



# *Nutley* HALLOF FAME

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*Two Thousand Twenty Three*

*Induction*

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 19, 2023

2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.



Nutley Public Library  
93 Booth Drive, Nutley, New Jersey  
[nutleyhalloffame.nutleypubliclibrary.org](http://nutleyhalloffame.nutleypubliclibrary.org)



## *Introduction*

*The people honored in these pages all have had a close association with Nutley through birth, long-time residence, and graduation by our high school or a combination of these criteria. Inclusion in the Nutley Hall of Fame is based on outstanding accomplishments beyond our borders on a statewide, national, or international level. The achievements of the honorees make us, as Nutley citizens, proud of their association with Nutley. They serve as inspirational examples for our young people to emulate. Each of the honorees presents us with a great American success story, where opportunity beckons to all regardless of the obstacles that may have to be overcome.*

*-The Nutley Hall of Fame Committee*

## *2023 Inductees*

Geri V. Bergen

William (Bill) L. Callanan Jr.

Ron Corio

Silas Mountsier III

Louis Riccardi

Eaton Stone

David J. Verdi

Michael Volpe



# Program

## Welcome

Wayne D. Greenfeder, President of the Board of Trustees, Nutley Public Library

## Opening Remarks

### Introduction of Inductees and Presentation of Awards

Pat Ritacco, Chairperson, Nutley Hall of Fame Committee

## Awards presented posthumously:

Geri V. Bergen  
Eaton Stone

## Contemporary awards:

William (Bill) L. Callanan Jr.  
Ron Corio  
Silas Mountsier III  
Louis Riccardi  
David J. Verdi  
Michael Volpe

## Official Installation of Inductees

Mayor Dr. Joseph P. Scarpelli, Township of Nutley, NJ

## Closing remarks

Michelle Salimbene Albert, Nutley Hall of Fame Committee Member  
and Director of the Nutley Public Library

## Narrator

Joanne Cocchiola



# *Geri V. Bergen*

(1930-2018)

## Forester and Conservationist

Geri V. Bergen was a pioneer who turned her love of the outdoors into a groundbreaking career in forestry, a lifelong commitment to conservation, and a successful leadership role in natural resource management. Remembered as a “Woman of Many Firsts,” her many professional accomplishments were often the first by a woman. As her most widely recognized “first,” she made history as the first woman in the U.S. Forest Service to serve as a Forest Supervisor.

Geri was responsible for professional leadership of the Tahoe National Forest, an 870,000-acre site headquartered in Nevada City, California, including management of the Forest's land use and resources as a public/private venture that benefits non-governmental businesses, serves the public interest, and maintains the health and productivity of the Forest.

In addition to her professional career, Geri created a concurrent volunteer leadership “life” that was equally productive in advancing her forestry/conservation goals. Through participation in a host of not-for-profit organizations, she was a leader in widely promoting understanding and active involvement in conservation and environmental issues. As one example of such an organization, Geri participated in the Society of American Foresters (SAF) for 50 years and was the first woman to receive that Society's highest award in recognition.

Geri was especially proud of her third “career,” a lifetime commitment to advance through mentoring and support as many women's professional lives as she could impact, not only within the Forest Service but in Geri's many volunteer organizations, and wherever else possible. Again, she worked frequently through outside organizations, like Business and Professional Women (BPW) and Soroptimist International, to help other women achieve their goals.

In all three “careers,” Geri broke many barriers and earned the love, admiration, and respect of many along the way.

Geri spent her young life in her hometown of Nutley, graduating from Nutley High School in 1948. Some of her favorite childhood memories were visits to the Poconos and Catskills where she first realized her love of forests and public lands. Geri later earned degrees in Forestry and Botany at the University of California (UC-Berkeley). At that time, UC-Berkeley was one of few programs in the U.S. willing to accept a woman into its forestry program.

Geri was a loving mother, daughter, sister, and grandmother and lived a full life that brought her a successful career in forestry, a host of personal accomplishments, and loving family and collegial relationships. Geri would be delighted to know that she is being inducted into the Nutley Hall of Fame, where it all began.



# William (Bill) L. Callanan, Jr.

## Jazz Organist and Recording Artist

New Jersey native William (Bill) L. Callanan Jr. was born in Newark and raised in Nutley. His prodigious talent for music was evident at the age of five, when Bill started playing the family piano. He and his younger brother James became the family entertainers, performing ducts at local parishes, fraternal organizations, and the famed Waldorf Astoria in New York City.

