

MONTCLAIR

FALL / WINTER 2020



**THE
NEW
NORMAL
FOR NOW**

SCENES FROM CAMPUS
IN THE AGE OF COVID-19



In order to give 2020 graduates a safe, in-person graduation and follow the governor's COVID-19 executive orders, the University held 21 Commencement ceremonies at Sprague Field over the course of one week in July. To provide for social distancing, each graduate was allowed two guests, with a maximum of 500 people in attendance at each ceremony. Though the ceremonies were small, there was enough pomp and circumstance to give graduates a celebratory walk across the stage.

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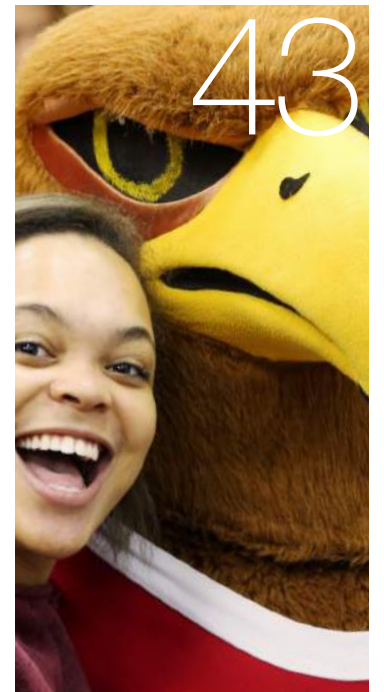
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FROM THE PRESIDENT



This fall term, my 23rd as president of Montclair State, has begun an academic year different from any that the University has experienced before. As you will read in this issue, we returned to campus in a reduced capacity, offering a combination of in-person, hybrid and online classes and many on-campus activities, in an effort to give our students as normal a campus experience as possible under the circumstances.

We have put tremendous effort and thought into the best and safest ways to connect our students effectively with the University during this pandemic. In the performing arts, for example, faculty turned the Red Hawk Parking Deck

into outdoor rehearsal and performance spaces. In the sciences, specialized safety protocols permitted laboratory research and instruction to continue, and many classes in different disciplines were held in outdoor spaces and under tents as long as the weather allowed.

We are getting through this crisis, step by step, relying on our commitment, courage and ingenuity, and once we are on the other side of the pandemic, we will be able to turn our attention again to realizing our ever-evolving vision for the future.

My role in this University's future growth and development, however, will come to a close at the end of June 2021, or as soon after that date as the next president arrives.

When I came to Montclair State, I found a solid institution with good and talented people, and enormous potential to grow in contribution to the state and nation. What we accomplished and built together truly transformed the University.

Unlike some who retire, I will not say that I have finished what I came to do. The University will never be finished; it is ever changing and meant for the ages, not just the decades. Even if I stayed for another 20 years, I would still never accomplish what I came to do, because my dreams and goals for the University have continued to grow with each new accomplishment and each passing year. All that we accomplish teaches us about what more we could do. As we finish each thing, we become better able to see what the next thing should be. As long as I am here, I could never be finished, so, at some point, I just have to stop.

I am grateful that this University and I have had the continued and generous support of our alumni and friends all these years. I can never thank you enough, and it has been a privilege to have you all as partners in building this great public university.

Susan A. Cole

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BACK
TO
THE
FRONT

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

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



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

As a first-generation American, Montclair State provided me with an education that started a wonderful career. Hence the subtitle of my memoir *Behind the Candy Store: The Path Forward*.

My father came from Russia at age 7, only earned an 8th-grade education and worked 100 hours a week his entire life. I earned a BA in Speech Communication in 1963 and a MA in Dramatic Arts in 1965, and later a PhD in Theatre from The Ohio State University. I taught and directed Theater at Boston College for six years and then spent a career in higher education administration and consulting. Since retiring as Assistant VP of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning at Marymount University in Arlington, Virginia, I have taught an online MBA course for the University of Maryland. Education, first at Montclair State, and later at Ohio, provided me with my path forward. I have never stopped reaping its rewards.

Regards,

Donald Shandler '63, '65 MA



It was great that some of our students got to see the New York Philharmonic record its holiday show on campus in the Amphitheater in October – and that the Philharmonic retweeted the University's tweet about it.



We loved that the State of New Jersey retweeted this *Today Show* tweet, after the show aired a piece about our choir practicing the Hallelujah chorus from Handel's *Messiah* in the Red Hawk Parking Deck in September.

COLLEGE HALL REDUX



After more than three years of construction, College Hall – Montclair State’s iconic, original home – reopened this fall after a loving and thorough renovation, expansion and modernization.

The Mission Revival building not only housed the entire school when it opened in 1908, but it also established a lasting identity for the institution – one that President Susan A. Cole has revived and carried forward as the University itself has expanded in recent decades.

“The old College Hall was worn and tired, now it’s bright and flowing with a renewed energy,” says Sharon Mahoney, director, Construction Management, Capital Planning and Project Management.

The building hosts Red Hawk Central, the University’s one-stop student services center for all current and prospective students and alumni.

Within the 5,000-square-foot addition, the lower level houses the new utility infrastructure that contains critical services such as steam, chilled water and electrical distribution systems, and an IT vault containing telecommunications equipment and the network operations center for the campus. Several administrative offices have returned, including the offices of the President, Provost, Dean of Students, Student Development

and Campus Life, University College, Educational Opportunity Fund and the Disability Resource Center. Panera Bread – now open for limited service – is scheduled for a grand opening in January 2021.

“We tried to bring the historical integrity of the building back by restoration of elements and finishes which we found in historic photos and documents,” says Mahoney, who pointed to uncovered brick walls, restored western hemlock wood finishes, tin ceilings, lighting fixtures and even the antique 200-year-old mission bell in the tower.

Other touches are completely modern: bathrooms are new and relocated to the central core of the building. Fairy lights float on poles above sapling trees and overhead along the sidewalk and landscaping on the north entrance.

Meanwhile, 125 window air conditioner units were removed and the windows were replaced, opening up exterior views that had been obscured for decades. Warrens of rooms have been removed and replaced with open-concept spaces – a process made difficult by the building’s thick masonry walls.

“There was a lot of structural work and temporary shoring involved to remove the existing load-bearing walls – but seeing the resulting open office areas, it was well worth the effort,” says Mahoney. ■



Message in a Bottle, Part 3

A sixth grade school assignment has reopened the story of families descending from two bricklayers who left a message in a bottle inside College Hall more than a century ago, on July 3, 1907.

In the latest twist of Montclair State’s “Message in a Bottle” stories, Robert Gleeson, a 12-year-old Bronx boy, was writing a paper on the Empire State Building, where there is a brick with his great-great-grandfather’s name, William Hanley, on it. When he and his mother, Susan Tursi-Gleeson, Googled Hanley looking for a picture of him, they found the *Montclair* magazine article about the message in the bottle left by Hanley and James Lennon, craftsmen from Newark, New Jersey.

Genealogy records had uncovered descendants of John Lennon, but until the homework assignment, the search for Hanley’s living descendants had hit a dead end. “I said to myself,” Tursi-Gleeson recalls, “Wow, somebody up there really wanted me to see this!” ■



COLE TO RETIRE IN 2021

University President Susan A. Cole announced in September that this academic year, her 23rd at the helm of the state’s second largest university, will be her final year as president.

Her retirement takes effect July 1, 2021, or whenever after that date the next president can take over. Known as an energetic and engaged leader with an unflinching work ethic, Cole said she is leaving not because she accomplished everything she set out to do, but because “at some point, I just have to stop.”

The work of developing the University, she said, is never done. “The University is organic and ever changing and meant for the ages, not just the decades. And, as for me, if I stayed here for another 20 or so years, I would still never accomplish what I came to do, because my dreams and goals for the University.”

Upon hearing the news, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy said, “The people of New Jersey owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Dr. Susan Cole for her extraordinary contributions to our state. She believes deeply in the power of higher education to transform lives and open doors of opportunity.”

Cole became Montclair State’s eighth, and first woman, president in 1998. During her tenure, the University’s enrollment grew from 12,000 to 21,000, and the University became one of New Jersey’s most successfully diverse institutions, while expanding its degree offerings, building 3 million square feet of academic and performance space and earning national recognition as a research university, as well as more than doubling its residential capacity to 5,200 beds and expanding its campus transportation and dining services. Look for more on the University’s transformation under Cole in the next issue of *Montclair*. ■

The Kelly Clarkson Show Features University Singers

Practicing in a parking garage turned out to be one of the best things to ever happen to the Montclair State University Singers.

First, they were discovered by a producer while singing the Hallelujah chorus from Handel’s *Messiah* in the Red Hawk Deck, which led to them being featured on both *The Today Show* and *CBS Evening News* in September. There, they caught the attention of NBC’s *The Kelly Clarkson Show*.

On October 29, millions of viewers saw Clarkson interview John J. Cali School of Music Director Anthony Mazzocchi, flanked by Chorale Director Heather Buchanan and Accompanist Steven Ryan, followed by a performance by the Singers of the spiritual “Ain’t No Grave” from the Amphitheater.

“This was the apogee of the semester for these kids,” says Mazzocchi. Indeed, as freshman bass singer Christian Collazo adds, “It’s amazing when someone you grew up listening to recognizes your work and congratulates you on your accomplishments.” ■



University Joins the Common App

To simplify the college application process for students, Montclair State has joined the Common App.

Serving more than one million applicants each year, the Common App reduces barriers during the college application process and provides additional resources to assist with scholarships and financial aid, according to university officials.

By becoming a Common App member, the University is also helping to make additional tools and services available to students and those who support them, including financial aid and scholarship information, virtual mentors, online portfolios and a vast library of counselor resources available in English and Spanish.

Students may also apply through the University’s own application at apply.montclair.edu/apply. ■





As Schools Move Online, University Creates New Certificate Program for Educators

Montclair State University has created a new certificate program, Virtual Learning for Students with Disabilities, to meet the needs of educators adjusting to the new responsibilities of online teaching. The program is designed for teachers looking to discover new technologies as they redesign curricula and instruction for the virtual learning environment.

“As educators, we have all been challenged by the abrupt shift to online instruction,” says Associate Professor Jennifer Goeke. “Those of us who teach students with disabilities have the added burden of ensuring that our students continue to learn and progress, without falling further behind.”

Classes are being taught by practicing special educators who are also technology leaders in their schools and experienced adjunct faculty in the Department of Teaching and Learning. They are acquainted with the challenges of this moment because they are facing them too.

“This program is not just about learning new apps and programs; it’s about understanding how to use technology to create an interesting, inviting and engaging virtual classroom for all students,” Goeke says. ■

Learn more at montclair.edu/online/virtual-learning-for-students-with-disabilities-certificate-online.

MARINE EXPLORATION

Arye Janoff, a Montclair State doctoral student who studies the long-term effects of climate change along the New Jersey coast, has earned a prestigious John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship.

Janoff is a coastal geomorphologist and research assistant in the Environmental Science and Management program, where he works with Associate Professor Jorge Lorenzo-Trueba and the Coastal Dynamics Lab, examining the effects of future sea-level rise, wave climate and resource economic conditions on coastal behaviors. The National Science Foundation supports this work through its Dynamics of Coupled Natural-Human Systems program.

Janoff will take what he has learned at Montclair State to Washington, D.C., where he will shape U.S. marine and coastal policy development when he begins the fellowship in February 2021.

“I am passionate about applying the knowledge I’ve gained through research and primary experiences to effect real change because, after all, that’s why I pursued a career in science,” Janoff says. ■



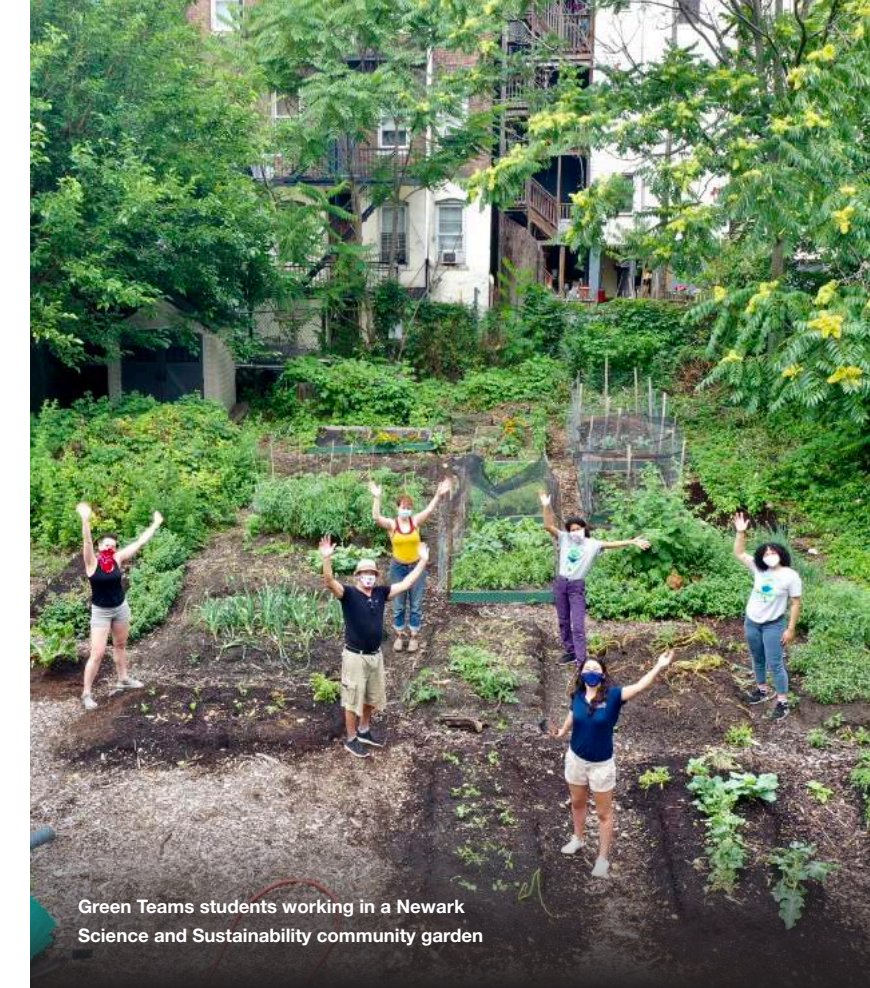
Arye Janoff is shown here on a groin field – the type of rock structure prevalent along the New Jersey coast.

