

The magazine of Montclair State University

# MONTCLAIR

Spring/Summer 2019



**EOF: A BRIDGE  
TO SUCCESS**

# Changemakers

**FOR 50 YEARS**



**THE BIG PICTURE**

Music major Lisbelkis Santana of Union City, New Jersey, sings the National Anthem at the May 24, 2019, Undergraduate Commencement ceremony at Prudential Center in Newark. The University graduated a total of 5,235 graduates in three ceremonies in 2019.



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Juggling = creative collaboration of art + science



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*Education Opportunity Fund Scholar and graduate Shantelle Jones is among the 118 EOF graduates for 2019, a year in which EOF celebrated its 50th Anniversary at Montclair State and the thousands of students it has helped to succeed.*



# MONTCLAIR

The magazine of Montclair State University

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

This time of year we are vividly reminded of the importance of our mission, as we cheer on the latest 5,235 Montclair State graduates as they embark on the next stage of their lives, amply prepared and filled with the desire to make our world a better place.

At the heart of our charge as a leading public university is our commitment to serve students who reflect the full diversity of our society, without respect to their economic circumstances. As you will see from our cover story, Montclair State has long supported the state's Educational Opportunity Fund, which recently commemorated its 50th anniversary. EOF has been vital in our mission, enabling us to recruit and enroll a highly motivated, diverse community of scholars and ensuring that countless graduates through the years were able to reach their goal of attaining a college degree.

Another celebratory milestone you will read about in this issue is the University's designation this year by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education as a Research 2 doctoral institution – high research activity – reflecting the expansive scope and depth of research in which our students and faculty are engaged and demonstrating the University's swift ascent toward becoming a dynamic and comprehensive research university. Among these pages you will see how both our commitment to high research activity and to our EOF participants elevate the educational experience for all of our students by helping them prepare for future success.

You will also read of the alarming reality many students face in the pursuit of their degrees: a national epidemic of food insecurity on college campuses. Montclair State has been leading the way in tackling this challenge with our food pantry, community garden and other efforts to help students in need concentrate on their studies without worrying about their next meal. We are grateful to all those who assist us in meeting the needs of our students, and I want to express particular gratitude to Inserra Supermarkets and its Chairman and CEO Lawrence R. Inserra Jr., who was honored at our Annual Scholarship Dinner for his commitment to serving the community and benefitting our students.

I am deeply grateful that with all of your generous support of our Soar campaign, we are close to meeting our historic fundraising goal of \$75 million. Indeed, Montclair State and our students are soaring, and I thank you for helping us both us and them to realize our potential.

Susan A. Cole

# FEEDBACK

Enjoy the magazine?  
Have a story idea for us?  
We want to hear from you.

Email us at [editor@montclair.edu](mailto:editor@montclair.edu).  
(We reserve the right to edit letters.)



## LETTERS, TWEETS AND POSTS



To the editor:

2019 marks the 70th year of operation for Montclair State's New Jersey School of Conservation (SOC) – the oldest and largest environmental education center in the Western Hemisphere. Throughout its history, the 240-acre field station in Stokes State Forest has provided the students with innumerable environmental-based research and education opportunities.

On October 12, 2019, The Friends of the NJ School of Conservation, in collaboration with SOC staff, will sponsor a weekend program at the SOC to celebrate the anniversary. We hope that many alumni will join us and help us dedicate a memorial to longtime director, John J. Kirk.

Details will be posted on the Friends of the NJ School of Conservation website at [friendsofnjsoc.org](http://friendsofnjsoc.org) and its Facebook page. We hope *Montclair* magazine can help us reach some of the many students and faculty members who've experienced the unique learning opportunities offered by the SOC and help them find their way back, if only for the weekend.

Sincerely,

**Shayne Russell '79, Friends of the NJ School of Conservation, [friendsofnjsoc@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofnjsoc@gmail.com)**



Rep. Mikie Sherrill

"You're a freshman, I'm a freshman..."

Got to speak with some student journalists from [@montclairstateu](https://twitter.com/montclairstateu) this morning at my office in DC about what it's like to be a new Member of Congress. Thanks for running around the Capitol with me!



8:52 AM - 12 Mar 2019 from Longworth House Office Building



Montclair SCM

Day 3 of [#MontclairinLA](https://twitter.com/MontclairinLA) begins with the great [@mikepriceinla](https://twitter.com/mikepriceinla) walking [@montclairstateu](https://twitter.com/montclairstateu) students through a recording session for F Is for Family



10:44 AM - 12 Mar 2019 from [Maggie M19](https://twitter.com/MaggieM19)

# HEADLINES



Photo by Thomas E. Franklin

## Student Coverage of Puerto Rico Wins College ‘Emmys’

On the biggest awards night in college television, School of Communication and Media students were twice called up to the stage to accept awards at the Television Academy Foundation 39th College Television Awards ceremony.

Only eight awards, which emulate the Television Academy Emmy® Awards, were given out on March 16

by the Academy and two of them went to Montclair State. “This places our students and their faculty mentors in elite company,” says School of Communication and Media Director Keith Strudler. “It’s another step in growing a national reputation for the School.”

Montclair State’s *Montclair News Lab: Hurricane Recovery Mission to Puerto Rico* won the Best in News award, as

well as the prestigious Bricker Humanitarian Award, which recognizes work that highlights global human issues.

The student team, along with faculty and staff members, visited Puerto Rico during their 2018 spring break and worked 10 to 14 hours a day to document the island’s recovery from the devastation of Hurricane Maria, which had

ravaged the region in the fall of 2017.

A year later, they flew to Los Angeles, where they enjoyed two days of networking with top media executives and fellow nominees before the awards ceremony.

There were 600 submissions from 174 colleges and universities in eight categories for the awards. The student winners for *Montclair News Lab: Hurricane Recovery Mission to Puerto Rico* are Mariano Arocho, Natalie De La Rosa, Laura Galarza, Babee Garcia, Madison Glassman, Genesis Obando and Madijuene Traore.

Communication and media arts major Arocho, a producer, director and writer on the project, says, “This project was the most important thing I’ve done in my college career. Not only was the project personal for me as I’m Puerto Rican, but it was an honor to be given a chance to tell the stories of those who struggled during and after Maria.”

“Montclair State has a long tradition of preparing graduates for the communication and media industries,” says College of the Arts Dean Daniel Gurskis. “These Emmy® Award-winning students are already making their mark as the next generation of professionals in their field.” ■



# University Reaches Research Milestone

Montclair State has achieved yet another milestone in its ascension to the ranks of the nation's top public universities. In the latest reclassification of the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, the University has earned the designation of R2: Doctoral University – High Research Activity.



cutting-edge research,” says Vice Provost for Research and Dean of The Graduate School Scott Herness.

Since its initial R3 designation in 2016, the University has not only added new doctoral-level programs such as its PhD in Clinical Psychology, but it has also increased the breadth of funding for its research, creating a diverse portfolio on topics ranging from youth character development to promoting representation of underrepresented students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) professions. ■

The reclassification comes just three years after the University earned an initial Research Doctoral University (R3) designation, and signifies a continued expansion of its research portfolio and doctoral program offerings.

“Our new designation as a Carnegie R2 institution is a well-deserved validation of what we have already known – that we are a dynamic research university with faculty and students who are producing

## CHORALE PERFORMS AT CARNEGIE HALL



The 2018–2019 University Chorale made its Carnegie Hall debut in January, sharing the stage at a humanitarian concert and performance of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*.

“We are very excited to have them literally give voice to the voiceless millions,” says George Mathew, conductor and artistic director of Music for Life International, which presented the symphony to raise awareness of the plight of

Rohingya refugees in Myanmar. The Chorale, under the direction of Heather J. Buchanan, professor of music, is the core choral ensemble and symphonic choir in the John J. Cali School of Music and includes 160 students. Among them is soprano Alexa Tammone, a sophomore majoring in music education, who says the group's debut on the hallowed stage was an honor.

“But it's even more of an honor to be able to use my passion for music to help people in their times of hardship,” Tammone says. “Preparing for this concert was a powerful, eye-opening and incredibly meaningful experience.”

Proceeds from the concert benefited Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières. Beethoven for The Rohingya was the eighth in a series of global humanitarian concerts presented by Music for Life International at Carnegie Hall. ■

## TOP 25 LGBTQ Friendly Colleges

In its first-ever survey, College Consensus has ranked Montclair State as one of the nation's top “25 LGBTQ Friendly Colleges for 2019.”

Other institutions on the list include Princeton University, Tufts University, the University of Pennsylvania, Ohio State University, Rutgers University and Lehigh University. All share a commitment to making their campuses safe and ideal learning environments for all students.

“We are proud to be included in the Top 25 LGBTQ ranking. Montclair State has a long history and tradition of providing equity and quality in all of its programs and services,” says Vice President for Student Development and Campus Life Karen L. Pennington.

The College Consensus listing specifically recognizes the University's LGBTQ Center, which, through leadership development, education, advocacy and support services, fosters a campus environment that is inclusive and supportive of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. ■

# Focus Immigration Project Trends Worldwide

Immigration issues resonate on campus since many students here are first-generation immigrants or related to first-generation immigrants. On April 10, School of Communication and Media students explored the topic with a multimedia #FocusImmigration and #MyImmigrantStoryIs “thunderclap” campaign, which included students’ and students’ families’ immigration stories.

At one point in the day, the thunderclap’s hashtag was trending internationally on Twitter and involved students from all of the School’s program areas.

The project – which included everything from the Montclair News Lab’s live statewide broadcast of a student-conducted interview with freshman Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill about immigration issues to a social media campaign – was the brainchild of Head of Journalism and Television/Digital Media Tara George.

“Students felt that in this era of fake news, responsible journalism was required to tell the truth about all the nuances of immigration,” George says.

For Mark Effron, School of Communication and Media professor and clinical specialist, the “thunderclap” was an exciting opportunity for students to gain real-world experience. “For someone like me who has been in media my whole career, it was a joyful experience to see students embrace the project and make it even bigger.” ■



Steve McCarthy

## ONLINE GRADUATE EDUCATION PROGRAM RANKED IN TOP 20



The new ranking is based on student engagement and excellence; services and technologies; faculty credentials and training; and opinions of academic experts.

“Our College is a national leader in preparing educators and other professionals in rigorous and innovative programs,” says College of Education and Human Services Dean Tamara Lucas. “This year’s top-20 ranking of our online graduate educational leadership program is a testament to our commitment to offering outstanding academic programs that are responsive to the needs of our students and our other constituents.” ■

Montclair State’s online Master of Arts in Educational Leadership degree program was ranked No. 19 in the nation by the *U.S. News & World Report 2019 Best Online Graduate Education Programs*. In tying for No. 19, the University moved up from its 2018 tied ranking at No. 21.

## Good News for Incoming Out-of-State Scholars

The University has a new scholarship aimed at attracting out-of-state scholars. Starting in fall 2019, incoming freshmen from other states may be eligible for in-state tuition – a reduction in tuition of nearly \$7,800 – if they have a minimum unweighted GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. To keep the in-state tuition scholarship for eight semesters, out-of-state students must maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA. ■





# MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR CHILDREN

For Gerard Costa, Early Childhood, Elementary and Literacy Education professor and director of the Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health at Montclair State University, nothing matters more than a child's emotional, interpersonal and physical well-being.

"I have an impassioned wish to make a difference for infants and children," he says. A noted thought leader in the field, Costa recently developed a video podcast for Family Court judges that he hopes will encourage much-needed changes in New



Gerard Costa

Jersey's visitation practices for children in out-of-home placements. "Actual intervention and how removal occurs can

be a traumatic event in the lives of both children and their families," he notes.

Produced by Advocates for Children of New Jersey with funding from a federal Children in Court Improvement Grant, Costa's recently released "Visitation Practices and their Impact on Infants, Children and Caregivers: Promoting Security and Stability of Relationships" suggests that consistent, collaborative and caring visitation practices help mitigate the trauma to children who have been removed from their homes and placed in protective care. ■

## Radio Station Among Top 5 in the Country

WMSC-FM received two national 2019 Intercollegiate Broadcasting System Awards and was a finalist in 11 categories, including Best College Station in the Nation – the third time the station has been among the Top 5 radio stations at colleges with more than 10,000 students in the country.

WMSC General Manager and Advisor Annabella Poland was named the Jeff Tellis Outstanding Advisor of the Year and the station also won for Best Community Outreach Event for its annual toy drive for Roberto Clemente Elementary School in Newark. The 11 finalist honors included Best News Director, Best News Story,

Best Political Show and best play-by-play for both baseball and women's basketball.

Earlier this year, WMSC also received the prestigious Spirit of College Radio Award in recognition of outstanding and spirited efforts made by college radio stations on College Radio Day.

"I am delighted that Montclair State students who work at the campus radio station are being recognized nationally for their work," Poland says. "Students have the freedom to discover, explore and create at WMSC, and they receive real-time professional feedback." ■

## GOOD GIGS LAND PR STUDENT ON FORBES SCHOLAR LIST

Ciara Rolle-Harris has had a run of success in college: First, HBO hired her as an intern. Then she scored internships at MTV/VH1 and the Wellmont Theater in Montclair. In May, she received an academic scholarship from New York Women in Communications.

She even caught the attention of *Forbes*, which recognized her accomplishments with an invitation to the *Forbes* Under 30 Summit, which connects A-list speakers with young leaders who show the entrepreneurial spirit of its 30 Under 30 list. "I'm 20, so in 10 years, I think I can do it," she says, only half joking.

Rolle-Harris, a senior public relations major, credits Montclair State's career services for helping her get a head start on her career. "I take part in mock interviews and receive advice on how exactly to stand out."



Ciara Rolle-Harris at the Wellmont Theater in Montclair, where she works as a marketing operations intern.



At the Wellmont Theater, she helps promote live music and is learning about the administrative side of the entertainment business. "I'm so grateful that I'm able to work as a student but then follow people and shadow people who I one day want to be," she says. ■

# Gala Raises Money for Scholarships, Honors Community Leader, Helps Students Soar



Students performed scenes from *Guys and Dolls* at the gala.

Alumni, friends, benefactors and community members raised more than \$550,000 for scholarships at the University Foundation 2019 Annual Scholarship Dinner on March 9, when 350 gathered at the Alexander Kasser Theater to also honor the service, philanthropy and leadership of Lawrence R. Inserra Jr. and Inserra Supermarkets.

As part of Soar, The Campaign for Montclair State University, the money raised will provide financial assistance to hundreds of students of limited economic means, allowing them to pursue and complete their studies at Montclair State.

"I rise every day grateful for the people such as you who share our understanding of the importance of our mission and, most important, who understand that, among our 21,000 smart, hard-working and hopeful students, there are many thousands who

quite literally would not be able to be here without your support," President Susan A. Cole told the guests.

Inserra Supermarkets and Chairman and CEO Lawrence R. Inserra Jr. received the Rose and John J. Cali Award for Business Leadership and Community Engagement, for his commitment to creating partnerships that enhance research and discovery and ultimately benefit the larger community.



Honoree Lawrence R. Inserra Jr.

Cole said Inserra, whose company operates ShopRite stores in New York and New Jersey, has been "tremendously generous with his time and resources to benefit our students and support their success." The Inserra family's lasting impact on the University also includes generous support of student scholarships, the Red Hawk Pantry, the Emergency Book Fund, Athletics, the Coccia Institute and the Theresa and Lawrence R. Inserra Endowed Chair in Italian and Italian American Studies. He also serves on the Montclair State University Board of Trustees.

The evening's entertainment featured selections from the musical *Guys and Dolls* performed by students in the nationally recognized Department of Theatre and Dance and John J. Cali School of Music.

Soar is the largest fundraising campaign in University history and has so far raised more than \$72 million of its \$75 million goal. ■

## The Montclarion Wins College Newspaper Awards

Montclair State University's student-run news organization, *The Montclarion*, won nine New Jersey Press Foundation (NJPF) College Newspaper awards – including six first-place awards.

