



Park Profiles

Winter 2011-2012

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Proudly Park!

As we celebrate the Centennial of The Park School of Buffalo, we are pleased to present this new publication profiling alumni and members of our community whose stories we feel are interesting to all. Our remarkable alumni have achieved much in college, their careers, and in volunteer activities. We hope you enjoy learning more about them, as well as the current faculty and students also featured.



Alumni Profile

TED RICH

Class of 1988

When Ted Rich talks about life after high school, he connects the dots, from Park School to the University of Vermont to his current position as Managing Director of Rich Products Corporation's UK/Europe division.

"Park had a nice blend of academics, along with an appreciation for nature, its model of progressive education," Rich said. "That helped guide my choice on the type of school I went to for university. At Vermont I found a good blend of academics and an appreciation for the environment."

Rich went to grade school elsewhere, then attended Park for 9th through 12th grade. He recalls being struck by the sense of community at his new school.

"The classes were a bit smaller, a little more tight-knit. I really experienced a different sense of community that I never had at any other school.

"For example, Halloween is one of my favorite times of year. As seniors we would go down and spend time with kids in the Lower School. There was always a sense of family. ... For me that was really important, and it ties in with the philosophy of our company, really, just looking out for each other."

Rich, his wife Nena, and their three children have been living in England for the past two years.

"One other thing I think about a lot being over here is that at Park I learned to interact with a lot of different [types of people], and ways of thinking. In a lot of ways, Park School

helped lay the groundwork for what I am doing now [in Europe with multiple nationalities and cultures]."

Rich is working for the family business. He is the second-oldest son of Robert E. Rich Jr., the chairman of Rich Products. Before joining the company in 1995, he made a point of getting experience elsewhere "so that I would bring more than my last name" to working at Rich's. He held a couple of jobs in Seattle, including one as sales manager for the Seattle SuperSonics NBA team (which is now the Oklahoma City Thunder). With star players Gary Payton and Shawn Kemp and head coach George Karl, the Sonics became a powerhouse in the league's Western Conference.

"That was one of my favorite jobs," Rich said. "That team had an amazing lineup of players."

Rich moved back to Buffalo in the mid-1990s, working first for the Buffalo Bisons baseball team. He earned his MBA from the University at Buffalo, then joined Rich's. His forays into the sports world were not surprising to anyone who knew him at Park, where Rich played lacrosse, basketball and soccer, among other activities.

"I'm a little competitive, so I was always drawn to those activities," he said. "I was also in student government, and was class president. I also did yearbook, which I really loved."

Rich has particularly fond memories of the late Tom Bailey, the longtime Park history teacher and drama aficionado, and the late Dan Zelasko, a Park math teacher.

"Dan Zelasko I thought was excellent. At Park you could build friendships with teachers as well as students.

"Mr. Bailey was really like the heart and soul of the School," Rich said. "He embodies the character of Park for me."



BIO

YEARS AT PARK: 1984-1988

ACTIVITIES: Basketball, lacrosse, soccer, student government, yearbook.

COLLEGE: University of Vermont; BA, SUNY at Buffalo; MBA

CAREER: Managing Director, Rich Products Corp. UK/Europe

HOBBIES: Running, fishing

Do you know someone we should profile in a future "Park Profiles" newsletter?

Please send us your suggestions! Email development@theparkschool.org or call

Carolyn Hoyt Stevens '81 at 716-839-1243x104.



Alumni Profile

JUDITH WARREN LITTLE

Class of 1968

Judith Warren Little is a well-known name in the field of education. Earlier this year she was appointed Dean of the Graduate School of Education at the University of California at Berkeley. She's been at the school for 25 years as a professor of education policy.

Little's career is a triumph of talent and hard work, but not necessarily of good planning.

"It's really been one moment of serendipity after another," she said. "For all the career planning that we talk about with young people, I'm a complete failure there. But I always liked school—reading, writing and talking as ways to spend my time engaging with others around ideas."

"I think I've been good at seizing opportunities when they appeared."

Little graduated from Park School in 1968. After a stint at Brown University, she transferred to the University of Colorado, earning a PhD in sociology in 1978. She then worked for nine years in the private sector, primarily in the field of educational research and development.

