal matters, and supports the team responsible for constructing its first purpose-built museum building on 125th Street, ensuring a synchronized, successful reopening.

Before joining The Studio Museum, Debra was Deputy Secretary for Civil Rights and Workforce for NY State, overseeing policy and management for seven state agencies and boards. During her tenure, she worked with the Department of Labor to quickly develop and implement the Excluded Worker Program, which provided nearly \$2 billion in relief for undocumented New Yorkers who were excluded from federal pandemic income support programs. Debra previously served as Chief of Staff/Chief Administrative Officer for the 2020 Democratic National Convention Committee and spent six years as the Senior Vice President and General Counsel of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, after spending over two decades in private practice representing clients in negotiating complex commercial and financial transactions.

Debra has 2 daughters – Andra (36), living in the Washington, DC area, and Angela (28), on assignment in Italy.

## CLINT DE GANON – Class of 1976

Professional Drummer & Percussionist

Nominated by Matthew de Ganon

Matt wrote, "My brother Clint is one of the most sought after drummers in NYC. He's played on over 1,000 recording sessions and 75 tours!"



Clint started taking drum lessons at just six years old! Before graduating from HHS in 1976, he had already studied with Sonny Igoe, been tutored by Mel Lewis, played for Buddy Rich and was presented with drumsticks from Gene Krupa himself. His fate was plainly sealed early on! He went on to college for classical training with the timpanist and percussionist of the New York Philharmonic.

Clint's TV, film, recording and performance credits are astounding; and his resume is extensive and exceptionally diverse. To date, he has played on more than 1,000 recording sessions and 75 tours. He has appeared on television with the *Saturday Night Live Band*, and performed with various artists on *MTV*, *GMA* and the *Today Show*. During his career, he has played drums with Hiram Bullock's band and guitarist John Tropea's band. He has toured and/or recorded with the Blues Brothers Band, Bob James, Tom Scott, Blood, Sweat & Tears, Eddie Vedder and Jimmy Buffett - to name but a few of the star performers Clint has shared the stage.

One of the busiest behind the scenes drummers/composers, Clint has created drum books for several Broadway shows, including the Grammy Award winning *Hairspray*, *Beautiful - The Carole King Musical* and *Catch Me If You Can*. His playing can be heard throughout the seasons of *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*.

Every year Clint looks forward to the honor of performing as a guest soloist with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra.



**HASTINGS HIGH SCHOOL  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, INC.**

Est. 2000

**HHS HALL OF EXCELLENCE  
SELECTION COMMITTEE – 2023**



Myrna Gulish '55 – CHAIRWOMAN

Dennis Timone '60

CLASS REP

Peter McKernan '71

CLASS REP

Laura VanWie McGrory '86

HOE MEMBER – 2019

Anthony Costantini '11

CLASS REP/HHSAA BOARD MEMBER

Joan Herd Minozzi '67

HHSAA BOARD MEMBER

---

**THE HALL OF EXCELLENCE INDUCTION GUIDELINES:**

Anyone can nominate a candidate for induction into the HHS Hall of Excellence (HOE). The criteria for induction requires:

- Proposed candidate(s) must be graduates of HHS.
- A nominee's personal achievements or body of work must have attained a recorded level of competency and expertise.
- The candidates record must reflect positively on HHS and the H-O-H community.

Each graduated class may nominate only one candidate from their class in a given induction year. If more than one nominee merits induction, a ruling may be rendered by the HOE Selection Committee to allow multiple candidates. In the event that a nominee is not selected in the specified election period, the candidate shall remain qualified and reconsidered in the next voting period. HHS Hall of Excellence inductions take place on odd years – sharing the spotlight with the association's notable sports organization, the Ronald Wilson Lindemann Athletic Hall of Fame.

"To become successful, one must put themselves in the paths of giants."

– Lillian Caudwell



**ESTEEMED MEMBERS  
of the  
HHS HALL OF EXCELLENCE**

1943 - William P. Daley	1963 - Jonathan F. Lillard
1944 - Julius R. Chemka	1963 - Jack E. McCallum
1945 - Donald P. Gregg	1963 - Patricia Mehlhop
1950 - William H. Bohnert	1965 - Stephen Collins
1950 - Bernard J. O'Brien	1966 - Vanessa H. Merton
1951 - Edmund "Ned" Phelps	1966 - Mary Koslap-Petraco
1951 - Julia Scott Maser	1968 - William Finkeldey
1951 - Donald Maricle	1969 - Jeanne Wester Newman
1953 - Ronald H. Jesberg	1975 - Steven M. Bass
1953 - G. Michael Howard	1976 - Staton Rabin
1954 - Robert L. Guyett	1976 - Sandra Gingras
1955 - Mitzi Mallina Wertheim	1976 - John Nyemchek
1956 - Thomas F. Pike	1978 - Marian E. Porges
1958 - Franklin A. Davis	1980 - Maud Tucker
1959 - Jeffrey M. Camhi	1981 - Andrew Michael Simon
1959 - William H. Ewen Jr.	1986 - Laura VanWie McGrory
1959 - Robert H. Hirst	1986 - Philip J. Weiser
1962 - Robert C. Merton	1986 - John Melvin Jr
1962 - F. John Adams	1987 - Lee R. Kaiser
	1990 - Andrew Berends

"Every job is a self-portrait of the person who did it. Autograph your work with excellence." – Jessica Guidobono

THANK YOU for being a part of this special HHS Alumni Association event and celebrating the induction of these five amazing HHS alumni into the HHS Hall of Excellence.

Congratulations inductees, you are now among a very special group of HHS graduates; and we could not be more pleased for you!

A great big round of applause to everyone who lent a helping hand to make this memorable evening possible. Too many to name, but as the old African proverb declares, "It takes a village!"

The next HOE induction ceremony will be held in 2025. We hope to see you again!

Stan Madyda '73  
President - HHSAA

Myrna Gulish '55  
Chairwoman - HOE



**ABOUT US:**

The Hastings High School Alumni Association (HHSAA) is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) tax exempt, charitable organization under New York State law. All donations are tax deductible.

**OUR MISSION:**

The mission of the HHSAA is to actively engage alumni and foster a lifelong connection with Hastings High School; recognize the high school and post high school achievements of HHS alumni; provide scholarships to future alumni; and promote a spirit of unity and pride.

**OUR FISCAL ACTIVITY:**

The HHSAA carries on from annual membership dues and contributions. You can become a supporting member for just \$25 per year. Join Us – You REALLY Make the Difference!

Our commitment to our alumni remains as strong today as ever.

**The HHS experience lasts a lifetime!**

"True friendship resists time, distance, and silence." – Isabel Allende

Hastings High School  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, INC.

**HALL OF EXCELLENCE**  **HALL OF FAME**

c/o 1 Mount Hope Boulevard  
Hastings-on-Hudson, New York 10706

Visit our website at: [www.hohalumni.org](http://www.hohalumni.org)  
to learn more about the HHSAA and the HHSAA Scholarship  
Program.

Join us on: [Facebook.com/hastings.alumniassociation](https://www.facebook.com/hastings.alumniassociation)