Green Teams Keep Winning

The PSEG Institute for Sustainability Studies (PSEG ISS) Green Teams are benefiting from \$2.6 million in National Science Foundation (NSF) grants that are helping the summer internship program better serve diverse students from multiple areas of study and their families.

The first award is a \$2 million NSF Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) grant, the University’s first HSI grant. Led by PSEG ISS Director Amy Tuininga, the grant enables the Green Teams program to better engage Hispanic students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and extend these learning opportunities to their families and corporate and community partners.

The second NSF award is a \$600,000 Improving Undergraduate STEM Education (IUSE) grant led by Chemistry and Biochemistry Professor Nina Goodey and designed to improve STEM literacy for students who are non-STEM majors through their participation in the Green Teams. Tuininga and Elizabeth Emery, professor of Modern Languages and Literatures, are co-principal investigators. ■



Green Teams students working in a Newark Science and Sustainability community garden

EXPRESSING THANKS THROUGH MUSIC



The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (NJSO) and MSU Singers debuted *Gracias Tibi*, by José Luis Domínguez, one of the first-ever works commissioned specifically for physically distanced choir and orchestra performance in June.

Gracias Tibi, which means “thanks to you” in Latin, offers a message of thanks to all front-line workers who have responded to the COVID-19 global pandemic with bravery and compassion.

“It really impacted the audience,” says MSU Singer Mackenzie Conaway. “It gave them a moment to reflect to be thankful for what they have and for the front-line workers. My mom works in health care, and this is a really great way to thank her as well.” ■



WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK(S)

The 7th annual Women's Entrepreneurship Week went 100% virtual for fall 2020 and extended over several weeks for what became the Weekly Women Entrepreneurship series.

Hosted by the Feliciano Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation, the events featured remarkable stories and interviews with women entrepreneurs – shared via the Center's platforms and social channels through November 13.

"Last year, more than 240 universities and colleges in 32 countries and 49 states, plus D.C., in the U.S. organized at least one event featuring a woman entrepreneur on their respective campuses," says Carley Graham Garcia, executive director of the Feliciano Center. "This year, many of those schools were back – joined by businesses and nonprofits, also featuring an event with a woman entrepreneur. It was exciting to connect our global community for the first time with content sharing across our platforms."

The women shared their stories and wisdom on everything from quitting your day job, giving back to the community and learning from failure to financing, packaging, marketing, networking, distribution, e-commerce and dealing with a global pandemic.

Denise Woodard, the founder of Partake Foods, which bakes "delicious, nutritious and allergy-friendly" cakes and cookies for kids, told participants that "as a woman, as a woman of color, as a first-time entrepreneur, I knew it was going to be very hard to raise venture capital. I wanted to prove the product first." Ultimately, Partake Foods attracted Jay-Z's Marcy Venture Partners – when the time was right. ■

Instructor's Film Wins Emmy

School of Communication and Media News Producer and Instructor Steve McCarthy's documentary *Breslin and Hamill: Deadline Artists* about two legendary New York journalists, won a national Emmy for Outstanding Historical Documentary. The doc, which McCarthy co-directed with Jonathan Alter and John Block, was also named in *The New York Times*' list of "10 Under-the-Radar Movies for Offbeat Times." ■



NEW GRADUATE PROGRAM PREPARES FUTURE COLLEGE LEADERS

Dann Truitt '14, '19 MA couldn't have chosen a more challenging time to start a new job in higher education. In mid-March, just as the COVID-19 pandemic was closing college campuses, he began a new position at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Nursing, helping with COVID-19-related communications and budget implications.

It was a role he was prepared to step into as a graduate of Montclair State's Educational Leadership program, which is cultivating a new generation of leaders for the increasingly complex issues in education.

This fall, the University launched the Master of Arts in Higher Education, which changes an existing concentration within Educational Leadership to full degree status.

Graduates of the concentration have gone on to careers throughout higher ed, from the Ivy League to community colleges. And while they hold a wide range of positions, including roles in student affairs, academic affairs and general university administration, they also carry with them a focus on social justice, which is among the hallmarks of the program.

Students learn about law and legal issues, supervision and management, leadership theories and social justice in higher education. "Our hope is to ensure that students feel they can go from residential life on a college campus to higher education policy at the state level, in both positions as critically minded and equitability-minded leaders," says Blanca Elizabeth Vega, assistant professor of Educational Leadership. ■

Graduates of the Educational Leadership master's program include (top to bottom, left) Peter Osebre '19, Natalie Lopez '19, Lucas Min '18, Kevin Brenfo-Agyeman '19, Jessie Coccione '19, (top to bottom, right) Claudio Alejo '19, Chelsea Rushing '19, Dann Truitt '14, '19 MA and Lynda Gary-Davidson '20.

Learn more at montclair.edu/graduate

PEAK Performances in High Definition

PEAK HD, a new streaming series of PEAK Performances, is providing arts lovers a free virtual way to experience Kasser Theater shows – at a time when most arts organizations have canceled their seasons due to the pandemic.

"The doors that are open are the doors of our ideas," says Arts and Cultural Programming Executive Director Jedediah Wheeler. "Everybody is welcome. All seats are available. There is no social distancing to the imagination."

The installation of multiple 4K robotic video cameras linked to control studios in Montclair State's School of Communication and Media in 2018 transformed the Alexander Kasser Theater into a state-

of-the-art live performance broadcast venue. In 2019, PEAK Performances, in partnership with WNET's ALL ARTS, began filming bold works in dance, music, theater, opera and circus.

"PEAK HD reaches back to the Golden Age of Television when broadcasts of live symphonies, operas and plays were fundamental to the newly invented craft of TV," says ALL ARTS Artistic Director Jörn Weisbrodt.

Even post-pandemic, the PEAK HD and PEAK Performances will continue to stream online, says

Wheeler, while phasing audiences back in. ■

Find more information and links to shows at peakperfs.org/peak-hd.



The 2019 production of *FALLING & LOVING*, premiered in October on PEAK HD.



Anthony McGill has given much thought to this moment we're in.

"It's a very interesting, challenging time, but also pretty inspiring," says McGill, the 2020-2021 John J. Cali School of Music Artist-in-Residence and winner of the 2020 Avery Fisher Prize.

As the first African American principal musician (clarinet) in the history of the 178-year-old New York Philharmonic, McGill brings his considerable musical chops as well as his activist spirit to his role as mentor to Montclair State students. Referring to both the pandemic and the global racial justice movement, McGill says, "I'm doing a lot of work in ways that I've never done before – obviously online, with teaching, of course – but I'm also doing a lot of work communicating to students and others about my kind of career and continuing to think about our roles as musicians or students in this world that is very complex and challenging and difficult."

Art and activism constantly collide for McGill. This summer he participated in a recording of "Lift Every Voice," an arrangement of the song known as America's Black National Anthem. The project showcased nearly a dozen Black symphonic musicians from across the U.S., including Demarre McGill, Anthony's brother and principal flute for the Seattle Symphony.

"The community of classical musicians is a very small community to start with," says McGill of the recording, which was planned "to show to the world how beautiful it can be when Black classical musicians get together and perform really great music. It was a powerful, meaningful thing for me."

"What I've been doing my whole career has been, in a way, a demonstration of what representation looks like, what change looks like within the world and in an industry that is predominantly white. There's a huge responsibility. Always. To represent not only that, but also to be an advocate for positive change in the world surrounding diversity and inclusion and equity in our society. Not only do I feel that responsibility, I feel like it's a duty. It's a part of who I am as a musician but also as a person who understands my own individual place, using my power as best as I can to affect positive change in the world." ■

—Mary Barr Mann

Photo by Chris Lee/New York Philharmonic



Chief of University Police Paul Cell officiates the wedding of Janet Fenner and Gregory Dabice on the Montclair State 50-yard line.

A Royal Wedding

By Marilyn Joyce Lehren



At long last, a Homecoming king has the chance to court – and marry – the queen

The last time Janet (Jaramillo) Fenner '93 and Gregory Dabice '93 shared the spotlight on the 50-yard line they were crowned Montclair State's Homecoming queen and king. In a fairy-tale ending, their reunion on Sprague Field on August 1, 2020, included a kiss and wedding vows, a story so sweet it traveled around the world.

"We never dated in college," Fenner recalls. "We knew each other from Greek life, but I was a straight-A student, intra-sorority vice president, on the student government and track team, the whole nine yards. Then there was Greg, who's completely 180." They were crowned homecoming king and queen in 1992 and parted from their royal duties, and each other, after graduating a year later.

Their reunion was a long time coming. Over the course of two decades, they each married, had children, eventually divorced and were beginning a new phase of their lives when Fenner randomly swiped right on a dating app. "It turns out I swiped right on Greg without even recognizing it was him. He reached out to me, 'Is that you, Janet?'"

It was Dabice's first and only time on the app. "I always say to her, and I really believe this, that we've been guided on the path we've been given. If we don't force anything

and enjoy it, it will be magic. It's been exactly that," Dabice says.

Their courtship has been a whirlwind since their first date on April 2, 2019. "By our third date, I just knew she was it," Dabice says. "I started ring shopping three months later."

He proposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the ring engraved with two tiny crowns. Family, who participated in a drive-by parade outside their home in Pompton Plains, New Jersey, carried signs that spelled out "Will you marry me?"

"He definitely struck a chord in my heart and here we are," Fenner says. "We have seven kids, two dogs and a tortoise, and it still works just perfectly. I wouldn't change a single detail."

They decided to marry despite the coronavirus restrictions to set an example for their children ages 10-18 as they combined households. "Their response to us throughout this whole process has been a big part of the magic," Dabice says.

The wedding, officiated by Chief of University Police Paul Cell, observed mandatory safety measures, including social distancing on the athletic field and the wearing of face coverings to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread. Mascot Rocky the

Red Hawk served as ring bearer. Cell says he was honored to be part of the ceremony. "I was here when they were in school and crowned," he says.

The bride, 48, graduated from Montclair State with a Bachelor of Arts, with a concentration in Graphic Design. She recently opened her own agency, Defined Marketing in Pompton Plains. The bridegroom, 50, graduated with a degree in Industrial Technology. He is director of procurement for Carl Stahl Sava Industries in Riverdale, New Jersey.

While an unusual wedding venue, "the football field definitely encompasses who we were back then, who we are now and how long we've taken to get to this day," Fenner says.

Their honeymoon was just as unusual. Dabice had his knee replaced a few days after the ceremony. While the couple stayed at home, the story of their reunion and wedding made the evening news on local and major networks, including *NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt*, and appeared in newspapers and websites across the country and the world, including the *Huffington Post*, *USA Today* and *The Daily Mail* in the U.K., and as an inspirational feature on *Inside Edition*, crowning a courtship nearly 30 years in the making. ■

“As a society, we need to learn to listen more. We need to be open to the idea that some of the things that we do and say are coming from a place that is a systemic problem.”

—Karen L. Pennington, vice president for Student Development and Campus Life



AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

The University serves as
‘a laboratory for what the world could be’
when it comes to social justice through inclusion,
diversity and equitable education

By Marilyn Joyce Lehren and Mary Barr Mann

This summer, as the country again began to grapple with its long history of systemic racism and marchers took to the streets night after night to demand change, the University community came together to support one another and its commitment to social justice and equality.

Home to first-generation students, students of color, students hard hit by the public health and economic toll of the coronavirus, as well as to scholarly experts in race, social justice, education and history, Montclair State began to lead the critical conversations of transformational change.

“When you look across the campus and you see so many things that are different in terms of race and gender and ethnicity, religion, culture, just all of it, it’s non-monolithic in terms of the world we live in, the world we aspire to live in, the world we have tried to cultivate as an example of what’s possible,” says Karen L. Pennington, vice president for Student Development and Campus Life.

Photos by Mike Peters

REFLECTING THE WORLD

Now a majority minority public university, Montclair State has experienced an intentional demographic shift, cultivated over nearly five decades through a series of presidents, beginning in 1973 with President David W.D. Dickson – the first African American appointed to head a four-year New Jersey higher education institution. Twenty-one years later, Irvin Dexter Reid, the University’s second African American president, led efforts to advance from a college to a university; and its first female president, Susan A. Cole, appointed in 1998, committed to a campus reflecting the diversity of New Jersey and created the President’s Commission on Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Diversity.

“The soul of this university, the very sacred purpose of this university is to create itself as a place where all of our students have the opportunity to fulfill their potential,” Cole told students in a video address in June. “Black Lives Matter. And we need to keep teaching that message until more and more and more people really understand it. We have a lot of work to do together, but how lucky are we to have this extraordinary university community where we can tackle that work together with trust and with respect.”

Historian Leslie Wilson, associate dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, whose expertise is environmental racism and African American studies, has been at the University 30 years. “Reid was committed to diversity, and Dr. Cole expanded that idea to make the University economically, racially, socially and culturally diverse,” Wilson says.

“People who would never have considered applying to Montclair State before do apply now because it makes them feel comfortable and welcome, and that’s important,” says Wilson. “It’s become a microcosm, or as my dean [Peter



Kyle Peters '12 protests in Verona, New Jersey.

Kingstone] says, it’s a ‘laboratory for what the world could be.’”

The evolution includes adding courses that address social challenges and growing partnerships in New Jersey cities, including Newark, Orange and Paterson, where faculty and student research and programs include equity in urban education, public health and sustainability.

It also includes working to increase the number of faculty of color, an issue facing universities nationwide.

The President’s Commission on Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Diversity emphasizes the benefit of diversity both in and out of the classroom. “We always strive to do better and to make sure that some of the faces students see across their desks reflect their own,” says Commission Chair Cindy Meneghin.

Despite creating this environment, Wilson says, an issue remains: While students exist in a diverse community on campus, it’s different when they leave. “The barriers of race that exist outside of the University,

Montclair State has not been able to defeat and has not been able to address.”

EMPOWERING STUDENTS

Before Assistant Justice Studies Professor Jason Williams took his message to the streets, speaking at racial justice rallies over the summer, he was teaching it in the classroom through his course in Current Issues in Policing, Black Lives Matter, and State Violence Against Women of Color.

To develop empathy, Williams and his students examine the context that “creates these police-involved murders and all the other negativities that inflict inequalities in education and health care.”

