



PITTSBURGH WALK OF FAME

Celebrating Southwestern Pennsylvanians Who Have Left Their Mark on America



ANNUAL REPORT | 2024

OUR MISSION

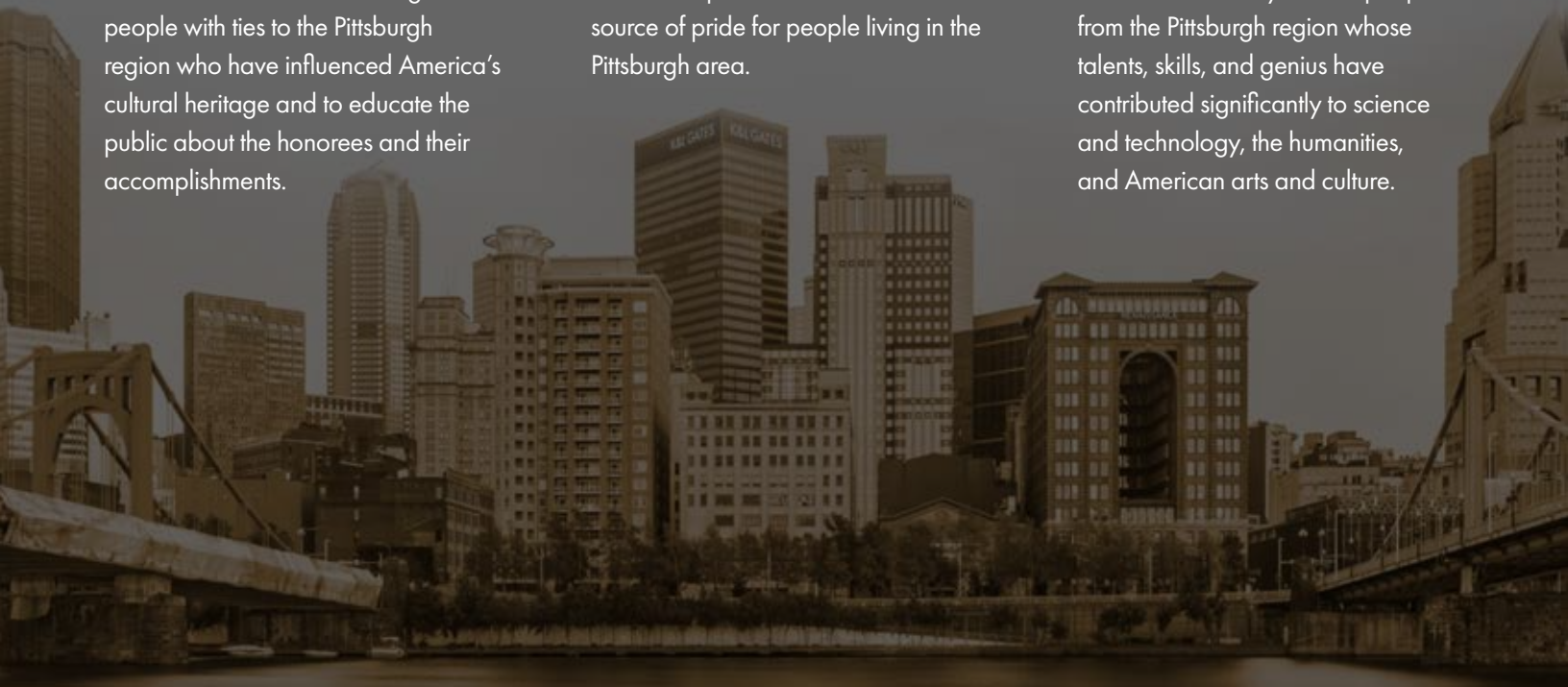
To create a landmark honoring people with ties to the Pittsburgh region who have influenced America's cultural heritage and to educate the public about the honorees and their accomplishments.

OUR VISION

To be a major tourist attraction and a source of pride for people living in the Pittsburgh area.

OUR VALUES

We value the many diverse people from the Pittsburgh region whose talents, skills, and genius have contributed significantly to science and technology, the humanities, and American arts and culture.






