



QuEd up for Education

People and programs impacting our QCSD community

Strayer students hear from Navy admiral

Linda Wackerman, who has been a Navy pilot for 32 years, received the Neamand Award from the Quakertown Community Education Foundation.

By Gary Weckselblatt

When she was 13 years old, Linda Wackerman was given a free flight lesson.

As she sat on phone books and cushions that allowed her to view the sky from the cockpit window, the young teen fell in love with being a pilot.

"I decided then and there that's what I wanted to do," she said.

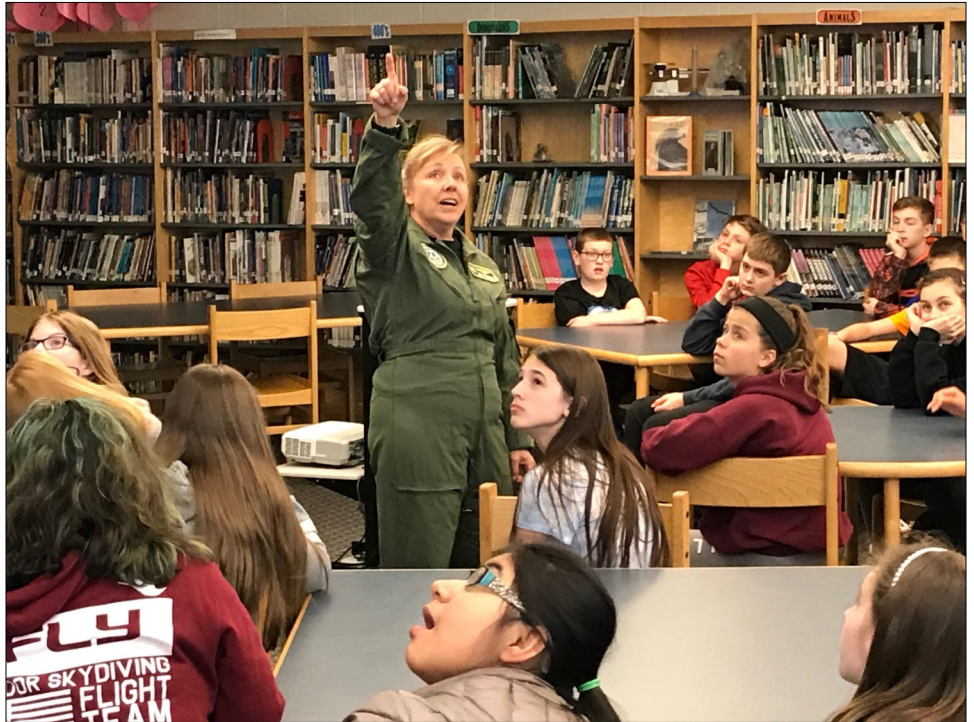
Wackerman told that story to Strayer Middle School seventh graders, many of them the same age she was when she chose what she described as a "fun and adventurous" profession.

She is a Navy rear admiral, having spent 32 as a Navy pilot, including the last 18½ years in the reserves. She also flies for American Airlines.

"I wouldn't change a day," she said. "I would do it all over again."

Wackerman, who has four children, lives in Quakertown. Her two daughters, Carly and Maddie, graduated from the Quakertown Community School District. Carly is an engineer while Maddie, like mom, is a Navy pilot. Son Ben is a QCHS senior who will be attending Schreyer Honors College at Penn State next year. Jacob, who aspires to become a Navy SEAL, is a student at Strayer.

The Quakertown Community Education Foundation invited Wackerman to speak about "Women in Leadership," as part of its annual series in honor of former social studies teacher Anna Ne-



Navy Rear Admiral Linda Wackerman has the attention of Strayer Middle School students during Thursday's discussion about "Women in Leadership." Below, Wackerman is given the Neamand Award by David Tyson of the Quakertown Community Education Foundation. The award recognizes the accomplishments of Neamand, a former teacher who touched the lives of local students for several decades.

amand. The Neamand Award recognizes the accomplishments of its namesake, who touched the lives of local students for several decades.

When high school graduating classes were smaller prior to the 1950s, she taught all of the high school seniors in their capstone course in social studies. The course was entitled "Problems of Democracy," and integrated all of the social science disciplines in the study of contemporary problems.

Neamand was a role model for her students and colleagues. She was chairwoman of the social studies department and served as the advisor to high school classes on a regular ba-



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ADMIRAL

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sis. During the summer she worked in the recreation program sponsored by the school district and Quakertown Borough.

The QCEF initiated the award in her name following her death in 2004. The Neaman Award is intended to recognize an individual who has made important contributions in a field related to the social studies.

Wackerman said when she told her school counselor of her love of flying, he said "So you want to be a flight attendant? I said 'no, no no.' That was in the 1980s."

Asked by a student how her day was going, she said "I love this. I love being able to talk to the future of our country. You need to understand that and take that responsibility. ... We need you to become be a part of our service."

According to her [Navy bio](#), Wackerman was designated a naval aviator in October 1987. Her active duty tours include Helicopter Combat Support Squadron (HC) 3, the Fleet Replacement Squadron; and fleet tour assignment with HC-11, Naval Air Station (NAS) North Island, California flying the H-46D and deployed to Western Pacific.

Wackerman was assigned to shore duty with Training Squadron 6 and the Instructor Training Unit, NAS Whiting Field, Florida instructing flight training in the T-34C Mentor. Her full time support officer duty assignments were both at NAS Joint Reserve Base (JRB) Willow Grove, Pennsylvania,

Following her sessions with seventh-grade classes, Navy Rear Admiral Linda Wackerman enjoyed lunch and a discussion with students in the Strayer Middle School library.



Navy Rear Admiral Linda Wackerman had students try on helmets during her presentation.

as the assistant reserve program director for 2,300 reservists flying the UC-12B; and Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VR) 52, flying the C-9B/DC-9 providing world-wide fleet logistics support.

Wackerman became a selected Reservist (SELRES) with VR-52 in June 1999 where she became the commanding officer of VR-52 and mobilized for the Global War on Terror. Subsequent SELRES tours include training officer of Navy Reserve Capabilities Assessment Unit, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV N8) in the Pentagon, Washington, D.C.

She served as the commanding officer for Navy Reserve (NR), Commander, Navy Region Mid Atlantic, Region Op-

erations Center in Norfolk. She then served as commanding officer, Navy Reserve, chief of Naval Operations, Operations and Planning N3/N5 unit in the Pentagon, Washington, D.C. She was assigned as Navy emergency preparedness liaison officer (NEPLO) for the state of Pennsylvania and deputy commander for the NEPLO Program at commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC). She then served as the commander, NR CNIC NEPLO leading the NEPLO Program; and chief of staff for the Washington Navy Yard Shooting.

Her flag assignments include Reserve deputy director, Assessment Division, OPNAV N81 and deputy, Naval Inspector General. She is currently assigned deputy commander, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command and U.S. 4th Fleet.

Wackerman's personal military decorations include the Legion of Merit (three awards), Meritorious Service Medal (three awards), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (two awards), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (three awards). She was selected as 2005 Federal Women and 1995 NAS JRB Willow Grove Women of the Year. Wackerman has accumulated over 5,400 flight hours in numerous naval aircraft.

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