His students are engaged and empowered, leading to lively and dynamic discussions. “We’ve covered race, ethnicity, gender and everything you can think of, and it was so explosive because of the times.”

Speaking in June at a demonstration in Wayne, New Jersey, Williams told the crowd to think deeply about “how multiple systems are working together to manufacture this perfect crisis, such

that we can come up with deeply multidimensional and comprehensive – because that’s how white supremacy works – policy solutions heavily steeped in Black pain and voice so we can hopefully be that city on the hill someday where Blacks are finally free.”

Jayda Lindsey '20, a Family Science and Human Development graduate, was among the organizers of the event with 2,000 in attendance. “[Dr. Williams’] words resonated with me the most, and I actually saw a few people tear up,” Lindsey says. “I can only be hopeful for the future.”

Pennington also reflected on the effect of the demonstrations and the future. “What it comes down to is, after the protest is over, what’s the work that has to be done?”

“How do we teach our students that the next step is action, working with our state legislatures to say, ‘This needs to be changed,’ and then getting out there and voting and being powerful constituents, so that the legislature feels it has to respond because we vote and we make sure that the people who are representing us do the right things.”

Nawal Farih '20 says Montclair State provided the tools to take the next step. “I found my own voice to advocate for others,” she says.

A Psychology major, Farih was among recent graduates who supplied masks, gloves, hand sanitizer and water for protestors in Hoboken.

“We wanted to do more than just educate those around us; we wanted to provide some form of essential good for the protestors risking their lives during a pandemic to fight for a much bigger cause – systemic racism and police brutality,” Farih says.

“We’re all going through this together: family loss, anger and frustration, reacting to what we’ve been seeing,” says Daniel Jean, executive director of the Educational Opportunity Fund at Montclair State. “Ironically with what’s going on now in the world, the EOF program was founded in the late 1960s in response to human rights violations and social unrest.”

EOF provides scholars from low-income communities, many the first in their families to attend college, with mentoring, tutoring and advising. Many are from communities hard hit by the pandemic, and Jean has worked with others to provide his students with health resources and information regarding the emergency relief through the CARES Act.

“We’re doing whatever we can to assist and to help them focus on personal well-being and continue on the road to graduation,” he says.

RESOURCES, PROGRAMS AND CONVERSATIONS

Social justice is a part of the fabric of the University. The Office of Social Justice and Diversity brings in speakers to help students better understand systemic racism in the United States. The Sprague Library recently added a research guide with general information for anti-racist learning.

Curriculum is inclusive of different backgrounds and experiences in majors across disciplines. Teacher education, for instance, is a magnet for students of color interested in going into urban education and urban communities. Grant-funded



Jason Williams, assistant professor of Justice Studies, speaks at a demonstration in Wayne, New Jersey. Photo by Neil van Niekerk

“We’ve covered race, ethnicity, gender and everything you can think of, and it was so explosive because of the times.”

—Jason Williams

research is helping children of color think of themselves as mathematicians.

Programs in the College of Education and Human Services tackle equity issues in education, including the lack of teachers of color by working to diversify the teacher pipeline in cities like Newark, New Jersey.

“We want to combat the social inequalities that we are seeing every day in our society,” says Jennifer Robinson, executive director of the Center of Pedagogy. “So, we have a broader mission beyond just teaching students about subject matter. We want to make sure our students see themselves as moral agents who are going to provide

their students with access to knowledge, opening doors and windows and opportunities.”

In its partnership with Orange Community Schools, the Center for Community Engagement works with faculty and students in disciplines from food and nutrition sciences, early childhood education and social work to sustainability studies, archaeology and the arts to address historic inequities in public education.

“We do this by building mutually beneficial partnerships among Orange public schools and local community- and faith-based organizations, and University faculty and

students that are focused on improving student and family success,” says Center Director Bryan Murdock. “It’s a different thing to go into the community where people live and work and play and pray, and to see the situation up close, than to read about it in a textbook.”

Associate Professor of Justice Studies Jessica Henry teaches Wrongful Convictions, Death Penalty Perspectives, and Hate Crimes. Her book, *Smoke But No Fire: Convicting the Innocent of Crimes that Never Happened*, was published in August by University of California Press. She is also the faculty advisor for the Petey Greene program, in which students tutor prisoners working toward their high school equivalency diplomas at Northern State Prison.

As a public defender in New York City, Henry saw how the poor and people of color are negatively impacted by how difficult it is to navigate the criminal justice system. “It’s such an honor for me to be able to bring those experiences into the classroom and then provide the theory behind what goes on every day in the criminal justice system,” she says.

In the days following the killing of George Floyd by police, University groups held virtual meetings to discuss racism, police brutality, the Black Lives Matter movement and the effect of COVID-19 on communities of color.

“We’re seeing communities already struggling to make ends meet, to have clean water. And now we’re in the middle of a pandemic, people facing food insecurities, potential job losses, not having anyone to watch their children while they’re working from home, if they have the ability to work from home,” says Tasneem Abushaban ’20, who earned her degree in Public Health, another program rooted in social justice. “On top of COVID-19, comes a civil rights movement. Imagine how that affects mental health,” Abushaban says.



Associate Professor Jessica Henry teaches a class on the justice system.

“It’s such an honor for me to be able to bring those experiences into the classroom and then provide the theory behind what goes on every day in the criminal justice system.”

—Jessica Henry



Associate Dean Leslie Wilson says the University is committed to racial diversity.



Jayda Lindsey '20 addresses the rally in Wayne, New Jersey. Photo by Amy Abdou

Coming to Montclair State from Phillipsburg, New Jersey, Abushaban, who is Muslim, Palestinian and Latina, welcomed the chance to study in a diverse community. “I thought being in an environment where I’m valued and appreciated was a privilege. But as I grow as a person, I’m realizing that it’s not a privilege. It’s deserved, that everyone deserves that.”

CHANGE BEYOND COLLEGE

Many alumni are devoted to bringing about change – some through public education, others through activist organizations, and some through seemingly unrelated paths.

Several have been profiled in *Montclair* magazine, including *Blue’s Clues* star Josh Dela Cruz ’11 and artist Pope.L ’78 who are featured in the Spring/Summer issue; Tosan Boyo ’11, who is leading the COVID-19 Operations Center for San Francisco’s Department of Public Health; poet and activist Talena Queen ’95, who brought Little Free Libraries to Paterson; former Camden police detective Shyqira Williams ’09, who now runs a program for youth; and educator

Gemar Mills ’05, known for turning around a failing Newark high school, who now leads College Achieve Public Schools-Paterson and is using this moment to educate both students and staff.

“We’re educating our staff on anti-racism and what that looks like. Educating the adults is going to be the most important piece,” says Mills, who has worked to give students the same kind of support he received. “What I like about what’s happening with Black Lives Matter and anti-racism is that it’s becoming a trend, and trends become embedded in the culture.”

LOOKING FORWARD

While the University has worked to create a diverse and equitable campus, leaders say there is still work to do.

“As a society, we need to learn to listen more. We need to be open to the idea that some of the things that we do and say are coming from a place that is a systemic problem,” Pennington says. “We need to be doing the same on campus.”

To that end, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education David Hood says student and faculty forums this summer helped students, staff and faculty process the cases of police brutality and the protests that followed.

“We not only wanted to talk about this from a scholarship perspective, we wanted to come together in an open dialogue and provide an outlet to students to express their feelings and to support them,” Hood says.

The University will continue to fight for social justice, Pennington says, through understanding, thinking, having conversations, talking about it, asking questions.

“It’s communication, it’s dialogue. It’s educating ourselves in order to be able to educate others,” she says. “It makes no sense to come and get an education if you aren’t able to debate, discuss, see and learn new things.” ■

Students and alumni take talents to Spielberg's remake of *West Side Story*

READY
TO
RUMBLE

BY MARY BARR MANN

Spielberg's *West Side Story* premieres December 2021.
Photo by Niko Tavernise



Two days after Carolina Abreu graduated from Montclair State in May 2019 with a degree in Filmmaking, she reported to work at her new job as production assistant on legendary filmmaker Steven Spielberg's remake of *West Side Story*.

"I'm still pinching myself," Abreu says.

Abreu is among nearly two dozen recent Montclair State graduates who worked on the film – whether as dancers, actors, singers or behind the scenes in production. The experience was a high-water mark in many young careers – and has sustained the former students as COVID-19 hit pause on their early, remarkable success.

West Side Story – a retelling of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* through the lens of violent conflict between rival New York City gangs, the Sharks and the Jets – jolted Broadway in 1957, with music by Leonard Bernstein, lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, book by Arthur Laurents and choreography and direction by Jerome Robbins. The 1961 film, directed by Robert Wise and Robbins, won 10 Academy Awards, including Best Picture. Spielberg has updated the classic with the help of Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Tony Kushner and Tony Award-winning choreographer Justin Peck. The new film stars Clifton, New Jersey, native Rachel Zegler (as Maria) and Ansel Elgort (as Tony) of *The Fault in Our Stars* and is scheduled for release December 2021.

"I consider my role in *West Side Story* my greatest professional accomplishment," says Carlos E. Gonzalez '11, a dancer and actor who was cast as a Shark. "Telling this incredible story and getting to work with Steven Spielberg was truly a dream."

"It was the best summer of my life," says Melody Marti '18, who earned a Bachelor of Arts in Dance and Education. "I went in as a rookie and I've been following these people on Broadway and *So You Think You Can Dance*. It never occurred to me that I would be working with them."

Getting cast was no easy feat; more than 30,000 performers auditioned for the film.

Marti answered two separate open calls – one in New York and one in Miami – with hundreds of other dancers and endured more than six rounds of

callbacks. She called the experience "pretty intensive."

Annelise Cepero '17, who earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre, reports that her audition process took almost a full year. "I first went in for an initial audition early 2018. It wasn't until around the end of 2018 that I was asked to come back in and do a series of callbacks. I found out I would be joining the cast right before the new year! I couldn't believe it."

Hard Work

Working on *West Side Story* was a dream come true, but still a dream that required long hours, lots of sweat and, often, aching feet.

After weeks of rehearsal, filming for "Dance at the Gym" – where Tony and Maria meet while the gangs challenge each other in a dance contest – took place over one week at an indoor location in June 2019, says Marti. The scenes for "America" were shot on the streets of Harlem and Paterson, New Jersey, in July of the same summer.

"The work was grueling with long hours dancing in heels in hot summer temperatures and sun," Marti says. "You're so excited and in the moment that you just embrace everything, the good and the bad."

Abreu spent much of the summer working as a production assistant (aka a P.A.) at the film's location in Paterson, where she and her colleagues were recreating 1950s Hell's Kitchen.

"Working 12-hour days for six days a week made me appreciate the people I worked with. They truly put their blood, sweat and tears into this project," says Abreu, who worked both in construction and location services, handling everything from making blueprints "come to life" and acting as a liaison to Paterson residents. "I learned a lot from some of the top industry professionals as they showed me the ins and outs of this business."

Filmmaking major Amy Muniz '20 worked as a P.A. from mid-August to mid-September 2019, with crews in Paterson, Newark and Harlem. "The experience was amazing – seeing all of the aspects of filmmaking that I had been taught and had been practicing at Montclair State being performed by truly the best of the best in the industry was unforgettable."

"I learned so much about artistry and the magic of cinema," says Cepero, who was cast as a singer and actor. "The professionalism on set was unmatched and everyone's sole purpose was to work as a team and make something legendary. To be singing and listening to the classic score every day on set was a dream come true."

Career Success

Following *West Side Story*, Muniz was hired to be a P.A. on a number of high-budget productions, including *Marry Me* directed by Kat Coiro, Showtime's *Ray Donovan*, Aaron Sorkin's *The Trial of The Chicago 7*, ABC's *For Life* and as a costume assistant for NBC's *Lincoln Rhyme: The Bone Collector*. She did almost all of this while finishing her coursework at Montclair State last fall. Muniz walked in Commencement this past summer.

After wrapping her work on *West Side Story*, Abreu went on to P.A. for the Disney+ original series *Encore!* and as an office P.A. and audience P.A. for *The Maury Show*.

"This experience has given me many opportunities to learn and ask questions about this industry," says Abreu. "Thanks to this journey, I have more confidence that I, too, can bring a movie to life."

Hitting Pause, Then Hitting Play Again

Gonzalez, a former Acting major with a minor in Dance, gained media attention for being cast in both Spielberg's *West Side Story* as well as the innovative Broadway revival of *West Side Story* directed by Ivo van Hove – a production that was shut down in March with the rest of Broadway because of the pandemic. Despite being on hiatus, Gonzalez's trajectory to stardom seems assured: fans will also be able to catch a glimpse of him in the film adaptation of Lin-Manuel Miranda's *In the Heights* now scheduled for release in June 2021.

After P.A. jobs disappeared with the pandemic this spring, Abreu and Muniz are

finally seeing work take off again. Abreu is now working for *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* through NBCUniversal's apprentice program. To fill the stretch from March to July, she kept busy writing a script.

Muniz took on some freelance work to help local small businesses over the spring and summer but was recently hired for *The Sopranos* movie, a prequel to the series. Production began in mid-September.

"The break was very hard at first but I think I needed it more than I thought," says Muniz, who worked multiple jobs while earning her degree. "I'm ready more than ever now to continue working and earning the title of First Assistant Director."

"It has definitely thrown a curve ball at all of us," says Cepero of the pandemic. Nonetheless, the actor – whose professional credits also include regional theater gigs such as *The Prince of Egypt*, *Murder Ballad*, *Smokey Joe's Cafe* and *The New World*, as well as appearances on CBS's *God Friended Me* and the award-winning digital series *#LoveMyRoomie* – is getting back to "doing what we do best."

"Fortunately, I've been able to work on a few commercial and print shoots, but it will definitely be a little while until we can perform on a stage again," says Cepero. "I've found it is important to use this time to take care of our bodies and our mental health. As artists, we are so used to 'go go go,' and it's been a change to slow down and stay mostly at home. I'm practicing gratitude daily, and I am just thankful for my own health and the health of my loved ones. So many people are suffering."

Roll Credits: Montclair State

Abreu and Muniz were two of 19 Montclair State students and recent graduates to work as P.A.s on *West Side Story*, hired through Broadcast and Media Operations at the School of Communication and Media.

