PLAYBILL

NIAGARA FALLS HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

ANGRY JURORS

BY:

REGINALD ROSE

STAGE VERSION BY:

SHERMAN L. SERGEL

Adapted from the Television Show of the Same Name Initially presented on STUDIO ONE, CBS-TV

DIRECTED BY: **DENNIS WILSON**

LIGHTS AND SOUND BY:
NICK FAGIANI AND
WES SLUSSER



PRODUCED BY: TOM VITELLO

SETS DESIGNED AND PROVIDED BY: NIAGARA UNIVERSITY THEATRE DEPARTMENT

NIAGARA PROSCENIUM ALUMNI/COMMUNITY PLAYERS

May 2, 3 and 4, 2024

THE NIAGARA PROSCENIUM ALUMNI/COMMUNITY PLAYERS OF NIAGARA FALLS HIGH SCHOOL proudly present

2 ANGLE JURORS ANGRY

REGINALD ROSE

DIRECTED BY: DENNIS WILSON AND

SUSAN MARCOLINI

LIGHTS AND SOUND BY: NICK FAGIANI AND WES SLUSSER

STAGE VERSION BY: SHERMAN L. SERGEL

Adapted from the Television Show of the Same Name Initially presented on STUDIO ONE, CBS-TV

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Produced by special arrangement with THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois.

Welcome to the Niagara Falls High School **Performing Arts Center!**

Please familiarize yourself with the following reminders as a courtesy to yourself, other patrons and the performers:

- Restrooms are located in the front lobby. Please be discreet if you have to leave during the performance.
- Please turn off all cellular phones and other electronics as a courtesy to other patrons and the performers. Cellular frequencies will interfere with the wireless audio system used in this theatre.
- Please remain seated through the entire act of the performance to avoid distracting the performers and patrons.
- The use of flash photography, video and audio recording including via mobile device is strictly prohibited, as it is hazardous to the performers and a contract violation. Please help us by observing this rule.
- While we appreciate your enthusiasm, please be mindful of proper theatre etiquette as this is not a sporting event.
- Thank you and enjoy the show!

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THIS SHOW?

Please click on the link to help us determine our advertising strategies.

Click here!

Thank you!

The NFHS Theatre Department



12 Angry Jurors

SYNODSIS

12 Angry Jurors is a play that contemplates the huge responsibility of 12 ordinary people as they consider the guilt or innocence of a young man accused of murder.

Despite the task at hand, the 12 jurors bring their own histories, prejudices, and biases to the jury room as they work through this life or death decision.

Place: A jury room Time: The present. Summer

Act One	Late Afternoon
Act Two	
15-Minute Intermission	
Act Three	Later that same day

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Foreman of the Jury	Bryan DalPorto (NC 1989/NFCSD Employee)
Juror No. 2	Evelyn DalPorto (NC 1990/NFCSD Employee)
Juror No. 3	
Juror No. 4	
Juror No. 5	
Juror No. 7	
	Dennis Anthony Wilson (LSHS 1985/NFCSD Employee)
Juror No. 9	Evan DalPorto**
Juror No. 10	
Juror No. 11	
Juror No. 12	Jack Nadrowski (NFHS 2019/NFCSD Employee)
Guard	
	Jadyn Langer**
Clerk	Jadyn Langer**

^{**} Current NFHS student

COMING SOON!

Decutiful State of the Carole King Musical

THE THEATRE EVENT NOT TO BE MISSED!

NOVEMBER 7, 8 & 9, 2024

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST



BRYAN DALPORTO
Foreman of the Jury



EVELYN DALPORTO

Juror #2



DAVID SANDERS

Juror #3





MANUEL MEJIA
Juror #4



COURTNEY BRANDY
Juror #5





DEBBIE TRAMONTANO

Juror #6

Please visit the
NFHS Theatre Department
Webpage for future performances,
alumni show information, show archives
and the NFCSD Theatre Hall of Fame.

www.nfschools.net/Page/5140

Are you interested in participating in future Niagara Proscenium Alumni Players

productions?



Follow us on Facebook for future audition announcements and performances.

