A Brief History of the Quality Student Program

Tonawandas met to discuss how they might call attention to the high quality of the young men and women who attended and graduated from Tonawanda, North Tonawanda and Bishop Gibbons high schools and who someday would assume positions of trust and responsibility in our communities. Thus was founded the unique Quality Student program, which has melded business and education in a program which honors these young people.

In 1971, when Bishop Gibbons closed, many students from the Twin Cities continued their education at its sister school, Cardinal O'Hara High School, which then became the third high school in the program.
The students are selected by teachers and a selection committee at each school based on the following criteria:

Leadership in the classroom and/or community
Participation in extra-curricular school activities
Exemplary qualities of citizenship
Academic achievement

The honored students represent their school at the awards dinner where they also recognize a memorable educator that has made a great impact on their lives.

Aims

- To inform young people of the importance of leadership, scholarship, service and character, not only in school, but later in life as well.
- To meld business and industry with education by encouraging area businesses to sponsor a student and their parents.
- The committee hopes that this program will serve as a momento for students chosen to be honored as Quality Students.

City & School Board Officials

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BANQUET FACILITY & GROVE
BANCHETTI
by Rizzo's

Special thanks to Mike Rizzo for his longtime support of the Quality Student event

Order of Events

Welcome
Dr. Timothy A. Oldenburg
Superintendent of Schools, Tonawanda

Benediction & Invocation
Father Paul Seil

Presentation of Awards
Bradley Rowles
Principal, North Tonawanda High School

Dinner

Presentation of Awards
Laura Osinski
Principal, Cardinal O'Hara High School

Lyndsey Todaro
Principal, Tonawanda Senior High School

Keynote Speaker
Supreme Court Justice Honorable Frank Caruso



A native of the City of Tonawanda, Hon. Frank Caruso, New York State Supreme Court Justice, graduated from Tonawanda High School, Buffalo State College and the University of Dayton School of Law. He also had his own general law practice in the Town of Tonawanda.

In 1995 Frank was elected in the Town of Tonawanda as Town Justice and re-elected in 1999 and 2003 with the endorsements of every political party. In June of 2001, Frank was the first Town Justice to be appointed as Acting Buffalo City Court Judge and continued to serve in that capacity until the end of 2006 when he was appointed to the New York State Supreme Court by Governor George Pataki. He was subsequently re-elected in 2021 with the endorsement of every political party.

Frank previously served as Deputy City Attorney and City Prosecutor for the City of Tonawanda.

Frank is married to the former Paula Tomasulo and they live in Wheatfield.

He is honored to be addressing the 2026 Class of Quality Students.

Closing Remarks
Dr. Jeffrey Jachlewski
Superintendent of Schools, North Tonawanda

Tonawanda Senior High School



Ally Bell

child of Joleen & Eric Bell

Honors & Activities: AP Scholar, Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Award, RIT High School Award Winner (Science & Math Award), NYSPHSAA Scholar Athlete x3, Volleyball, Track & Field

Future Plans: I plan to go to college and study biotechnology.

Memorable Educator: Mrs. Shaffer. Mrs. Shaffer is an exceptional teacher! She goes above and beyond and always kind. Mrs. Shaffer supports me and always there when I need her.



Emma Caufield

child of Theresa & Daniel Caufield

Honors & Activities: Captain of Varsity Tennis, NHS Historian, Track & Field, FBLA, GSA, Student Council
Honors: Valedictorian, Scholar Athlete, Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony Award (via University of Rochester), RIT's Women in Stem Award

Future Plans: I plan on attending Buffalo State University, and pursuing an education in the humanities/silversmithing.

Memorable Educator: Mrs. Insinna. I have chosen my middle school French teacher, Mrs. Insinna, as my memorable teacher. She has an infectious enthusiasm that few people can muster. I felt very inspired by her passion for both the French language and teaching as a whole. She always made lessons interesting and thoroughly enjoyable. I also had the honor to take a school trip to France & England with her, which I look back upon very fondly.



Shannon Doane

child of Sandra Peterson & David Doane

Honors & Activities: Scholar Athlete, Perfect Attendance, Honor Roll, National Honor Society, Varsity Tennis, Varsity Bowling and Team Captain, Varsity Softball Most Improved, Leadership Class, Peer to Peer, Student Council, FBLA, Teens Teach Tech, Connect Life, Girl Scouts Silver Award, Youth Group, Western Area Youth

Future Plans: I plan to attend college to study Environmental Science in order to help our world and communities.

