

**Torrington Public Schools, CT**  
**Retiree Class of 2006**

**Barbara Anzellotti – 24.9 Years**



Barbara Anzellotti began her professional training at Central Connecticut State University, where she received her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education as well as thirty hours of graduate study in education. Barbara's first teaching position in 1972 was at the Southeast School, where she taught in grades six and two until 1975. From 1974 to 1984, Barbara changed jobs to become a stay-at-home mom with her children Tia and Christopher. Ever since she returned to teaching in 1984, she has taught second grade at the Tarringford School.

As Barbara prepares to leave her beloved second grade students, she says:

*I have been associated with the Torrington Public School system since 1972, and it has been a privilege to know and work with so many wonderful staff members, children and families. Tarringford School holds an extra-special place in my heart, as I've taught her for the past 22 years, my children attended grades K-6 here, and **I** was also a student here "way back when!"*

*It has been such a pleasure to work in the community where I grew up. My life has been so enriched by my teaching experiences. It is my hope that I've had a positive impact on the lives of students and they will look back with the same kinds of fond memories that I have.*

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**Janet Beck – 31 Years**

Janet Beck began her career in education in 1969 as a teacher of physical education at the elementary level in Suffield, Connecticut. In 1970, Janet moved to Canton High School, where she again taught physical education. She joined Torrington Public Schools in 1975. Through her years in Torrington, Janet has served our elementary students at various schools, including Riverside, Wetmore, Forbes, South, North, Southeast, East, and Forest Court.



Janet began preparing for her education career by attending Monroe Community College, from which she earned an Associate's Degree in Recreation. She received her undergraduate degree in Physical Education at Springfield College. She pursued graduate studies at Central Connecticut State University.

Among the honors and recognitions Janet has received over the years, her most recent have been:

- Probus Educator of the Year
- Outstanding Award Program – Olympic Program
- Archery Program for the Handicapped

In her personal reflections on her career, Janet states:

*I was hired during Mr. Hogan's term – it was a "CETA" one-year contract. There were three of us who traveled around to all the elementary schools. We taught in smelly, cramped basements with no equipment. Playgrounds were busy with traffic, cars, or the people walking by on the streets. More time was spent retrieving a ball kicked over the fence than in keeping it in.*

*Mrs. Amicone was our "boss" – although a lovely woman, she sure didn't know much about P.E. We were never allowed to buy one piece of equipment to share with the nine schools! Then East School opened! I thought I had died and gone to heaven. I had a gym, office, playground, and playing field. Mr. Kelly treated me like a professional. Whatever I wanted, he said "sure." Sixth grade was still with us and our faculty was the best in town.*

*I loved going to school each and every day. I always said to the other teachers who complained that I didn't have any papers to correct or all the other stuff classroom teachers do. They didn't check the box "Physical Education."*

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**Nancy Borghesi – 30 Years**



After graduating from Torrington High School in 1972, Nancy Borghesi received a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in Elementary Education from Central Connecticut State University. Since 1974, she has been a member of Kappa Delta Pi, an honor society in education. In 1988, she became a national trainer in the Talents Unlimited Thinking Skills model.

Nancy began her teaching career in 1976 when she was hired as a fifth grade teacher at Southeast School. She continued her professional career at Riverside School, teaching second, third, and fourth grades. With the closing of Riverside School in 1985, Nancy moved to the renovated Forbes School, where she has taught third grade through the current year.

In her personal reflections on her career, Nancy states:

*Teaching has been a challenging and rewarding experience. My life has been enriched by wonderful students and by supportive, caring, and dedicated professionals. I will miss my colleagues.*

**Susan Bredice – 35 Years**

Susan Bredice decided at an early age that she wanted to be a teacher. So, after graduating from Torrington High School, Susan entered Southern Connecticut State University. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education in 1970. She extended her studies at Central Connecticut State University in the years that followed, eventually earning thirty graduate credits in education.



Susan joined Torrington Public Schools in 1971, when she became a Chapter One teacher at Southeast School. In the following years, she taught grade one at South and Southwest Schools. In 1983, Susan moved to Torrington, where she remained. Since 1998 she has served as a Reading Recovery teacher.

