



# Alumnae Association of the Philadelphia High School for Girls

December 2016

Issue #56

## Philadelphia High School for Girls

# Happy Holidays from the Alumnae Association

December is a significantly spiritual month for many religions. The month holds the Christian and Jewish holidays of Christmas and Hanukkah. It also includes religiously important holidays for Muslims and Buddhists. December also welcomes Kwanzaa, a modern pan-African celebration of family, faith, community and culture.

- Happy Bodhi Day*
- Blessed Milad un Nabi*
- Joyous Hanukkah*
- Peaceful Solstice*
- Merry Christmas*
- Happy Kwanzaa*

Whatever tradition you celebrate during this season of light, we wish you joy, health, love, peace, and abundant happiness this month and always.



# 128<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Luncheon

The 128<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Luncheon will be held on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. The keynote speaker will be the Honorable Shirley C. Franklin. Tickets are now available; three purchasing options are provided.

- Tickets are available on the Alumnae Association website: ([www.ghsalumnae.org](http://www.ghsalumnae.org)) or through the direct link: (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/128th-annual-meetingluncheon-tickets-30468406825>). Please note there is a \$5.00 surcharge when purchasing tickets online.
- The second, a "paper" option, can be accessed via a PDF link included in the Constant Contact email that accompanied this newsletter.
- The final option is an onsite payment on the day of the luncheon. Walk-in registrations will be accepted with a **cash or credit/debit card** payment of **\$80.00** (\$75.00 plus a \$5.00 surcharge). There is an ATM in the lobby of the hotel. Seating with your class cannot be guaranteed.

## Upcoming Class Reunions

*By Dorothy G. Kapenstein*

Arrange a class reunion! We offer a very nice package to classes that join us on this date to have their reunions with the Alumnae Association.

Call Dorothy G. Kapenstein (215 331-2681) or email her ([dorothyk08@aol.com](mailto:dorothyk08@aol.com)) for more information. The following classes have already arranged to have their reunions at our annual spring gathering! If you are a member of these classes and would like to participate in the reunion planning process, please contact the organizers listed below.

183 June 1952	Sabina Gatti	<a href="mailto:sabinagatti@comcast.net">sabinagatti@comcast.net</a>
203 June 1962	Nancy Newcomer	<a href="mailto:nanewic@yahoo.com">nanewic@yahoo.com</a>
	Donna Elman Fine	<a href="mailto:caesertoo@yahoo.com">caesertoo@yahoo.com</a>
227 June 1983	Lynette Jackson	<a href="mailto:nyasha@bellsouth.net">nyasha@bellsouth.net</a>
236 June 1992	Paula Antunes Schneider	<a href="mailto:schneiderfamily@gmail.com">schneiderfamily@gmail.com</a>

***The following classes also have milestone anniversaries this year:***

1937, 1942, 1947, January 1952, 1957, January 1962, 1967, 1972, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012.

There's still time to contact Dorothy ([dorothyk08@aol.com](mailto:dorothyk08@aol.com)) to arrange your reunion on April 22, 2010.

# News From Our School

By Dorothy G. Kapenstein

**Louis Austin**, Service Club Sponsor, has informed us that County Fair



took place on Tuesday, November 29 and the theme was "Disney." It was moved to

the week after Thanksgiving to not conflict with scheduled parent-teacher conferences.

Other noteworthy GHS traditions.



**Senior Day October 21, 2016**



**Junior Day November 18, 2016**

**Lisa Gregory**, a Girls' High alum, came back to school to work with our International Baccalaureate students. She works out of the state Department in D.C. was in town and volunteered her services. She spent about two hours with 30 IB students working on a diplomacy simulation activity.

