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101 Ridge Road
Little Silver, NJ 07739
Phone (732) 842-8000
Fax 723-842-8504

www.rbrhs.org
RED BANK REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Contact: Dr. Louis Moore, Superintendent
Phone: 732-842-8000 ext. 1240, 1247

Marianne Kligman
Community Information Officer,
mkligman@rbrhs.org; 732-758-9089
732-586-1232 (cell)

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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Pictured (Left to right) above are the 2018 inductees to the RBR Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame William H. Truswell, M.D.; Francis Hankins; John "Jay" Waters, Colonel, US Army, Sarah Landy; Jennifer Brush.

RBR Inducts Distinguished Alumni to its 2018 Hall of Fame

Little Silver: On April 27, Red Bank Regional (RBR) High School inducted its 2018 Distinguished Alumni members to its Hall of Fame. They include: accomplished plastic surgeon and missionary doctor of reconstructive surgery William H. Truswell, M.D., F.A.C.S., Class of 1964; multiply decorated retired Army Colonel John "Jay" Waters, Class of 1983; long-time head electrician of the PNC Bank Arts Center Francis Hankins, Class of 1985; Senior Vice President of Nickelodeon Preschool Television Sarah Landy, Class of 1993; and music educator and performer Jennifer Brush, Class of 2005. The event is sponsored and organized by the RBR Buc Backer Foundation. This year's event committee chairs were Teresa Jahns Hottmann, Shrewsbury and Kate Quinn, Little Silver.

RBR Principal Risa Clay greeted the Distinguished Alumni telling her student audience, "This event has become a wonderful tradition at RBR. It combines the occasion to learn more about the rich history of our school with an opportunity to honor our past."

Each alumnus was introduced to the audience by Buccaneer Student Newspaper Adviser Cassandra Dorn, whose students wrote biographic articles of the inductees for a commemorative journal. The Alumni all shared their stories and advice to the students.

Dr. Truswell told the crowd that he was old enough to be the father of every other Alumnus but stated, "Every day is a reward. Every day is a gift to me to do what I do. I find it fascinating and energizing."

When a student asked him what was the most memorable part of long and distinguished career, he choked up and related the story of a young Vietnamese girl whose face was disfigured from an accident when she was only a baby. After a long and grueling surgery she thanked him, and then later, when he returned to the United States, she called him for changing her life. She continues to thank him with annual cards of gratitude.

Colonel Jay Waters traveled to many places for his military career, telling the students, "I have been to 44 states and 57 countries and when I come back I am always proud to tell people that I am from the Red Bank area and a part of the public school system." He credited the diversity of RBR in helping him perform all his leadership assignments throughout the world with a diverse command of American soldiers. In his retirement he continues his service in working with the Americans in Wartime Oral History Project.

Francis Hawkins is a frequent visitor to RBR enjoying the productions that he used to work on as part of the stage crew. He told the students, "If you can't find your niche here, you are not looking hard enough. I was never a big academic but they had the stage program. And you will find some teacher who will affect your life.

For me it was Renee Maxwell and Joseph Russo. Mr. Russo helped me get my first job in the industry. Find what makes you happy; you can turn that into a career. Go to college if you feel it is right for you. If not you will find something that makes you happy.”

Sarah Landy was a very popular guest, having been responsible for producing many of the programming the current students enjoyed as preschoolers. But her beginnings did not portend for the amazing success she would achieve as an executive at Nickelodeon. She shared her biggest challenge with the students when she came to grips with the fact that undiagnosed learning disabilities had always hampered her success.

She stated, “My school counselor set up a peer group for students dealing with similar challenges. The group was a safe space for me to share my experiences of different things that were coming at me in classes. We shared techniques we would use... This experience set up a model for me to always learn what my resources were and to fully utilize them to the best of my ability and not to let shame or embarrassment to keep me from getting the most out of my situation and pursuing my goals.”

Jennifer Brush explained that her career path was etched in her genes from a very musical family. The RBR band room is named for her grandfather, RBR’s beloved music teacher Mr. Luckenbill. Now she is a vital part of the RBR community in educating its upcoming musicians as the music teacher for the Little Silver sending school. She explained her love of music stating, “Music instilled a sense of confidence, discipline, and compassion and continues to be a way to express myself.” Her years at RBR were spent as part of the Visual & Performing Arts (VPA) Family, playing in the orchestra and the marching band, but added, “RBR provided me with every opportunity to explore and merge all my interests academically, musically and athletically.” She advised the students to take advantage of every opportunity at RBR and beyond. Have the confidence to try something new even it forces you to be outside your comfort zone. Work your hardest and push your limits now. It will help you build the stamina to face challenges later in life. And you will learn so much more about yourself and the world around you.”

The Distinguished Alumni Inductees and their families and friends were later honored at a luncheon prepared by the RBR Culinary Club and serenaded by the VPA piano majors. Little Silver Mayor Robert Neff and Shrewsbury Mayor Don Burden presented them with town proclamations. Additionally, Maria Lina LaRosa presented the inductees with proclamations from the State Assembly.

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Left, the Distinguished Alumni are pictured with RBR administration and event committee chairs. They are (left to right), (back row): RBR Superintendent Louis Moore, Distinguished Alumni William H. Truswell, M.D.; Francis Hankins; John “Jay” Waters, Colonel, US Army, Sarah Landy; (front row) Committee Co-Chair Kate Quinn, RBR Principal Risa Clay, Committee Co-Chair Teresa Jahns Hottmann, and Distinguished Alumni inductee Jennifer Brush,

The alumni received proclamations from (pictured left to right): Little Silver Mayor Robert Neff and State Assembly representative Maria Lina LaRosa Shrewsbury Mayor Don Burden.



(Below) The Alumni enjoyed a luncheon prepared by the RBR Culinary Club (left to right), Bill Doren, Union Beach, Brandon Trani, Little Silver, Kaitlyn Viola, Lake Como, Chef Peter Roskowsinski Erin McEvoy, Neptune City, Samantha Feder, Millstone,



(Right) And were serenaded by the VPA piano majors. (left to right) Evan Bardinas (front), Bradley Beach; Andrew Hall, Little Silver; Jacquelyn Conforti, Millstone; Christopher Hall, Little Silver; Maggie Mullaney, Little Silver and VPA Supervisor Adam Reckenwald.

