

Twentieth Annual  
*GEORGE A. DENNETT*  
**DISTINGUISHED  
CAREER AWARDS**

Program



NEEDHAM HIGH SCHOOL  
NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

OCTOBER 30, 2009



## Statement of Purpose

The **George A. Dennett Distinguished Career Award** has been established to recognize former Needham High School students who have gone on to distinguished careers in their chosen fields.

By making a significant contribution to our society, these alumni bring honor to their school and community, and serve as inspirations and role models to the students of Needham.

## Distinguished Career Award Committee

Linda George Michael Niden	<i>Co-Chair</i>
Katie Rutter	<i>Research &amp; Profile Editor</i>
Paul Buckley Susan Burke	<i>Fund Raising</i>
Joan Gould Kelley	<i>Program</i>
Tracey Aldrich Antaya	<i>Publicity</i>
Carole Sullivan Bill Concannon	<i>Reception &amp; Luncheon</i>
Kate Robey	<i>Invitations &amp; Web Site</i>
Steve Blomberg	<i>Alumni Relations</i>
David Crispi Stephen Peck Phil Quillard	<i>Nominations</i>
Max Hekler	<i>Student Presenters</i>
George A. Dennett	<i>Emeritus</i>

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# Prior Recipients

## 1990

**Frank H. Dodge** **Class of 1955**  
*Founder & President, Frank Dodge Associates, Inc.*

**James S. Gracey** **Class of 1945**  
*Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard (Ret.)*

**Brian J. Kelly** **Class of 1974**  
*Major, U.S. Air Force*

## 1991

**Gwen Grabowski Krivi** **Class of 1968**  
*Senior Fellow, Monsanto Co.*

**Ralph E. Leader** **Class of 1939**  
*Major General, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), Business Executive*