By the time Bill attended Nutley High School, he was an accomplished keyboardist who started playing gigs around North Jersey and was voted the “top talent” of his class in 1959. His rhythm and blues band included a future Oscar-winning actor named Joseph Pesci, who played guitar, a future professional football player named Donald Chuy, who played the accordion, and future Nutley Police Chief Robert DeLitta, who played the saxophone. In 1960, Bill's father, William L. Callanan Sr., purchased a Hammond B3 Organ for him from the Griffith Piano Company in downtown Newark. Bill became fascinated with the B3 after seeing the Bill Doggett band perform in Newark, which dramatically shaped his playing style. It was during this period that he began to expand on his musical collaborations and could be seen rehearsing with emerging icons, including Cissy Houston, Dionne Warwick, and Frankie Valli.

Bill was asked to join a rock and roll group in 1962 known as *Joey Dee & the Starlitters*, while attending Manhattan School of Music. The group performed regularly at a nightclub on 45th Street in New York City called the Peppermint Lounge and eventually became the house band. They recorded the chart-topping hit “Peppermint Twist” and were one of the most popular bands of that time. Around the same period, Bill recorded on an instrumental R&B crossover single for King Curtis called “Soul Twist.” Some interesting facts about *Joey Dee & the Starlitters* while Bill was performing with the group: when they appeared at the Star Club in Hamburg, Germany, their opening act was the Beatles; the group was also one of the first racially integrated bands to perform and travel together; and they were one of the few bands to appear live on Dick Clark’s American Bandstand. The group was featured on the “Murray the K” show and on the stage of the legendary Apollo Theater. *The Starlitters* included renowned artists David Brigati and Eddie Brigati of the Young Rascals, as well as Jimmy Hendrix.

In 1967, while touring the “Chitlin’ Circuit” with his own B3-organ-jazz trio, Bill was offered an opportunity to play at the Desert Inn Hotel on the Las Vegas Strip. He took that offer and has been performing in Vegas ever since. For over five decades, Bill played in the orchestra pits of Las Vegas, backing up famous headliners such as Elvis Presley, Tom Jones, Robert Goulet, Ann Margaret, and Englebert Humperdinck. Bill was also the conductor of the 18-piece orchestra for the Lido De Paris show at the Stardust Hotel. He retired in 2011 from the nightly performances and formed a jazz quartet of Las Vegas all-stars—all former “Jersey Boys”—called the “B3 Conspiracy.” The group performed in Japan, Singapore, and Las Vegas. They also released a CD entitled “Sleeping Lions.”

Bill is a 1974 graduate of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, with a degree in Music Education. He resides in Las Vegas with his wife of nearly 61 years, Janet, who is from Bloomfield, New Jersey. He is the proud father of two daughters, Dr. Patty Coaley, PhD, and Mary Pike, RDH, four grandchildren, and one great-grandson.



# Ron Corio

## Pioneer of Solar Tracking

Ron Corio was born and raised in Nutley, New Jersey. He attended Radcliffe Elementary School, Franklin Middle School, and then graduated from Nutley High School (NHS) in 1979. During high school, Ron played sports with a large group of friends that called themselves the Clement Street Bombers. At the age of seventeen, after NHS graduation, Ron moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico to attend the University of New Mexico (UNM). His brother Phil was already there and the west was a perfect place to go to fulfill his wanderer spirit. He attended UNM, studied architecture, physics, and mechanical engineering all congruently, but was not able to choose which he liked best.

At the beginning of his sophomore year of college, he found a job as a research assistant at an automotive technology startup company. The technology was a spin off from nuclear fusion research at Los Alamos National Labs. It was multifaceted in engineering and science disciplines. It was a perfect place for Ron to get a fully engaged, well-rounded education. At the age of twenty-four, he became Chief Engineer at Hard Discharge Ignition (HDI), authored patents, and became the company's technology representative to all the major car companies. The work was so intriguing that he left college for good with only a semester and a half to go.

Ron strongly believes in renewable energy and environmental stewardship, so it was serendipitous that he was offered a consulting job with a solar energy startup company while working at HDI. Soon he became Chief Technology Officer (CTO) of the company. At Wattsun Corporation, Ron drove the development of a concentrator solar module and developed a high accuracy dual axis solar tracking system to work with the solar module. Tracking the sun's position through the sky increases the power production from solar modules. As time went on, commercialization of the Wattsun Solar Module proved to be difficult, so eventually Ron was offered the opportunity to buy the solar tracker business that he developed from the Wattsun Corporation. He raised \$55,000 from three angel investors, paid off \$39,000 of company debt, and with the remaining \$16,000 of working capital, Array Technologies (Array) was born in June of 1992. No new capital was ever raised in the company. It was purely boot strapped from that point forward.

