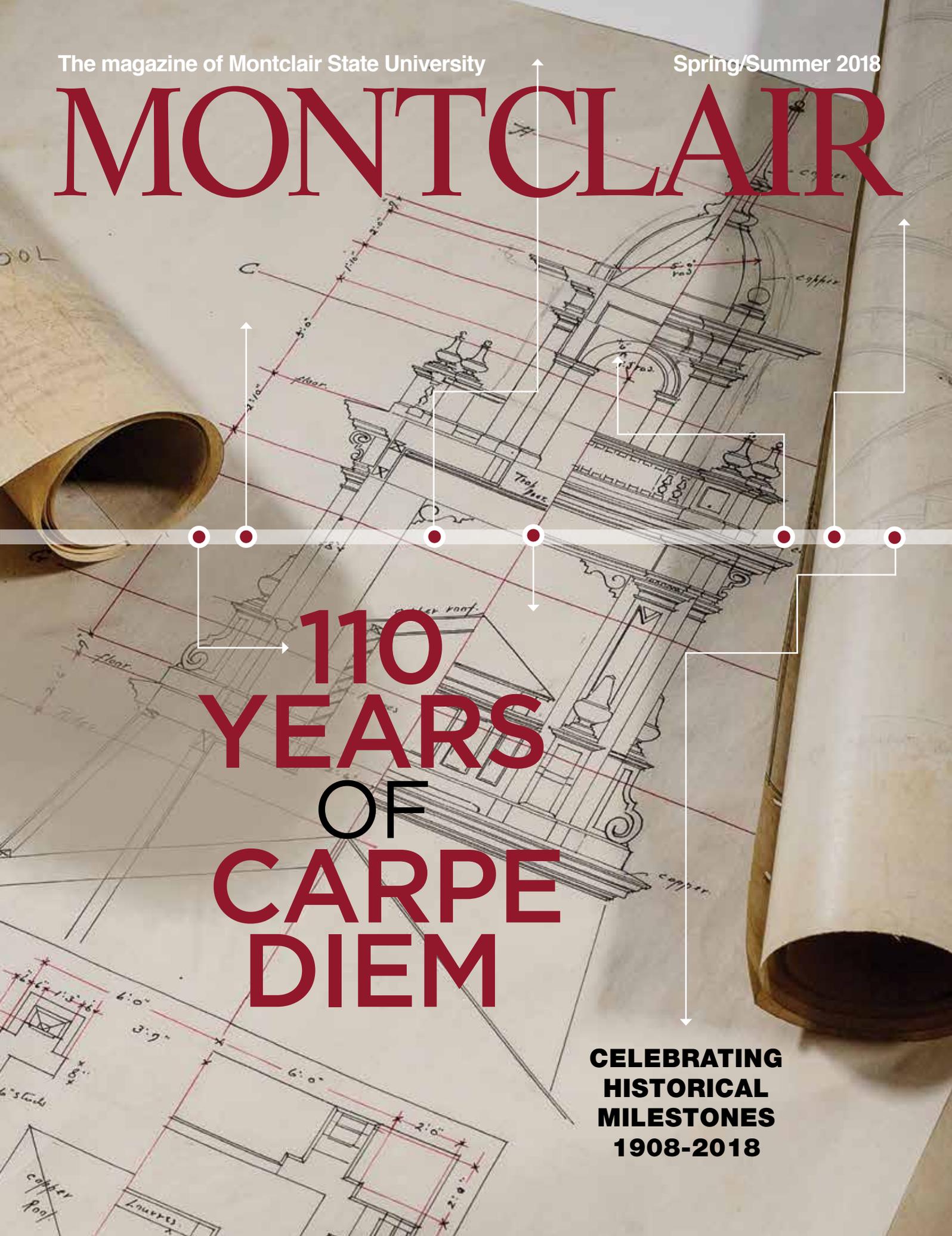


The magazine of Montclair State University

Spring/Summer 2018

# MONTCLAIR



## 110 YEARS OF CARPE DIEM

**CELEBRATING  
HISTORICAL  
MILESTONES  
1908-2018**



Many students walked in both Commencement and Convocations (such as this one for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences) in May. The University conferred 5,309 bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in 2018. For more about Commencement, see page 4.

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Architectural drawings for College Hall, the first building on campus, evoke memories from Montclair State's 110-year history. See page 21 for a timeline of University milestones.



# MONTCLAIR

The magazine of Montclair State University

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

We are fortunate to live in a society that values teaching, learning and research, one that not only strives to pass knowledge on to the next generation, but one that also seeks to create new knowledge through acts of imagination, ambition and courage.

Back in 1895, a group of educational leaders had the courage to acknowledge New Jersey was falling short in meeting that critical standard. They recognized that teachers were in short supply statewide, and that those actively teaching in schools were often poorly prepared to do so. Knowing that the future of New Jersey's children depended upon their actions, they worked together to convince the Legislature to invest in a new Normal School that would deliver high-quality preparation to much-needed teachers. That school was the precursor of today's University, and since its founding 110 years ago, Montclair State's history has been one of compelling stories of teaching, learning and research.

In these pages you will read not only of our rich history but also about the ways that Montclair State is actively creating a better future for our students, New Jersey's communities and the world at large. Our campus is a rich and diverse mosaic of talented students and faculty. In these pages, you will meet Communication and Media faculty, staff and students who spent spring break in Puerto Rico, documenting the devastation and the hardships people continue to face months after Hurricane Maria. You will meet our entrepreneurship students, whose big ideas won favor with celebrity judges in our annual pitch contest, which offers the largest prize money at any university in the state. You will meet Isadora Williams, a student who skated in the Winter Olympics in South Korea for Team Brazil, and Kaan Yilmaz, a sophomore from Turkey who has found a home on the Red Hawks men's basketball team as a power forward.

I hope that you, as one of the University's many supporters, donors or alumni, take pride in all that Montclair State University has become and all that our students and our faculty continue to accomplish. We are grateful for the many ways that you have helped to make Montclair State University's accomplishments possible. As we continue to imagine what the future can be for our campus community, the possibilities are virtually limitless. To realize those dreams, we will need your continued support.

Susan A. Cole

# FEEDBACK

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

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



## OUR FAVORITE TWEETS AND POSTS



**Montclair State University Dance Division**  
May 8 at 1:12pm · @

Montclair State dancers to perform at the Kennedy Center in June!!  
<https://www.montclair.edu/newscenter/.../08/leading-the-dance/>



MONTCLAIR.EDU  
**Leading the Dance**  
Montclair State dancers to perform at Kennedy Center in June

Like Comment Share

At press time, six Montclair State dancers, selected to represent the Northeast region, were preparing the modern dance masterpiece *To Have and To Hold* to perform June 8 at the biennial festival at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

**Montclair Athletics** @msurochawka · May 24

NATIONAL CHAMPION!! .@MSUperfastXCTF's George Alexandris (Fair Lawn, NJ) wins long jump breaking the 44-year old @NCAAIII Championship meet record - 7.92 meters. Records 2nd longest jump in D3 history. @VarsityAces @TheRecordSports @montclairstate @NJACSports @USTFCCCA



4 Comments 48 Retweets 100 Likes

This tweet in May announced the exciting news that Red Hawk long jumper George Alexandris, a junior from Fair Lawn, won the NCAA DIII National Championship, breaking a 44-year championship meet record with a jump of 7.92 meters (26 feet) -- the second longest jump in DIII history.



Willie Geist

To the editor:

I recently attended the School of Communication and Media's conversation with *Sunday Today* anchor Willie Geist. As an alumnus of the graduate program, I was thoroughly impressed as I stepped into the school's new facility, which, for me, embodies the value of an MSU education. An

MSU education effectively bridges the gap between theory and practice, providing students with real-world experiences and the latest industry insights so that they can unlock the full value of their education. I look forward to seeing where the SCM goes from here because the bar is now set so high.

—Ron Sausa '17 MA

**Willie Geist** @WillieGeist · Following

What an incredibly impressive new facility at Montclair State's School of Communication and Media. Those students are in a great place. Thanks so much for having me. Good to be back home in Jersey...

Montclair SCM @MontclairSCM  
@montclairstateu wants to thank @WillieGeist for speaking at our 2018 Terhune Lecture on news media and public affairs. Stay tuned for upcoming events and more from #MontclairStateSCM

10:21 AM - 18 Apr 2018

20 Retweets 131 Likes

*Sunday Today* host Willie Geist tweeted about his visit to the School of Communication and Media to his 800,000 followers in April. See page 9 for information the event.

# HEADLINES



Loretta Weinberg

John Schreiber

Sheila Oliver

## Commencement 2018: Carpe Diem

The University held record-setting Commencement ceremonies this spring for 5,309 graduates earning their degrees this academic year, including 657 graduate students who earned their doctoral and master's degrees in January.

Graduate students and undergraduate students were conferred degrees in two separate Commencements

in May. In addition, six undergraduate Convocations, organized by the respective colleges and schools, were held on campus to celebrate the academic achievements of baccalaureate candidates.

New Jersey Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver and New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) President and CEO John Schreiber received honorary degrees at the May

ceremonies. Oliver delivered the keynote address and received an honorary Doctor of Letters degree during the University's Undergraduate Commencement ceremony held on Friday, May 25 at Prudential Center in Newark. Schreiber addressed the graduates and received an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree as part of the Graduate School Commencement ceremony on Tuesday, May 22 at NJPAC in Newark.

In January, New Jersey Senate Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg received an honorary Doctor of Letters degree and delivered the Commencement address. She advised graduates to take an interest in all things political and be engaged. "Trust yourself, trust your knowledge," she encouraged, "the world needs you – we need you to take your place and make the world a better place."

# University College Opens This Fall

Beginning in fall 2018, students who are not certain about their choice of major will enter University College, a new academic home where they can tap into the support, guidance and programs they need to explore and discover the areas that interest them most.

By utilizing University College's guided exploration opportunities, students will be less likely to switch majors – and more likely to graduate within four years.

"The new University College will be a welcoming and supportive new home where students can begin their University studies surrounded by peers and supported by a team of advisors and counselors dedicated to acclimating them to University life and to helping them find the major most appropriate to their talents and career interests," says Montclair State Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Willard Gingerich.

In fall 2018, University College will admit about one third – or 1,000 – incoming freshmen, as well as approximately 1,400 returning and



transfer students who have yet to declare a major. Once University College students declare a major, they will move seamlessly on to the college or school of that major, well prepared to succeed in their progress to completing a degree.

## Professors Receive \$5.7 Million Grant to Explore Character Development in Scouts

What combination of training and experience of scoutmasters and other volunteers best builds character in scouts? How can their training be enhanced to strengthen the scouts' character development? These are some of the questions that Family Science and Human Development professors Jennifer Urban and Miriam Linver are asking in a new research project that seeks to reveal how adults build character in scouts.

The researchers, who are also co-directors of the Research on Youth Thriving and Evaluation (RYTE) Institute at Montclair State University, will receive \$1,868,050 for the first year of a two-year, \$5.7 million Boy Scouts of America (BSA) National Character Initiative sub-award funded by the Stephen D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation.

The grant supports the second phase of an ongoing BSA national character initiative project that is focused on uncovering the role adults play in youth character development.



Jennifer Urban, left, and Miriam Linver study character development in scouts.

"We're very excited to have this opportunity to study one of the longest-running youth-serving organizations in the nation," says Urban. "The RYTE Institute is focused on understanding what goes right with youth. A study of this magnitude could potentially impact hundreds of thousands of young people – as well as the adults who care about promoting their positive development."



### GRAZ HONORS SENATOR COLE

President Susan A. Cole was awarded the title "Honorary Senator of the University of Graz" at a ceremony in Graz, Austria, in April.

With University of Graz Rector Christa Neuper presiding, the ceremony was attended by City of Graz Mayor Siegfried Nagl, guests and members of the faculty and administration of both the University of Graz and Montclair State University.

In her acceptance remarks, Cole stressed the importance of education to the practice of citizenship in an open and diverse society, and how it is vital that universities engage with the world.

"As universities, we cannot fulfill our mission if we remain ensconced behind the walls of our institution or the boundaries of our nation," she said. "We must forge an organic engagement with the larger society that we serve, and, in today's world, that larger society is, in fact, the whole world, and it is why the partnership between our two universities is so important."

## MALLORY HALL REBOOT

Newly renovated and expanded Mallory Hall will open by fall 2018. A \$22.95 million project is transforming the 52-year-old, 34,400-square-foot building into a 43,800-square-foot, high-tech computer sciences center.

“The new state-of-the-art facility will be a hub for cutting-edge computer science research, an incubator for technology and innovation and a home for one of the University’s fastest growing majors,” says College of Science and Mathematics Dean Lora Billings. “Students and faculty alike will be able to experiment and create in open work areas, labs and classrooms that promote teamwork and active learning.”

The building will boast a new fourth floor, as well as new classrooms, faculty offices, meeting spaces, student study and project spaces, and specialized research spaces. Its exterior will mirror the iconic Mission style of its original sister building, Schmitt Hall.

According to Vice President for University Facilities Shawn Connolly, work on the building is on schedule and under budget and will be completed by late July and ready for move-in in August.



## MAKING RAINFOREST CONNECTIONS TO CLASSROOMS AROUND THE WORLD



Jacalyn and Greg Willis

Jacalyn Giacalone Willis, founding director of Professional Resources in Science and Mathematics (PRISM), the College of Science and Mathematics’ K-12 education center, is an international innovator – and media star – featured in programs produced by the likes of *Animal Planet* and the Smithsonian Channel.

Since 2003, using interactive videoconferencing, PRISM’s

Rainforest Connection project has linked researchers and educators at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama with students, teachers and classrooms everywhere from New Jersey to Kenya. This past winter, 875 students from 17 schools in 11 New Jersey school districts and one Michigan district also made the connection.

Willis visits Panama each February to conduct Rainforest

Connection webcasts and an annual census of endangered wildlife on Barro Colorado Island with her husband, Greg. “These long-term studies help guide conservation decisions,” she says.

In April, *Mysteries of the Rainforest*, a Smithsonian Channel documentary highlighting the couple’s Barro Colorado census was screened at the International Film Festival in Panama.

## Mapping the Road to Recovery



A nearly \$1 million, one-year grant from the State of New Jersey Department of Health Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services will allow Montclair State students in recovery access to enhanced services – from housing and counseling to meditation and yoga – that support their recovery efforts.

The University takes a different approach to recovery, says assistant director for Residence Life and grant project leader Kevin Schafer. “We don’t follow the traditional 12-step model for substance use disorder recovery,” he says. Instead, the University’s holistic wellness model helps students develop healthy habits that will last a lifetime. The Residents in Recovery program has offered students a substance-free campus community with 24/7 support. In fall 2018, the grant will fund scholarships for recovering students who wish to live on campus but can’t afford to.

It also covers residence hall renovations; augmented University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) programs; a new Allies in Recovery program designed to help reduce stigma; and more.

“This grant enables us to strengthen the groundwork we’ve begun for recovery housing and increase our recovery services,” says Vice President for Student Development and Campus Life Karen L. Pennington.

# Collaboration with JED Campus Expands Student Mental Health Support

Through a four-year strategic collaboration with JED Campus – a national initiative of the Jed Foundation – Montclair State will work to strengthen its mental health support networks for students with stress and anxiety.

The new partnership reflects the University's ongoing commitment to destigmatizing mental health issues, protecting students' emotional well-being and preventing substance abuse and suicide within a safe campus environment.

"We are fortunate University leadership supports the emotional well-being of students and makes this a priority for the entire campus community," says Staff Psychologist and Suicide Prevention Coordinator Jude Uy.

---

## Graduate Student Receives Fulbright Grant

Alumna and graduate student Tiffany Soares '17 was named a finalist in the Fulbright U.S. Student Program and will travel to Spain's La Rioja region to teach English as a second language.

A first-generation American, Soares grew up in East Brunswick, New Jersey, speaking English and Portuguese and dreaming of someday teaching English as a second language. "I have a personal connection with immigration stories, diaspora and the yearning to learn English as a means to a better life," she explains. "My family's journey through this – and the inspiration of hearing my father's stories of beginning school in the United States as a non-native speaker – has fueled me to pursue a career in teaching English as a second language."



Tiffany Soares

Soares was also a four-year recipient of the James Patterson Teacher Education Scholarship. This scholarship was established to support the next generation of teachers as they work to learn their craft, foster learning and, particularly, inspire a love of reading.