"We have talented and eager students and we produce graduates with real-world

experience who are ready to hit the ground running – at the highest level," says Patricia Piroh, director of Production Services and Technology for Broadcast and Media Operations.

"Montclair State is widely acknowledged as the leader among all universities in New Jersey in its engagement with the burgeoning film and television industry here," says Daniel Gurskis, dean of the College of the Arts.

The Department of Theatre and Dance is also producing students and graduates who are transitioning successfully into professional careers.

Gonzalez entered Montclair State as an undeclared student and explored other options before committing to the BFA Acting program. "Lori Katterhenry, [former] chair of the Dance department, encouraged me to audition for a dance show and take ballet as an elective," he says. "Her encouragement is something I'll always be thankful for."

Gonzalez also cites Clay James, coordinator of the Musical Theatre program, for introducing him to the world of musical theater. James advised Gonzalez to stay true to himself and "embrace my authenticity of being Cuban and recognize that authenticity is what was going to help me succeed in the real world," he says. "And it did."

At Montclair State, Gonzalez was cast in musicals that allowed him to combine both his passions for dancing and acting. The result: Gonzalez became the first person to win awards from both the American College Dance Festival and the American College Theater Festival during his junior year.

Gonzalez credits Montclair State for giving him the foundation and training to succeed as a performer. "Take in as much information as you can – even if at the moment it doesn't seem like it will be useful." ■

With reporting by Jennifer Rossi '17.



Carolina Abreu '19

"I learned a lot from some of the top industry professionals as they showed me the ins and outs of this business."

—Carolina Abreu '19



Melody Marti '18, BA Dance and Education, was cast as a dancer for "America" and "Dance at the Gym."



Melody Marti '18 (right) in a Montclair State production of *West Side Story*.



"I learned so much about artistry and the magic of cinema." —Annelise Cepero '17



Carlos E. Gonzalez '11 was also cast in Ivo van Hove's Broadway revival of *West Side Story* and is featured in the film adaptation of Lin-Manuel Miranda's *In the Heights*, to be released in June 2021.

"Seeing all of the aspects of filmmaking that I had been taught and had been practicing at Montclair State being performed by truly the best of the best in the industry was unforgettable."

—Amy Muniz '20



Amy Muniz '20



Photos by Mike Peters 1.

1. Acting class and Zoom put students on the big screen, literally.

2. Friday night fire pits offered an outdoor in-person activity for student bonding.

3. Manny Wheagar, a junior and Community Health Ambassador, likes being part of something greater than himself.



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THE NEW NORMAL FOR NOW

Scenes from Campus in the Age of COVID-19

A walk on campus this fall is a quieter experience than a typical semester, but there is still life here: Musicians singing or playing instruments in the parking garage. Dancers practicing on the Quad or in the studio. Actors rehearsing with others in person and on Zoom, projected on a big screen. Classes across campus meeting outdoors, weather permitting.

Wearing masks, students still study together on the lawn or roast marshmallows over the fire pit. An occasional skateboarder rolls by. There is still a campus experience – albeit a different one with fewer people on campus, the majority of classes online and safety precautions that must be followed as part of the University’s state-approved Red Hawk Restart plan.

“We’re embracing this idea that we’re doing what we need now for everyone to be safe,” says junior Robert Onoz, a Physics major with a concentration in Physical Science Education. “It’s less scary that way too, to reassure us that this isn’t the ‘new normal.’ This is something we’re going through now, but it will change.”

“I feel very lucky to actually be here,” freshman Julia Ciesielsk, an Acting major from Massachusetts, said on the first day of the semester in August. “So even getting just the slightest bit of a college experience, I’m very happy to be here and meet new people.”

“In order to stay on campus, we must work together, and try our best to slow the spread.”

–MANNY WHEAGAR

All fall, students understood that if they didn’t follow the guidelines, they could get sent home and if cases spiked, the on-campus experience could end.

“In order to stay on campus, we must work together, and try our best to slow the spread,” says Manny Wheagar, a junior Biology major who works as a student Community Health Ambassador walking around campus in a vest to hand out masks and answer questions about the University’s safety protocols.

“Sometimes I forget there are other people in the building.”
–CARLEY CAMPBELL

THE SOUND OF SILENCE

When sophomore Journalism major Carley Campbell’s father helped her move into Freeman Hall in August, they both thought it might just be days before she would have to head home again. But as the days turned to weeks and campus coronavirus cases remained relatively low, Campbell settled into the semester, including hosting a quirky weekend history radio show on WMSC-FM from her dorm room and a daily news show from a studio, where she’s flying solo.

“A lot of the time, because I can’t control the sounds in the background, you can hear birds or my fan blowing,” she says, of doing the show from her room. In the studio, it’s much quieter, since she’s the only one there. “Still, you have to have personal protective gear, like masks, gloves and headphone covers, and you Zoom in with the directors.”

She told these stories in a video call while sitting in Freeman’s laundry room as her roommate took an online class in their room. “It’s so quiet,” she says. “Sometimes I forget there are other people in the building.”



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4. Carley Campbell hosts one radio program from the studio, alone, and one from her dorm room.

5. Yoga classes were held outdoors this fall, weather permitting.



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6. Much of life was spent outdoors, including study sessions on the Quad.

7. A student at work in a science lab.



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8. Nursing student Jhoniel Santiago administers a flu shot at an outdoor flu clinic.

9. Associate Professor Tara George teaches her journalism class outside.

10. Dance class on the Quad.

11. Enjoying a quiet first day on campus.



11.

PEACE IN THE QUAD

For Luz Corado Polo, the quiet campus has taken some getting used to. “[In the past,] you would always see the Quad full with people from different organizations. It was just so packed,” says the senior Justice Studies major. “And now it’s so empty and weird. I find myself asking, ‘Where is everybody? Where did everybody go?’”

It may be strangely quiet, but student groups gather both virtually and in person, providing some socially distanced ways to connect, including weekly Friday night fire pits behind the Rec Center and outdoor movies on the Quad – and there are many times in a week when the Red Hawk parking deck is filled with the sounds of music.

12. The Symphonic Band, Wind Symphony, and University Singers all held their rehearsals in the Red Hawk Deck.



12.



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13. Percussion class outside the Kasser Theater.

14. Director of Choral Activities Heather Buchanan and the University Singers rehearse for a performance on *The Kelly Clarkson Show*. See story, page 7.



14.

THE SOUNDS OF MUSIC

For musicians who had been singing or playing instruments in isolation for six months before the semester began, the return to in-person rehearsals made for a meaningful – and at times, emotional – start to the school year.

“It was clear that the directors and the students fully grasped the magnitude of the moment – many were openly emotional.”

– CALI SCHOOL DIRECTOR ANTHONY MAZZOCCHI

“Not having played music with another human being in six months and then finally playing with all my peers made me cry during the first piece we

played,” recalls Sabrina Isaac, a junior Clarinet Performance major, describing the feeling during those first notes.

“The experience was quite overwhelming,” said sophomore Music Education major Ryan Branco, a trumpeter with the Wind Symphony. “It’s quite breathtaking to see how easy it is to pick up where you last left off.”

And that they did. ■

Researchers are using insects as a way to offset malnutrition in some areas of the world.

This plate of grasshoppers (chapulines) is from Tolache, a Mexican restaurant in New York City.

They're What's for Dinner Bugs!

Montclair State anthropologist's research suggests nutritious insects hold the key to food security and saving endangered lemurs in Madagascar

By Laura Griffin

What would an insect need to taste like for you to add it to your diet? How about ... bacon? That smoky flavor seems to be the secret behind a Montclair State anthropologist's success in improving nutrition and saving lemurs in Madagascar through farming the crunchy *Zanna tenebrosa*, aka the "bacon bug."

"We knew they were delicious – they taste just like bacon – but it turns out that they're also nutritious," says Assistant Anthropology Professor Cortni Borgerson. "The farms we've created are really taking off, and insect consumption has increased by more than 1,000%."

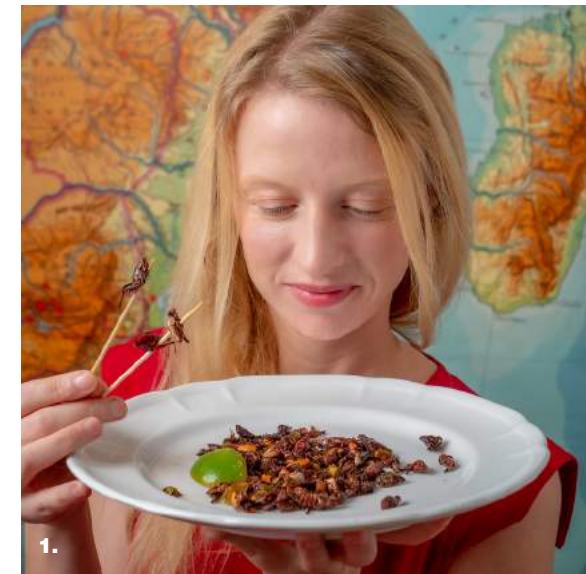
And beyond that, the more insects are eaten in the wilds of Madagascar, the fewer endangered lemurs will be hunted, which has long been Borgerson's goal.

Until last March, Borgerson split her time each year between the manicured campus of Montclair State and the wilds of the Masoala Peninsula on northeastern Madagascar, where, for the past 15 years, in one way or another, she has been working on both lemur conservation and improving malnutrition. In the last year, her grant-funded project to farm these "bacon bugs" is proving to solve both problems.

Her last trip to Madagascar was this past Spring Break, when, while she was there, the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic, and many areas of the world locked down. Getting back home was an adventure in itself – starting with having to wait out a cyclone before being able to leave the island in the Indian Ocean off the east coast of Africa.

"I managed to get on one of the last flights out of Madagascar before everything shut down," says Borgerson, "but our work continues here, as well as [in Madagascar], thanks to our incredible research team there."

Borgerson has been traveling to the same area near the Masoala National Park since she was a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts and a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard, long before she



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1. Cortni Borgerson, seen here with a plate of grasshoppers, leads a program to farm the so-called "bacon bugs" in Madagascar to improve food security.

2. Borgerson shares sakondry aka "bacon bugs" with villagers in Madagascar.

Photo by Mike Peters

joined the Montclair State faculty in 2018. She is fluent in Malagasy and in the local dialect in the Masoala region, where locals first introduced her to “sakondry,” the Malagasy name for the bug that tastes like bacon.

Villagers thought the sakondry were tasty but hadn’t considered it a sustainable food source, Borgerson says. When people get hungry and desperate there, they turn to the forest. Her original studies in Madagascar showed that in some villages, 75% of animal-source foods come from forest animals, including lemurs, and that there are higher rates of malnutrition in households that hunt lemurs, indicating that lemur is a “last resort” food. The sustainability of farming the tasty little “bacon bug” was worth exploring as an alternative food source, especially since they were already picked off plants and fried up in the rainy season as a special treat.

So, when she returned to Montclair State for the fall 2019 semester, she sought the



2.

help of entomologist and Assistant Biology Professor Matthew Aardema to develop ways to farm the bug and better understand the biology of this little-studied insect.

Aardema says Borgerson’s program to farm the sakondry in food insecure communities “has the potential to significantly improve the quality of life for those individuals who will have direct access to these insects.”

As Borgerson explains, “There is a clear correlation between malnourishment, food insecurity and lemur hunting. But that also makes it a very solvable problem. We just need to change what people put on top of their rice.”



3.

After getting the nutrition results and designing farming protocols in the fall of 2019, Borgerson’s team has been establishing farms of “tsidimy,” the lima bean plant that attracts the bacon bug, in villages throughout the Masoala region where the rainforest meets the sea. Borgerson’s team received a three-year grant from The International Union for Conservation of Nature’s Save Our Species initiative as well as support from National Geographic and Montclair State to test sakondry farming methods as a lemur conservation effort.

Their project is set in three of the Masoala Peninsula’s remote communities. “Our furthest communities are about four days beyond the last village on the map,” Borgerson says.

Her team of 15 research staff distributed lima bean plant seeds to participating households and there are now about 4,200 plants growing across all three project communities. The beauty of farming the “bacon bugs” is that they eat the “phloem” of the plant but not the lima beans, so people can harvest both. “It’s a win-win,” Borgerson says.

Early results show that farming sakondry has already begun to improve child nutrition, food security and lemur conservation.



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1. The Masoala region where Borgerson works is where the rainforest meets the sea.

2. Borgerson shows villagers a sakondry.

3. Borgerson’s team is using insects to increase food security and save endangered lemurs.

4. The sakondry’s scientific name is *Zanna tenebrosa* and it is mostly found in Madagascar and sub-Saharan Africa.

“There’s now food available at the times when people might typically hunt primates,” she says.

According to the most recent estimates, nearly 90,000 harvestable sakondry had found each of the communities’ lima bean farms, creating enough food from sakondry to replace 100% of lemur meat, and halve lemur hunting, since the project began a year ago, which had been their original three-year goal, Borgerson says.

Borgerson’s work in Madagascar has made her a bit of a celebrity in conservation circles. She has led National Geographic Expeditions and guest-starred on two episodes, where she helped the show’s hosts navigate Madagascar in search of animals thought to be extinct. Her work has also been featured on Vox and Atlas Obscura.

She serves on the board of the NGO Madagascar Health and Environmental Research (MAHERY), and is a commission member for the Madagascar Section of the International Union for Conservation of Nature Species Survival Commission’s Primate Specialist Group.

Pre-pandemic, she traveled to Madagascar in the summers and on winter or spring break, often with her husband and young daughters in tow, but since her last trip in March, she has had to find ways to do her research long-distance.

“We can’t wait to get back into the field,” she says. “Madagascar is our second home.”

Borgerson teaches Introduction to Physical Anthropology, Environmental Anthropology, Human Culture for Biodiversity Conservation, and Planetary Health. In the summer of 2019, Biology major Patsy Herrera ’20, traveled to Madagascar with Borgerson to assist.

It was a life-changing experience. “It made me realize how much is out there, diversity of nature, culture and language,” Herrera says. “It made me want to keep pursuing my interests in horticulture and ecology that is multi-culturally responsive. I also developed a massive appreciation for insects!”

The sakondry program is part of broader efforts in Madagascar to boost insect consumption to reduce malnutrition and protect biodiversity – including the use of cricket powder in school lunches in the capital city.

