

WP

Innovative new program serves up a warm and welcoming environment for Latinx students, receives national attention



Spring 2021  
William Paterson University

The Magazine of William Paterson University

# WP Inside

## Student Support for WP's Latinx Community Thrives with Weekly Dose of *Café con Leche*

This welcoming program has evolved into a glowing example of how to holistically support and engage college students—especially students from diverse backgrounds



Francisco Diaz, associate vice president for campus life (front, right), and Maribel Rodriguez, associate director, campus activities, service, and leadership (rear, second from right) with *Café con Leche* program students Wilnell Martinez (front, left) and (rear, left to right) Antoinette Arce, Mary Martinez, and Karla Lopez

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The co-founder, chief operating officer, and head of strategy for Novartis Biome, one of the largest digital health companies in the world, Roberts credits his experience on William Paterson's baseball team for laying the groundwork for his success.



Robin Roberts '01, MS '04

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**Recalling the Grateful Dead on Campus**

I enjoyed reading the magazine this month, but was blown away with the Parting Shot article about the 1970 Grateful Dead concert, now 50 years later.

Being a music lover all these years, attending the original concert on Sunday night is one of my most famous stories of my "rock and roll concert history" I have been telling to my family and friends over these past decades.

The true story is that I bought my ticket and attended the Sunday night concert. It was a wonderful show, with great music! One of my friends at school was working as a stagehand and when I saw him during the show, he told me to come around the back of the arena and he would let me in backstage. Obviously, I jumped at the chance.

So, I went around the back, he let me in...and I stood on the side of the stage for the remainder of the concert. I literally was standing about 6 feet from Jerry Garcia during that time—and was mesmerized by his talent and the overall experience of being that close to the music. I still get chills just writing about that night.

It was clearly one of my most memorable nights as a music fan, and as a Grateful Dead fan—which I owe to my time at William Paterson University.

Thanks for the article, and letting me relive the experience once again. I cut out the article, framed it, and it's now hanging in my music room with all my other Rock and Roll memorabilia.

Joseph Rotino '73

**Here's the Set List...**

While I was not there, attached is a copy of the set list and sound track for the show:

- |                             |                     |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Casey Jones                 | China Cat Sunflower |
| It Hurts Me Too             | I Know You Rider    |
| Mama Tried                  | Dark Star           |
| Till the Morning Comes      | St. Stephen         |
| Dancin' in the Streets      | Not Fade Away       |
| Candyman                    | Goin' Down the Road |
| Sittin' on Top of the World | Feelin' Bad         |
| Morning Dew                 | Not Fade Away       |
| Beat It on Down the Line    |                     |

Enjoy,  
Allen Magrini  
Vice Chair, William Paterson University Foundation

**Remembering Chestnut Trees on Campus**





In the last paragraph of "Project Seeks to Reintroduce American Chestnut Trees on Campus," Dr. Davi states that, "The American chestnut would definitely have been present on the campus in the past." Indeed, in the spring of 1961, Dr. Emerich took her Botany class into the campus woods to show her students, including me, a living specimen. As I remember, the tree was about 6 inches in diameter and revealed its attacker, the Asian Bark Fungus.

Allan Barnitt '64

**We welcome letters to the editor.**

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**Grateful Alumna Gives Back with Scholarship and Through Her Estate**

"I was a first-generation college student and was able to attend William Paterson to earn a degree in biology with state and local scholarships that covered my tuition, books, and fees for four years. My science coursework and master's degrees enabled me to have a wonderful career with a continued interest in nature, ecology, and wildlife habitat. Funding a scholarship is an opportunity for me to give back and provide a leg up to help students so they don't have to work two jobs and go to school full time. I hope to inspire others who have had a good career and made something of their lives to pay it forward." —*Donna Rottengen '65, MS '71, MEd '73*

In gratitude, she has established the Mary Donna Rottengen Annual Scholarship and is making a legacy gift from retirement funds as part of her smart estate planning. The scholarship will be awarded to the next generation of first-generation college students. We are grateful to her and all of our Hobart Society planned giving members as they establish a legacy to benefit current and future generations of University students.

Visit us online at [wpunj.giftplans.org](http://wpunj.giftplans.org) for information about gifting opportunities that may be best for you. Please contact **Judy Linder**, director of development and planned giving, at **973.720.2309** or at [linderj@wpunj.edu](mailto:linderj@wpunj.edu).



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Dear Friends,

One of the many great things about working in Hobart Manor is its proximity to Shea Center for the Performing Arts. Over the course of the semester, I've had the pleasure of hearing the sounds of our student musicians through its doors, opened to the warm weather, and of seeing choral ensembles heading outside to rehearse in the sunshine. Along with the blooming of our beautiful campus, these sights and sounds signal the renewal of the season and affirm the resilience of our University community.

I am so incredibly proud of everyone at William Paterson for really pulling together this year to support each other and ensure that our students continue to receive a great education and an enriching on-campus experience. I am especially excited that this determined response to what's happening in the world, and our success in keeping each other safe and healthy, means that we can now look forward to a full return to campus in the fall for our students, faculty, and staff.

Over the past year, we have shown that, with the strength of our fundamental commitment to student success, we can fulfill our mission under any circumstances. The success of our new WP Online initiative demonstrates a strong demand for the excellent programs we offer, delivered in a fully online format. At its heart, however, William Paterson remains an institution grounded in on-campus, face-to-face undergraduate education.

That is why we led the push last fall to bring as many students back to campus as safely possible. It's why it has been so great to see many of our students, faculty, and staff on campus as the wonderful rhythms of the academic year have played out, both in and out of the classroom. This rhythm may have been a bit softer than in years past, but it has been no less meaningful for our students, including the Class of 2021. Whether collaborating with faculty; studying together, distanced and masked, in small groups; competing on Wightman Field; or making beautiful music, our students have demonstrated the grit and persistence that define what it means to be a Pioneer.

So, I can't wait to welcome back all of our students, faculty, and staff for the start of the fall semester on August 25 and, conditions permitting, to welcome back alumni and friends for live performances, athletic competitions, and other campus events. Please mark your calendars for Homecoming on October 9, when tailgating and celebrating the return to campus is on the program. We will, of course, follow all public health guidelines in place at the time, and we will do it together, as a community. Until then, I hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable summer!

Richard J. Helldobler, PhD  
President

# WPD Newsbeats

## Pre-Doctoral Fellows Program Seeks to Advance Faculty Diversity

A new fellowship program designed to support doctoral or terminal degree candidates from underrepresented backgrounds as they launch their academic careers has been established by the University. This program supports the University's commitment to diversifying its teaching faculty.

Following a national search process, doctoral candidates have been selected for five available fellowships to begin in August 2021. The fellows, their doctoral institutions, and department of placement are: Jasmine Henry, Rutgers University, Music; Shannon Holder, University of Connecticut, Educational Leadership and Professional Studies; Javier Jasso, University of Texas at Austin, Communication Disorders and Sciences; Steven Jones, Rutgers University, Psychology; and Soohyun (Ashley) Lee, Baruch College and Graduate Center, CUNY, Management, Marketing, and Professional Sales.

"As a public university serving a highly diverse student population, we are launching this fellowship program to support the development of emerging faculty from underrepresented groups who desire a career at an institution that prioritizes equity and inclusion, emphasizes teaching quality and encourages multiple forms of scholarship," says Joshua Powers, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs. "Our goal is to assure

long-term faculty growth that reflects the diversity of the students we serve on our campus and throughout higher education."

Academic departments on campus that are hosting fellows commit to mentoring and providing them similar levels of support as they would for tenure-track faculty. The fellows will teach in the department and participate in a cohort experience intended to position them for success in a tenure-track faculty appointment at the University or another institution of higher education.

"We are proud to be federally recognized as both a Hispanic-serving institution and a minority-serving institution with a firm commitment to creating and sustaining a campus culture of inclusion," says David Jones, chief diversity officer and director of talent management, who served as a co-coordinator for the program's development. "This fellowship program demonstrates our University's shared goal to build a more diverse teaching faculty by supporting the growth of doctoral students from diverse backgrounds."

National research highlights the value of institutions investing in career success initiatives, such as this program, says Kara Rabbitt, associate provost, who co-led the program's development. "Our pre-doctoral fellows program will provide mentoring and other experiences to support the fellows as they simultaneously advance their instructional skills and scholarly plans," she adds.

### TWO ACADEMIC COLLEGES TO FUSE INTO ONE

The College of the Arts and Communication and College of Humanities and Social Sciences are joining together to create a new college, the College of Arts, Humanities, and Sciences, as of July 1, 2021. The new entity will be led by Wartyna Davis, who currently serves as dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

"This decision was the result of careful consideration of both financial and organizational circumstance, as well as opportunity. We believe that the joining of the two colleges will be a valuable contributor to institutional strength post-pandemic with powerful new synergies and the collaborations that can come from it," says Joshua Powers, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs. "The new college will help us, collectively, to strategically position the University for success in a changing higher education environment."

A joint faculty and staff transition committee, with representation from the colleges' external advisory committees, is currently working to engage issues regarding the fusion of the two colleges and make recommendations. The initiative is being co-led by Davis and Loretta Mc Laughlin Vignier, interim dean of the College of the Arts and Communication.



## New Education Doctorate Prepares Candidates for Leadership Roles in Range of Careers

**A** new multidisciplinary doctor of education in leadership degree that will prepare candidates for executive leadership roles in a variety of career settings launches at the University this summer.

