



BHC Awardee: Caroline Hardart and Her Story

By: Grace Heraty

On June 12, 2026, at the Bronxville High School Awards Ceremony, Caroline Hardart earned the Bronxville Historical Conservancy Award. This honor is given to a senior who maintains exceptional academic standing, demonstrates intellectual curiosity through independent research projects, actively participates in history-related extracurricular activities, and may express a strong interest in pursuing higher education in history, political science, or related fields.

Caroline plans to attend Notre Dame University this fall, where she intends to major in political science and study public policy. “Public Policy is also something I’m really interested in, I have two parents who are doctors, and that really weaves my love of history with medicine”.

Caroline explained that the reason she believes history is so critical to study stems from the insight and context that it provides for current events and the different issues we see in the world today. She loves to be informed on the topic she is discussing, and having the knowledge to be passionate about it. She also said history gives you tools for forming your own opinions and making your own decisions: “Rather than telling you what to think, history shapes how to think”.

At a young age, Caroline gravitated towards history, enjoying trips to various museums with her family. As she progressed to high school, Mrs. Dana Landesman (history teacher) played a major role in shaping her drive for the subject. “She was so passionate and made history fun. Having a role model so involved and interested in what she does definitely had an impact on me”.

Caroline also explained that AP World History was one of her favorite classes, which was taught by Mrs. Landesman. Specifically, she admired the different themes and patterns that encompassed vastly different groups, cultures, and nations over time. AP U.S. Government, taught by Mr. Martin Patmos, was another class that Caroline loved. The timing of the course lines up with spring of senior year, educating students who are turning 18 as they prepare to become more involved politically.

In her sophomore year, Caroline worked with two of her friends, Louise Jacobs and Virginia Shah, on a National History Day project. This is assigned to freshman and sophomores at the Bronxville School, and it gives students the opportunity to present their historical research. The theme for Caroline's group in 2024, was “Turning Points in History”.

Caroline, Virginia, and Louise built an exhibit that focused on Caroline’s great-grandfather Frank Hardart, and his friend Joseph Horn. As business partners, they opened the first automat in Philadelphia, and expanded to New York City, naming it Horn & Hardart. The automat was an affordable self-serve restaurant, famous for its coffee and inclusivity. “It was really big in the 1920s when the U.S. wasn’t very

open to people from different walks of life... the automat opened doors to people coming from Ellis Island, who were all of different races and socioeconomic groups”.

The automat cultivated a welcoming atmosphere in the presence of discrimination, representing a turning point in history. Caroline also explained the importance of the affordability of the restaurant when the economy was failing, further contributing to the inclusive nature that the automat provided.

Following the school-wide competition in Bronxville, Caroline's group advanced to the regional, then state, and lastly the national level of the NHD competition. This was a major accomplishment, and their group was accompanied and aided by Mrs. Landesman, Ms. Eva Gambino, and Mr. Patmos, who are all Bronxville history teachers.

Caroline, Louise, and Virginia were invited to present at the Smithsonian in Washington D.C., surrounded by other high-achieving student-research projects. Caroline said this was an amazing experience, and teachers from the Bronxville History department came to show their support for the group at the presentation.

Caroline's story demonstrates how passionate Bronxville history teachers can inspire students to explore the past in meaningful ways. Her dedication and success show the impact that curiosity, hard work, and great mentorship can have on students. The BHC Award will continue to recognize students like Caroline who are committed to learning from history and sharing its stories.