As an undergraduate at Montclair State, Soares majored in linguistics and minored in Spanish, before continuing her education in the University's Teacher Education Program, which is recognized

both nationally and internationally. The University is ranked among the nation's top 100 institutions for education by *U.S. News & World Report's* 2018 "Best Graduate Schools."

Soares follows Jeremy Fishman, a 2017 Fulbright U.S. Student Program finalist who traveled to Taiwan, where he has been teaching English as a second language.

"Montclair State provides excellent preparation and an ideal foundation for students seeking Fulbright grants and Tiffany's success reflects that," says Director of Study Abroad and International Programs Domenica Dominguez. "This year, we had six applicants to the Fulbright U.S. Student Program. Two were semifinalists – and Tiffany became a finalist."

While Soares is just the eighth Fulbright finalist in Montclair State's 110-year history, the University has long been involved with the program in various capacities.

Faculty currently serve on its Fulbright Campus Committee, which interviews and evaluates all of the University's applicants. Faculty members have also received Fulbright Scholar Grants and the University has enrolled more than 50 international Fulbright students across all colleges and schools.



### New MSW Degree Launching in Fall 2018

With its unique focus on vulnerable children, youth and families, Montclair State's new 60-credit, full-time Master of Social Work (MSW) degree program prepares advanced practitioners to become leaders in a growing field.

Through a combination of coursework and supervised field experience, the rigorous two-year program trains graduates for such professional roles as mental health counselor, family therapist, case manager, community organizer, child and family advocate, or social worker in a school or health-care setting.

"The MSW program prepares leaders in social work practice in a diverse local and global society," says MSW Program Director Svetlana Shpiegel. "Graduates will promote the well-being of their clients by engaging in ethical, culturally competent and evidence-based practice – and by demonstrating a strong commitment to social and economic justice."

## POLICE HERO HONORED AT NATIONAL MEMORIAL



L to R: Sgt. Christopher Vidro, Lt. Paul Giardino, Chief Paul Cell, Lt. Barbara Giuliano and Capt. Kieran Barrett (2004).

On September 11, 2001, when the Montclair State University Police Department received a call for assistance from the Port Authority Police Department, officers Christopher Vidro and Paul Giardino volunteered to help.

Six years later, on July 25, 2007, Sergeant Christopher

Vidro, an 11-year veteran of the MSUPD and 35-year-old father of two, died after battling an aggressive form of cancer resulting from his exposure to toxins on 9/11. Today, Paul Giardino continues to serve the MSUPD as a lieutenant.

Sergeant Vidro's name was inscribed on the National Law

Enforcement Officers Memorial, in Washington, D.C., joining the names of other officers who lost their lives in the line of duty. In May, MSUPD Chief Paul Cell and Captain Kieran Barrett attended the formal dedication of Vidro's name during National Police Week's 30th Annual Candlelight Vigil, as well as the May 15 National Peace Memorial Day Wreath Laying Ceremony on National Peace Officers' Memorial Day.

"Chris left an indelible mark on this agency and it's still hard to imagine that he is not with us," says Cell. "I am extremely proud of him and the officers who helped make this honor possible for him and his family."

## THE WIND BENEATH HIS WINGS



A couple of campus love birds got engaged on May 7 when alumna Stacy Albanese '08, '17 MA, said yes to Andy Fagioli '11. With both graduates now University employees, the surprise proposal saw Fagioli swooping into Albanese's office area dressed as the University's mascot, Rocky the Red Hawk.

On bended wing, he held out the ring with a "will you marry me moment" that took school spirit to new heights and went viral, even making an appearance on *Inside Edition* and NJ.com. "Did I ruin the magic having the (Rocky) head off?" he joked. "It's hot in this suit." The bride-to-be, who is the University's associate director of annual giving and alumni engagement, is used to office appearances by Rocky, but this one was a stunner. "Is this real life?" she asked.

Fagioli is the web and media developer for Student Development and Campus Life. Since part of his job involves working with Team Rocky – the students who help bring Rocky to life – his office was in on the surprise, letting him borrow the Rocky suit. "Those who know us well, know that this proposal is perfect for us," says Albanese.

# Media Leaders Share Insights from Trenches



Bill Ritter honored as DuMont Broadcaster of the Year

With the media under intense scrutiny, the School of Communication and Media recently called in the experts to provide students and the public firsthand journalism insights.

In April, Willie Geist, host of NBC News' *Sunday Today* and co-host of MSNBC's *Morning Joe*, was the speaker for the 2018 Terhune Lecture, an annual event that brings the nation's most influential voices in journalism to campus to speak with the University and general communities.

At a March Colloquium Series event, WNYC Radio host Shumita Basu discussed newscasts, podcasts

and everything in between in her presentation "Radio in the Digital Age."

At the February Colloquium Series, Pulitzer Prize-winning author and veteran journalist Mike Barnicle shared his perspective on "President Trump and the Press."

In November, Medal of Honor recipient and Vietnam War hero Colonel Jack H. Jacobs, an NBC military analyst, took part in the School's high-profile Communications Industry Speaker Series to discuss the challenges of "Covering the Military in the Age of Political Divide."

Against that same backdrop of attacks on media and spread of "fake news" on social networks, the search for truth by journalists matters more than ever before, Bill Ritter, anchor of ABC7 *Eyewitness News*, told students and faculty when he was honored as the Allen B. DuMont Broadcaster of

the Year. Ritter used the opportunity at Montclair State to give voice to challenges facing the news industry today.

"When I first became enthralled and captivated by the possibilities of journalism," said Ritter, recalling his reporting days during the Vietnam War and Civil Rights movement, "it was a great time to be a reporter, a great time to be searching for the truth... It's even more important now because the whole world – for searching for the truth and reporting the facts – is under assault like never before."



Willie Geist, right, with SCM Director Keith Strudler

## A GOOD READ

In March, the University served as a co-host of the second annual Montclair Literary Festival. The event featured about 100 noted writers and celebrities, including Patti Smith and Anna Quindlen, and National Book Award finalist Min Jin Lee.

Montclair State faculty served as panel hosts and participants throughout the four days of programming, with their topics as varied and thought provoking as poetry and pop music to the #MeToo and racial justice movements. Proceeds from the festival fund community-based Succeed2gether programs.

## Film Institute Features Classics and Filmmakers



In its plush new theater, The Film Institute at Montclair State has become the go-to place to catch – and talk about – movies, from its Films and Filmmakers series to its

Friday Night Frights series to its Sundays with Scorsese or Sundays with Hitchcock this year.

For the latter, film critic Stephen Whitty hosted matinee screenings of Hollywood classics, spotlighting Martin Scorsese's New York neighborhoods and revealing Alfred Hitchcock's secrets. Friday Night Frights officially launched the U.S. premiere of the critically acclaimed horror film, *The Ritual*. Taking movie buffs backstage, the Films and Filmmakers and Dialogue with the Screenwriter programs bring to campus some of the most innovative talents working today.

# Nursing Students Find Prescription for Success

In Montclair State's new high-tech nursing skills laboratory recently, Sandy Hussain, a registered nurse, demonstrated how she cares for an infant after delivery with a lifelike computerized mannequin. The University's new School of Nursing began just two years ago and Hussain was part of the inaugural class of RNs who earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree in May.



Student Sandy Hussain demonstrates how to care for an infant.

The School of Nursing Convocation on May 18 was a milestone in the young life of the School. In September, the University welcomed 50 freshmen into the newly launched, four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program. Montclair State plans to offer a new online Master of Science in Nursing degree by fall 2018.

Hussain works on the maternity floor at Saint Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston and, like her classmates, had a variety of reasons – higher salaries, education requirements, greater job opportunities – for entering the RN to BSN program. She and her classmates were also attracted to the University's hybrid RN to BSN format that combines classroom and online learning.

"The advanced classwork has given me that extra education to think deeper, help patients better, to think outside of the box,"

says Erin Fitzmaurice, an RN in the Atlantic Health System, who also earned the BSN degree.

By filling a demand for highly qualified nurses, Montclair State supports the complexities of providing care for individuals across the lifespan. The School of Nursing facility features high-tech mannequins in a simulation lab designed to address the learning needs of students at all levels as they care for persons in varying states of health.

During Convocation, School of Nursing Dean Janice Smolowitz described the 24 graduates as "risk-takers who joined us with the goal of creating something meaningful and outstanding."



The first Convocation ceremony for the School of Nursing was held in May.

## ANYTHING GOES AT SCHOLARSHIP DINNER

The Montclair State University Foundation's annual scholarship dinner raised more than \$750,000 to help today's students – and tomorrow's leaders – pursue and complete their studies at the University.

The gala also honored philanthropic leaders, Investors Bank and the McMullen Family Foundation, and retired financial services executive, alumnus James W. Merli '83,



all of whom have been strong supporters of the community as well as the University.

"This event is extremely important to the

University's ability to provide necessary support to our students," President Susan A. Cole said at the gala on March 3. New Jersey First Lady Tammy

Snyder Murphy also addressed the audience.

The awards highlighted an evening that featured performances from the Cole Porter musical *Anything Goes* by students in the nationally recognized Department of Theatre and Dance and John J. Cali School of Music. Veteran WCBS 880 helicopter traffic reporter Tom Kaminski '84 served as master of ceremonies of the gala.



CALLING ALL ALUMNI!

The survey can be found at [montclair.edu/alumni-survey](http://montclair.edu/alumni-survey). Complete it by **August 31** to be entered in a raffle to win Montclair State gear.

For questions, please contact the Office of Alumni Engagement at **973-655-4141** or [alumni@montclair.edu](mailto:alumni@montclair.edu).

We need your **HELP!**  
The Office of Alumni Engagement is conducting a survey of the alumni community to gather important feedback that will be used to evaluate and enhance alumni programs and services. The survey covers important topics, including communications, programming and your connection to Montclair State.

# *opportunity* ready.

Many graduate programs are accepting fall 2018 applications on a limited basis.

For more information and to apply, visit [montclair.edu/graduate](http://montclair.edu/graduate) or call **973-655-5147**.

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
**Montclair State University**  
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# Still, She Persists

## PROFESSOR EXPLORES THE COST OF BEING A GIRL AND THE ROOTS OF PAY INEQUITY

By Amy Wagner

**S**ociology Professor Yasemin Besen-Cassino has always been a feminist. “I grew up in Istanbul, Turkey, with feminist, working parents, who had a big effect on me,” she recalls. “Issues of gender equality are universal – regardless of place.”

Long a vocal gender-equality advocate, Besen-Cassino spoke alongside Lily Ledbetter in support of the historic 2009 Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and has testified as an expert witness before the New Jersey State Legislature. As a nationally recognized expert in gender pay equality, she has distilled her research into two well-received books, which have redefined the origins of the gender wage gap. Despite the slow progress in closing the wage gap,

Besen-Cassino persists in challenging gender-based assumptions – including with new findings that suggest that even when wives earn more than their husbands, husbands do fewer household chores.

### The wage gap starts early

While women make up nearly half of today’s workforce, they earn 20 percent less than their male counterparts. According to the Institute for Women’s Policy Research, the earnings gap is unlikely to close anytime soon: at the current rate of change, it will be another 41 years before women achieve pay equity.

In determining the causes of the gender wage gap, Besen-Cassino defies traditional

thinking. “I think we are looking at it the wrong way,” says the one-time Montclair State University Distinguished Scholar of the Year. “Pay explanations like babies and housework don’t really work. In my heart, I knew these explanations weren’t right, so I looked for ways to prove this,” she recalls. “I ultimately found that pay gap issues start in the teen years.”

Besen-Cassino first pinpointed the origins of the gender wage gap in her 2014 book, *Consuming Work: Youth Labor in America*, which discussed how early work experiences not only create and sustain socio-economic inequalities, but also create lasting gender inequality in the workplace. After tracking the same girls for many years,



Besen-Cassino discovered that working as a teenager helps boys – but not girls. “Even many decades later, women who worked as teenagers make less money,” she says.

Her latest book, *The Cost of Being a Girl*, published in 2018 by Temple University Press, amplifies a chapter from *Consuming Work*, which found that while 12- and 13-year-old boys and girls earn the same money for babysitting, yard work or snow shoveling, by 14 and 15, the first gender wage gap emerges.

## How girls pay the price

Besen-Cassino found that once teens are old enough to work for businesses, boys seamlessly move into these jobs while girls often stay in freelance work like babysitting. But this is not the only factor behind the start of the gender pay gap. “Boys have networks that tell them what a job might pay, so they are better equipped to negotiate their wages. When they negotiate, boys always get the money. Girls don’t,” she contends.

In retail jobs especially, girls often have no idea of what the pay should be before they negotiate, making it easy for would-be employers to exploit them by assuming they want to work for the employee discount and don’t really care about earning money. “They are told they know the brand, and are good with people,” Besen-Cassino says.

The wage gap is even wider for teens of color and lower-income girls who are less likely to conform to the image sought by corporate employers. “These look requirements make it seem like it’s their fault for not having the right outfits.”

In the end, all teen girls who work pay a steep psychological toll, especially in the apparel industry where they internalize gendered and unfair workplace assumptions about weight and appearance.



Yasemin Besen-Cassino teaching a class

“Parents can only do so much to fix this. We tell our kids they can be anything they want, but kids don’t believe this, once they experience job inequity firsthand,” she insists.

Besen-Cassino believes that as a society, active steps need to be taken to turn things around. “Without changing the structural problems of the workplace, we cannot simply continue to tell our teenagers that it’s going to be okay.”

## Working for change

Besen-Cassino is nonetheless hopeful that real change will occur. In January, Iceland became the first nation to make it illegal for companies with more than 25 employees to pay men more than women. Closer to home, New Jersey

Governor Phil Murphy has signaled his support for equal pay for women by signing an executive order prohibiting managers in state government from questioning potential employees about previous salaries. “This was really encouraging, as it was the first thing he signed when he became governor in January,” she says.

She is equally heartened by how women’s voices have gained new strength – from the past two Women’s Marches to the growing

momentum of the #MeToo movement. “This gives us hope as women. Women can’t take it anymore and are deciding as a group how to take action and change laws,” she says.

## When men don’t work, they cook

These times are also changing – and challenging – for men. Recently, Besen-Cassino and her husband Dan Cassino, a political science professor at Fairleigh Dickinson University, have been looking at how men respond when they feel their masculinity is threatened.

They are studying what happens when women in heterosexual relationships become the new breadwinners after husbands or male partners lose their jobs or earn less money. “In conservative households, the husbands vote for Trump – and do less housework,” Besen-Cassino reports. In fact, the more wives outearn their husbands, the less housework the husbands will do – with one exception. “The more money their wives earned, the more time the men in the study – regardless of their politics – devoted to cooking.”

As cooking gains traction as a manly pastime that showcases mastery and skill, can the de-gendering of vacuuming, dishwashing and child care be far behind? Besen-Cassino and her husband intend to answer that question in a future book. ■

FEATURES

# BIG IDEAS

STUDENT STARTUPS COMPETE  
FOR NEW JERSEY'S LARGEST  
COLLEGIATE PRIZE POOL AT  
**BULBHEAD.COM INVENTORS DAY**

BY MARILYN JOYCE LEHREN



The next big thing might just be taking shape on campus inside the University's Feliciano Center for Entrepreneurship. Student

startups are booming, boosted in part by a chance to win part of New Jersey's richest collegiate prize pool for promising business ideas. With \$80,000 donated this year by alumnus AJ Khubani, CEO and founder of BulbHead.com, Montclair State's *Shark Tank*-inspired contest gave student ventures a chance to test the waters with their killer investment pitches.

As the May competition dawned, David McDougall, a senior Business Management major, was picking up a fresh batch of ingeniously shaped 3D-printed kitchen gadgets that "roll a better burrito." The emcee for the Montclair State competition was a popular pitchman, and the Rollarito, the name McDougall and his partners have given the quirky cooking tool, was just the type of thing OxiClean's Anthony "Sully" Sullivan spins on TV.

But first they'd have to convince Khubani and a panel of judges at the BulbHead.com Inventors Day for Aspiring Entrepreneurs. It's not exactly sink or swim. The University provides plenty of resources, from networking opportunities with alumni to professors' expertise to help students turn their passions into profits. Specialized classes and facilities like the MIX Lab with 3D printing for innovation and digital design are helping students fully develop and test their ideas. The University also offers a certificate in entrepreneurship, which teaches the real-life skills needed to launch a successful enterprise. And with the pitch contest's reach across campus, students draw on each other's expertise, whether it's business or graphic arts, computer science or psychology.