Memorable Educator: Mr. Macro. Mr. Macro has been my coach for the past three years and my teacher for two. He is always there for me to help with whatever I need and is always willing to talk or listen. He makes sure everyone has fun and can enjoy themselves in both sports and his class. He has always managed to brighten my day whenever I see him.



Falica Giomundo

child of Denise Frazier

Honors & Activities: Honor Roll from 9th to 11th grade, National Technical Honor Society, National Society of High School Scholars, Skills USA, Best Buddies President , Youth Court, Unified Basketball

Future Plans: Attending college at SUNY Niagara for Culinary Art's to open a restaurant one day

Memorable Educator: Ms. Planz-Christian. I chose Miss. Planz as my memorable teacher because she has impacted my life since the day we met in ninth grade when I got to join her class for their Easter Party and work with her students to make fun holiday themed snacks. I knew in middle school that I wanted to work with kids with IDD and the day I found out Miss. Planz was starting Best Buddies I knew that was something I wanted to join and for the past two years she has made me the president of the group and its only one of my biggest accomplishments that she has helped me get to. I'm a very introverted person so that was the first club I have ever joined thanks to her now I'm a part of so many extracurriculars thanks to her. Miss planz has helped me come out of my comfort zone and become the person I am today there's nothing big enough I can do to repay her and I truly appreciate everything she has done for me. She is one of the most amazing teachers I know and I haven't even had a class with her. She has impacted my life for the better and she deserves to be my most memorable teacher in all the years I have been in school.
So Miss. Planz Thank You, you are an amazing teacher and an even better friend to your students.



Peyton Langworthy

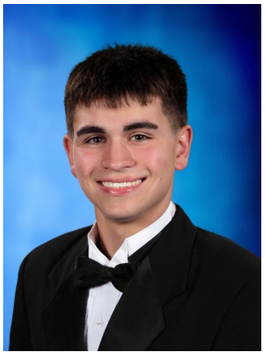
child of Melissa & Lucas Langworthy

Honors & Activities: High Honor Roll, AP Scholar, Scholar-Athlete Award, TEAcher's Choice Award, Rensselaer Medal Award, Alfred University Scholars Award, Outstanding Student in Social Studies Award, ELA Excellence Dept. Award, French III Dept. Award, French II Dept. Award, OP Rugby Award,Player of the Year Award,'24 & '25 All-Rugby NY West Team, Niagara Wasps Rugby-Ray Barkwill Niagara Shield Award, Varsity Soccer MVP,2nd Team ECIC,Youth Court, National Honor Society, Rugby team captain, USA Rugby High Performance program, Varsity Soccer Captain, Varsity Cheerleading, Danceability, Inc. volunteer, Nickel City Canine Rescue volunteer, Tonawanda Dance Arts Leader In Training program volunteer, Tonawanda Dance Arts Intensive Team, Tonawanda Dance Arts Accelerated LEAD program, guiDANCE Experience Ambassador, Dawn Marie Dance Photography Ambassador, employee at St. Andrew's Country Day School, Just For Kids, & CCDC

Future Plans: I plan to attend Dartmouth College to study sociology and play D1 women's rugby. I aspire to work in law enforcement as an intel analyst, and play rugby at a higher level.

Memorable Educator: Mr. Maier. I chose him as my memorable teacher because in senior year, he instantly became a teacher I clicked with and could talk to about anything. He is very kind & is willing to help any student the best that he can. He also makes his classes super fun!

Tonawanda Senior High School



Derek Leiker

child of Angela Snyder & William Leiker

Honors & Activities: High Honor Roll every semester, Current member of National Honor Society, Multiple Scholarship Awards, Multiple Departmental Awards, TEA award, Varsity Soccer Player for 5 years (Captain Junior and Senior Year). ECIC 1st team as a Junior and Senior. ECIC 2nd team as a Sophomore. ECIC HM as a Freshman. All WNY Small Schools Soccer team as a senior, Sportsmanship POTY for ECIC. MVP 2 years in a row for Varsity soccer(JR &SR) , Most Reliable Player 2 years in a row for Varsity soccer (FR & SO). On the Varsity Basketball team for senior year, JV 2 years. Lacrosse Freshman Year. Scholar Athlete 9x. Club Soccer playing for the Buffalo Stallions. I have run my own landscaping business while balancing it with school and sports.
Future Plans: I plan on attending a 2 year college majoring in business in order to acquire an associates degree to either enter the workforce, enter into police academy, or transfer to a 4 year and finish school to acquire a bachelors degree.
Memorable Educator: Mrs. Arnow. Mr. Hawley was always a joy to see for the fact that he would always have a new dad joke prepped and ready to say at a moment's notice. Mr. Hawley's light and fun attitude made the science wing so bright to walk through even if you didn't have him as a teacher. Even though I had Mr. Hawley in middle school, his class had so many memorable moments, so I know I'll never forget his class.