The new program is the University's third doctoral degree, following the establishment of the doctor of nursing practice in 2011 and the doctor of clinical psychology in 2015.

Designed for both novice and experienced leaders in fields such as P-12 education, higher education, social services, healthcare, nonprofit and for-profit business enterprises, faith-based organizations and government, the program is especially suitable for working professionals, with limited required in-person attendance and most work conducted online.

"This new doctoral degree provides a valuable, and integrated, way of engaging leaders from multiple organizational settings," says

Joshua Powers, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs. "Societal needs transcend sectors, and leaders prepared to address problems in that way are critical."

Through practical, real work simulations and experiences, candidates will learn to act with vision and purpose to lead and transform organizations. The program will prepare candidates to be scholars and practitioners who can solve practical, everyday problems and provide executive leadership in a broad spectrum of disciplines and settings. Courses will be taught by expert faculty from the College of Education and a multidisciplinary team of instructors throughout the University. A unique feature of the program is the Leader Learner Community concept, where small groups of students with similar interests meet regularly with a faculty mentor to further develop their professional acumen and make important career connections.





## Student Chapter of Society of Professional Journalists Named National Campus Chapter of the Year

William Paterson's student chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) was named National Campus Chapter of the Year for 2020, besting 95 chapters across the United States, including those at universities more than triple the size. With its win, the University's chapter also dethroned the renowned chapter at Ohio University's E.W. Scripps School of Journalism, which had been named National Campus Chapter for four straight years.

SPJ, comprised of more than 7,000 members nationwide, cited 18 programs and projects run by the William Paterson chapter during the 2019-20 academic year, including a discussion series and post-discussion dinner with journalists from a range of news media outlets, trips to shadow a theater critic while she reviewed a stage performance and a professional basketball announcer during a game at Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, and on-campus workshops on interviewing and fact-checking.

Nicholas Hirshon, assistant professor of communication, founded the WPSPJ chapter in fall 2017 to strengthen the

University's journalism culture and has served as its adviser since. In just three years, with a national accolade for the chapter already under his belt, it appears he's succeeding.

"Dr. Hirshon has been instrumental in demonstrating to our young men and women the importance of high-quality journalism at a particularly difficult time in our country," says Loretta Mc Laughlin Vignier, interim dean of the University's College of the Arts and Communication. "There continues to be a need for journalistic excellence especially when the value of the fourth estate is being questioned and economically undercut. Journalism continues to be a viable and noble career."

"Journalism is critical in keeping the public apprised of what's happening in their communities and helping them make informed decisions about how to live their lives," continues Hirshon, a former reporter for the *New York Daily News*, who previously won SPJ's 2019 David L. Eshelman Outstanding Campus Adviser Award for his work with the William Paterson chapter.



At the New York City headquarters of ProPublica, left to right, ProPublica reporter Caroline Chen, students Leslie Campos, Olivia Biel, Allan Asuncion, and John Conlow, and Professor Nicholas Hirshon



Shadowing a professional basketball announcer at Nassau Coliseum in 2019, are (left to right) students Olivia Biel, Tom DeMartino, Leslie Campos, and Ryan Sudol, and Professor Nicholas Hirshon

## UNIVERSITY LAUNCHES FIRST NEW JERSEY CHAPTER OF HONOR SOCIETY FOR FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS



William Paterson is the first college or university in New Jersey to establish a chapter of *Alpha Alpha Alpha* or Tri-Alpha, the national honor society that recognizes the accomplishments of first-generation college students. Sixteen students were

in the first group to be inducted into the University's *Alpha Mu* chapter.

Tri-Alpha is dedicated to promoting academic excellence and creating a supportive environment for first-generation college students. Faculty and staff also will be invited to join. More than 45 percent of

William Paterson's undergraduate students are first-generation students.

"Tri-Alpha is a wonderful vehicle for connecting first-generation students at William Paterson," says Ian Marshall, associate dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and professor of English. "Students will benefit by having the guidance and support they need to become the first in their family to earn a degree. Many of our faculty and staff members, including some who are alumni, were also first-generation students. Having this common experience will help us create mentorship, career, and academic opportunities across all disciplines and departments."

The group will offer leadership opportunities, a community service component, and workshops and speakers to enhance personal and professional development, according to Jonnine DeLoatch, director of the Office of Student Transitions and adviser for the group.

"The establishment of this honor society is a testament to the commitment of the University for promoting the success of first-generation students," she says. "Our students are enthusiastic about being a part of a group that connects them with other first-generation students and having the tools they need to succeed."





## Vital Signs: Students Learn to Turn Live Theater into a TV Performance

For theater professor Elizabeth Stroppel, who directs University student theater productions each fall and spring, the challenge of finding a show that might work in a virtual environment was significant.

“I attended an online conference, and saw many examples of shows that were coordinated on virtual screens that were successful,” she says. “But I still wanted to find a way to give my students a collaborative experience by filming it live.”

She settled on *Vital Signs* by Jane Martin, a collection of women’s monologues exploring their life experiences. “The monologues tell a wide range of women’s stories—some are introspective, some are quirky, some are outlandish, and I thought this would work well for our students.”

The show, with an all-student cast, was livestreamed and recorded on March 5, and broadcast online on YouTube March 12 to 15. A three-camera, “live capture” production performed in one take, it provided the students and Stroppel with the unique opportunity to learn how to stage and act live for broadcast on television.

The student cast included undergraduates Emilee Rodriguez, Jessica Moore, Bailey Stewart, and Paola Ruiz—who all enrolled in Stroppel’s Theater Performance Laboratory course last fall and this spring—and graduate student

Jennifer Fiore. All the cast members worked individually with Stroppel throughout the semesters using Zoom. “We all learned to adapt,” says Stroppel. “The one-on-one rehearsals with each student resulted in a much more in-depth and focused understanding of character creation.”

Originally scheduled for performances last November, the show was postponed as coronavirus cases started to increase, and rescheduled for this spring. Rehearsals resumed in January, and Stroppel says the break gave the students some additional time “to filter the characters through their own lives and to create more connections and specifics for them.” The cast had just one week of in-person rehearsals to work on the physical action and props prior to the livestreamed filming.

Stroppel credits the University’s Shea Center production team for their incredible support of the project. “As a faculty member who is used to directing for a live performance, this was all new to me. We had to learn how to tailor the performances for the camera, and our technical people are so knowledgeable,” she says. “Everyone has been incredibly helpful and supportive. It’s all about expanding your creativity.”



### PROFESSOR RECEIVES SOCIAL JUSTICE AWARD

LaShauna Dean, associate professor of special education and counseling, received the 2020 North Atlantic Region Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (NARACES) Social Justice Award for her significant work on social justice and multicultural issues.

“Dr. Dean has done tremendous work in the areas of multicultural issues, including and specifically to microaggressions and working on a variety of trainings to help with diversity issues,” states the organization on its website.

The award recognizes a counselor educator who has made significant contributions to the research and literature on social justice and/or multicultural issues, including work as a practitioner and being engaged in community-based social justice and advocacy issues, and infusing diversity and social action into counseling, counselor education, and supervision.

In addition to conducting implicit bias training for the University’s faculty and staff, Dean performed many trainings throughout New Jersey and virtually on the topics of diversity and bias. She has worked with several school districts to help teachers and other school professionals identify personal bias that may affect their work with students. She also conducted research with a colleague that focused on ways to improve cross-cultural communication, which they presented at various conferences.

Students performing in *Vital Signs*: (top, left to right) Emilee Rodriguez, Bailey Stewart, Jessica Moore; (bottom, left to right) Jennifer Fiore, and Paola Ruiz



Nick Montesano with his COVID chessboard  
©Chris Pedota – USA TODAY Network

## Vice President Stephen Bolyai to Retire after More Than Three Decades on Campus



Stephen Bolyai

During his tenure, Bolyai has been instrumental in transforming and expanding the campus through outstanding budget management, commitment to best financial practices, a strong sense of innovation, strategic property acquisitions, and a commitment to sustainability.

Driven by the desire to keep college costs affordable for students, he consistently focused on limiting tuition and fees while enhancing revenue through alternative sources and containing expenditures. He helped the institution grow its reserves and strategically invest in capital projects, innovative student academic and retention programs, and increased student scholarship offerings.

A visible example of his support for sustainability is the University's 3.5-megawatt solar panel installation, featuring solar arrays covering numerous campus parking areas and photovoltaic cells on the roofs of University buildings. Ranked among the largest installations at U.S. higher education institutions, the installation

Stephen Bolyai, senior vice president for administration and finance, is retiring May 31 after more than three decades of service to the University. In recognition, President Richard Helldobler will present him with the President's Medallion—awarded periodically to individuals who have made outstanding contributions of service to the University community, to academe, or to society as a whole—during the University's 2021 Commencement ceremonies this May.

Bolyai joined the University in 1988 as assistant vice president for business services. From 1990 to 1997, he served as associate vice president for finance and controller, and in 1997 became vice president of administration and finance. He was named senior vice president for administration and finance in 2016.

was developed through a New Jersey public-private partnership and affords the University the ability to buy solar power at a reduced rate with no upfront costs. Under his leadership, William Paterson was the first university in New Jersey to use a public-private partnership for this type of initiative and other energy reduction projects. Since its inception in 2010, the project has saved the institution \$1.5 million while supplying 15 to 20 percent of its energy needs with clean, low-cost energy. The University has received numerous awards for this and other campus sustainability projects.