In the mid-1980s, Little learned of a teaching job that was open at Berkeley. She got the position, eventually holding an endowed chair as the Carol Liu Professor of Education Policy. When Little was named Dean in April, the school said she "has built an international reputation as a leader in research about schools as professional environments and how teachers learn to improve their teaching."

Little is an elected member of the National Academy of Education and a fellow of the American Educational Research Association. She was awarded the Frank H. Klassen Award for scholarly contributions in teacher education in 2009, and the Spencer Foundation Faculty Mentor Award for 1996-98.

Even if her career path was not plotted in advance, Little knows the seeds were planted when she attended Park School. That too, was a story of serendipity.

"I grew up in Snyder and I did not attend Park until high school," she said. "I went to what was then Harlem Road Elementary, and it was terrific, I did not so much love Amherst Junior High. Academically it was fine, but I was unhappy with the social clique-iness. I didn't like the feel of it."

BIO

YEARS AT PARK: 1964-1968

ACTIVITIES: Yearbook, field hockey, cheerleading

COLLEGE: University of Colorado, Boulder; PhD, University of Colorado, Boulder; BA, Brown University

CAREER: Professor and Dean of the Graduate School of Education, University of California, Berkeley

HOBBIES: Sailing, golf, travel

Little's mom, Mary Jane Kibler, was working part-time at Park as a secretary for Head of School E. Barton Chapin. Judith visited the school and liked what she saw.

"My mother was widowed and she didn't have the tuition money to send me," Little said. "I took a scholarship exam and ended up getting it. ... I felt very fortunate since my mother didn't have the means to send me, otherwise."

Mr. Chapin turned out to be Little's English teacher in her senior year. The experience was memorable.

"I remember a day when we were reading 'Moby Dick.' Perhaps not surprising, since Chapin was descended from [the author] Herman Melville.

"Mr. Chapin thought we were being way too abstract, too focused on the symbolic. It was the middle of winter, but he made us get our coats and out we traipsed to play-act a chapter of 'Moby Dick' in the circle."

Little participated in the school's annual musical, and also played field hockey. She was also a cheerleader at Park.

"Playing field hockey and cheerleading meant getting to go on the away trips to our sister schools in Rochester and Syracuse, which was always fun."

Little said she looks back at Park "as a place where students could thrive through art, music or sports as well as academics. It was a wonderful combination of cultivating individual talents and building community."





Alumni Profile

**RICHARD L.
VOGEL Jr.**
Class of 1968

There is a popular fortune cookie message that says "Stick to one thing and you will succeed." That could be the motto for Richard Vogel Jr., who began his career at the Whiting-Turner Contracting Company in Baltimore soon after graduating from the University of Maryland at College Park in 1972.

Today, Vogel is a senior vice president at the company, which is the third largest domestic construction firm in the United States. He oversees the company's Mid-Atlantic Division, which includes offices in Washington, Northern Virginia, Richmond and Norfolk.

Vogel attended Park School from age 3 through Upper School graduation in 1968. He grew up in a family of seven children, all of whom went to Park. Richard is the oldest of the five boys in the family.

"My father was on the board at Park and he claimed to have paid for 96 tuitions" for the family, Vogel recalls, amusingly.

"Park really helped me develop critical thinking skills and gave me a lot of exposure to many different things."

He remembers a class trip to the Buffalo Philharmonic when Vogel was in Lower School. Later, he was in charge of the design and construction of Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall in Baltimore.

"I learned about nature in Mr. Barnes's [science] class during Middle School. He was unbelievable, very brilliant and eccentric. His room was full of animals, including a monkey, alligators, guinea pigs, rabbits, and snakes.

"Probably my favorite teacher was Bill Hoyt. He was the soccer coach and hockey coach as well as my AP history teacher.

"When I was a freshman I played soccer on the JV team. Mr. Hoyt came to me and said, 'Do you want to start in varsity next year?'"

"I said sure. He said then I would need to play ice hockey for him. The school was starting a team. I said I didn't know how to skate very well, but he said he would teach me. By the time I was a senior, I ended up as a left winger and I scored many goals.

"Our ice hockey team, in the first couple of years, was not very good and we were creamed by many teams, but by my last year we were winning most of our games. Eventually Park got so good at ice hockey that they were even playing junior colleges.

"I was vice president of the senior class and involved in many things. There were lots of leadership opportunities. These opportunities were some of the best things I've could have done in my early life. I was an introvert, and this helped me to learn to deal with all different kinds of people, to get along with them and to learn from them."