**Richard E. Wylie** **Class of 1959**  
*President, Endicott College*

## 1992

**Gary M. Gillis** **Class of 1973**  
*Sportscaster, WHDH - TV 7*

**Donald MacKenzie** **Class of 1954**  
*President, CEO, Chair, NYNEX Info. Resources, Inc.*

**Michael D. O'Neal** **Class of 1978**  
*President, CEO, Fathers Inc.*

## 1993

**Leonard W. Cronkhite, Jr., M.D.** **Class of 1937**  
*Physician, Consultant, Research Foundation Executive*

**Kent W. Jarrell** **Class of 1969**  
*National Correspondent, WUSA - TV*

**Patricia Saumsiegle Rabe** **Class of 1969**  
*Senior Producer, Random House, Inc.*

## 1994

**Cheryl Jacques**

*Massachusetts State Senator*

**Class of 1980**

**Stephanie Kalin**

*Director, Needham Community Council*

**Class of 1937**

**Richard Wainwright**

*Educator and Publisher*

**Class of 1954**

## 1995

**Samuel R. Cohn**

*Associate Professor of Sociology*

**Class of 1972**

**George L. Kline**

*Educator and Writer*

**Class of 1938**

**Carol Wallace Orr**

*Book Publisher*

**Class of 1951**

## 1996

**Bryan E. Carlson**

*President, Mount Ida College*

**Class of 1963**

**Colin B. Gracey**

*Chaplin, Northeastern University*

**Class of 1953**

**Susan Glover Gracey**

*Teacher & Court Reporter*

**Class of 1952**

**Alan L. Meltzer**

*Founder & Owner, Meltzer & Associates*

**Class of 1969**

## 1997

**William L. Healy**

*Orthopedic Surgeon*

**Class of 1970**

**Mary Catherine Mazzio**

*Attorney, Olympic Rower, & Filmmaker*

**Class of 1979**

**George F. Skinner**

*Educator, Realtor, Major, USAF (Ret.)*

**Class of 1946**

## 1998

**Elizabeth Lamb de la Vega**  
*Assistant United States Attorney*

**Class of 1969**

**James Lehr Kennedy**  
*Entrepreneur, Economist, Innovator, Educator*

**Class of 1966**

**Philip Vincent Robey**  
*Manufacturer's Representative, Community Service and Activist*

**Class of 1964**

## 1999

**Vincent Fantegrossi**  
*Athlete, Entrepreneur*

**Class of 1969**

**Andrea Morgan Matthews**  
*Performing Artist, Teacher*

**Class of 1974**

**George Twigg, III**  
*Marketing Representative, Community Service Activist*

**Class of 1950**

## 2000

**John Breda**  
*Professional Musician, Performing Artist, Physician*

**Class of 1972**

**Steven B. Larsen**  
*Insurance Commissioner State of Maryland*

**Class of 1977**

**Robert "Cap" Raeder**  
*Professional Hockey Player, Scout, Hockey Coach*

**Class of 1972**

## 2001

**Penelope Schneider Calf**  
*Language Teacher, Field Hockey Coach*

**Class of 1964**

**Robert A. DiPoli**  
*Chief, Needham Fire Department*

**Class of 1967**

**Alan K. Stern**  
*Pediatrician, Vice Chairman of Board of Health*

**Class of 1982**

## 2002

**Kevin Gottlieb**

*Professor - Public Administration*

**Class of 1960**

**William M. Harris**

*Chief Operating Officer*

**Class of 1968**

**Paul W. Robey III**

*Executive Vice-President*

**Class of 1964**

## 2003

**Kimberly Hinden**

*Registrar of Motor Vehicles, Massachusetts*

**Class of 1983**

**Lt. Colonel Paul O'Leary**

*Battalion Commander United States Marine Corps*

**Class of 1978**

**Michael Brian Tannenbaum**

*Asst. General Manager, New York Jets Director of Personnel*

**Class of 1987**

## 2004

**Charles D. Baker**

*President and C.E.O., Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, Inc.*

**Class of 1975**

**Martha Miceli Healy**

*Early Childhood/Preschool Special Education Teacher*

**Class of 1976**

**Jeffrey C. Taylor**

*Entrepreneur, C.E.O., monster.com*

**Class of 1978**

## 2005

**Paul F. Buckley Jr.**

*Fire Chief, Town of Needham*

**Class of 1979**

**Karen Carrleton**

*Captain, U.S. Air Force Major and Test Pilot, Alaska National Guard*

**Class of 1976**

**John P. O'Leary**

*Commissioner, Mass. Division of Unemployment Assistance*

**Class of 1980**



## 2006

**John F. Akers** **Class of 1952**  
*CEO and chairman of the Board, IBM (retired)*

**Michael Aronson** **Class of 1981**  
*Pulizer Prize winner, Editorial Board, New York Daily News*

**Albert Jacobs** **Class of 1983**  
**John Jacobs** **Class of 1986**  
*Co-founders, Life is good, Inc.*

## 2007

**Rev. Denise H. Brown** **Class of 1977**  
*Clergy and Specialized Ministry, Napoleon, Ohio*

**James G. Healy** **Class of 1977**  
*Attorney at Law, Needham Selectman, Needham, MA*

**Sunita L. Pandya Williams** **Class of 1983**  
*NASA Astronaut and Naval Aviator, Annapolis, MD*

## 2008

**Anne Collins** **Class of 1979**  
*Associate General Counsel, Executive Office of Transportation  
and Public Works  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

**Carol Hasenfus Stento** **Class of 1976**  
*Founder NHS Dance Team Coach  
Manufacturer's Representative  
Community Service*

**Thomas Lambert** **Class of 1973**  
*Chief of Police  
Holliston, Massachusetts*

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NEEDHAM HIGH SCHOOL  
DISTINGUISHED CAREER AWARDS CEREMONY

AUDITORIUM

10:00 am - 11:30 am

*Cakewalk* Symphonic Band

Suite of Old American Dances

*By Robert Russel Bennett*

*Margaret McLallen - Conductor*

**Master of Ceremonies**

Dr. Jonathan Pizzi

*Principal of Needham High School*

*America the Beautiful*

Symphonic Band and Chorale

*Lyrics, Katherine Lee Bates*

*Arr. Baker*

**Greetings**

Joe Barnes

*Chair, Needham School Committee*

**Presentation of Honorees**

Ben Wildman '11

Steven Gross '85

Lauren Glenn '11

Leslie Woodies '70

Tess Jonas '11

Lisabeth Scott '76

*Song: Take Me Home*

*Lyrics and Music by: Lisbeth Scott and Nathan Barr*

**Presentation of Awards**

Linda George  
*Co-Chair, DCA Committee*

*In His Care-O*

*William Dawson*

Concert Chorale

*Jonathan Vander Woude,*  
*Conductor*

**Question & Answer Session**

Max Hekler, Moderator  
*NHS Faculty*

**Closing Remarks**

Dr. Jonathan Pizzi

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*Each recipient will be sent a videotape of the award ceremony at a later date. The production work will be done by Needham High School students, courtesy of the Media Department.*

Ushers for today's events: Colin Bernardo ('11) and Lindsay Walcott ('11)

# **Reception & Luncheon**

(By Reservation Only)