"At a time when the world more than ever needs dedicated, professional journalists able to create content across a range of platforms, these students are rising to the challenge of becoming the media leaders of tomorrow," says School of Communication and Media Director Keith Strudler.

According to Haley Wells, editor-in-chief of *The Montclarion*: "These awards really focus on the writing of the articles, which just goes to show how important great writing and reporting are to a news organization."

*The Montclarion* staff took home first-place awards in news, feature, and arts and entertainment/critical stories, and a second-place award for editorial writing. It also won first place for photography and picked up firsts and thirds for web project and online video.

"This is a huge win for *The Montclarion*," says Assistant Professor Tara George, head of Journalism and Television/Digital Media, who serves as faculty advisor for *The Montclarion*. "In the last four years, the students and I have worked to develop the multi-platform digital nature of the paper while still respecting its print roots.... With their wins, they have proven not just that they are awesome, but that they are awesome across multiple platforms." ■

Carla Ko and Robert Onoz are among the first class of Presidential Scholars at Montclair State University.



## PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS FIND A HOME

Financial support and meaningful experiences attract N.J.'s high-achieving students

When Carla Ko graduated from James Caldwell High School with a perfect 4.0 GPA, her high school achievements earned her a \$20,000 scholarship and academic advantages as a member of the first class of Presidential Scholars at Montclair State University.

"It's the main reason I decided to study here," says Ko, an accounting major. "It's exciting to be a part of a brand-new program, this community of students who strive for success and love a good challenge."

Representing just over 10 percent of the freshman class, the Presidential Scholars formed a small cohort who got to know

each other through shared coursework in specialized learning communities. They participated in academic, cultural, research-driven and career-focused activities that take the college experience to the next level.

For Robert Onoz, the select group's reading of a common book, the Pulitzer-winning *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*, has been especially meaningful. As a chemistry major and future science teacher, Onoz was drawn to the theme of man-made climate change destroying our planet's ecosystem, a message made all the more compelling by the discussion on campus with the author, science writer Elizabeth Kolbert.

"Presidential Scholars are highly diverse and among New Jersey's most ambitious and determined young people who are looking to maximize their college experience, explore opportunities and gain every possible advantage," says Jeffrey Gant, director of Undergraduate Admissions. "This program encourages them to put a stake in New Jersey ground and establish themselves as the next generation of leaders and professionals."

Staying in New Jersey was important to Karsen Griffin, an exercise science major who graduated fifth in her class from Teaneck High School with a perfect 4.0 GPA. Montclair State felt like the right fit,

she says. "I just felt that I would never be able to get that diversity, differing opinions and exposure to the real world anywhere else," she says.

The scholars receive a \$5,000 scholarship during each of their four years of study, provided they maintain rigorous academic requirements. They are also exposed to meaningful experiences, including access to alumni mentors and internships, spring break community service, and lectures and research opportunities. They also share a close-knit living and learning community and academic advantages, including priority registration. ■

# MATH IN THE AIR

By Marilyn  
Joyce Lehren

JUGGLING =  
CREATIVE COLLABORATION  
OF ART +  
SCIENCE

What's the probability of finding math and science on the performance stage at Montclair State University?

It's actually quite high.

In a duet between academia and Arts and Cultural Programming's Peak Performances, geometry and patterns have been tossed around in a creative equation connecting mathematics, physics, the arts and juggling – the collaboration highlighted in December by the avant-garde performance of *Smashed* by Gandini Juggling.

If the intersection of art and science on the Alexander Kasser Theater stage was unexpected, an exhibit by general mathematics students made clear the many ways they overlap. Pre-performance exhibits featured student work on the connections discovered between math and history, psychology, exercise science, poetry and music. A discussion with juggler and artistic director Sean Gandini and University professors showcased the play and creativity in the sciences.



World-renowned juggler Sean Gandini teaches Montclair State students the art – and math – of juggling.

That's the goal of Creativity in Mathematics professors Mika Munakata and Ashwin Vaidya. With funding from the National Science Foundation, they have introduced innovative teaching that engages students with imaginative curricula.

The work has benefited from a partnership with Peak Performances, which brings professional music, theater and dance to Montclair State, and its artistic director Jedediah Wheeler. With the American premiere of *Smashed* on the schedule, creating a general mathematics unit on juggling presented an off-beat opportunity.

"We did a lot of homework," Munakata says. "The research on mathematics and juggling actually goes deep. Of course, juggling becomes really complicated very fast, but there are researchers who study number patterns, geometric patterns, different notations for juggling. Just the fact that juggling could be represented through mathematical notation, that was enough to get us thinking about what we could do with the students."

Gandini, the world-renowned juggler, was supportive of the University's efforts. He has described juggling as "doing math in the air," and lent his talents in guiding the professors as they developed lesson plans and spent time with the students as his troupe prepared for Peak Performances.

"I think for me, the most interesting thing was the connections the students made in terms of understanding how the patterns and the rhythms and juggling itself impact brain scans," says doctoral student Ceire Monahan, who taught the class Contemporary Applied Math for Everyone.

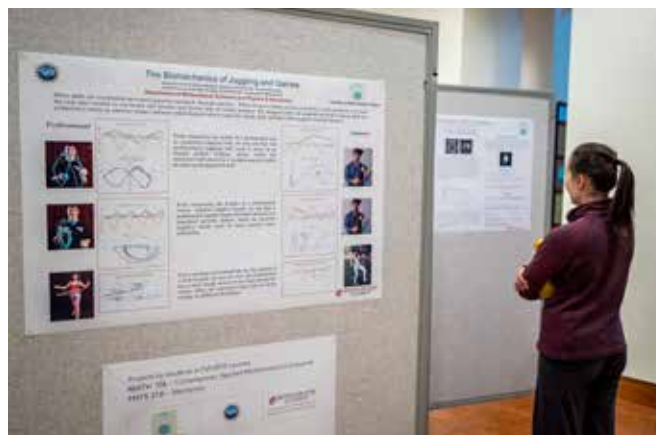
Students who once found math and science – and juggling – intimidating are no longer shying away from it. "Everything that we learned was able to be applied to real-life situations," says Danielle Vacca, a sophomore television and digital media major. "For example, juggling, order of magnitude problems, architecture analysis, the mathematics of toys and



even having book club discussions based on mathematical novels. I was challenged to see how math is prevalent in nearly all those scenarios."

For audiences at Peak Performances, the students showed off their newfound juggling skills and exhibited an interactive virtual reality system to track participants' juggling movements.

"Juggling is all about rhythm and it's all about beats," says Vaidya. "You can understand it from a physics point of view, a mathematical point of view fairly easily. The trouble is, of course, doing it." ■



**Top:** Students attend a workshop with Gandini Juggling.

**Left:** Pre-performance, students exhibited their research on the play and creativity in the sciences.

# Media's Changing Landscape

By Marilyn Joyce Lehren

## THE CENTER FOR COOPERATIVE MEDIA IS REINVENTING THE WAYS NEWS IS SHARED AND FORMING PARTNERSHIPS TO PRODUCE STRONGER JOURNALISM

**W**hen it comes to knowing what's happening in your town, no news is bad news. With no one watching the schools, or local government and zoning board, some communities across the Garden State are being left in the dark in so-called "news deserts."

"If you gave me 1,000 independent journalists, I could keep them busy full time. I could probably keep 2,000 to 3,000 busy full time," says Stefanie Murray, director of the University's Center for Cooperative Media. "There's so much to write about."

The Center's mission is to grow and strengthen local journalism through three main programs. One is its flagship project, the NJ News Commons, a network of 280 media outlets and freelancers across the state, for which the Center provides business coaching, training, some grant funding and networking. The Center also runs a national collaborative journalism program and conducts academic research in different areas of local news.

Some audiences know the Center best for its newsletter, which rounds up the top stories of the day from news sites across the entire state. The NJ News Commons

newsletter is free and available to the public at [centerforcooperativemedia.org](http://centerforcooperativemedia.org).

The Center regularly runs collaborative news projects in New Jersey, such as Voting Block NJ, an initiative that brought together 25 newsrooms to cover the state's 2017 gubernatorial election. The effort resulted in more than 70 stories and over two dozen community events, called Political Potlucks, which brought the public into the conversation and reporting process.

"Collaborative journalism can help news organizations produce and provide the kind of news and information that just isn't

possible when everyone is working within their own silos. It can increase diversity, reach and impact,” Murray says.

The Center’s funding comes from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the New Jersey Local News Lab Fund of the Community Foundation of New Jersey, the Abrams Foundation and Montclair State University. A new grant from the Democracy Fund provides opportunities for local and independent journalists to visit colleagues around the United States. Those are relationships, Murray says, that allow journalists to work smarter and move more quickly to improve what they are doing.

“We work a lot on business models,” including pay models for online news, Murray says. “We do a lot of training – podcasts, newsletters, and multimedia and graphic design skills this spring alone – and bring in speakers on various topics because the industry is changing so quickly.”

In helping its members push the boundaries of what technology offers at the local level, the Center recently held a workshop on ways to tell a story using 360-degree video. Joe Amditis, associate director, says he constantly keeps “an eye on what’s just over the horizon in terms of the latest local news tools and trends.”

Research Director Sarah Stonbely, meanwhile, is currently focused on a project that will map the local news ecosystems of New Jersey in a way that is more detailed and comprehensive than any other such study conducted to date in the United States.

Beyond New Jersey, the Center has launched a global database for collaborative projects that includes full translations in Spanish and Portuguese. “Part of what makes collaboration powerful for newsrooms is that it enables us to cover stories with wide-ranging impact. This is particularly true for stories that go beyond our borders – immigration, tax shelters,



The Center regularly brings in journalists for training; shown is Matthew MacVey leading a class on creating first-person visual stories with 360 photo and video.



privacy laws, the implications of global tech platforms, misinformation and climate change,” Murray says.

The Center’s work, observes Thomas E. Franklin, assistant professor in multiplatform journalism, “is cutting edge in terms of social media, online tools and research practices.”

Montclair State journalism students benefit from the connection, tapping into the Center’s expertise in training tech-fluent professionals experienced in the latest multimedia tools. “It’s what we teach, what we preach in the classroom,” says Franklin, whose own award-winning reporting, photography and video projects as an independent journalist focus on immigration and border issues.

“It can be a depressing time when you consider what’s happening in local journalism,” Murray says. “But it’s also a really exciting time, too. The climate for independent journalists in New Jersey is one of opportunity. But it’s really hard to make it work.” ■

**Top:** Stefanie Murray, director of the Center for Cooperative Media. **Right:** Students in class. **Bottom:** Thomas E. Franklin, assistant professor in multiplatform journalism, teaches a class at Montclair State. Within the School of Communication and Media, journalism students are learning new multimedia skills, including producing stories with photos and videos for social media and websites. Visit [centerforcooperativemedia.org](http://centerforcooperativemedia.org) for more information.





# MAKING A *World* OF DIFFERENCE By Amy Wagner

FULBRIGHT GRANTEES **TO TEACH ENGLISH**  
IN GERMANY, MALAYSIA AND SOUTH AFRICA



**F**or the first time ever, two students and an alumna of Montclair State – a record number – are among 2,100 Fulbright grant recipients getting ready to teach English in other parts of the world.

In April, graduate students Treasa Praino and Stephen Campbell, and alumna Meghan Marino, a 2016 graduate, were awarded the

teachers and leaders. Additionally, our supportive campus culture contributes to the success of our Fulbright applicants.”

### An immersive experience

This year, Marino has been taking an intensive German language course in Germany to ensure that she will be a more effective communicator with both students

and teachers when she begins teaching English to students in Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany, in September.

After-school American movie nights and sports nights, as well as an English creative writing club, are among her plans for giving her students an immersive language experience.

“My goal is to motivate my students and to provide them with the same positive, memorable experience that my most beloved teachers have given

me,” she explains. “I hope to inspire them to want to travel or study in the U.S.”

### Promoting cultural understanding

Come January, Praino, who will earn her Master of Arts in Teaching in December, will head to South Africa to teach English to high school and university students. “I’ll also be implementing several community projects to help make a more direct connection between Americans and South Africans,” she says.

On previous travels to South Africa, she fell in love with the country.

“I’m excited to return to learn even more about its people, wildlife and this time, its education system,” she says.

Praino welcomes the opportunity to “not only help my students, but also to expand my own knowledge of teaching diverse

**“MY GOAL IS TO MOTIVATE MY STUDENTS AND TO PROVIDE THEM WITH THE SAME POSITIVE, MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE THAT MY MOST BELOVED TEACHERS HAVE GIVEN ME.”**

—Meghan Marino



Meghan Marino

prestigious Fulbright U.S. Student Program English Teaching Assistant grants – the largest number of Fulbright finalists in a single year for the University.

The U.S. Student Program is dedicated to promoting goodwill and mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries. “Treasa, Stephen and Meghan will be wonderful ambassadors for both the United States and Montclair State,” says Director of International Engagement Domenica Dominguez.

“This record number represents both the extraordinary talent of Montclair State students and alumni as well as the University’s commitment to fostering intellectual discovery,” Dominguez says. “As a designated ‘Research 2 doctoral university,’ Montclair State provides an excellent foundation for our graduates to engage with the wider world as scholars,



learners and to engage in one of the most exciting and memorable experiences of my life.”

### Connecting with his heritage

“Growing up as a Malaysian American who has never visited Malaysia before, I’m excited about being able to experience my culture in its own setting while also sharing my experience of growing up in the United States,” says Campbell, a 2018 graduate who will receive his Master of Arts in Teaching in May.

From January to November 2020, he will teach English to Malaysian secondary school students. For Campbell, who studied linguistics and French as an undergraduate, the Fulbright allows him to combine his passions for languages and teaching. “Though growing up bilingual in English and Malay, I’m looking forward to using and improving my Malay,” he explains. “I’m hoping this will help me better acclimatize to the new environment and help me connect with my students on a deeper level,” he says.

### A flagship program

Operating in more than 160 countries worldwide, the Fulbright Program is the flagship international exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government. Recipients of Fulbright grants – named for former U.S. Senator J. William Fulbright – are selected on the basis of academic or professional achievement, as well as demonstrated leadership potential in their fields. Fulbright alumni have distinguished themselves in numerous fields and include 59 Nobel Prize winners; 84 Pulitzer Prize recipients; and 37 who have served as heads of state or government in their home countries. ■



Treasa Praino



Stephen Campbell



# FINDING FOOD SECURITY

**B**y the time Jerry Comprendre Jr. transferred to Montclair State and discovered the Red Hawk Pantry, he was skipping meals and getting a little desperate. “The food pantry saved my life,” he says.

Comprendre, a junior, and his best friend, Jean Pepe, also a junior transfer student, were recently filling bags with groceries – pasta, spaghetti sauce, cereal and almond milk at the pantry.

ShopRite had just made a delivery, so they also had a choice of fresh apples, oranges, spinach and tomatoes.

“Everyone says that to get ahead and make money, you need a college education. But a college education costs money,” says Pepe. “At one point, I considered living in my car to save money,” says Pepe. But after transferring to Montclair State, finding the food pantry and becoming a resident assistant, he has found success. “It’s

hard to concentrate when your stomach’s growling. My grades skyrocketed when I became an R.A.”

Montclair State has been a leader in fighting food insecurity since 2016, when it became the first four-year university in New Jersey to open a food pantry on campus. Vice President for Student Development and Campus Life Karen L. Pennington says the University tackled the problem even before fully understanding the extent of it.

Students prepare the Campus Community Garden for the summer growing season.



Sonja Tillman has managed the Red Hawk Pantry since 2016.

# Pantry, garden and donations help students stave off hunger

By Laura Griffin

“We knew of a few students who were hungry. We knew of a few students who were homeless and we knew that where there’s five, there are 105,” Pennington says. “We decided not to wait for the data. We knew it was happening and decided to open immediately. That way at least we were helping.”

Indeed, the results of a 2016 survey sent to students confirmed Pennington’s hunch: 37 percent of 200 respondents reported

that they experienced food insecurity daily, weekly or monthly, which mirrored national numbers at the time.