Ron designed, built, and marketed solar tracking systems, initially to the small remote home and water pumping markets. Eventually when utility scale solar began to take traction, Ron had a product ready for that market. He was a pioneer of solar tracking for utility scale solar power plants. In 2016, when Array reached over a half of a billion dollars in yearly sales, he sold part of the company to Oaktree Capital, a private equity group. Array had about five-hundred employees, multiple manufacturing facilities, and international sales offices. Ron remained Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Array for another two years. Array then hired a new CEO at Ron's request. Ron filled in as CTO for six months after stepping down as CEO, before leaving the day-to-day operations of the company. The company went public on the NASDAQ exchange in October of 2020. Ron stayed on the Board of Directors until the fourth quarter of 2022.

Ron Corio was named the richest person in New Mexico by Forbes Magazine in 2021.



# *Silas Mountsier III*

## Financial Advisor and Philanthropist

Silas Mountsier III has had an incredible career handling the finances of a who's who of some of the wealthiest clients this country has to offer, and he deserves high accolades for the amazing personal and business successes amassed over his fifty-plus years working for Citibank and the United States Trust Company.

But Silas was always more than your traditional banker. Many of Silas's clients became dear, lifelong friends because he always treated them like family rather than clients. There are countless tales of the over-the-top personal services he's provided for his clients and their families—and for the lucky ones, that relationship spanned fifty years or more.

Those who know Silas know how much he cares for those around him, and for those outside of his immediate circle. Silas's love for people, his deep personal belief in the inherent worth of the individual, his incredibly successful long-lived career, and his philanthropic nature are what makes his story unique.

His relationship with his clients went well beyond making sure their investments were sound. From a call in the middle of the night that so-and-so's child is in jail in Manhattan (Silas got up, got dressed, and headed into the city to bring him home) to the man who told Silas that he'd been a better father to his children than he had ever been himself, Silas was involved in some of the most intimate areas of complex family dynamics—again, not your traditional banker.

The list of Silas's personal accomplishments in his chosen field is impressive, but even more so is what he's chosen to do with that success time and time again. The following is a beautiful example.

### **Allegheny College**

Silas is an alumnus of Allegheny College, in Meadville, Pennsylvania, as are multiple generations of the Mountsier family. He is also one of the longest-serving members on Allegheny's Board of Trustees.

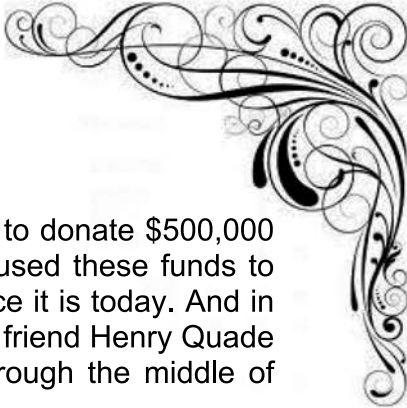
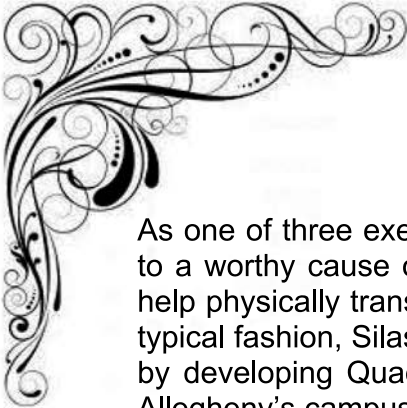
Silas's relationship with Allegheny serves as a beautiful example of how the results of the genuine, personal relationships he seems to have always developed with his clients were used to benefit others.

In the 1990s, as Silas was walking up Madison Avenue, he saw someone in front of him falter. Silas rushed over, held the man upright, and helped him to a nearby bench. When they had a moment to look at each other, they realized they were no strangers.

“Mr. Mountsier.”

“Mr. Quade.”

Mr. Henry Quade had been a former client of Silas's, and from this latest encounter they became close, lifelong friends. Mr. Quade was an impressive man who had run General Motors International—Asia, and during the lead-up to WWII had managed to get all his employees out of Japanese-occupied Indonesia before being captured and imprisoned himself.