Susan departs Torrington Public Schools with these words:

*For 35 years I devoted my life to the teaching of children (mostly first graders). It is amazing to think about all the lives you have touched in 35 years. But it has been a wonderful, rewarding experience for me. The “ah-ha” on the face of the child when a first grader has discovered he or she could read or write is priceless. I will miss the children and my friends and colleagues, but it has been a good “ride.”*

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**Janet Campbell – 31 Years**



Janet Campbell, a graduate of Torrington High School, began preparing for her professional career by attending Annhurst College in Woodstock, Connecticut. Janet received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education and Art from Annhurst in 1974. Between 1975 and 1979, Janet completed her studies for a Master's degree in Art from Central Connecticut State University.

Janet began her first teaching assignment in Torrington in 1975 as a grade one teacher at Southeast School. From 1976 through 1981 Janet taught at South School in grades four and three. In 1982, she changed over to teaching Art for the next two years at Wetmore and Torrington Schools. Deciding to return to the elementary classroom, she taught grade two at Wetmore (1984-1987) and at Forest Court (1987-1996). Finally finding a home, Janet moved with the Forest Court staff and students into the Vogel-Wetmore School in 1996, where she continued to teach grade two, and then grade four.

When asked to comment on her career, Janet said the following:

*“If I had it to do all over again, would I become an elementary school teacher?”  
That’s a question that I have asked myself many times over the past 31 years while teaching in the Torrington Public Schools. Looking back on my entire career, I have no regrets entering the teaching profession.*

*Being a teacher has fostered my ability to learn, grow, and face a variety of challenges with my students. Teaching isn’t always fun. Teaching is doing the hard things as well as the fun things. But seeing the joy on the face of a child who has succeeded at something he struggled to accomplish is a huge personal reward.*

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**Patricia Dzialo – 35 Years**



After thirty-five years of teaching in Torrington, Patricia Dzialo has decided it is time to retire. She does so, however, after having provided hundreds of Torrington students with years of quality instruction. Her first year of teaching in 1971 was in grade six at Southwest School. She continued at Southwest until 1992. Beginning in the 1992-1993 school year, she began focusing on language arts in the middle grades at Vogel School. When the Torrington Middle School opened in 1994, Patricia moved into a new classroom there and has continued to teach language arts until now.

Patricia received her Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Southern Connecticut State University. She earned her Master's degree in Education from Central Connecticut State University. Her years of teaching in Torrington have earned her the respect of her co-workers, parents, and students. We will all miss her quality of instruction and her devotion to her students.

**Patricia Fairchild – 34 Years**

Patricia Fairchild began preparing to teach back in 1968, when she entered Central Connecticut State University. She graduated from Central in 1972 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education. Two years later, she returned to Central for graduate school. Pat finished her Master of Science degree in Elementary Education in 1977.

Patricia's first teaching job was at Forbes School in 1972. In 1984, she moved into a fifth grade position at East School. In 1986, she moved on to Torrington, but she must have liked her time at East, because she returned in 1987 and stayed on until now. East School obviously thought a lot of her, as well, because Pat was selected as East School Teacher of the Year in 1997.



As Patricia prepares to leave her classroom at East, she shares the following:

*I have made many special friends throughout these thirty-four years. My colleagues, former students, and parents have created many fond and unforgettable memories that will remain with me for the rest of my life.*

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**Donna Georgescu – 21 Years**



Donna Georgescu began her preparation to become a teacher by entering Central Connecticut State University. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Early Childhood Education from Central in 1976. Some years later, Donna received her Master's degree in General Education, also from Central Connecticut State University.

The Torrington Public Schools welcomed Donna as a teacher in 1985, when she was hired to teach grade 4 at Wetmore School. She was at Wetmore until 1987, when she moved to Forest Court School, where she remained for the next nine years. In 1996, Donna moved with the Forest Court staff and students to Vogel-Wetmore School, where she taught grade five. Her final move took place in 1999, when she moved to grade five at Torrington School.

Donna has been listed in *Who's Who Among America's Teachers in 2000* and the *National Honor Roll of Outstanding American Teachers for 2005-2006*. While teaching at Forest Court School, Donna was nominated by her peers for Teacher of the Year.