Www.facebook.com/AlumniPlayersNFHS

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST



MARIA MASSARO

Juror #7



DENNIS ANTHONY WILSON

Juror #8



EVAN DALPORTO

Juror #9





RICCO SLAIMAN

Juror #10



CARISSA EWING
Juror #11





JACK NADROWSKI

Juror #12

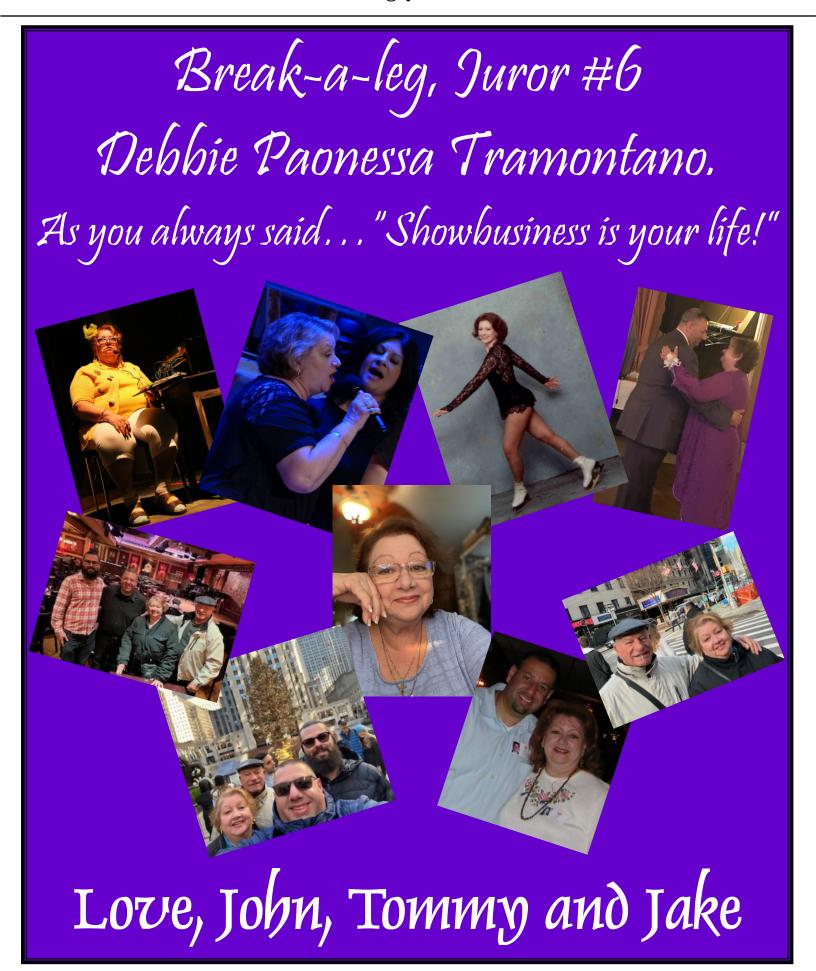
12 Angry Jurors

DRODUCTION STAFF

Director	Dennis Wilson (LSHS 1985/NFCSD Employee)
	Susan Marcolini (NFCSD Employee)
	Dennis Wilson (LSHS 1985/NFCSD Employee)
	Nick Wrobel (NFHS 2001/NFCSD Employee)
	imo Thomas, Niagara University Theatre Department
	Wes Slusser (NFCSD Employee)
Programs, Posters and Tickets	
	Barbara Rodgers (LSHS 1969/NFCSD Retired)
Concessions	Emily Walter
50/50 Tickets	Donna Nadrowski (LSHS 1993/NFCSD Employee)
THI	E CREW
Stage Manager	Charity Hosler**
Assistant Stage Manager	Leah Scrivano**
	Kendall Arbatosky**
	Camilla Ralands**
House Manager	Kaelyn Walter**
Ushers	Kendall Arbatosky**
	Peter Carlo**
	Camilla Ralands**

** Current NFHS Student

Kaelyn Walter**



WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

THE CAST

(in alphabetical order)

COURTNEY BRANDY (Juror #5) class of Niagara Falls High School 2002 is excited to be a part of her third alumni production! Previously she has performed in Smokey Joe's Café and Jesus Christ Superstar. Courtney has performed in the Niagara Falls Summer Theatre Program production of Guys and Dolls as a hot box dancer and in Godspell as a part of the chorus and a dancer under the direction of the late Tim Ward in 1999 and 2004. Courtney is a trained dancer and has been dancing for over 30 years. Throughout, she has used her talents as a dancer teacher, liturgical dance leader, and a member of the Buffalo State Dance ensemble. Courtney is graduate of Buffalo State College (University) and Niagara University. Currently she is a school counselor at Hyde Park Elementary School. Courtney would like to thank God for the many blessings, her dance teachers for influencing her love of dance performance and the continuous love and support from her family.

BRYAN DALPORTO (Foreman of the Jury) is the Director of Security for the Niagara Falls School District. This is his first stage performance. He spends most of his free time with his family and friends. He enjoys boating, pickleball and watching his son, Evan, play hockey. He is also dad to daughter Madison. He gets his courage to perform on stage from his son, Evan who has appeared in several performances and a short film. He feels that this has been a great learning experience that is out of his comfort zone and gets to perform not only with his son, but also his wife Evelyn.