In a back hallway, Sirawar Matin, a sophomore majoring in Athletic Training, was nervously rehearsing his carefully crafted script with Iffat Siddiqi, a junior Computer Science major. It was a childhood

memory of sock "skating" over wooden floors that had brought them to the finals at Montclair State. "What would happen if you could walk and slide and clean the house at the same time?" they wondered.

The friends had reason to hope they could clean up in the contest. A few weeks earlier, they placed third among state universities and colleges in UPitch New Jersey, where their company, Neatsweeps, also won the Audience Choice Award. For the BulbHead pitch, they upped the "cute" factor, inviting a pair of young boys in slippers to slide around the stage.

Facing the panel who will decide if your idea is worthy of investment is one of the most critical – and terrifying – moments for any entrepreneur. At Montclair State, more than 300 people viewed the finals on May 2 in University Hall. The students presented their ideas, product samples and PowerPoint presentations to entrepreneur experts, including Khubani, a 1984 graduate who has invested in Montclair State's business program, substantially increasing the prize money this year.

Khubani has firsthand experience in student startups, launching his own career as an entrepreneur while at Montclair State. He has since built direct-response marketing into "As Seen on TV" TeleBrands and its online marketplace BulbHead.com.

"You remind me of where I was 35 years ago when I first started," he told the contestants.

A few days before the competition, the partners in Eatree, an idea for a healthy fast-food chain, set up a stand at a local lacrosse game, selling vegan burgers they grilled on a camper's stove to parents watching their children play. At the pitch, the gumption paid off as the group showed confidence batting away questions on marketability, strategy and finances – and winning \$20,000 to continue testing its recipes. "It took skill to think through the nervousness," says Lauren Wisnewski, a senior Visual Communication Design major.



**We look at the pitch prizes as investing in companies just as startup investors do... They may have a terrific concept, but they need money to strengthen and grow their business model.”**

—Dennis Bone  
*Director, Feliciano Center for Entrepreneurship*



Tech-savvy teams incorporated apps to enhance their products. The Neatsweeps slippers, for instance, were boosted with augmented reality to entertain and encourage children to clean up virtual dust bunnies as they sweep up real dust by sliding on floors inside their homes. While high on the cool factor, the judges, after deliberation, were lukewarm.

“We thought about what each team could do with the money,” Khubani says. “Could they really get to market, how sellable is the idea, how unique is the idea?”

The winning pitch came from Wheatpaste, a digital advertising and community platform for small businesses. The startup takes its name from the mix-it-yourself paste advertisers use to plaster their messages on fences. With an easy-to-use app for small businesses to design, post and push out ads, coupled with community news and events, Wheatpaste is envisioned as the “glue that holds a community together,” says George Garcia, a senior Business Administration major who is slated to be one of Montclair State’s first graduates in the new entrepreneurship concentration.



1) Alumnus AJ Khubani, CEO and founder of BulbHead.com, questions the student startups. 2) The partners in Rollarito pitch their kitchen burrito-rolling gadget. From left are Daphne Titus-Glover, David McDougall and Will Krupka. Kayla Abella helps out with a cooking demo. 3) Montclair State students, from left, George Garcia, Jacob Gilbert and Matthew Szot, win \$50,000 to develop a digital platform for community and small business engagement. 4) OxiClean pitchman Anthony "Sully" Sullivan emcees the contest. 5) Neatsweeps rolls out the cute factor with Tanim, 8, demonstrating the house-cleaning slippers during the pitch.

Garcia with teammates Matthew Szot, a senior Applied Nutrition major, and Jacob Gilbert, a junior Psychology major, were awarded \$50,000 to continue developing their app. They plan to launch in Randolph, New Jersey, where Garcia has experience working with small businesses as a member of the township's Economic Development Committee.

"They had a great pitch," says Information Management and Business Analytics Professor Ross Malaga. "They are tackling a big problem facing many small businesses. Plus, they developed an interesting solution that will hopefully lead to greater community engagement and advertising opportunities for local businesses."

Third place went to an ethical clothing startup called Culture that will create opportunities for the workers making the garments. Culture, headed by Kent Daniel, a senior Management major, and Sasha Mejia-Rivas, a junior Fine Arts, Photography major, received \$10,000 to continue website and product development. Daniel has experience in launching such a business. He worked as a designer in the clothing industry for 25 years before the economic downturn, coming to Montclair

State seven years ago as transportation supervisor. "My experience as a University employee and student has created the opportunity for me to reinvent myself," he says. His startup plans to give back, "one stitch at a time," through profit sharing and foundation support.

At each prize level, team members will share 20 percent of the award, with the remaining 80 percent to be invested in the venture under the coaching of the Feliciano Center for Entrepreneurship.

"We look at the pitch prizes as investing in companies just as startup investors do," says Dennis Bone, the Center's director. "The reason we raised the money to expand the prizes is to address one of the biggest challenges facing startups, which is securing funding, especially for early-stage startups that haven't yet generated a lot of traction. They may have a terrific concept but they need money to strengthen and grow their business model."

For Rollarito, despite its "As Seen on TV" appeal, the difficulty of rolling burritos just didn't resonate with all the judges as a universal problem. "You have to make (the need for the gadget) huge," Sullivan, the

British entrepreneur and pitchman, advised the team.

"It was definitely disappointing and surprising we didn't win something based on the reaction we received after we pitched," says Will Krupka, a senior Business Management major.

But rejection, while frustrating, often leads to future success. "You can't use that as a premonition of what your path or journey will be because you have to fail in order to win," semifinal judge and alumna Hakika DuBose, founder and CEO of Kika Stretch Studios, told the contestants. "And really, failing is not failing, it's just a lesson learned."

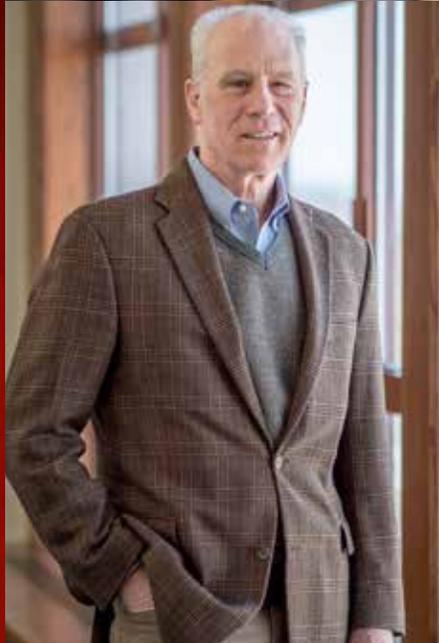
Or as Sullivan put this part of the entrepreneurial process: "Embrace the suck. Embrace the failure."

Rollarito may not need to embrace it for long. The day after the pitch contest, one of the judges reached out expressing interest in possibly investing. "We still need to schedule a meeting and go through our strategy," Krupka says. "Nothing is set but this is at least hope that we can move forward." ■



*“At my stage of the game, there’s just a sheer pleasure and challenge in taking a class.”*

*—Ken Browne*



From top to bottom:  
Chuck Hayden,  
Ken Browne,  
Hermine Bartee,  
Richard Franco,  
Sally Baggett

# ACT 2

## OLDER STUDENTS DISCOVER NEW JOYS AND PASSIONS THROUGH **LIFELONG LEARNING**

BY MARILYN JOYCE LEHREN

**I**n the wings of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark, Hermine Bartee is getting ready for her encore. As an opera singer and actress, she's accustomed to being in the spotlight, but on this Sunday afternoon in January, there's no need for vocal warmups, just family to help adjust a traditional red cap and gown as she takes center stage to mark her academic achievements at Montclair State University.

The Graduate School Commencement culminates a second act that has seen Bartee earn a master's degree in music therapy and additional certificates. She draws on her artist roots to treat patients with depression, Parkinson's and autism. She's also given voice to a movement within the profession to have the State of New Jersey formally recognize the licensing of music therapists, a bill that supporters say will bring needed recognition to the healing powers of music.

"In what would be the evening of life, I am still pursuing and supporting a healthy active lifestyle," the 79-year-old says.

Bartee is among dozens of older adults engaged in creative and intellectual pursuits at Montclair State. Experts point to the arts in all forms for enhancing the lives of older people and promoting physical health. On campus, you'll find older students enrolled in classes, everything from Italian theater to pre-law in the University's Older Adult Learning Program. There are also beginner and advanced musicians refining their technique in classes at the John J. Cali School of Music Extension Division.

"When you get older and your kids are out of the house, you can sit down and learn something new," says the artist Chuck Hayden. He spent the fall of his 90th year learning jazz guitar at the John J. Cali School of Music Extension Division. "It's fun."

### LIFELONG LEARNING

Living close to campus has its perks. Neighbors have easy access to wide-ranging programming that shapes the University as a cultural, artistic and intellectual center for the community. For the active mind, most lecture series, interviews and discussions are free and open to the public. Internationally acclaimed artists and productions draw audiences to Peak Performances.

As a concertgoer at Cali School performances (more than 200 are presented each year), Hayden was inspired to add another instrument to his repertoire. He has played the banjo for 80 years, loves jazz and also plays the four-string tenor guitar. Just a few blocks from campus, his apartment is filled with his paintings of the American West, cowboys and horses. Under the gaze of a bucking bull, a favorite rodeo motif (and yes, he once roped), Hayden practiced the fingering and chords of the guitar.

"I practice a lot because I have a lot to memorize," he says.

His drive to learn a new skill is encouraged by experts. According to findings by the Association for Psychological Science, aging adults who engage in difficult tasks and learn new skills show memory improvements, among

the physical and emotional well-being benefits of healthy aging.

"Later in life," says Brian Abrams, associate professor of music therapy at the Cali School, "active engagement in music and the arts is a form of maintaining one's humanity, one's dignity, one's possibilities for connecting and one's possibilities for experiencing the beauty of life."

### WORKOUTS FOR THE MIND

Universities throughout the U.S. offer encore programs to help seniors make a social impact and learn new skills. At Montclair State, about 60 seniors are active in the Older Adult Learning Program, says Krista Hendrickson, the initiative's coordinator. It is open to New Jersey residents who are at least 65 years of age and who possess a high school degree or its equivalent. Seniors enroll on a space-available basis with costs that include only administrative and student fees.

For Sally Baggett, the program allows her to take care of some of the undergraduate requirements she needs for a bachelor's degree. She's had a long and successful career in marketing and graphic design for high-tech software companies in California, and recently moved to Upper Montclair when her husband changed jobs. Through the years, Baggett has taken classes toward her elusive bachelor's degree and has spent the past few semesters at Montclair State taking such classes as Spanish, macroeconomics and writing. "Hopefully I'll get my degree before I'm 70," she says.

W. Leonard Newman, a University supporter, has been taking classes for the past 22 years, mostly in the humanities and social sciences. “You have to have some consuming passion during your retirement,” says Newman, 89. “Some people play golf, others play cards. It doesn’t matter what you do as long as you are doing it for psychic enjoyment.”

This spring, Ken Browne, a Montclair resident and videographer, was volunteering on campus at an Italian Language and Culture Day for high school students, among the ways he takes advantage of living close to campus. Already a fan of performances at the Alexander Kasser Theater and minor-league baseball at Yogi Berra Stadium, his love of the Italian

***“Creativity is good for a whole bunch of things. It’s good for your mind. It’s good for your soul. It’s good for your body ... I plan on taking classes until I can’t get to campus anymore.”***

***–Richard Franco***

language inspired him to take a class in the history of Italian theater, an experience he describes as a “workout for your mind.” Through that class, he’s read the works of Carlo Goldoni and Luigi Pirandello, performed in plays and skits, and enjoyed a variety of learning experiences outside class, including attending an Italian theater performance in New York City.

“At my stage of the game, there’s just a sheer pleasure and challenge in taking a class,” Browne says. It also has its perks. This summer, he will take part in a research project in Sicily.

“Availing yourself of these learning opportunities is just too good a thing to pass up,” Browne says. “Even though I’m an older student, the students and professors are welcoming. And you get right back into the academics like you’ve never left school, right back into the flow of homework and assignments.”

## **FOR A QUARTER CENTURY, ONE CLASS AT A TIME**

Richard Franco, a painter, is a familiar face in the University’s fine arts studios. He blends in easily with other students, despite a 50-something-year age gap, as they share in the creative inspirations born in Calcia Hall. Students look up to him. “I’m older and wiser but I’m not an authority figure. It makes them more comfortable,” he says.

Franco was working for the U.S. Postal Service in North Jersey when, with some extra time on his hands and a few credits earned years earlier, he decided to go back to college. He had enjoyed art while growing up and selected a papermaking class. It changed the course of his adult life. “I

fell in love with art again,” he says of the experience, his first project – a sculptured bird with wings recycled from the pages of a book – displayed in his work space.

Each semester Franco selected another medium and learned the techniques of jewelry making and photography, exhibiting work on and off campus. He started taking the required courses to earn a bachelor’s degree, which he received after 23 years, one class each semester at a time.

At the age of 68, he’s now part of the Older Adult non-degree program, this spring semester taking a class in museum studies while continuing to work on his art and challenging himself to learn new techniques in printmaking and ceramics. “Being a student is just what I do,” he says.

Franco retired seven years ago from the Postal Service and can now be found on campus most days.

“Creativity is good for a whole bunch of things,” he says, musing on the benefits of the arts and learning for healthy aging. “It’s good for your mind. It’s good for your soul. It’s good for your body ... I plan on taking classes until I can’t get to campus anymore.”

## **MUSIC MAKERS**

At the John J. Cali School of Music Extension Division, adults often find it’s never too late to learn. Some are new to their instruments, others refine their technique and artistry, as they fit practicing into their busy schedules. Among the students, Carmelle Lucas, who has taken piano lessons on and off for the last 19 years, the past two at Montclair State, credits her Cali School teacher with tapping into her strengths on how she best learns. “It’s very challenging,” she says. “I’m enjoying the whole process.”

Now Bartee is using her operatic training and music’s healing abilities to engage seniors with dementia and children with autism, taking a creative and integrative approach to wellness and mental health. “I’m able to reach people who are difficult to reach,” Bartee says of the rewards of her later-in-life academic and career choice. “Music helps them open up and tell you all the secrets of life.”

A champion long-distance runner and a runner-up in New Jersey’s Ms. Senior America (and likely only because she tripped on the three-inch heels she hadn’t worn for 20 years), Bartee shows no signs of slowing down. She is working on earning the Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor Certificate and opening a private music therapy practice. She hopes to recreate in two years the 50th anniversary of her New York City debut at Carnegie Recital Hall if her voice remains strong.

“My family, genetically we don’t stop,” Bartee says, adding that her mother lived to be 109. “Everyone says I look like her, so maybe I still have another 30 years.” ■



# 110 YEARS *of* CARPE DIEM

On Tuesday morning, September 15, 1908, the New Jersey State Normal School at Montclair opened for the first time. Its mission, set in law by the state legislature, was to educate and train students in the science of education. According to the official history, the future teachers, 187 in all, “came by trolley on the Valley Road line, by the Erie Railroad to the Montclair Heights Station, and on foot,” filing into classrooms in College Hall, the school’s singular building, its style designed like the Spanish missions Board Member Edward Russ had admired on a trip along the California coast.

Here on the East Coast, the State of New Jersey had a great demand for teachers, and the school’s first principal,

Charles Sumner Chapin, in a speech at a formal opening ceremony, remarked, “We have been handed a schoolhouse to make a school. We accept the trust and pledge the best work we know how to do.”

As the University celebrates 110 years of Carpe Diem, *Montclair* magazine is featuring this timeline of significant events, thanks in large measure to the pages of Montclair State’s history, *A Century of Triumph Over Circumstance*, written by Joseph Thomas Moore, professor emeritus of History and Social Studies Education. From its early days and singular focus on teaching, the University has grown in ways no one in 1908 could have imagined.



continued 

# 110 YEARS of CARPE DIEM

→ continued from previous page

It is bigger, stronger and more complex, offering 300 majors, minors and concentrations. Professors collaborate with other research universities to solve the mysteries of space. They are advancing autism research and treatment, and using drones to assess floodplains; they are examining racial bias and charting paths in STEM. Such research, scholarship, funding and partnerships now form the heart of University life.