As Donna prepares to depart from the Torrington Public Schools, she shares these personal reflections:

*At the end of each school year, I always reflect on the students that have just passed my way. Some of the over 500 students grew academically, socially or emotionally. Some became more responsible. I realize now, as I did on my very first day of teaching, that it has always been about the children. I enjoy many visits and phone calls from former students.*

*Parenting my two wonderful children, Mark and Elizabeth, and teaching have been my two passions. Teaching is not just a job, as parenting is not just a job.*

*Many hours outside of school were used to enhance my teaching. My biggest supporter in this endeavor has been my husband of forty years, Marty. I also praise my parents for the work ethic and principles that they instilled in me and which were definitely needed for this "calling." Yes, I believe teaching is a calling if we are to do this right.*

*I have worked with some wonderful peer teachers, such as Katie Murphy, Jackie Kulhowick, and Lisa Melaragno, just to name a few. I still have a deep connection to one peer teacher who taught in the room next to me ten years ago, Colleen Carr. She became my daughter-in-law and has made me the happiest grandmother on this planet.*

*I have been blessed in so many ways by having my wonderful family and having a work life that I enjoyed so much.*

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**Jacqueline Kulhowick – 36 Years**

In May of 1970, young Jacqueline Kulhowick graduated from Elmira College and went looking for her first teaching position. She found that position at the North School in Torrington, where she taught sixth grade. In 1986 she moved to Forbes School, and then on to Torrington School in 1987. She must have truly found a home with Torrington's fifth graders, because she has completed 19 years in this position.

Besides her work in the classroom, Jacqueline has been active with several committees, including Nature's Classroom, Tools for Schools, HOT Schools, School Leadership, and several textbook selection committees.



Jacqueline shares these thoughts as she looks back:

*It was a rainy morning in September of 1970, and I had been hired to teach the sixth grade at North School. I was twenty-one, my students were twelve, and a few were taller than me. They were anxious about their new teacher; I, on the other hand, was petrified to be in charge of twenty-five students.*

*Throughout that first year I kept asking myself if I made the right career choice. Will my students learn from me? Will they be able to make connections from what they learn in the classroom to their outside world? Will I make somewhat of a difference in their young lives?*

*Now, after thirty-six years and almost a thousand students later, I am sure that I made the right career choice. . . . I have only to read the paper and see former students names on the high school or middle school honor rolls. . . . receiving academic or sports-related scholarships and awards. . . . I know that somewhere along the way I helped them achieve their goals. . . .*

*In conclusion, I have no regrets about the path I chose. . . . even though my name will no longer hang outside a classroom, I'm confident that my teaching will continue in the lives of those I have touched for generations to come.*

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**Margaret Larson – 20 Years in Torrington, 40 Years in Education**



Margaret has devoted her career as a professional educator to the field of Business Education. Through the years she has worked in various schools and states, as well as for the Department of Defense in Heidelberg, Germany. Some places where she has taught: Tewksbury High School in Massachusetts, Bloomfield Junior High School, Tunxis Community College in Farmington and Adult Education in California and Massachusetts.

Highly regarded as a teacher and well experienced by 1984, Margaret joined the Torrington teaching staff as a Business teacher at Torrington High School. Nine years later, she transferred to Torrington Middle School, continuing to serve as the Technology teacher until now.

Margaret's teaching preparation began at Boston College, where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Education. Her Master of Education degree was received from Boston State College.

Normally a very quiet individual of few words but great action, Margaret shares these personal reflections regarding her career:

*I have enjoyed teaching since the first day I started. It has been challenging and rewarding. The students, faculty and staff in every school have made my life complete and meaningful.*

**Sally Lefkowski – 27 Years**

Twenty-seven years ago, Sally Lefkowski decided that she wanted to continue spending her days in the Torrington Public Schools. Sally, who graduated from Torrington High School in 1966 and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education at Central Connecticut State University, began teaching grade 1 at Southwest School in 1971, where she remained until 1976. While teaching, she earned her Master's degree from Central.

From 1984-1986, Sally taught at North School. Between 1986-1998, she was a Title I teacher at Tarringford and at the district level. She moved to her final position as a Reading Recovery/STAR teacher in 1998 and has made her home at Forbes School since 2000.



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**Grace Michnevitz – 30.5 Years**



Grace G. Michnevitz, or “Amazing Grace,” as she is often called, enrolled in college at St. John’s University after graduating from Bishop McDonnell High School in New York. After she moved to Connecticut, she enrolled at the University of Hartford. There she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education. Wishing to further advance her education, Grace attended Central Connecticut State University, where she received a Master of Science degree and a Sixth Year Certificate in administration and supervision.