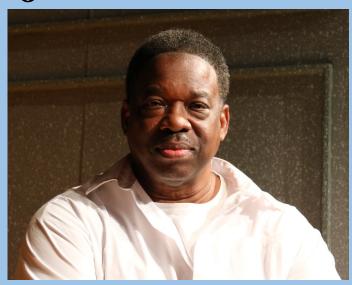
EVAN DALPORTO (Juror #9) Evan is a junior at Niagara Falls High School. Evan has been in shows such as Clue (Colonel Mustard), An Evening of Stephen Sondheim (Narrator), On Golden Pond (Billy Ray), Crimes of The Heart (Doc Porter), Grease (Danny Zuko), The Diary of Anne Frank (Otto Frank) and Hello, Dolly! (Cornelius Hackl). Evan's film credits include Nothing Will Ever Be The Same (Jeffery) and Manente Orthodontists (Extra). When offstage, Evan plays sports such as golf, hockey, and track. After high school Evan wants to pursue his career in the entertainment industry. Evan would also like to thank his family and friends for everything and hopes you enjoy the show. Evan is proudly represented by Aqua Talent. https://evandalporto06.wixsite.com/evan

EVELYN DALPORTO (Juror #2) is making her debut as Juror #2 in 12 Angry Jurors. Evelyn is a Teaching Assistant at 79th Street School. Married to Bryan, who coincidentally plays The Foreman. Evelyn has two children, Madison and Evan, with Evan also taking on a role in the production as Juror #9, creating a heartwarming family affair. Beyond the stage lights, Evelyn finds joy in the simple pleasures of spending time with her loved ones, cherishing each moment shared with family and friends. She expresses her heartfelt gratitude to the production crew for their tireless efforts and draws strength from the pep talks and encouragement bestowed upon her by her son, Evan. With unwavering

(Continued on page 13)

Congratulations Mr. Sanders, Juror #3 on your debut theatre performance!

We are so proud of you and happy to be your co-workers!



Best wishes for a great run! *Your 2nd Floor, House 2 Colleagues*

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

(Continued from page 11)

support from her loved ones, Evelyn's debut performance is bound to be a memorable one.

STEPHEN DIETRICH (Guard) - Stephen commonly goes by Stew. He is in his Senior year at NFHS. He participates in all facets of Band including: Pep, Marching, Concert, Gold Jazz, and Symphonic. Recently, he made his NFHS stage debut in *The Diary of Anne Frank* He would like to thank his parents, siblings, sibling in-laws and girlfriend for their support.

CARISSA EWING (Juror #11) is a Sophomore at Buffalo State University, beginning her studies as a Honors student in Theater and American Sign Language. Carissa is currently apart of Buffalo State's Improv group: FNL! She also has had a previous background in various theatrical productions like *The Wiz* (Ensemble), *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (Kate), *Clue* (Mrs. White), and *Plaza Suite* (Jesse, Costume Designer). She's thrilled to return to the stage once again and eager to share this story, which would not be possible without the support and time put in by both the crew, the directors, producer, and her talented castmates!

JADYN LANGER (Judge/Clerk) - Jadyn currently is a Senior at Niagara Falls High School. Jadyn just started performing theatrically on stage 3 years ago starting with Open Door Productions Production of Freaky Friday as Savannah. Other productions Jadyn has been in include Back Cover (Jessica), Ranked (Kelly), Crimes of the Heart (Lenny McGrath) and recently The Niagara Proscenium Players production of The Diary of Anne Frank (Mrs. Van Daan). After high school Jadyn is planning on pursuing a career in acting.

MARIA MASSARO (Juror #7) is the Administrator for Human Resources in the Niagara Falls City School District. Maria is so happy to make her Niagara Procenium Alumni/Community Players debut as Juror 7 in this production. Maria is a strong supporter of high school theater arts and believes that the experience she gained from being in the Drama Club and Niagara Falls Experience Players while she was in high school continues to help her in so many ways in her position today. She spends much of her free time running, and playing with her dogs: Peeps and Gus. Maria wants to thank Mr. Vitello and Mr. Wilson for encouraging her to join this production.

MANUEL MEJIA (Juror #4) Manny is a sophomore Theater major at Buffalo State. He has appeared on stage in Buffalo State's *Teach* (Male Chris), *On The Verge* (Alphonse, Mr.Coffee, Nicky), *Medea* (Aegeus), as well as *Clue* (Wadsworth), and *The Miracle Worker* (James). He's so grateful to share some laughs with you, enjoy!

(Continued on page 15)



Break a Leg, DalPorto Family!

To my amazing trio of family stars, tonight's performance is not just a show; it's a true family affair! You've got this! Sending all my love and support from the audience.

Love, Madison and Christopher

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

(Continued from page 13)

JACK NADROWSKI (Juror #12) is a graduate from Niagara Falls High School, Class of 2019 and an employee of the Niagara Falls City School District. He's previously appeared as both Mr. Pinky and Brad in *Hairspray*, the Rabbi in *Fiddler on the Roof*, the Man on the Street in *Dennis Wilson's The Therapist*, and Charlie in On Golden Pond. This is his third alumni production after *Evita* in 2021 and On Golden Pond in 2022. Special thanks to my family for all of their love and support.

DAVID SANDERS (Juror #3) is a social studies teacher at NFHS. You may have seen him in class teaching US history, African American Studies, or in the hallway on the second floor yelling really loud at students to get to class before the bell rings. Mr. Sanders spends much of his free time at the gym, doing yard work and walking his dog Achilles. Mr. Sanders is a graduate of Buffalo State College and Niagara University. Mr. Sanders would like to thank his wife and twin sons for their endless support as he takes on the challenge of life as a stage actor. He would also like to thank his students whom have been constantly harassing him about playing the role as the main antagonist in this play. Also, thanks to director Dennis Wilson for the opportunity of a life time, as well as all of my fans (LOL).