PITTSBURGH WALK OF FAME

pittsburghwalkoffame.org

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I've been envisioning a Pittsburgh Walk of Fame since I visited another city's walk of fame nearly twelve years ago. I left wondering, "How does Pittsburgh not have one of these?" And I was inspired to change that.

I'll admit, I didn't think it would take this long. It didn't help that a pandemic got in the way. Then I had to sell my business—I was a magazine publisher—because work was getting in the way. But 2024 was the year all the pieces finally started to fall into place, and here we are, an officially registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit filing our first annual report. I couldn't be more delighted.

Southwestern Pennsylvania has more than its fair share of people with ties to the region who have left their mark on America, and the Pittsburgh Walk of Fame will celebrate them with more than stars featuring their names. There will also be plaques profiling these individuals, noting their ties to our area, and describing their major accomplishments. And there will be a custom app to further enhance the experience. The Walk is envisioned as a major tourist attraction for visitors to Pittsburgh, a source of pride for people living in the area, and an educational experience for people of all ages—one that is open 24/7 and free of charge.

Certainly one of—if not the—highlight of the year was partnering with The Terminal in the Strip District to make its front sidewalk home to the forthcoming Pittsburgh Walk of Fame, and I am extremely grateful to everyone at McCaffery Interests who helped make that happen.

An equally big thank you goes to the amazing individuals who comprise the Pittsburgh Walk of Fame board of directors. They stepped up when asked to help bring my vision to life, and without them, nothing that happened this year would have been possible.

The Pittsburgh Walk of Fame is well on its way to becoming a reality, even with some big challenges still ahead. But 2024 will go down as the red-letter year when the path forward became clear and key first steps were taken.

Nancy Polinsky Johnson
Founder & Executive Director

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

Held Our First Board Meeting

February 9, 2024. The inaugural meeting of the Pittsburgh Walk of Fame Inc. board of directors took place over lunch. Officers were elected, bylaws were adopted, and a plan of action was approved.



Gained Nonprofit Status From the IRS

It became official in March: Pittsburgh Walk of Fame Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public charity that is tax-exempt, and all donations made to us are tax-deductible.

Enhanced Our Website

With a board in place and the ability to receive tax-deductible donations, we expanded and improved our website, pittsburghwalkoffame.org, to reflect our new status and capabilities.



Established a Selection Process

The board established that honorees on the Walk would be nominated by the public and voted on by a committee of community leaders from the region, with final determination coming from the board.



Secured a Location

On November 11, 2024, Pittsburgh Walk of Fame Inc. signed an agreement with the owners of the Strip District Terminal to locate the visitor attraction on The Terminal's front sidewalk.

Received a Warm Welcome From Our New Neighbors

Strip District Neighbors, the nonprofit organization representing Strip District residents and businesses, formally endorsed the Walk, saying, "We're very much in support of it."



Generated Media Buzz

A May announcement about the formation of our nonprofit organization and a November press release about The Terminal location both sparked significant media coverage and public interest.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

It was December 2015 when Nancy Polinsky Johnson first shared with me her vision for a Pittsburgh Walk of Fame, a sidewalk honoring people from the Pittsburgh area who have made notable contributions to our country—and even the world.

I loved the idea from the start, and later, when the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* published her op-ed piece “Give Pittsburgh a Walk to Remember” on the front page of its editorial section, I reached out to her and offered my help. I told her I was up for the

challenge and that this has to happen because Pittsburgh deserves it.

Fast forward to 2024. It started to happen.

I’m honored to serve as the founding president of Pittsburgh Walk of Fame Inc. and grateful for the tremendous progress this new nonprofit made in its first year. We assembled an outstanding board of directors, established our mission and vision, developed a game plan for moving forward, and secured an ideal location for this upcoming visitor attraction. I couldn’t be more excited about the Strip District Terminal.

The progress made in 2024 is thanks to the enthusiasm and support of many individuals and organizations. You’ll learn about them in this report. But there is still much work ahead, most notably raising the funds to bring the vision of a Pittsburgh Walk of Fame to reality.