Vogel was the school chess champion in the 7th and 8th grade.

BIO

YEARS AT PARK: 1954-1968

ACTIVITIES: Sports (varsity letters in track, soccer, ice hockey, swimming), drama.

COLLEGE: University of Maryland, College Park; BSCE, MBA

CAREER: Senior Vice President, The Whiting-Turner Contracting Company

HOBBIES: Politics, golf, fishing, travel.

He said the Park teams he was on "were very competitive. We played a lot of tough schools and we won our share. Jim Morrison and I were co-captains of both the soccer and track teams. We won the CUPS track meet when we were seniors at Park School and I think I still have a picture from the newspaper of Jim and I holding the trophy."

A younger brother, Gary Vogel '74, is in Park School's Sports Hall of Fame. He was a soccer standout who played professionally for the Minnesota Kicks and a few other teams.

Vogel has managed hundreds of projects for Whiting-Turner, including the building of many foreign embassies in the U.S. for countries such as Singapore, Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates. He has completed projects on more than 20 college campuses, including more than 300 projects just for Georgetown University, as well as building hospitals, office buildings, and corporate headquarters.

"I have a lot of good people working for me," he said. "I oversee 10 separate groups in Whiting-Turner, and the person in charge of each group has, on the average, been working for me for about 25 years. Next year will be my 40th with the company."

Public service is a thread that runs throughout Vogel's adult life. For five years he was the president and CEO of Vantage House, a continuing care retirement home in Columbia, Md. He is or has been on many boards of for profit and many non-profit organizations and schools, including the Greater Washington Board of Trade, Junior Achievement, the University of Maryland Civil Engineering Board of Visitors, the Catholic University Civil Engineering Advisory Council and many others.

"Going to private school all my life, seeing my parents pay the extra money for private school, making donations to others and helping others gave me a sense that I should always try to give back. With community work I can give back something of value to organizations that need help. I want to be where I can make a difference. Junior Achievement is one example. It's a great organization that teaches financial literacy to kids."

Vogel lives in Columbia, Md. He has been married for 40 years to Dr. Stefanie Vogel, a professor of Immunology and Microbiology at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. The Vogels have two children. Sarah Vogel Weise is a business consultant for Booz Allen Hamilton in Arlington, Va. and has recently given birth to a daughter, Linna. Andrew Vogel is a graduate student in mechanical engineering at the University of Maryland.

Vogel recalls his Park years with much fondness.

"I had a lot of great teachers. Having a place like Park, the nature that's there at the pond area ... the sports, and the opportunities were great. Everybody had to do sports, and if I had gone to a bigger school I would not have had the same opportunity to participate. Some of the traditions, like seniors interacting with the younger kids, are different than you see elsewhere. It made you grow up a bit mentally. When I went from my little class at Park to the University of Maryland, with 30,000 students, I didn't have any trouble at all adjusting. ... Park still has a special place in my heart."





Alumni Profile

PAULA WARDYNSKI Class of 1975

When Paula Wardynski first moved to New York in the early 1980s, the city was a bit more gritty than it is today.

“I thought if I were to last here a year, I would surprise myself. And 30 years later, I can’t imagine living anywhere else,” said Wardynski, who is now Senior Vice President of Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation and Treasurer of News America, its U.S. holding company.

Wardynski graduated in 1979 from Bowdoin College in Maine, having developed a fondness for her studies in romance languages and mathematics. She realized she wanted to work in the world of finance, and that New York City was the place to do it. After a year and a half spent working for a computer company in Buffalo, she was able to make the move.

BIO

YEARS AT PARK: 1961-1975

ACTIVITIES: Yearbook, sports, AFS

COLLEGE: Bowdoin College; BA

CAREER: Senior Vice President, Finance, News Corporation

HOBBIES: Cycling, hiking, cooking.

“I wanted to work for an international financial institution, which I thought would let me combine my interests in languages and mathematics,” she said.

Wardynski landed a job with European American Bank (“EAB”), a U.S. company owned by six European banks.

Wardynski went through a training program there, and then ironically joined the area of the bank that dealt specifically with Great Britain.