**Dr. Cristobal Carambo**, chemistry teacher, sent us this report on the kick-off event of this year's STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Medicine) Program at the school:

"On Wednesday Nov. 15, 2016, approximately 28 students met in room 116, to listen to Mrs. Ellen Polsky speak about the Blumberg twins, 1942 GHS Alumnae. The sisters did math research for the U.S. Army Air Force in World War II and then served among the earliest programmers of ENIAC, the first computer. Mrs. Polsky is the daughter of Doris Blumberg Polsky and the niece of Shirley Blumberg Melvin. They were elected to our Distinguished Daughters Court of Honor in 2012. Mrs. Polsky began the program with a brief introduction background of the work the two sisters did to help keep Mt. Airy racially diverse. She then spoke of how research into their real estate activity led to the film on their mathematical careers. The film, *Top Secret Rosies*, was produced by LeAnn Erickson of Temple University. We paused the conversation to watch the film; time constraint only allowed us to watch half the film. After the

viewing, the students asked more question about the time of the war, how they were treated, and the lasting effects of their work. The girls were, as usual, very respectful, inquisitive, and highly interested. The session lasted until approximately 4:00 pm. Mrs. Michini, Mrs. Baker, Mrs. Renz, and Ms. Hahn were present.

**Mrs. Catherine Michini**, Faculty Sponsor, presided over the 39<sup>th</sup>

Bailey-Williams Honor Society Induction assembly on October 25, 2016. A total of 158 students were honored: 58 from 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 43 from 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and 57 from 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The guest speaker was Mrs. Jurate Krokys, Assistant Superintendent of the Autonomous Region of the School District of Philadelphia (aka Regional Superintendent). Parents of the honorees and guests attended the ceremony.

## News from Our Alumnae

*By Dorothy G. Kapenstein*

**Dorothy G. Kapenstein** (January 1946) has gathered a garland of great news about a group of Girls' High grads. They have gained success in many areas. Dorothy interviewed them by email and, wherever possible, their stories are told in their own words. Dorothy had so much fun putting this together that she is thinking about doing it again!

**Gayle Feldman** (June 1969) has played an amazing number of roles in



the literary world. She is or has been an author, editor, journalist, book reviewer, and consultant. She is fluent in French and Chinese

and has served as a Cultural Ambassador to China. After graduating from Penn, she lived abroad in several places for some years. Gayle described her career(s) in an email: "I spent a year after earning my MA from Girton College at Cambridge University working in France on a French government assistantship: I taught English in a French lycee in Lille, and continued to study at the University of Lille. When I returned to England, I worked in publicity and then as an editor in book publishing in London, then went on an exchange organized by the British Publishers Association and the Publishing Administration in China and was based in Beijing and Shanghai. After that, I came to New York, where I have been for 30 years. Here I became a journalist, and was on the staff of *Publishers Weekly* for many years. I went freelance and continued to contribute to *Publishers Weekly* and wrote for *The New York Times*, *The Nation*, and

others, and for many years have been the New York correspondent for *The Bookseller*, which is the British equivalent of *Publishers Weekly*. One of the pieces I am most proud of having written was about my father, and it was published for Father's Day in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* some years back. I published a breast cancer memoir, *You Don't Have to Be Your Mother*, in 1994, and a study of prize winners and best sellers, *The Best and Worst of Times: The Changing Business of Trade Books*, in 2003. "

Gayle reported on her most recent accomplishment: "I've just been awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Public Scholar fellowship, one of only 30 scholars from across the country to be awarded the grant. This is the second year that the NEH has funded these awards. I will use it to finish work on a long-term project, a biography of Random House co-founder Bennett Cerf. The book is under contract to Random House, and publication will likely take place in fall/winter of 2018-19."

Gayle wrote warmly about her GHS education, noting that, "The education it provided was so very good—the cultural literacy. There was everything from going to the Philadelphia Orchestra concerts in music class to learning about Shakespeare from Miss O'Neill and Miss Kahler, and going to see the Shakespeare films playing at the local cinema with classmates, to discovering Albert Camus and so much else. It was at GHS that I learned the fundamentals of the English language that have stood me in good stead as I went on to Penn and Cambridge, as I edited books in London, as I became a journalist

here and then a book writer. GHS opened my mind to a bigger world. And I should also say that Dr. L. Ruth Murray Klein was also an inspirational figure. "We are happily waiting for the publication of Gayle's book on Bennett Cerf!