Since Montclair State’s pantry opened, it has met a growing need – with nearly 1,000 total visits, according to Sonja Tillman, the coordinator of Student Center Programming and the Red Hawk Pantry. And preliminary results of a 2019 campus survey support the continued need, with four out of 10 respondents reporting some level of food insecurity.

## A NATIONAL EPIDEMIC

Hunger is a reality across college campuses. Students say they forgo food in order to buy books or pay tuition. Others struggle to concentrate in class because of skipped meals or eating smaller meals because they don’t have enough money for food.

A December 2018 report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO), a nonpartisan Congressional agency, notes that millions of low-income students nationwide are potentially at risk of being food insecure and that food-insecure students are at risk for dropping out of school.

When the Red Hawk Pantry opened, there were 300 college food pantries nationwide.

Three years later, the College and University Food Bank Alliance reports there are now more than 700. Schools are also fighting food insecurity by redistributing food after catered events, making sure students who are eligible apply for food stamps, and lobbying to change national and state education funding to cover living expenses, not just tuition.

Advocates say that the national epidemic of campus food insecurity is also fueled by a rise in enrollment of low-income and first-generation students.

“Tuition and books and expenses just eat up money and there’s very little left for food for some of our students,” says Tillman. “Many of our full-time students also work and still can’t make it. It’s tough.”

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Since 2016, the University has raised about \$47,000 from alumni, students and faculty to help sustain the pantry. “It’s heartbreaking that it’s needed and heartwarming that our community wants to help,” says Stacy Albanese ’08 ’17 MA, associate director of Annual Giving and Alumni Engagement, who conducted the first survey and spearheaded the fundraising campaign. “The pantry remains a priority in all of our fundraising initiatives, including our Annual Giving Day.”



The Red Hawk Pantry is more fortunate than many college pantries in that it is also supported by Lawrence R. Inserra Jr., CEO of Inserra Supermarkets, and his daughter, Lindsey Inserra Hughes, who operate 23 ShopRite stores. The Inserras gave the pantry an industrial refrigerator and freezer and regularly donate perishable items such as produce and dairy products.

**“Many of our full-time students also work and still can’t make it. It’s tough.”**

– Sonja Tillman

“The Inserra family is making a huge difference for our students,” says Tillman. “I have seen students come in here and actually burst into tears because they didn’t know how they were going to eat.”

In addition, last summer, the pantry partnered with the student-tended Campus Community Garden, which donated 300 pounds of fresh produce, including lettuce, tomatoes and cucumbers, to the pantry. This summer, the goal is to donate more and to extend the growing season through October, says Christopher Snyder, a graduate assistant who oversees the garden and conducted the spring 2019 campus food-security survey in which 43.6 percent of students responding reported experiencing some level of food insecurity during the semester.

One thing Snyder, who is working on his master’s in public health, and other food security advocates are seeking is an extension of the kindergarten through 12th

grade free or reduced-cost lunch program to cover college students.

“The government gives students free or reduced lunch from K through 12 and then that just stops,” he says. “It’s not like the need for it stops. We need a direct continuation of the school lunch program.”

Beyond helping students, the garden also donates to community pantries and it is a “showcase of sustainability” – part of the PSEG Institute for Sustainability Studies. This year the garden received a grant for a shed and a rainwater harvester.

“It’s a project fueled by passion,” Snyder says. “We’ve turned a brownfield on campus into something that is productive and pleasant to look at.”

In May 2019, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy signed a “Hunger-Free Campus” Act that will provide grant funding to colleges and universities in New Jersey



that are taking an active role in addressing food insecurity, and Pennington says that additional funding will help create solutions beyond the food pantry. The University is working with Dining Services to come up with a stigma-free plan for students to access meals, including using vouchers and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (formerly food stamps).

The majority of the students using the pantry are women, so Tillman also stocks feminine hygiene products and toiletries. Another popular pantry item is laundry detergent – especially the pods, she says.

### EASING THE BURDEN

Angelica Vergara, 20, is a third-year commuter student whose baby was four months old when she took him to the food pantry at the end of the spring semester. While she has been using the food pantry since her freshman year, she says, with a baby to care for, she needs it more than ever.

“I’m not working right now because my priorities are my baby and school,” she says. “All of my money goes to diapers and clothes for him, and because I’m nursing, I also need to eat well. I get really hungry.”

Vergara and her baby live in Perth Amboy with her mother, and, even with financial aid, money is tight. Growing up, she was used to getting free or reduced lunch at school, but that stopped when she got to college. “It’s a very hard struggle,” she says.

Because Montclair State is a leader in tackling food insecurity, Soledad O’Brien and her documentary filmmaking team from Starfish Media Group are working on a documentary that includes how the University is addressing it and interviews with students.

“The Montclair students we followed for our documentary are determined and strong and willing to put their education above

everything else,” she says. “We hope we can shed some light on the issue and help prompt people to come together to find solutions that make it possible for students to not have to choose between paying tuition and going hungry.”

The end of each semester is the busiest time at the Red Hawk Pantry. Students run out of meal swipes or have difficulty making it to their next paychecks.

The stories Tillman hears from students tug at the heartstrings: “One student broke down in tears and said she was so happy that we carried the kind of cereal her children like,” she recalls. “It’s satisfying because we know we’re making a difference.” ■

**Left to right:** ShopRite (Inserra Supermarkets) regularly delivers perishables to the Red Hawk Pantry; Students tend the Campus Community Garden to donate vegetables; The pantry is busiest at the end of each semester; Jerry Comprendre Jr. and Jean Pepe say the pantry has helped them succeed in school.

# IMAGINE THAT!

By Amy Wagner

**Faculty researchers transform big ideas into real results**

**N**ew knowledge stems from new ideas. Montclair State faculty researchers have received \$10 million in funding from federal and state agencies, and corporate and nonprofit organizations through the third quarter of fiscal year 2019 for fresh thinking that generates real-world benefits. In this issue of *Montclair* magazine, we take a look at just a handful of the innovative ideas and groundbreaking research taking place on campus – many funded by government grants or private gifts to the University. “The breadth of our research portfolio – from astrophysics and climate change to diversifying New Jersey’s teacher pipeline – is exactly what one would expect from a nationally designated doctoral high-research activity university,” says Vice Provost for Research and Graduate School Dean Scott Herness.



## MAKING HISTORY IN ANTARCTICA

On sighting land, as scientific drillship *JOIDES Resolution* approached Chile on its return from Antarctica in March, Earth and Environmental Studies Professor Sandra Passchier was overwhelmed. “I had to adjust to all that color after seeing a landscape of nothing but white, blue and gray for two months,” she recalls.

Passchier, a pioneer in the field of internationally coordinated Antarctic research, and other members of an international team of scientists and crew, made history by retrieving the longest drill cores ever collected from West Antarctica’s isolated Amundsen Sea region.

The cores – which preserve a history of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet’s expansion and retreat – will help scientists predict the potential effects of climate change.

“So many icebergs were around that keeping the drill pipe in the seafloor long enough to make some depth was extremely difficult. But the determination of everybody on the ship was unprecedented. Nobody wanted to give up,” she says.

Their persistence paid off. “I’m really happy with our cores. We recovered a complete West Antarctic record of an important warm period in Earth’s past,” Passchier reports. “We found evidence that the West Antarctic Ice Sheet changed its footprint in the past and responded to climate changes. Now, as a science team, we’re designing a plan on how to extract all the climate information embedded in the sediments.”

Despite appetizing meals, two months aboard ship posed unique challenges – from staying balanced while running on a treadmill on a bouncing ship and living “unplugged” without cell phone or reliable internet service to returning to Chile six days early to get an injured crew member needed medical treatment.

This was Passchier’s sixth Antarctic expedition and her third with the



Sandra Passchier (right) on her sixth Antarctic expedition spent two months on a drillship (above) collecting cores from the West Antarctic Ice Sheet.



Getty Images

International Ocean Discovery Program (IODP). While the National Science Foundation (NSF) and its international partners funded the IODP, Passchier’s participation in the IODP Expedition 379 was funded through a contract with the IODP’s U.S. Science Support Program at Columbia University.

## EXPLORING CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN SCOUTS

How do adults shape character in young people? For scoutmasters and other adult volunteers, what combination of training and experience helps them build character in scouts? What particular kinds of training enhance character development? Family Science and Human Development professors Jennifer Urban and Miriam Linver hope 2,500 scouts and their adult leaders have answers that will help Boy Scouts of America (BSA) strengthen its mission.

The researchers, who also codirect the Institute for Research on Youth Thriving



University researchers are studying character building through the Boy Scouts of America.

and Evaluation (RYTE) at Montclair State, have received first-year funding from a two-year, \$5.7 million Boy Scouts of America National Character Initiative sub-award funded by the Stephen D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation to support the second phase of the nationwide BSA BEST (Building Evidence in Scouting Together), an ongoing national-scale study exploring the role adults play in youth character development.



“What excites me the most is the brilliant mix of talented and enthusiastic professional staff and faculty who are working on these projects, with energy, commitment and focus.”

–Jennifer Robinson



Jennifer Urban (standing, right) and Miriam Linver codirect the Institute for Research on Youth Thriving and Evaluation.

“The first phase confirmed that BSA offers a distinctive character initiative that’s deeply rooted in its culture, as well as ideal for exploring and documenting the relationship between adult practice and youth character development,” says Urban.

To understand how adults and scouts work together, Urban, Linver and American Institutes for Research (AIR) BSA BEST partners are currently looking to pinpoint the BSA trainings and adult experiences that lead to the strongest character outcomes in scouts.

“Our combined effort – which includes developing and pilot-testing surveys and interview protocols – has been a success

so far,” says Urban. “We’re also conducting in-depth observations of adult volunteer leader trainings, with a focus on BSA’s intensive leadership Wood Badge training courses.”

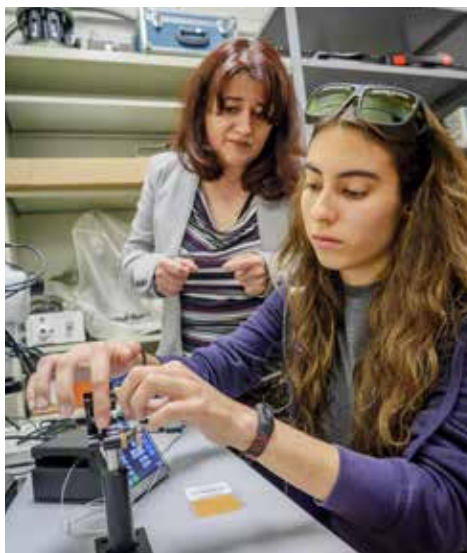
While the team expects to issue a preliminary report by early fall, Urban notes that exciting patterns and findings are already emerging. “We expect, for instance, that there are several different adult leader profiles that lead to positive youth outcomes. We’re excited to find out what they are so we can help BSA foster

strong adult leaders.”

### AIDING DISCOVERY OF DISTANT BLACK HOLES

When black holes collide or neutron stars merge, they produce minute ripples in space-time measurable by gravitational-wave detectors. Since 2015, when LIGO – the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory – measured the first gravitational wave from colliding black holes, four more black hole collisions have been detected, as well as a binary neutron star merger. The significance of these discoveries, which confirmed century-old predictions made by Albert Einstein, was

acknowledged by the 2017 Nobel Prize in Physics.



Rodica Martin, (left, with a student) studies optical properties that can be used in gravitational-wave detectors, which detect neutron stars colliding (above).

Physics and Astronomy Professor Rodica Martin, who, along with Physics Professor Marc Favata, is a member of the LIGO team, is now studying the optical properties of materials that can be used to develop the next generation of highly sensitive gravitational-wave detectors.

“With more sensitive instruments, LIGO can detect gravitational waves from sources that are

much further away, or that are too weak to observe with current detectors, giving us new insights on the dynamics of the cosmos,” says Martin.

Through tabletop optics experiments, she and a team of students are investigating new magneto-optical materials for the detectors’ Faraday isolators – a key component of the gravitational-wave detectors. Early identification of suitable materials for next-generation



Montclair State is working with Newark Schools to diversify the teacher pipeline; Jennifer Robinson (above right) is helping to recruit teachers of color in New Jersey.

Faraday isolators is key to developing gravitational-wave detectors able to observe nearly all the stellar-mass black hole mergers in the universe – and facilitate even more precise tests of Einstein’s theory of relativity.

According to Martin, her NSF-funded project is progressing well. “We’ve obtained preliminary results on several materials and hope to be ready to report more complete findings in the months ahead.”

## DIVERSIFYING NEW JERSEY’S TEACHER PIPELINE

While all students benefit from a diverse teaching workforce, just 16 percent of New Jersey educators are teachers of color according to the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE).

For students of color, this shortage of role models – and teachers who fully understand their racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds – can contribute to lifelong achievement and opportunity inequities.

While a NJDOE “Diversifying the Teacher Pipeline: Recruiting Teachers of Color” grant is enabling Montclair State to tackle this situation by partnering with Newark Public Schools in a 19-month pilot program, the University has also joined forces with national educational partners to launch New Jersey’s largest school district’s first teacher academy to grow the next generation of teachers.

“Montclair State is again in the vanguard of teacher preparation and in helping to lead the recruitment and retention of teachers of color – as well as teachers for urban schools,” says Montclair State Center of Pedagogy Executive Director Jennifer Robinson.

The Recruiting Teachers of Color project will extend the work of the University’s innovative Newark-Montclair Urban Teacher Residency Program – a site-based teacher certification program for college graduates and career changers committed to urban education.

Robinson explains, “While it will serve as a model for other programs across the state, most importantly, it will help us learn more about how to do this work so that we can

increase the diversity of the New Jersey teacher population.”

In February, Montclair State, Newark Public Schools and the American Federation of Students joined forces to launch the Newark Public Schools Teacher Academy.

It is the first in a planned series of high school academies that will prepare Newark Public School students for careers in education and grow a pipeline of diversity for the state’s teacher workforce.

The launch began the planning phase for the Teacher Academy, which is set to open in 2020. The University will help design a curriculum that prepares students for teaching careers, as well as provide instruction by professors and internship opportunities.

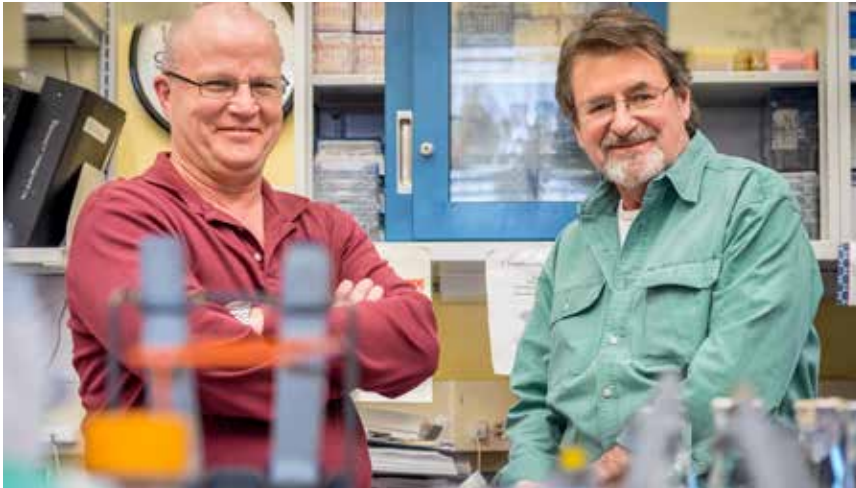
“What excites me the most is the brilliant mix of talented and enthusiastic professional staff and faculty – including Secondary and Special Education professors Mayida Zaal and Tanya Maloney and Early Childhood and Elementary and Literacy Education Professor Bree Picower – who are working on these projects, with energy, commitment and focus,” says Robinson.

## DEVELOPING NEW TREATMENTS FOR MALARIA

Nearly half the world’s population risks contracting malaria after being bitten by mosquitoes infected with the single-cell parasite *Plasmodium*. In 2016 alone, according to Medicines for Malaria Venture estimates, 216 million cases led to 445,000 deaths worldwide.