“EAB was News Corp.’s main U.S. operating bank at the time, so News Corp. was my biggest client,” she recalls. “I was doing corporate work for the company, as well as private banking for the executives.”

In 1985, she “jumped ship” and went to work for News Corp., starting off in a division as the Circulation Director for a start-up automotive magazine. After nine months she returned to finance as Assistant Treasurer. She became Treasurer of News America in 1991.

“The company has changed a great deal over time,” Wardynski said. “Once in the English speaking arena only, it is now the most global of media companies. It’s a much bigger entity with more divisions and reach than when I started. That, along with the entrepreneurial nature of the company, creates opportunities and makes my job interesting and challenging.”

Wardynski and her partner of fifteen years, Jed Scala, make a weekly escape from Manhattan to their weekend retreat in the Berkshire Mountains in Massachusetts. When she’s there she

cycles, hikes, cooks, and takes in the area’s cultural offerings in theater and music.

“It’s a great place to relax and recuperate from a week in Manhattan.”

Public service is another important facet to Wardynski’s life. She serves on the Board of Trustees at Bowdoin, and has been involved in human rights and educational organizations, including Row New York, which helps put underserved youths on the road to college and a brighter future. She is also on the board of AFS-USA, an intercultural exchange program for young people. Wardynski went on an AFS summer program to Italy between her junior and senior years at Park, and it sparked a lifelong interest in the program.

Wardynski also worked on Park’s yearbook, played sports and “pretty much got involved in as many activities as I could.”

Both of Wardynski’s siblings also attended Park all the way through: brother Skip, ’77, owns and operates the family sausage business of the same name (started by their paternal grandfather and run by their father, Ray, for many years) and sister Kasia, ’79, is the Director of Development for a hospital foundation in Virginia. Their mother, Sue, was on Park’s Board of Trustees and served as its President for a time. Paula reflected on why she thrived at Park:

“The School was like an extended family. The small classes and regular interaction with the teachers was a real draw; I still remember even the teachers from my early years well. And the sprawling campus was a big, wonderful footprint that one could call one’s own.

“I skipped the 9th grade, but had no problem continuing to do well in high school. I felt well prepared academically, and from a time management standpoint as well. And I never, ever questioned whether I could or could not do something as a female.

“Everybody was part of the community: boy, girl, white, black, red, yellow, handicapped or not, well-off or not. Park was an inclusive place, where everyone participated; no one was sidelined. We were able to develop sensitivities to others, as well as a better understanding of ourselves. I would say Park prepared us very well for what was to follow in whatever communities we find ourselves.”





Alumni Profile

RACHEL HEZEL

Class of 1999

Rachel Hezel came to Park School at the start of seventh grade, but in a way it was like coming home.

Hezel's mom, (Sally Clough Hezel, Class of 1966), went to school at Park, as did three of her sisters. In her six years there, Hezel developed some pretty strong bonds at the School, and in 2009 she took over as President of the Park School Alumni Association.

Hezel attended Wellesley College in Massachusetts, then earned law degrees at New York University and the University at Buffalo. She works now as a tax lawyer for the firm Cannon, Heyman and Weiss in Buffalo.

Hezel (pronounced HEEZ-ul) says her Park education prepared her quite well for life after high school. One course in particular stands out. "Ms. [Kerry] Maguire's English classes loomed very large in my Park experience," Hezel said. "I took a course with her called Critical Thinking. It taught me to have a healthy skepticism about things, whether we were studying literary texts or historical events. It really prepared me well for what I do now."

Hezel also cited the classrooms of history teachers Stephen Dombrowski and the late Thomas Bailey as particularly influential. "Mr. Dombrowski was our class adviser. His room was the hangout place. He had a very good sense of humor, and some of my happiest memories are from his classes. He and Mr. Bailey were both a lot of fun, and that's something that not every high school student can take for granted."

At Park, Hezel was active in drama, student government and Model UN. She felt like it gave her an academic boost to interact closely with Park teachers as well as her fellow students.

"You developed a real rapport with the teachers; it wasn't unusual for us to be friends with them," she said.

These days, Hezel's favorite activities include travel -- she's been to Peru and Turkey in the past year -- and tennis. And, keeping in touch with many of her former classmates.

"A number of my good friends are from Park," she said. "They are among my closest friends."