Bolyai led an expansion of the campus to coincide with programmatic and student growth. During his tenure, the campus has grown from 346 to 407 acres and the square footage of campus buildings has doubled with the addition of major facilities, including the expanded Science Complex; the construction of University Hall, with facilities for the health professions; the

purchase and transformation of corporate office buildings at 1600 and 1800 Valley Road to house education, business, high school, and continuing education programs and a forthcoming childcare center; several new residence halls; and a vibrant University Commons.

He also has been integrally involved in state policy issues that impact New Jersey public higher education. He drafted language and helped with revisions to the New Jersey State Colleges Contract Law, and was instrumental in organizing the North Jersey Public and Private Colleges Purchasing Collaborative. He served as chair of the New Jersey Public Colleges Business Officers Group and the New Jersey Public Colleges Vice Presidents for Administration and Finance Council, and on a working group for New Jersey's Plan for Higher Education under Governor Murphy's Task Force for Higher Education.

### NICK MONTESANO '24 CREATES COVID-INSPIRED CHESS SET, EARNS LOCAL MEDIA ATTENTION

First-year student Nick Montesano '24 took classic chess pieces, such as the queen, bishop, and rook, and recreated them to incorporate the quarantine essentials of the pandemic.

Montesano's idea stemmed from the final project of a 3D Design class with art professor Henry Yoo. Yoo challenged his students to develop and present a themed chessboard that integrated 3D modeling and fabrication methods.

After abandoning some earlier concepts, Montesano settled on an idea that would resonate with a larger audience.

"When the pandemic first started in March of 2020, everyone began to stockpile products out of fear," adds Montesano, an art studio major with a concentration in industrial design. "My goal for this project was to take those concerns and add a humorous play in the hopes of changing the perception."

Montesano, whose project has been featured on major regional news websites [nj.com](http://nj.com) and [northjersey.com](http://northjersey.com), hopes to file copyright and trademark rights and bring his idea to major toy companies. In the future, he plans to bring his entrepreneurial mindset to a career designing athletic and healthcare products, such as footwear and prosthetic legs.





Shaun Harper



## Inaugural President's Diversity Lecture Features Leading Diversity Scholar Shaun Harper

**S**haun Harper, Provost Professor in the Rossier School of Education and Marshall School of Business at the University of Southern California (USC) and one of the nation's most highly respected racial equity experts, spoke to faculty, staff, and students about the racial challenges and opportunities currently facing universities in the United States when he delivered the inaugural President's Diversity Lecture on March 11 via Zoom.

Taking the urgency of racial equity in higher education as a given, Harper focused his talk, "Strategic Action for Racial Equity," on practical strategies for how faculty can create inclusive classroom environments, trends regarding diversity and inclusion issues in higher education across the country, and why racial equity is important.

The address was part of a number of diversity and inclusion initiatives spearheaded by President Richard Helldobler and launched during the 2020-21 academic year. These include the formation of a standing Council for Equity and Justice, composed of faculty, staff, and students and chaired by David Jones, William Paterson's chief diversity officer, that will serve as an advisory group

to the president to review, address, and respond to equity and inclusion matters and work in partnership with various stakeholders to create and sustain a just, inclusive, and equitable campus environment. Initial key projects will include development of a Diversity Statement and a Diversity Strategic Plan with benchmarks to measure success.

The University also launched a Community Dialogue Series in which faculty and staff are encouraged to engage in meaningful conversations on race, racism, and other forms of oppression. Topics have included how to enhance communication through the use of inclusive language and creating an inclusive environment within one's sphere of influence, among others.

Later this spring, a group of 20 senior University administrators and faculty will participate in the nationally recognized University of Southern California Equity Institute, of which Harper serves as executive director. Participants will complete an intensive, eight-module program that prepares and positions them to enhance the equity lens they use in their decision making, policy development, and organizational practices.

### CAMPUS TO BECOME TOBACCO AND SMOKE-FREE



As part of its commitment to a healthy living and working environment, the University is adopting a new policy to become

tobacco and smoke-free on all campus property beginning January 1, 2022.

"This decision was made after considerable study and engagement with student groups, faculty, and staff," said President Richard Helldobler in a message to the University community. "In taking this important step, William Paterson will be joining many other colleges and universities across the country that have adopted tobacco- and smoke-free policies. Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. This new policy reflects our commitment to the health of every person who studies or works in our community."

Current state law and University policy already prohibit smoking, and/or the use of tobacco, vapor, or similar products inside any campus building. In addition, consuming any cannabis item is prohibited in any building, on the grounds of, or in any facility owned, leased, or controlled by any institution of higher education in New Jersey.

A one-year phased implementation plan is underway that includes restricting the use of tobacco products to 14 clearly marked on-campus designated smoking areas. Programs are in place to support and encourage tobacco cessation for members of the University community.

"We all benefit from a campus community that is healthy in all its many forms," President Helldobler adds. "This plan enables us to take the steps necessary to help achieve that goal. We look forward to a healthy campus environment for all."

## UNIVERSITY RECOGNIZES TWO DECADES OF SUPPORT FROM THE JOHN VICTOR MACHUGA FOUNDATION

When the John Victor Machuga Foundation gave the University its first seven-figure donation in 1999, it was the beginning of more than two decades of support for the William Paterson students who need financial assistance in order to realize their dreams of earning a college degree.

The Machuga Foundation has continued its dedication to funding scholarships at William Paterson. Over the years, the Foundation has contributed nearly \$1.9 million in both annual and endowed scholarship support. Today, the Foundation supports two scholarship funds: the John Victor Machuga Endowed Scholarship for high-achieving students, with a preference for students from inner-city schools, and the John Victor Machuga Foundation Scholarship for Passaic County high school graduates who demonstrate significant financial need, qualify for financial aid, and exhibit leadership traits that bring recognition to the University and/or the community.

“Thanks to the generosity of the John Victor Machuga Foundation, William Paterson has been able to award more than 200 scholarships to William Paterson students,” says Pamela Ferguson, vice president for institutional advancement and president of the William Paterson University Foundation. “We are so grateful for their enduring partnership which has truly changed the lives of many of our students.”

One such student is Abdus Salam, a January 2021 graduate with a bachelor’s degree in computer information technology, *magna*



Machuga Foundation members and student scholarship recipients at a 2019 luncheon on campus. Front row, seated: Albert Dahab, executive director, and Georgiana Dahab; standing, left to right: Christopher Restituyo Matos '20; Stacy Waldman '85, Machuga Foundation; Jaslyn Pagan '19; Ashley Dawson-Redwood '21; June Makoujy and her daughter Jackie Makoujy Coral, Machuga Foundation; Madeline Reina '20; Abdus Salam '21; and Christopher Ribot '20

*cum laude*. “The John Victor Machuga Scholarship really helped me,” he says. “I was working more than 35 hours a week while at the University to support my family. As a recipient of the John Victor Machuga Scholarship, I was able to take some extra classes during summer and winter sessions that allowed me to graduate a semester early and earn some IT certifications before I start looking for a job.”

John Victor Machuga, a native of Paterson, who died in 1991, worked hard, studied diligently, and earned a college degree and master’s degree, all while working full-time. No stranger to adversity, he took a path similar to many of the numerous scholarship recipients that have been awarded his named scholarships. In his will, he directed that his assets be used to create a foundation to provide support for education, research, the arts, and health care. Five of his closest friends were named as trustees of the foundation to ensure that his dreams were realized.

“We continue to be proud to be associated with William Paterson University, and have been so gratified to see the success of so many students over the past two decades,” says Albert Dahab, executive director of the Machuga Foundation. “Through these scholarships, the legacy of John Victor Machuga will live on and help students for generations to come receive the support they need to complete their education.”



## Nursing Professor Named President of National Association of Indian Nurses of America

William Paterson nursing professor and alumna **Lydia Albuquerque, DNP '18**, has been inducted as the eighth president of the National Association of Indian Nurses of America (NAINA), comprised of more than 3,000 nurses across 22 chapters in 15 states.

Albuquerque, who has won numerous awards and grants for her work as both a nurse and academic researcher, says her term as president will be centered on communication, research, education and, perhaps most of all at this point in history, advocacy.

“Advocacy is a pillar of nursing. Nurses instinctively advocate for their patients, in their workplaces, and in their

communities, but legislative and political advocacy is no less important to advancing the profession and patient care,” she says.

Albuquerque works as an acute care nurse practitioner at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. “Practice in the clinical field helps me to bring patient care experiences to my students in the classroom, and it also keeps me abreast of changes in technology and practice,” she explains. Moreover, when it comes to her classroom, the professor hopes her NAINA presidency will help her to “lead by example”—showing WP nursing students the importance of networking and advocating in professional nursing organizations, and particularly those for ethnic minorities.



## DEAN AMY GINSBERG SELECTED FOR PRESTIGIOUS SUMMER LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Amy Ginsberg, dean of the College of Education, has been selected to participate in the 2021 HERS Leadership Institute, a highly prestigious leadership program for women in education.

Designed to create and sustain a diverse network of women leaders in higher education, participation in the HERS (Higher Education Resource Services) program is by nomination and requires a detailed application for consideration among a pool of applicants throughout the United States and abroad.

“Being selected to participate signals Dean Ginsberg’s unique skills and talents, as well as her potential for further leadership development, among a cohort of superb and diverse professionals,” says Joshua Powers, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs.

Ginsberg joined William Paterson as dean in June 2018, having previously served as dean of the School of Education at Long Island University Brooklyn. Under her leadership, the College of Education has developed and launched new programs, such as the doctor of education in leadership and alternate route program in career and technical education; expanded dual enrollment offerings with local high schools; and secured funding to support scholarships and stipends for education students.

