



**NIAGARA CATHOLIC  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

# DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

**2017**

Saint Paul Catholic High School, Class of 2005

**ATHLETE**



Mary Ward Catholic Elementary School

## Bruno Agostinelli

FOR BEING AN EXCEPTIONAL TEAMMATE, HIS RESPECT FOR OTHERS AND FOR THE GAME HE LOVED, AND FOR HIS DIGNITY AND CHARACTER ON AND OFF THE COURT, WE ARE PROUD TO POSTHUMOUSLY HONOUR BRUNO AGOSTINELLI AS ONE OF NIAGARA CATHOLIC'S 2017 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI.

Bruno was a nationally ranked tennis player who represented our country with pride, and was outstanding player, coach and mentor. He was a member of Canada's winning Davis Cup team in 2011 and in 2016, was honoured by the City of Niagara Falls on its Sports Wall of Fame. Bruno retired from professional tennis in 2011, after fulfilling his long-time goal of competing at the Rogers Cup Masters, and chose instead to focus on player development.

Sadly, his life was cut short in 2016, leaving a void for all who knew and loved him.

Denis Morris Catholic High School, Class of 1990

**AUTHOR**



Holy Rosary, St. Charles, A.T. Clancy Catholic Elementary Schools

## Christine Dernerlanden

FOR HER TIRELESS DEDICATION TO HELPING OTHERS, FOR HER CREATIVITY, COMMITMENT AND HER FAITH, AND FOR BEING SUCH AN EXEMPLARY ROLE MODEL TO HER FAMILY, TEACHERS, AND HER COMMUNITY, WE ARE PROUD TO HONOUR CHRISTINE DERNERLANDEN AS ONE OF NIAGARA CATHOLIC'S DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI.

Christine Dernerlanden lost her older brother in a tragic accident in 1986, the year she began grade 9 at Denis Morris Catholic High School. A short time later, doctors feared the teenager had developed bone cancer. Those two life-altering events directed Christine toward a lifetime of service to others.

She created many programs, designed HUGS – Helping Understand Grief Sessions), to help students understand when they are affected by grief, created Empathy Bear, and is the award-winning author of Where is Robert?, a book that helps children understand and process grief. She is a recognized expert in childhood grief and was called to support families in the wake of the 9/11 bombings in New York City.

Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School, Class of 1995

**SCIENTIST**



Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Elementary School, SC

## Philip Eles

FOR HIS SUPPORT OF THE NATO FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN, FOR HIS COMMITMENT TO NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOR THE GLOBAL RECOGNITION HE HAS RECEIVED FOR HIS WORK, WE ARE PROUD TO HONOUR DR. PHILIP ELES AS ONE OF NIAGARA CATHOLIC'S DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI.

While a student at Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School, Philip's passion for rugby was eclipsed only by his passion for math and science. He eventually obtained his PhD in physics from the University of British Columbia, and commenced working with Defence Research and Development Canada. Throughout his illustrious career, Philip has played integral roles in providing objective analyses of security. He has worked as a senior scientist with NATO, and is a recipient of the organization's highest civilian honour, the NATO Meritorious Service Medal.

Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School, Class of 1992

**AUTHOR & FILM MAKER**



Canadian Martyrs Catholic Elementary School

## Laura Rietveld

FOR HER ARTISTIC CREATIVITY, HER PASSION FOR SHINING LIGHT ON INTERESTING STORIES AND FOR HELPING TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE DEVASTATING IMPACT OF THE DOG SLAUGHTER, WE ARE PROUD TO HONOUR LAURA RIETVELD AS ONE OF NIAGARA CATHOLIC'S DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI.

Laura Rietveld graduated from Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School in 1992, before completing an undergraduate degree in History at Queens University and an MBA from the Richard Ivey School of Business at Western University.

Laura was on track to a career as a newspaper publisher before taking the opportunity to travel to Canada's far north with her aunt changed her perspective - and her career trajectory. A chance meeting with an amputee dogsledder left her so captivated by his own story and the story of how a government cull of Inuit huskies that she decided to give up her career in corporate sales to become a storyteller. Laura's film, Okpik's Dream, has been widely recognized in film festivals at home and abroad.

Denis Morris Catholic High School, Class of 1982

**MILITARY**



Canadian Martyrs/PK Kerwin Elementary Schools

## Commander John Zorz

FOR HIS ONGOING COMMITMENT TO SERVING CANADA THROUGHOUT HIS MILITARY CAREER, FOR HIS DEDICATION TO KEEPING PEACE AND CALM PLACES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, AND FOR HIS HUMANITARIAN MISSIONS, WE ARE PROUD TO HONOUR COMMANDER JOHN ZORZ AS ONE OF NIAGARA CATHOLIC'S DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI.

Commander John Zorz graduated from Denis Morris Catholic High School in 1982. The following year, he joined the Royal Canadian Navy, as part of the Regular Officer Training Program. Throughout his career, John has served on a number of seagoing ships in many specialized capacities.

In 2005, John was appointed as the Executive Officer of HMCS Athabaskan. In 2010, he was appointed to command HMCS Fredericton, and was a part of a humanitarian effort there to assist Newfoundland residents in areas devastated by Hurricane Igor. He has served on a number of international deployments, including tours in the Persian Gulf and the Adriatic Sea.