BIO

YEARS AT PARK: 1993-1999

ACTIVITIES: Drama, student government, Model UN

COLLEGE: Wellesley College; B.A., SUNY Buffalo School of Law; J.D., New York University School of Law; LL.M.

CAREER: Attorney, Cannon, Heyman & Weiss, LLP

HOBBIES: Travel, tennis, Park School Alumni Association President.



Alumni Profile

JORDAN WEINER

Class of 2004

Jordan Weiner writes the songs that make the whole world sing. OK, maybe not all of them, but the Los Angeles music producer is quickly making a name for himself in the business.

"Essentially, I write songs -- music, lyrics, and melodies," Weiner said. "Then I record, mix, and master them to sound like finished records. Those songs can be used for major label and indie artist album placements, television or movie syncs, video games, etc."

Weiner graduated from Berklee College of Music in 2009 with a degree in Music Production and Engineering. Just two years later, his work is climbing the charts.

A song that Weiner produced and wrote music for, "123," was recorded by Vancouver singer-songwriter Craig Smart and is No. 3 on the iTunes rhythm-and-blues charts in Canada.

BIO

YEARS AT PARK: 1992-2004

ACTIVITIES: Art, chorus, theater, band, sports.

COLLEGE: Berklee College of Music

CAREER: Music producer

HOBBIES: Drumming, tennis, mobile application development.

Weiner collaborated on a song with Jason Derulo and Kara Dioguardi called "Lesson For Life," which has since been recorded by Charice. He co-wrote and produced the music with a Miami-based production team known as The Ghostwriters, who then passed the track along to Derulo and Dioguardi, who wrote the lyrics and vocal melody. A singer recorded a demo of the song, then that was sent to Weiner for mixing.

"Eventually, 'Lesson For Life' found its way to Charice," Weiner said, referring to the internationally renowned vocal artist who played a regular character on the second season of TV's "Glee." "Once she recorded her vocals, they were sent back to me for rough mixing and mastering," Weiner said. "This was essentially to get the label excited about the record. We waited several months and eventually heard back that it was a placement. Big decisions are often made very slowly in the music industry."

"Lesson for Life" appears on Charice's album "Infinity," which was released in Japan in early October and is headed for worldwide release later this year.

If you are looking for Weiner's name in the song's credits, you'll find it under "Jordan Kyle," his pseudonym in the music business. The name is kind of an inside joke to anyone who knows him and his identical twin brother, Kyle.

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JORDAN WEINER *CONTINUED*

“I’ve been mistakenly called Kyle throughout much of my life, so ‘Jordan Kyle’ seemed like the perfect name,” Weiner said, laughing.

You can find “Jordan Kyle” at his website, producerjordan.com, as well as [facebook.com/producerjordan](https://www.facebook.com/producerjordan) and twitter.com/producerjordan.

Weiner said his love of music took root early and was nourished during his years at The Park School. “I always knew that I wanted to be a part of the music industry since I began playing drums at age 12. Park did allow me to incorporate my musical interests into academics. ... I remember writing songs with my brother for environmental science and mythology classes. We were also able to combine math and music into a credited class our senior year.”

Jordan and Kyle Weiner, with the help of some other students and teachers, were instrumental in establishing the tradition of a student coffeehouse at Park, an evening gathering of student musicians performing for their schoolmates. Weiner recalled the role played by one of his teachers, Dave Weeks, who is still with Park instructing students on computer skills.

“If Mr. Weeks hadn’t come on board as our faculty adviser, and been willing to extend his work hours once a month on Friday nights, coffeehouse may never have happened.”

In a way, Upper School was sort of a dress rehearsal for Weiner’s professional life.

“Park had a pretty diverse student population when I was there,” he said. “Everyone was pretty friendly with each other. I’d like to think that helped to make me a more cultured person by being around people from varying ethnic and economic backgrounds who had ideas and interests that were different than my own.”

“In classes, we were often encouraged to debate our differing views as well. My classmates were also fairly competitive with each other academically, which isn’t too different from the nature of the music business.”



Student Profile

DYLAN WEISS

Class of 2012



“It started off as a math project and turned into my life.”

That is how Dylan Weiss, a senior at The Park School, describes how she turned a 10th grade geometry assignment into a “positive awareness” line of clothing sold around the world.