“It has been a true privilege and joy to work alongside my passionate teammates within the College of Education, William Paterson University, and our overall community of supporters to build upon our institution’s long history as one that graduates top-notch educators and overall well-rounded, civically minded citizens,” Ginsberg says. “I look forward to benefiting from my involvement in the HERS Institute to expand upon our forward momentum, especially during this challenging time in the field of education.”

# Celebrating 30 Years Legacy Award Gala

## Five Distinguished Women Honored During 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Legacy Award Gala

The William Paterson University Foundation honored five distinguished women during its 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Legacy Award Gala, held virtually on April 29. The gala is the Foundation’s largest event to raise funds to support the University’s mission of promoting student success and academic excellence through student scholarships.

The five honorees are: Lauren Locker ’79, CFP and founder, Locker Financial Services, honored as Distinguished Alumna; Lourdes Cortez, president and CEO, North Jersey Federal Credit Union, and member, William Paterson University Board of Trustees, honored as Distinguished Friend; Marilyn Taub, co-founder and board member, The Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation, honored as Distinguished Organization; Sandra De Young, EdD, former interim provost, retired dean, College of Science and Health, and professor *emerita*, Department of Nursing, honored as Distinguished Faculty/Staff Member; and Kathleen Waldron, president *emerita*, William Paterson University, honored for Distinguished Service.

“The Legacy Award Gala is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate those who support William Paterson through their work and their philanthropy,” says President Richard J. Helldobler. “Most importantly, all proceeds from the event directly benefit student scholarships. For most of our students, scholarship support is what allows them to enroll and ultimately graduate, so it makes a huge difference in their lives and the lives of their families and communities.”

“This year, the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the annual Legacy Awards, we are celebrating the Year of Women, and that is why we chose these five extraordinary honorees,” says Pamela Ferguson, vice president for institutional advancement. “All of these women are true leaders. And each one is lauded for making a positive and lasting impact on William Paterson. We thank them for their generosity, partnership, and friendship.”

*More Newsbeats on page 28*

# Powerful Ideas

## COMMUNICATION PROFESSOR, PRESIDENT *EMERITA* CO-AUTHOR BOOK ON HIGHER ED LEADERSHIP

Higher education is facing a wide range of profound changes and issues. Whether dealing with cost, changing student demographics, issues of diversity and inclusion, student activism, student mental health, or the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, among many other challenges, effective leadership is critical.

In their just-released book, *Higher Education Leadership: Pathways and Insights* (Studies in Educational Administration, Emerald Publishing), Sharmila Pixy Ferris,

professor of communication, and Kathleen Waldron, William Paterson University president *emerita*, showcase expert leadership through interviews with 20 experienced leaders who represent diversity in ethnicity, type of institution, geographic area, and gender. Half of those profiled are women.

Collaborating on research for the first time, Ferris and Waldron brought their decades of varied experiences—Ferris as a communication and social science researcher and professor, and Waldron as a professor of history, dean, and two-time college president—to the question of the pathways, strategies, and skills demonstrated by impactful leaders, using a unique, interview-based approach. Among other interview questions, interviewees were asked to reflect upon a critical incident that was important to their development as leaders.

Both Ferris and Waldron were impressed by the thoughtful and open conversations with their interviewees. “I was amazed at how frank some people were with us,” Waldron says. Ferris concurs. “While we provided the questions in advance, it takes a certain kind of person to be willing to talk about leadership and difficult issues.”

Every interviewee spoke about several topics including the rising cost of college and structural inequities in education. Among other key takeaways:

- Successful leaders are responsive while keeping the good of the institution in mind.
- These leaders were curious, eager to learn, and advanced because their efforts were recognized; they were open to opportunity and willing to take a risk.
- Leadership requires frequent and consistent communication to all stakeholders.
- The leaders were confident enough to seek guidance and support from mentors and peers.

Both Ferris and Waldron believe their book provides an important resource. “If leadership is learned through experience, then our book offers important lessons for current and aspiring leaders, and those in higher education leadership programs,” says Ferris.

“Speaking from experience, as a leader, you don’t know what’s coming,” says Waldron, “but if you have a methodology, mentors, ways to work collegially, and the skills demonstrated by these leaders, the next generation of leaders will be well prepared.”



Morganne Vogel and Michelle Correa look at one of their specimens

## Students Analyze Impact of Pollution on Trees

For their environmental science capstone project, seniors Michelle Correa and Morganne Vogel set out to analyze the chemical composition of tree rings from trees on campus to gauge the impact of emission pollution on them over time, namely before and after the Clean Air Act of 1996. They faced a unique academic obstacle: The samples from campus chestnut-oak trees they obtained were too dense, with tree rings too narrow, to allow for timely analysis in their professor’s lab.

A change in the timing of the fall 2020 semester due to the pandemic meant the student-scientists had about four weeks less time than usual to research and analyze their data. They also were limited in the number of people allowed in the lab at the same time, making scheduling tougher.

Under pressure, Vogel and Correa obtained donated samples of white pine from a facility in Mahwah and pivoted their project accordingly. For nine weeks, they spent 10 to 20 hours per week working in the lab, often researching late into the night.

“It felt like the ultimate challenge, drawing out everything I’ve learned from past classes,” Correa says. “As an undergrad in the environmental science department, I’ve

## STORIES ABOUT RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION



### CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROFESSOR FINDS MANY MASS SHOOTINGS ARE MOTIVATED BY GRIEVANCES AGAINST WOMEN

Nearly one third of all mass-shooting incidents in America from 1966 to 2018 were motivated by grievances against women, according to new research published in *Violence Against Women* by Jason R. Silva, assistant professor of sociology and criminal justice.

In this first study of its kind, Silva and three other researchers conducted a quantitative study of “gender-based mass shootings,” referring to attacks motivated by grievances against women, to examine the incidence rate, motivations, and characteristics of perpetrators. In general, the study also highlights the role of toxic masculinity and possible reasons why the majority of shooters are males.

Findings show that nearly 50 percent of these shootings were motivated by attacks against a specific woman who was targeted, such as a girlfriend, wife, or woman who rejected the male shooter’s advances, before killing other individuals at random or for symbolic value. The second most common type involved perpetrators with grievances against a specific woman, but whom they did not target.

“There has been a perception that mass shooters are only targeting random individuals in public places, and it can happen to anyone, anywhere,” says Silva, whose research was recently cited in an article in *New York Magazine*. “However, many times, the perpetrators are beginning with a specific victim, and then ultimately they go on to kill other people.”

In addition, he says, “gender-based mass shooters were much more likely to have a history of domestic violence, which has huge implications for scholars and practitioners who are developing strategies for intervention and prevention.”



Professor Jason Silva

read through several different scientific journals that spoke about methods and techniques. To actually apply them was a brand-new experience, and quite riveting, I might add.”

Using three different techniques to cross-reference their findings, Correa and Vogel compared the chemical analyses of the tree rings from two different decades: 1972 to 1982 and 2010 to 2020.

Their study confirmed a difference in concentrations between macro and micronutrients in the white pine at different points in history. Soil bio-nutrients, weather events, and soil acidity caused by pollution may have impacted their results, Correa and Vogel explained during a presentation to their classmates, but they did not have enough time to investigate all of those variables. “We hope to revisit this topic in the future,” Vogel says. “Exploring this research further will answer so many unanswered questions and open new horizons for scientists in this area to explore.”

Nicole Davi, professor of environmental science, who taught their senior practicum course, says she was impressed by their skills and dedication to their research, especially under the difficult circumstances posed by the pandemic. “They were pioneers here, doing an analysis no one has done at William Paterson before,” she says.

“I am so grateful to be a part of the environmental science program at William Paterson,” says Vogel, pointing to the opportunity as an undergraduate to use sophisticated equipment such as the Inductively Coupled Plasma-Optical Emission Spectrometer.

“This experience helped me gain confidence in the lab and as a student,” Correa adds. Following Commencement, she now plans to seek employment in the field of scientific lab research and analysis.

Michelle Correa examines a tree sample in the lab



# WP Powerful Ideas



## LEGAL MARIJUANA MAY LEAD TO FEWER WORKERS' COMP CASES AMONG OLDER EMPLOYEES, ECONOMICS PROFESSOR FINDS

As more states—including New Jersey—legalize recreational marijuana, a new study by University health economics professor Rahi Abouk shows a resulting decline in the rate of workers' compensation claims and benefit amounts among older employees.

The possible reason behind it? "Better pain management," says Abouk, who is also director of the University's Cannabis Research Institute. The study, "Does Marijuana Legalization Affect Work Capacity? Evidence from Workers' Compensation Benefit," co-authored with three other researchers, was published in the National Bureau of Economic Research.

"We found that this population group substitutes cannabis for other pain medication treatments such as opioids, which improves their capacity to work, thereby making fewer mistakes and reducing injuries," he says. When workers in pain have easier access to marijuana as a form of chronic pain management, the study shows this may reduce their need for workers' compensation and help them work longer.

The researchers focused on workers age 40 to 62—those more likely to experience health conditions for which marijuana may be a therapeutic substitute. Using data from 2010 to 2018, they studied several surveys of workers' compensation claims, cannabis, and pain medication drugs. Results show that propensity to file workers' compensation claims and annual income from workers' compensation decline by 20 percent after recreational marijuana is legalized.