The campus itself first grew from that single schoolhouse to add residential halls and a library. The modern-day campus transformation has created interactive spaces for teaching and learning in areas as diverse as communications, science, business, nursing and dance.

Culture and sports have also had a huge impact on enhancing college life.

The history of the nation has also shaped the history of Montclair State, from the returning WWII soldiers and their families living on campus in temporary Army surplus buildings to the student demonstrations of the 1970s and to the attacks on 9/11, where from the campus, the iconic New York City skyline is clearly in view. Today, diversity, inclusion and acceptance are an important part of the fabric of life on campus.

Looking back at our years and our incarnations: from a normal school to a teacher's college to a liberal arts college to a regional university and now to a national research university, it is easy to see how Montclair State was transformed by time and events. Still, the educational purpose remains the same. And 110 years later, we are still seizing the day. Carpe Diem!



## 1908 NEW JERSEY STATE NORMAL SCHOOL OPENS

Established by the state as a response to a growing demand for academically trained teachers.



## 1915 THE SCHOOL'S FIRST DORMITORY OPENS

Funded by a legacy gift from Board Chairman Edward Russ of \$115,000, Russ Hall includes a living room with a fireplace, a reading room, a dining room and a hospital room.

1915 ROOM & BOARD \$250 PER YEAR

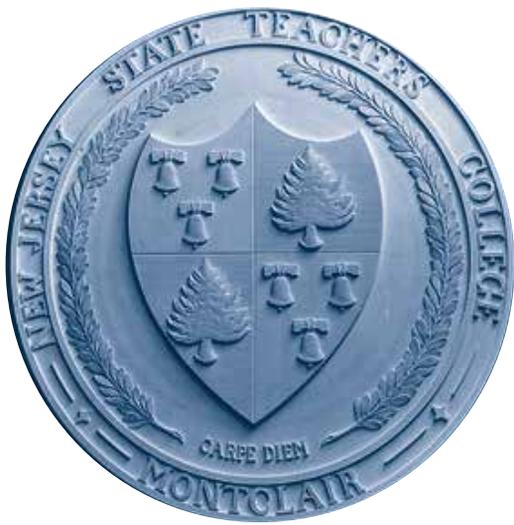
1900

1910

1920



↑ **1918 SCHOOL DURING WWI** By the height of the war, the school had to close for several days in January because of a coal shortage. Because men were called to the war front, by the time the entering class graduated in 1919, it consisted of 120 women and no men. (Left) Russ Hall dining room.



**MONTCLAIR CALLED "HARVARD OF TEACHERS COLLEGES"**



**1927 MONTCLAIR STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE**  
The Normal School becomes a teachers college, dedicated to the education of secondary teachers through a four-year baccalaureate degree program.

**1930 MUSIC, THEATER AND DANCE CLUBS**  
Students in the 1930s celebrated their youth with dances, festivals and performances sponsored by each class, and by student associations and clubs.

**1926 SPORTS AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION**  
Intercollegiate athletics comes of age in the 1930s, but starts with tennis and basketball in the mid-1920s.



**1949 MONTCLAIR STATE'S NEW JERSEY SCHOOL OF CONSERVATION OPENS**  
Since 1949, generations of New Jerseyans and Montclair State students have learned about nature and conservation at Montclair State's NJ School of Conservation.



**1947-1954 A POST WAR CAMPUS**  
Taking the campus from war to peace after WWII, President Sprague creates programming for returning veterans and erects 19 temporary war surplus buildings for soldiers and their families to live on the north end of campus.

**1932 TUITION IS \$50 AND DOUBLES IN 1933**

1930

1940

1950

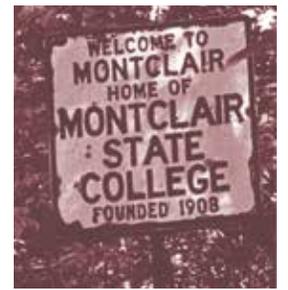
1960

**THE AMPHITHEATER IS ONE OF TWO WORKS PROJECTS ADMIN (WPA) JOBS IN N.J.**

**1937 AMPHITHEATER**  
After its completion, the Amphitheater became a popular gathering spot for students and remains so to this day.

**1941 A P.E. OBSTACLE COURSE PREPARES MEN FOR WAR**

**1952 THE BIRTH OF EDUCATIONAL TV**  
The nation's first educational television programs are broadcast from the Montclair State campus from a studio converted from a bowling alley, with transmitters sending signals to classrooms in New Jersey and parts of New York, Pennsylvania and Connecticut.



**1958 MONTCLAIR STATE COLLEGE**  
The name changes in 1958 and that same year, the college merges with Panzer College of Physical Education and Hygiene, the last private single purpose school for physical education in the United States.



**1964  
2ND  
UNDEFEATED  
FOOTBALL  
SEASON IN  
5 YEARS**



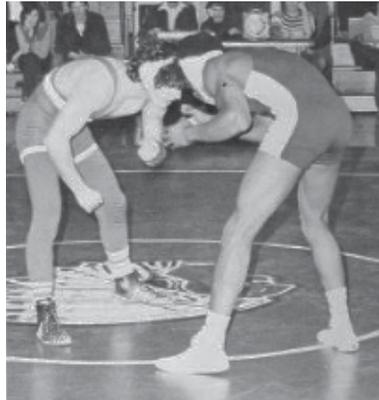
**1963 HARRY A. SPRAGUE  
LIBRARY OPENS**

Named for the principal and later president Harry Sprague, who ran the college from 1924 to 1951, overseeing its change to a four-year teachers college and elevating its reputation.



**1966 UNIVERSITY ADDS LIBERAL ARTS**

The NJ Legislature made Montclair State a multipurpose institution and it admits its first liberal arts students in 1966.



**1976 WRESTLING MANIA**

The Wrestling team wins the national NCAA Division III championship in both 1976 and 1986.



**1978 WOMEN'S BASKETBALL**

Women's Basketball makes it to the national AIAW Final Four tournament.

**1989  
THE MSU  
INDIANS  
BECOME THE  
RED HAWKS**

1960

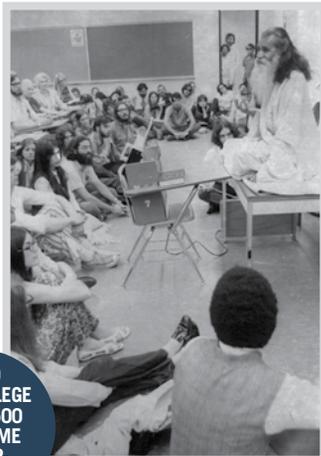
1970

1980

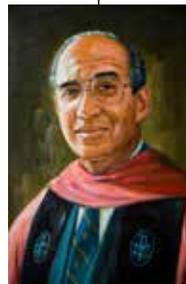
1990

**1970 STUDENT STRIKE**

In May 1970, two days after four students were killed at Kent State in Ohio, the Montclair State student government called for a student strike. Faculty voted to support the students and the strike lasted through the end of the semester, but students held protest classes of their own.



**1970  
THE COLLEGE  
HAS 7,500  
FULL-TIME  
UNDER-  
GRADUATES**



**1973 FIRST AFRICAN  
AMERICAN PRESIDENT**

David W.D. Dickson becomes the first African American to head a New Jersey state college or university.

**1987 HONORS PROGRAM OPENS**

The honors program opens for academically gifted freshmen; by 1989, 100 students were enrolled.



**1998 FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT**

Under the leadership of its first female president, Susan A. Cole, Montclair State becomes the second-largest and fastest growing university in New Jersey. She ushers in an era of building and transformation.



IN FALL 2014, THE UNIVERSITY GROWS TO 20K



**2016 HISPANIC SERVING**

U.S. Department of Education designates Montclair State as a Hispanic-Serving Institution and for more than 15 years has been on the *Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education Magazine's* list of "Top 100 Colleges for Hispanics."

**2006 NEW SCHOOL AND BUILDINGS**

University Hall and the John J. Cali School of Music are established, the latter with a \$5 million gift from the Cali family.



**2004 ALEXANDER KASSER THEATER OPENS**

A \$4 million gift from Kasser's family in his memory made the theater possible. The stunning facility seats 500 and stages avant garde productions often praised by *The New York Times*.

**2017 SCM BUILDING OPENS**

A high-tech, high-def, \$55 million School of Communication and Media building opens with a partnership with Sony Electronics' Professional Solutions Americas providing students with the most advanced broadcast facilities on a campus in the country.



**2016 SCHOOL OF NURSING OPENS**

Responding to a national shortage in nursing, the University opens a School of Nursing and offers a RN to BSN degree and adds a BSN degree in fall 2017.



**2016 A RESEARCH UNIVERSITY**

Carnegie Classification designates Montclair State as a Research Doctoral Institution, followed by the State of New Jersey recognizing the University as a public research university.

**1994 UNIVERSITY STATUS**

Under the leadership of President Irvin Dexter Reid, Montclair State College is renamed Montclair State University.



2000

2010

2020

**1998 FLOYD HALL AND YOGI BERRA STADIUM**

A gift from Floyd Hall and a public-private partnership results in a first-of-its-kind venture for a university in New Jersey.



**2000 BASEBALL TEAM BECOMES NATIONAL CHAMPS**

Coach Norm Schoenig leads the Red Hawks to the their third Division III national championship.



**2013 BUILDING FOR OUR FUTURE BONDS**

Montclair State receives \$94 million from state bonds for \$121 million in construction projects that include the School of Business building and the Center for Environmental and Life Sciences.



**2015 LARGEST GIFT EVER**

An anonymous donor gives the University \$20 million to support programming in the Feliciano School of Business.

# UNIVERSITY WELCOMES FIRST PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS

Dinner with the president, financial support and other perks attract New Jersey's high-achieving students.

By Marilyn Joyce Lehren

**T**his spring, Robert Onoz was still undecided about his college decision when he was invited to dinner with a select group of New Jersey's best and brightest students. Each had received an acceptance letter from Montclair State University and was selected as a Presidential Scholar. For Onoz, the letter especially stood out among the seven other offers of admission he had received.

When it came time to give his final decision, the choice was easy, Onoz says. At Montclair State, his high school achievements had earned him a \$20,000 scholarship and academic perks. He's

decided to spend the next four years studying biochemistry as part of the University's first class of Presidential Scholars. "The dinner left me feeling more comfortable and excited about being here in the fall," he says.

"The Presidential Scholar program is designed to identify and mentor New Jersey's high-achieving students and to help them make the most of their undergraduate experience," says President Susan A. Cole. "You'll have an exceptional opportunity to experience the best of the University," she said in remarks at the March dinner.



**“STUDENTS WHO ARE IN PROGRAMS LIKE THIS ARE GREAT TO BE AROUND. THEY MAKE EACH OTHER BETTER.”**

**—Robert Onoz,  
incoming freshman**

The evening also included a chance to meet with professors, alumni and students. "They sold me on the school," says Onoz, an honors student from Ridgefield who recently graduated from Saint Peter's Prep. "I felt a human aspect," a caring community, he says, to help him connect and explore his interests outside science in teaching and film production.

Representing fewer than 10 percent of the incoming class, the Presidential Scholars will form a small cohort who will get to know each other through shared coursework in specialized learning communities, says Jeffrey Indiveri-Gant, director of

“THIS DYNAMIC  
NEW PROGRAM  
ALLOWS THE  
UNIVERSITY TO  
MAKE A POSITIVE  
CONTRIBUTION TO THE  
STATE’S ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT.”

—Susan A. Cole



Undergraduate Admissions. They will participate in academic, cultural, research-driven and career-focused programs and activities that take the college experience to the next level.

Onoz says he’s looking forward to the challenge. “Students who are in programs like this are great to be around. They make each other better.”

Money factored into many of the students’ decisions. “It takes a little bit off my parents’ shoulders,” says Onoz, who, like every Presidential Scholar, will be supported by a \$5,000 scholarship for each of their four years of study, provided they maintain the rigorous academic requirements.



Cole says the scholarships represent an investment by Montclair State in the intellectual growth and success of New Jersey’s youth. “By making our outstanding education accessible to the state’s most

valuable resource – talented, motivated students – this dynamic new program allows the University to make a positive contribution to the state’s economic and social development,” she says.

The scholars will also be exposed to meaningful experiences, including during their freshman year, access to alumni mentors and internships, spring break community service, lectures and research opportunities.

“This is a significant scholarship,” says Kendrick Slaman, a Parsippany High School senior from Lake Hiawatha. “It’s special to be one of the first to experience it.”

Slaman plans to study filmmaking. He visited about a dozen colleges, but at the end of his college search applied to just three. “Montclair’s program is incredibly good,” he says, noting the new “Hollywood East” home of the School of Communication and Media. “With Montclair’s partnership with Sony and technology, it’s one of the best in the country.”

For John Brizek of Oak Ridge, Montclair State’s designation as a public research university was key to his decision to accept the Presidential Scholar award to study marine biology. “It made a difference,” says Brizek, who was accepted into three other schools.

The University’s reputation continues to grow overall admissions, and enrollment in the Presidential Scholars this first year exceeded projections.

A number of first-generation students count among the first cohort, including Ashley Deita of Passaic, a senior at Passaic High School who plans to study Family Science and Human Development. “What drew me into Montclair State was the feel of the campus and how I could imagine myself there,” she says. “I am the first in my family to go to university,” an achievement enhanced as a Presidential Scholar. “It’s amazing to see how far I’ve gone.”

To receive the scholarship, the students challenged themselves with rigorous AP and honors classes while in high school and earned high grades. Harrison resident Alejandra Zavala pursued studies in the sciences at Harrison High School and a passion in music, a path that led her ultimately to decide on music education as a major. She elected to attend Montclair State after taking a flute lesson and passing the audition.

“I felt right at home and fell in love with the campus,” Zavala says. “The scholarship is just a plus, like a cherry on top.”

Visit [montclair.edu/presidential-scholars](http://montclair.edu/presidential-scholars) to learn more. ■



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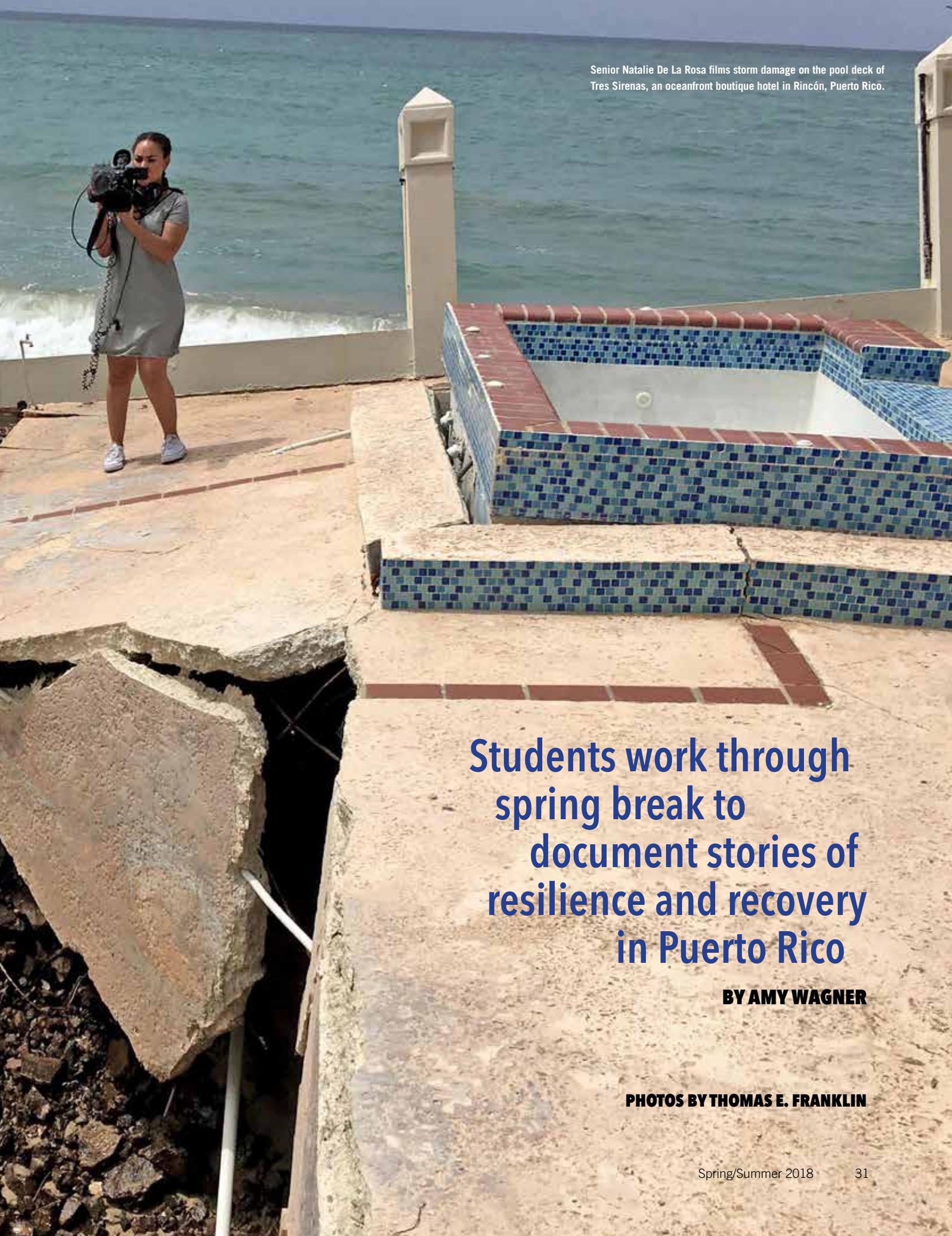
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# AFTER THE STORM



Senior Natalie De La Rosa films storm damage on the pool deck of Tres Sirenas, an oceanfront boutique hotel in Rincón, Puerto Rico.

