

Extra

Who is lauded in this week's Inside Out? E6

GRYMES HILL

Wagner College holds tea party for new 'first lady'



Barbara Schiano, left, with Marilyn De Sario
Pamela Silvestri, Staten Island Advance



Margo Governo and Dolly Smith.
Pamela Silvestri, Staten Island Advance



David Pitou and Herman "Bud" Emigholz.
Pamela Silvestri, Staten Island Advance



Fiona Sweeney, Nancy Meyers-Benbow and Constance Lane. *Pamela Silvestri, Staten Island Advance*

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On Wednesday, a noontime tea took place that only a true Staten Islander could appreciate. It marked the official welcoming of Jan Martin, an educator who is the new "first lady" of Wagner College, Grymes Hill. Her husband, Joel Martin, began his tenure as the 19th president of the school on July 1.

Wagner Guild President Aletta Diamond made the introductions to attendees in the school's faculty room, a collection of about 50 guests, most of whom were Staten Island natives and/or proud alums of the college.

Guests included: Wagner Trustees Dianne Powers, Kim Spiro and Deputy Borough President Ed Burke, Class of 1980, plus two Staten Island Women of Achievement, Janice Giacalone-Stoffers with Eva Lazar Gabriel.

Martin stood up to accept flowers from Diamond, and made her own introductions to the crowd. She told a touching story of her work in York, Pennsylvania, at a prior education post, where she led a STEAM Academy.

"Joel and I really feel we've met our match with Staten Island," Martin later told the Advance.

"We feel so connected to the Wagner community."

And, like a true Staten Islander those connections already turned up her six degrees of separation to the borough. Martin hails from Pittsford, New York, which is the very suburb where meetings happened about a century ago with the Lutheran pastors who created Wagner College.

She said will take a year off from her teaching career, adding that she wants to get to know the students, assimilate to her new hometown and support her husband as the school's new president.

She said she has some surprises in store with food and, yes, she does enjoy kitchen work.

She learned how to cook from her grandmothers.

As noted in her Wagner College bio: "She says the term 'procrastibaking,' which the New York Times food writer Julia Moskin has defined as 'the practice of baking something completely unnecessary, with the intention of avoiding 'real' work' — perfectly fits her, because she enjoys using baking to bring joy to others and celebrate milestones in their lives."

Martin spoke to each person in the room and keenly listened to guests.



Aletta Diamond and Jan Martin. *Courtesy of Karen Sweeney Kennedy*

Eva Lazar Gabriel concluded the tea with a touching version of "God Bless America" on a keyboard sung by Herman "Bud" Emigholz.