"This is important because it sheds light on how older U.S. adults are using recreational cannabis as a pain medication and how it affects the labor market

outcome, such as workers' compensation claims and the likelihood of having limited disabilities," adds Abouk.



## Music Professor's Research Uncovers Earliest Known Music by American Female Composers

As a musicologist, Christopher Herbert, assistant professor of music and director of vocal studies, had the opportunity to delve into the history of the Ephrata Cloister, an 18<sup>th</sup> century celibate commune that was located in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. What he didn't know was that he would uncover evidence of the earliest known music composed by women in colonial America.

Herbert, who began conducting this ongoing research for his doctorate in musical arts at The Juilliard School, was working to catalog music from Ephrata, which was founded in 1732. At least 135 manuscripts are located in libraries throughout the U.S. including the Ephrata Codex, a large music manuscript at the Library of Congress, where he made the discovery.

"I took a photo of every page of the Ephrata Codex," Herbert says. "Several months later, I was reviewing the images. I was deep into my photos when I noticed something that had been hidden in plain sight: the names of three women—Sister Föben, Sister Ketura, and Sister Hanna—and two men next to specific musical settings. The only credible conclusion is that the inscriptions in the Ephrata Codex denote composer status for these particular hymns... (and) provide evidence of America's first known female composers."

Now, Herbert has brought a portion of the thousands of Ephrata hymns to life on the new album, *Voices in the Wilderness*. Performed by a quartet of professional singers, the album includes 11 *a cappella* works, including two hymn settings by Sister Föben (Joseph Greey '19 served as sound engineer). Herbert, who has worked to translate and transcribe the hymns and interpret them for modern notation, served as music director and producer for the album, which was recorded in the meetinghouse at the Cloister for which the music was originally written, marking the first time this music has been performed by a professional ensemble.

"It's just devotional, simple music. Not trying to be frilly, not trying to be ostentatious. Simply existing for the sake of a religious experience," he said during a recent interview on National Public Radio's *Morning Edition*.

"It is an illuminating aspect of American musical history that very few people know about," he says.



# WIP Sports

## Director of Athletics **Sabrina Grant** Retires after Nearly Four Decades on Campus

Sabrina Grant, who contributed nearly four decades of leadership to the William Paterson athletics department, retired from her role as director of intercollegiate athletics on February 1, 2021. Kristen Foley, who joined the Pioneers as associate director of athletics in 2017, is serving as interim director of athletics.

Grant joined the University community in 1983 as assistant director of athletics, and became associate director of athletics in 1994. In 2002, Grant was named interim director of athletics, and appointed director of intercollegiate athletics shortly thereafter in 2003.

"When I arrived on campus in 1983, I could not have envisioned spending more than three decades at William Paterson, and ultimately retiring from the institution where I would spend nearly my entire career," says Grant. "However, William Paterson is a special place, a place where I was afforded countless opportunities to grow and develop while feeling valued and respected, and a place where I felt I was an important member of the overall University community."

"There are so many people who supported me throughout my career, who have and continue to play an important role in my life," she continued. "I also want to thank all the talented members of the Athletics Department staff for their dedication and commitment, and most importantly, thank our student-athletes. All

that has been accomplished is a result of true team effort and collaboration of Athletics staff and University administration. As I look forward to the next chapter in my life, I depart with wonderful memories of my time at William Paterson."

Grant was present for many exciting times at William Paterson, including winning the 1992 and 1996 National Championships in baseball, and reaching the finals in the 2001 men's basketball national championship. During her tenure, the Pioneers made 70 NCAA Tournament appearances and won 26 New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) titles. She made her mark on every part of the department, including operations, student-athlete support, budget, scheduling, and staffing. Among her notable accomplishments were the establishment of the Faculty Athletic Support Team (FAST) in 2013 and the Student-Athlete Mentors (SAMs) program in 2019.

"On behalf of everyone at William Paterson, I want to thank Sabrina for her nearly four decades of service to the University and its student-athletes," said President Richard J. Helldobler. "As both president and an enthusiastic fan of all of our Pioneer Athletics teams, I have seen firsthand the care and dedication that Sabrina brought to the development and success of the whole student-athlete. The results of her good work can be



Sabrina Grant

seen in their many individual and collective achievements in competition, in the classroom, and in life. We wish her all the best."

"Sabrina has been an outstanding athletic director and colleague," said Miki Cammarata, vice president for student development. "The accolades are numerous, but one of the things that stands out the most for me is her true care for, and commitment to, the student-athlete experience. During my seven years working with Sabrina, her sentiments and decisions were always informed by what she felt best supported our student-athletes' success, both in competition and in the classroom."

One of Grant's lasting legacies is her impact on the Pioneers' facilities. She spearheaded four construction projects since 2003 that created brand-new practice/competition sites for the baseball, field hockey, football, tennis and men's and women's soccer programs. She also was key to important upgrades to the sites used by WP's volleyball, men's and women's basketball, softball, and men's and women's swimming and diving teams.

Active on the local, state, and national levels of intercollegiate athletics, Grant was honored numerous times throughout her career. She served as president of the NJAC and the New Jersey Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (NJIAIW), chairperson for the New York/New Jersey Metro ECAC Women's Basketball Selection and Seeding Committee, and member of the ECAC Softball Selection and Seeding Committee. She received the Directors Award from William Paterson for her service and dedication to the University and the Athletic Department, and in 2004 was honored by the NJIAIW for service to the state of New Jersey. In addition, she was a recipient of WP's Merit Award in 1988-89.

Prior to joining the University, Grant served as assistant director of athletics and recreation at Brooklyn College from 1980 to 1983. A *magna cum laude* graduate, she holds bachelor's and master's degrees in physical education from Queens College, where she was a standout on the tennis team.



## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL COACH ERIN MONAHAN '91 RECORDS 500TH WIN

Women's basketball head coach Erin Monahan '91 earned her 500<sup>th</sup> career victory on February 13 when the Pioneers scored a convincing 67-42 victory over Rutgers-Newark in the Sports and Recreation Center on campus.

In her 28<sup>th</sup> season on the sideline of her *alma mater*, Monahan is not only the most successful women's basketball coach in William Paterson history, but she also is one of the very best in the nation. Monahan's record now stands at 500-245, with 11 NCAA Tournament bids, three New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) Tournament titles, nine additional berths in the NJAC Tournament championship game, and the 2018 Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) Tournament championship.

She was recently named to a list of the top 50 college basketball coaches of all time in New Jersey in an article in the *Asbury Park Press*. Eight of her former players have been inducted into the William Paterson University Alumni Association Athletic Hall of Fame: Stephanie Arrigo '00, Jill Bachonski '95, Bridget Brennan '98, Keira Haines '96, Maureen Marz '95, Dana Feltz '00, Meg Renna '01, and Wendy Kane '02.



## STUDENT-ATHLETES RETURN TO COMPETITION

After a pause of nearly a year due to the coronavirus pandemic, William Paterson's Pioneer student-athletes returned to competition this spring. Men's and women's basketball, men's and women's soccer, volleyball, men's and women's swimming and diving, field hockey, baseball, softball, men's golf, women's tennis, and football all returned to action.



Left to Right: Brianna Brooks, Brianna Smith, Allison McBride, Erin Monahan, Yakira Rosa, Justina Cabezas, Kayla Allmendinger

Photos left: Pioneer athletes back in action, clockwise from top left: Yvens Monfleury, men's basketball; Megan Ponce, women's soccer; Jason Palmieri, baseball; and Kourtney Scipio, field hockey

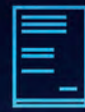
# MOVING INTO THE WORLD

of



# online

# EDUCATION



By Mary Beth Zeman

Karla Inchaustegui '20 originally planned to pursue a William Paterson MBA as a traditional, in-person student. Accepted to the University's 4+1 BS/MBA program, she took a graduate course during the spring 2020 semester of her senior year; the pivot to online learning in the middle of the semester due to the coronavirus pandemic gave her a taste of fully online learning.

As the pandemic continued, Inchaustegui realized that her plans for continuing her education might have to be put on hold. "My family was facing some financial issues, and I was concerned about going to school in person. Then I learned about the online master's degree option that was now available," she says of WP Online, the University's fully online degree platform that launched in July 2020, which includes an online MBA. "Based on my positive experience with the graduate class I took, being considerate of the health and safety of myself and my family, and the fact that it was more affordable, I thought this would work for me. I am glad to say I made the right decision for myself."

For many students like Inchaustegui, earning a degree online is increasingly attractive. In fact, adult learners—a student population defined with a broad array of characteristics, including online and distance learners, older adults, single parents, mid-career professionals, delayed enrollees, part-time students, continuing education students, and those over age 25—make up nearly half of all students enrolled at colleges and universities nationwide, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

The coronavirus pandemic certainly placed online learning front and center for the majority of Americans, as colleges and universities across the U.S.—as well as K-12 schools—were required to pivot to fully remote education. While online courses have been taught on campus in a wide variety of disciplines for decades, now virtually every student was immersed in learning from home, whether in their bedrooms or at the kitchen table, on their computers, tablets, and phones.

"We need to rethink where and how learning takes place," says President Richard Helldobler, noting that only one-third of



President Richard J. Helldobler is focused on expanding the University's share of the online education marketplace through WP Online, which provides a variety of programs for adult learners

the U.S. population holds a bachelor's degree. "As the number of traditional age college students declines, we need to think about different markets. We know that having a college degree provides upward social mobility; helping adult learners earn a college credential can have a huge economic impact on their lives."