# Students work through spring break to document stories of resilience and recovery in Puerto Rico

**BY AMY WAGNER**

**PHOTOS BY THOMAS E. FRANKLIN**

As Hurricane Maria barreled through Puerto Rico last September, cutting off communication to the island territory and leaving as much as \$95 billion in damage to the region in its wake, Communication and Media Arts major Mariano Arocho anxiously awaited news about his grandparents, who live there. “We waited for three days,” he recalls. “My mother found a blog post online and the blogger had taken a photo of my grandmother at a shelter. We emailed the blogger and found that they were safe. It was very relieving.”

Six months later, Arocho joined a group of students, faculty and staff from the School of Communication and Media (SCM) on a weeklong spring break trip to Puerto Rico for a collaborative journalism project to cover stories of resilience and recovery in the aftermath of the storm.

For Arocho, and other students with ties to the island and the region, the experience was intensely personal. “I’m Puerto Rican,”

says Arocho, a senior. “My grandparents were greatly affected when Maria hit.”

Seeing the trip as an opportunity to enhance his journalism and video production skills, Arocho filmed *Abuela’s Hogar* – a documentary of how the storm flooded the nursing home his grandparents owned and has been a labor of love for his *abuela* (grandmother) for years. “They’re now planning to sell their business,” he says. “My *abuela* can no longer do what she loves to do. It breaks her heart, but now’s the time for her to retire.”

For some college students, spring break is often a time to relax on a beach, but for Arocho and the others on this trip, spring break was a working vacation – and an opportunity to produce meaningful work.

Hurricane Maria was the worst natural disaster in Puerto Rican recorded history, and when they arrived, Arocho and six other students, along with professors Thomas Franklin, Steve McCarthy and David Sanders, and staff members Marie Sparks

**“I REALIZED YOU TRULY HAVE TO LOVE STORYTELLING FOR THIS JOB – AND I CAN HONESTLY SAY I DO. THIS IS WHAT I WANT TO DO FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.”**

**–Madison Glassman**



Left: SCM students Madjiguene Traore, Madison Glassman, Natalie De La Rosa, Babee Garcia, Laura Galarza, Genesis Obando and Mariano Arocho on the final evening in Old San Juan; Above: Traore stands on her toes to take a photo at El Morro in Old San Juan, along with Galarza.



and Krystal Acosta, quickly discovered that recovery is far from complete, as signs of devastation linger across the island.

### **A cultural and journalistic experience**

The stories that the students worked on focused on how people and communities came together to face adversity and hardship in the wake of the storm.

“We wanted to provide an opportunity for our students to have a cultural experience

as well as a journalistic experience in a place where a big, prolonged news event was occurring,” says Franklin. “On a scale of one to 10, this trip was a 20, especially in terms of the students’ development and growth in the short time we were there.”

Looking back on the trip, Sanders reflects that the experience for the students was both character- and career-building. “They came out of the trip with a real taste of working in the professional world. The bonus is that the media projects they

produce will really stand out from their peers when they begin to look for work.”

Senior Television and Digital Media major Natalie De La Rosa also identified with the islanders’ plight. “Being an islander myself from the Dominican Republic, I felt I could help people by telling stories we don’t usually get to hear in the states,” she says. Her video features business owners who shared how they coped with hardships before, during and after the storm.



A man in Boquerón, Puerto Rico, talks with Obando, De La Rosa and Garcia about the tsunami-like storm surge that occurred during Hurricane Maria, destroying his grandparents home behind him.

“A lot of places we visited looked as if we were back in September when Maria hit,” De La Rosa says. “I wasn’t expecting to see houses under water, cars underneath sand, and houses without roofs. The island isn’t even close to being repaired.”

While shocked by the island’s devastation, De La Rosa was impressed by people’s positive spirit. “Everyone greeted us with a smile and love in their eyes,” she recalls. “Many said they were just happy that somebody was willing to listen to them.”

### Excelling at storytelling

The professors say they run their journalism and documentary trips like professional shoots.

“Before we go, each student is charged with researching and casting a story,” says McCarthy. “The daily production really reinforces what we teach – storytelling. It’s like developing a muscle. We train them to set up the gear, ask the questions, film the shots and then pack up and go to the next location.”

For senior Journalism major Madison Glassman, the trip not only gave her invaluable real-world experience, but it reminded her that journalism is all about telling and sharing stories.

She also learned that journalism is hard work. “It’s long hours, no breaks and putting personal needs aside for your work,” she says. “I realized you truly have to love storytelling for this job – and I can honestly say I do. This is what I want to do for the rest of my life.”

Glassman’s video focused on Cypress Missions, a group from Brielle, New Jersey, that was helping to repair a damaged church and rectory in Vega Baja. “I met them the day I filmed my story, but by the end of the day, I felt like we were family.” Among the volunteers were Montclair State alumni Medaly Rodriguez Jones and Jay Jones, who had met while attending the University.

### Cross-cultural collaboration

According to Franklin, the team benefited from unique cultural and learning experiences gained by collaborating with University of Puerto Rico students and faculty.

“The Puerto Rican students were phenomenal,” says De La Rosa. “They were such a great help to the team – from guiding us around the island to literally being involved in some of our pieces.”

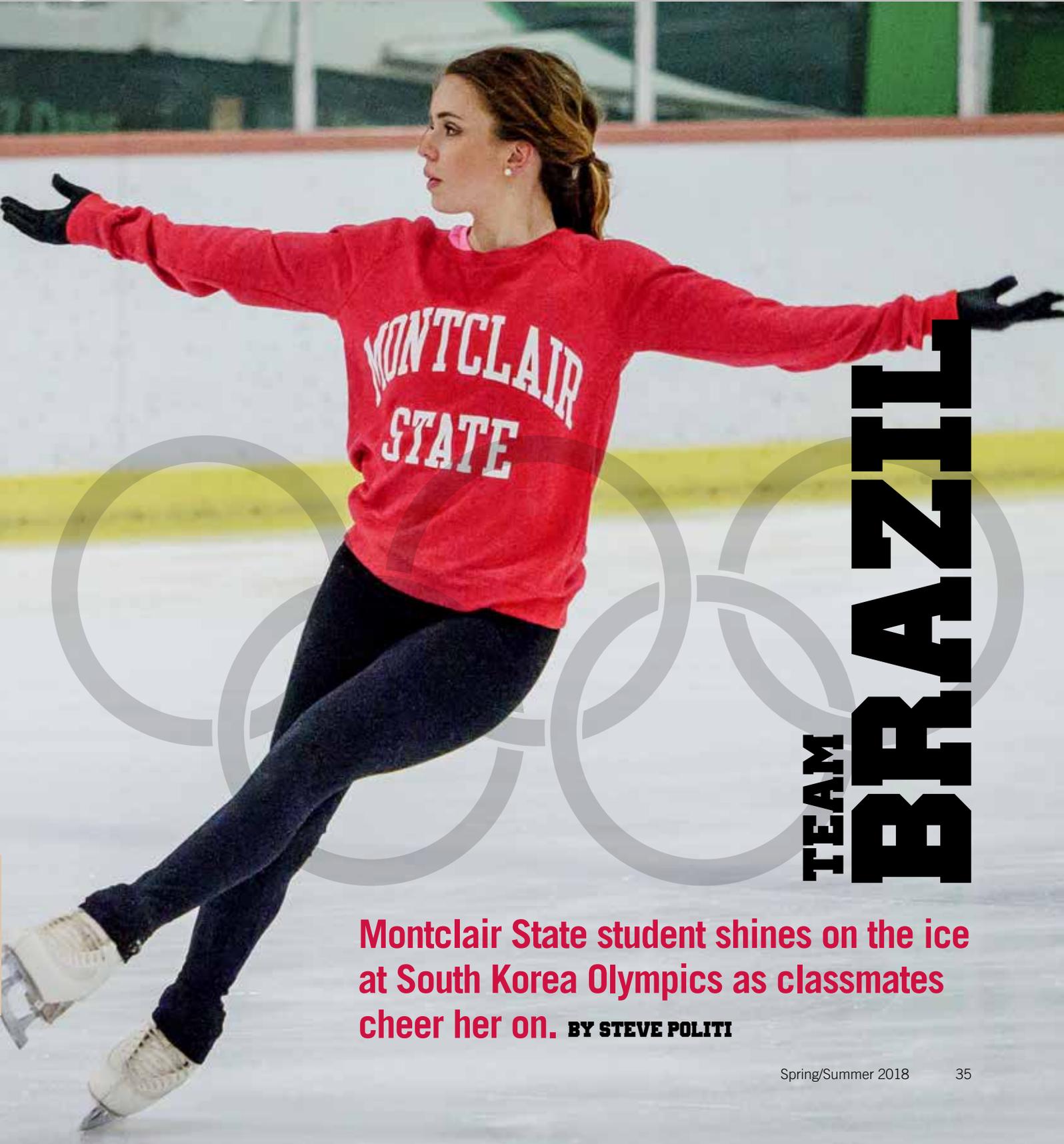
Through this collaborative process of capturing and sharing stories of Puerto Rican resilience, recovery and hope, the Montclair State team hopes to further the understanding of the lasting impact of Hurricane Maria on Puerto Rico.

Arocho recalls that while the Puerto Ricans were unwilling to let a hurricane completely disrupt their lives, they still need help to recover. “There are people still without power and still without roofs over their heads. It’s important to understand this and do what we can to help.” ■

➔ To watch the students’ stories, visit [wiredjersey.com/mission-to-puerto-rico](http://wiredjersey.com/mission-to-puerto-rico)



# RED HAWKS ATHLETICS



# TEAM BRAZIL

Montclair State student shines on the ice at South Korea Olympics as classmates cheer her on. **BY STEVE POLITI**



**T**he soft red sweatshirt became a favorite outfit inside the athletes' village at the Pyeongchang Olympics, and every time Isadora Williams wore it, she knew she was inviting conversation with speed skaters or hockey players or even volunteers from different corners of the world.

"Where is Montclair State?" they would almost always ask.

Williams would explain that Montclair State is a university in northern New Jersey, just outside of New York City. That was the easy part. But if the conversation continued, if the curious fellow Olympian wanted to know how a Brazilian figure skating pioneer ended up there – well, she would say, that was a long story.

The best athletes in the world gathered in South Korea in February for the quadrennial celebration of winter sports, and among them was a Montclair State dietetics major representing a country that few people associate with anything cold.

Williams represented Brazil, a country of 200 million people, which doesn't have a single regulation-sized ice rink within its borders. But she was also representing her adopted home in New Jersey, and her new friends gathered on campus each time she performed to watch from afar.

"I think I need to pay my roommate to be a marketer for me because she has literally told everyone on campus," Williams says with a laugh. "They had a watch party for me at our dorm. I'm not the first Olympian from Montclair State. They have a wall of all the others and they put me on the wall, and when I saw that, I was touched."

She belongs on that wall. A strong showing in the short program qualified her for the free skate, accomplishing one of her biggest goals. And, while she had hoped



for a cleaner performance on that second night of competition, her 24th-place finish was the best showing for Brazil in the Pyeongchang Games.

Her teammates, recognizing that accomplishment, voted her their flag bearer for the Closing Ceremony. Williams had the honor of marching into the stadium alongside all of the chosen athletes from across the globe, the greatest honor of her career...even if the task was a little harder than she expected.

"The flag is heavy!" she says. "All of the other athletes were huge, six-foot-tall bobsledders or speed skaters, and I'm this little pipsqueak. But to be with all of these amazing athletes who overcame so much to get there, it was amazing."

### Blazing her own path

Williams had an unusual journey too. She was born in Atlanta to a Brazilian mother and American father and lived in Brazil for two years as a young child, giving her dual citizenship. She picked up a love of skating from a birthday party in Georgia, and when her parents put her in group lessons, it was clear from almost the very start that she was a natural.

"I just kept going with it because I happened to not be any good at any other sport. I liked skating and performing," she

says. "And when I was little, my mom was always telling me, 'You'll be a Brazilian figure skater. You'll represent Brazil.' And so on my fourth-grade papers, I wrote that, 'When I grow up, I'm going to be an Olympic figure skater' along with all the astronauts and firemen."

She could have competed for a spot on the American team, but the idea of representing her other home country – one that had never placed a figure skater in the Olympics – was more appealing. The United States, after all, already had a long tradition in the sport. Why not try to blaze her own path?

Williams qualified for the 2014 Olympics in Sochi, Russia, as a teenager, bringing an unfamiliar winter sport to the forefront in Brazil.

"That was the first year that figure skating was broadcast on public television in Brazil," she says. "A lot of little girls supported me, and my mom got messages saying how inspired they were to skate."

### The road to Montclair

In the U.S., she was well known only inside the figure-skating community. But in Brazil, she had become a minor celebrity, once getting recognized in the Rio de Janeiro airport, and helping to build support for the sport.

But she was faced with a decision as she continued her career. Yes, she wanted to compete in Pyeongchang, but she also wanted to continue her studies to prepare for a life when she was done skating. She was training in Northern Virginia and attending a community college, but she couldn't find a school in the area that had a dietetics program.

That's when her mom, through a conversation with a friend of another figure skater in Brazil's junior program, discovered Montclair State. Not only could



**“WHEN I WAS LITTLE, MY MOM WAS ALWAYS TELLING ME, ‘YOU’LL BE A BRAZILIAN FIGURE SKATER. YOU’LL REPRESENT BRAZIL.’ AND SO ON MY FOURTH-GRADE PAPERS, I WROTE THAT, ‘WHEN I GROW UP I’M GOING TO BE AN OLYMPIC FIGURE SKATER’ ALONG WITH ALL THE ASTRONAUTS AND FIREMEN.”**

**—ISADORA WILLIAMS**

she live on campus and pursue her chosen degree, but she could train with coaches Igor Lukanin and Kristen Fraser at Floyd Hall Arena.

It was a perfect fit. Williams moved to Montclair and enrolled in the dietetics program, and as local kids learn the very basics of ice skating on one rink inside Floyd Hall, she can be found honing her skills on the other one.

“She’s an inspiration to the young skaters,” says Denise Rodak, an assistant registrar at the University whose daughter, Amy, is also coached by Fraser. “Not only are they sharing the ice with an Olympian, but they see that she’s going to school, living in a dorm and taking care of her studies.”

The latter isn’t always easy. Williams signed up for several online courses, which allows her to not fall too far behind when she’s competing overseas. Within a few weeks of her arrival, her fellow students

started to realize that their new classmate was more than an average student.

“Some of them [realized I was an athlete] because I miss a lot of class,” she says. “They’re like, ‘Where do you GO? What’s happening?’ And I would tell them, ‘Oh, well, I was in this competition ...’

“This is such a community-based university. I’m part of the Dietetics Club. There are a lot of concentrations within my major here, and I’ve met a lot of people who are interested in the same things as I am. They do such a good job of getting you involved.”

