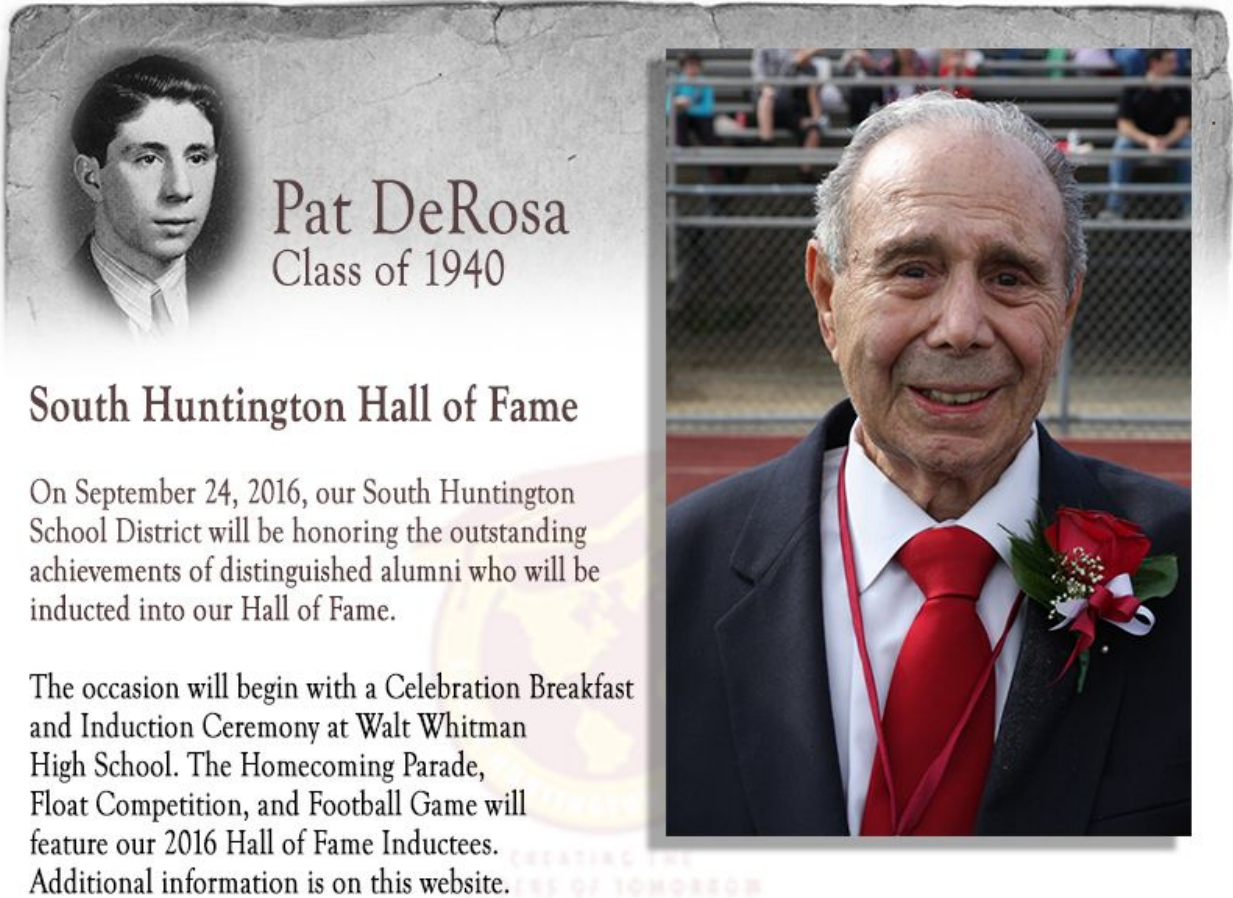


## Introducing Hall of Fame Inductee Pat DeRosa



**Pat DeRosa**  
Class of 1940

**South Huntington Hall of Fame**

On September 24, 2016, our South Huntington School District will be honoring the outstanding achievements of distinguished alumni who will be inducted into our Hall of Fame.

The occasion will begin with a Celebration Breakfast and Induction Ceremony at Walt Whitman High School. The Homecoming Parade, Float Competition, and Football Game will feature our 2016 Hall of Fame Inductees. Additional information is on this website.

"I was born in Brooklyn," Mr. DeRosa, who will turn 95 on Dec. 6, said. "When I was 12, my mother noticed I had an interest in music and decided to take me to the Bowery, where she bought me an alto saxophone."

That saxophone, and a tenor sax acquired later, has taken Mr. DeRosa across the country and brought him face to face with many of the 20th century's legends of entertainment, including Lana Turner, Marlene Dietrich, Barbara Stanwyck, Tyrone Power, and Errol Flynn.

Working for the Grumman Aircraft Engineering Corporation in Bethpage, where he built aircraft parts, he was granted a few deferments before being drafted into the Army Air Forces. He was sent to Greensboro, N.C., for basic training, "after which I joined the concert band as well as the 20-piece dance band," he said.

In the war's aftermath, Mr. DeRosa was recommended for work at the Latin Quarter, the famed Times Square nightclub opened by Barbara Walters's father, Lou Walters. While working there, he received a call from the bandleader Tommy

Tucker's manager. "They needed a sax player immediately," Mr. DeRosa said. The musician set out for Chicago, and from there to gigs across the country as the band made its way to Hollywood, where it would appear in a film biography of the Tommy Tucker Orchestra.

In Hollywood, he met the stars of the era, also finding himself on the set with Abbott and Costello. Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, he said, took him to lunch. He performed with the popular bandleaders Boyd Raeburn, Lionel Hampton, Tex Beneke, and Percy Faith. He has also played with the pianist Dick Hyman, and with another Montauk resident, the harmonica player Toots Thielemans.

"The Big Band era was dying out," Mr. DeRosa said, "so I went to Manhattan School of Music for my bachelor's and master's degrees." He began teaching in 1954, initially in the Huntington School District and then in South Huntington, while continuing a professional career that took him to Manhattan venues including the Plaza Hotel, the Waldorf-Astoria, and the Paramount Theater.

In Huntington in the 1960s, the owner of a local music store told him that the legendary jazz musician John Coltrane was looking for a duet partner. They played together for a year or two, Mr. DeRosa remembered, until Mr. Coltrane's untimely death, at Huntington Hospital, at age 40 in 1967. He also performed at President Richard Nixon's inaugural ball, and in the 1970s served as master of ceremonies for many memorable jazz concerts at Gosman's Dock in Montauk.

Mr. DeRosa retired from teaching in 1978 but continued to play professionally. Thirty-eight years later, he continues to blow that saxophone on stages across Long Island.

\*Updated from The East Hampton Star Newspaper: Article 'Still Swingin' by Christopher Walsh, September 9, 2014