As one of three executors of Mr. Quade's estate, Silas was allowed to donate \$500,000 to a worthy cause of his choice. He chose Allegheny College and used these funds to help physically transform the college's campus into the beautiful place it is today. And in typical fashion, Silas did not call attention to himself, but honored his friend Henry Quade by developing Quade Walk, a series of beautiful paths that run through the middle of Allegheny's campus.

Silas's personal compensation for being one of the executors of Mr. Quade's estate was an additional \$500,000, which he promptly donated to Allegheny College to commission public sculptures to further beautify the campus.

The groundwork for these campus enhancements had been laid a few years earlier when Beatrix Tuxbury, a client-turned-lifelong-friend (whose husband, Nathaniel, had been president of General Motors International), passed away. She left Silas her incredible Park Avenue apartment, which he promptly sold, donating \$500,000 to Allegheny College for the initial development of its master plan.

This is perhaps the clearest example of the way Silas has used the financial rewards he reaped from his personal successes to help others, but here is one more.

### **Helen May Schaefer**

When Helen May Schaefer's will was unsealed, Silas learned (along with her not-so-loving extended family) that she had left her fortune to Silas.

She was a lifelong client who, like so many others, had become a dear lifelong friend. Mrs. Schaefer was an extremely wealthy woman from Mississippi who came to New York regularly to deposit her dividend checks. Offering her the same personal attention he did all his clients, Silas remembers seeing *My Fair Lady* "more than fifty times," since that is what Mrs. Schaefer most loved to do when visiting New York.

The inheritance was worth in excess of \$10 million, and within twenty-four hours, Silas had given it all away. He most notably arranged for her properties to be split among her large staff of long-time (multi-generational) employees, changing their lives and enabling those who wished to attend college. Mrs. Schaefer's extended family (she did not have children) was not thrilled, but Silas moved forward with what he thought was the right thing to do.

As a side note, through his close relationship with Mrs. Schaefer, Silas was awarded—more than fifty years ago—one of the most prestigious honors New Orleans has to offer by being named King of the New Orleans Mardi Gras, a position dating back to 1872. The mayor of New Orleans traditionally offers the key to the city to the reigning Rex, or King of the Carnival. The king is chosen by a special committee and is usually someone who has endeared themselves to and is loved by their membership. That sounds a lot like Silas.

### **Westminster College**

Westminster College in New Wilmington, Pennsylvania, had been supported by Silas's mother's family for generations. When Margaret Stevenson Mountsier passed away, Silas started a memorial fund in her name for a student scholarship, with preference shown for a graduate of Nutley High School.





### **Odyssey House**

Silas served on the original Board of Directors of Covenant House when that incredible nonprofit was founded in 1972.

Covenant House's mission is to provide safe housing and holistic care to youth ages twelve to twenty-four experiencing homelessness and to survivors of human trafficking. Covenant House offers services including healthcare, educational support/GED preparation, college scholarships, job readiness and workforce development programs, substance-abuse treatment and prevention programs, legal services, mental health services, and transitional living programs.

Throughout the late 1970s, Covenant House expanded its social service programs within New York City and began to branch out, opening centers in thirty-four cities throughout the United States, Canada, and Latin America.

### **The Unity Concerts**

For many years Silas served on the Board of Directors of Montclair's Unity Concerts, an organization with a history of offering incredible cultural opportunities to the people of Essex County and beyond.

A smattering of guests over the years includes Isaac Stern, Vladimir Horowitz, Yo-Yo Ma, Joan Sutherland, Dizzy Gillespie, Amelia Earhart, Sinclair Lewis, Paul Robeson, and Clarence Darrow. Wow!

### **The Lotos Club**

Silas is a lifetime member—and a long-standing board member—of the historic Lotos Club, serving as its president for two years.

The Lotos Club is one of the oldest literary and arts clubs in the United States. For more than a century and a half, it has been a preeminent New York City club. Samuel Clemens, an early member, famously called it "the ace of clubs."

The Lotos Foundation supports, encourages, and recognizes exceptional students and emerging artists in the fields that have been of primary interest to the club throughout its history: literature, art, sculpture, music, architecture, journalism, drama, science, and education.

Silas was instrumental in transforming the club's latest home, a 1900 residence designed by Richard H. Hunt. Through his efforts—and sleuthing—such treasures as its large Tiffany skylight, which lay hidden and forgotten for decades above a dropped ceiling, was discovered and restored.

The Lotos Club is known for its annual State Dinners—honoring such luminaries as Ulysses S. Grant, Amelia Earhart, Rodgers & Hammerstein, Robert Frost, and Angela Lansbury—and under Silas's tenure as president, Mikhail Baryshnikov was honored.