The recent appearance of *Plasmodium* strains resistant to existing antimalarial drugs has sparked an urgent search for new antimalarial agents.

David Rotella, Sokol Professor of Chemistry; John Siekierka, Sokol Professor of Medicinal Chemistry and director of the University’s Sokol Institute for Pharmaceutical Life Sciences; and Rutgers University researchers are sharing a three-



David Rotella (left) and John Siekierka are working with an NIH grant to search for new antimalarial treatments.

year, \$1.5 million award from the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIH NIAID) to do just that.

"We're investigating inhibitors of a protein kinase in *Plasmodium* that plays multiple roles in its life cycle," explains Rotella. "We hope to confirm if this enzyme can inhibit the parasitic life cycle of *Plasmodium* at more than one point. If we can show that, it may be possible to combine this with other antimalarial drugs to treat infection and reduce – or very hopefully – prevent resistance from developing."

The researchers have begun to prepare new compounds to identify potent inhibitors of the protein kinase. "Our most potent compounds are now 10 times more active compared to our starting points – and are also active in cell-based assays." Rotella notes that precision and reproducibility have been improved by optimizing the enzyme assay technology.

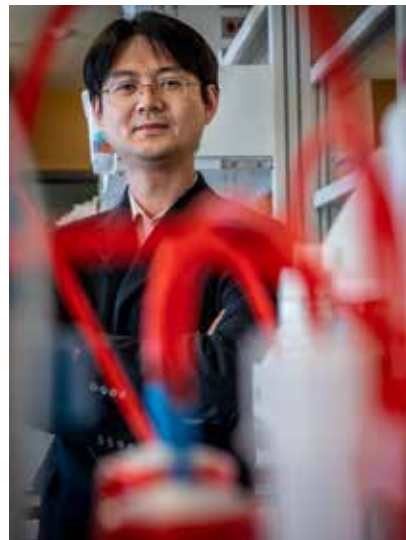
While the researchers aim to improve both their compounds' activity and drug-like characteristics, and identify and test at least one molecule in animal models of malaria in the grant's remaining years, Rotella is pleased with initial results. "So far, the results support our idea that this

enzyme is a good target to explore for the treatment of malaria."

### KEEPING WATER CLEAN AFTER A DISASTER

Water crises such as Puerto Rico's in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria are often unfortunate results of today's increasingly frequent and severe natural disasters. Yet clean water is essential for survival and relief after catastrophic natural disasters.

Earth and Environmental Studies Professor Yang Deng took a holistic approach to devise an innovative



emergency water treatment that uses ferrate – an emerging and multifunctional treatment agent – to remove contaminants from disaster-polluted waters and prevent the spread of water-borne infectious diseases. His affordable solution is safe, easy to use and suitable for home and community use.

"I was inspired by my personal experience with hurricanes over the years and I deeply understand different emergency needs – including water – after natural disasters," says Deng. "I feel it's an engineer's responsibility to find real-world solutions for disaster-affected populations that support their survival."

His research, which is supported by the University's PSEG Institute for Sustainability Studies and the New Jersey Water Resources Research Institute, is recognized by the American Academy of Environmental Engineers and Scientists. In April, he was the 2019 winner of the Academy's competitive Superior Achievement Award for Excellence in Environmental Engineering and Science.



**Left:** Inspired by his personal experiences with hurricanes, Yang Deng created a water treatment device that can be used following natural disasters. **Right:** Two women collect water in cat litter buckets from a pipe bringing untreated water from the mountainside outside Utuado, Puerto Rico, three months after Hurricane Maria.

## SUPPORTING CLEAN ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

The University's Clean Energy and Sustainability Analytics Center facilitates research, analysis and outreach regarding clean energy development in the state, country and abroad.

The Center's programs and projects are funded, in part, by the PSEG Foundation; state agencies including the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities; organizations such as the Sediment Management Work Group; and ongoing National Science Foundation and U.S. Department of Agriculture grants.

The Center collaborates with faculty on numerous research projects. "For example, we're working with School of Communication and Media Professor Anthony Pemberton on a film and education project documenting stakeholder perspectives on clean energy in India – and here in New Jersey," says Center

Director and Earth and Environmental Studies Associate Professor Pankaj Lal.

"We're also working with Anthropology Professor Neeraj Vedwan on community acceptance of clean energy sources in New Jersey and with Mathematical Sciences Professor Eric Forgoston on emerald ash borer infestation in New Jersey and its use as a bioenergy source," Lal adds.

Other Center-related research projects include Lal's own explorations of place-based bioenergy sustainability and biomass-based biofuel development.

The Center also contributes to New Jersey energy and environmental planning through faculty-student research in clean energy and sustainability analytics and the development of state-of-the-art integrated economic models.



Pankaj Lal (above left) is leading the University's Clean Energy and Sustainability Analytics Center.

Lal says the Center is not only the future of energy in New Jersey by hosting events for policymakers, academics and other stakeholders such as the 2018 Clean and Sustainable Energy Summit, but also through a variety of education programs designed to cultivate tomorrow's energy leaders. ■

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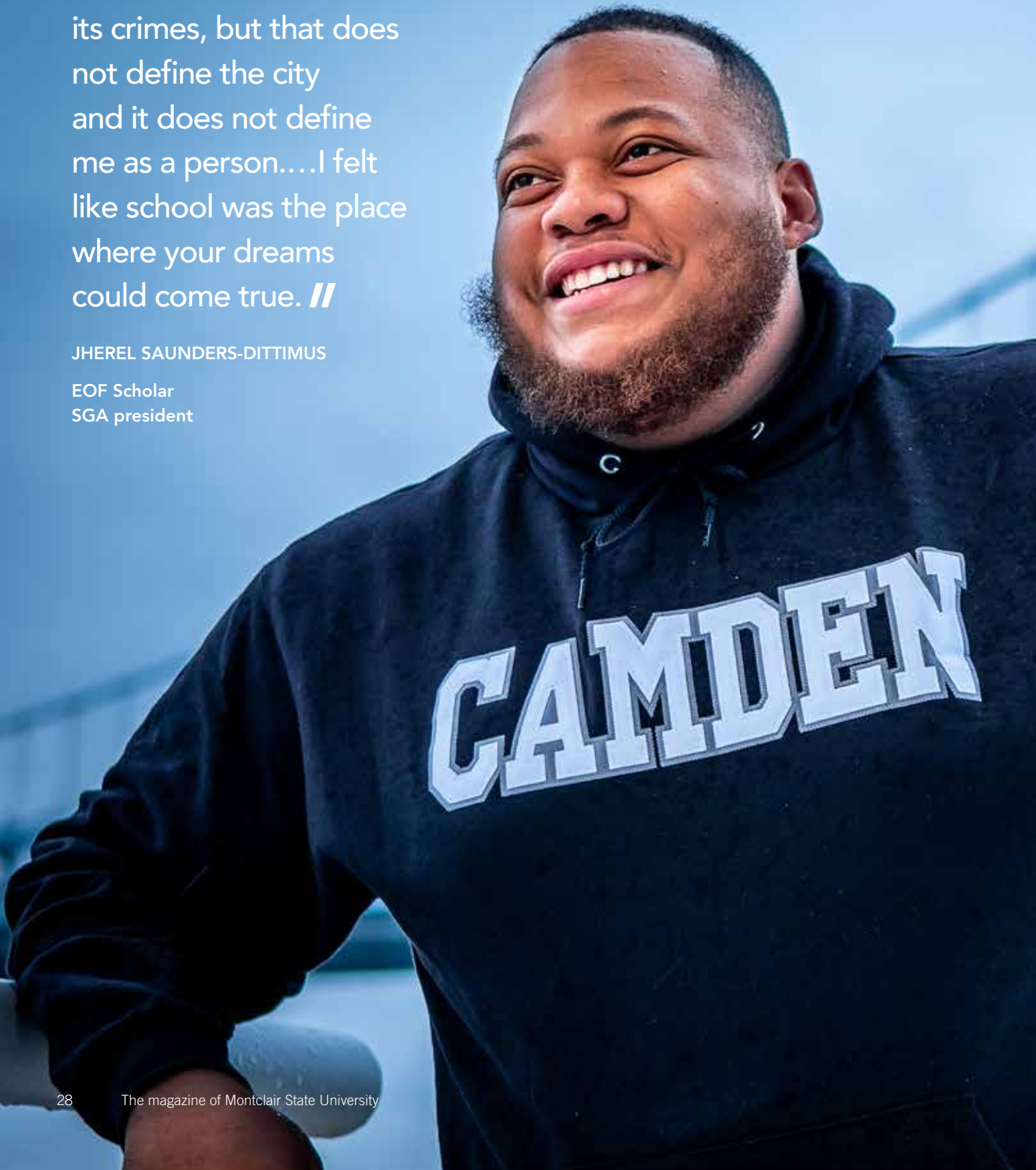
Montclair State University Alumni

# Montclair State University

// Camden does have its bad times, it does have its crimes, but that does not define the city and it does not define me as a person....I felt like school was the place where your dreams could come true. //

JHEREL SAUNDERS-DITTIMUS

EOF Scholar  
SGA president



# A Bridge TO Success

EOF  
CHANGEMAKERS  
CELEBRATE **50** YEARS  
OF TRANSFORMING  
LIVES

BY MARILYN JOYCE LEHREN

**G**rowing up in Camden, a city synonymous with urban blight, the classroom for Jherel Saunders-Dittimus was a bright spot. “I always loved school,” he says. “As much as I probably complained in order to fit in, school was always my gateway. I felt like school was definitely the place where your dreams could come true.”

As an Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) scholar at Montclair State University, Saunders-Dittimus is chasing those dreams. He’s a leader on campus, and after running this spring, new president of the

Student Government Association. His resilience and experiences drive him to succeed.

“Camden does have its bad times, it does have its crimes, but that does not define the city and it does not define me as a person,” he says. “At the end of the day, that’s where I gained my heart.”

For the past 50 years, EOF has discovered the potential in students like Saunders-Dittimus, providing a way for young men and women from the poorest

neighborhoods, from the most troubled school districts, to thrive when given a real chance with quality mentoring, tutoring and advising.

Montclair State’s EOF has long been a shining example of the 65 state-funded EOF programs in New Jersey, each designed to provide support for educationally and economically disadvantaged students, many the first in their families to attend college. And often, as is the case at Montclair State, it is run by people who have walked in those students’ shoes.

## BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Kaluba Chipepo, a sergeant on the University police department and an adjunct professor, shares his story with EOF scholars new to the program: the middle of 11 children raised by a single mother who encouraged him to continue school. “She wanted me to set a different path for my younger sisters who were coming up,” he says.

Accepted by EOF at Montclair State, he set off in the summer of 1988, “throwing a few things into a garbage bag. My mom gave me money for the bus and I was off to college.”

All new scholars take part in a summer academy known as the “heart and soul” of EOF, a six-week program that introduces college courses and provides the new students with the structure, skills, resources and counseling that significantly reduce drop-out rates, contributing to keeping nearly 90 percent of the first-year scholars in school.

“We put our students through the rigor. We really do,” says Rahjaun Gordon, associate director. “But we do it out of love. We do it out of community. We do it out of character building, and we fill in any gaps that the students may have had in their educational, personal journeys.”

Retention and graduation rates are the key measures of the program’s success, and at Montclair State, three out of four scholars graduate within six years, among the highest in the state.

Chipepo credits EOF for helping him persevere through life challenges that could have easily derailed him from completing his bachelor’s degree in business administration, and later an MBA. “When you go into EOF, you go in with half a tank. They fill you up with a full tank of gas and you’re ready to face the world again,” he says.

“We try to navigate some of the stressors and troubles our EOF students had coming

**// When they say EOF is family, they really mean it. It’s a family because they have background and understanding of everything you’ve been through. //**

**CIERRA WATTS**

**May 2019 graduate in Business Administration**

to college by giving them as much support as possible, by being mentors, by being motivators and also by showing them that it is possible,” says Gordon, a doctoral student conducting research on first-generation, low-income African American males and their persistence in college. He studies the students’ family structures as well as the factors that supported them on their way to college and while they’re in school.

## HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Cierra Watts is capitalizing on the opportunities. Graduating in the top of her class at University High School in Newark, she was accepted into 21 colleges. She chose Montclair State because of the promise of EOF. “No matter what kind of student you are in high school, the transition to college is going to be totally different. You’re more independent; you’re living alone. There’s no one to wake you up in the morning and no one to tell you to do your homework. I wanted stability. I had heard great things and that great people come from EOF.”

EOF alumni include political commentators, college administrators, actors and business leaders, and Watts has her sights set high. A business administration major who graduated in four years in May with a concentration in Finance, she served as a student representative on the University’s Board of Trustees. She plans to help build wealth for lower-income investors. “EOF has played a big part in my growth as a student leader and in the ways I am paving pathways

for students coming behind me.”

Her own path has not been easy. In September, on the first day of her senior year, her mother, Myeshia Williams, died unexpectedly. “When I started college, my mom went back to school. She said, ‘I can’t push you to go to college if I don’t finish.’ And she actually finished. She finished her last class a week before she passed away. I’m proud I was able to inspire her to finish her degree.”

At the funeral, Watts says she was uplifted by her EOF family. “When they say EOF is family, they really mean it. They have background and understanding of everything you’ve been through. EOF is one of those places where I can go. I can laugh. I can cry. I can feel at home. It’s like a home away from home.”

Saunders-Dittimus takes the family analogy a step further. “I always say that EOF equals FOE and FOE stands for Family Over Everything.”

## PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL

“My story is unique, but the stories I hear from my scholars are very similar,” says EOF Executive Director Daniel Jean, who lost his father in the eighth grade. “I was a straight-A student up until that point, and then my grades started to plummet. An EOF director interviewed me, told me that my grades were terrible – the interaction was very strange; I didn’t know what his angle was. Then two weeks later I received an acceptance letter. I was forever grateful.





Cierra Watts  
EOF scholar



Rahjaun Gordon  
Associate director



Gladys Valentin  
EOF alumna

**// When you go into EOF, you go in with half a tank. They fill you up with a full tank of gas and you're ready to face the world again. //**

**KALUBA CHIPEPO**

**Sergeant  
Montclair State Police**



Kaluba Chipepo  
EOF alumnus



Executive Director Daniel Jean (center) with a few of the 2019 EOF Scholar graduates. Pictured left to right: Julia Barton, Christopher Philippe, Cassandra Ramos and Elijah Blackwell.

Raised by Haitian immigrants in the heart of Newark, New Jersey, this avenue for college access absolutely made the difference.”

Recently, Jean was in the computer lab, talking with a student typing a paper. “Dr. Jean, my mother lost her home again so we’ll have to go back to the shelter.” The student remained composed, going right back to typing his paper after sharing the news, Jean recalls. “There are a lot of scholars dealing with similar situations of the despair and the challenges that come with poverty. What we do is engage these motivated scholars and provide them resources and encouragement to ultimately achieve their personal and professional dreams.”

The legacy of EOF is important, Jean says. “When I started here, there was a strong foundation and framework,” much of it credited to the contributions of Bertha Diggs. She was part of the inaugural class in 1968 of Martin Luther King Scholars (later to be renamed the Educational Opportunity Fund), and made EOF her life calling, retiring last year after three decades as a champion of Montclair State students.

## INSPIRING NEW LEADERS

Saunders-Dittimus, who has worked the past two summers as a peer leader, shares with new EOF students the highs of the college experience and his personal lows struggling academically. “I nearly packed my bags,” he says. “My advisors just saw something in me and wouldn’t let me go.”

These days, Saunders-Dittimus is a rising senior in communication studies with a minor in entrepreneurship. He plans to earn higher degrees and return eventually to Camden to create youth programs. “I want to be the person who drives the younger generation to go to school or get on a career path,” he says. “I’ve learned that our days are ticking, that we have just so much time in the world, and the time we have should be focused on investing in ourselves.”