At William Paterson, planning for the launch of WP Online was already well underway when the pandemic put a halt to in-person instruction in March 2020. As of this spring, WP Online provides 24 fully online advanced degree programs in business, education, and nursing. Plans are currently well underway for an expansion of the platform into fully online undergraduate programs in marketing, management, communication studies, criminology, psychology, health studies, liberal studies, and leadership and professional studies (see sidebar on page 19), to launch in late fall 2021.

With more than one million adult learners in the greater region surrounding the University, fully online programs "are an opportunity to expand and better serve that need," says Joshua Powers, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs. "These options are designed to attract new and distinct

students to our University by targeting older, professionally focused adult learners who bring extensive life and professional experience but lack the credentials to seek a promotion, land a job, or wish to forge a new career path.”

And for the University, the successful enrollment numbers demonstrate the demand is there for a convenient, affordable, and predictable pathway to a graduate degree or certificate. As of spring 2021, 476 students were enrolled in WP Online programs—23 percent more than projected. “This strong enrollment growth indicates that we are meeting these students where they are and serving their needs,” says Powers.

Gearing up to provide fully online programs is a significant task. The University decided to work with Academic Partnerships (AP), a leader in online program management focused on adult learners. Working in partnership with University faculty and staff, AP provides program planning, instructional design, marketing, student support services, and integrated marketing. All courses are created and taught by William Paterson faculty and delivered through a consistent online course template.

Students can complete their degree in as few as 12 months, online and on their own time, while maintaining full-time employment and fulfilling personal responsibilities. The programs offer six start dates per year and courses that run every seven weeks. All coursework is asynchronous, meaning students are able to study at their convenience.

For Michael DeMarco '90, that flexibility was critical to his decision to enroll in the online MBA program. A lawyer who had retired in 2019 as Deputy First Assistant Prosecutor after 26 years in the major crimes

and homicide units in the Passaic County Prosecutor's Office, DeMarco has been teaching criminal justice courses at Queensborough Community College and William Paterson. Toward the latter part of his career in the prosecutor's office, he had taken on some administrative duties, so when the pandemic hit and he saw the news about WP Online, he was intrigued.

“I was interested in the MBA program, and wondered whether I would be able to fit in the degree with my family and work—could I handle it?” he says. “I decided to try it, and have been enjoying myself ever since. Having the ability to learn at your own pace is key. Pursuing the degree in person would be nearly impossible with my work schedule.”

Having never taken a course online, DeMarco says he finds the courses “challenging and rewarding due to the dedication of the professors in the program.”

One of those professors is Stephen Betts, a professor of management, and a member of the full-time faculty since 2001. Betts, who has taught online courses for close to 20 years, says that anyone who would question the quality of online courses need only look at the fact that programs in the University's Cotsakos College of Business are accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). “AACSB holds us to the same standards whether our courses are taught in-person or online,” he says.

Betts, who teaches courses online such as Crisis Management and Human Resource Management, says he uses various strategies to engage his online students, including online welcome videos and organized discussion boards. He also provides optional open sessions where students can interact with him in real time, which are very popular. “Online students are very committed to doing the work—it's about how you start the conversation when you are not in the same room.”

Inchaustegui, who took Betts' course in Human Resource Management, says the faculty are incredibly supportive. “Every professor has their own style of interaction and they have very high

standards,” she says. “They have given me the opportunity to keep exploring my academic potential.”

The University is now taking the next step as it prepares to launch a full slate of fully online bachelor's degree programs in late fall. “We know that in New Jersey, there are 750,000 residents with some college credits who have not completed their degrees,” says Kara Rabbitt, associate provost, who is leading the initiative. “They need flexible programs that meet them where they are. While we would expect students to come with some credits, it still means we need to offer a full 120-credit degree program that includes courses that meet our University Core Curriculum requirements.”

In addition to eight bachelor's degree programs, students will be able to select from among nine minor options. The campus is also working to provide WP



Karla Inchaustegui '20



Michael DeMarco '90

Online undergraduate students with a wide array of remote student support services, from tutoring and academic support to career development and internships, as well as opportunities to participate in student clubs and organizations.

"We learned a great deal during the pandemic about how to offer support to students remotely, especially academic support such as tutoring, and visits to the Writing Center and Science Enrichment Center," she says. "We know we can provide these services going forward for our adult learners."

Both Powers and Rabbitt stress that online programs provide a different kind of space for people at different phases of their lives with different needs.

"On-campus attendance offers additional social, community engagement, and face-to-face opportunities that enrich the university experience, including interactions with peers, professors, and staff," says Powers. "These collective elements are of particular benefit to the growth and development of younger college students."

But for others, like Inchaustegui, who works about 30 hours a week, the flexibility to study online is crucial. "Managing work and school requires a lot of discipline," she says. "It applies no matter your age or circumstance. You have to be committed one hundred percent and demonstrate your own motivation and persistence. You still need Will. Power. to succeed."

DeMarco agrees. "Some nights I am at the kitchen counter right next to my daughter who's in high school and my son who's in middle school," he says. He hopes to complete his degree by summer 2022 and pursue consulting opportunities on HR issues. "The program gives you the tools to be equipped with advancing or shifting your career."

"Universities have historically built distinction through what they offer," Powers concludes. "But in the future, it won't be just what you offer but how you offer it that provides the distinction. Our entry into the online education sphere sends a very visible signal that we have programs that are marketable for jobs and a way to meet you where you are."



Professor Djanna Hill

## NEW BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROVIDES HIGHLY FLEXIBLE OPTION FOR ADULT LEARNERS

An innovative new bachelor's degree in leadership and professional studies set to launch in fall 2021 will provide adult learners with a highly flexible program designed to help them return for a degree and build on professional knowledge and earned credits.

The core of the program, which will be offered both in an on-campus model and through WP Online, is the opportunity for adults to demonstrate knowledge and application of quantitative skills, cultural competency, ethics, and organizational understanding through the completion of courses or through prior learning assessment options. These outcomes, established in consultation with successful alumni from diverse career fields, can then be applied to individualized learning and leadership goals specifically targeted to the adult learner's desired career path.

"The goal of the program is to put returning adults in the driver's seat of their educational and career goals and to capture as fully as possible the applicability of prior learning," says Kara Rabbitt, associate provost. In Passaic County alone, 68 percent of adults have some college credits, but no degree.

"Providing these alternatives for adult learners can be really transformative," says Djanna Hill, professor and chair of the Department of Community and Social Justice Studies, which will house the program. "We are giving an academic name to the skills and competencies employers are looking for and providing support for these learners to be successful."

The interdisciplinary curriculum is drawn from departments across the University, an acknowledgement that many adult learners bring transfer credits from a discipline in which they started a degree but that no longer fits their career or interests. "We are looking to provide a program that supports adult learners and their individual goals," says Rabbitt. Students will receive structured support through the Adult Degree Completion Program in the University's School of Continuing and Professional Education.

The program will launch on campus in September 2021, with the online version slated to launch in November 2021 through WP Online.



# Student Support for WP's Latinx Community Thrives with Weekly Dose of



BY MARIA KARADIS DANIELS

What started as a way to bring William Paterson University's Latinx community together in an open, welcoming space has since evolved into a glowing example of how to holistically support college students—especially those students from diverse backgrounds.

The success of WP's weekly Café con Leche program was spotlighted in *Ed Prep Matters*—a journal produced by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)—as well as *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*.

Thanks to the two articles penned in those publications by faculty and staff facilitators, educators across the nation are now looking to WP and the Café con Leche model as a way to reimagine

conventional ways of helping students on their journey to a college degree.



Bryan Francisco '21

Created by Francisco Diaz, associate vice president for campus life, and Maribel Rodriguez, associate director of campus activities, service, and leadership, Café con Leche debuted on campus in fall 2018 as a pilot program—“afternoon gatherings to bring together Latinx students, faculty, and staff to socialize, address various questions and establish a welcome space for us to engage in, where English, Spanish, and of course ‘Spanglish’ could be spoken freely and without judgement,” Diaz explains.

In a casual group setting, peppered with a cultural comfort base, students started coming to Café con Leche meetings with plenty of questions and concerns for faculty and staff in attendance, thereby shaping meeting agendas and creating a very influential student support resource on campus.

“We discuss topics impacting the Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latinx communities as well as have workshops on wellness, career advisement, financial literacy, leadership development opportunities, civic engagement, campus resources,

networking, and academic development,” Rodriguez says. “We provide ways for students to navigate William Paterson University.”

Today, almost 20 Latinx faculty and staff from all sectors on campus regularly contribute to Café con Leche meetings, which tend to attract about 20 student participants each week. Non-Latinx employees often join meetings to share information from their respective departments, and non-Latinx students often drop in after hearing about the group from others on campus.

Everyone is welcome, Diaz stresses.





“Café con Leche has made me feel comfortable speaking up on issues that I feel need to be addressed or personal information that can potentially help me grow in a professional setting,” says Mikaela Gongora ’21. “I continue to take part because it has given me a voice to speak up as a Latina woman in a place where our voices are usually shut down.”

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the group transitioned to meeting virtually, via Zoom, last spring.

Since then, Café con Leche meetings have become all the more meaningful to both the students and campus employees who attend, explain David Fuentes, associate professor of teacher education, and Johanna Torres, director of student enrollment services, in the *Ed Prep Matters* article they wrote. Both are regular attendees.

“What was established as a celebratory group quickly morphed into a lifesaving, therapy space for us to hear from and listen to students about their trials and tribulations,” they write.