### **Times Square Hum**

Silas is the donor of one of Manhattan's most unique public art installations—the *Times Square Hum*.

When the children of one of Silas's clients—who had arranged for the art installation before he passed away—lost interest in the project after his death, Silas reached into his own pocket to honor the financial commitment to the artist.



### **The Mountsier-Hardie Estate**

The Mountsier-Hardie Estate is known well beyond Nutley's borders as one of New Jersey's preeminent private gardens. Its two acres have been thoughtfully and lovingly developed for more than forty years into a series of unique spaces visited and enjoyed by more than a thousand people in 2022 alone. It is one of the highlights of New Jersey's Garden Conservancy and was featured on the cover of their main publication. In that year, more people visited Silas and Graeme's labor of love than any other New Jersey private garden.

The very existence of the garden in its present form is another example of Silas not being a banker in the traditional sense and of the unique, deep, genuine relationships he develops with so many people. One of his clients spent a million dollars developing a portion of the garden when Silas had offered her a place to live out her final days.

Another client rearranged her will in such a way that Silas would be able to care for the garden for the rest of his life: "I want you to live well until you die" was the way she put it. Silas continues to "live well," and our community continues to reap the benefits.

### **Nutley**

While induction into the Nutley Hall of Fame is based on accomplishments beyond Nutley's borders, this is a welcome opportunity to also applaud Silas for his philanthropy right here at home, where he has lived his entire life.

Silas was a long-serving board member of the Nutley Family Services Bureau and has served on the board of the Child Guidance Clinic of Nutley and Belleville. Silas has served on the Nutley Planning Board and was one of the first members of the Nutley Historical Society when it was founded in 1945. A member of Vincent United Methodist Church for eighty years, Silas taught Sunday School and served on their Finance Committee, Missions Committee, and Church Council. Silas is also one of those responsible for the establishment of the United Nations Garden in Kingsland Park.

Silas has also made significant contributions to the Nutley Family Services Bureau, the Nutley Public Library, the Academic Booster Club, the Nutley Educational Foundation, the Nutley Historical Society, and other local organizations. Never one to seek the spotlight, Silas is also responsible for private acts of kindness and generosity, whether paying college tuition for local students or taking care of a family's taxes so they would not lose their home.

In 2022, Silas was awarded the Virginius D. Mattia Memorial Award for Distinguished Community Service.



# *Louis Riccardi*

## “Handi-able” Olympian, Athlete, Coach, Mentor, and Friend

Louis Riccardi is a lifelong Nutley resident born to Jane and Louis Riccardi on September 15, 1989. Louis was born with Spina Bifida, a condition where the spinal cord never fully develops. From day one, Louis had to overcome challenges of life. On this day he had to go through multi-hour surgery with no clue of what the future would bring. As it turns out he overcame the surgery growing up happily with his family (mom, dad, and two brothers) in addition to many family and friends support. As this was only the beginning of what was to come.

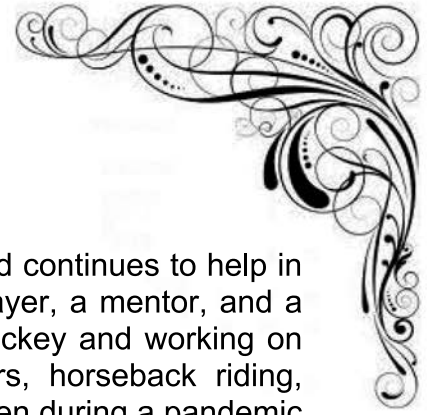
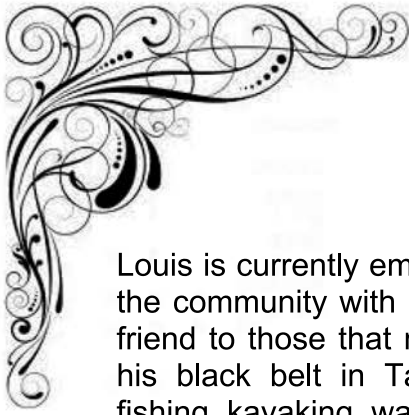
In the early years, growing up with a disability Louis learned very quickly to overcome. His family and friends never treated him as handicapped but as Louis liked to call it “Handi-able.” Starting his school career at Radcliff Elementary School, from a little boy walking on crutches through the halls of school, his personality made people smile. In school he had to learn to keep up. Louis made many of Friends along the way. One thing he had to do was keep up with able bodies. It was always a struggle for him as he was diagnosed with a learning disability as well as his physical. This never stopped him though. It made him work harder to do what everyone else was doing.