Some 700 students are EOF scholars at Montclair State. To be eligible, participants must have resided in New Jersey for at least 12 months, meet the NJ State Higher Education income criteria and exhibit through academic standing the potential for high achievement.

Eligible students receive up to \$1,500 of EOF Grant funding annually, awarded in the state system by Gladys Valentin, assistant to the executive director. She’s another of the EOF alumni on campus, joining EOF as a secretary in 2001 and taking advantage of the opportunity to earn a degree as an EOF transfer student graduating with a bachelor’s degree in Spanish. She received the Excelsior Award for outstanding service and dedication. As a single mother, she understands the challenges the scholars face and gives back by donating each year to the EOF book fund. “Students do come here struggling. I just like to help,” she says.


Many students worry their financial needs and grades will hinder their possibilities, says Mary Colon, director of academic personnel services. She also understands the roadblocks. Colon was a high school student at Barringer in Newark – one of 10 children and the first to head to college – when she was accepted to Montclair State as an EOF scholar. “EOF nurtures you to have a voice in navigating your financial and academic path,” she says.

Each year, EOF brings more than 1,000 high school students to campus during the Young Women’s Leadership and Boys to Men conferences that showcase the college experience and provide financial literacy, leadership and career training. The students also receive help throughout the college application process, including financial aid and scholarships.

“EOF is still one of the best kept secrets in New Jersey,” Jean says. “There are pockets throughout the state that don’t know what EOF is so I’m working very intently to make sure that EOF is known, and that the folks who need to know know so that students are continuously supported for the next 50 years.” ■




**RED HAWKS ATHLETICS**



# **MONTCLAIR MADNESS**

BY STEVE POLITI



**Men's, women's  
basketball teams  
provide thrills and heart  
but must look to next  
year for post-season  
success**

# A FIGHT

**T**

he four words are written at the bottom of the dry-erase board inside the locker room, but unlike the other instructions that Head Coach Marlon Sears has outlined for the Montclair State men's basketball team, these are in capital letters.

These words are everything.

“THIS IS OUR MARCH!”

The calendar reads February 16, but for the University's two basketball teams, that's a lie. For Sears and his counterpart with the women's basketball team, Karin Harvey, this is their March Madness. This is the biggest game of the year – unless, that is, they survive to play another one.

And another one ...

And another one ...

As the women's team has done repeatedly in the last several years.

This is the start of the New Jersey Athletic Conference Tournament, the first postseason event on the calendar. This is a win-or-go-home moment, a single game for both teams that will help define how they view the entire season that preceded it.

That both teams – with players who are friends, classmates and cheerleaders for each other – will play back-to-back at the Panzer Athletic Center? That makes the afternoon perfect. Before it is over, the several hundred fans who pay their \$5 to fill the bleachers in Panzer will witness two intense games that will go down to the final minute.



**Left:** Myles Mitchell-White goes up for a layup prior to making his buzzer-beater shot. **Right:** The Red Hawks huddle up before a big win.

They will see one wild postgame celebration that spills out into a stairwell and gets so overheated that a window shatters from exuberant pounding on the wall. They will see one player screaming on the floor after dislocating her shoulder, only to pop it back into place and return to help her teammates.

They will see the joy that comes from a buzzer-beating victory that raises the hopes of an entire program, and the tears that flow after one of the most impressive streaks in the athletic department's history comes to an unexpected end.

They technically won't go on to see March Madness, not this year. But they will

experience Montclair Madness. And, for one crazy afternoon, that is every bit as good.

## ‘WIN OR GO HOME’ TIME

It is 10:50 a.m. If you didn't know that a basketball doubleheader was about to take place here, you wouldn't find many signs to tip you off.

Mike Scala, the University's longtime sports information guru, sets up the scorer's table and plugs in the microphone. A few employees and students unfold chairs along the sideline where the players will sit. A visiting women's lacrosse team from RPI, here for an afternoon scrimmage, is having brunch in the gymnasium lobby.

# TO THE END

The College of New Jersey, the team that the third-seeded Montclair State men will face in this first round NJAC Tournament game, has yet to arrive. And, inside the tiny locker room that he helped raise \$25,000 to renovate, Coach Sears is pacing as he gets ready for a program-defining moment.

The banner on the gymnasium wall tells the story: Only once since 1982 has the men's basketball team won the NJAC title. Sears, in his fourth season at Montclair State, is determined to change that.

"They know that, at this stage in the season, it's win or go home," Sears says. "There's so much riding on this. Only 64 teams in the nation make it to the Division III (NCAA) Tournament. We want to be one of them."

Sears knows all too well the razor-thin margin that separates the teams that get there and the teams that don't. A year ago, his Red Hawks lost in the NJAC semifinals when a controversial technical foul call helped Ramapo force overtime. The league sent the University a letter acknowledging a refereeing mistake, but for Sears and his players, that mea culpa was too little, too late.

He gathers his players in the locker room at 12:43 p.m., with just 17 minutes left until tipoff. The song "Stayin' Alive" by the Bee Gees is playing on the sound system as the players arrive, hardly a current popular tune among college students. But it's a fitting one for the

young men in the home-team uniforms. "For the next one hour and 45 minutes, you play tough and you play with passion," Sears tells them.

He doesn't have to make a big speech about what's at stake. They know. Myles Mitchell-White, a sophomore guard from Trenton, is chosen to call out those four words on the white board – "THIS IS OUR MARCH!" – as he and his teammates piled in around their coach.

Mitchell-White doesn't know it then, but in just two hours, Montclair Madness would engulf him in a memorable way.

## A FIGHT TO THE END

The game is the back-and-forth battle that everyone expects. TCNJ takes an early lead, but Montclair State rallies before halftime. The Red Hawks go up by as many as 10 points in the second half, but the Lions aren't ready for their season to end, either.

The game is tied at 65 with the final minute ticking down. One 3-point shot by the Red Hawks misses, then another caroms off the rim. Both times, the home team fights to get the rebound. Sears calls time out with 19 seconds left and draws up a play to put the ball in his leading scorer's hands.



Coach Marlon Sears encourages players during a close game, prior to victory.



## RED HAWKS ATHLETICS

Mitchell-White has a choice: He can dish to a teammate or take the ball to the hoop himself. When the defense shifts to stop him from passing, he drives to the hoop and pulls up for a fall-away jumper with 1.2 seconds left.

It hits nothing but net.

A final heave from TCNJ misses and Mitchell-White finds himself at the bottom of a pile on the Panzer court, ecstatic about the biggest basket of his college career but also a little worried. It gets a little hard to breath.

“I wasn’t expecting that at all,” Mitchell-White says, as the team heads to the locker room. “I’m just glad my teammates and I are happy. I love the support they have for me and I’m glad we had a chance to celebrate together.”

Upstairs in the gym, the onlookers are still buzzing about the incredible finish. A dozen of them, though, must put aside their excitement in a hurry and get on the court to warm up. It is time for Harvey and her players on the women’s team to go to work.

### PLAYING WITH HEART

Harvey is no stranger to the pressure that comes this time of year. Few coaches in Division III women’s college basketball have had more success over the past few seasons than Harvey, who has turned the NJAC Tournament into an annual Montclair State coronation.

Dating back to 2012, the Red Hawks have played repeatedly in this tournament. Twelve times they walked off the court victorious in playoff games. They added six NJAC championship trophies to the Panzer case over the course of that unprecedented run.

Sears, perhaps her biggest fan in the athletic department, puts it this way: “They’re going to name this court after her someday.”

But this season is different. With only one senior on the roster, the Red Hawks

**Left:** Taylor Brown dribbles past her opponent. **Right:** Kim Calloway goes up for a layup prior to a shoulder injury.



struggle down the stretch and fail to earn a first-round tournament bye. It is hard to call it a rebuilding year – what coach, after all, wouldn’t want to “rebuild” with a third-place finish? But the expectations are different.

“They sense it. They feel it,” Harvey says. “This time of year has been a big part of our culture in this program.”

The opponent: Kean. And, right from the start, Harvey knows her team is facing an uphill battle. The Cougars take a 10-point lead, scrapping for every loose ball as the Montclair State coach paces in front of her team’s bench.

“It’s all rebounding. It’s all rebounding. It’s all rebounding,” she tells her players.

The Red Hawks trail by as many as 16 points as the hopes for bookend Montclair State victories seem to fade. Then came a

furious rally with senior Domonique Wirsing leading the way. The score is tied at 51.

Harvey looked toward the rafters and smiled.

The joy doesn’t last as one of her players is on the court, writhing in pain, after a collision with an opponent. It is Kim Calloway, a sophomore guard from Morristown. The gym goes quiet except for her screams, and after she is helped off the court, it seems clear that the Red Hawks will have to play on without one of their key players.

They fall behind again. Kean is looking to pull away. Then, harkening back to a famous moment in New York Knicks history, Calloway comes running out of the locker room with a brace on her shoulder. She’d popped it back into place to rejoin her teammates.

"Here comes Willis Reed!" Scala says from the bleachers, referring to the New York Knicks player who returned to play in the 1970 NBA Finals with a torn thigh muscle.

## A NAIL-BITER, AND A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

The team, however, cannot write that fairytale ending. Taylor Brown, a sophomore guard from Trumbull, Conn., hits a 3-pointer with a minute left to cut the Kean lead to just 2 points, but the visitors hold on for the win.

This time, it is another team celebrating on the Panzer court. This time, it is Harvey's players wiping away the tears as they make their way through the handshake line. Their season is over.

"I'm very proud of them," Harvey says, recalling her message to the team. "I thought we competed for 40 minutes. We played the type of basketball we wanted to play. Sometimes, the result just isn't what you want."

Harvey, now a brilliant 263-80 in 12 seasons at Montclair State, is facing an unfamiliar situation. The calendar is about to turn to March, and for the first time in six seasons, she won't have a team to coach.

That's the other side of this time of year. As the men move on to the next round of the NJAC Tournament, the women will have to wait for another shot at Montclair Madness a year from now.

Panzer is empty again as the clock ticks toward 5:14 p.m. Another day in the most exciting time of the year for Montclair State's college basketball teams has come to an end. But, all around the country, the Madness is just beginning. ■

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*Editor's note: The Montclair State men's team saw their season come to an end in the NJAC Tournament semifinals with a 95-86 loss to Rowan. The Red Hawks finished 17-10. In May, Sears accepted a job as an associate head coach at Columbia University.*



**Top:** Coach Karin Harvey discusses strategy with the team during the last game of a building season.  
**Right:** Domonique Wirsing dribbles down the court to lead a rally in a tight game.



**“THIS TIME OF YEAR HAS BEEN A BIG PART OF OUR CULTURE IN THIS PROGRAM.”**

—COACH KARIN HARVEY

**H**olly Gera remembers how the fans reacted when they saw the familiar face in the crowd at the Division III Women's College World Series. Hosting the event was a big deal for Montclair State in 2009, and accordingly, the University recruited the biggest celebrity on campus to attend.

It was Yogi Berra, of course.

"When they saw Yogi, it was like a chill in the crowd," Gera says. "Carmen (his wife) threw out the first pitch. It was really a great moment."

But for Gera, who retired as athletic director this winter after three decades at Montclair State, that moment was significant for another reason, too. It was just another sign of how far the University had come as a major player on the national sports scene.

To host a national event like that? It would have been unthinkable when she returned to her alma mater in 1989 and joined the athletic department the following year. Montclair State didn't even have a dedicated softball field, much less a facility good enough to hold a tournament to decide the NCAA champion.

Teams had to jockey for time on Sprague Field, and during the peak season, practices were scheduled as late as 10 p.m. to accommodate everyone. Improving existing fields and adding new ones, as well as expanding and renovating the University's other athletic facilities, was a priority when Gera became athletic director in 1996.

Those improvements allowed Montclair State's 18 teams to become fixtures near the top of the New Jersey Athletic Conference standings under Gera's watch, with regular appearances in the NCAA Tournament. Red Hawk programs flourished during her 23 years as athletic director, winning 50 conference championships while producing 15 NCAA individual champions and over 200 All-Americans.



# Gera Says Goodbye After 30 Years

BY STEVE POLITI

"During the time I was there, all of our programs made it to the NAAs – some of them for the first time in their history," Gera says. "I'm really proud of that."

Along the way, Gera stockpiled several national awards. She was named the Division III Southeast Region General Sports TURF AD of the Year by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA) in June 2006. That fall, she received the Jostens Female Administrator of the Year award from the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC). She was also the recipient of the Pathfinder Award for the State of New Jersey in 2004 from the National Association of Girls and Women in Sports and the Garden State Award for Contributions to Athletics in 2001.

The accolades and victories, she said, are great. But for Gera, the best part of the job was the relationships she built along the way. That includes the student athletes who, after graduation, often became the alumni that she would see on the sidelines

coaching their former teams or in the stands cheering them on.

"In looking back, the most meaningful memories I have surround relationships, shared experiences and challenges weathered together," Gera said. "My work gave me energy, gave me purpose and gave me a sense of accomplishment."

Gera isn't leaving that family behind entirely. Her retirement plans include spending time with Abby, a 6-year-old beagle that she adopted, and working as a docent for the Stickley Museum in Morris Plains. The ability to make spur-of-the-moment plans on a weekend night is not a luxury she has had for a long time.

But she is also looking forward to "a nice spring day" when she can return to Montclair State and watch several teams play from the bleachers. When she does, she can look around and know that she had a big role in making all that she sees a reality. ■



# SPORTS BRIEFS

## DECORATED



Senior **Grace Nielsen** completed one of the most successful diving careers in Montclair State history with an appearance at the NCAA Northeast/South Diving Championships. Nielsen, who holds every Montclair State diving record, finished 16th in the three-meter competition and 15th in the one-meter finals. She is the only University diver to qualify for the prestigious event since 1998, doing so two years in a row.

## HONORED



**Ashley Koester**, a senior midfielder for the women's soccer team, was named the NJAC's Defensive Player of the Year – the first time a Red Hawks player has earned that distinction since 2006. Koester also became a four-time All-NJAC selection, and joined junior forward **Emily Beenders** on the league's first team.

## CHOSEN



**Mauro Altamura**, a senior linebacker for the Red Hawks, was chosen as a D3football.com All-American. Altamura, the 2018 NJAC Defensive Player of the Year, was a third-team selection after registering 92 tackles, four sacks, an interception and two fumble recoveries for Montclair State during his final season.

## REMEMBERED



**Fred Hill Sr.**, who coached both football and baseball from the mid 1970s to the mid '80s, died on March 2. He was 84. Moose, as he was affectionately called, compiled a 52-16-4 record from 1976-83 in football and a 148-91-2 mark from 1977-83 in baseball, including a Division III College World Series appearance, before leaving to coach Rutgers' baseball team.