### **Patricia (Pat) Buchholz Guth**

(June 1977) has had a life and a



career filled with music. She was happy at GHS. She wrote: "I loved music theory with Mr. Kauriga and, as an avid reader, loved my English classes. Mr. Kauriga was one of the largest

influences in my musical life. His enthusiasm for teaching and his determination to produce GREAT music with high school students made me realize I wanted to do the same thing. I also loved Ms. Johnson's English class because she assigned wonderful books to read. Physics was a favorite too. (I believe the teacher's name was Mrs. Steiner). I was in band and orchestra for four years, drama club in freshman year, and I wrote for the *Iris* for all four years. I was the Band Manager and was also chosen as the *Iris* editor for senior year but felt like I had to choose one or the other. Since music was going to be my career, I chose Band Manager. I graduated Summa Cum Laude and received the Instrumental Music Award for Band.

Pat wrote, "I believe that GHS allowed me to recognize that women could do anything, so I've always set my goals high as a result. I think that had I been at a co-ed school, I

wouldn't have been the band manager. I bet that honor would have gone to a young man back then. When I assumed that position, it was the first time I had led a musical ensemble and I was hooked immediately.

Writing about life after Girls' High, Pat said: "I earned a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education from Westminster Choir College, Princeton, NJ. I majored in organ with a minor in voice. At Westminster, as a member of the Symphonic Choir, I had the opportunity to sing with the New York Philharmonic and Philadelphia Orchestra. I taught elementary school music for several years after I graduated. I stopped teaching to raise my children. I have served as Director of Music at various churches in the Bucks County area since my senior year at Girls' High (40 years). I also spent several years working as an apprentice for a pipe organ builder and nine years as the artistic director of the Young Singers of Pennsylvania. I write articles/blogs for websites and print publications, mostly for travel-related sites/magazines. I've self-published two children's travel books. I'm learning to play the harp! I'm also an avid amateur chef and love to experiment in the kitchen.

Pat wrote that when she founded the Bucks County Women's Chorus in September of 2012, she had hoped to spark the interest of maybe 30 or

40 local women who loved to sing. Instead, 80 singers showed up at that first rehearsal on a hot September evening and, ever since, the ensemble has maintained its large membership and has been wowing local audiences with its artfully blended voices and obvious love for singing...and for each other.



But besides sharing a love of singing and a great sisterhood, says their director, many of the women are united in a love of travel. Pat is an avid traveler as well and was more than delighted to help fulfill the dreams of many of her members by organizing choir concert tours to Europe. In 2014, members of the ensemble enjoyed an inaugural tour to Northern Italy. This past spring, 45 travelers headed to Budapest, Hungary and Vienna and Salzburg, Austria for the choir's 2<sup>nd</sup> tour. It was an unforgettable journey to three cities where music, including choral music, boasts such a rich history.



This time, the group used performance tour company KI Concerts of Colorado Springs as their tour organizer. KI secured them a spot in a gala choral festival in Budapest, joining Bucks County Women's Chorus (BCWC) with four other U.S. choirs in a performance of Haydn's Lord Nelson Mass. (That was a huge change for the choir, which is

more accustomed to performing standards, Broadway show tunes, spirituals, multi-cultural works, and light classical pieces.) In addition, the choir performed their regular repertoire at a retirement home in Bruck an der Letha, Austria (a small town outside of Vienna) and at the Residenz (palace) in Salzburg.

The choir and their companions (including many spouses, adult children, and friends) also enjoyed a four-hour Viennese cooking class, took an evening cruise down the Danube, participated in a *Sound of Music* tour, and embarked on several other walking and bus tours throughout the trip, enjoying amazing monuments, cathedrals, palaces, and more.

Pat notes that the choir members also greatly enjoyed their interactions with locals and found communication to be quite easy, as most Hungarians and Austrians, especially those under 40, speak English. In addition, the audiences were wonderfully appreciative of the choir's music and seemed to really enjoy the group's "American" repertoire.

In 2018, BCWC plans to travel to Helsinki, Finland; Tallinn, Estonia; and Stockholm, Sweden on a 10-day tour that will include concerts in each location, as well as a "friendship" concert with a local choir in Estonia and other cultural interactions.