There’s also a push worldwide for more insect consumption – crickets, grasshoppers and other edible bugs – for both nutritional and environmental reasons. Harvesting insects requires less land and water and produces fewer greenhouse gases than harvesting meat. “They’re a great source of protein, vitamins and minerals,” Borgerson says. “And the fact that this one tastes like bacon helps.”

Too bad it’s mostly found in abundance in Madagascar. ■



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5. Borgerson with then-undergraduate Patsy Herrera in Madagascar in summer 2019.

6. Borgerson and her daughters take in the view in Madagascar.

7. Borgerson sits in a garden of tsidimy, the lima bean plant that the bacon bugs are drawn to.

8. Borgerson shows some Malagasy children a sakondry insect.

Madagascar photos courtesy of Cortni Borgerson



Philanthropy in Practice

“I don’t know if I’d be here right now. Because of this scholarship, I can focus on gaining the knowledge and experience to grow as an artist and as a person.”

—Nicole Arakaki, sophomore



The Campaign for Montclair State SOARs high, breaks records for supporting students, research and programs

By Michele Hickey

Getting to spend most of her time back in the studio after months of virtual instruction has been a relief for Nicole Arakaki, whose commitment and passion for dance fuels her drive to overcome every barrier to earning her degree – including finding financial resources to put herself through school.

“It’s so freeing,” says Arakaki, a sophomore Dance Education major. “I love the long hours. I don’t think I could ever feel as passionate about any other field.”

The dancer’s determination is typical of Montclair State University students, who inspired more than 20,000 alumni, friends, and corporate and foundation donors to contribute nearly \$82 million toward **Soar, The Campaign for Montclair State University**, surpassing the goal of the most ambitious fundraising campaign in the University’s history.

Making a difference in the lives of students like Arakaki was at the heart of Soar and was a core message that resonated quickly and deeply.

“Donors from all walks of life stepped forward to invest in Montclair State’s future,” says Vice President for Development Colleen Coppla. “These funds are having a direct and lasting impact, strengthening every aspect of a Montclair State education. Our gratitude to our donors – and our Red Hawk pride – have never soared higher.”

This philanthropy in practice is creating meaningful impact in three vital areas: educating the next generation of leaders, sustaining a vibrant research and

scholarship community, and enhancing our student-centered campus.

EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

“Scholarships to support the education of the next generation of leaders have always been a necessity at Montclair State,” says President Susan A. Cole. “Our students, often the first in their families to attend college, are as hardworking as ever, but the financial realities of earning an education have changed.”

More than 7,500 scholarships were awarded during the campaign. Ninety-one new scholarship funds were created, including 34 endowment funds that will provide an enduring source of financial assistance for Montclair State students.

These resources are vital to students who struggle financially to stay in college. “With more than 70 percent of our students relying on financial aid to attend college, every scholarship dollar matters,” Cole adds.

SUPPORTING THE AMERICAN DREAM

“It is essentially up to me to pay for my future,” says Arakaki, who received a scholarship in honor of retired dance professor Lori Katterhenry. Arakaki has taken out loans to pay tuition, but without the help from the scholarship, she says, “I don’t know if I’d be here right now. Because of this scholarship, I can focus on gaining the knowledge and experience to grow as an artist and as a person.”

“A gift of \$500 or \$1,000 can literally save the education of a dancer at Montclair State,” says Montclair State University Foundation Board Trustee

Gerald Appelstein, referring to the typical gap between many students’ financial aid package and the cost of staying in school.

“Montclair State is an incredible place,” says Appelstein, an angel investor who established the Lori Katterhenry Dance Scholarship. “Everywhere I look I see talented people making a difference. Here, the American Dream is truly inclusive, and equal opportunity means providing the tools for students to become their best.”



GERALD APPELSTEIN



KEESHA CHAVIS

HELPING HANDS

As a first-generation college student and a teen mom, Keesha Chavis '97, '03 MA learned that hard work and helping hands can change the course of your life. Chavis grew up watching her own single mother struggle to make ends meet. She was determined to follow a different path.

“Without my mother, my sister and the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF), I could not have done it,” she says, recalling her early days as a student. Today, she is assistant vice president for learning, development, and performance in the University’s Division of Human Resources.

Chavis created the Tanya and TaQuanna Green Memorial EOF Scholarship in memory of her sister, who passed away in 2016, and her daughter, who died two years later, to help students from Newark, New Jersey. “This scholarship is my way of offering assistance to those in need and acknowledges that my sister played a key role in my journey to obtain a higher education, and also honors the memory of my daughter,” she says.

For sophomore Zhaky’a Shorter, Chavis’ gift provided the resources needed to get through this difficult pandemic year. “I was so close to taking a year off of school,” Shorter says. “The scholarship provided the help I needed. It made me realize that finishing college was going to be hard but that there are ways around it and I should not give up.”

GIVING STUDENTS A GLOBAL EXPERIENCE

Sharon Foerster ’66 created a scholarship for undergraduate students in the Language, Business and Culture program to ensure that first-generation undergraduates have the chance to experience the world.

“When students study abroad, they have to be open to diversity in order to get by – they must be open to cultural difference. And they bring that sensibility, that openness, home with them, often with a new interest in equity,” says Foerster, the lead author of several college-level Spanish language textbooks and co-founder and academic advisor of Academic Programs International, an independent study-abroad provider (see profile, page 47).



Zhaky'a Shorter, a sophomore, says receiving the scholarship lessened the stresses brought on by the pandemic.

THE IMPACT OF SCHOLARSHIP GIFTS

Scholarships are as individual as the donors who create them. Collective funding from College of the Arts (CART) Board Members established the Creative Talent Awards, which gives recipients opportunities to work with luminaries in their chosen fields, in addition to providing much-needed financial support. “To be part of a student’s growth and see them excel has been beyond gratifying,” says Robert Gregory, the CART Advisory Board chair.

Trevor Stephney, a senior majoring in Filmmaking, says receiving the Creative Talent Award was “one of the most memorable moments of my life” and has allowed him to pursue his art, to discover his voice for what he intends to create. “I’m taking this career path seriously, and it’s good to have that support system, knowing there are people who believe in me and what I do.”

University Foundation Trustee and lawyer Steven Resnick ’93 created the Tayler-Benfield Scholarship as a tribute to his professors, Marilyn Tayler, professor of Political Science and Law, and David

Benfield, professor emeritus of Philosophy and Religion, while also helping deserving pre-law students. “I was immensely touched to know that a former student felt such gratitude to name a scholarship in our honor while we are still alive and teaching,” Tayler says. “The scholarship provides a substantial motivation to excellence for our students.”

It’s an honor as well for Hiba Khalil ’20, who graduated with a double major in Political Science and Philosophy, a 2019-2020 Tayler-Benfield Scholar. “This scholarship gave me the recognition I needed to confirm that I had put in my best work at Montclair State,” Khalil says. “It was a reminder of what I am capable of achieving on my journey to law school.”

Campaign Cabinet member and University Foundation Trustee Judith Schumacher-Tilton notes, “The motivation for supporting scholarships at Montclair State may be unique to each donor, but the impact on students’ lives is universal. Deserving, determined, hardworking students are afforded opportunities to pursue their passions and realize their dreams.”

SUSTAINING VIBRANT RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

“The University’s talented faculty represents a significant resource of scientists and scholars contributing to the creation of new knowledge and solutions to society’s most pressing issues,” says Cole. Donors contributed nearly \$43 million in support of academic programs, professorships and research initiatives that are breaking new ground in disciplines, including artificial intelligence, music therapy, social reform, sustainability and teacher training.

A DREAM COME TRUE

Entrepreneurs Mimi and Edwin ’82 Feliciano know firsthand the challenges and rewards of launching a new business venture. They established the Mimi and Edwin Feliciano Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation to provide rich, real-life entrepreneurial experiences for students and to expose them to mentors and advisors who are, themselves, successful entrepreneurs. Mimi Feliciano is a member of the Feliciano School of Business Advisory Board.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Feliciano Center’s MIX Lab, which provides tools for 3D printing, design and manufacturing, did more than enhance students’ innovation skills. Students used the facility to produce more than 30,000 face shields for front-line health-care workers.

“Core to the Center’s work is collaboration with a rich ecosystem of global and local talent that helps blur the line between where the Montclair State campus ends and where the entrepreneurial community begins,” says Feliciano Center Executive Director Carley Graham Garcia.

A LASTING IMPRESSION

Although Michael S. Kogan, professor emeritus, retired in 2015, he remains in touch with his former students. He taught courses in philosophy, theology, American religious history and Mormonism. He also initiated evening lectures and informal events that allowed students and faculty opportunities to deepen their dialogue and to look beyond what was covered in the classroom.



STEVEN RESNICK



MIMI AND EDWIN FELICIANO



MICHAEL S. KOGAN

“I’ve had a great career and loved everything about it,” he says. Through his planned gift, he created the Michael S. Kogan Fund to support the Department of Religion in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

“This gift is a fitting legacy for Professor Kogan, a passionate advocate for tolerance and dialogue among religions,” says Coppla.



Trevor Stephney, a senior majoring in Filmmaking, says the support strengthens his resolve to pursue his career path.

ALWAYS READY TO DO MORE

Over the years, Lawrence R. Inserra, Jr. and Inserra Supermarkets have been generous champions of the University, supporting everything from the Red Hawk Pantry to the Theresa and Lawrence R. Inserra Endowed Chair in Italian and Italian American Studies.

Inserra saw Soar as an opportunity to greatly expand the Inserra Endowed Chair. “The endowment has placed Italian Studies at Montclair State University on the national – and the international – map,” says Teresa Fiore, Inserra Chair and professor of Italian. “It has created a unique opportunity for us to think about Italy, not just in terms of preservation of culture, but in a contemporary, dynamic and, most important of all, interdisciplinary way.”

KNOWLEDGE AS A RESOURCE FOR THE GREATER GOOD

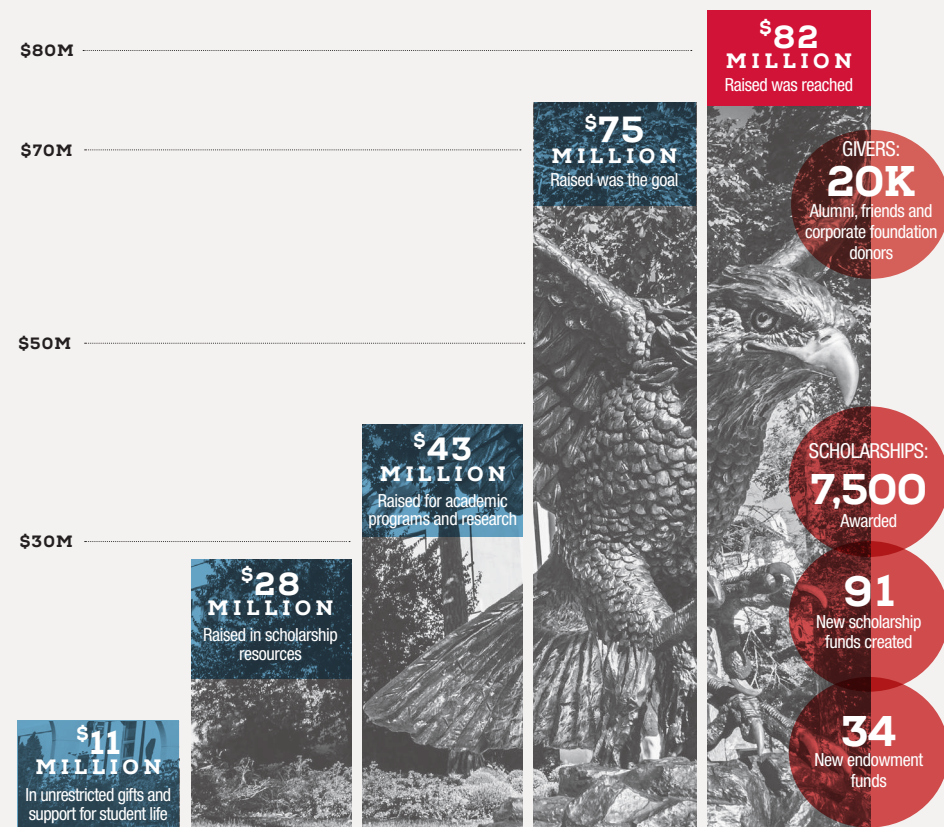
While many donors choose to support specific initiatives, their combined support for academic programs and research helps strengthen the academic foundations of the entire University.

When the pandemic hit, faculty across disciplines shared their expertise on economic modeling, public health, social justice and more with collaborators, the media and the public.

ENHANCING A STUDENT-CENTERED CAMPUS

Nearly \$11 million in unrestricted gifts and support for student life allowed the University to enhance athletics, expand career and academic support services, and address the most pressing needs of students. Donors supported athletic facilities, team travel and equipment, academic resource rooms and the extracurricular life of the campus.

SOAR: BY THE NUMBERS



Making a difference in the lives of students was at the heart of Soar, The Campaign for Montclair State University, the largest and most ambitious campaign in the University's 112-year history. The campaign raised a record-breaking \$82 million in private contributions, surpassing its \$75 million goal.

The Soar campaign enhanced the University's ability to provide a vibrant educational environment where students, regardless of their financial means, are challenged and empowered to succeed. Soar also provided faculty members with resources to develop new programs, conduct groundbreaking research, and for the entire campus community, access to facilities conducive to 21st-century teaching and learning.

PAYING IT FORWARD

Judy Graef '66, '69 MA knows how to make every minute count. An avid traveler, she has been to all seven continents. As an education professional, Graef encourages students to be open to possibilities. But when Graef learned about the financial hardship faced by some students, she saw how opportunities for adventure could seem far out of reach. Her support for the Pay It Forward Emergency Scholarship assists

students in need in their senior year. “These students have proven themselves, and what I give can help them get across the line to complete their degree.”

Charisse Myers '16 was in the second semester of her senior year when her family encountered sudden financial hardship. “I emailed the financial aid office to see if there was anything they could do,” she recalls. “They told me about this new emergency scholarship fund and helped me apply. It

came at the perfect time – it relieved the financial burden for my family, lifting such a weight off of my shoulders. I could focus on school work and finishing my degree.”