Grace began teaching in Torrington in 1976 at the Southeast School. Through the next twenty years, she taught at the South, Riverside, Forbes, and Wetmore schools. Deciding that she liked the Wetmore School, Grace became Principal there in 1986. She has served as Principal for the Forest Court and Vogel-Wetmore schools, and finally, at East School.

Grace has received recognition as the Probus Club Educator of the Year and was nominated for Woman of the Year by the Litchfield Business and Professional Woman’s Club.

When asked to share her thoughts about her years in Torrington, Grace had the following comments:

*As you can see, I have been in eight schools over a period of 30.5 years. I have learned so much over those years from wonderful staff, students and parents. Over the years there were lots of laughter and some tears. I choose to remember only the laughter.*

*A special thanks to the outstanding and professional staff at East School, who have worked so hard with me over the past three and one-half years to make East School even better. Past administrators at East, Mr. Kelley and Mr. Doyle, did an awesome job before I came.*

*Thanks to everyone I have ever worked with. They have each made a difference in my life.*

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**Diane O'Connor – 25 Years**

Diane O'Connor began her career in Torrington Public Schools in 1970 as a grade 7 history teacher at Vogel Junior High School. Since that time, given all that she has done for her students and fellow teachers, she has been a most busy individual.



Diane taught until 1974, at which time she took a few years off to raise her family. From 1984 through 1985 she worked as a TPS instructional assistant, but she returned to teaching in 1985 as a grade 5 teacher at Wetmore School. She taught grades 3 and 4 from 1986 through 1995 at Forest Court School. In 1996, she moved with her students and colleagues to the Vogel-Wetmore School, where she ends her career teaching grade 4.

In addition to her “day job,” Diane has been highly involved in other roles such as: Power Hour teacher at Vogel-Wetmore, Saturday Academy teacher, summer school teacher, BEST Mentor, and Cooperating Teacher. She has also served on dozens of school committees such as Enrichment Committee, Language Arts Committee, District Testing Committee, and Retirement Committee.

As this very busy teacher prepares to retire, one can only wonder what she will be up to. She does, however, leave us with these thoughts:

*Excited! Anxious! Nervous! Eager! It seems like only yesterday I held all these emotions as I began my first teaching position at Vogel Junior High. At the beginning of each new school year, these emotions have repeated themselves. I feel privileged to have worked with such talented and caring people. I want to especially recognize my colleagues at Vogel-Wetmore. You are the best and it sure has been fun! To the thousands of students I have taught, I say thank you. You have enriched my life in so many ways. Because of each of you, there hasn't been a day in my teaching career that I haven't loved my job. Now, it is time to move to another chapter of my life. I again feel the same emotions – Excited! Anxious! Nervous! Eager! I leave taking with me compassion and knowledge from colleagues and students alike and hope I have left a little behind.*

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**Patricia Radocy – 35 Years**



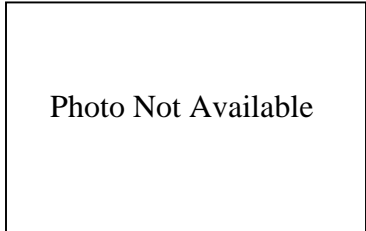
After three and one-half decades of devoting herself to the education of Torrington's children, Patricia Radocy says that she plans a change in her life that involves traveling, reading more, doing some gardening and relaxing.

Pat entered Eastern Connecticut State University back in 1967 as the first step in preparing for her career in education. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in education from Eastern in 1971 and her Master of Education degree from Central Connecticut State University in 1976.

While in graduate school, Pat took on her first teaching position at North School in 1971, where she taught third grade. In 1986, she transferred to Forbes School. She has taught second, third and fourth grades at Forbes. At the end of the 2005-2006 school year, Pat will say good-bye to the Forbes family after having given them fifteen years of caring and devotion.

**Catherine Reis – 33.4 Years**

Catherine entered the field of education in 1970. Her first position was that of transition teacher for grades one through three at Lincoln School in Attleboro, Massachusetts. After two years there, she began doing substitute work in Torrington's schools. She eventually was hired to teach at South School in 1973. In 1982, she moved to Southwest School, where, over the next six years, she taught fourth, second, and third grade. Finally, in 1988, Catherine settled into Forbes School, where she taught first grade until 1995. Then she took on her current role, specializing in reading and working in the Reading Recovery and STAR programs.