Other GHS alum who've participated in the chorus include MaryAnn Buchholz (218) and Curita Goode (235). Pat welcomes any alumnae in the area to join the group for rehearsals on Monday evenings in Holland, Bucks County. For more

information, go to [www.buckscountywomenschorus.com](http://www.buckscountywomenschorus.com)

**Nancy Gold** (June 1958), a well-known and respected business owner and community activist, has written a book, *Shirt Tales: The Stories Behind a Successful Startup*. It tells her own



story and gives useful advice for anyone who is thinking of starting a

business. She has graciously sent us a gift copy of the book and it has been placed in the Alumnae Authors Collection in our Archives.

Nancy has sent us the following bio. She is the President of King's Collar Shirtmakers, one of the Philadelphia area's most notable companies, and with clients from coast to coast. It has earned a national reputation. She was the first woman in the country to enter this male-dominated industry when she was hired by The Custom Shop in 1965, and has served as a mentor to others entering this field. Nancy's entrepreneurial accomplishments have been recognized both locally and nationally and, through community leadership roles, she has raised over a million dollars for non-profits and for community-based needs. She has coached hundreds of businesspeople over the years, and understands the entrepreneurial passion that drives their vision and fuels their success. She is also President of TKC Advertising and, since 1980, has worked on advertising campaigns in

Haddonfield, NJ; Center City Philadelphia; and Ardmore, PA.

Having spent 20 years as an activist in Center City Philadelphia, Nancy presently serves as a Community Revitalization Expert in Ardmore, PA. As a Center City activist, she was among the first to press for the zoning of outside dining in the city, and was instrumental in enrolling the city's residents and building owners into supporting the Business District Authority, which created the Center City District (CCD). In 1990, when the city was looking for humane ways to treat the problem of panhandling, Nancy founded the I Do Care Foundation, and authored The Vendor Food Coupon Program, which provided vendor meals for those begging for food on the streets of Philadelphia. 27,000 coupons were sold, and the program ultimately led to several proactive solutions to panhandling.

She has been honored as an *Inc. Magazine Entrepreneur of the Year* [1991] and in 1994 she was presented with The Award of Honor by The Alumnae Association of the Philadelphia High School for Girls. In 1996, she was named by Governor Tom Ridge as one of *Pennsylvania's Best 50 Women in Business*. She is President Emeritus of both the Center City Proprietors Association and the Ardmore Business Association, and is a Founding Officer of the Center City District (CCD) in Philadelphia, where she served its businesses, and worked to support a healthy business climate. In 2008, the *Ardmore Initiative* presented Nancy with the Charles F. Ward Service to Ardmore

Award, recognizing her selflessness, integrity, leadership, and kindness, and she continues to work closely with the *Ardmore Initiative* as an Ardmore activist for positive change.

In 2011, she formed TKC Business Consultants, and The King's Writer, as divisions of The King's Collar Corporation. Both companies offer support services for start-ups, and allow Nancy to continue her work as an entrepreneurial coach for small businesses. She is a familiar voice on KYW Newsradio 1060, and has done the voiceovers and ad copy for a myriad of companies over the years. She has served as a keynote speaker, as well as a guest editorialist, for *The Daily News*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, and several community papers.

In answer to our question about how GHS impacted her later life, Nancy wrote: "As I answer these questions, I am reminded of the role that Girls' High played in my life and the difference it made for my family and my community. The strengths I developed carried me through many dark days and allowed me to achieve goals that for others may have seemed impossible to accomplish. Girls' High taught me how to be an independent member of my community and to take pride in its tenets, which included being part of an all-girl school. I learned to value my female friends and the strengths they possessed. I found I held myself as someone on an equal par with men, and when I later became the first woman in the country to enter the men's custom shirt industry, this served me well."

# News from Our Distinguished Daughters

By Dorothy G. Kapenstein

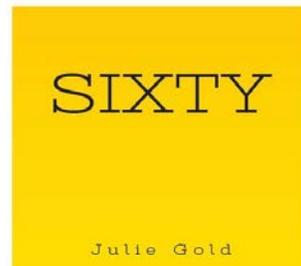
**Blondell Reynolds Brown** (June 1970) joined City Councilwomen Cindy Bass and Helen Gym in presenting bills for City Council to consider. The bills aim at protecting citizens, especially children, against lead poisoning in the city water supply. Blondell is now a two-time Hall of Fame member. She was elected to our Court of Honor of Distinguished Daughters in 2008. On November 17, 2016, she was inducted into the Morton McMichael Elementary School Hall of Fame. She is a graduate of the school.