Upon entering junior high at John H. Walker Middle School, another challenge came upon him. He became sick spending most of his junior high years in a hospital bed. The support of the town helped him overcome another obstacle in life. Some may think being in a hospital would be depressing but not for Louis. This is where doors opened for someone with a disability. He met with disabled athletes, something he did not know about. Once medically cleared, he joined Children’s Specialized Hospital Lightning Wheels, a New Jersey based track and field team. He learned to compete in field events, swimming, and archery to name a few. Being highly competitive, he set goals to win. Louis competed at high levels representing the USA as a junior disabled Olympian. Louis in South Africa won ten medals for the USA.

Continuing to strive as an athlete, Louis joined the NJ Youth Devils Sled Hockey Team. Sled hockey is just like hockey but on a sled. Louis has been competing and coaching still to this day. Also from the Lightning Wheels, Louis became involved in helping with an organization that raises money for handicap scuba diving. Stay Focused is not just the name of the organization but a way of life. While helping out, he was able to scuba dive 86 feet with sharks in Grand Cayman Islands.

During his years at Nutley High school, he was a four-year letterman in Track and Field and a state record holder in shot put, discus, and javelin. He held this record for many years until losing it about five years ago to someone he mentored in the sport. Throughout high school, Louis became a mentor with Dare to Dream. This organization teaches students to never give up so they can become successful with any disability and strive for independence. After graduating Nutley High School in 2008, and continuing his education at Essex Community College, Louis achieved an associate degree in 2012.

From his competitive and positive attitude, he won the Safari Club International Pathfinder Award. This national award is for individuals who advocate for themselves as well as others.



Louis is currently employed by RWJ Barnabas as a security aid and continues to help in the community with Dare to Dream, as sled hockey coach and player, a mentor, and a friend to those that need his help. Today, Louis enjoys playing hockey and working on his black belt in Taekwondo. His passions include the outdoors, horseback riding, fishing, kayaking, water skiing, target shooting, and working out. Even during a pandemic in 2020, Louis decided to jump out of a perfectly good airplane skydiving with his friends. A lifelong dream.

For someone in a wheelchair Louis never lets anything stop him. A lesson for anyone that thinks they are not capable of doing something they are wrong. Being “Handi-abled” is not just a saying but a motto. Never giving up and overcoming any challenge makes Louis special. His positive attitude has never let his disability stop him since day one. Louis has accomplished many things in the past but is sure to accomplish many more by giving back to a community that has helped him overcome.



# Eaton Stone

(1817-1903)

## “The Greatest Rider Ever Known”

If anyone was meant for the circus life, it was Eaton Stone. The son of a Vermont lawyer, Eaton first ran away at age ten to join a traveling circus—his father had to sue for kidnapping to get his son back. When Eaton ran away a second time, again to join a circus, his father relented . . . and a star was born.

Eaton began as a horse groomer, plate spinner, and tumbler and went on to become a national and international star and one of the leading equestrians in the country—the first circus rider to do a backward somersault on a speeding, unsaddled stallion.

As the *New York Clipper* put it: “In daring, Eaton Stone was unsurpassed, and his act, which was accomplished upon a bareback steed, was wild and fearful. He would urge his horse to do his utmost speed, and without saddle or bridle, sometimes standing on the back of the animal, and sometimes seated upon his flanks, holding on, one scarcely knew how, he careened around the arena with a velocity almost painful to look at.”

Called “the one great horseman of the world,” Eaton would enter the ring at breakneck speed standing on his galloping horse, leap to the ground and back up, and then do a headstand on the horse!

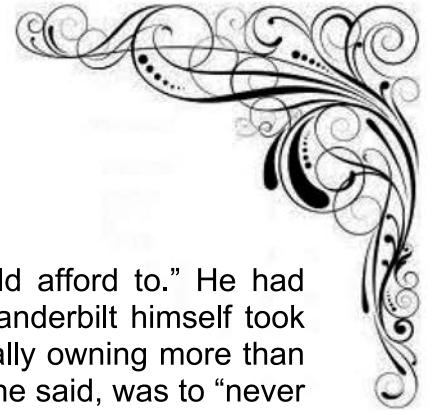
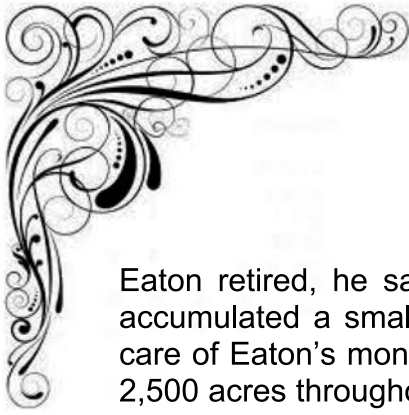
According to one contemporary newspaper account, Eaton Stone “ranks at the head of equestrians” and is “the best horseman that has ever entered the ring.” According to another, he was “the first bareback rider in this country, and the first equestrian to introduce somersaulting backwards, through hoops and over poles and banners, from the back of his horse while it was under full speed.”