In the years since I first offered to help build this Walk, I’ve become a grandfather. Now, in addition to working on this project because Pittsburgh deserves it, I’m also motivated by my grandchildren. In years to come, I look forward to strolling along the walkway with them, helping them to learn how people with ties to Southwestern Pennsylvania have left their mark on America. And I can’t wait to tell them, “I helped make this happen.”

You, too, can help make this happen by visiting pittsburghwalkoffame.org and donating what you can.

Take this walk with us. Make this walk with us.

Jim Rudolph

President

OUR FINANCIALS

January – December 2024

INCOME

Contributed Income	21,231.34
Total Income	\$21,231.34

EXPENSES

Accounting Fees	337.50
Bank Fees	44.67
Computer and Internet	163.62
Dues and Subscriptions	527.02
Insurance	322.00
Meals and Entertainment	110.11
Outside Services	4,000.00
Post Office Box	222.00
Printing and Copying	213.67
Supplies	19.94
Tax and Registration Fees	290.00
Website	<u>7,244.04</u>
Total Expenses	\$13,494.57

NET INCOME

\$7,736.77

Prepared by North Star Consulting Services

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The course ahead for the Pittsburgh Walk of Fame is being charted by this committed group of community leaders. They all have a deep appreciation for the Pittsburgh region and share an enthusiasm for celebrating highly talented Southwestern Pennsylvanians who have left their mark on America.

Jim Rudolph, president

An entrepreneur and developer, formerly with McKnight Realty Partners, he has extensive experience as both a franchisor and a franchisee in the food and beverage industry. Jim is involved in numerous philanthropic causes.

Tripp Clarke, vice-president

Co-founder and former co-owner of the local marketing agency Blink, he has also sat on a number of nonprofit boards. In addition, Tripp co-authored *Pittsburgh Born, Pittsburgh Bred*, a book highlighting 500 noteworthy people who have called Pittsburgh home.

Michael Goldstein, treasurer

CFO of Walnut Capital, he has also been a founding board member and president or treasurer of several local nonprofits, including Dress for Success Pittsburgh, Bike Share Pittsburgh, and Carriage House Children’s Center. Michael is a licensed CPA and an attorney.

Geraldine “Gerri” Jones, secretary

Retired president of California University of Pennsylvania—the first woman and person of color to hold that position—she spent 46 years in education. Gerri sits on several boards, including Adagio Health, the Washington County Community Foundation, and LeMoyné Community Center.

Kenya T. Boswell

— Senior Vice President, Community Affairs at Highmark Health, she previously served as the director of global impact citizenship at BNY Mellon, as well as president for BNY Mellon Foundation of Southwestern Pennsylvania. She sits on numerous nonprofit boards.

Diana Bucco – President of The Buhl Foundation and former president of The Forbes Fund. She launched the Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership and was the founding executive director of the Coro Center for Civic Leadership and The Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Joel Burstein – CEO and founder of BEAM Collaborative, an advisory firm dedicated to expanding local minority-owned businesses. His expertise comes from 12 years as a manager at Raymond James. He also sits on other boards, including the African American Chamber of Commerce of Western PA.

Hilda Pang Fu – Founder and president of Luminari, a nonprofit program for teens, with a mission of broadening minds and promoting community engagement. She also founded Pittsburgh Regional Champions and served as director of external relations at University of Pittsburgh Health Sciences.

Martha “Mardi” Isler – Retired from a public policy career focused on early childhood education, she is now a community volunteer and has held leadership roles for the Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition, Allies for Children, Uncover Squirrel Hill, and Tree Pittsburgh, among others.

Rick Sebak – Public television producer, writer, and on-air host, he has become Pittsburgh’s premiere storyteller. During his 38 years at WQED, Rick has chronicled local and regional history and highlighted numerous people in a series of popular and engaging documentaries.

Dean Welch – As vice president of Pittsburgh operations for the development company McCaffery, he oversees The Terminal, home to the upcoming Pittsburgh Walk of Fame. Dean holds a Pennsylvania Managing Broker’s license and sits on the Community Development Review Committee for Strip District Neighbors.