Often, in higher education, “it’s on students to come to us,” Fuentes further explains in conversation. “They have to find the information, time, and courage to meet with different faculty and staff in their offices to ask questions, surrounded by other faculty and staff, in a more formal one-on-one environment that can feel intimidating.”

Café con Leche turns the tables on that model, creating an “intersection of student engagement and university support services,” Fuentes and Torres write. “By bringing the offices to the spaces that were already populated by students, we closed the gap between administrative support and student need.”

Beyond traditional support, though, Café con Leche provides personal support, one wherein Latinx members of the WP community feel they can be their true selves.

“There are a lot of reasons I take part in Café Con Leche but mainly because I feel it’s a safe space for me. Seeing other students and staff there who are first-gen students like me makes me feel like I have a home on campus,” says student Bryan Francisco ’21.

Employees who regularly attend Café con Leche meetings have become a family of *madrinas* and *padrinos* for Latinx students—in other words, their godparents: persons who quite often take on the role of mentors and support systems in Latinx cultures.

“All of our *madrinas y padrinos* make this environment a safe and enjoyable space for us to come together and make our ideas heard,” Gongora says. “It’s refreshing to know that there are people here at William Paterson University who actually take our feelings into consideration and really want to make a difference in our lives.”

“We serve as mentors and role models for our students to demonstrate the diverse possibilities of what success could look like, and are invested in increasing retention and degree attainment for the Latinx student population,” Rodriguez adds.

In other words, William Paterson University is “moving beyond Hispanic enrolling while becoming Hispanic serving”—as she, Diaz, Fuentes, and Torres, along with Elena Sabogal, associate professor of community and social justice studies, and Daisy Rodriguez, associate director of counseling, health, and wellness, wrote in their joint article for *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*.

In so doing, Café con Leche has taught students to embrace their heritage.

“One important thing I’ve learned is to always be proud of where you came from and don’t forget your roots,” Francisco says. “They shaped you to be who you are today.”



Francisco Diaz, associate vice president for campus life, and Maribel Rodriguez, associate director of campus activities, service, and leadership



# SEEKING THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED: ROBIN ROBERTS '01, MS '04

BY MARIA KARIDIS DANIELS



**R**obin Roberts '01, MS '04, is co-founder, chief operating officer, and head of strategy for the Novartis Biome, one of the largest digital health companies in the world. Created by Novartis, one of the largest life science companies in the world, Roberts and his cofounders launched the Biome in October 2018 with headquarters in San Francisco. Since then, he has been an essential driving force in the Biome's strategic growth, with 10 locations now across the globe and another eight locations worldwide set to launch in the next 12 months.

Roberts was born in the Dominican Republic, where he spent his early years. His mother relocated the family to Hackensack, New Jersey when he was three. But Roberts continued ties to his native country, spending part of every year there with his biological father well into his teens—and providing him with an opportunity to experience two vastly different worlds and points of view, which would help shape who he would later become.

He describes a lower-middle class upbringing in the U.S., but is quick to explain that life in New Jersey felt like “an abundance” compared to life in the Dominican Republic. There, Roberts and his friends played outside without shoes and often didn't have a shirt to wear. As he remembers it, “the goal was to be happy, play with friends, and enjoy each other. Shoes and shirts were something kids who ‘had’ would wear. Kids in my neighborhood were not part of the ‘haves’.”

Meanwhile, in the U.S., Roberts was an inquisitive and studious, yet rambunctious kid. As a student at Hackensack Middle School, he and his friends built a car that not only picked up tennis balls—as was the charge from his teacher for this group project—but also shot fire and mineral oil so that other cars had little chance of winning.

“I grew up in this weird dichotomy,” Roberts says of his time split between the Dominican Republic and New Jersey.

Interestingly, an overall flavor of contradiction has peppered most of his successful professional life.

## DEFINING MOMENT

Roberts enrolled at William Paterson University by way of now-retired, renowned baseball coach Jeff Albies, who recruited him for the Pioneers—the top Division III baseball team in the country at the time. In addition to baseball, Roberts was drawn to the University's well-respected biology program. As an undergraduate, he spent close to three years conducting hands-on research in the lab of biology professor Jaishri Menon. Roberts is still connected with both Menon and Albies almost 20 years after his second WP commencement.

Roberts had a fantastic freshman year on the baseball team that earned him a starting position. Unfortunately, during an early-season game as a sophomore, he broke his wrist, requiring surgery, and found himself red-shirted. The next season, just as he was working his way back into the lineup, Roberts slid into home plate and severely injured his ankle.

Having to rehabilitate both injuries left Roberts with little playing time during which many new and talented recruits joined the Pioneers team. This left Coach Albies with a difficult decision to make.

“Jeff Albies asked me to come into his office. I knew then it wasn't to discuss my rehab,” Roberts recalls. “He said, ‘You're





**Robin Roberts**  
OF/DH R/R 6'0 210  
Hometown: Hackensack  
HS: Bergen Tech  
Major: Biology (Pre-Med)

a great kid, and I want to be upfront with you. We're going to have to let you go...we have great recruits coming in... maybe you should go to another school where you can get the playing time you need." He describes that conversation with Albies as a "defining moment" in his life, adding that his first thought was, "There's no way I'm leaving William Paterson."

He begged to stay on the team. Albies agreed. "No coach ever likes to cut anybody," Albies explains. "He told me, 'You might be making a mistake,' and that made me think, 'I might.'"

Roberts says it was the hardest news he had ever received; baseball was where he knew he could excel. "I was at the lowest point in my baseball career. I had never doubted my abilities or my talent until then. I felt like I had failed, and I could not see a way back to the top or out of this hole." Roberts recalls sleeping in one morning when his mother burst into his room. "She woke me up and told me this wasn't me! 'You have to make a choice now. If this [baseball] is what you want then you need to get up every day and go get it. No one will make it happen for you.' I knew I had to fight for this dream." That summer, Roberts made baseball his job. Between 6 a.m. and 4 p.m., he stuck to a daily, self-created training program of batting practice, fielding practice, and workouts. He came back to campus that fall more ready and willing than ever.

"He just worked his butt off, and I don't think it was to prove anything to me; he was proving something to himself," Albies says. "He was the first one on the field and the last one off the field, and that showed me something—not only how much he really wanted it, but what kind of person he is."

Roberts was named an all-conference, all-region baseball player in his senior year and notched the second-highest batting average in WP history for a single season: .466.

"That taught me that if I completely commit myself to something, there's nothing I can't accomplish," Roberts says. "That experience at William Paterson laid the mental groundwork for how I tackled every situation where I found myself at a crossroads. I realized it was OK to choose the most arduous, least-lit road because I can do the work to make it through and it would ultimately lead me to where I needed to be."

## DREAM CATCHER

After graduation, Roberts started his career as a molecular biologist at

Schering Plough but found the work too solitary so he transitioned to Merck as a clinical trial leader and spent the next seven years in that role.

At Merck, he learned the basics of clinical research and drug development, and then moved to Novartis as a global trial leader, leading Phase III clinical trials in the cardiovascular space, overseeing day-to-day operations of running a trial along with the budget. "I thought my career was going pretty well, considering that I started as a kid in the Dominican Republic with no shoes," Roberts says. "I thought to myself, 'I'm doing alright.'"

Nevertheless, Roberts felt like he was missing something. Even though he loved his job and considered his colleagues more like family, he had always wanted to join the military in special operations.

"Merck and Novartis are major pharmaceutical companies and they're really hard to get into, and I was doing more than I ever thought that I could do before. But I knew I had to go tell my family, 'By the way, I'm leaving everything I've worked for, the opportunity you have sacrificed to give me, the six-figure job you hoped I'd one day get, to go into the military, to go get shot at, for minimum wage.'"

Roberts went into special operations training with the U.S. Navy, aiming to become a combat diver with the Navy SEALs—known to be among the best swimmers in the world. The catch: Roberts didn't know how to swim. That didn't stop him, though. He spent over a year training to swim well enough to enter the program, and then another year working his way through the training command.

"So now I'm living my dream as a candidate in the special ops community, working my way up. A few years later, I got injured." The dream he gave everything else up for was over. Luckily, Novartis hired Roberts back into his previous position. "I needed to figure out how I was going to find my passion again," he says.

Back at Novartis, during a recognition ceremony for returning veterans, Roberts had a chance encounter with a senior leader who invited him to become part of a mentorship program. During a meeting with his mentor, Roberts somewhat rhetorically questioned why he had to be responsible for the financial side of major clinical trials he was leading,

and he was charged with building a team to start a new company initiative: Novartis's first centralized global budget organization for drug development.

"I said, 'Oh no, I don't want to be responsible for that; that's not what I'm saying. I'm trying to say someone with a financial background should hold that responsibility. What do you mean start a group? I have never done that before; I wouldn't even know where to start,'" Roberts says, laughing. "It ended up being a fantastic learning experience."

Roberts built and led a very successful team for two years, managing over \$1 billion in clinical trial budgets during that time.

"And then I hit another kind of crossroads," Roberts says. "I thought, 'Well this was fun,' I liked the vision required in creating the team, but I didn't like checking the boxes thereafter. I liked creating the boxes, so I thought, 'Off to a new adventure.'"

Roberts decided he wanted to be at the intersection of technology and clinical trials, after seeing firsthand that those trials weren't leveraging all the technology available to them. He subsequently learned there was a team in Novartis already working on that very issue.