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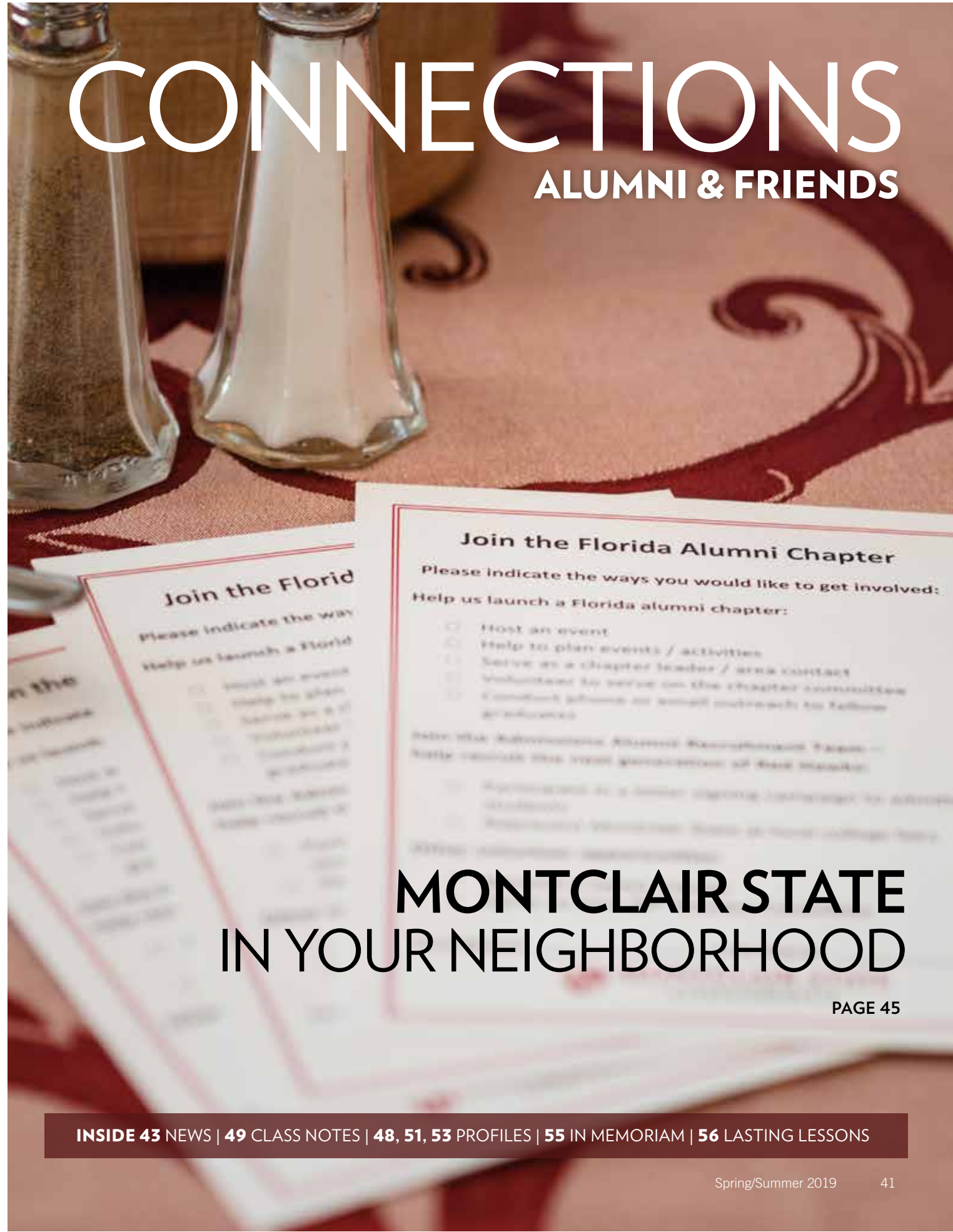
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THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

**Montclair State University**

# CONNECTIONS

ALUMNI & FRIENDS



## MONTCLAIR STATE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

PAGE 45



# THE RESULTS ARE IN!

## And the survey says...

In a recent survey, 2,115 graduates from as far back as the 1940s to 2018 took the Montclair State Alumni Survey and provided us with valuable feedback. Here's a look at what the survey found:

## → OF OUR 2,115 RESPONDENTS:



**43%**

offered to serve as volunteers in areas including recruiting, mentoring, providing internships, speaking in a class, serving on a panel or serving on a committee.



**61.5%**

attended an event, including alumni activities, arts/cultural events, academic programs/speakers and Homecoming.

**46%**

follow us on social media. Facebook and LinkedIn are the most popular.



Montclair State University Alumni



Montclair State Alumni



Office of Alumni Relations at Montclair State University



Officialmsualumni

We thank those who participated in the 2018 Montclair State Alumni Survey. Your thoughtful answers help us better understand alumni interests in order to evaluate and enhance our programs and services and guide us as we create future events, activities and benefits. We look forward to further dialogue and engagement as we continue to build and strengthen the alumni network. For more information, contact the Office of Annual Giving and Alumni Engagement at [alumni@montclair.edu](mailto:alumni@montclair.edu) or 973-655-4141.

*The survey and data analysis were prepared by students in the Data Collection and Management Program under the direction of Christopher Donoghue, associate professor of Sociology.*



## MOST POPULAR ALUMNI BENEFITS:



1. MONTCLAIRconnect (our online community)
2. Alumni ID Card
3. Gmail for Life Account
4. Career Services
5. Discounts/Perks

## TOP PROGRAMS ALUMNI WOULD LIKE TO SEE OFFERED IN THE FUTURE:

- Career Services, Workshops and Professional Networking
- Professional Development/Continuing Education
- Travel Programs
- Art and Cultural Events
- Social/Networking Events
- Mentoring Programs



## MOST VALUED COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS:



- *Montclair* Magazine
- Alumni E-newsletter
- Email Updates

## TOP AREAS OF INTEREST:

- University News
- New Academic Programs
- Class Notes
- Faculty Research



## A NIGHT WITH THE NJ DEVILS

In what has become a favorite annual winter event, the New Jersey Devils hosted Montclair State Alumni Night at Prudential Center. Alumni and friends enjoyed a pregame reception and some hockey as the Devils took on the New York Islanders.



## TASTING THE WINES OF FRANCE

Alumni gathered in April to learn about the key aspects of wine tasting as well as the geography and history of the wines they sampled, and the regions from which they originated. The 9th Annual Wine Tasting focused on the wines of France. Attendees had the opportunity to taste a variety of wines, including light, medium and full-bodied wines.

Alumni gathered in April to learn about the key aspects of wine tasting as well as the geography and history of the wines they sampled, and the regions from which they originated.

## CLASS OF 1969 CELEBRATES ITS 50<sup>TH</sup> REUNION

Members of the Class of 1969 gathered to celebrate their 50th reunion in May. Alumni were welcomed back to campus for a wine and cheese reception and tours the night before Commencement. The Class of 1969 was honored at the 2019 Commencement ceremony where members led the procession of graduates. Following the ceremony, all alumni and guests celebrated on campus with a luncheon and campus tours.

## HONORING EMERITI FACULTY

In the fall, six faculty members – Mark L. Berenson, Robert Browning, Karen D. Goodman, William Robert Parzynski, Ana Maria Villegas and Shahla Mozayani Wunderlich – became professors emeriti during the University Board of Trustees meeting in October and were treated to a luncheon in their honor.



## THIRD GRADUATION FAIR A SUCCESS

More than 2,500 graduating students attended the third annual Graduation Fair in May. Students picked up their caps and gowns, donated to the senior class gift campaign and had access to more than a dozen campus partners, including The Graduate School, The Center for Career Services, and The Office of Annual Giving and Alumni Engagement.

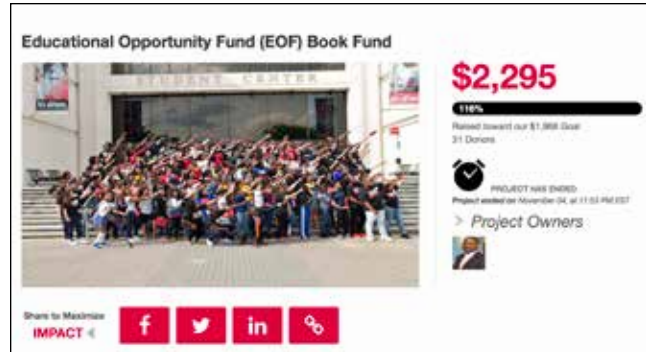


## CROWDFUNDING MAKES AN IMPACT ON MONTCLAIR STATE

The Office of Annual Giving and Alumni Engagement recently launched IMPACT Montclair State – the University’s crowdfunding platform. To date, more than 15 projects have been completed, with half of them meeting or exceeding their goals with gifts from alumni, faculty, staff, students, parents and friends.

Recent projects included campaigns to help send the MSU Wind Symphony to a national conference, support club sports teams, raise funds for the WMSC Excellence in Radio scholarship and support the volunteers who make Rocky, the University’s mascot, possible.

As of April, the platform had raised a total of \$70,000 from nearly 800 donors. Throughout the year, new projects are launched that benefit students and the campus community by providing the resources needed to offer the best education possible.



For more information, visit [crowdfund.montclair.edu](http://crowdfund.montclair.edu) or contact Stacy Albanese '08, '17 MA, in the Office of Annual Giving and Alumni Engagement, at 973-655-5465 or [albaneses@montclair.edu](mailto:albaneses@montclair.edu).

## GIVING DAY BREAKS RECORDS



### 48 for Montclair State

The Montclair State community came together on April 25 and 26 to support students with “48 for Montclair State” as part of our 4th Annual Giving Day campaign.

#### GIVING DAY BY THE NUMBERS



MONEY RAISED

**\$118,332**



'PHIL' THE PIG

**\$650**

IN CHANGE FOR THE EMERGENCY BOOK FUND



TOP

**5**

FUNDS SUPPORTED

1. COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
2. COLLEGE OF THE ARTS
3. ATHLETICS
4. EMERGENCY SCHOLARSHIP FUND
5. THE FUND FOR MONTCLAIR STATE

NUMBER OF DONORS

**419**



## Montclair State in Your Neighborhood



With more than 130,000 alumni living in all 50 states and worldwide, the Office of Alumni Engagement hosts events that give alumni an opportunity to connect with the University – near where they live. This year, alumni in neighborhoods in New Jersey, New York, Florida and Arizona got a chance to hear updates on the University's recent accomplishments and on Soar, The Campaign for Montclair State University, which is on track to raise a historic \$75 million for students, faculty and programs.

### BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG (AND SMALL) CITIES – NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY



In November 2018, alumni gathered at the Hyatt Regency in Morristown, New Jersey, to reconnect with fellow graduates and University leadership. Many Morris County area alumni were attending their first alumni event, and said they were pleased to see Montclair State close to home and hear from

Feliciano School of Business Dean Greg Cant, who shared University news and updates.

In December 2018, Red Hawks met for an evening of networking at Smithfield Hall in New York City. Alumni had the chance to reconnect with old friends, make new ones and enjoy an evening in The Big Apple.

In January, the party moved to the Shannon Rose in Clifton, New Jersey, for a Montclair State Trivia Challenge game, with three lucky winners leaving with University swag. A month later, alumni met at the lively Birch Bar in Hoboken, New Jersey, and in March, they returned to New York City for an unforgettable evening at One World Observatory, where they were treated to spectacular views of New York City and watched the sun set over New Jersey.

### ON THE ROAD AGAIN – FLORIDA AND ARIZONA



Alumni in Florida gathered for a New York Yankees spring training game in Tampa, where the Yankees took on the Philadelphia Phillies at Steinbrenner Field. For two alumni in particular, the event was a special reunion. When Reid Richards '79 and his wife, Sylvia, got their invitation, he reached out to his former roommate, Robert Gardner '79, and invited him to fly down from New Jersey for the game and stay with him for a few days.

"If it wasn't for the spring training game, I wouldn't have seen my friend. It's been two years since we got together," says Richards.

In Naples, alumni lunched at The Ritz-Carlton Beach Resort with Daniel Gurskis, dean of the College of the Arts, and Colleen Coppla, vice president for Development, who shared exclusive updates and highlights specific to the College of the Arts.

In Del Ray Beach, Barbara and Rob Lieberman hosted alumni in their home, where guests heard University updates from President Susan A. Cole and enjoyed a performance by the accomplished Heimat Quartet, the John J. Cali School of Music Graduate String Quartet-in-Residence.

With more than 400 alumni living and working in Arizona, alumni were treated to a cocktail reception at the Hyatt Regency Scottsdale Resort and Spa at Gainey Ranch for an alumni networking event in April.

"Alumni have been eager to hear about the University's transformation through our Soar campaign and how we are true to our mission of providing access and excellence to our students," says Coppla.

To help organize events in your area, contact the Office of Alumni Engagement at 973-655-4141 or [alumni@montclair.edu](mailto:alumni@montclair.edu). Check out our gallery of event photos and view a calendar of upcoming activities at [montclair.edu/alumni](http://montclair.edu/alumni).



# LEGACY DONORS HELP GENERATIONS TO COME



Alumna Barbara Brummer (top) and Jim Merli (left) and Professor Emeritus Robert Pines (right) are among many donors creating a lasting legacy with planned gifts to the University.

Marian McGinty credits Montclair State University for giving her an opportunity to reinvent herself at age 60. For Education Professor Emeritus Robert Pines, it was a source of personal identity and inspiration during his 33-year tenure. For others, the University provided the springboard to successful careers, whether as a school administrator, investment banker or business executive.

The donors share a mission to support the future of Montclair State and its students as members of the Carpe Diem Society, whose members have

committed to leave a portion of their estate to the University.

More than \$22 million has been raised in legacy gifts in the University's current Soar campaign. Some donors establish a gift annuity or designate a percentage of their retirement account. Others transfer property, name the University as a beneficiary or leave a residual amount to establish endowed or spendable scholarships.

Morgen O'Neal, Class of 2020, says the support can have a life-changing impact for students. "It is

because of loyal donors that I can continue my education and follow my dream," she says.

McGinty was a 60-year-old widow and volunteer usher for TheaterFest when she was offered a job as group sales director, an experience that helped her realize hidden talents.

"I'd never gone to college or anything like that," she says. "To have someone call me and think they needed me was empowering."

McGinty hopes to enable someone else's second act,

designating a music scholarship aimed at students starting over. McGinty always loved to sing but didn't study voice until she was 41, and went on to do community theater.

It is McGinty's second major gift to the University. Five years ago, she established the Charles P. McGinty Memorial Scholarship in her husband's name, to be awarded to a male vocalist enrolled in the College of the Arts.

Retired investment banker Jim Merli '83 joined the Feliciano School of Business Advisory Board in 2012, working to ensure faculty and students will be prepared for the ever-changing demands of the workplace.

Merli says his tenure on the board and work as an adjunct professor and executive-in-residence offered a window into the challenges students and universities face.



# ALUMNI NEWS

"The more I got involved, the more I liked what I was seeing and what I felt like we were accomplishing," he says.

Merli and his wife, Sandy, made a gift to the School to name the James W. Merli Executive Conference Center, but also designated a portion of their estate for student scholarships.

"Students today need help with college costs," he says. "It was important to me to give back to Montclair State."

Pines says the years he spent teaching at the College of Education and Human Services, prior to retirement in 2003, were deeply gratifying, both personally and professionally. "I think the

University contributed more to me than I did to it," he says.

Pines said he was constantly inspired by the strong work ethic and passion his students brought to teaching. But he also recognized the financial struggles many faced and wanted to find a way to help. Through his estate, Pines designated an annual scholarship award – the Robert Pines Scholarship – for an honor student and future teacher in their last year of school.

"This was just a logical extension of my past association with our students," he says.

Barbara Brummer '68, New Jersey's state director at The Nature Conservancy, spent much

of her career as an executive with Johnson & Johnson, including president of J&J Canada Inc., and is chair of the College of Science and Mathematics Advisory Board at the University, serving also on the University's Campaign Cabinet.

Brummer, who earned her undergraduate degree in biology, says she owes her success to the professors "who inspired me to learn and apply."

Brummer says participating in a planned giving program was important to her because "women need to help others by offering a hand up."

George Iannacone '54 spent 31 years working in education after earning his undergraduate

degree. He recalls the close-knit community he experienced as a student and still maintains close friendships with his fellow classmates.

Iannacone was part of a pioneering effort in the 1950s to produce live broadcasts of curriculum in the early days of television.

"I felt very fulfilled, academically and socially," Iannacone recalls. "I felt like we were connected to the world."

Participating in the Carpe Diem Society, he says, "is the right thing to be socially responsible and contribute to the institutions that we enjoy."

—Suzanne Marta

## SAVE THE DATE

# HOMECOMING

## OCTOBER 19

Homecoming season is quickly approaching! Join us on Saturday, October 19, for fun, food, football and festivities for the whole family.

Come home to cheer the Red Hawks on to victory as Montclair State takes on Christopher Newport University at 2 p.m.!

No matter how far away you live, returning to Montclair State is definitely worth the trip. We look forward to seeing you!

For more information, visit [montclair.edu/alumni](http://montclair.edu/alumni).





