

## Thomas Walsh, Latest Westfielder Joins County's Superior Court

By THOMAS FORTUNATO and PAUL J. PEYTON  
 Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — Westfield resident Thomas Walsh was sworn in Friday afternoon as the newest judge of the state Superior Court in Elizabeth. Mr. Walsh was sworn in by Union County Assignment Judge Karen Cassidy in her chambers on the second floor of the county courthouse. He joins James Hely and Robert Kirsch as recent Westfield additions to the county bench.

Aside from Mr. Walsh's family, friends, and partners of his now-former law firm Triarsi, Betancourt

and Wukovits in Cranford, there was a large turnout of various lawyers, elected officials and judges from across the region.

"I'm thrilled to be back in public service to try and help people now by equitably applying the law," Judge Walsh told *The Westfield Leader*.

Judge Walsh has more than 20 years of legal experience. He started his career as an assistant prosecutor in Union County before moving on to private practice.

The state Senate confirmed Mr. Walsh's nomination to the bench on January 11. His appointment fills the vacancy created by the retirement of

Judge Edwin Alley. Judges in the state courts are mandated to retire when they reach the age of 70.

At Friday's ceremony, Assemblyman Jon Bramnick (LD-21, Westfield) said Judge Walsh would bring a "compassion and warmth that is so desperately needed" on the Union County bench.

Judge Walsh's former law partner, Joseph Triarsi, a relative of former Union County Superior Court Judge John Triarsi, further emphasized Judge Walsh's strength of character and devotion to the hectic job of being a private attorney.

"He knows what it's like to be in Union at nine [a.m.], Essex at eleven [a.m.] and Camden at two [p.m.]," Mr. Triarsi said.

Former Union County manager and ex-New Jersey Turnpike Authority executive director, Michael Lapolla of Westfield, worked with Judge Walsh 15 years ago in the county prosecutor's office.

"He is a lawyer's lawyer and a gentleman," Mr. Lapolla said.

A longtime family friend, Mr. Lapolla noted that back when Judge Walsh was an assistant prosecutor in Union County, he tried the first bias crime case in the state. The case involved three black high school girls who were repeatedly tormented and called racial slurs by a white man who would drive by their school every afternoon. Upon the man's conviction, the girls and their families were not only satisfied with Judge Walsh's devotion to upholding justice, but also believed that justice had been served, Mr. Lapolla said.

"He (Walsh) made sure they wouldn't become victims twice," Mr. Lapolla told *The Leader*. "He did an outstanding job and got a conviction" in what Mr. Lapolla described as an "extraordinary, difficult case."

Carol Jeney, president of the Union County Bar Association, said Judge Walsh is "going to be a great asset to the bench."

"Union County is lucky to have Judge Walsh filling one of the vacancies (on the Union County bench)," Ms. Jeney said. "He is a great lawyer. He is well respected by everyone." She also described him as "very personable" and "enthusiastic."

Senator Tom Kean, Jr. (LD-21, Westfield), the Senate minority leader in Trenton, said he was happy to support Mr. Walsh's nomination and, now, his "elevation to the bench."

"New Jersey's judicial system is touted as one of the best in the country and I am quite certain that Tom will follow in this fine tradition and will be a tremendous asset to the Union County Superior Court system," Senator Kean said in a statement.

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JOINING THE BENCH... Judge John Walsh of Westfield, the newest member of the state Superior Court, Union County bench, makes comments to his fellow judges, elected officials, family, friends and colleagues following his swearing-in ceremony last Friday at the Union County Courthouse in Elizabeth.

## Mr. Cummings Resigns After 20 Years on FW Planning Bd.

By SUZETTE F. STALKER  
 Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

FANWOOD — After 20 years of service on the Fanwood Planning Board, 17 of those years at the head of the dais as chairman, Greg Cummings resigned from the nine-member body last month.

"I'd been there for many, many years and I thought it was time to move on," Mr. Cummings told *The Westfield Leader* in an interview last Friday. "I thought it was time to turn it over to other people."

Mr. Cummings stepped down January 19, during the planning board's annual reorganization meeting. Former board vice-chairman, Jack Molenaar, who Mr. Cummings nominated to succeed him, is the new chairman. Dale Flowers is now vice-



Greg Cummings

chairman. The board usually meets twice monthly, on the third Monday and fourth Wednesday, in the council chambers at Fanwood Borough Hall.

A Fanwood resident for 21 years, Mr. Cummings retired for the second time last July after a 35-year career in sales and marketing. He was first drawn to community service in the borough while still a new resident — successfully working to save a historic local home from demolition. The house, known as "The Burton Hall Home," still stands on North Avenue opposite the Fanwood train station.

A developer was seeking to raze the



FUTURE PARKLAND... Union County has purchased the property at 370 Madison Hill Road in Clark, pictured above, currently occupied by a single-family home. The property, acquired for \$600,000, is located adjacent to St. Agnes Parish of Clark, and is earmarked for additional parkland.