RED HAWK PRIDE RUNS DEEP

By the time Holly P. Gera '79 retired as director of Intercollegiate Athletics after 22 years, she had been part of many athletic accomplishments, including 50 conference championships and every sport competing in an NCAA Championship tournament. She is particularly proud to have recognized 209 All-Americans and 21 Academic All-Americans over the years.

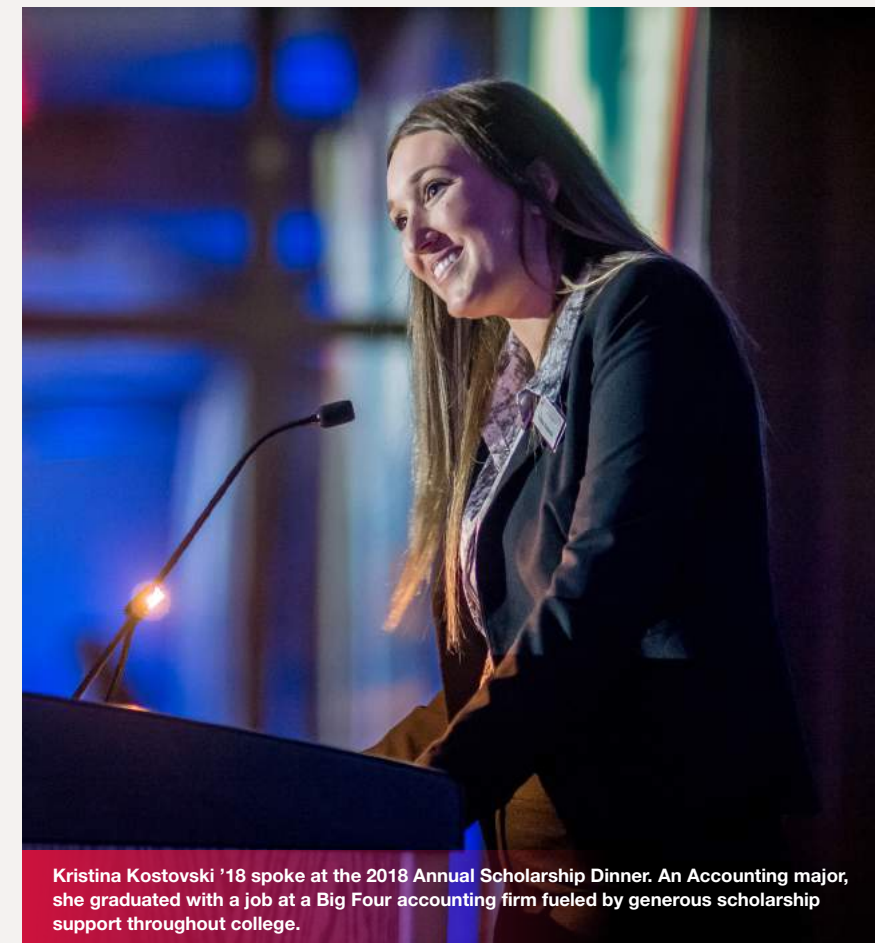
So supporting the Red Hawk Athletics Fund through Soar was a perfect fit for Gera. “There are lots of organizations that one can donate to, but for me, it is important to give

back to Montclair State because it changed my life,” Gera says. “It gave me great background to build my life and career.”

GOING GREEN

Timeless values and innovative thinking are behind two Soar-funded programs – the PSEG Institute for Sustainability Studies Green Teams and the Sustainability Awards. Paid internships allow students to pursue their ideas for a sustainable environment while earning money to support their education.

“I want to leave a handprint on the earth instead of a carbon footprint,” says Portia Calo '19, a Nutrition Sciences graduate who worked to get fresh produce into the homes of city residents.



Kristina Kostovski '18 spoke at the 2018 Annual Scholarship Dinner. An Accounting major, she graduated with a job at a Big Four accounting firm fueled by generous scholarship support throughout college.

Amy Tuininga, director of the PSEG Institute for Sustainability Studies, says these off-campus partnerships help students succeed. “This important educational component of their academic careers helps to jump-start the next stages,” she says.



EVERY GIFT COUNTS

These are just some of the many ways philanthropy in practice is providing life-changing opportunities for students and helping to ensure the continued success of programs at Montclair State.

“The success of Soar is possible thanks to the generous participation of so many alumni, volunteers, faculty, staff, students, and corporate and foundation supporters,” Coppla says. “They taught us so much about coming together as a community, and about the true value and impact of giving.” ■



THE PRACTICE SEASON

In COVID-19 era, fall sports teams use canceled season to train for spring games

By Corey Annan

Montclair State Athletics prepared extensively for a fall sports season in the pandemic, putting in place safety protocols for its teams, including regular testing, temperature checks, small group practices, daily health screenings and plans for quarantining, if needed.

But when the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) released its mandates for college sports this summer, the New Jersey Athletic Conference canceled the season because some schools were unable to meet those requirements, says Montclair State Athletic Director Robert Chesney, who is president of the NJAC board.

So instead, Red Hawk fall sports teams are using the season to let teams practice together, with a plan to play a shortened season in the spring. Additionally, winter

sports teams will play a modified season beginning in January and spring teams will play a traditional season.

The restart plan allows for flexibility, which is crucial because of the uncertainty of the pandemic, Chesney says. "We prepared the plan knowing that change is very possible and most likely will happen," he says. "So while we have a good plan and we plan to move forward, hopefully, things get better and not worse, but we are ready either way."

While the canceled season was a disappointment, especially for the seniors, "we are grateful to have the opportunity to practice together this fall," says Field Hockey Head Coach Eileen O'Reilly.

Practices look much different this season. Coaches must wear masks on the sidelines, and players must wear masks except when they are participating in physical activity. Teams practice in smaller breakout groups, splitting up the field, and team meetings are held on Zoom.

"The athletic administration has done a great job of giving us positive opportunities to train together," O'Reilly says.

After months apart, players are just happy to be back on the field.

"Pretty much practice has been awesome. We've been following all protocols, wearing masks at all times," says junior Brennan Ray, a safety/linebacker for the football team. Yet, he adds, "Nothing really feels different... We look good on the field, too. All the chemistry is there."

Even though it's not what they envisioned, players say, all of the protocols are worth it.

"Everything we're doing is just restricting the risk of the virus," Ray says. "I'm pretty sure we're one of the only teams still practicing because we have been following protocol."

The men's soccer team was particularly looking forward to its 2020 season, after making a good run in the NCAA Tournament last season and being optimistic about their chances this fall.

"Last year, we left with a little bit of an edge because we were seconds away from going to a Final Four in the NCAA Tournament," Oscar Sanchez, the team's star forward, said when practices began. "We were all prepared and ready to go hard this season, but now we realize it isn't in our hands."

Prior to fall, players trained on their own so they could take advantage of the fall training to improve mentally and physically, he says.

Sanchez understands that a spring season may not include much, if any, postseason play, but says that the fall training will be pivotal to the team's success.

"We don't know if there will be an NCAA Championship or an NJAC Championship," he says. "But we are going to be focused on being more ready and prepared than anyone else."



Masks aren't required for physical activity, so athletes, coaches and staff are regularly tested for COVID-19.



ATHLETICS

Because social distancing and mask wearing are difficult to achieve and not required during physical activity, players and others in Athletics are required to be tested for COVID-19 regularly.

While Sanchez is concerned about the pandemic, he plans to continue to play the sport he loves, with caution.

“The COVID-19 pandemic in general is nerve-wracking,” Sanchez says. “But as athletes, if you love your sport, you’re gonna do whatever you can [to play it]. I know the guidelines are as cautious as possible, so I’m not really nervous because I want to get back to playing. I am taking as many cautionary steps as I need to take to make sure that I’m healthy and ready to go.”



When not on the field, players are required to wear masks.

Questions remain whether fall sports might play in the spring and what that would look like. As of October, details for the plans for spring were not finalized.

One detail yet to be worked out is how teams will share Sprague Field. There could potentially be four teams actively using the field on a regular basis, assuming spring sports continue a traditional schedule.

The canceled season hasn’t been all bad, Chesney says. “Teams have had the chance to do some different things this fall than what they have done in the past, and it has been a teaching and learning experience for everyone.” ■

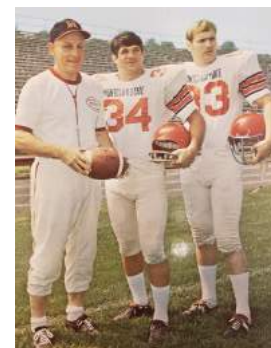
Corey Annan, a junior Sports Media and Journalism major, works for the student newspaper, The Montclarion. A version of this story first appeared there.



Athletics Updates Brand and Logo, Partners with Adidas

The Montclair State University Athletics Department refreshed its brand and Red Hawk logo and entered a three-year partnership with Adidas as the Red Hawks’ official outfitter for the University’s 18 varsity sports teams. As part of the partnership, Adidas will provide support for the Red Hawk Open golf event and National Student-Athlete Day. The partnership also provides significant branding support for the Athletics Department, aspiring to become known as one of the top NCAA Division III programs in the country, and allows a consistent look for all athletics programs.

“We continue to raise the profile of MSU Athletics, and this commitment by Adidas only reinforces that fact,” says Director of Athletics Rob Chesney. “We are looking forward to seeing our teams take the field with this new look” once they are able to get back into competition.



Football Celebrates 50th Anniversary of Knute Rockne Bowl Win

In the 89 years of football at Montclair State, there have been plenty of outstanding seasons producing great victories, incredible individual performances and championship campaigns. A

half-century ago, all three came together in what is remembered as the greatest season in program history – when the team finished off the year winning the NCAA Knute Rockne Bowl title.

This fall, the Red Hawks celebrated the 50th anniversary of the 1970 squad that posted a 9-1 record, including five shutouts and winning by an average score of 25-5. At that time, the team was named the Indians, and it claimed its second consecutive New Jersey State College Conference (known as the NJAC today) championship, allowing no points in any league contests.

Montclair State played the previous year’s champions, Hampden-Sydney College (of Virginia) in the Knute Rockne Bowl, the East Regional Championship for NCAA College Division II inside the Atlantic City Convention Center on a portable grass field. The teams slugged it out before a crowd of 2,700 until Montclair State prevailed 7-6, finishing a season that still resonates 50 years later. ■

For more about that day, visit montclairathletics.com.

NEWS AND NOTES FROM ALUMNI AND FRIENDS



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DIGITAL GOING

Creating Virtual Space for Alumni in the Time of COVID-19

Wine Tasting Leads Off Events from Home

Like the rest of the world, the Office of Alumni Engagement had to shift its events online to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, partnering across campus to help alumni adapt to trying times – from mindfulness training to tips for parents homeschooling their children to philosophical lunch discussions and engaging musical performances and even a series of virtual wine tastings.

“The silver lining to going digital is the ability to attend educational discussions, cultural happenings and fun events without having to fight traffic or leave home,” says Jeanne Marano, assistant vice president for Annual Giving and Alumni Engagement.

“I was so impressed with how quickly Montclair State shifted gears to offer robust virtual programming for alumni in the early weeks of the pandemic,” says Amanda Parker Lejniaks '11. “My favorite was the virtual wine tasting – I forwarded it to my mom, a fellow Red Hawk, and we signed up together.”



Alumni Engagement directors sent the lists of wines from California and Italy to those who registered for the events, and tips on where to find the wines so that everyone could purchase ahead of time and learn about them together.

“It was a great experience, something my mom and I normally would have done in person, but were able to recreate and share a memory while being safe and socially distant,” Lejniaks says. “It’s still a highlight of our ‘COVID’ experience.”

In May and July, wine educators guided alumni and friends through the tasting of wines from California and Italy in the comfort of their own homes via Zoom. “I enjoyed the presentation and like doing something out of the box,” says Mira Mizrahi '81. Diana Todaro '70 echoed that sentiment: “We thoroughly enjoyed it. It was fun for me to be on with everybody.”

Other highlights from virtual events included:

- Homecoming 2020 (see page 46)
- Red Hawk Open (see page 45)
- Homeschool Tips for Parents
- The Philosophy for Lunch series of discussions
- Free summer webinar series with the Center for Career Services addressing job searches during the pandemic.
- MBA Executive Speaker Series (virtual) hosted by Matt Jahansouz, Chief People Officer at WeWork.
- The University Singers partnered with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (NJSO), for a virtual world premiere of *Gratias Tibi*, “giving thanks” through music, dedicated to health-care workers and first responders.
- SCM Directors Conversation with Emmy Award-winning writer and producer and alumnus Michael Price '81, co-creator of the Netflix animated hit series *F is for Family* and executive producer of *The Simpsons*. ■

All these events may be viewed online by visiting the archives of MONTCLAIRconnect at connect.montclair.edu.

MONTCLAIRconnect Offers New Virtual Opportunities

To celebrate 10 years of **MONTCLAIRconnect**, the Office of Alumni Engagement has upgraded its platform to allow for online mentorship, volunteer opportunities, networking and improved ways to connect with the University. Through the online community, you can network, mentor, learn and stay up-to-date with the latest events.

By taking advantage of this lifelong resource, says Stacy Albanese Fagioli '08, '17 MA, associate director of Annual Giving and Alumni Engagement, alumni can join more than 25 online academic or alumni interest groups, including regional chapters, career groups, school and college groups. “MONTCLAIRconnect is a wonderful tool that provides our current students, alumni and mentors an opportunity to collaborate with each other,” says April Sime, MBA advisor at the Feliciano School of Business. “It can be used for networking, mentorship, accessing resources and connecting with experts in the field.”

Through the platform, you can reach out to former classmates, network with other alumni, share life updates and accomplishments, or offer up your expertise to others. To learn more, visit connect.montclair.edu. ■

Supporting Students with Online Gifts

During the shutdown due to the pandemic, when students were at their most vulnerable, the University community came together online to raise much-needed funds in support of the Student Emergency Fund and the Red Hawk Pantry.

The Student Emergency Fund was created to assist students in need, and since March it has provided scholarship assistance for those who would otherwise be unable to continue their studies due to financial hardship caused by the pandemic.

Montclair State also participated in **#GivingTuesdayNow**, a global day of giving and unity in emergency response to the unprecedented need caused by COVID-19.

