

Watkins Glen High School
2019 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Steve Rondinaro – Class of 1972
DISTINGUISHED IN THE FIELD OF BROADCAST JOURNALISM

Steve Rondinaro has forged a long and distinguished career in broadcasting and public relations that has taken him across the country and overseas. He started in radio professionally at the age of 15 at WGMF, our hometown radio station. To quote Steve “It was love at first mic!” He quickly became a local personality and in July of 1973, helped keep the station on the air around-the-clock reporting on the local emergency evolving with the Summer Jam concert.

Steve’s move to television came during his college years at Geneseo, when he began reporting at WENY, Elmira and WROC, Rochester. A 1979 move to Florida found him in the role of lead anchor for 17 years with Miami and Orlando TV stations. He covered the first space shuttle launch from the Kennedy Space Center in 1981, the Miami riots of the early 80’s, the unrest in war-torn Beirut, Lebanon in 1983 (earning him the AP Best Documentary Award for “Our Boys in Beirut”), assignments in Europe, Central American jungles and many others.

For his work in the field, Steve was nominated for 14 Emmy Awards and won four. He has won six Telly Awards and numerous other journalism honors. His wide-ranging interviews run the gamut: Ronald Reagan, Paul McCartney, John Glenn, Bill Clinton, Ted Williams and many others!

Starting out on PBS and then moving to ESPN, Steve has hosted, for 41 years and counting, the Drum Corps International World Championship broadcasts. He currently hosts two DCI cinecasts a year, live, in 600+ movie theaters across the country. In 2013 Steve was proudly inducted into the Drum Corps International Hall of Fame. To quote Steve again, “A tremendous honor for someone who nurtured his love of the activity as a charter member of Watkins Glen’s Squires Jr. Drum & Bugle Corps!” Steve marched with the Squires from the age of 10 and helped run the corps from 1975-1979.

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While in Miami in the 80's, Steve helped reorganize the Florida Vanguards into a new corps, called Florida Wave, a group that went on to win the DCI's A-Class Championship title in 1984. To quote Jeff Bridges, a Florida Wave staffer, "Steve's unselfish acts helped shape the lives of hundreds of young adults who would never have had the chance if not for what he did and what he gave." Steve's love and passion for the Watkins' Squire's Jr. Drum & Bugle Corps of his youth produced far reaching effects since his graduation 47 years ago!

Although most of Steve Rondinaro's distinguished career has taken him far from Watkins Glen, his hometown roots remain firmly planted. His family ties remain strong and as recently as October 2018 he volunteered with Schuyler County ARC to create a video to support their ambitious fundraising campaign. The video was a powerful first person testimonial citing all that ARC has meant to the Rondinaro family.

The Watkins Glen High School Alumni Association is indeed proud to recognize and honor Steve Rondinaro, Distinguished in the Field of Broadcast Journalism, as our 2019 Distinguished Alumnus.