To prepare for teaching, Catherine attended Rhode Island College in Providence, where she received a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education in 1970. After moving to Connecticut, she attended Central Connecticut State University, achieving a Master of Science degree in Elementary Education. Her preparation to be a reading specialist took place at University of Connecticut, where she earned a Reading Recovery Certificate.

As Catherine prepares to leave us, many hundreds of Torrington students and their parents have her to thank for the quality of instruction she brought into the classroom every day.

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**Ellen Mary Rolfe – 34 Years**



With the end of this school year, Mary Rolfe will complete 34 years of bringing music into the lives of hundreds of Torrington Public School students. Mary began her music career in 1960 at the Lapeer State Home Training School in Lapeer, Michigan. In 1963 she took a music teacher position in Waterford, Connecticut at the Seaside Regional Center. Looking for possible career change, she accepted a special education teacher position in 1964 at Valley Region Four District in Deep River. However, after three years, Mary returned to music, accepting a position at Torrington School in 1972. Throughout the past 34 years, Mary has taught in six Torrington schools: Southwest, East, Torrington High, Vogel and Torrington Middle.

Mary's skills in music and music instruction are well known by her peers. She has received several formal honors, including the following:

- Music Educator of the Year (selected by the Connecticut Music Educators' Association)
- Who's Who among America's Educators
- Connecticut Music Educators' Association Service Award

As the end of this school year approaches, many of our students, teachers and administrators will be saddened that Mary Rolfe is ending one phase of her music career, but this loss will be balanced by the years of musical joy still to come in the hearts and minds of all Mary's former students.

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**Patricia Vallerand – 35 Years**

Patricia Vallerand began her journey in education at Southern Connecticut State University, where she received her Bachelor of Science degree in Special Education in 1971. She continued her studies at Southern, earning thirty additional graduate credits in Special Education.

Pat's first teaching position began in 1971 at Wetmore School, where she taught Special Education. She stayed there until 1979, when she moved into an elementary position in grades five and six. In 1987 she transferred to the fifth grade at the Forest Court school. In 1996 she moved with her Forest Court colleagues and students to the Vogel-Wetmore School.



In addition to her years of service as a teacher, Pat also served as the Forest Court TEA representative, has been a BEST mentor for our new teachers, and has served on various school committees.

As Pat Vallerand prepares to leave Torrington Public Schools, she offers the following words:

*I sincerely thank the city of Torrington for affording me the opportunity to teach their children for the past 35 years. It has been both a pleasure and an honor.*

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**Karen Vasko – 35 Years**



Karen Vasko, after graduating from Torrington High School, decided to follow her heart's desire to be an elementary school teacher. She entered Southern Connecticut State University, where she majored in Elementary Education, graduating in 1971 with a Bachelor of Science degree. With teaching certificate in hand, she returned to her home town to teach first grade at East School. Karen truly made a career choice when she entered this first grade classroom. Not only has she remained at East since 1971, but she has taught first grade for the entire 35 years from within the same classroom.

In her own words, Karen says the following about her career:

*Thirty-five years ago I began my teaching career as a first grade teacher at East School. I end my career in the same capacity. Each year has been different, each class unique. . . . In conclusion, I have to say that anticipating retirement has been bittersweet for me. I will honestly miss coming to East School every day. It has been my home away from home for the past thirty years. However, I will not miss working the ten or more hours that I logged on most days. I am looking forward to a (hopefully) happy and healthy retirement. This is also my wish for my fellow retirees of the "Class of 2006."*

**Barbara Verderame – 27 Years**

After twenty-seven years of teaching in Torrington Public Schools, Barbara Verderame has decided finally to leave school. A 1962 graduate of Torrington High School, Barbara started her undergraduate education at Northwestern Community College, where she received an Associate's degree. Planning a career in education, she enrolled at Central Connecticut State University, where in 1977 she earned a Bachelor degree with dual majors in Elementary and Special Education. She continued into graduate school at CCSU, earning a Master of Science degree in the field of Special Education in 1983.



Barbara's teaching career began at Tarringford School when she accepted a fifth grade position in 1979. A year later, she moved into a Special Education position at Tarringford. She remained in Special Education until 1996, when she transferred to Torrington Middle School, where she has taught math until the present.

Barbara shares the following words with us as she prepares to leave school:

*This decision was very difficult for me because of my love for the students. I feel very fortunate to have begun and ended my career in Torrington working with talented and caring staff. I look forward to spending time with my caring family and friends. Thank you for the past 27 years.*