RICCO SLAIMAN (Juror #10) is honored to once again become a part of The Niagara Proscenium Alumni Players of NFHS. He has performed in many shows as a member of the Western Door Playhouse at the NACC. Past roles include Biff Loman in *Death of a Salesman* and Juror 8 and the guard in two separate productions of *Twelve Angry Men*. Recently he had the pleasure of being is a stage production of A *Few Good Men*. Ricco is currently in his 25th year as a teacher in the Niagara Falls City School District. In his spare time, he enjoys coaching youth baseball, reading and spending time with family. He'd like to thank his wife, Cassie, and children, Francesca and T.J., for their love and support.

DEBBIE (PAONESSA) TRAMONTANO (Juror #6) is a 1970 graduate of NFHS who has worked on her class reunions for 44 years, chairing for the last 32 yrs. She is busy planning for next year's NFHS Class of 1970's 55th Reunion, a 3 day event. She has certifications in both Interior Design and Human Resources Administration from SUNY at Buffalo. A lifelong love of music and the arts, she was a member of the chorus at North Jr., also performing in dance in *Jamie Freel*, and in the Drama Club, playing Lucille in *Two Crooks and a Lady*. As an adult she started Ice Dancing in Thorold, Ontario, later joining the adult precision (synchronized) teams of Reta's Roses and Midnight Ice, who were 3 times bronze medalists in the Canadian National Precision (Synchronized) Competition. Also enjoying roller skating in the off season, she met her husband of 44 years, John, an avid skater in his own rite. As a retired snowbird she wintered with her husband for over 22 years in Lake Havasu City, AZ, where she joined a snowbird chorus performing at many association functions, as well as soloing at many

(Continued on page 17)

Congratulations

to the cast and crew of

ANGRY JURORS

Proud To Be
Part Of
Another
Alumni
Production!



Debbie Paonessa Tramontano NFHS Class of 1970

Thank you Dennis, Susan & Tom For all you do!

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

(Continued from page 15)

activities. There, she found a love of singing at weekly snowbird jam sessions, introducing her love of jazz, soft rock and ballads to their country/bluegrass music. Debbie appeared in the chorus/ensemble of the alumni production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Dennis Wilson's *The Therapist*, a web series, On *Golden Pond* as the zany operator, and is proud to be part of this year's alumni cast of 12 Angry Jurors. If she isn't playing a part in the production, you'll find her in the Box Office or helping wherever she's needed in support of the Theatre Department. She would like to especially thank Dennis Wilson, Susan Marcolini and son, Tom Vitello, Jr., for their continued dedication to the NFHS Theater Department and Niagara Proscenium Alumni/Community Players.

DENNIS ANTHONY WILSON (Juror#8/ Director) was born and raised in Niagara Falls, NY. He attended Niagara University where he earned a B.F.A. in Theatre Arts and a M.Ed in Education Administration from Grand Canyon University. Upon graduation from Niagara University, Dennis became heavily involved in community theatre in Buffalo, NY. He relocated to New York City in 1995 and was immediately cast in theatrical productions. The next few years Dennis engaged in a professional acting career. Dennis has performed in the National and Canadian Touring Companies of Five Guys Named Moe (Little). Regional credits include: Once On This Island (Papa Ge), Toys in the Attic (Gus), Ain't Misbehavin (Andre), The Zoo Story (Peter), A Chorus Line (Mike & Bobby), Cabaret (Kit Kat Girl), West Side Story (Luis), Dutchman (Clay), Jesus Christ Superstar (Judas), Hair (Tribe Member), Smokey Joe's Café. Dennis is an accomplished choreographer, having staged productions of Sophisticated Ladies, Ragtime, The Wiz, Cabaret, West Side Story, The King and I, Smokey Joe's Café and Jesus Christ Superstar. In 2005, Dennis founded a theatrical production company, Dendewil Productions. Dennis also humbly adds the title of author to his credits having written and self-published three books, My Void My Voice (Poetry 2012), Eros Dennis (Poetry 2013), Morning Coffee Thoughts (Positive Affirmations 2016). Dennis wrote, produced and directed his first web series. The Therapist, which had its premiere in October 2021 on YouTube. During the summer of 2022, Dennis recorded an audio version of his poetry from his publication, My Void My Voice. In 2023, Dennis appeared as the Apparition in an original Regional-World Premiere of The Magnolia Ballet at the Alleyway Theatre in Buffalo, NY. Most recently, Dennis directed a production of the The Taming at Niagara University. Dennis currently resides in Niagara Falls and teaches theatre at Niagara Falls High School.

THE PRODUCTION STAFF

(in alphabetical order)

CHARITY HOSLER (Miep/Stage Manager) - Charity is a Senior here at NFHS. She is very involved in the theatre department. She has been the resident stage manager for The Niagara Proscenium

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Hey, Juror Number 12... You're Number 1 With Us!



