

## **Dr. Peter A. Spina '56**

Peter A. Spina graduated from Bay Shore High School in 1956 after his family relocated to Brightwaters. A baseball pitcher of some ability, he heeded the advice of Bayshore's Director of Guidance, Douglas Frelick, and enrolled in Frelick's alma mater Albany State Teachers College from which he received the A.B. and M.A. degrees in English and Speech. He starred at baseball at Albany State receiving regional and national recognition and some of his pitching records are extant even after sixty years. He was elected to the University at Albany's Athletic Hall of Fame. Peter returned to Long Island to teach in West Islip and Farmingdale and played in the semi-professional baseball leagues in Suffolk and Nassau. His summer employment as a greenscutter at Southward Ho Country Club yielded a friendship with Paul K. Roth, Sr. of Brightwaters who was a Trustee of the brand new Suffolk Community College. On Mr. Roth's recommendation, Peter was hired at Suffolk as an instructor and, during an eighteen year career there, he worked his way up the academic ladder rising to the position of Professor and Executive Dean at the College's largest campus. Along the way Peter completed the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) at New York University where he also received their Founder's Award.

In 1981 Peter was named President of Monroe Community College in Rochester, upstate's largest community college. For almost two decades he led MCC during its period of greatest growth more than doubling its enrollment and presiding over an institution generally regarded as one of the finest community colleges in the nation. He served on many professional, community and corporate boards, received the Thomas Peters Leadership award, and was named one of the fifty top transformational leaders at American community colleges. He was named Outstanding CEO by the American Community College Trustees Association, was elected Commissioner of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and received the University at Albany's Outstanding Alumnus Award. Peter was a sought after guest lecturer on fundraising and college operations at universities like Harvard, Texas, Michigan and Cornell to name a few. He received the first ever Lifetime Member designation of the American Association of Community Colleges.

In 2000, Peter switched gears and was hired by Cornell University and SUNY to develop and supervise a new research and professional development institute for community colleges. After several years at Cornell, he was asked by the Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce to bring his expertise in economic development and technology back to Rochester and serve as the President of High Technology of Rochester, Inc., a consortium which built and operated a technology business incubator there. He missed the academic environment, however, and returned to campus life serving as President of Thomas Nelson Community College in Hampton and Williamsburg, Virginia. Following a successful stint there, Peter was tapped by the SUNY Chancellor to return to New York to lead the State University of New York Institute of Technology in Utica. In four years as President there, he presided over an undergraduate and graduate institution which has morphed into a high powered technology focused college with some unique academic programs.

After almost half a century of academic work including being president of three colleges, Peter decided to retire and play golf. He enjoyed the leisurely life but couldn't resist the challenge of being president one more time at one of the nation's largest community colleges, Tidewater Community College in Norfolk and Virginia Beach Virginia. This was his last academic role and in 2012 Peter concluded his working career and returned to Rochester where he now resides. He is proud to follow his brother David A. Spina, retired CEO of the prestigious State Street Bank of Boston, to membership in the Bay Shore High School Alumni Hall of Fame.