They also support their own. When Williams returned to New Jersey from Pyeongchang as a two-time Olympian, her friends at Floyd Hall welcomed her with a congratulatory banner. From Brazil to Montclair to Korea, it was quite a journey. ■

# POWERING FORWARD

BY STEVE POLITI

A 6-FOOT, 8-INCH PLAYER FROM TURKEY ASSISTS IN RED HAWKS' SUCCESSFUL BASKETBALL SEASON

Coach Marlon Sears knows he has plenty to sell recruits when they are considering his Montclair State men's basketball program. Top-notch academics. High-quality facilities. A short train ride to New York City.

But good Turkish food?

That was a new one, but for Kaan Yilmaz, it meant everything. He had come to the United States from Izmir, Turkey, and found himself at McMurry University in Abilene, Texas, and while it was hardly a small town, the self-described "city person" felt like he was living "in the middle of nowhere."

He knew he was going to transfer *somewhere*. He reached out to Ali Ton, a friend from Turkey who coaches at Fordham, and Ton called Sears. The second-year Montclair State coach wasn't about to ask too many questions.

"I was like, 'You can always use a 6-foot-8 guy who can shoot, right?'" Sears says with a laugh.

Kaan Yilmaz (No. 21) celebrates a win with Myles Mitchell-White (No. 4) and other teammates.



That's how Yilmaz, a sophomore with a big upside and an even bigger personality, ended up a Red Hawk. Yilmaz says he immediately felt at home on a suburban campus where he could take advantage of that short trip to Manhattan, and where a good Turkish restaurant named Toros is in nearby Clifton.

"In Texas, it was all barbecue and beans," Yilmaz says. "You get tired of that after you gain 20 pounds."

Yilmaz became an important part of a successful season for the Red Hawks, who went 18-9 – a five-win improvement over a year ago and the best record since 2010-11 – as Sears continues to rebuild the program. Yilmaz averaged 7.2 points and 5.4 rebounds a game off the bench as a sophomore, and knows his role is going to grow.

Sears has put together a solid young core that includes Myles Mitchell-White, who

was named D3Hoops.com Atlantic Region Co-Rookie of the Year after averaging 13.8 points, 3.8 assists and 5.7 rebounds a game.

"In my opinion, we've got the best player in the league," Sears says of his point guard. Mitchell-White has three more years in Montclair, and next season, 80 percent of the team's scoring and rebounding will return to build on its success.

Yilmaz is part of that. International players have populated the rosters of American college teams for years, but at the Division I level. It isn't always easy to find them in Division III, where coaches generally don't have budgets to scout Europe, and in most cases, the top players need a scholarship to pay for school.

That wasn't the case with Yilmaz, whose parents sent him to America with one priority: to get his degree. He is majoring

**"I WAS LIKE, 'YOU CAN ALWAYS USE A 6-FOOT-8 GUY WHO CAN SHOOT, RIGHT?'"**

**–COACH MARLON SEARS**

## RED HAWKS ATHLETICS

in Television and Digital Media, with a concentration in sports media and journalism, in hopes of landing a TV gig when his basketball career is over.

"I was into acting and theater in Turkey but I was too tall for that," Yilmaz says. "I felt like I should stay (in media) and use my sports knowledge. Once I get in front of a camera, I know what I'm talking about."

For now, though, he is happy with the cameras following him. Yilmaz doesn't think it's a coincidence that several of his best games came late in the season after he got comfortable in his new home. The best, he believes, is yet to come.

"I think we have a chance to do something special," Yilmaz says, and it doesn't hurt that he can find a good Turkish meal along the way. ■



Kaan Yilmaz (center) with teammates Daniel Ramis (left) and Drew Walker (right) at a pregame team meeting

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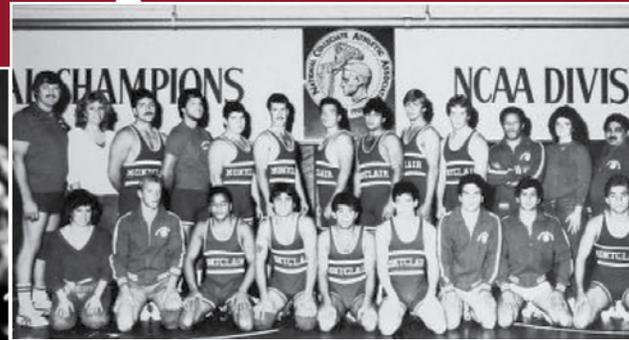
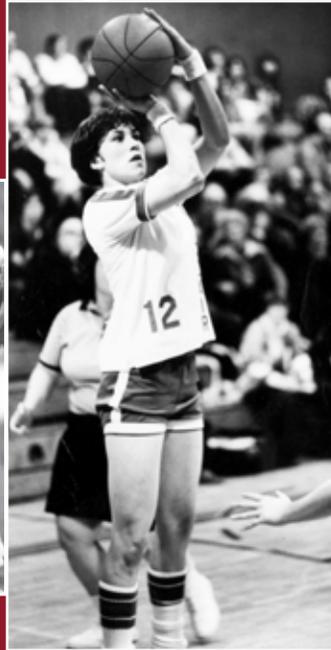
# A LOOK BACK AT SPORTS



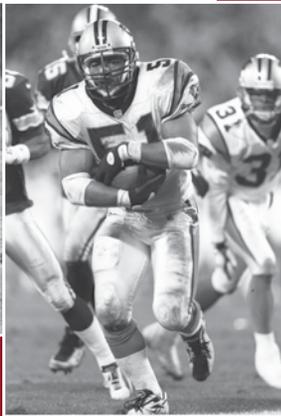
2015

1986

1978



2013



1980



1987

L to R: Women's basketball took third in the Final Four in 2015; Alex Hill led softball to two NCAA championship games; Sam Mills broke records and was an NFL All-Pro (as seen here); Carol Blazejowski led the nation in scoring and her team to the Final Four; wrestling twice won the NCAA championship twice; and baseball won it three times. (For more photos, see timeline page 21.)

From its humble beginnings with just three men's sports in the '20s and '30s, Montclair State's athletic program has grown to 18 sports for men and women, with five national Division III championship teams and more than 280 athletes named All-Americans. Montclair State has been chosen to host three NCAA Division III Championship events – softball (2009), women's lacrosse (2012) and field hockey (2020).

Montclair State's rise to national stature in sports began the '70s – first with the national championship won by the wrestling team in 1976 and then in 1978, when the women's basketball team, led by Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame inductee Carol Blazejowski, reached the Final Four for the first time ever. Blazejowski, who later made the 1980 Olympic Team, scored a record

3,199 points for Montclair State – a record that still stands.

Since then, there have been many winning records, more championship games and standout players. In the early '80s, Sam Mills shattered most of the school's defensive football records and went on to an All-Pro career in the NFL and was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2009. Some 21 players have signed with the NFL as well through the years.

The wrestling team brought home a second national championship in 1986 and captured 28 NCAA Division III individual national titles. The baseball team has won three national championships: 1987, 1993 and 2000.

Other teams that played in NCAA DIII Championship games include the softball team in 1997 and field hockey in 2012. Men's Soccer reached the Final Four in 2011 with baseball and softball making more than 20 combined Division III World Series appearances. For the last six years, women's basketball has made it to the NCAA DIII "Sweet 16" – getting as far as the Final Four in 2015.

In outdoor track and field, DeWayne Stevens completed back-to-back titles in the 400 meters in 1993; Heather Gearity captured back-to-back titles in the 400-meter hurdles in 2013; and this spring, long jumper George Alexandris won the national title in the long jump, breaking a 44-year DIII championship record with his leap of 7.92 meters (26 feet).

# SPORTS BRIEFS

## INDUCTED



Longtime athletic trainer **John Davis** was inducted into the Eastern Athletic Trainers' Association Hall of Fame in January, the first of two significant honors for a man who has spent almost three decades at Montclair State. He will also be inducted into the National Athletic Trainers' Association Hall of Fame – the highest honor in the profession – at a ceremony in June.

Junior long jumper **George Alexandris** (right) won the long jump at the NCAA Division III Outdoor Track and Field Championships in May, where he competed along with fellow Montclair State teammates and javelin throwers **Lia Negra** and **Rob Melillo**. Alexandris broke a 44-year championship meet record with a jump of 7.92 meters (26 feet). It was Negra's third straight year and Melillo's second year to compete in the outdoor championships.

## CHAMPIONS



## COMPETED



A pair of Montclair State track athletes ended long droughts for the Red Hawks in the NCAA Division III Indoor Championships in March. Senior **Jocelyn Anderson**, the first female in the competition for Montclair State since 2013, finished 13th in the 60-meter hurdles, while junior **George Alexandris**, the first male athlete to represent the University in seven years, placed 11th in the long jump.

**Myles Mitchell-White**, who led the men's basketball team to its best win total in seven years, collected several impressive honors. He was named New Jersey Athletic Conference Rookie of the Year and the D3Hoops.com Atlantic Region Co-Rookie of the Year, and also was the first Red Hawk player named to the Atlantic All-Region Team since 2012. He averaged 13.8 points, 3.8 assists and 5.7 rebounds a game.

## HONORED



## SIX-TIME CHAMPS



The **women's basketball team** won its sixth-straight New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) Championship in February, resulting in the team's sixth-consecutive trip to the NCAA Division III Women's Basketball Championship tournament. Senior guard Katie Sire was named NJAC Player of the Year and Coach **Karin Harvey** was named Co-Coach of the Year.

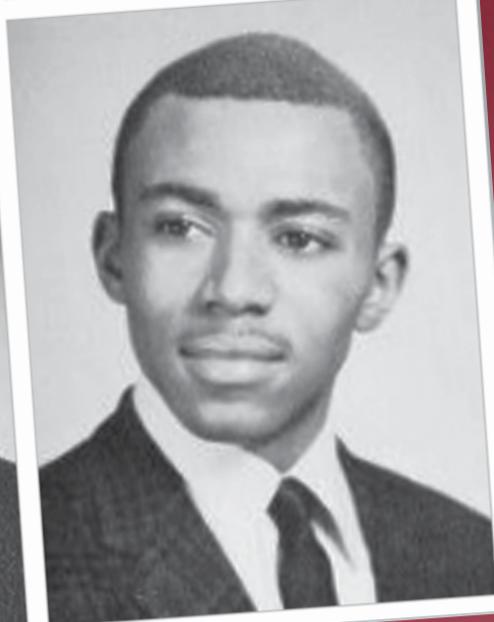
Sophomore **Grace Nielsen** completed the best season by a Red Hawk diver in more than two decades when she finished 20th in the 3-meter event at the NCAA Division III Region 4 competition in March. Nielsen, who also finished 19th in the 1-meter competition, is the first diver to compete in an NCAA event since Kim Roy in 1997.

## QUALIFIED



# CONNECTIONS

ALUMNI & FRIENDS



**CLASS OF  
1968  
RETURNS**

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**MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY**  
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### Join Us! October 6, 2018

Join us for Homecoming 2018 on Saturday, October 6. Be on the lookout for more information regarding events and activities and ways that you can help us raise \$110,000 to support the students of Montclair State and in honor of our rich 110-year history.



### 50<sup>TH</sup> AND 60<sup>TH</sup> REUNIONS

Members of the Classes of 1968, 1958 and beyond gathered to celebrate their 50th and 60th reunions in May. Alumni from the Class of 1968 and guests celebrated at a casual cocktail reception the night before Commencement, and the 50th Reunion alumni led the procession at Commencement. All returning alumni celebrated on campus with a luncheon and campus tours.



### MEET UP WITH THE DEVILS

In what has become a favorite annual winter event, Prudential Center welcomed alumni and friends to Montclair State Alumni Night with the New Jersey Devils. They enjoyed a pregame reception and some hockey as the Devils took on the Pittsburgh Penguins.

### Fun in Philly

Philadelphia-area alumni gathered for a luncheon followed by a tour of The Barnes Foundation museum in March. Attendees received exclusive updates on their alma mater's notable recent accomplishments and exciting future plans.



### Red Hawks Give Thanks

Montclair State joined nearly 100 educational institutions worldwide to participate in its fifth annual Red Hawk Day of Thanks on February 22. In a record-breaking event, more than 1,675 students stopped by more than nine locations across campus to sign thank-you cards for donors and learn how philanthropy impacts the University.





## HONORING EMERITI FACULTY

Three faculty members – Professor Ada Beth Cutler, Professor Benjamin Franklin Hadis and Professor James G.S. Yang – became Professors Emeriti during the University Board of Trustees meeting on April 11. The professors were honored at a luncheon immediately following the meeting. The luncheon, held biannually, was attended by 28 emeriti faculty as well as guests and University administrators.



## GRADUATION FAIR

More than 2,200 graduating students attended the second annual Graduation Fair in April. Students picked up their caps and gowns, donated to their senior class gift campaign, and had access to more than a dozen campus partners including The Graduate School, The Center for Career Services, The Office of Annual Giving and Alumni Engagement, and GEICO® Insurance.

## A RECORD GIVING DAY

The third annual Giving Day at Montclair State closed out with a grand total of \$102,459 from 465 donors, more than doubling the amount raised last year. Donors designated funds to go to specific programs – academic or athletic – or donated to the Red Hawk Pantry or the Emergency Scholarship Fund. Excitement was high as groups and teams took to social media and the web to meet the challenge. Campus was also buzzing with activity as ambassadors helped to spread the word, with home base being a festive event in the Student Center.

If you missed this year's event and want to give, you can donate at [montclair.edu/make-a-gift](http://montclair.edu/make-a-gift).



## Tasting the Wines of Spain

Nearly 150 alumni and guests gathered on campus April 11 for an educational wine tasting, where they learned the key aspects of wine tasting as well as the geography and history of the wines they sampled and the regions from which they originated. The 8th Annual Signature Wine Tasting focused on the wines of Spain and gave alumni the opportunity to taste a variety of wines throughout dinner, including light, medium and full-bodied wines. Each year, a different region is chosen.



# FULL CIRCLE

## Alumni who benefited from mentoring, Pay It Forward with a scholarship fund



Drew Heimlich, Kristina Kostovski and Frank Colombo

Even before she graduated in May, Kristina Kostovski was ready to take on the world. She'd been asked to speak at Montclair State's Annual Scholarship Dinner in March, engaging the audience of more than 375 guests. She began preparing for the grueling CPA exam, and best of all, she had already lined up a job at KPMG, after being mentored by accounting alumni who helped her prepare for the interview.

During Kostovski's four years at the University, the now 21-year-old

Garfield, New Jersey, resident was awarded \$40,500 in scholarships from multiple sources, including a \$3,000 Alumni Pay It Forward Award, given each year to a rising senior majoring in accounting or a student in the MS in Accounting program.

The donors, Frank Colombo and Drew Heimlich, aren't far removed from their senior year at Montclair State themselves. Both men graduated in 2012 and established the scholarship with matching gifts from their employers in 2015. As

part of the scholarship, they offer not only money but mentoring. "When Drew and I were in college, a big part of who we became professionally was driven by who mentored us along the way," says Colombo, 27, an investment banking associate at RBC Capital Markets. "Montclair State provided a lot for us, and so we try to give back to the students in the same way."

Heimlich, Colombo and Kostovski have a common mentor: Steven Markoff, an assistant professor in the Feliciano School of Business' Department of Accounting and Finance.

"I always looked at Markoff as someone who could provide insight into real-world application of the courses," says Heimlich, 29, an investment banking associate at Guggenheim Securities. Colombo agrees: "He helped prepare me, similar to how we helped prepare Kristina for her interviews, so he was instrumental inside and outside of the classroom."

Markoff says he encouraged Kostovski to apply for the Alumni Pay It Forward Award because she exemplified all the characteristics they're looking for: academic excellence, commitment to career, professional development and "most importantly, her

understanding of the importance of giving back."