Break-a-leg!
Love, Your
Family

(Continued from page 17)

Players productions of Clue, An Evening of Stephen Sondheim, Crimes of the Heart, Grease and Hello, Dolly! This past fall, she made her NFHS on-stage debut as Miep in The Diary of Anne Frank in addition to being the stage manager for the show. She was the stage manager for The Alumni Show productions of Evita and On Golden Pond. Charity was the recipient of the 2023 Thespie Robe Honors. Charity is also a part of the Varsity Soccer and Track and Field Teams, The Unified Sports Program, President of the class of 2024 Board of Directors and several other activities both in and out of school. She would like to thank her family, friends and amazing production team for supporting her throughout her time with the theatre program. This fall she will be attending Syracuse University.

SUSAN MARCOLINI (Choreographer) is delighted to once again, join the talented students at NFHS. Some of her past credits include, Jesus Christ Superstar, A Chorus Line, Ragtime, Mame, Pippin, and several more. She enjoyed working with the Niagara Experience Players for many years and holds a B.A. in dance from the University at Buffalo. She began choreographing for Niagara Falls High School in 1989 for a production of Jesus Christ Superstar. She is currently employed by the Niagara Falls City School District as a speech language pathologist.

LEAH SCRIVANO (Assistant Stage Manager) is a Senior at Niagara Falls High school and has previously been in shows, *Lion King Jr* (Sarabi), *Frozen Jr* (Sven), *Freaky Friday* (Ensemble), *Evita* (Assistant Stage Manager), *Clue On Stage* (Assistant Stage Manager), *An Evening of Stephen Sondhiem* (Assistant Stage Manager), *On Golden Pond* (Assistant Stage Manager) and *Crimes of the Heart* (Assistant Stage Manager), *Grease* (Frenchy), *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Assistant Stage Manager) and most recently as Dolly in *Hello*, *Dolly!* This fall she is planning on attending Alfred University.

TOM VITELLO (Producer) is currently a Spanish teacher at Niagara Falls High School. Tom graduated from the SUNY College at Buffalo in 1998 with a B.S. in Spanish Education and a M.S. in Education in 2000. Tom is also a 1995 graduate of NCCC where he earned an Associate Degree in Liberal Arts/Humanities - Social Science. Tom's has over 100 theatre credits to his name including: Anything Goes!, The Pajama Game, Guys and Dolls, A Chorus Line, Forum, The Music Man, Grease, Hello, Dolly!, Fiddler on the Roof, Godspell, Little Shop of Horrors, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Company, Pippin, Man of La Mancha, Evita, Children of Eden, Steel Magnolias, Annie, Bye Bye Birdie, Barry Manilow's Copacabana, Jekyll and Hyde, Les Miserábles, Chicago, The Rocky Horror Show, Smokey Joe's Café, Ragtime, Willy Wonka, The Addams Family, Hairspray, Mamma Mia!, On Golden Pond, Crimes of the Heart, The Diary of Anne Frank and West Side Story. Other music credits include: Handel's Messiah, Berlioz' Messe Sollennelle, Mahler's Symphony 8 – Symphony for a Thousand, Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture, and other selected works all performed with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and the Holy Trinity Lutheran Concert Choir. Tom was as the Music Director, Arranger and Studio Musician for two CD recordings, My Father's Hymns and Broadway and Beyond, by local artist Lee Stevens. In 2008, Tom performed in concert with Grammy Award Winning Singer/Songwriter Kenny Loggins at Artpark.

(Continued on page 21)



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Your Future is Our Top Priority



(Continued from page 19)

Tom has worked with the theatre departments of Lewiston-Porter, Starpoint, City Honors School and Niagara Falls High School and has been on the production staff for several productions at NCCC. Tom served as the Drama Club Advisor/Director for Niagara Catholic from 2000 to 2006. For the Fall 2005 semester, Tom was an Adjunct/Musical Director for the theatre department of NCCC. Tom proudly is co-founder of the Niagara Falls City School District Theatre Hall of Fame. In 2021, Tom was the Executive Producer of the web series *Dennis Wilson's The Therapist*, for which he composed and recorded all the underscoring and theme song, *Journey*. In Fall of 2022, Tom composed and recorded the instrumental music for the Niagara Proscenium Alumni Players production of On Golden Pond. In January of 2023, Tom performed Off-Broadway at 54 Below in New York City as a pianist for a special engagement of the Stage Door Medium with Jimmy Moses. Tom would like to thank his husband Jacob for always being so supportive.

KAELYN WALTER (House Manager) Kaelyn is a senior at Niagara Falls High School. She has been seen on the NFHS stage as The Cook, Clue on Stage, Babe McGrath, Crimes of the Heart, Ms. Lynch, Grease, Edith Frank, The Diary of Anne Frank and most recently as Ernestina in Hello, Dolly!. She works behind the scenes as stage crew and house manager when not performing. Kaelyn is very excited to be a part of Hello Dolly and is honored to be playing the role of Ernestina! Kaelyn will be attending the University of Nevada at Las Vegas.

