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Simon & Schuster Editor-in-Chief Marysue Rucci to Speak Sunday

Author : David Gurliacci

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Marysue Rucci recalled the day her second-grade teacher told the class to write a story based on the idea that they were just six inches tall.

Sitting in beloved teacher Babs Myers's classroom at Center School—located across Maple Street from New Canaan Library, razed following the 1982-83 school year to become a parking lot—Rucci took the assignment to heart.

“I just remember writing and writing, and she let us go as long as we wanted,” she said.

Her story “Six Inches Tall” ended up 16 pages long.

Her career in fiction didn't stop there.

On Sunday, the 1988 New Canaan High School graduate, now vice president and editor-in-chief of Simon &

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Schuster, will return to her hometown—to the library, steps from “Center School Parking Lot”—to deliver a talk in a popular series that hosts some of the business world’s most successful and knowledgeable people.

The annual “[Conversations with Business Leaders](#)” lecture starts at 4 p.m. (registration is required).

“I’m excited and nervous,” Rucci said of her presentation. “Some of these people have known me since before I was school age, so there’s a little bit of pressure there. But I also am thrilled that people are interested.”

The public has good reason to be interested. At Simon & Schuster, Rucci oversees the storied company’s impressive fiction program while also editing the roughly 30 to 35 novels it puts out each year, about one quarter of its total list.

She arrived at the position in 2012, nearly 20 years after entering the field. She graduated from Northwestern University as one of 12 students in her year accepted to its English-Creative Writing program before landing a job with HarperCollins in 1995. She would go on to work for Scribner, Villard (Random House,) and Putnam (Penguin.)

“I always loved books,” Rucci told the *New Canaanite*. “I was reading early, but Center School was really instrumental for me.”

Some of the first and most influential New Canaan teachers to nurture her interest in fiction included Rucci’s first grade teacher at Center School, Mary-Ellen McDonald, as well as Myers and Hazel Hobbs, a [recently retired](#) Board of Education member who taught a special writing program.

Rucci would progress through Saxe Middle School and NCHS, where she served as editor of the Spectator Literary Magazine and received the Brown Book Award for Excellence in English.

Now a Manhattan resident, she has worked with high-profile writers such as Shonda Rhimes, Hunter S. Thompson and Nelson DeMille.

On Sunday, she plans to address topics from her career path to the key to bestsellers and even rumors of the downfall of the publishing industry.

Above all, Rucci said, she’s looking forward to returning to her hometown.

“It’s really fun to get to share my life with people who I care about and people who were formative in my career,” she said.

Asked for summer reading recommendations, Rucci said “Normal People” by Sally Rooney, “The Pioneer” by David McCullough, and “The Dearly Beloved” by Cara Wall, which will be released in August.