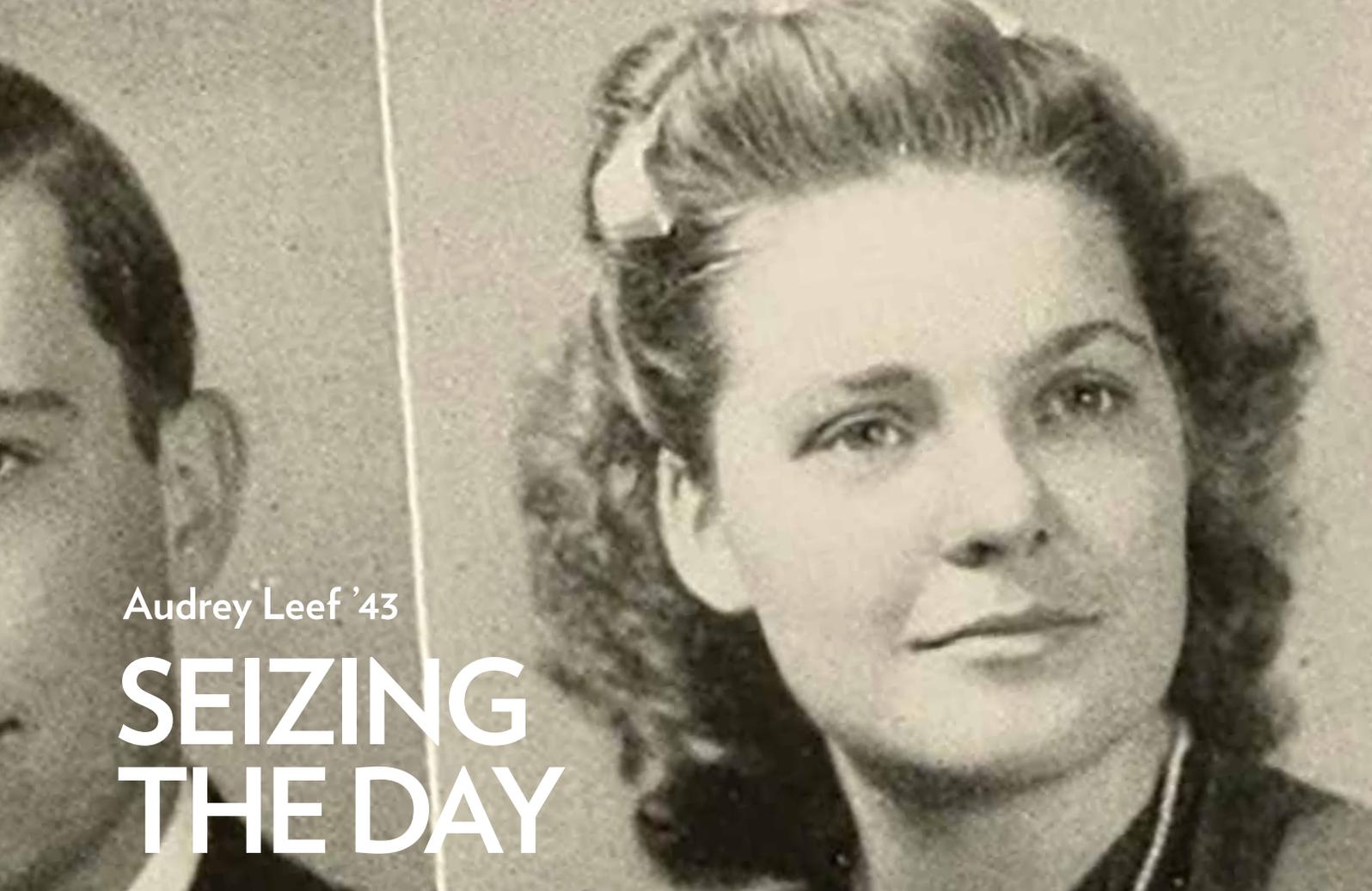
Kostovski says the personal touch from Colombo and Heimlich proved invaluable. "I could ask them questions regarding my CPA license" and related matters, Kostovski says. "It made the process easier than it would've been without their guidance."

In addition to scholarship aid from the University, corporations and arts organizations, Kostovski financed her education by juggling multiple jobs, including a position at an accounting firm that started as an unpaid internship in high school.

"Drew and I did this because we want the brand of Montclair State University to grow," Colombo says. "And one way of growing the brand is for other people to get involved in the University and give back. It's just a circle of education to professional life."

Heimlich says he and Colombo did not put their names on the scholarship because they hope to add more alumni donors, a desire that is already being realized: "We're happy to say that the 2018-19 scholarship will be able to award \$4,500, thanks to an anonymous graduate."

—Malecia S. Walker



Audrey Leef '43

# SEIZING THE DAY



In 1939, Audrey Vincentz was just 16 when she graduated from A.J. Demarest High School in Hoboken and enrolled as a mathematics major at what became known as Montclair State University. It was a bold decision for a teenage girl at the time.

"Montclair was highly recommended by my high school mathematics teacher. I was aware of their fine reputation and they invited me to come," she recalls. "When I was a student at Montclair, we were taught to live with an attitude of *carpe diem*, or 'seize the day,' so I decided to seize the opportunity."

She graduated in 1943, began her teaching career at Millburn High School and later broke down another barrier, becoming one of the first women to ever earn a master's in mathematics at Stevens Institute of Technology in her hometown in 1947.

What would have been the culmination of anyone else's life was just the start of her remarkable achievements. She met her future husband, George "Bob" Leef, at Stevens. They would adopt four children. Each year, she was approached by Montclair to join the math department. Eventually, when their youngest child turned five and went to kindergarten, Leef accepted the position and began a journey dedicated to helping students overcome the challenges of mathematics – and life.

"I was not intimidated by math because that's the kind of mother I had. She was ahead of her time, ran her own businesses, felt women were important and

encouraged me," Leef says. "It came naturally to me with a mother like that."

Leef, now 95 and a professor emerita of mathematics at Montclair State, is also a member of the University's Foundation Board of Trustees. She bestows a scholarship in her name each year to a full-time or part-time student enrolled in at least one mathematics class. She taught thousands of Montclair State students from 1966 to 1992, while earning a doctorate in mathematics from Rutgers University – and a Master of Divinity from Drew University. Leef was ordained and served for five years as the youth minister at the First Congregational Christian Church of Irvington and as the assistant minister at Community Church of Mountain Lakes, where she remains pastor emerita.

"My religion has always been very important to me, and it had been a lifelong dream to become

a minister," she says. "However, when I was young, women were not allowed in the ministry. That had changed by the time I was in my 50s, and I had the opportunity to fulfill my dream."

Leef continued her dream at Montclair State, where she became chaplain, saying her table in the student lounge, which she called "the listening post," allowed her to split her time between tutoring struggling math students and providing spiritual guidance.

Looking back on her 79-year journey to counsel students, Leef says the goal is simple. "I am blessed because people have always been so supportive," she says. "I want to live a life of service for as long as I can. It has always been so rewarding to live a life of service! I stress the same for all students: Serve others! Do what you can with what you have, because love never fails."

—David Chmiel

A portrait of Emanuel Scrofani '61, an older man with white hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera. The background is a blurred interior space with wooden railings.

Emanuel Scrofani '61

# TEAM WORK

As a member of Montclair State's undefeated 1960 football team, Emanuel "Manny" Scrofani learned the importance of being versatile and inspiring players to reach their potential.

"Everything was centered on team building and all of that transferred beautifully to education," he says.

For more than four decades, Scrofani improved education at every level, driving innovation for classrooms, school districts, teachers and school boards.

Scrofani, who joined the College of Education and Human Services Advisory Board in 2018 and received this year's Distinguished Alumni Award, says he values his college experience and is

impressed by Montclair State's continued program quality and innovation.

"Montclair State is way out front in terms of its creativity in helping teachers succeed," he says. "They understand kids, they understand learning and they understand what teachers will need in order to survive in this complex society."

Scrofani grew up in the inner city of Newark, commuting by trolley to what was then Montclair State College to earn a degree in business education. After teaching for a couple years at East Side High School in Newark, he headed west in search of work.

California was growing so fast, Scrofani quickly found a job near

Malibu, where "I could look out and see the ocean while I was teaching."

After two years, Scrofani shifted into administration, became an expert at helping teachers grow, working with researchers at UCLA and Stanford University to implement new curriculum approaches on the school level.

Looking for a way to have a bigger impact, Scrofani took on education staff development for the entire state, helping secure \$100 million in funding to integrate technology in the classrooms during the 1980s.

Having worked at the school level and state level for more than two decades, Scrofani turned his focus to the district level, working as superintendent in Sonoma Valley

and Napa Valley before becoming a professor focused on training teachers.

Before retiring in 2005, Scrofani developed training programs, videos and wrote a book for the California School Boards Association, guiding citizens to navigate their stewardship of local schools effectively.

"I never forgot that the primary motivation for me was to be a teacher and improve learning and that was true whether it was in the classroom, talking to legislators, working with school boards or teaching doctoral students as a professor," Scrofani says. "If you always think like a teacher, you can't go wrong."

—Suzanne Marta

# CLASS NOTES

## 1930s

**Constance O. Lefkowitz '39** celebrated her 100th birthday, with a visit from Congressman Ted Deutch. [1]

## 1950s

**John T. Acorn '59** had a sculpture exhibit at Sift gallery in Greenville, S.C.

## 1960s

**Ann Hartmann '62** received the Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award from Marquis Who's Who.

**Barbara Lefke '68** and **Lawrence Lefke '69, '79 MA** celebrated their 47th wedding anniversary in February. They are both retired teachers after more than 35 years in education and have been in North Myrtle Beach, S.C., for the past 16 years. [2]

## 1970s

**Frank J. Korn '72 MA** and his wife, Camille, have co-authored a book titled *Below Rome*. [3]

**Risë Kagan-Erickson '74** was a featured performer at the Maurice River Music salon in Mauricetown, N.J.

**Paul Van Ostenbridge '75** is now president and CEO of Atlantic Stewardship Bank, based in Midland Park, N.J.

**James "Jim" McLaughlin '76** is a founding member, senior vice president of investments and branch manager of Princeton Wealth Advisors of Raymond James. Previously, he served as a first vice president of investments and a wealth management advisor at Merrill Lynch.

**Sharon A. Pastore '76 MA** presented the inaugural event, "Our Love for Mathematics = Our Love for Problem Solving," at Saint Peter's University in Jersey City, N.J.

**Joseph Cosentino '77** wrote a holiday novella titled *The Perfect Gift*, a Bobby and Paolo Holiday Stories book published in December by Dreamspinner Press.

**Andrew T. Fede '78** is a lawyer in Hackensack and a Montclair State adjunct professor. He released his third book, *Homicide Justified: The Legality of Killing Slaves in the United States and the Atlantic World*, published by University of Georgia Press.

**Gina Polese-Grosso '79** was named CEO and president of the Family Planning Center of Ocean County, N.J.

## 1980s

**Edward J. Buckley '80** was ordained as permanent deacon of the Archdiocese of Atlanta, Ga.

**John A. Kosinski '80, PhD**, a consulting scientist for MacB's Advanced Technology Group, co-wrote a collaborative electronic warfare cover story titled "Thinking Through Collaborative Electronic Warfare."

**Robert M. Beyer '81** was promoted to senior vice president of the business and finance partners function of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

**Irving Dennis '81** was named chief financial officer, Department of Housing and Urban Development for the Trump administration.





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**Constantino "Gus" Milano '81** was ranked No. 20 out of 50 on *NJBIZ's* Real Estate Power 50 list.

**Thomas D. Morris '82** was appointed as a trustee on the board of The Hugs for Brady Foundation in Kendall Park, N.J., an organization dedicated to helping children with childhood cancers.

**Bruno Pettoni '82** is currently the chief financial and people officer of New York eHealth Collaborative. Previously, he served as CFO/director of operations for a technology distributor and service organization servicing Fortune 500 companies in East Rutherford, N.J.

**Coy Rudd '82** was named senior vice president of the Surplus Lines Excess business unit of IAT Insurance Group.

**Janine Iannarelli '83** is the founder and president of Par Avion Ltd.

**Kevin Glenn '84** was appointed partner for King & Spalding, New York office.

**Don Korotky Norte '84** has joined the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's parking management team to administer the Supportive Transit Parking Program Master Plan for the county's rail and bus systems.

**Mary Louise Long '85 MA** had a solo show at the Art/Place Gallery in Fairfield, Conn.

**Herbert Yardley '85** was elected to the Sussex County (N.J.) Board of Chosen Freeholders.

**Dawn M. Donohue '86** was sworn in as municipal court judge for West Orange, N.J.

**Gerard Marrone '86** was promoted to chief revenue officer of SPAR Group, a leading supplier in

retail merchandising, business technology and other marketing services.

**Gary J. Ruff '87** was named news editor for *The Daily News* in Newport, R.I.

**Robert William Johnson '88** was named acting Cape May County (N.J.) prosecutor.

**Michael A. Schueler '88** is the managing director of Suburban Propane, L.P., which is the sole owner of Agway Energy Services, an energy services company operating in New York and Pennsylvania.

**Stephen C. Novak '89, '94 MBA** was appointed executive vice president, senior commercial real estate officer and group leader of Lakeland Bank.

## 1990s

**William Hennessy '91** recently received the Josephine M. Picone Lifetime Achievement Award from the Connecticut Society of Radiologic Technologists.

**David Whitley '91**, a lieutenant with the Newark Police Department, was honored by the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders for selfless service.

**Kara Baldwin Brennan '92** is the director of annual giving at Montclair State. A field hockey alumna and proud Red Hawk, she joined the Advancement team in October 2017. [4]

**James G. Dorey '92** was named president of the growing supermarket chain, Price Rite Marketplace, based in Keasbey, N.J.

**Theresa A. Lyons '92** created an app that lets users find information about divorce and child support, and can connect people to

domestic violence and child abuse hotlines.

**David Walsh '93** recently opened another location of his business, Revive Personal & Sports Training, in Springfield, N.J.

**Keith Markowitz '94** was hired as development manager at Delaware Hospice.

**Joanne Pollara '94 MA** was recognized by Marquis Who's Who Top Educators for dedication, achievements and leadership in Special Education.

**Erica Lockhart '98** is now the director of academic administration and finance in the Music Department at Columbia University.

**Stephen A. Snyder, Esq. '98** was appointed CEO of Medical Transcription Billing.

**Nunzio Campanile '99** joined the Rutgers University football coaching staff.

**Christopher C. Catching '99** joined Stockton University as vice president for student affairs.

## 2000s

**Michael DePinho '01** was promoted to sergeant of the Union (N.J.) Police Department.

**Sean W. Grace '01 MA** was appointed president of the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association.

**Dr. Alyson Thelin Davison '02, '04 MA and Jim Davison '03, '09 MA** welcomed their third child, Owen Joseph Lowell. He joins big brother, Andrew, and big sister, Keira. [5]



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### UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION

**Did you move? Get married?  
New email? New number?  
Let us know!**

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

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

## Keesha Chavis '97



# PAYING IT FORWARD

Keesha Chavis knows just how hard it is to be a teen mom and pursue an education. She also knows what a difference outside help can make.

During her senior year at Arts High School in Newark in 1991, Keesha gave birth to her eldest daughter, and it would have been easy to lose sight of her college dream. But because she was still determined to get an education, her mother and sister stepped up to make it possible.

"I had thought about going out of state for college, but after having my daughter, I needed to stay close to home," says Keesha, who instead became an Educational Opportunity Fund scholar and benefited from all that EOF had to offer, including the pre-college summer program.

Having grown up watching her own single mother struggle to make ends meet and provide for her family, Keesha was determined

to be the first in her family to get a college degree, and to one day have a partner to help raise their children.

"Without my mother, my sister and EOF, I could not have done it," says Keesha, who lived on campus for a year and a half, spending weekends with family in Newark, and weekdays focusing on her studies.

While living on campus, she met her future husband, Jonathan William Chavis '99, and together they had a child. Even with juggling classes, work and her children's needs, she graduated in 1997 with a degree in psychology. Soon after graduation, she was hired in Montclair State's Physical Plant and has been at the University ever since, working her way up to assistant vice president for talent management in Human Resources, the job she now holds.

"That was a significant year for me: I graduated from college –

with tears in my eyes – obtained my driver's license, married my college sweetheart and landed my first full-time permanent job," she recalls, adding that she and her husband eventually had two more children. A believer in lifelong learning, she earned a master's degree from Montclair State in 2003 and is working on a doctorate in Higher Education: Leadership, Management and Policy at Seton Hall University and hopes to complete it spring 2020.

When her sister, Tanya Green, passed away in 2016, Keesha created the Tanya Green Memorial EOF Scholarship, which is available to students from Newark who are also parents and struggling to pay tuition. The first scholarship will be awarded this fall. "Without my sister's help, I would not be where I am today," Keesha says, adding that her sister had eight children and was always helping young people – taking in neighborhood kids who were struggling or having issues. "This

scholarship is my way of offering assistance to those in need but also acknowledging that my sister played a key role in my journey to obtain higher education."