DENNIS ANTHONY WILSON (Director) - See Cast Bios

A MESSAGE FROM THE DRODUCER

Good Evening and Welcome to our annual Alumni/Community theatre production here at Niagara Falls High School Performing Arts Center. With what started as a once time project has grown in an annual event giving past graduates and members of the community to return to the stage and share their talents once again.

This year, our plans changed significantly from what was on the slate of this alumni/community production. We were full steam ahead to bring you *Beautiful—The Carole King Musical*, but much to our displeasure, the performances rights were temporarily put on hold for us. Long story, short... with much aggravation, many phone calls to the rights company and much persistence on our part, we are moving ahead with *Beautiful* this coming November 7, 8 and 9, 2024. Keep an eye on our website and Facebook page for more information including auditions. That being said, we were left without an alumni/community show for this year. Planning and scheduling time was of the essence which had us moving the show to now in May, just a short amount of time after our Spring student musical production of *Hello*, *Dolly!*

(Continued on page 23)



So, here we are with an exciting cast bringing you the stage drama 12 Angry Jurors. This cast has done an outstanding job to put this dramatic production together in literally 8 rehearsals and 3 technical rehearsals. With the exception of one cast member who is retired, everyone in the cast has a full time job or are full time students. They have come to rehearsals after their regular work days or school days to work on their lines, character and staging, They have been so dedicated and such a joy for the production staff to work with. We just know that you will truly enjoy their staged-reading performance.

Thank you to everyone involved with this production; the cast, the crew, the production team. You are all so wonderful and a true joy to work with. Thank you to you, the patrons for consistently supporting our projects and supporting the arts in our school and community. We hope that you enjoy the show and come see our student and alumni/community productions next year.

Tom Vitello Producer

FRIEND DATRONS

• Nice performance, Mr. Slaiman! - Leo Nadrowski

Break-a-leg to the cast and crew of 12 Angry Jurors!

CONGRATULATIONS

TO THE CAST AND CREW OF 12 ANGRY JURORS!



From the Office of Human Resources
Niagara Falls City School District

NIAGARA FALLS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT THEATRE HALL OF FAME



2023 INDUCTION CEREMONY Saturday, May 4, 2024

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2023 THEATRE HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Ayla Ciccone Burton
Ceciyyah Colvin Atkins
Richard Meranto
Paul M. Wos

PAST RECIPIENTS

Janet Dunstan - 2022
John F. Echler - 2019
Maria Fortuna Dean - 2020
Marva Frails - 2019
Portia Johnson - 2022
Katherine Kerswell Muldoon - 2020
Daniel McDonald - 2020

Ralph Meranto - 2019
Ben Michael Moran - 2022
Jennifer Neuland - 2019
Leon Packman - 2020
Jeffrey Perri - 2021
Angela Ruggiero - 2021
Wendy Zito - 2021

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Tom Vitello, Co-Chairperson
Dennis Wilson, Co-Chairperson
Robert Kazeangin
Richard Meranto
Susan Marcolini
Paul M. Wos

MEET THE INDUCTEES AYLA CICCONE-BURTON



Ayla Ciccone-Burton graduated from Niagara Falls High School in 2013. As a young actress, singer and dancer, she was involved with the Niagara Proscenium Players and the Niagara Fine Arts Program. She appeared in such productions as Annie, Guys and Dolls and Little Shop of Horrors. She then went on to travel and study in places such as Chicago, London and Ireland where she discovered she wanted to pursue musical theatre as a career. Since then she has been in shows such as The Book Of Mormon in Australia, Tina! The Tina Turner Musical on Broadway, Six on Broadway, The Great Gatsby starring Jeremy Jordan and Eva Noblezada, and

you can currently see her in the musical revival of *Cabaret* on Broadway as Helga, which stars Eddie Redmayne and Broadway veteran Bebe Neuwirth. She currently resides in NYC with her puppy Alfie where she continues to create outside of the theatre. You can find her music recordings streaming on all music platforms.



MEET THE INDUCTEES CECIYYAH COLVIN ATKINS



Ceciyyah Olivia Atkins, formerly Colvin, known to many as Ceci, has cultivated a rich tapestry of experiences that connects her passion for music with her dedication to serving the community as an educator. Her ability to overcome adversity through her vocal gifts or supportive presence is a testament to her strength of character. Born and raised in Niagara Falls, NY, Ceci's journey is one truly marked by resilience, compassion, and the persistent pursuit of her dreams.