11:30 am

Library

## **Luncheon**

### **Acknowledgments**

Michael Niden

### **Guest Speaker**

Dan Gutekanst

*Superintendent, Needham Public Schools*

### **Impressions of the Day**

Steven Gross

Leslie Woodies

Lisbeth Scott

*Art work by Needham High School students, courtesy  
of the Fine Arts Department.*

## **Steven Gross** **Class of 1985**

*Founder and Chief Playmaker of  
Project Joy  
West Roxbury, Massachusetts*



For this Needham High School graduate, work is play. Steven Gross, a member of the class of 1985 at NHS, is the Founder and Executive Director of Project Joy, a non-profit organization that uses play to strengthen and heal children whose lives have been deeply impacted by trauma. Using sports, games and art as the therapeutic process, Project Joy helps children overcome adversity and thrive. Gross is a recognized leader in the field of psychological trauma response, and a pioneer in utilizing pure fun to promote resiliency in children.

According to Gross, his experiences at Needham High had an immense impact on his life and work; he lettered in four sports (baseball, basketball, football and track) and had the lead role in the high school musical *Bye Bye Birdie*. “The joy that I received from playing sports and participating in theatre really formed the foundation for the work that I have done outside of school,” Gross explains. He also recalls the positive impact of NHS teacher and coach Bob Lockhart as a particular influence on his career today: “During my biggest moments of sports ‘failure,’ he always put his arms around me, motivated me to improve, and never stopped believing in my potential, heart and ability.” Finally, Steve Gross credits NHS with teaching him that nothing of value ever comes easily, and that hard work and dedication are more important than natural ability.

Upon graduating from NHS, Gross went on to earn his bachelor’s

degree in business from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and a master's degree in social work from Boston College. He founded Project Joy in 1989 and has worked tirelessly over the past 20 years to spread the organization's philosophy nationally and internationally. He has implemented child trauma intervention projects on the Mississippi Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina, and in Turkey following the massive earthquakes of 1999 and 2000. In addition, he has served over 250,000 traumatized children in areas around the world, including Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Gaza, Sudan, Burundi, and Nepal.

Gross was recently recognized on DirectTV's Hometown Heroes series by Joan Lunden, and was honored by Mississippi State University for his work along the Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina. Gross was also recognized by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) for his trauma response work in Boston following the events of 9/11.

Today, Gross lives with his wife, Kerrie, and son, Jimmy (Chihuahua) Claude "Mookie" Nelson (age 18), in West Roxbury, MA.

## **Lisbeth Scott**

### **Class of 1976**

*Singer, Songwriter,  
Composer, Producer  
Venice, California*



While the high school hill is a long way from Narnia, one NHS graduate has been there and back. Lisbeth Scott, a member of the Needham High School class of 1976, is an accomplished vocalist and song-writer who is featured on the soundtracks of both *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, and *the Prince of Caspian*. But for Ms. Scott, the *Chronicles of Narnia* was not a fantasy, rather another opportunity to showcase and share her life-long love of music.

Despite describing herself as “painfully shy” during her high school years, this award-winning artist has made significant contributions to her field and society. Her voice, songs, and music have appeared on Billboard’s Top Ten and in over 100 feature films and television’s top shows, including *Transformers*, *Kingdom of Heaven*, *Munich*, *Shrek*, *The Passion of The Christ*, *Trueblood*, *Tudors*, *Kings*, *Medium* and *24*. Scott also launched her own music company and released six acclaimed CDs on her label, *Whistling Bird Music, Inc.* She has received several awards and honors including a Gold Record, and recognition as Best New Artist and Best Vocal Performance in the New Age Category by *New Age Voice*.

Much like her sister and fellow Distinguished Career Award recipient Leslie Woodies, Scott began her musical career as a child, studying piano performance at the New England Conservatory of Music. Upon graduating from NHS, she continued her studies at The University of London and Connecticut College and then

moved to Los Angeles. Aside from performing and composing, Ms. Scott has also used her music to uplift and heal, participating in several humanitarian organizations. She is on the Board of Directors for No Kidding Me Too!, an organization dedicated to removing the stigma associated with mental illness; she has done several benefit concerts for Agros International, a group dedicated to breaking the cycle of poverty for rural families in Latin America through land ownership; and she also works with Education Through Music, an organization which promotes the integration of music into the curricula of disadvantaged schools, enhancing student's academic performance and general development.

Scott is deeply grateful to two NHS teachers, Lee Allen and Robert Enos, for recognizing the artist in her that she had not yet acknowledged. "They encouraged me, gave me opportunities to express myself, and gave me creative outlets for the confusion and pain I was going through at the time." Her message to current NHS students is: "Realize the unique gift each of you has to give the world, and have no fear."