Julia Lanigan

# THE ART OF A QUALITY LIFE

Having fled with her family to the United States as a refugee from her birthplace of Hungary at 17, Julia Lanigan has a strong perspective on living a quality life. “We had no food and no future; it was intolerable,” Lanigan recalls.

She and her parents found work and settled in a Hungarian community in Passaic, New Jersey. She grew up with a strong work ethic and developed a deep appreciation for visual and musical arts and a love for Hungarian composers. “Art was always part of our lives...it improved our quality of life even when life was not very good.”

Thanks to scholarships from the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, she moved to its Kentucky campus for college, interacting with students from all over the world. She majored in chemistry

– a good choice, she says, “when you are still learning English.”

Lanigan attended graduate school at St. John’s University, where she met her husband, Thomas, also studying chemistry. She landed a job as chemist, which led to 26 years at American Cyanamid. “It was great because I worked for the same company but was exposed to varied jobs, spanning synthetics, molecular biology and cell biology,” she says.

She later joined her husband at Humana Press, the scientific publishing company he founded, and worked there 15 years, selling the company after his death.

After moving to Montclair 10 years ago, Lanigan met a few Hungarian students from Montclair State, and because

she lived so close to the campus, she opened her home to many graduate student musicians.

“I became interested in the school through the eyes of the students,” she says.

She now serves on the College of the Arts Advisory Board and has generously supported the arts at the University with donations to the College, the George Segal Gallery, the Alexander Kasser Theater, Peak Performances, the Annual Scholarship Dinner and scholarship support for high-achieving students through the Creative Talent Award.

“The most important consideration for me is that the quality of education at the University is advancing,” she says, pointing to Montclair State’s tremendous growth in technology, science, business, theater and

dance among other programs. “I’m impressed.”

She regularly hosts receptions and concerts with University students as well as professionals, including the New Jersey State Opera Guild and the Montclair Operetta Club. Keeping the arts in life is a message she fervently shares with all. “Art helps you think. It makes life richer – not always in dollars but it makes you richer in happiness.”

In her home full of paintings, many created by her brother, George Bartko, who became an artist, Lanigan lives that lesson. “I invite students to my home to expose them to art so they can envision the quality of life they would like to create for themselves and how to work hard to achieve it.”

–Laura Iandiorio

# CLASS NOTES

## 1930s

**Eileen Stouter '37** celebrated her 103rd birthday at the Slate Valley Center in Granville, N.Y., with her daughter, Mary Eileen Stouter. (1)

## 1940s

**Harriet Dresdner Silver '44** celebrated her 94th birthday with her family.

## 1950s

**Edgar A. Mack '50** recalled his time in World War II in an interview and article in the *News & Record* of Greensboro, N.C., titled "'Tin can sailor' recalls World War II."

**Eleanor Bill Calvin '51** celebrated her 88th birthday with friends, family and students. She teaches piano and sang three concerts of the complete *Messiah* last year. She is president of the Schubert Club, a group of piano teachers that sponsors student concerts and other activities.

**Emily Lummer '52** is enjoying living in Minnesota near family.

**John W. Dankowski '56, '63 MA** gave a talk titled "From Inkwells to Artificial Intelligence; A Lifetime of Teaching" in Mandarin at Three Gorges University in Chongqing, China, in November. (2)

**Leon J. Zimmerman '59** gathered with **Tom Kelly '59, '68 MA**; **Edward Topar '60**; **Guy Vinopal '60, '66 MA**; and **William Hogan '60** for a mini class reunion and remembrance of classmates who have died.

## 1960s

**Laura G. Adams Dunham '66 MA** published *Extraordinary Time: Spiritual Reflection from a Season with Cancer, Death and Transition*. The book aims to appeal to people who have suffered serious illness or traumatic loss and are seeking to heal from trauma, pain and grief.

**John D. Bryce '67** received good news when a woman contacted the Office of Alumni Engagement stating that she had found a 1967 Montclair State College class ring with his name inscribed inside. The woman discovered the ring among the belongings of her late father, a former police officer. Bryce's ring had been stolen during a break-in nearly 48 years ago.

**Thomas W. Gannon '68, '71 MA** is retiring after 50 years in education. In his most recent assignment, he supervised 24 student teachers at the College of Charleston (S.C.).

**Edmund A. Moderacki '68** has conducted close to 800 concerts, 300 parades and 15,000 pieces of music with the Waldwick (N.J.) Community Band, which marks its 65th anniversary this year.

**William S. Eickhorst '69, '70 MA** recently donated one of the largest privately held print collections in the United States to Missouri Western State University where he taught for 28 years. The collection comprises more than 1,000 prints by 300 artists. In addition to a 40-year teaching career, he founded and ran a print exhibition business for more than two decades. (3)

**Linda B. Liebiedz '69** joined "Grandmothers, Mothers and Others" Mountainside softball alongside daughter, Sandi, and granddaughter, Stephanie. (4)

## 1970s

**Diane Wald '70** has published more than 250 poems in literary magazines since 1966 and recently received a two-year fellowship in poetry from the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, Mass. Through the years, she received the Grolier Poetry Prize, The Denny Award, The Open Voice Award and the Anne Halley Award. Her novel *Gillyflower* was published in April.

**Nicholas F. Mazza '71**, professor and dean emeritus at Florida State University, College of Social Work, was elected president of the National Association for Poetry Therapy (NAPT). Mazza, a founding and continuing editor of the *Journal of Poetry Therapy*, delivered the keynote address at the 2018 NAPT Conference in Minneapolis. Mazza also received the NAPT Lifetime Achievement Award. (5)

**Aldo D. Scrofani '73** was appointed chief operating officer of The Apollo Theater Foundation, Inc. Scrofani has been involved with over 100 theatrical productions and worked with some of the largest names in the performing arts. As COO, he will oversee the operations of the iconic Apollo Theater as it increases its own productions and co-commissions while continuing its long history of nurturing emerging talents and art forms. Prior to this role, Scrofani served as COO of Columbia Artists Management, Inc. (A note in the Fall/Winter 2018 print edition misidentified his new position.)

**Angelo Genova '75**, co-founder, chairman and managing partner at Genova Burns, was included in ROI Influencers Power List 2019.

**Christina B. Kindl '75** was appointed vice president for communications and marketing at California University of Pennsylvania.



## CONNECTIONS ALUMNI & FRIENDS

**Thomas Loikith '75** was installed as the 120th president of the Bergen County Bar Association.

**Daniel Infanti '76** retired after a 40-year career in marketing and advertising that included senior executive positions at major international corporations, an advertising agency and a tech startup, including Sharp, Avaya, Etrana, Sigma Group and, most recently, CIT Bank.

**Joe Cosentino '77** added two more books to his series, *Bobby and Paolo's Holiday Stories*.

**Nancy E. Smith '77** is an employment lawyer for Smith Mullin and recently represented Gretchen Carlson in her suit against former Fox News head Roger Ailes. Smith is included in ROI Influencers Power List 2019.

**Donna Bonavita '78** was inducted into the 2018 Advertising Hall of Fame of New Jersey. She was a creative director of Global Design for KPMG LLP and propelled *World Magazine* to international design acclaim. In addition, she developed the brand for the Global Benefactor of the Nobel Peace Center and Nobel Peace Prize. (6)

**Ramiz Lapatinca '78, '80 MA** purchased former Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., and converted it into an art gallery for the public.

**Regina E. Egea '79** was named by *NJBIZ* as one of the 2019 Best 50 Women in Business Award winners.

### 1980s

**Neil D. Cooperman '80 MA** was the 2018 recipient of the prestigious Max Sobel Award for Outstanding Service and Leadership in Mathematics Education. The award is named after the internationally renowned math scholar who taught at Montclair State.

**Wayne DeFeo '80, '82 MA** was named executive director of the New Jersey Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council. (7)

**Daniel Furnald '80** joined the Newark Voices and Montclair State University Chorale in the New Jersey Symphony Performances of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* at NJPAC.

**James E. Horan '80** joined the arts department as teacher of music and choral director for The Pennington (N.J.) School.

**Stephen G. Mulligan '80** was inducted into the Butler (N.J.) High School Hall of Honor.

**Barbara McGraw Edmondson '81, '83 MA** was named the head of Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School in Washington, D.C.

**H. Scott Ellis '81** was promoted to president and CEO of the North American operations of TATA Chemicals Limited, of which he has been vice president and general counsel since 2004.

**Robert Eustace '81** was named the Christians in the Visual Arts Artist of the Month in March 2018.

**Susan F. Young '81** has been serving the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials as immediate past president for the 2018-2019 school year.

**Peter D. Aquino '83** was appointed to the board of directors of Alaska Communication Systems Group, Inc.

**Lydia Bruno Furnari '84, '95 MA** was appointed the interim assistant superintendent of Green Township (N.J.) Schools.

**Kathryn A. Mavrikakis '85** was promoted to senior production manager of the digital video department at CNBC.

**Theodore J. Pallis '86, '94 MA** published three books: *A History of the Grape Growers and Wine Makers of New Jersey* (2016), *The Ferris Wheel and the Moon* (2017) and *The New Jersey State Fish Hatchery at Hackettstown, A Continuing History* (2018).

**Anthony Prinzo '87** is an accountant with more than 30 years' experience. In 2015, he began his own practice. Prinzo is a certified valuation analyst by the National Association of Certified Valuators and Analysts, a certified mediator through the New Jersey Association of Professional Mediators, and a roster mediator for the Hudson County Special Civil Courts. He is a current member of the West Essex Regional Board of Education.

### 1990s

**Susan Y. Turner Ellerbee '90 MA** of Randallstown, Md., was named the 2018 National University System - Sanford Teacher Award winner for Maryland. The honor comes with a \$10,000 prize and this is the first year for this award program designed to honor inspirational teachers.

**Boris Gavrilovic '93, '97 MA** co-taught an "Acting for the Camera" workshop at Centenary University in Hackettstown, N.J.

**Robyn A. Merkel-Walsh '93, '95 MA** published a textbook titled *Functional Assessment and Remediation of TOTs*. For over 24 years, she has specialized in oral placement therapy, myofunctional disorders and feeding disorders. She works for the Ridgefield (N.J.) Board of Education, runs a private practice and is the board chair of the Oral Motor Institute.



### UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION

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New email? New number?  
Let us know!**

It's easy to update your information online through *MONTCLAIRconnect*, the online community exclusively for alumni of Montclair State University.

Visit [montclair.edu/alumni](http://montclair.edu/alumni), where you can also sign up for your alumni email account. You can also update your information by calling the **Office of Alumni Engagement** at 973-655-4141.

Talena Lachelle Queen '95



# POET, ACTIVIST, TEACHER

Talena Lachelle Queen loved writing and planned to build a career in broadcast journalism when she arrived at what was then Montclair State College in 1991.

Looking back, Queen, who was recognized in 2018 as the first Poet Laureate for her hometown of Paterson, New Jersey, and earned the New Jersey Clean Communities Council's (NJCCC) "Education Award," said her Montclair State education went beyond classroom curriculum.

"My professors were empowering," she says. "They taught me that I could do anything."

Queen did start her career in broadcast journalism but made several pivots, taking her to

Seattle, Washington, for 18 years before returning to Paterson in 2015.

But those college lessons of empowerment are ones Queen still leans on and tries to pass on in her roles as a poet, an activist and a fifth-grade language arts teacher at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School in Paterson.

"I want my students to know that their talent is unique to them and useful for their life," she says. "It's not about this grade or this moment, but about how we use those moments to inform our future."

Queen has spent the last two decades finding ways to make an impact in her community. In 2011, she founded Her Best Self, a program of the National Black

United Fund, creating a yearlong curriculum that matches young women with mentors who can help them build leadership skills as they do community projects and "live purposeful lives on purpose."

"I want these girls to see that they can do anything," Queen says. "You just have to plan it and stop having it be a dream and make it an action."

As Paterson's Poet Laureate, Queen organized an October poetry festival, and speaks at events throughout the region.

In August, Queen was recognized by the NJCCC for her efforts to place "Little Free Library" book lending boxes throughout the city and encouraging people and civic groups to voluntarily "adopt"

those parks with funding and beautification efforts.

Queen says the program, which included poetry and storytelling events, can help close the literacy gap while giving communities more reasons to enjoy local parks.

"People who read more have a different trajectory in life than those who don't, so I figured the best way to make a big impact was to make reading very cool and fun," she says.

Starting with her first location in 2017, Queen initially hoped to place 15 Little Free Library boxes by 2020. The response from the community was so strong, she has expanded her plan to include all 46 of the city's parks.

—Suzanne Marta

## CONNECTIONS ALUMNI & FRIENDS

**Todd F. Tietchen '97** published *Technomodern Poetics: The American Literary Avant-Garde at the Start of the Information Age*.

**Timshel E. Purdum '98 MA** is the director of playful learning and inquiry at the Science Museum of Virginia.

**Christopher J. Roof '98** was inducted into the Union County (N.J.) Baseball Hall of Fame.

### 2000s

**Victor Cirilo '00** serves as the new executive director of the Newark Housing and Redevelopment Authority. The agency is the largest housing authority in New Jersey with an annual budget of \$183 million for property management and development of affordable housing. (8)

**Mitsuharu V. Okada-Coelho '00** is an assistant professor at Hawai'i Pacific University in the School of Social Work, College of Health and Society.

**Jason J. Velante '00**, an ESL teacher with the Paterson (N.J.) Public Schools, facilitated the publication of testimonies of his newcomer students detailing their journey to assimilation into the United States. In October 2018, his students witnessed the launching of their first edition within the Paterson Free Public Library.

**Marta Fernandez '02** was promoted to executive vice president of originals programming at Starz, a global streaming entertainment company.

**Michelle Mattia '02 MA** published her first book titled *Enrichment Is Not a Packet! Valuable and Realistic Strategies to Enrich your High Level Students in a Truly Differentiated Classroom*.

**Kimberly M. Monico-Rifi '02, '07 MA, '18 MA** is the school psychologist for the Waldwick (N.J.) School District.

**Jennifer T. Ranu '02 MEd** published a book titled *Images of America – Italians of Greater Paterson*.

**Joseph V. Russomanno '03** was promoted to sergeant in the Cedar Grove (N.J.) Police Department.

**Kerry A. Vendittoli '03** was elected to a three-year term on the Freehold (N.J.) Township K-8 School District Board of Education.

**Angelo Auteri '05** was promoted to counsel at Scarinci Hollenbeck Attorneys at Law, which has offices in New York and New Jersey.

**Kelley R. Faulkner '05** was cast by the Milwaukee Repertory Theater to play Pip in *Things I Know to be True* for the play's American premiere.

**Daniel J. Greco '05** was promoted to lieutenant in the Verona (N.J.) Police Department.

**Ben Hinson '05** is the creator of a thought leadership platform called Hickam's Dictum. The insights on the platform are based on his years working as an analyst and strategist for Fortune 500 companies in the financial, banking, entertainment, real estate, publishing, packaged goods, consumer electronics and automotive industries. The platform was featured on outlets such as *Forbes* and SB Nation.

**Jacob V. Hudnut '05** is the chief prosecutor for Jersey City and is ranked 23 out of 100 on *Insider NJ's Power List*. (9)

**Tamour Kousha '05** joined Liberty Science Center as its chief financial officer in July 2018. The Liberty Science Center is a nonprofit interactive science museum and learning center in Jersey City.

**Kyle C. Arlington '06 MA** was appointed superintendent of Kenilworth (N.J.) Schools where he was the assistant superintendent.

**Hakika Dubose '06** was named one of the top female entrepreneurs of 2018 by the Huffington Post. She opened her fifth franchise location of Kika Stretch Studios in Short Hills, N.J., adding to Westfield, Montclair, Morristown and New York City.

**Michael T. Treanor '07** married Alexis Boyle on the beach in Belmar, N.J., in September 2018.

**Jessica L. Vosk '07** stars in the Broadway Musical *Wicked* as Elphaba. (10)

**Stephen Frost '08, '11 MBA** was named as Randolph (N.J.) Township Schools new assistant business administrator and assistant board secretary.