Dylan’s geometry teacher, Tammy Giancola, gave her the task of creating something -- anything -- that had to do with their math curriculum. Dylan’s parents, Jon Weiss and Linda Nagle-Weiss, own and operate New Buffalo Shirt Factory in Clarence, a screen printer of T-shirts. Their daughter, who was named after Bob Dylan, kind of had T-shirts in her genes.

After many hours of research and giving the product a lot of thought, Dylan decided she would develop an eco-friendly clothing line. She came up with the name bi-kuz (as in “because”).

A friend who had returned from a trip to Africa told Dylan about a concept there called “Ubuntu,” which means, “I am what I am because of who you are.” Dylan said she was inspired by the power of that word and used it as the basis for bi-kuz.

“It’s about focusing on people’s allegiances and relationships with each other and the world,” she said. “It’s helping to spread the positive message that everyone and everything matters, that we are all better together because of each other.”

The bi-kuz clothing is printed on 100 percent organic cotton, using “earth-safe, sustainable inks,” and adorned with positive social messages.

A Park alumnus, Abhi Nangia (Class of 2008), is a student at Northeastern University. After making a trip to Africa, Nangia decided to start a business venture called Unitia, whose goal is to give financial support to alternative schools on that continent. Nangia formed a partnership with Dylan, who contributed profits from bi-kuz to support Unitia, giving tangible results to her mission.

The 17-year-old has built her business on the side, while attending Park full-time. She was captain of the school tennis team her junior year and captain of the soccer team this year. She dabbles in various musical instruments and has been involved in many theatrical productions at school. She also volunteers at Summit, a facility in Amherst that provides educational and therapeutic services to children with learning, communication and behavioral challenges.

Dylan travelled to Turkey with her family in the summer of 2011 and spent time with Veysel Ekmis ’11, an international student and recent Park graduate. Connecting with him while at Park gave Dylan the opportunity to see Turkey beyond the typical tourist route.

BIO

YEARS AT PARK: 2006-2012

ACTIVITIES: Sports, theater.

COLLEGE: To be determined

HOBBIES: Travel, music, community service.

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DYLAN WEISS *CONTINUED*

Dylan is in the process of applying to college, where she aims to study marketing. That choice is partly inspired by her experience with bi-kuz, and partly by observing her mom's marketing and advertising work for New Buffalo.

She is grateful to math teacher Tammy Giancola for lighting a spark in her. "Mrs. G. gave us the opportunity to really explore who we are. ... Without her assigning the project and giving us the open-endedness, I would never be where I am today."



Faculty Profile

A Profile of **STEPHAN GEORGE**

Class of 1997

Newly minted college graduate Stephan George was not sure what he wanted to do with his life. He had majored in history at Allegheny College in Pennsylvania, but his studies of the past had so far not illuminated his future.

"I always loved history, but I didn't know what I wanted to do with it," he recalled. "I was living with some friends in Pittsburgh and I didn't really have a serious job. ... At that point, I didn't really know myself enough to know my professional strengths. I wanted to do more than make money; I thought it would be great to be doing something important."

George got to thinking about his Park School education and some of the teachers he had known there. It dawned on him that teaching might be the career for him. He enrolled at Canisius College to pursue a master's in education. One phase of the program was a "semester of observation" in which he would be stationed at a school to learn how teaching was done. His observation post turned out to be a history classroom at his high school alma mater, Park School.

"I was just here to observe one of the history teachers, but I ended up teaching his class a few times," George recalls. "He threw me right into the fire."

Being back in Hamlin Hall rekindled some great memories.

"When I went here [as a student], the pillars of Park happened to be in history," George said. "Mr. Thomas Bailey, I had him in 9th and 10th grade and he was awesome. His style was very conversational. He told you stories that just happened to be about history. It felt very natural and it turned out you learned a lot.

"In 11th and 12th grade I had Mr. Dombrowski. His style was a little old-school for me, but I loved it. He really prepared you for college. There were few kids I met at college who I thought were

as prepared as I. So many kids struggled with how to write a persuasive paper, how to write a time line. I loved his classes in the moment, but I love them even more after the fact."

After earning his master's in 2005, George came out of school "full of fire and anxious to save the world," in his words. His first teaching job was in a middle school in Prince George's County, Maryland, where a lot of his students came from disadvantaged backgrounds. The experience taught him a lot about classroom management, George said.