From a young age, Ceci's melodic voice echoed through the halls of GJ Mann Elementary, where she eagerly participated in

talent shows, captivating audiences with her soulful performances. She first performed a solo debut at the tender age of 4 at Niagara Christian Academy where she first attended school. Her love for music blossomed further within the nurturing embrace of her church community and parents, Pastor Mitchell and Louise Colvin, where she found solace and joy in singing. Later on, this led her starting a gospel choir at LaSalle Middle School (NF); as well as transition into performing in Musical Theatre during her years at LaSalle Senior High School (NF), Daemen College (Buffalo), and Community Fine Arts Theatre (NF). Ceci's journey in the performing arts is marked by significant achievements and milestones. Among her accomplishments are winning a Kenny Award for her portrayal of Ronnette in "Little Shop of Horrors" and another for her captivating lead role performance as Carmen Diaz in "Fame". Notably, she made history as the first African American woman to receive a Kenny Award for a leading role. Additionally, Ceci holds a special place in the hearts of her alma mater, being part of the inaugural graduating class of Niagara Falls High School in 2001. Beyond the

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(Continued from page 28)

confines of her successes within The Performing Arts during academia, Ceci's love for music continued to flourish professionally. Her captivating sound accumulated years of experience as a professional solo performer, delivering heartfelt performances that have graced countless stages, venues, and events across Western New York for over two decades. Whether she was performing in church or lending her talents to a ticketed audience, Ceciyyah's voice sparked hope and inspiration to all who listened.

Nonetheless, her journey was not solely defined by music; it was also shaped by her deep-seated commitment to education. As she navigated the corridors of higher education, Ceci discovered her passion for nurturing and empowering students with unique learning needs. With each passing year, her resolve to make a difference in the lives of these children grew stronger, propelling her towards a career dedicated to their welfare. With her boundless compassion and a Master of Science degree in Childhood Education from D'Youville University, Ceci embarked on a transformative journey in the field of Special Education that has spanned two decades. Currently, her days are spent in classrooms filled with eager young minds, each one a testament to her spirit of service and genuine care. In addition to her professional pursuits, Ceci found joy and fulfillment in her role as a mother and more recently as a wife. Her son Aaron Shareef is embarking on his own journey as an accounting major at Niagara University and stands as a

testament to Ceci's ultimate commitment as a nurturer. In a beautiful celebration of love and companionship, Ceci recently exchanged vows with Dr. Mikhail Atkins on Valentine's Day, marking the beginning of a new chapter to an already remarkable story.

As Ceciyyah Atkins continues to tread the path she has carved with grace and determination, she remains a shining example of the courage it takes to follow your dreams no matter what challenges may exist. Her story is one of a life lived with purpose and passion. As a woman of her generation, Ceci embodies the spirit of resolve and



(Continued on page 30)

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humility. Her infectious personality, coupled with her innate ability to uplift those around her, has endeared her to both her professional and social circles. Ceci's "it" factor and talents shine through in everything she does, making her a beloved figure in her community and beyond.

Ceci would like to dedicate this award to Dawn Smith-Deluca (former theater director for La Salle Senior HS.); Mike Esposito; Duncan Hollinger (former band instructor for La Salle Middle School); The late Kate Muldoon (former theatre director for NFHS); and the late Paul Wos (former band director NFHS). Their collective efforts over the years nourished her growth as a person and performer. Their belief in Ceci's abilities helped her to flourish, and because of their genuine support, Niagara Falls now celebrates one of its own.



MEET THE INDUCTEES RICHARD MERANTO



Rich has been involved in theater since he was in the second grade when he appeared in a production of *Hello*, *Dolly!* at the old Niagara Falls High School. Rich was hooked and was fortunate to be cast in shows every year until he got to 7th grade at LaSalle Jr. From that point on he appeared in three shows a year till he graduated from LaSalle Senior in 1985. Rich looks back fondly on his portrayals of Cornelius Hackl, Will Parker, Fagin, Vernon Hines and Lord Fancourt Babberley and is proud to have performed with Dennis Wilson and Wendy Zito.

After high school he was involved with Niagara Falls Little Theater where he began his love of the technical side of theater and directing. In 1988 he decided to become a teacher, and his high school theater director and mentor Lee Packman gave him the opportunity to be the tech director for several shows as well has his first real directing opportunity, Neil Simon's *Broadway Bound*.

Rich got hired in 1992 by the NFCSD and began to work with friend from NFLT, Kate Muldoon on productions at the old NFHS, where he also re-launched the NFHS Strange Crew. He also served as the director for the Starpoint Drama program for three years. His partnership with Kate, is the period he is most proud of. She directed the musicals, and he directed the plays. His favorites included Steel Magnolias, Charley's Aunt, Animal Crackers, A Streetcar Named Desire, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof and others. When the new high school was being built, Rich became heavily involved in the design of the PAC, and then he served at the stage manager and theater coordinator for 22 years. During that time he also was fortunate to direct the Kenny Award winning Footloose, as well as Copacabana, Les Misérables

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and A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum. These years are special to Rich because he got to work with his cousin Tommy Vitello, and his NFHS partner in crime, Amy Chiarella. Rich has returned to the stage a few times over the years. He even got to play be the lead when portrayed Harold Hill in his favorite show, *The Music Man*.

Rich stepped away from directing when he started media production program at NFHS, known as the Our Schools Channel, the Niagara County education access channel, but continued to build and design sets and manage the PAC until he retired in 2022. Rich and his wife Maria now own Meranto Media, Inc and they also operate the Emerge: A media Creators co-op. He would like to thank his wife Maria, for never questioning his commitment to education and his students.