**Roberto Mendez '08 MA** was appointed as the director of special services at Palisades Park (N.J.) Public Schools. He has been in special education for 18 years and is working toward his EdD in Educational Leadership. (11)

**Jennifer A. Skomial '08** was named New Jersey's Teacher of the Year 2018-2019 by the New Jersey Department of Education. She works at the Academy for Education and Learning at Morris County School of Technology.





Nicole Silva '05

# TEACHING FOR TOMORROW

In high school, Nicole Silva was named “class optimist.” Two decades later – as a third-grade teacher at Nathan Hale Elementary in Carteret, New Jersey – Silva’s enthusiasm hasn’t dimmed at all. “Today, I still have to catch my breath some mornings when I walk into the room and remember I get to do this,” she says.

But Silva’s classroom really belongs to her students. “I feel strongly about children taking charge of what they’re learning and sharing it with their peers,” she explains. They explore the solar system with Google Expeditions, construct Olympics games out of recycled materials, find the fun in fractions by way of a mini basketball hoop, and more – and the sky really is the limit. “I have one student who wants to

learn Russian and precalc, so I’m letting him work on that in class.”

Her teaching style is holistic, incorporating mindfulness and a respect for varied learning styles. Students who act out aren’t shamed or punished, either. Instead, they’re encouraged to use the “cool-down bookbag,” a kit to help children self-regulate and develop coping skills. “I tell them, ‘You can take this bag and go wherever you want in the classroom to cool down.’ We have to be mindful of what kids might be carrying with them from their home life when they walk in the door.”

While Silva had her eyes on a teaching career as early as second grade, studying at Montclair State drove it home. “I had a young professor who talked a lot about elementary

education, which really ignited the fire for me,” she recalls. “I loved the classes that were hands-on, too, where I could visualize exactly what I’d be doing in my classroom.”

In December, Silva’s passion was recognized with a 2018 Milken Educator Award, commonly referred to as the “Oscars of Teaching.” In true Academy Awards style, she had no idea it was coming. “I thought the Commissioner of Education was giving an assembly about college and career readiness. When he started talking about a special guest, a teacher who was being awarded, my colleagues and my students started saying, ‘I think it might be you!’ I couldn’t believe it.”

Silva is the only Milken winner from New Jersey this year.

“Winning that award is an indescribable feeling,” she says. “It’s become a driving force to push me to do things that I was previously unsure about. I have a lot of ideas, and now I feel like people really want to hear what I have to say.”

The Milken motto is “the future belongs to the educated.” Silva couldn’t agree more.

“My parents always told me I could be a Rockette or a movie star or anything I wanted. I know my students might not have someone at home telling them those things, and I want to be that person for them,” she says. “I believe they can do anything. They’re the leaders of their own destiny.”

—Olivia Rubino-Finn

## CONNECTIONS ALUMNI & FRIENDS

**Neisha Louhar '09** competed in the Miss Infinity International 2018-2019 pageant, representing New Jersey. Her charitable cause was awareness of child abuse and neglect.

**Ryan P. McCoach '09** was inducted into the Montclair State Athletic Hall of Fame. He is one of just two Montclair State football players to record back-to-back 1,000-yard seasons.

### 2010s

**Rachel L. Camp '10** was part of the Philadelphia Theatre Company's performance of *The Bridges of Madison County*.

**Allyssa M. Hynes '10** won Pioneer Drama Service's Shubert Fendrich Memorial Playwriting Contest for her play *Poe: Dreams of Madness*.

**Maurice Torres '10** spent eight years at Prudential Fixed Income on its derivatives operations desk. He is now at Morgan Stanley in its institutional equities division, covering hedge fund clients. An alumnus of the men's basketball team, Torres still returns to campus to support student athletes.

**Jonathan M. Fazio '11** is an associate producer for the *Make It* video team at CNBC.com.

**Nicholas J. Jones '11, '14 MA** married **Leah McClish-Jones '12** on April 23, 2017. (12)

**Kyle L. Williams '11** is now an assistant professor of chemistry at SUNY-Corning Community College.

**Louis F. Castano '12** married **Jenna M. Rocca '10** on October 12, 2018. (13)

**Tayfun Selen '12 MBA** became the first Turkish mayor to be elected in the U.S. He is the mayor of Chatham Township, N.J., and currently sits on the Feliciano School of Business Advisory Board.

**Allison T. Strong '12** was named the Garden State Film Festival's 2019 Rising Star. The award recognizes up-and-coming actors for achievements in theater, film and television. (14)

**Sharrod Y. Williams '12** visited Deerfield (Ill.) High School to give a talk to dance and theater students about life in show business. He is currently performing in the Chicago production of *Hamilton: An American Musical*.

**Nathan Bajar '13** photographed the story "What 9 Fighters Wore to a Boxing Gym in TriBeCa," which was featured on *The New York Times* website.

**Vincent C. Fischer '13** was sworn in as an officer of the Denville (N.J.) Police Department.

**Matthew A. Kaprielian '13** helped produce the 2018 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade with **Brett T. Gearity '12, Christina Pfefferkorn '14, Jesse H. Haack '15, Noelle A. Rasco '15, Jeffrey C. Reid '17** and **Kiefer Handschuh '18**. They are Theatre Production and Design alumni.

**Stephen L. Zimmerman '14** joined the ranks of the Woodbridge (N.J.) Township Police Department.

**William Cytowicz '15** was backed by the Passaic County (N.J.) Republicans as a candidate for Passaic County Freeholder.

**Jason M. Fekete '15 MA** was appointed vice principal at Linden (N.J.) High School.

**Marissa A. Schaeffer '15** had her first solo photography exhibit at the McConnell Gallery titled "Water Elements" in Ocean County, N.J.

**Luke J. Drazdik '16** graduated from the 158th New Jersey Police class and became a New Jersey State Trooper.

**Jordyn Goffin '16** opened a gift shop, Giftbar, with her sister, Cali, in Montclair.

**Courtney J. Holder '16** was sworn into the Cranford (N.J.) Police Department.

**Nicholas A. Hussey '16** was sworn in as an officer of the Mountainside (N.J.) Police Department.

**Cole A. Mills '16** was a finalist on Season 15 of Fox-TV's *So You Think You Can Dance*.

**Timothy R. Price '16 MA** was awarded the 2018 North Carolina Symphony Musicians Award, which honors emerging music educators with fewer than 10 years of teaching experience.

**Jade A. Webber '16** had a showing of her artwork in an exhibit titled "In Defiance of Winter" at Studio Montclair.

**Stephen Blazejewski '17** joined the Board of Directors of the New Jersey LGBT Chamber of Commerce as vice president of membership. He previously held a financial consultant position at AXA Advisors in Woodbridge, N.J.

**Daniel Knepple '17** took over as the head coach of the Naugatuck (Conn.) High School boys swim team.

**Maral Tutunjian '18** is the assistant coordinator of the Armenian Relief Society at the United Nations in New York City.



### Connecting with Alumni Engagement has its perks

PerksConnect is a service providing benefits to alumni, including deals and discounts on travel, insurance, event tickets and more. It is free for all Montclair State graduates. To get started with PerksConnect, just sign in to your exclusive alumni account at [MONTCLAIRconnect.com](http://MONTCLAIRconnect.com). For more information, visit [montclair.edu/alumni](http://montclair.edu/alumni).



# IN MEMORIAM

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Thelma Terjesen '41  
Jessie V. Boerger '42, '46 MA  
Audrey V. Leef '43  
Gloria K. Pasquale '45  
Alleana Fernane Bianco '47, '52 MA  
Levon K. Barmakian '48  
Clifford G. Swisher '48, '51 MA  
Elizabeth Degnan '49  
Loretta E. Schantz '49  
Marie M. Scotti '49  
Martin Zwillman '49  
Pauline M. Apgar-Ajamian '50 MA  
Elena M. O'Brien '50  
Richard L. Pasvolsky '50  
Thomas J. Randazzo Sr. '50, '55 MA  
Sylvia A. Totin '50  
Alice B. Bonderchuk Blasi '53  
Robert A. Babb '54, '60 MA  
Eleanor Navarrete '54, '61 MA  
Anthony Scardaville '54, '58 MA  
Gwen Grant '55  
Arthur Lemos '55 MA  
Frances Fusco Duff '56  
Patricia G. Hatfield '56  
Barbara McDermott Pangacian '56  
Nancy M. Cant '58, '61 MA  
Gabriela Crane '58  
Richard L. Ryan '58 MA

Sandor L. Gonczlik '60, '73 MA  
John R. Pietrowicz '60  
Louis Zarello '60, '71 MA  
Alice Benjamin '62  
Patricia A. Arslanian '63  
Francis P. Kedian '63  
Harry J. Berger Jr. '66  
Margaret Hoffman '66  
William P. Birdsall '67, '68 MA  
Carol M. Jaccodine '67, '72 MA  
Robert F. Smith '67 MA  
Ronald Batistoni '68 MA  
Francis X. Herbert '68 MA

Lee R. Steelman '69 MA  
George J. Fruhbeis '70 MA  
Judith V. Hardin '70  
Robert B. Lapidus '70 MA\*\*  
Carol J. Tomason '70  
Robert L. Coates '71 MA  
John F. Daly Jr. '71  
Janet F. Amatrudi '72  
Kenneth T. Forziati '72 MA  
John D. DeBarbieri '74  
Elizabeth F. Garrett '74 MA  
Hope A. Reeves '74 MA  
Eleno A. Ramos '75 MA  
Emily Lynne Abel '77  
Miriam S. Kennedy '77, '84 MA  
Blanca A. Kochel '77  
Kathleen M. Fitzgerald '78  
Alicia N. Ford '78  
Susan B. Reimer '78  
Thomas Gallucci '79  
Jill J. Jeffrey '80, '91 MA  
Betty J. Van Stratton '81 MA

Daniel Kelleher '82  
Elizabeth R. Bailey '85\*\*  
Tara Todd '85  
Nancy L. Stoddard '87 MA  
Sandra E. Hearne '88  
Felicitia S. Smolin '88  
Gale D. Kaufman '90  
Tom Lawless '90  
Sharon E. Pearce-Moses '90  
John F. Tully '90 MA  
Sean M. Dolan '92  
Mary C. Kudla '94, '01 MA  
Marilyn A. Gotlinger '98 Cert  
Christina C. Siedler '04 MAT  
Sasha J. Truesdale '04  
John Zimmermann '08 MA  
Ryan A. Pritchard '13  
Jessica Munoz '15, '16 MA

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\*Faculty Emeriti

\*\*Former Faculty

# LASTING LESSONS

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## ROBERT PINES | Professor Emeritus, Education

Professor Emeritus Robert Pines, who retired in 2003 after 33 years at Montclair State, was renowned for his quiet and encouraging manner, and for the personal interest he took in his students. “Although he may be very soft spoken and quiet, the message he conveyed to his students was very powerful,” says Alex Kaplanovich '73, 92 MA, who, together with his wife, Veronica Kaplanovich '82, took classes with Pines. “He inspired both of us to enter our teaching profession with a positive attitude and to go out and make a difference.” An author and administrator as well as a professor, Pines urged students to examine how their particular combination of knowledge, interests and motivations could be used in the classroom. “I felt fortunate as a mature, second-career student to be mentored by Dr. Pines,” says Marty Siegel '90, '99 MA. “His quiet method of requiring self-reflection about best practice set an exacting educational bar quite high.” Says former student Linda Hendrixson '79, PhD: “The important lesson that I learned from Dr. Pines is that a teacher must always use a humanistic, student-centered approach in the classroom. Respect the student’s viewpoint and approach the teacher-student relationship as a mutually shared experience.”

—Robert Gano

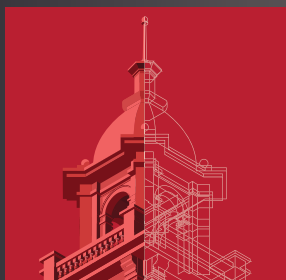
Read more about Pines at [montclair.edu/lasting-lessons/Pines](http://montclair.edu/lasting-lessons/Pines). Let us know which faculty or staff members made a difference during your time at Montclair State at [editor@montclair.edu](mailto:editor@montclair.edu).

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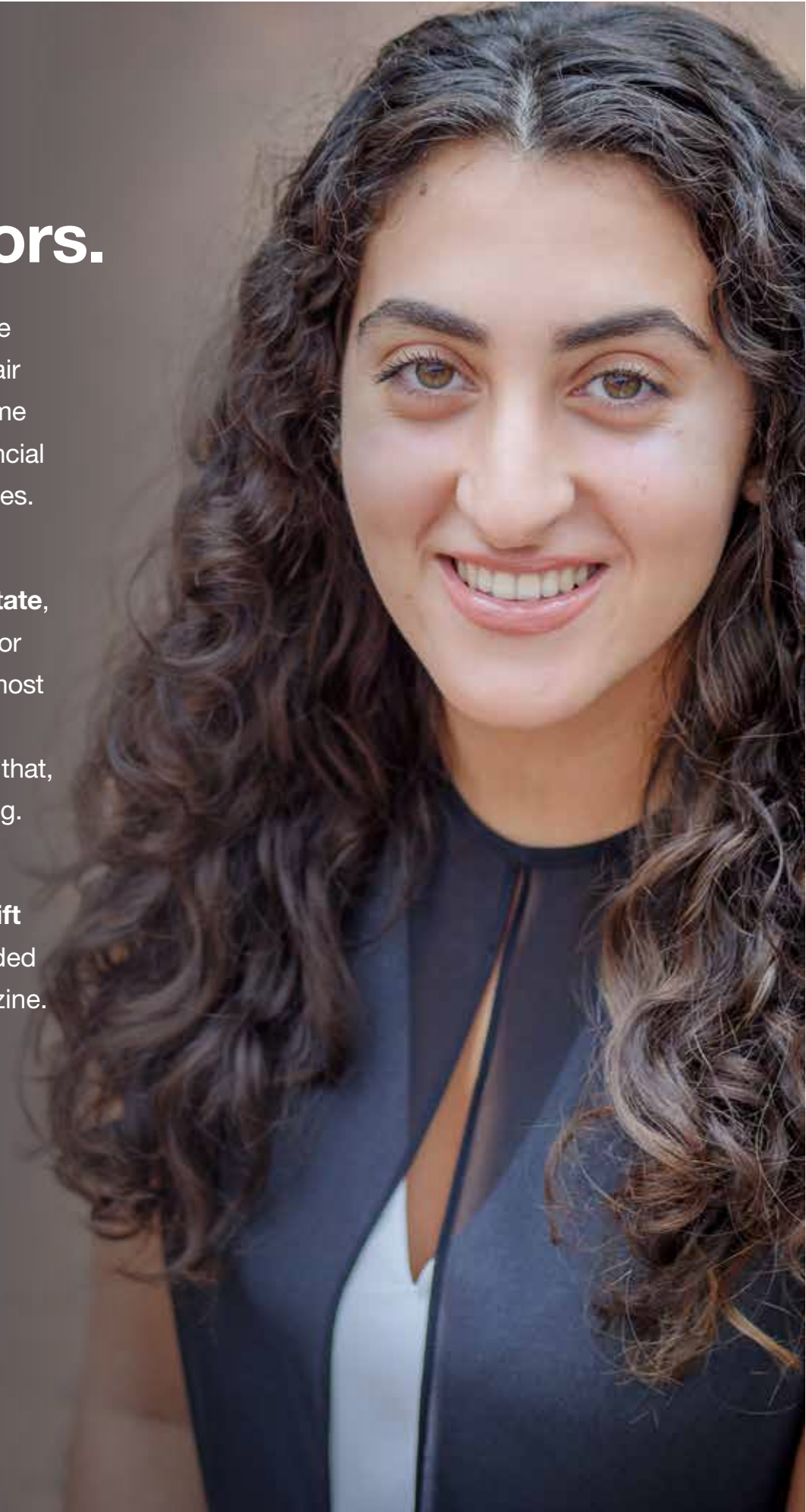
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