Keesha's professional accomplishments include being a founder of the University's chapter of the International Association of Administrative Professionals, and a former president of the Colleges and Universities Professional Association in Human Resources.

Keesha plans to endow the scholarship to continue to help students into the future. "I feel it's my duty to assist young parents who don't see a way out of challenging life situations," she says. "I want to help them access higher education and provide some additional resources for them. That is the key to unlocking a future they have only dreamed about."

—Laura Griffin



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**Anthony N. Abrantes '04** is currently a senior union official with the Northeast Regional Council of Carpenters and vice president of Carpenters Local 254. He was recently appointed commissioner of the Morris County (N.J.) Park Commission.

**Timothy J. Mol '04** was hired as vice president, financial advisor for Lakeland Bank.

**Jordan Zaretsky '04 MA** was appointed acting fire chief of the Teaneck (N.J.) Fire Department.

**Alexandra Thelin Blackowski '05, '08 MA** and husband, David, welcomed their son, Matthew Daniel. [6]

**Gloria Lamoureux '06** is a Perry Award winner who was featured in the play, *50th & 4th*, which premiered at the Frigid New York Theater Festival in February.

**Michael J. DiBernard '08** was hired as Parsippany (N.J.) High School's athletic director.

**Halley M. O'Brien '08** is a successful on-air personality, producer and writer in the ski industry. She is also the founder of Halley O'Brien Productions.

**Patrick E. Cirelli '09, '13 MBA** married **Jessica M. Lezak '09** on October 1, 2017. [7]

**Connie Ducaine '09 MA, '17 PhD** is an advanced illness expert who was a featured guest on the show *Times Square Today*.

**Brittany L. James '09** has opened a solo exhibit of oil paintings called "Escapism" at the Belmar Arts Center.

## 2010s

**Nadia E. Vynnytsky '10** starred as Katherine in the show *Newsies the Musical* at the Pioneer Theatre in Salt Lake City, Utah.

**Kenneth W. Hanley '11** is the former editor-in-chief of *Fangoria* magazine who spoke at the Montclair State University School of Communication and Media about the evolution of horror filmmaking.

**Sarah B. Bonilla '12** is program manager at Clara Maass Medical Center in Belleville, N.J.

**Francisco Cordero '12** married **Amanda Basile '12** on September 30, 2017. [8]

**Tayfun Selen '12 MBA** was appointed as one of the public members of the New Jersey Board of Nursing.

**Allison Strong '12** made her feature film debut as a lead in the Happy Madison/Netflix feature, *The Week Of*. She plays the daughter of Adam Sandler's character. She previously performed in *Mamma Mia* and *Bye Bye Birdie* on Broadway, in NBC's *The Blacklist* and Nickelodeon's *Dora and Friends*. [9]

**Nnaemeka K. Anyanwu '13** is an associate at Jones Walker LLP, New York.

**Jaclyn M. Cirello '13 MA** is now the prevention coordinator at SUNY New Paltz as part of a New York State grant-funded initiative to combat drug use and underage drinking among students.

**Amanda Kuchta '13**, an Essex County (N.J.) Sheriff's officer, was honored by the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders for her bravery, sacrifice and selfless service.



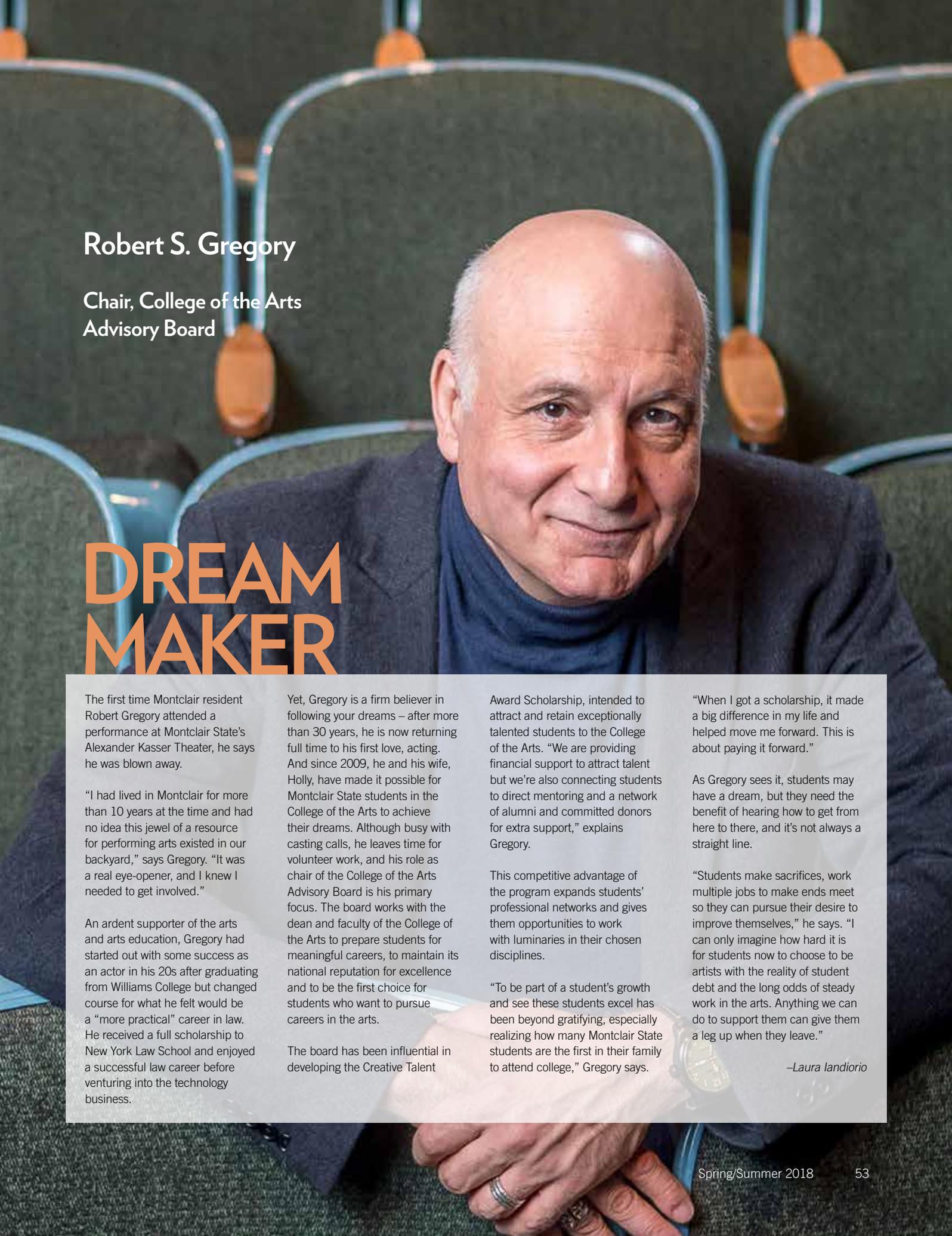
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## Robert S. Gregory

Chair, College of the Arts  
Advisory Board

# DREAM MAKER

The first time Montclair resident Robert Gregory attended a performance at Montclair State's Alexander Kasser Theater, he says he was blown away.

"I had lived in Montclair for more than 10 years at the time and had no idea this jewel of a resource for performing arts existed in our backyard," says Gregory. "It was a real eye-opener, and I knew I needed to get involved."

An ardent supporter of the arts and arts education, Gregory had started out with some success as an actor in his 20s after graduating from Williams College but changed course for what he felt would be a "more practical" career in law. He received a full scholarship to New York Law School and enjoyed a successful law career before venturing into the technology business.

Yet, Gregory is a firm believer in following your dreams – after more than 30 years, he is now returning full time to his first love, acting. And since 2009, he and his wife, Holly, have made it possible for Montclair State students in the College of the Arts to achieve their dreams. Although busy with casting calls, he leaves time for volunteer work, and his role as chair of the College of the Arts Advisory Board is his primary focus. The board works with the dean and faculty of the College of the Arts to prepare students for meaningful careers, to maintain its national reputation for excellence and to be the first choice for students who want to pursue careers in the arts.

The board has been influential in developing the Creative Talent

Award Scholarship, intended to attract and retain exceptionally talented students to the College of the Arts. "We are providing financial support to attract talent but we're also connecting students to direct mentoring and a network of alumni and committed donors for extra support," explains Gregory.

This competitive advantage of the program expands students' professional networks and gives them opportunities to work with luminaries in their chosen disciplines.

"To be part of a student's growth and see these students excel has been beyond gratifying, especially realizing how many Montclair State students are the first in their family to attend college," Gregory says.

"When I got a scholarship, it made a big difference in my life and helped move me forward. This is about paying it forward."

As Gregory sees it, students may have a dream, but they need the benefit of hearing how to get from here to there, and it's not always a straight line.

"Students make sacrifices, work multiple jobs to make ends meet so they can pursue their desire to improve themselves," he says. "I can only imagine how hard it is for students now to choose to be artists with the reality of student debt and the long odds of steady work in the arts. Anything we can do to support them can give them a leg up when they leave."

—Laura Iandiorio

**CONNECTIONS**  
ALUMNI & FRIENDS



**Joseph Vulpis '13** is a social media content creator and YouTube star with more than 100,000 followers.

**Nicholas Cocchi '14** joined the Fairfield (N.J.) Police Department.

**Christina M. Cruz '14** wrote and directed her first full-length play called *Unspoken Conversations* at WinterFest 2018 at the Hudson Guild Theater in New York City.

**Alejandro Hernandez '14** spoke at Mercer County (N.J.) Community College about acting as a profession.

**Nelson Jimenez '14** joined the Madison (N.J.) Police Department.

**Ngqibeko P. Ncanywa '14** released an album overseas called *Let Me Go* under the stage name "Peter Ngqibs."

**Nicholas A. Rodriguez '14** performed under his stage name, Nicholas Edwards, in a national tour production of *Les Miserables*.

**Nicole Gaudenzi '15** joined Iona College in New Rochelle, N.Y., as the athletic academic advisor.

**Margaret "Maggie" Latona '15** became program development assistant for Distinguished Concerts International New York.

**Rachel Maynard '15** works as an Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education fellow with the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Transportation and Air Quality in Washington, D.C. As part of her graduate work, Maynard conducted scenario planning workshops around the Miyun Watershed in China. She and her research team traveled to three villages to learn how ecosystem services might change 20 years from now. [10]

**Lorraine C. Perri '15** received the 2017 NJACT Perry Award and the 2017 Kelsey Award – Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Musical – for her performance as Daniela in *In the Heights*. [11]

**Kiara Sarner '15** married James Falconer on June 10, 2017. [12]

**Andres R. Scott '16** and **Sebastian Mejia '17** are both running for the Paterson (N.J.) School District Board of Education.

**Jennifer Flores '17** has joined Colliers' New Jersey retail team in the brokerage division.

**Nicole R. Gavin '17 MA** married Scott Gavin at the Preakness Hills Country Club in Wayne, N.J., on July 8, 2017.

**Wayne T. Guarino '17 MA** was appointed supervisor of Athletics, Physical Education, Health and Nurses for the Montville (N.J.) Public School System.

**Kelsey L. Strouse '17** married Andrew Litwin on October 29, 2017.



**Connecting with Alumni Relations has its perks**

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

# IN MEMORIAM

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Dora G. Bellat '36  
Lillian K. Lapides '39  
Mary Brochu Markert '40  
Jane E. Skillin '41  
Fred Warren Wachtel '43  
Marian Russell '44  
Adele K. Shargel '44  
Rose S. Stahnten '47  
Robert Weston '47  
Ethel E. Strauss Berman '49  
Delores O. Fusco '49  
Frances Ingemann '49  
Emil Orey '49, '51 MA  
Susan Peach '49  
Herbert R. Andlauer '50, '55 MA  
Earl W. Collinson Jr. '50  
Stuart D. McEwen Jr. '50, '56 MA  
William G. Koellner '51  
John Hargreaves '52, '72 MA  
Sandra J. Herbst '52  
Seymour Kelin '52  
Mary E. Wilbert '52  
Charles L. Magliaro Jr. '54, '58 MA  
Louise Gerckens '55  
Marion Helen Miller '55  
Frank Bottone '56  
Judith Coffin Cambria '56  
Graham A. Elliot '56  
Barbara S. Pierson '56

Leo J. Spirito '56  
William L. Trepicchio Sr. '56 MA  
John R. Davies '57  
Edna Farrell '57  
Alfred J. Campanella '58 MA  
Jean A. Czerniecki '58  
Margaret Korkes '58  
Charles William Port Jr. '59, '65 MA  
Roger F. Rosznagel '60, '72 MA  
Alan C. Engisch '61  
Kenneth C. Gaughran '61  
Roxanne E. Busch '63  
Donna Castiglione Bocco '64  
David B. Grundy '64 MA

Erwin A. Sloan '64 MA  
John T. Velcamp Sr. '64  
Sandra B. Swagler '65  
Robert Alfred Winter '65  
Dennis E. Woods Sr. '65  
Patricia A. Griffith '67  
James R. Icklan '67  
Joseph C. Ponsi '67, '76 MA  
Samuel Richardi Jr. '67, '70 MA  
Kathleen M. Sattelberger '67, '71 MA  
Franotie B. Washington '67  
Paul V. Domino '68  
Lorraine M. Strollo '68, '79 MA  
Kenneth V. Harlow '70  
Margaret Reap '70 MA  
Edward F. Gromek '71  
Crystal Lingenfelter '71  
Susan Lipscomb '71  
Genevieve J. Connelly '72  
Sheila Fay Killoran '73  
Dorothy H. Budd '74  
Dennis Richard Harrison '74  
Patricia Cappello '75  
Elizabeth M. Bator '76, '78 MA  
Maria M. Cardiellos '76 MA

Robert E. O'Mahen '76 MA  
Rev. Wayne H. Ackerman '77  
Robert A. Bockstiegel '77  
Regina Lautenberg '77  
Linda Greenberg '78 MA  
Albert Hoffman '78 MA  
John L. Laskey '79  
Jaqueline E. Rubenstein '79 MA  
Nicholas A. Fagioli '80 MA  
Nancy J. Politi '80 MA  
Barbara Sue Scheiner '80  
Harold H. Fairchild '81  
Elaine H. Fenwick '81  
Jo Ann Leone Eades '81  
Lucille H. O'Hara '81  
Mary Ellen Ferraro '82 MA  
Elizabeth A. Longo '82  
Michele A. Mackenzie '83  
Kathleen C. O'Donnell '83  
Michael L. Poggi '83  
Meyer B. London '84 MA  
Arthur E. Ahrens Jr. '86  
Richard Thomas Koes '87  
Florence R. Samitt '87  
Gina Sarah Cuzzo '88  
Doris A. Sozek '90  
Gladys M. Van Langen '90  
Joseph A. Jannicelli Jr. '91  
Matthew J. Kingfield '91  
Donald L. McNamara '92  
Douglas Joseph Ferrari '94  
Susan Beth Bernard '96  
Diane Dale Jacobs '96  
Dawn Ann Reynolds '97  
Michael Robertiello '97  
Faith A. Roberson '98  
Norman James Civensky '99  
Leon Rynar '01  
Michael John Perotta '08 MA  
John F. Barell, Professor Emeritus



## **BERTHA DIGGS** | Associate Director, Educational Opportunity Fund Program

**B**ertha Diggs, a champion of recruiting, enrolling and guiding highly motivated students through their college years, retired in December 2017 after 34 years as the Educational Opportunity Fund's associate director. Diggs paved a way for students from the poorest neighborhoods, from the most troubled school districts, to succeed when given a real chance with quality mentoring, tutoring and advising. In fact, it became her life calling. Christopher Catching '99, vice president for Student Affairs at Stockton University, was recruited by Diggs for the EOF program. "Being part of EOF transformed my life and provided a foundation for my career as an educator. The lessons I learned from participating in the EOF program were transferable in addition to being transformational." EOF scholars also credit "Mamma Diggs" for her counsel, intelligence and ability to find greatness in students who often cannot yet see it in themselves. "She has a presence about her, so you know she means business," says Stanley Fils '09, who works on campus in financial aid, "but she also has that motherly touch to remind you that everything will be fine."

*—Marilyn Joyce Lehren*

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



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