From 1834 to 1867, Eaton performed with or starred in nearly every major circus traveling throughout the United States. Contemporary, local newspapers are rife with accounts of the awards and honors bestowed upon him (gold medals, a diamond brooch, not to mention the twenty doubloons and a thousand cigars from the Governor General of Cuba!). In Philadelphia, Jenny Lind, the famous “Swedish Nightingale,” performed at a supper given in Eaton’s honor at which he was also presented a service of silver.

A star performer throughout the United States, Eaton Stone also wowed overseas audiences for three years, earning rave reviews from 1851 through 1854—and paving the way for Annie Oakley and Buffalo Bill’s famous European tours decades later.

In 1851 Eaton opened at London’s Drury Lane Theatre, where he remained for four weeks. Seven thousand tickets were sold and, except for opera performances, there was more money taken in at the box office than ever before. *The London Times* said that Stone was “the best bareback rider ever seen in that city.” Eaton continued to perform to sold-out audiences in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland for the next three years.

Upon Eaton’s retirement in 1867, the *New York Clipper* wrote that “for many years he has enjoyed a reputation as the most daring rider of the age, and even now there are but few able to excel him in the performance of those feats which have made his name famous in nearly all parts of the world.”



Eaton retired, he said, “because it was time and because I could afford to.” He had accumulated a small fortune—his friend Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt himself took care of Eaton’s money—mostly by investing in real estate, eventually owning more than 2,500 acres throughout the United States. (His secret for success, he said, was to “never invest in circuses.”)

In 1874 he purchased a forty-acre farm in Franklin Township from the Satterthwaite family on property along Kingsland Road. Always a circus man, Eaton erected a “handsome private hippodrome fitted up for a training school, and some of the country's best equestrians have put in months of hard practice there.”

He remained in retirement for twenty-seven years—until the 1894 Nutley Amateur Circus one-day charity event was held at his training facility, which was Eaton Stone's last appearance as a performer in the circus ring.

Held for the benefit of the Red Cross, there were more than a thousand people in attendance, including Clara Barton. The fundraiser was covered not only by the *New York Times* and other prominent newspapers but also by national magazines such as *The Illustrated American* and *Harper’s Weekly*.

The star of the show was Nutley Hall of Famer Annie Oakley, but here is how nationally known author and editor Henry Bunner (another Nutley Hall of Famer) introduced Eaton to the crowd that evening:

“This, ladies and gentlemen, is Eaton Stone, the greatest rider ever known.”

Eaton Stone resided the last days of his life in Franklin Township until he passed away on August 8, 1903, at the age of eighty-six. He is buried below a simple headstone in Nutley’s Methodist cemetery.



# David J. Verdi

## Award Winning News Journalist

David J. Verdi is Executive Vice President, Global Newsgathering for NBC News. He oversees all domestic and international NBC News bureaus, assignment desks, News Affiliate Partnerships, Digital Newsgathering, Rights and Clearances, the Research Desk and the NBC News Channel. He is responsible for the safety and security of all NBC News teams in the field.

Starting as a student intern at *The Nutley Sun*, Verdi's 43-year career began at ABC News, and the last 31 years at NBC News. He has covered every war from Iraq to Afghanistan, Ukraine and currently Israel. Verdi produced NBC's interviews with Russia's Putin, Syria's Assad, Iran's Raisi and Rohani, and has had access to the White House over all past administrations, the palaces of the Middle East, and multiple other global locations where the activities impact the lives of Americans. Verdi covered the fall of the Berlin Wall, multiple hurricanes including Katrina and Sandy, and countless political conventions. The global newsgathering desk led the coverage of 9/11, clearly one of the most outstanding stories of his career.