Help ensure our students have the best possible chance for success. Make a gift today by visiting montclair.edu/make-a-gift. ■

Red Hawk Open Scores Big

The 8th Annual Red Hawk Open – Virtual Edition – included home visits from Rocky the Red Hawk, highlights from Montclair State Athletics, updates from University leadership and a live raffle drawing.

While golfers did not hit the links this year, the Montclair State community came together to raise more than \$56,000 for Athletics.

Each year, the golf outing benefits each of the University’s 18 NCAA Division III men’s and women’s teams. Last year’s outing also raised funds to create the Red Hawk Sports Network, and some of the money raised at the virtual golf outing will help the Network get to the next level.

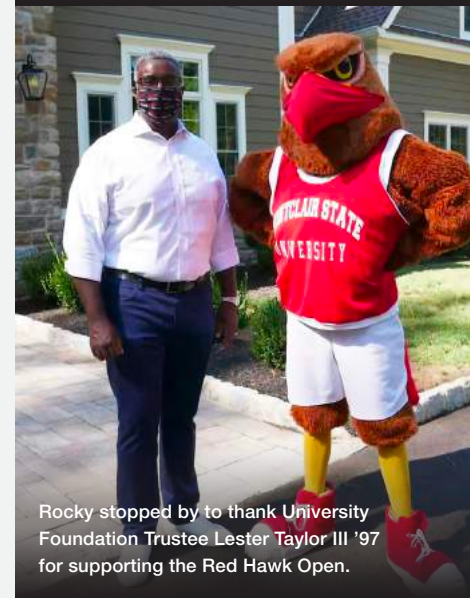
The Red Hawk Sports Network launched in fall 2019 and is a joint venture between the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics and the School of Communication and Media. The network covers all of the Red Hawk teams, including live events through YouTube.

The inaugural Red Hawk Sports Network team consists of two sports commentators: a play-by-play and color commentator and a production team that assists in producing the livestream for the games. Social media interns also help provide video and other content for the network. There are currently plans to bring in sideline reporters, sports analysts and other positions in later months.

Athletics Director Rob Chesney '90, '92 MA thanked donors, sponsors and alumni for their support and explained that players and coaches were excited to get back on the fields, courts, track and in the pool for practices this fall and are looking forward to spring. Save the date for next year’s open on September 13, 2021, at the Crestmont Country Club in West Orange. ■



Rocky hit the road to thank our supporters, including the Iannitelli family, Nick '99, Jill '00, Dante, Marianna and Bella.



Rocky stopped by to thank University Foundation Trustee Lester Taylor III '97 for supporting the Red Hawk Open.



2020 **Goes Virtual!**
Saturday, October 24

Celebrating Homecoming From the Comfort of Home

Online games, webinars and other virtual activities were part of Homecoming 2020. Montclair State hosted the event virtually on October 24, with 1,000 people participating, including a “stay-at-home-coming” tailgate.

President Susan A. Cole welcomed alumni and friends to the event, which was an informative, fun-filled day of activities – from the at-home tailgate to a family-friendly trivia game and scavenger hunt to webinars showcasing what’s going on in our schools and colleges and conversations with Red Hawk coaches.

“While we weren’t able to join together in person, we were thrilled to connect with alumni and friends virtually to keep our school spirit soaring,” says Jeanne Marano, assistant vice president for Annual Giving and Alumni Engagement.

Alumni who registered early received a tailgate party box that included pom-poms, a pennant, bandanna and other swag, and a few received a special delivery from Rocky the Red Hawk.

Some of the college and school highlights included a Zoom performance by the Montclair State University Singers, an exploration of Sprague Library archives, discussions with faculty experts about what the election could mean for economy and criminal justice reform, a historic look at the 1918 flu pandemic and a virtual trip to the Galapagos. ■

To view the events, visit montclair.edu/homecoming.



Sharon Foerster '66 THE GIFT OF TRAVEL

“Being a Spanish major in college put *salsa* in my life,” Sharon Foerster '66 says with a laugh. As the creator of a scholarship for students enrolled in Montclair State’s Bachelor of Arts in Language, Business and Culture, she is helping to cultivate a new generation of culturally competent leaders.

Although Foerster describes her childhood in Linden, New Jersey, as “plain vanilla,” meeting a relative’s new husband, who hailed from Cuba, piqued an interest in the world beyond her own backyard. “I fell in love with the Spanish language,” she recalls.

“When I got to Montclair State, I was one of only 25 Spanish majors and more than half of them were native speakers,” she recalls. “I was a first-generation college student and very shy. The three professors in charge of the program were strong and powerful women. They were intimidating, but I was inspired by them and I studied hard.”

When the opportunity arose for a trip to Puerto Rico, Foerster jumped at it. “I used \$189 from funds my mother had saved for my education. I took my first plane ride, had my first exposure to being in a foreign environment and visited a rainforest – it was transformational.”



The experience set the tone for her career – and her life.

A Fulbright Scholarship sent Foerster to Madrid after graduation. When she returned a year later, she joined Volunteers in Service to America, now part of AmeriCorps, and taught English as a Second Language at the University of Texas at Austin. In the late 1970s, many of Foerster’s students were from the Middle East and studying petroleum engineering at UT. Learning about their cultures led Foerster to pursue a doctorate in Intercultural Communications at UT. Her research took her to Libya to study how an American educational experience affected Libyan students’ cultural values.

After joining the UT faculty as Coordinator of Lower Division Courses



When she learned that Montclair State recently launched a Bachelor of Arts in Language, Business and Culture that emphasizes international experiences, it was the perfect fit. “I love language and culture, and I love being in business. I knew right away that this is something that I wanted to support.”

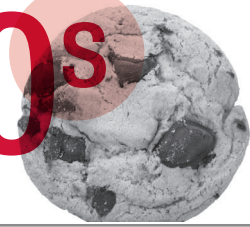
Foerster’s scholarship will help the program’s first-generation students participate in summer internships and study abroad after pandemic travel restrictions are lifted.

“This new BA program is relevant in today’s world,” she says. “I love that language is central to the curriculum, and that the University is encouraging these students to experience the world. It makes me so proud of my alma mater.” ■

—Michele Hickey



'30s



'50s



'60s



'70s



'80s



CLASSNOTES

Marie Macchiaverna Anzalone '38 turned 104 years old in July. For many years she was a Girl Scout leader in Newark and Maplewood, N.J. In 2011, Morris County Board Freeholders designated her "A Living Treasure" for her years as a Girl Scout leader and a volunteer transcribing text and literary books. She was also commended by the Borough of Florham Park, N.J., for her work on the building committee that built the senior center. Anzalone still attends church and her passions are reading and playing bridge. She belongs to several social groups, enjoys traveling and meeting new people.



Leonard Blessing '50, '51 MA celebrated his 100th birthday with a drive-by COVID-19-safe parade.



Eleanor Bill Calvin '51 taught fourth grade in Midland Park, N.J., and third and fourth grade in West Caldwell, N.J. Following her education at Montclair State, she earned a master's degree in music at the New England Conservatory in Boston, Mass. At 90, she recalls fond memories of Montclair State as a French major and music minor.



Gloria Vaughan Curry '51 retired from teaching at Prince George's County Public Schools (Md.) in 1989. She married Tuskegee airman John Carol Curry.

Mary Fenesy Connelly '52 retired from teaching and moved to South Carolina in 1986. Now 90, she enjoys her retirement by bowling and golfing.

George Laniado '52 has been keeping well and safe in his home of Columbia, Md. He enjoys playing lots of duplicate bridge on Bridge Base Online.

Charlotte Trinchieri Ward '58, '71 MA wrote a memoir about her family, *The Forgotten Americans*. She was invited to make a speech at the internment camp of Compiègne in France since six members of her family were interned by the Germans. She taught for 42 years before retirement.



Dorothy "Daniela" Gioseffi '63 has published 18 books, won an American Book Award and has given talks all over the world about her writing and activism. She was wounded in the civil rights movement in which Congressman John R. Lewis and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. protested and were abused by the KKK for integrating Selma Alabama's WSLA-TV in 1961. She was included, along with Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, in *Feminists Who Changed America*. A documentary of her life, *Author and Activist: The Daniela Gioseffi Story*, which premiered in 2014 was screened on college campuses just prior to the pandemic. Her newest book is *#MeToo*, an anthology of women's writings.



Warren Farrell '65, PhD published a book, *The Boy Crisis*, and became a finalist for the Foreword Indies award (the Independent Book Publishers). He and his book were featured in *Newsweek* as well as on Fox News. His YouTube channel includes his interviews with nine of the Democratic presidential candidates about the boy crisis, and he presented his findings at the White House in November 2019. Since the pandemic, he has been turning the couples' communication course he has taught for 30 years into a Zoom course he plans to distribute to libraries and faith-based communities in poorer areas where people cannot typically afford therapists.

Donald Shandler '63, '65 MA published a memoir *Behind the Candy Store: The Path Forward*. After a career in higher ed administration, he retired and now teaches an online MBA course for the University of Maryland.

Jacqueline Seewald '66 released a new mystery novel, *Blood Family*, published by Encircle. It is the fifth novel in her Kim Reynolds series and her 20th published novel to date.

Elizabeth "Liz" Scheible Tentarelli '66 received the Keene State College President's 2020 Outstanding Women of New Hampshire award. This award celebrates women who have worked to secure voting rights for women and disenfranchised groups. She was recognized for her work as president of the League of Women Voters New Hampshire and for advocating for and speaking about voting rights in the New Hampshire Legislature.



Phyllis Woods '68, '79 MA published a children's fairy tales book, *The Kingdom of Fairwind*. She taught high school English in New Jersey, and later worked at Rollins College in Florida. She enjoys keeping in touch with Montclair State and went to her 50th class reunion.



Diana M. Todaro, Esq. '70 co-wrote two children's books with her grandchildren: *The Ghost House* and *If Grandma Lived Next Door*. The media in San Diego have interviewed them about the books. She credits her grandchildren for inspiring her to create something lasting that they will be able read to their children and talk about how their grandma helped them to be authors at a very young age.

Donna Fellenberg '71 received training at her local NPR affiliate, WJFF Radio Catskill, and has since had her own show, "Catskill Character," since retiring as a psychoanalyst.

Van Lear Shepherd '75 recently published a book with Amazon titled *Multiple Income Streams in Insurance*, where he shared all that he has learned from 45 years of experience in the insurance industry. He credits Montclair State University for giving him a start in the world of business and society.



Charlotte Lifschutz Mandel '77 MA published *Alive and Taking Names: Poems in the Japanese Form of Haibun and Light's Music*, as part of the Blue Lyra Press Delphi VIII series.



Carl Sullivan '77 has taught line dancing in Australia for the past 30 years. He is now retired and admits it is hard for him to adjust to doing nothing. He travels back to the United States occasionally (seen pictured in Louisiana).

Armand Assayag '78 retired in March 2019 from the Los Angeles County Department of Military and Veteran Affairs, after serving for 22 years.

Rev. Kenneth L. Walsh '79 moved to Yulee, Fla., and became a pastor for the Christ Church of Peace in Jacksonville. He was ordained in 1984 after earning a Master of Divinity from New Brunswick Theological Seminary at Rutgers.



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Suzanne Shapiro '81 retired as a professional musician and music teacher. She recently began her third year as president of the Eugene (Ore.) Symphony Guild, having served three years on the Eugene Symphony Association Board and two years on the Eugene Symphony Executive Board.

Georgianna Cuntala Horvath '82 is proud that one of her adult students won the New York State Adult Student of the Year award in fall 2019. She guided this student through several years to earn a diploma at age 52. Horvath works as a computer literacy manager for Literacy Volunteers of Broome-Tioga Counties in New York and as an adult literacy instructor for Greater Southern Tier BOCES, instructing adults seeking their high school equivalency diplomas.

Barbara A. Pinelli '82 was awarded a \$10,000 scholarship/grant from the nonprofit organization Facing History and Ourselves, for Teaching Civics: Identity, History, and Action. This will provide for educational resources to teach the democratic principles of inclusion, civility and the common good. She is an eighth grade teacher at South Plainfield Middle School in New Jersey.

Thomas Mongelli '83 worked in psychiatric social work prior to earning an MBA in marketing from Rutgers University. He worked in sales and management until 1997, when he began teaching business at the high school level in both Paterson and Barnegat, N.J. He currently manages a self-storage facility in Lakehurst, N.J., and moonlights as a stand-up comic, podcast host and comedy show producer.



Samuel Roland '83 became a certified life coach in 2016 and has been helping others reach their

goals after practicing psychotherapy for 15 years. Among other pursuits, he enjoys composing music and playing the guitar.



John Zur '83 retired from Bell Labs/AT&T/Lucent Technologies as director of eBusiness. The highlights of his career were seeing and living in many different countries, traversing the globe three times and learning other cultures and languages. He now assists others in home electronics, writes essays and practices guitar.

Christine Carmean-Foss '87, director and lead instructor for the New York Chiropractic College Certified Chiropractic Physician program and education chair for the Federation for International Sports Chiropractic, traveled with Team USA Track and Field to Mexico as medical staff. She has worked with USA Gymnastics, the World Games in Poland and the Bobsleigh World Championships in Austria, traveling to World Championships with the Austrian Bobsleigh team. She specializes in the care and rehabilitation of athletic injuries.



Christina Emrich '92 was inducted into the Athletic Trainers Society of New Jersey Hall of Fame in March. She is the society's past president and has held many committee positions. She has been the athletic trainer at Red Bank (N.J.) Regional High School since 1995.



Susan Friend '92 has won two awards: a Hollywood contest judged by Mick Fleetwood and Maria Maples and a Nashville competition where she opened for Montgomery Gentry and Kid Rock. Active in New York City, Nashville and Los Angeles, she's currently pitching to major artists and working with many up-and-coming singers, including several from *American Idol* and *The Voice*. She is also writing and producing songs for film, television and advertising.

Marisol Ramirez '93 was named to the 2020 Top 25 Women in Power Impacting Diversity list by *DiversityPlus* magazine for her work as supplier diversity manager for the Procurement Organization at PSEG.

Michael Piperno '96, founder and president of Imbue Creative, a marketing agency in Lambertville, N.J., launched free training workshops for regional business leaders on topics that included new business prospecting, digital marketing, branding basics, building a lead-generating website and more.