Rich is the proud son of Ralph and Theresa Meranto, the brother of fellow Hall of Famer, Ralph and is the proud parent of two sons, Christian and Zachary.



MEET THE INDUCTEES PAUL M. WOS



Paul M. Wos was a 31-year career music teacher in the Niagara Falls City School District, where he was the director of the Concert Band, Wind Ensemble, and Jazz Lab Band at Niagara Falls High School. He also taught AP Music Theory at the school for 14 years. He was the conductor for over 45 musical theatre productions for school and community theatre groups in the Niagara region. In April 2012, Paul was the recipient of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra "Excellence in Music Education Award." Paul has been a four-time honoree in "Who's Who Among America's Teachers," and was honored as

"Teacher of the Year" by the Niagara Falls City School District in 2005. He was listed in several past editions of Marquis "Who's Who in America." His former students were inspired to continue their musical studies at SUNY Fredonia, SUNY Potsdam, the Eastman School of Music, Ithaca College, and the Berklee College of Music, and many of them are now professional performers or music educators. A graduate of the Eastman School of Music and a professional performer on trumpet, Paul performed with the Erie County Wind Ensemble and the Amherst Symphony, along with dozens of stock and touring shows at SUNY Buffalo, Artpark, the Kavinoky Theatre, MusicalFare Theatre, and Niagara University. He also performed at various venues with Tony Bennett, Robert Goulet, the Spinners, the Temptations, Regis and Kathie Lee and the Four Tops, among others. He performed in the area with the Hitmen Horns, performing with popular local groups like JoyRyde, Junction West, the Bob Meir Big Band, among others. He was an avid theatre goer and season ticket holder for many years for the Broadway Series at Shea's Performing Arts Center where he was also a group leader bringing

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many friends, students and fellow faculty members to the theatre regularly. Paul was a huge Looney Tunes fan, especially Bugs Bunny, and threw an annual Christmas party unlike no other every year for his friends who were like Paul's family. Paul was an excellent conductor and a book of knowledge for many things musical. His personal music collection rivaled most libraries and perhaps record stores. Paul's favorite Broadway show was Les Misérables, especially with the role of Jean Valjean was performed by Colm Wilkinson. He saw that show over 120 times over the years. Paul became a friend to Colm Wilkinson after bringing student groups from the old NFHS to see him in The Phantom of the Opera in Toronto dozens and dozens of time. Paul's most recent performance was his return to the NFHS stage as King Herod in the Niagara Proscenium Alumni Players production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Paul sadly left us unexpectedly and very prematurely on January 10, 2024. He is greatly missed by his friends, family and former students.







NFCSD THEATRE HALL OF FAME NOMINATION CRITERION

- 1. Nominee is a former theatre department alumnus
 - Nominee was active in the theatre department production as an actor, stage crew/technical crew member or pit orchestra member.
 - Nominee exhibited outstanding qualities not limited to talent that makes him/her worthy of nomination.
 - Nominee was a student in the theatre programs in the high schools that make up the NFCSD but is not necessarily a graduate of the NFCSD.
- 2. Nominee is a current or past theatre department production staff member.
 - Nominee was active as a production staff member including but not limited to director, producer, assistant director, choreographer, costume director, orchestra director, technical director, artistic director.
 - Nominee exhibited a notable dedication to the department.
 - Nominee does not need to be a graduate of the NFCSD but was employed as a staff member in a school in the NFCSD or was employed as a "sub-contracted" staff member for a/some production(s).

MISSION OF THE NIAGARA FALLS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT THEATRE HALL OF FAME

The mission of the Niagara Falls City School District Theatre Hall of Fame is to recognize theatre alumni and theatre department professionals of the school district for their outstanding contributions to the theatre department and their work in theatre beyond their tenure in the school district.

Each year, the Hall of Fame Committee will select future nominees each year. Alumni and department professionals are nominated by submission of an official nomination form. On the following page, the criterion for nomination eligibility are listed. Recipients will receive an award at each year's induction ceremony and their names will be permanently displayed at Niagara Falls High School. The display is forthcoming and is currently in the design phase.

Click here to submit a nomination to the NFCSD Theatre
Hall of Fame

12 Angry Jurors

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mr. Mark Laurrie, Superintendent of Schools Members of the Niagara Falls Board of Education

Mrs. Cheryl Vilardo, Chief Education Administrator Mr. Bryan Rotella, Administrator Mrs. Valerie Rotella-Zafuto, Administrator Mr. Nicholas Ruffalo, Administrator Mr. Edward Ventry, Administrator

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Mr. Steven Braddock - Niagara University Theatre Department Mr. Primo Thomas - Niagara University Theatre Department Students of the Theatre Department at Niagara University

> Mr. Jacob Kopera Ms. Barbara Rodgers Mrs. Donna Nadrowski Mrs. Emily Walter

> Mr. Robert Touchette Mrs. Teresa Kurilovitch

Mr. Rocco Strangio and the students of the OSC-21 Media Program

All of the Parent, Student and Alumni Volunteers