Verdi grew up in Nutley with his parents Joe and Georgina and his brother Bob. He attended Washington Elementary School, Franklin Middle School, and graduated Nutley High School in 1974. One of his most impactful and lasting influences was his sixth-grade teacher, John H. Walker. A gentle, but demanding force, Mr. Walker imprinted a powerful ethic of hard work and responsibility which have been guiding principles throughout Verdi's career. Days spent at the Mudhole, "hanging" on Franklin Avenue and those beautiful fall days at the Oval still shape the warm memories of growing up in a storybook town.

Verdi graduated from the University of Northern Colorado with a B.A. in journalism and began his career at ABC News in 1979 as a freelance desk assistant on "America Held Hostage" with Ted Koppel, covering the Iranian student takeover of the American Embassy in Tehran. He went on to serve as associate producer, tape producer, field producer, and broadcast producer on "Nightline," "Good Morning America," "World News Tonight with Peter Jennings" and "This Week with David Brinkley."

Joining NBC News in 1990 as a producer on "NBC Nightly News with Tom Brokaw," Verdi subsequently became Assistant News Director, Senior Producer of Specials, Executive News Director, and Senior Vice President, Worldwide Newsgathering.

When MSNBC launched in 1996, Verdi led the team that reimagined NBC's global newsgathering system to provide content for both network and cable platforms—a first in the industry. NBC Global Newsgathering has continued its expansion to provide editorial, production and logistical support to NBC News, MSNBC, NBC News NOW, CNBC, NBC's owned and operated stations, affiliated stations, Telemundo, Sky News, and NBCNews.com.

Verdi's journalism has been recognized with five Emmy Awards, more than twenty Emmy nominations, four Edward R. Murrow Awards, a Peabody Award, an award from the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), and the New York Press Club. Verdi serves as co-executive sponsor of NBC's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion group,



APA@NBC News. He is also an advisory committee member of the Rory Peck Trust for freelance journalists.

The assignment desk is responsible for all coverage, domestic and foreign. However, the experiences Verdi values most are those where people have welcomed his crew and him into their lives, meeting them at their homes, workplaces, schools and places of worship, on their farms and at the edges of the battlefields. At the times when they were most in need, they were interviewed so their stories could be told, giving voice to those otherwise not heard.

Verdi married his high school sweetheart, Bernadette Rubino. They have four adult children and one grandchild. Believing that a bedrock of democracy is a free press holding power to account, Verdi and his family also believe that a journalist's fundamental duty is to provide the truthful information people need to make informed decisions in their lives.





# Michael Volpe

## Music Producer and Songwriter

Growing up in Nutley, New Jersey, Michael Volpe—better known today as the internationally acclaimed music producer and writer “Clams Casino”—fused the East Coast hip-hop music on which he grew up with innovative, radical techniques to create an unmistakable new sound, becoming one of the most singular artists of his generation.

As the 2000s were turning over to the 2010s, Michael graduated from Nutley High School in 2005 and was studying by day to become a physical therapist. His hobby turned into a career: his slow, hazy instrumental productions, which often sound like a computer learning to breathe, became the ideal canvases for hip-hop's emerging superstars (A\$AP Rocky, The Weeknd, Mac Miller, and Vince Staples, amongst others). He was called a “visionary” by *Rolling Stone*, his music described as “intoxicating” and “fascinating” by the *New York Times* and lauded on *BBC Radio 1* by the legendary producer Brian Eno.

But no single endorsement or accolade can encapsulate the reach Michael’s music gained in the culture. His production work can be heard on multiple number one Billboard charting albums, and his solo efforts, whether the collected *Instrumentals* series or his star-studded 2016 Columbia Records album *32 Levels*, have bolstered the kind of cult following that has earned Michael invites to perform and lecture around the world and made him considered by critics and fans alike one of the greatest beat makers of his generation.

Having produced and co-written ten Gold and Platinum Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) certified recordings, Michael continues to push himself and the genre forward. Recent work with the likes of Earl Sweatshirt, Joji, BTS's J-Hope, Jhene Aiko and the late Lil Peep reveals the rare ability to adapt and evolve while retaining an unmistakable point of view.



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# Notes

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# Notes

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# *My Little Town*

Arose O' the breast in a fine virgin soil,  
such 'twas the fruit bore of arduous toil.  
For people came first, 'pon families so sound,  
thy passion embraced, in my little town.

We differ of name not essence of thought,  
afflatus in concert bestow what is wrought.  
Thy limit of mark, hath never known bound,  
so earnest a peace, in my little town.

Time is no stranger to my old abode,  
yon demons of mammon do wish to erode.  
So steadfast we are and perceived with renown,  
O' we are the envied, in my little town.