William "Bill" Gillard '98 MA released his most recent book of poetry, *The Vade Mecum of the True Sublime*. Arranged like a monastic Book of Hours, it is filled with almost-prayers. This agnostic hymnal contains songs about love and loss, growing up and out, the New York City subway and electric guitars. Gillard is an associate professor of English at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh and still relies on notes from classes he took at Montclair State.



Dania Ramos '98 created a time-travel fiction podcast, *Timestorm*, which launched its second season in June. She produced the podcast with **Michael Aquino '99** through Cocotazo Media in partnership with TRAX and PRX. Season 2 features voice acting performances by alumni **Amanda Faison '14 MA**, **Joseph Respicio '19**, **Angelica Ubiera '18**, **Brissae Valdes '19** and **Daniel "Danny" Le Mache '20**.

Gregorio Maceri '99, '02 MS was appointed superintendent of schools in Franklin Lakes, N.J., in July. He is also pursuing a doctorate in education.



Joan Kanner '00, '04 MA opened a storefront for her co-founded pop-up bagel business, Bottoms Up Bagels (BUB) in Baltimore, Md. Their goal is to bring classic flavors to people outside of the Garden State while staying true to her Jersey roots and food inspiration.

Anthony N. Abrantes Sr. '04 was promoted to organizing and political director for the Eastern Atlantic State Regional Council of Carpenters, which represents 43,000 Union Carpenters from New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Washington D.C., Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina and Puerto Rico. He oversees the day-to-day operations of the political and organizing department, its staff and its initiatives in the region.

Mary Burns '04 Cert., '05 MAT published a memoir, *Saving Eric*, about her adopted son's struggle with mental illness and drug addiction. The book brings readers into the day-to-day struggles of dealing with these issues for individuals and their families. It also sheds light on the shortcomings of treatment for substance use disorder.



Nelson J. Pérez '84

THE ARCHBISHOP

Photo courtesy of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Just a few weeks after Nelson J. Pérez '84 was installed as the 10th archbishop (and 14th bishop) of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, overseeing the spiritual life of 1.3 million Roman Catholics, the global COVID-19 pandemic sent his flock into lockdown.

"I stand and I preach to an empty cathedral that holds 1,200 people. There's no one there and at the same time, there are a lot of people there," Pérez explains. "In the last few months my presence has been virtual, which has been odd."

However, the self-proclaimed extrovert has found a silver lining: Some 27,000 to 30,000 people were watching the livestream of Sunday Mass from the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul in Philadelphia each week before the limited return of in-person Mass began in June.

The Basilica is a long way from Pérez's time earning a bachelor's degree in Psychology at Montclair State, but the archbishop remembers how those years

shaped him: "My college years were not *party hardy*. They were *study worky*—which I think helped form a certain work ethic in me."

The middle son of Cuban immigrants, Pérez grew up mostly in West New York, New Jersey. During his undergraduate years, he drove along Route 3 to what was then Montclair State College, scheduling his classes early three days a week so that he could work nearly full time at Sears Credit Central in Secaucus.

His time at Montclair State and public schools in New Jersey molded him in multiple ways.

"What it gave me is a broader vision of the secular world," says Pérez. "Because my education and formation was not exclusively within the realm of Catholic schools and Catholic education. That, in some ways, challenged my faith and made it stronger too."

After Montclair State, Pérez taught high school in Puerto Rico before entering the

seminary, eventually earning a Master of Divinity and Master of Arts in Theology at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia.

One of only three Hispanic archbishops in the U.S. and the first Hispanic to lead the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Pérez brings bilingual skills that help when shepherding five counties of Catholics through a public health crisis with major socioeconomic, racial and cultural impacts.

"This moment with COVID, we will get through it. We are not done yet. It has brought upon all of us an opportunity to reevaluate what are the things that are important? The things we didn't appreciate? That we took for granted? All of a sudden our routines are taken away. People are saying, 'We can't wait to go to work.' Families have reconnected. I think people have also reconnected with their faith."

Nonetheless, Pérez says, we all crave human connection and a return to

normalcy. "People have asked me, 'Do you think this is the way we are going to go to church?' No. That's like having dinner on Zoom. . . . And you hear it in families. Families are saying, 'We want a hug. We want to hold hands.'"

He also shared a message for today's students:

"Ultimately what you do with the formation and education that you get at Montclair State is not just about you," he says. "It's about the world that you are going to help to make a better place."

"You are a gift to the world. When Pope Francis speaks about young people he doesn't call you the future. He calls you 'the now of God.' . . . Never underestimate the gift that you are to the people around you." ■

—Mary Barr Mann

'00's



Keyana M. Jones '04 married the love of her life, Basui Mshu Nikaamen in September at Mountain Creek (N.J.) Resort, inspired by their love of hiking. They are thrilled to add some good memories to this year.

Katherine Niewodowski '05 MFA is creating a series of portraits, titled "I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free," telling the stories of Black people who have been murdered by police. She began the series focusing on women because their stories are overlooked.

Ronald P. Botelho '06 is partner at the Chasan Lamparello Mallon & Cappuzzo, PC law firm in Secaucus, N.J. He practices personal injury, medical malpractice and government law.

Paul Jackson '06 was named the South Carolina Gamecocks' director of football strength and conditioning in December 2019.

Adam Roth '06 was the featured guest as a technical accounting and reporting thought leader in a fireside chat on SEC Financial Reporting Matters in December 2019 at the EY Wavespace in New York City. He leads the SEC reporting and technical accounting function at Yext and is an alumnus of PWC and Avaya.

Gilman Choudhury '09, '12 Cert. was appointed councilman in Paterson, N.J. He represents the Second Ward.



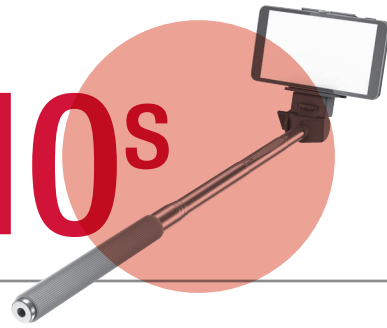
Dr. Sabrina D. MisirHiralal '09 Cert., '15 EdD published *Confronting Orientalism: A Self-Study of Educating Through Hindu Dance*, a book about how she educates primarily non-Hindus in higher education about Hinduism. She also served as the lead editor for *Religious Studies Scholars as Public Intellectuals*, which is published in the Routledge in Religion Series. In addition, she teaches philosophy, religion and education courses solely online for Montclair State, Three Rivers Community College, the University of South Carolina Aiken and St. John's University.

Deanna Marie Podstawa '09 is a co-host of a morning radio show on one of Reno, Nevada's top radio stations, the "Alice Morning Show" on KLCA. She is active in theater through community organizations, including as a board member for the Little Reno Theater, the longest running theater in Reno.

CONNECT WITH US SOCIALLY



'10's



Emily M. Bisnauth '10 was promoted to chief deputy attorney general of the Law and Public Safety Section at the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General.



Jacqueline "Jackie" Rothong '10 competed on an episode of Season 44 of the Food Network's *Chopped*.

Frank Lincoln '11 MAT, '18 MA became vice principal of James Caldwell High School in West Caldwell, N.J.

Catherine Winters '12 received her PhD in English from the University of Rhode Island in May. Her dissertation, "The Mark of the Vanishing Reader: Intradiegetic Interaction in Multimodal Narrative," focused on reading characters in contemporary American literature.

Lauren Bonczek '14 built her own special effects company, LBB ARTISTRY & FX. Her business includes all types of makeup: special effects, beauty, body painting, prosthetics making and injury simulation. She has worked New York Fashion Week and has been honored three times by McKenzie Westmore's

makeup "Face Off" home challenge. She also worked with first responders creating injury simulation for training purposes. Bonczek was selected in the Brightside Tavern Film Festival for her short film and makeup.

Dumaine O. Williams '14 MA began working as provost of Bard College at Simon's Rock in the fall of 2020.



Mary E. Perez Callirgos '15 married Willy M. Callirgos in February. They also welcomed the birth of their third daughter, Arya, in March.

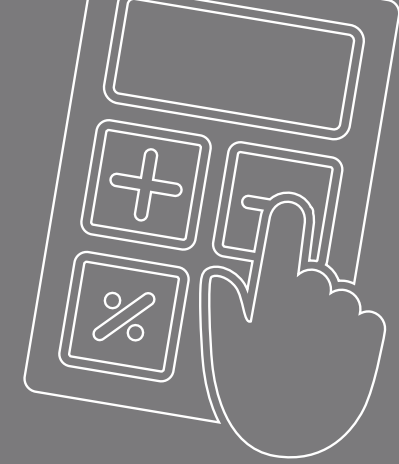
Pia I. Domicolo Bauer '16 MA was named one of the Livingston (N.J.) Public Schools Teachers of the Year for the 2019-2020 academic year, after teaching in Livingston for eight years.

Byron Blake '17 was appointed to the Port Authority Police Department of New York and New Jersey in March.

Gilbert "Gil" Addeo '19 was hired as the New Jersey Jackals general manager.

Peter Chapman '19 was featured in the LGBT Toronto Film Festival for directing the film, *A Kept Boy*.

Amanda Eustice '19 joined the Newswatch 16 team as a multimedia journalist in March, serving northern and central Pennsylvania.



“ I don't believe that there are any wasted components of your life. They're all necessary. ”



Tiffany Aliche '01

THE BUDGETNISTA

Tiffany Aliche '01 – better known as The Budgetnista – has helped more than one million women balance their budgets, worked to pass a law requiring financial literacy education for New Jersey middle school students, and has garnered widespread media attention through her award-winning podcast, "Brown Ambition," Live Richer Academy, books and television appearances. But the former Business Administration major with a concentration in Marketing came to entrepreneurship through a circuitous route.

As her undergraduate years at Montclair State were coming to an

end, Aliche had a job on campus at a child care center that she loved and an internship at a Fortune 500 company that she did not: "People didn't seem to enjoy working there. I also realized that I wanted to do something that I felt mattered."

Aliche pivoted to a career as a preschool teacher and earned a master's in Education. When her preschool shut down in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis, she lost her career and her home and found herself in a financial hole. Her friend Nkeruka Linda Iferika '04 helped Aliche see her way out. "She said, 'You know how to do this. Stop beating yourself up.'"

Aliche, who grew up building budgets with her dad at the kitchen table every week, did just that and then started helping others. Eventually she landed contracts with organizations like the United Way of Greater Newark to help single moms budget and save.

"We don't start with finances," says Aliche. "I usually tell them, 'Tell me your story.' That's really what people are wanting. They're wanting to unload and a safe space. So then we can unpack and fix it."

Ultimately her "discarded" Business Administration degree, as well as her experience as a teacher, became central to her success.

"I'm not gonna lie. When I graduated, I was like, 'Oh gosh, I have an unnecessary business degree.' And then I was like, 'Oh, I'm going to be a teacher forever.' So I got my master's in Education. And then when I realized I didn't want to be a principal, I thought, 'Oh gosh, it's a wasted master's degree.' And now literally every aspect and nook and cranny and corner, I am cooking with all the ingredients. I don't believe that there are any wasted components of your life. They're all necessary." ■

—Mary Barr Mann

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Joshua Abdi '20 graduated with a BS in Justice Studies in July from Montclair State. He is the second generation of Montclair State graduates following his mother, **Dr. Ellie Dehbozorgi Abdi '93, '01 Cert., '05 MEd.** His mother is also a clinical faculty member at the University.



Louiza Dahnoun '20 married her husband, Samer, in Lebanon in July.



Sabariya Dharsini Ponnudurai '20 MS was hired after graduation by Damascus Bakeries, the same company where she interned in the quality assurance department.

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IN MEMORIAM FALL 2020

Bonnie S. Cagan '48

Doris Lew Beck '50

Florence Galender Berk '50

Mary Cossaboon '50

Poppy Vassos '50

Irvin Schwartzbach '51

Irena P. Hackett '52, '59 MA

Donald J. Bungler '53, '54 MA

Johanna E. Veiga '53

Harry Lauer '58, '63 MA

Peter Wacker '59

Edward T. Perretti '61

J. Lynn Englander Safran '62 MA

James Bates Jr. '63 MA

Adolph H. Haug '68 MA

Patricia L. Schall '68

Francine G. Lendman Sorock '68 MA

Nelly Villaverde '73 MA

Thomas H. Cooke Jr. '74 MA

Jose Linares '74

Linda Dobransky '76

Terrance M. "Terry" Fitzpatrick '76 MA

Eleanor Elgart '77

Donna M. Craig '78

Paul James Sadusky '79

Elaine Leone Frances '80

Ronald P. Cecere '81 MA

Gerard A. Paradiso '81

Nahid Hemmat '82

Josephine Sargent '82

Vincent Buchinsky '83 MA

Joan Beck '84

James M. McNamara '84

JoAnn L. Borden '88

Gerald "Jerry" J. Rogala '91

Ruth Ann Martucci '92

Lillian L. Kinney '99 MA

Sean Singer '13

*Dr. Eva M. Fleischner

*Dr. Donald Mintz

*Faculty Emeriti

LASTING LESSONS

KAREN L. PENNINGTON | VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND CAMPUS LIFE

Karen L. Pennington likes to say that Montclair State is “a place where you can come and be who you are.” Speaking with the students whose lives she shaped in her 22 years as Vice President for Student Development and Campus Life, something else is clear about Pennington, who is retiring this year: she made Montclair State a place where students realize who they can become. “Dr. Pennington is a phenomenal woman who went above and beyond and has always been in my corner,” writes Vaughn McEnough Jr. '09, '13 MS, who earned his degrees in Molecular Biology and hopes to become a surgeon. “Even beyond writing letters of recommendation, she facilitated an atmosphere where I could sit and talk with renowned physicians in the field to inspire and motivate me.” Alisha Tillman '05, now a registered nurse in Philadelphia, says Pennington “taught me that a female leader in particular should be both a force to be reckoned with and a reliable stalwart ally in times of crisis.” Nikita Williams '20, Psychology, highlighted Pennington’s lighter side along with the grit: “She taught me incredible lessons about strategic leadership, self-compassion, and the importance of an office filled with plants.” And when it was time to fly the Red Hawk nest, Pennington was there to help former SGA President Serafina Genise '19 make the move: “She told me it was time for me to go have a different experience. Take everything I had learned during my four years at Montclair and use it where I went next.” Concludes McEnough: “She is simply amazing.” ■ —Mary Barr Mann

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