



# 91<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL ALUMNAE LUNCHEON

BY MARILYN LYNAUGH STRAFER '80



After a touch and go lead up, The Alumnae Association was able to successfully host our annual luncheon at the Manhattan Penthouse on November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Many challenges faced the Luncheon Committee this year and we met via Zoom on a dozen different occasions to iron out the many problems facing the 2021 luncheon.

As luncheon chairperson, and along with a very strong Board of Directors and committee we were able to navigate these many obstacles and the luncheon was an enjoyable success. Lead by Alumnae President Joanne Billott '77, and rounded out by the Luncheon Committee members including Marië Brady '66, Harriet McGreal '69, Patricia Costello '66, Susan Faggiani '68, Chris Colligan '73, Mary Muehleck '70, and Patricia Caffery '79. I thank each of them and am extremely grateful for all their support.

The check-in process was smooth, thanks to the many graduates who submitted their COVID vaccine cards in advance of the luncheon, and sign in was streamlined by a small army of volunteers lead by Patti Caffery, moving the line along expeditiously.

The day began with a beautiful and joyous Mass celebrated by Reverend Sam Sawyer, SJ at The Church of St. Francis Xavier. Our alumnae shared in fellowship and camaraderie, and we were able to live stream the Mass via YouTube for the first time for those unable to join their classmates in person. The music and readings were carefully selected by Susan Faggiani, who over saw every moment of the ceremony with exquisite detail.

The feeling of happiness at the conclusion of the Mass continued as a short walk to the Manhattan Penthouse enabled everyone to safely catch up with classmates in the beautifully appointed ballroom with sweeping views overlooking the Manhattan skyline.

The weather was cold and cooperated early on but during the height of the luncheon, the skies opened, and we witnessed heavy rain, hail, and snow for a brief period. Even this could not dampen the spirits in the room.



Sister Kevin Phillips was able to attend the luncheon and was presented with a bouquet of flowers and a NY Met's cap as a nod to her favorite home team. Sister was delighted see so many familiar faces and her presence was a real highlight to the day.

Golden Anniversary Class coordinators for 1970 were Dorothy (Dedee) Fitzpatrick Gingeras, Ellen Lovelle Conant, and Joanne McGrath Gouge. The 1971 coordinators were Mary Muehleck and Bernadette



Pisani Ellingsen. Both classes had a combined picture remembrance on display on the baby grand piano in the foyer of the ballroom and a long stem white rose was placed there for each deceased classmate.

The first speaker representing the Class of 1970 was Margaret (Peggy) Fisher McNulty who spoke to the dedication of her class and their adventures along the way.

The second speaker for the Class of 1971 was Irene Rush Nolan and her presentation was followed by a slide show of the era and had everyone on their feet singing along to "Reach Out" by the Four Tops and Tina Turner's rendition of "Simply the Best". Even the Penthouse staff joined in with singing, creating a contagious and uplifting great vibe in the room.

Sr. Katie Aucoin, SC was on hand to sell her beautiful hand-made statues of SVH student nurses, expecting mothers and greeting cards. This added an extra layer of warmth to the day with memorabilia available to mark the occasion.

But on another note...

To address some of the obstacles that arose, there were many cancellations in the final days leading up to the luncheon. Twenty people cancelled within days of the luncheon, including several on the day of the event. We were able to accommodate everyone who wanted to attend this year with the early cancellations in the weeks before the deadline, but the last-minute cancellations created confusion to the seating, which had to be completely revised twice.

These cancellations also led to a financial dilemma since a guaranteed 180 guest minimum was required by the Penthouse. With only 168 graduates in attendance, the Alumnae Association was held accountable for the 14 empty seats at a cost of \$1,540.

Several alumnae members had asked to have family join them at the luncheon, but we were already committed to a no guest policy this year due to the anticipated demand based on the pre-luncheon survey instituted last Spring. Had we had earlier notice of late cancellations, we could have considered accommodating these requests.

Although the increasing number of COVID cases as well as NYC safety concerns were no doubt responsible for the many cancellations, this was understandable and was anticipated. This was the reason the checks were not deposited until after the luncheon.

But all in all, I think that everyone will agree that the luncheon was well worth the difficulties encountered along the way and everyone left the Penthouse wishing the day could go on and on.

## ADRIANA TRIGIANI

The Alumnae Association was delighted to have had Ms. Adriana Trigiani join us on our first Zoom General Alumnae meeting on October 13, 2021.

Ms. Trigiani opened her remarks by saying how much she misses St. Vincent's Hospital and of the great respect she has for nurses, particularly SVH nurses! She described how she loves stories about nurses and has incorporated them in many of her novels.

Ms. Trigiani then went on to speak about her new book *The Good Left Undone*. A multi-generational story that takes place in several countries in Europe, and was inspired by the writings and teachings of Pope John XXIII.

The ease with which she speaks about her journey as an author is both entertaining and inspiring. You feel as if you are speaking with an old friend, rather than a famous author.

It was a truly enjoyable session and we look forward to more of the same in the future!

Release date for the book is this April 2022.

## CLASS NOTES

### Class of 1955

*A message from the graduating class of 1955 of Saint Vincent's Hospital School of Nursing:*

2020 would have been our 65th anniversary or our 13th quinquennial (occurring every five years) celebration. As a class we attended

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**Patience, Fortitude, Perseverance**

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