**Sara Garonzik** (June 1968) has had a splendid career of some 35 years with the Philadelphia Theatre Company. The Barrymore Awards recently presented Sara with their Lifetime Achievement Award. This group honors outstanding achievements in theatre in the Philadelphia Area. Sara was elected to our Court of Honor in 2012.

**Vanessa Northington Gamble MD, PhD** (June 1970) is Professor of

Medical Humanities and Health Policy at George Washington University. She wrote a column that appeared on November 23, 2016, in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. It describes the indignities forced on black women as they took on careers as physicians. All alumnae should read it! Dr. Gamble is a 2014 inductee to our Hall of Fame.

Grammy Award-winning songwriter and one of our newest Distinguished



Daughters, **Julie Gold** (June 1974) is releasing her latest CD, a compendium of her lifetime work, appropriately

titled *Sixty*. Her 5<sup>th</sup> CD is available on CD Baby, iTunes, Spotify, and Amazon. She performed songs from the entire CD on Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at the historic Duplex in the heart of Greenwich Village.

# Celebrated Sisters

By Dorothy G. Kapenstein

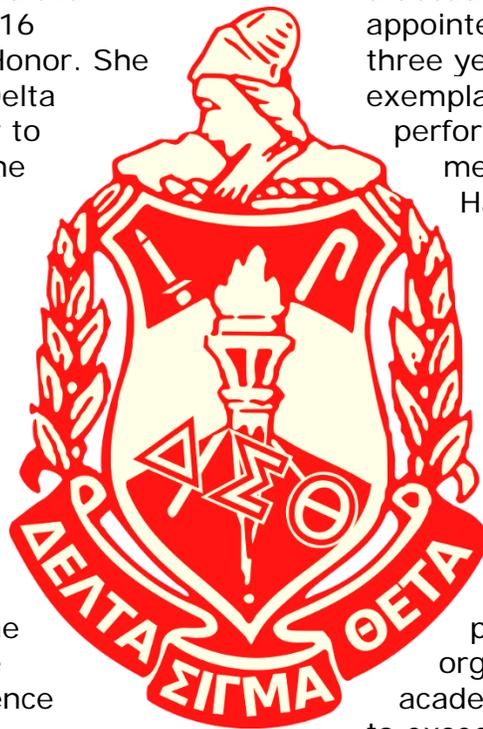
*The Alumnae Association of the Philadelphia High School for Girls believes it is important to take note of dedicated alumnae, whose important contributions have eased the way for, and inspired so many women. Celebrated Sisters is an initiative designed to complement our Distinguished Daughters by highlighting the continued accomplishments of Girls' High graduates.*

## Dr. Monica Johnson Taylor (June 1982)

**Dr. Monica Johnson Taylor** (June 1982) came home to Girls' High on October 28, 2016, to attend the induction ceremony for 2016 honorees to our Court of Honor. She attended as President of Delta Sigma Theta, Inc. Sorority to accept the honor for Pauline Oberdorfer Minor, a 1910 GHS graduate. Ms. Minor was one of the 22 founders of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. Her achievements and those of her sister founders not only impacted many in the society of her era, their work still reaches out in our time and has grown exponentially. It influences the lives of some 300,00 women around the world today and this influence will continue in the future.

In her professional capacity, Dr. Taylor now serves as Assistant Superintendent of Schools in the Hatboro-Horsham School District in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. She described her professional career with

these words: "I began my career as an elementary school teacher in the School



District of Philadelphia. After experiencing great success for just over a decade in the classroom, I was appointed assistant principal. Following three years in this position, my exemplary qualifications and performance as an administrator led me to the role of principal in the Hatboro-Horsham School District. In 2010, I was commissioned as Assistant Superintendent of that school district and continue to serve in this position. The District's mission statement notes: We view everyone as a 'Champion of Learning.' Our suburban Philadelphia school district of approximately 5,000 students is a forward-thinking, progressive educational organization with a rich history of academic excellence that we will strive to exceed as we move into the future. Although we take great pride in our rich traditions and current accomplishments, our principals, teachers, and staff members work diligently every day to improve and to provide programs that yield strong student performance and foster a caring environment. Our staff is committed to providing the best educational opportunities for all students, and we encourage parents to be involved."

