



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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RETIRED DISTRICT SOCIAL WORKER PUBLISHES BOOK OF PROFILES OF NOTABLE PATERSONIANS

Skip Van Rensalier's "Up Close And Paterson" includes stories of 35 Paterson people

Photos attached: see end of the release for details.

PATERSON – When Dale “Skip” Van Rensalier retired in 2010, he capped off 37 years of working as a social worker for Paterson Public Schools. But he didn’t stop working.

Van Rensalier soon took a job as a substitute teacher at the Norman S. Weir School, where he was a trusted and reliable colleague for his longtime friend, Principal Grace Giglio, until the pandemic closed the district’s school buildings. But he didn’t stop working.

It was during the pandemic shutdown when Van Rensalier began working on what he calls a labor of love that has now become his new book, [*Up Close And Paterson*](#). The 35 people profiled in the book include those who may be considered household names among Patersonians like vaudevillian-style entertainer “Uncle” Floyd Vivino, William James Pascrell, Jr., a former mayor who has been the city’s congressman since 1997, and Nelida “Nellie” Pou, who has been a stalwart fighter for Paterson as the city’s state senator for many years. There are elders of the community like educator Alonzo “Tambua” Moody, former Councilwoman Veradene “Vera” Ames, and the recently deceased patriarch of Paterson youth sports, Ray Lyde, Sr. And there are younger voices including tutoring entrepreneur Shanikwa Lemon and educator/musician Scott Cumberbatch.

“Mr. Van Rensalier has done a tremendous service for the City of Paterson by capturing these profiles of so many different people in the city’s richly diverse community,” said Superintendent of Schools Eileen F. Shafer. “Anyone who wants a crash course on the people of Paterson will get it in *Up Close And Paterson*. I also think that this is a project that can go far into the future, given that there are so many people in Paterson. I look forward to the publications of *Up Close And Paterson*, volume 2, volume 3, and so on.”

“There is no denying the love and the pride this man has for the City of Paterson,” said Norman S. Weir School Principal Grace Giglio at a special book signing the school hosted on Friday. At the event, Van Rensalier gave signed copies of the book to staff and students.

“People were very candid,” said Van Rensalier as he spoke to the gathering in the school’s library. “These people’s lives, when they were growing up, were very similar to yours,” he said to the young students. “People had a lot of problems, but now they’re successful.”

He said the title, *Up Close And Paterson*, was a nod to Mayor Andre Sayegh’s 2018 “One Paterson” campaign platform.

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Anna Pelosi Adams, an educational consultant who retired from the district after a career as a teacher coach and administrator, said that Van Rensalier worked very closely with his profile subjects.

“When you read the book, you’ll see that the style is very conversational,” Adams said.

He interviewed everyone twice at the A.M.E. Zion Baptist Church, making audio recordings of each interview, Adams said. He allowed his subjects to review his synopses of the interviews, giving his subjects the opportunity to reel in some of their candor if they wanted. Only a handful did, Van Rensalier said.

Photo 1: Skip Van Rensalier

Photo 2: Van Rensalier fist bumps an NSW student after signing a copy of his book for him.

Photo 3: Van Rensalier with Superintendent Shafer

Photo 4: Van Rensalier with Principal Giglio

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