

Wagner to host 'Four Little Girls: Birmingham 1963'

The staged reading, marking 50th anniversary of the civil rights tragedy, will be Sept. 15

By **JUDY L. RANDALL**
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

A staged reading recounting the killing of four black children in Alabama during the civil rights struggle will be shown at Wagner College on the 50th anniversary of the tragic event, Sept. 15.

"Four Little Girls: Birmingham 1963" will be streamed live from Washington, D.C.'s Kennedy Center Family Theater to venues around the world, including Spiro Hall 2, 1 Campus Rd., Grymes Hill.

The screening, which will begin at 5:45 p.m., is free and open to the public.

The hosts are City Councilwoman Debi Rose and the Harbor Lights Theater Company.

The dramatic work recounts the deaths of Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair,

Carole Robertson and Cynthia Wesley, when a bomb placed by the Ku Klux Klan exploded at the 16th Street Baptist Church. The girls, the youngest of whom was 11, were getting ready for Sunday school.

The explosion at the church marked a turning point in the U.S. 1960s civil rights movement and contributed to support for passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

"In honor of their sacrifice, President Obama this year bestowed the Congres-

sional Gold Medal on them posthumously," said Ms. Rose (D-North Shore). "Their stories as individuals are not well known. This dramatic presentation fleshes out the story of these innocent victims who never knew the joy of young womanhood."

Written by Christina Ham and produced by Project 1 Voice, the production is directed by Tony Award-winning actress Phylicia Rashad.

Judy L. Randall is a news reporter for the Advance. She may be reached at randall@siadvance.com.