Jayliana Lopez

child of Samantha Lopez



Honors & Activities: Musical Theater, Glee club, Drama club, Outstanding Vocal Student award
Future Plans: I plan on attending SUNY Niagara for Nursing
Memorable Educator: Mrs. Urbaniak. I chose Mrs. Urbaniak because she has been my vocal teacher for all 4 years of high school. Singing to me has always been a more vulnerable subject for me, as it is so close to my heart, and she has really helped me flourish and grow as a student. Mrs. Urbaniak helped me to be able to open up, to be able to share my music to the community, and improve my skills. No other teacher has had such a big impact on me as Mrs. Urbaniak has.



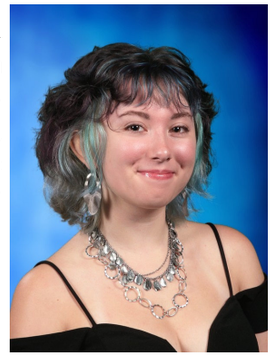
Charlotte Oates

child of Rhoda & Rick Oates

Honors & Activities: Scholar Athlete, Teachers Choice Award, Honor Roll, Student of the Month, Quality Student, Sunshine Award, MVP, Perfect Attendance, Younglife, SkillsUSA (Parliamentarian and Competed in National & Regional), Peer-to-Peer, National Tech Honor Society, El Salvador Mission's Trips, Varsity Softball, ECIS Varsity Bowling, 716 Herd Softball, Grand Island Vikings Softball, Lady Gamblers Softball, Salvation Army, COT Fundamental Softball Clinics Assistant Coach
Future Plans: SUNY Niagara for my Associates and then attend Houghton University to get my Master's Degree, majoring Early Childhood Education. I want to become a speech pathologist while also playing D3 college softball during my college career.
Memorable Educator: Miss Warthling. I picked Miss Warhtling because she is one of the most empathetic teachers I know. She is so kind and really helped me be successful when I was struggling in some courses. I don't know where I would be today if it wasn't for her support.

Sierra Penn

child of Stephanie & Stephen Penn



Honors & Activities: Bausch Lomb Honorary Science Award, Scholar athlete award, National Honors society, Future Business Leaders of America, Teens Teach Tech, Student Council
Future Plans: Planning on going to Niagara University and studying art or biology
Memorable Educator: Mrs. Kasprowicz. Mrs.Kasprowicz has influenced my future and my passions in many ways. I have always been interested in microbiology, but Mrs.Kasprowicz's class inspired me to another level. To this day AP Biology is one of my favorite classes I've ever taken.



Ariella Popovich

child of Jessica & Jason Popovich

Honors & Activities: High Honor Roll, AP Scholar with Honor, Scholar Athlete, National Honor Society(Vice President), FBLA, Student Council, GSA, SWISS, Wolfpack reading, Best Buddies, Youth Court, Varsity Basketball, Varsity Golf, Unified Golf(Captain),Varsity Softball, JV Cheerleading
Future Plans: Still undecided on which college but planning on staying in New York and attending college to obtain an undergraduate degree in Biology and then furthering my studies to obtain my Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine(DVM) in graduate school to become a Equine Veterinarian.
Memorable Educator: Mrs. D'Amato. I chose Mrs. D'Amato due to the persistent support she has provided me during my time in high school. She has been a teacher I can rely on for advice and encouragement. I will always remember the memories I made with her during our FBLA meetings and out of state field trips to conferences. I will always remember her as a selfless mentor who consistently prioritized my welfare and academic success.