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PROUD OF WIN NUMBER 500... Fans, including Westfield Mayor Andy Skibitsky, who is holding up the "5", celebrate January 30 after the Westfield High School wrestling team defeated Elizabeth, 45-22, in Elizabeth, to record the 500th win in the history of the program and the 100th win for head coach Glen Kurz.

David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader

## Westfield Council Promotes E-Alert System; COAH Discussed

By MICHAEL J. POLLACK  
 Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — Public Safety Committee Chairwoman JoAnn Neylan said Tuesday at the town council meeting that the town must promote its Instant E-Alert system, for which 800 people have so far signed up.

Whether it is to alert people to a rash of burglaries in a given area or to provide safety tips, the system, similar to the board of education's alert program, she said, would be used on a regular basis to give updates.

"Public safety will be my top priority," she said, repeating her sentiment from last week.

Third Ward Councilman Mark Ciarrocca suggested the town employ the E-Alert system to notify Memorial Pool members about 2010 signups. Recreation Commission Director Bruce Kaufmann gave a public service announcement in which he said all 2009 members should have received information about signups. Registration is ongoing through April 15. After that date, any available slots will be offered to those on a waiting list. Online signup will again be offered.

All crossing-guard posts have been renewed going forward, Ms. Neylan said. In the spring, police will collect data that will aid the committee in recommending where possible relocations or additions should occur.

In addition, Westfield renewed a one-year contract with The RBA

Group, Inc., of Morristown, to serve as an on-call traffic safety and engineering services consultant. The contract is not to exceed \$14,000.

The RBA Group's data collection was needed to further the new four-way stop at Boulevard and Park Street, which Ms. Neylan called a success. The group will now focus its attention at the intersection of South Chestnut Street and

Fourth Avenue, near Gumbert Park.

The council passed a resolution for final payment of the Sid Fay/Houlihan Municipal Park project. The artificial-turfed Sid Fay/Houlihan fields, used primarily for soccer and lacrosse, are located at the corner of Rahway Avenue and Lamberts Mill Road, across from St. Helen's Church.

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## Westfield Foundation Posts Newest Grant Recipients

WESTFIELD — The Westfield Foundation, a nonprofit foundation dedicated to promoting the betterment of Westfield and its surrounding communities, has announced its fourth-quarter grants and final year-end review. The Foundation granted more than \$247,000 to 36 programs and projects benefiting all segments of Westfield and neighboring communities in 2009.

The fourth-quarter grants totaled \$21,850. These grants will be used for such projects as after-school counseling for children, summer theater camp, wellness education programs and musical performances in Westfield. Recipients included Youth and Family Counseling Service, New Jersey Intergenerational Orchestra, Premier Stages (Kean University), Trinitas Health Foundation, Westfield Area "Y" and Furniture Assist.

The Westfield Foundation favors grants for programs or projects that focus primarily on the community of Westfield or groups serving the Westfield community. The areas of focus include education; the arts and other cultural activities; civic, health and human services; community development; and the conservation and preservation of historical resources.

Recipients for the year 2009 included The Alzheimer's Association, Autism Family Tours, CONTACT We Care, Emmanuel Cancer Foundation, Habitat for Humanity, Home First,

Jewish Family Services, Liam's Room, Occupational Center of Union County, Our House, Inc., Rahway River Association, Summer Youth Employment, SAGE Eldercare and the Westfield Neighborhood Council.

The board of trustees supports a diverse group of area organizations that are effective in preserving and protecting what makes living in Westfield and its surrounding communities unique. Grants awarded to these various organizations enhance and enrich the community. The Foundation strongly supports organizations that address positive community change in a constructive way.

The Westfield Foundation started with an initial donation of \$2,000 more than 35 years ago. The Foundation fund is professionally invested and the income generated is granted to carefully screened applicants throughout the year. The Foundation has distributed more than \$4 million since its inception. Tax-deductible donations made by local residents allow the Foundation to keep supporting organizations that directly benefit Westfield.

For more information about the Westfield Foundation or for those interested in making a contribution, contact Betsy Chance, executive director, at foundation@westfieldnj.com or (908) 233-9787. Information about the Foundation can be viewed online at thewestfieldfoundation.com.



PAST AND PRESENT... The Westfield Foundation, a nonprofit foundation whose mission is to promote the betterment of Westfield and its surrounding communities, has announced its fourth quarter grants and final year-end review. The foundation granted more than \$247,000 to 36 programs. The current and former presidents of the Westfield Foundation were present at the annual Cornerstone Breakfast held recently at the Echo Lake Country Club. Pictured, from left to right, are: front row, current president, Charles Kroloff; previous presidents, David Owens, Gail Cassidy, Michele Picou and Barbara Doyle Frantz; back row, Lee Hale and Gerry Glasser.

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