Then he took a job in Albuquerque, N.M., teaching history to seventh graders, many of whom were from low-income households. George said he enjoyed working with the kids at both schools, but he chafed at the lack of academic freedom he experienced.

"At schools that are struggling with [federal] mandates, they are told consistently what to do. There's a disconnect between some bureaucrats designing some chart about how to teach reading and with the actual reality of teaching these kids," he said.

In the middle of 2008, George learned about a job opening at Park School. He interviewed for the job and thought things were going well. Then a teacher who had been planning to leave reconsidered, and George was told there was no job after all. By the middle of the summer, the teacher changed his mind again and George was offered the job at Park.

"After I got that phone call, I did a 'Rocky' run through my apartment, with my arms up in the air," George recalled, laughing. "It's a school that I always loved anyway. After having these experiences at different places with some of the more challenging aspects of the public schools, I was ecstatic about coming to Park."

Now that George has "come home" to teach, he again enjoys immersing himself in the historical past, and sharing his passion with his students.

"As I've gone through the years, I can't always predict what the kids are going to absolutely love. But I find things in history that I am excited about and transfer that to the kids. When I hear the questions they ask me, I really learn from that, too. There's a lot of trust at Park. We have the freedom to say, 'This is really compelling -- I am going to teach this.' I appreciate this more and more every day."

BIO

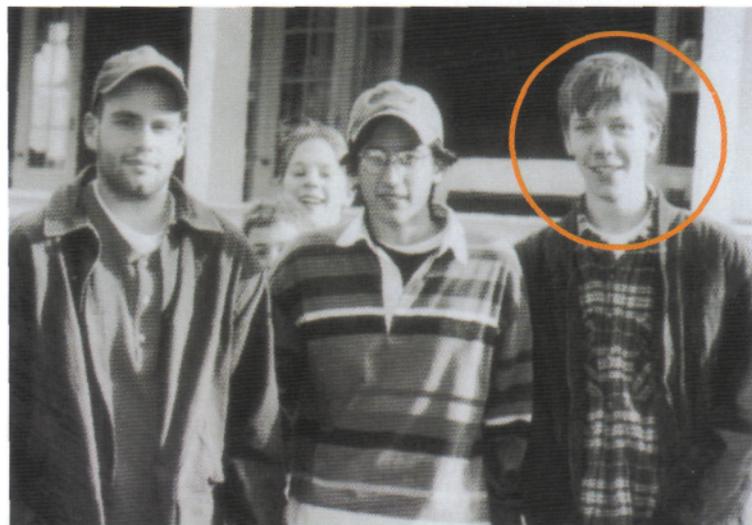
YEARS AT PARK: 1992-97

ACTIVITIES: Soccer, tennis, drama.

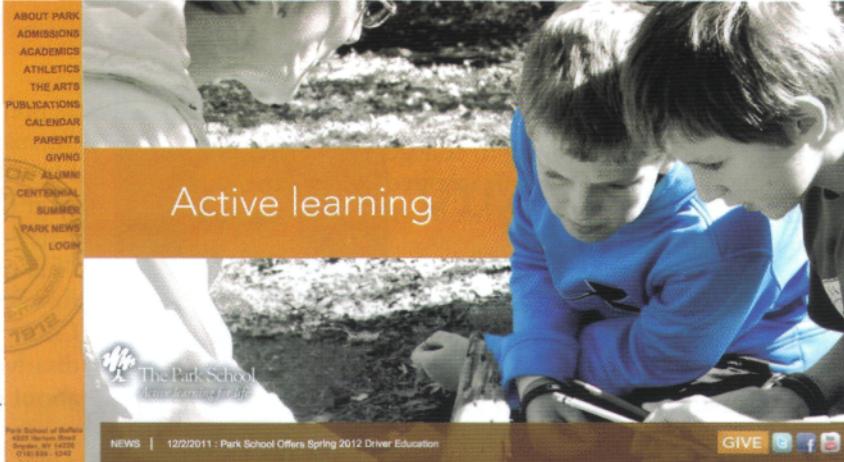
COLLEGE: Allegheny College; BA, Canisius College; MS

CAREER: History teacher, Park School

HOBBIES: Tennis, soccer, reading biographies



To keep up with all the news at Park, please visit our website, www.theparkschool.org. The website has a new look and is easier to navigate



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Alumni

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