Tonawanda Senior High School



Jackson Shepler

child of Amanda & Matthew Shepler

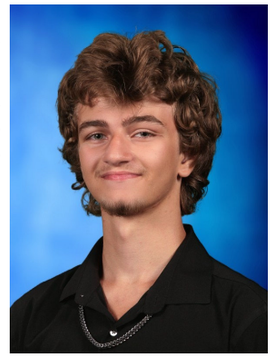
Honors & Activities: AP Scholar with Distinction, High School Honor Roll, Scholar Athlete, Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Award, Swim Team MVP, Tonawanda High School Record Holder - 200 Free, 200 IM, 500 Free, Scholar of the Arts, Congress for Future Medical Leaders, Star Swimming Character Award, Best in Show, Male Llama Erie County Fair, Reserve Grand Champion Erie County Fair, Red Cross Lifeguard, SCUBA Certified, Top Ranked Swimmer - Class C & ECIC's Division IV, Captain Varsity Swimming, FBLA President, Class President 10-12, Youth Court Judge, Lead Trumpet, Mascot Committee, Students Wishing to Improve School Setting, NHS, GSA
Future Plans: I plan on continuing my education at Oberlin College in Biosciences or Political Sciences, and participating in their swim program.
Memorable Educator: Mr. Rudroff. Mr. Rudroff is an incredibly kind, funny, and supportive teacher. I am thankful for his guidance and unique sense of humor. My musical abilities have flourished from his teachings.



Cameron Smith

child of Carla & Michael Smith

Honors & Activities: Scholar Athlete 2022-2026, Honor Roll, Varsity Soccer Captain 2024 & 2025, Varsity Lacrosse, Jazz Band, Delta Sonic Advanced Delta Tech, Coached & Reffed Youth Soccer
Future Plans: I plan on going to the University at Buffalo to major in engineering
Memorable Educator: Mrs. Barnum. Mrs. Barnum was my thrid grade teacher who had my brothers too. She was always super kind, helpful and reliable as teacher. Mrs. Barnum always made learning fun in the classroom.



William Stranahan

child of Jennifer Smith & William Stranahan

Honors & Activities: Swim, Track, FBLA, Student Council, GSA, NHS, Tech Wars, Physics Olympics, and Scholar Athlete
Future Plans: Going to UB for Engineering or for Paramedic Practice
Memorable Educator: Mr. Hawley. Mr. Hawley was always a joy to see for the fact that he would always have a new dad joke prepped and ready to say at a moment's notice. Mr. Hawley's light and fun attitude made the science wing so bright to walk through even if you didn't have him as a teacher. Even though I had Mr. Hawley in middle school, his class had so many memorable moments, so I know I'll never forget his class.



Petra Vagic

child of Natasa & Sasa Vagic

Honors & Activities: National Honor Society President, Student Council President, Vice President of Class, City of Tonawanda Ex Officio Board of Education Student Representative, Youth Court member, Business and Marketing Society, Future Business Leaders of America, High Honor Roll, Wolfpack Reading Program member, FBLA Secretary (2023-24), TEAcher's Choice Award (2023-24), World Languages Spanish IV Award (2024-25), Scholar Athlete, LeMoyne College Heights Award (2024-25), George Eastman Young Leaders Award (2024-25), Saint Stephen Serbian Orthodox Church Traditional Dance Captain, Travel Volleyball, Franco's Pizzeria Team Member, Volleyball Captain, MVP (2022), Steady Eddy Volleyball Award (2024), Team Leader Volleyball Award (2025), ECIC Second Team (2025).
Future Plans: I plan to pursue a master's degree in Accounting at the University at Buffalo
Memorable Educator: Mrs. Andres. Mrs. Andres is one of my most memorable teachers during my time at Tonawanda High School. Taking AP Statistics as a sophomore was scary, but having Mrs. Andres as my teacher made the class one of my most memorable classes. Having her again as a senior has made me appreciate her teaching style even more. Her ability to educate while keeping the class engaged is astonishing. She makes challenging classes fun and never fails to prepare us as much as possible. Her positive energy and amazing personality has inspired me so much during my years at Tonawanda and will continue to inspire me for the rest of my life.



Markell Wittmann

child of Cynthia & Edward Wittmann

Honors & Activities: National honor society,Teen of the week,first team ECIC baseball and football, nominated for overall player of ECIC baseball, scholar athlete, class president freshman year, honor roll all four years of high school
Future Plans: I plan on attending SUNY Niagara for sports management and I plan to become a full time firefighter upon graduation
Memorable Educator: Mrs. Rice. I chose Mrs. Rice because Mrs. Rice was more than just a teacher to me- she became another parent to me. Mrs. Rice also supported me at my sporting events every year, even over the summer outside of school. I'm so glad that I was able to have a teacher like Mrs. Rice who helped so much in shaping me into the person I am today.

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The committee thanks the sponsors for their interest in and commitment to the program as well as the future of our communities and the young people.

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