Dr. Taylor's skills and learning make her fit in greatly with this plan.

In further describing her career, she spoke of valuable lessons she learned at GHS. "Being an alumna of the Philadelphia High School for Girls, I benefited greatly from the valuable educational experiences associated with my studies at this prestigious institution. Upon graduation, my goal was to excel in a career as an elementary school teacher and eventually an educational leader. After nearly three decades of serving in these capacities, along with earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from West Chester University, a Master of Education degree in Educational Administration from the Pennsylvania State University, and a Doctorate degree in Educational Leadership from Arcadia University, I credit the instructors at Girls' High for providing me with a shining example to follow. I observed them create multiple paths so that students of different



abilities, ethnicities, and economic status experienced equally appropriate ways to absorb, use, develop, and present skills and knowledge as part of the learning process. Therefore, as an Assistant Superintendent of Schools, I lead with love, promote a positive educational climate, make decisions with integrity, and always put children first."

Dr. Taylor is a true professional who is an active participant in local and national educational and professional organizations. She also works for the community in several service organizations, and is a board member of several of them. Among her awards are Woman of Substance and Style Award in 2014 and Philadelphia's

Most influential African Americans List of the *Philadelphia Tribune* in 2016.

We believe there are great things ahead for the administrators, teachers, students, and parents of the Hatboro-Horsham School District and for Dr. Monica Johnson Taylor as well!



# Our Alumnae Association Matters!!

Did you know that you can designate the Alumnae Association in your will or trust? Did you know that you can donate life insurance contracts, stocks, certain bonds, and/or mutual funds? These gifts may provide needed tax benefits for you, the donor, and help our Association promote and sustain its mission for many years to come. The state of the School District of Philadelphia was reviewed eloquently at the Annual Meeting/Luncheon. As we age, we all talk about leaving a legacy. This is your opportunity to do so for generations of women to come, as well as to help the school and the students as they battle the financial hardships they may be facing. If interested in helping or donating, please contact Joy Pollock at [jepollock@aol.com](mailto:jepollock@aol.com).

Please continue to send information if you or someone you know is serving or has served in our Armed Forces. Please email your news to [dorothyk08@aol.com](mailto:dorothyk08@aol.com).

Do you have news about a retired faculty member or are you a retired faculty member? Please email your news to [dorothyk08@aol.com](mailto:dorothyk08@aol.com).

We are very interested in receiving gift items for the Archives such as yearbooks, commencement programs, gym contest, concert, drama, or other memorabilia that will enhance and substantiate GHS history. Please email Dorothy G. Kapenstein at [dorothyk08@aol.com](mailto:dorothyk08@aol.com) or call her at 215-331-2681. Please do not send items directly to the school.

**What's New?** Send your news items and pictures to [dorothyk08@aol.com](mailto:dorothyk08@aol.com) or [communication@ghsalumnae.org](mailto:communication@ghsalumnae.org). GHS classmates and friends love to read the latest news about each other!

Do you want to enjoy the intangible spirit of the days at Girls' High? Would you want to have items that have the Girls' High name or logo imprinted on them? If so, the Alumnae Association can help. Please contact: [communication@ghsalumnae.org](mailto:communication@ghsalumnae.org) and you will be advised of which items are available for purchase. You can also go to our website to see items that are available to order. To visit our website, click [www.ghsalumnae.org](http://www.ghsalumnae.org).

Please join our Facebook group, The Alumnae Association of the Philadelphia High School for Girls. All social, no business! When you ask to join, please be sure that you have indicated your year and class somewhere on your Facebook page, and your name at graduation if it was different than our current name. While you do not have to be a member of the Alumnae Association to join the group, it is limited to alumnae and faculty.

## Editorial Board

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Ruth Brown, Copy Editor  
Dorothy Kapenstein, Features Writer

We look forward to hearing from you!



Don't forget to visit our website: <http://www.ghsalumnae.org/>



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Alumnae Association for Philadelphia HS for Girls

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