Lisbeth lives in Venice, CA with her husband Stephan Roggenbuck, her dog Niff, and her cat Emily.



## **Leslie Woodies**

### **Class of 1970**

*Director, Choreographer,  
Master Teacher  
Quincy, Massachusetts*



Leslie Woodies is a director, choreographer and master teacher, currently serving on the faculty at the Boston Conservatory and at Harvard University, Office of the Arts. Much like her sister and fellow Distinguished Career Award recipient Lisbeth Scott, Woodies is an award-winning artist who has made significant contributions to her field and society. A former soloist with the Boston Ballet Company, Woodies toured the U.S. and Europe with Dennis Wayne's Dancers, and was a guest artist with the New York Dance Theater at Lincoln Center in New York. Leslie had the honor of playing 'Cassie' in the Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Shakespeare Festival productions of *A Chorus Line*, and also appeared in the film *A Chorus Line - The Movie*. She covered Natalia Makarova, Kitty Carlisle and Dina Merrill in the Tony Award winning Broadway Production of *On Your Toes.*, and was a Live-Action Representative in *Aladdin* for Walt Disney Studios. As a Choreographer, Leslie has worked for Paramount, Lifetime, the Disney Channel, and numerous corporate Industrials.

During her years at NHS, Woodies threw herself into a variety of activities and yet still had time for her studies and friends. As part of NHS' first work-study program for the arts, she danced and toured professionally with the Boston Ballet Company and the Concert Dance Company. She participated in NHS musicals and was a Charter Member of the Needham Youth Summer Theater (which operated for close to 25 years). She also earned a scholarship to Jacob's Pillow, the renowned dance program in Western Massachusetts. Woodies describes her time at NHS as "incredibly

full,” and explains how her high school experience has impacted her career success. “It gave me freedom to do my own thing... [and] taught me that if you’re going to do something, do it well, do it all the way, and exceed expectations.”

Woodies’ message to students is to “dive into everything that’s offered, and enjoy being an explorer. High school is the perfect time to find your passion, and make it your life’s work. You really can do anything you want, and have a great time doing it!” Woodies deeply appreciates the influence of NHS Theater Arts Teacher, John McKay: “He helped me find my life, allowed me to find out for myself that going to the edge is the only way to know that it is not so scary out there, [and taught me] that art provides the perfect safe space for exploration of the emotional and intellectual self.”

In addition to her roles in the arts, she is actively involved in mentoring high school and college students to live to their fullest potential.

*We gratefully acknowledge the support and services  
provided by:*

## **Needham Patrons**

**Dr. Connie Barr**

**Senator Scott Brown**

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**Representative Lida Harkins**

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**Needham Business Association**

**Needham Children's Center**

**Needham Firefighters Local 1706**

**Needham Police Union**

**Needham Women's Club**

**Marcia Nizzari**

**Stephen H. Peck**

**Provider Insurance Group, Inc.**

**Nicolas' Pizzeria**

**Laurie and Carl Tarabelli**

*Booklet Printed by Direct Mail of Maine*

# Nomination Process

- Each year the twelve person Distinguished Career Award committee (DCA), appointed by the NHS Principal, welcomes nominations beginning November 1st and ending May 1st.
- All nominees must be alumni of Needham High School who graduated at least ten years prior.
- If, once notified, nominees wish to be considered for an award, they will be mailed a profile form to complete and return.
- The DCA will choose up to three award recipients from among the nominees.
- Selections are completed by June 25th.
- All award recipients are notified and must pledge to attend the award ceremony the following fall.
- Nominations for posthumous awards will be accepted.

*We greatly appreciate the enthusiasm with which individuals have nominated alumni for the Needham High School Distinguished Career Award. Anyone interested in nominating someone for the award may fill out the Nomination Form attached or on-line at:*

<http://nhs.needham.k12.ma.us/DCA/index.html>.

# Nomination Form

Nominee \_\_\_\_\_ NHS Class of \_\_\_\_\_

*Please complete as much of the following about your nominee as possible:*

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

*Please describe nominee's qualifications:*

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Nominator's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

*Please mail this nomination form to:*  
**Needham High School Distinguished Career Award**  
**609 Webster Street • Needham, MA 02494**

# Notes



*George A. Dennett was a teacher, a coach, and the Faculty Manager of Athletics at Needham High School from 1958-2004. In 1987, he conceived the idea of recognizing alumni with outstanding careers. With the assistance of four staff members from Needham High School, four alumni, and four parents, the concept of a **Distinguished Career Award** was developed into the program that was first presented to the student body in 1990, and has continued as a tradition every fall since then.*