Contact Us

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FINDING A HOME

A key turning point for Pittsburgh Walk of Fame Inc. came in the spring of 2024, when it entered into talks with Chicago-based McCaffery Interests about locating the Walk at The Terminal in the Strip District. In partnership with the Urban Redevelopment Authority and the City of Pittsburgh, McCaffery completed a massive renovation of the five-block-long former produce terminal in 2019, transforming the interior while preserving and restoring the historic façade and framework, which date back to 1926. Today, more than two dozen tenants—most of them locally owned—provide a variety of opportunities for dining, shopping, entertainment, and more along Smallman Street, from 16th to 21st streets.

Prior to engaging in discussions with The Terminal, a Pittsburgh Walk of Fame site-selection committee had carefully considered 20 sites within Downtown, the North Shore, the Strip District, Mount Washington, and Station Square. The committee visited each site in 2019 and rated them all, using criteria that considered 14 critical factors ranging from the sidewalk material and infrastructure beneath to transit accessibility and foot traffic. The Terminal ranked number one among the private properties that were considered. Its central location in the bustling Strip District, iconic legacy, and extensive length made it an ideal site for the Walk.

In November 2024, Pittsburgh Walk of Fame Inc. signed an agreement with McCaffery to establish the Walk at The Terminal, and both parties are moving forward with shared enthusiasm and a spirit of partnership.

THANK YOU!

To Our Volunteers...

who put in the hours, made the phone calls, and did the research necessary to build the data base we needed to launch our efforts: Elyse Eichner, Ellen Terri Kaplan Goldstein, Susie Gross, Elaine Miller, Todd Miller, and Elaine Stept.

To Our Donors...

whose financial support made it possible for us to operate all year: Kenneth W. Bell, Joanna Berens, Kenya Boswell, Diana Bucco, The Buhl Foundation, Tripp Clarke, Natalie Coccagno, Amy and Gary Dubin, Hilda Pang Fu, Ellen Terri Kaplan Goldstein, Michael Goldstein, Susie and Don Gross, Highmark Health, Martha Isler, Nancy and David Johnson, Geraldine Jones, James and Louisa Rudolph, and Rick Sebak.

To Blink...

the Sharpsburg-based creative services agency that designed our logo and created and maintains our beautiful website. They swathed us in Black & Gold and burnished everything with a historical touch that feels just right. Where would we have been this year without Phil Pagliari, Terri Petras, and Alex Mysels? Also, a big shout-out to the Blink founders, who embraced the Pittsburgh Walk of Fame from the start: Tim McLaughlin and Tripp Clarke.

To Strassburger McKenna Gutnick & Gefsky...

the Downtown Pittsburgh law firm from which real estate attorney Jeremy P. Rudkin and his associate Trevor N. Handlovitch were heaven-sent to help Pittsburgh Walk of Fame Inc. secure a sidewalk to call home. Their thoroughness and attention to detail are matched by their enthusiasm for our vision and their willingness to help.

To Leech Tishman...

where intellectual property expert Michael D. Lazzara and his fellow attorney William A. Buck are law partners who believe in giving back—and watching our back. From their Golden Triangle offices, they offered advice and guidance about what elements we'll be able to use to highlight the achievements of the honorees on the Walk.

To Matthews Architectural Products...

which has been manufacturing bronze memorial pieces in Pittsburgh since 1850 and has become the largest bronze foundry in North America. Company vice-president Samuel Liberto and key account manager Eric Resch have entered into this project with enthusiasm and a sense of teamwork to ensure that the manufacturing, installation, and maintenance of the bronze markers are all done to the highest of standards.

And To Desmone...

where architect Chip Desmone is carrying on the family business and continuing its tradition of great design from a striking Lawrenceville studio. He and designer Erik Frantz have begun outlining a plan for installing bronze stars and narrative plaques in The Terminal sidewalk over the upcoming years—and they tell us we're good to go for at least 150 honorees.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

We want to jump-start the Pittsburgh Walk of Fame by inducting 10 honorees in each of the Walk's first three years, making it a substantial visitor attraction in a relatively short time. But that's an expensive proposition.

You can help with a contribution of any amount. Visit pittsburghwalkoffame.org and click on Donate. Or, send a check made payable to Pittsburgh Walk of Fame to P.O. Box 8127, Pittsburgh, PA, 15217.

Every dollar takes us another step closer.