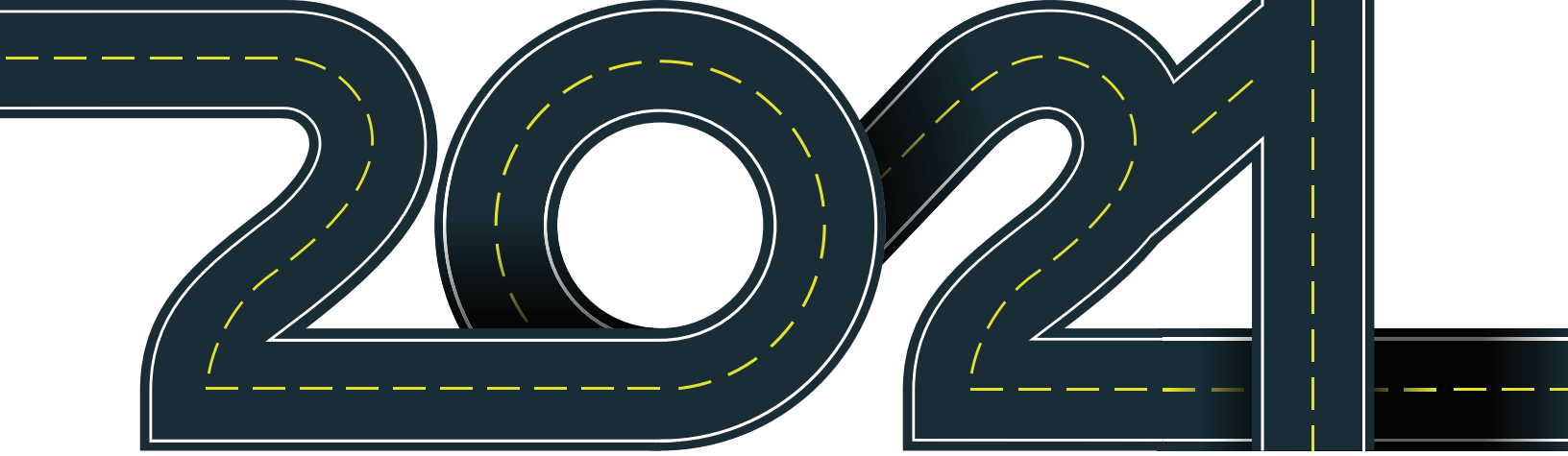
"I went to that group not knowing a lot about the technology side of the business and asked to join them as an intern. I would start at the bottom, learn, and find a road up," Roberts says, nonchalantly. The senior leader indeed worked his way up from intern to a new role that he created: global digital project director.

## ON THE CUTTING EDGE

In his new role, Roberts was tapped to help develop a digital strategy for the company's drug development organization. In so doing, he and the head of his group came up with two constructs: an accelerator for internal projects plus an external-facing digital innovation lab to help find the technology to solve real-world problems for the organization.

"I knew the moment we created that part of the business that that's where I

*continues on page 36*



# New Road Paved by the Pandemic Leads College of Education into the Future

BY MARIA KARIDIS DANIELS

“It’s not so much that the syllabus has changed. It’s the ‘how’ we teach that has changed, not the ‘what,’” explains Linnea Weiland, professor and chairperson of teacher education.

William Paterson University’s College of Education, through the pandemic, has worked to help teacher, counseling, and educational leadership candidates serve children in remote and hybrid learning environments while the University itself was simultaneously having to teach those candidates in remote and hybrid ways.

The end result? A jump into the deep end of a technological pool that will shape education courses at William Paterson well beyond the pandemic.

“Our job, first and foremost, is to prepare the next generation of teachers, counselors, and educational leaders to meet the needs of the communities they are entering as professionals. In addition to developing content area knowledge and traditional pedagogical skills, now that also means ensuring their proficiency with all kinds of digital tools to facilitate P-12 students’ learning and overall success,” says College of Education Dean Amy Ginsberg.

“In general, the tools we have available at William Paterson in terms of technology are fabulous,” Weiland adds, noting that there have been “so many” professional development opportunities for faculty to be trained in using new technology. “We have also all learned from each other and we are modeling for our students the kind of learning we want them to have: Try something new and work collaboratively.”

That modeling has paid off ten-fold, according to Margaret Renn, director of the College of Education’s Office of Field Experience, in lauding WP students’ team-driven, technological prowess in their clinical placements, otherwise known as “student teaching.”

“It is nice to see future teachers taking the lead with new ideas and concepts related to remote learning,” wrote a teacher in the Garfield Public Schools, who mentored a WP teacher candidate last semester, in an email to College of Education administrators. “This year has been interesting as far as the technology and the format of learning, and I am glad to see WPUNJ is producing student teacher candidates



Professor Linnea Weiland

that will take charge and get creative. Furthermore, this opportunity to host a student teacher candidate is my absolute pleasure and I am learning as well as him.”

Collaboration, Ginsberg says, has been happening across every sector of the College more and more this year thanks to everyone’s newfound and regular use of new technologies that make such interactions easier.

“Everyone benefits. I expect our College’s faculty, staff, and students to not only maintain this heightened culture of teamwork going forward, but also to expand upon it,” she adds.

Weiland points to the recent evolution of courses that were always taught online as a great example of such teamwork, and points to a bilingual education class taught by David Fuentes, professor of teacher education. Fuentes teaches this course online as an Undergraduate Core Curriculum course, in the Honors College, and also as a dual enrollment course in high schools. Across all three areas, thanks to support from his colleagues, Fuentes recently developed strategies to make the class more meaningful and interactive, particularly when it comes to using video.

“With the aid of my peers, I quickly acclimated to teaching using video to host synchronous online classes at the

beginning of the pandemic. Now, I use video in a variety of ways to teach and interact with all my classes, which has enhanced the classes that were previously online and relied primarily on reading, writing, and text-based modes of communication,” Fuentes says.

For one, he video records every class now, and uses particularly strong excerpts from one class to create supplemental video learning resources in his other classes, editing together video clips wherein he plays “host” for his students. “This is especially important in dual enrollment classes, to provide students increased opportunities to engage with the curriculum,” Fuentes adds, noting he has no plans to do away with the recent technology upgrades he’s brought into the course.

Although Elizabeth Brown, professor of teacher education, always used video in her classroom—to record students and then have them watch themselves and others to critique technique—she has traded the conventional video recording for use of Microsoft’s Flipgrid, with which educators can post discussion prompts that require all students to respond with short videos, whether they are learning in class or at home. Therefore, Brown gets to see and hear from every student in class—something she points to as a huge plus.

As a result, she has no plans to look back.

“Before the pandemic, in-person sessions provided opportunities for all students to discuss concepts and build on one another’s ideas; however, rarely would all students participate. Often those who feel confident and prepared lead and dominate the discussions,” she explains. A “silver lining” in remote learning, she adds, is that it encourages even the shyest of students to participate.

“It’s not about our faculty changing the content, but the method to make the presentation of that content online more effective,” Weiland stresses.

Similarly, teacher candidate Malcolm Ireland ’21, a double major in elementary education and journalism, credits the collaborative and remote clinical experience class he took last semester for helping him successfully navigate the challenges he faced leading a kindergarten class that was also fully remote and then hybrid.

Teacher candidates and the professor virtually bounced ideas off of one another and shared resources, he says. “A lot of us would take from each other since we were all in the same pool.”

Ireland is currently applying for full-time teaching positions for the 2021-22 school year, both conventional, in-person opportunities and those that are fully virtual—the latter being a sign of a new era in education, for sure, and one for which Ireland feels well prepared.

According to Ginsberg, “It’s fair to say that remote learning is here to stay in some capacity in K-12. That said, how it will unfold will vary among districts and grade levels. Our goal is to enable our teacher candidates to graduate classroom-ready wherever they will be teaching.”

On campus, going forward, Weiland says the University’s Department of Teacher Education will schedule more of its classes as hybrid, and across all classes will incorporate further use of such technological tools “to create opportunities for students to work in small groups between in-person class

## EDUCATION STUDENTS OFFER FREE, REDUCED-COST VIRTUAL TUTORING FOR CHILDREN

In the wake of COVID-19, many parents of K-12 students have been looking to bridge a learning gap caused by fewer in-school hours. Thanks to a program proposed by President Richard J. Helldobler, aspiring and practicing teachers studying in the College of Education have been filling this need throughout this past academic year—both for the extended campus family and beyond.

Last semester, about 20 University students provided free virtual tutoring services for the children of WP faculty and staff. This semester, the program was expanded to serve the community at large, and parents were asked to pay a nominal fee for the tutors’ time and effort.

“This program isn’t only good for the child and the parent who are being served; it’s also beneficial for the tutor and for the College of Education,” notes the College’s dean, Amy Ginsberg. “In difficult times, stretching ourselves and being of service to others brings great internal rewards. I am proud that our students and staff have volunteered their time and their expertise in this way and very grateful to them for representing the best of our college.”

Brian Fanning, director of information technology user services, enrolled both his daughters, ages 8 and 12, in the tutoring program. “I thought it would be good to provide them with the opportunity to have someone who isn’t a parent or teacher help them out and give them a different perspective,” Fanning explains. “It was a great decision.”

His youngest is especially excited for tutoring, he says. “She told me, ‘I really like Thursdays. I get to see Abby and do tutoring,’ and I thought, ‘Wow.’ It’s good to see that.”

Honors College student Abigail “Abby” Viola ’22 is that tutor.

“This experience has benefited me in many ways. First, it pushed me to think outside the box when it comes to share information online—

games, flashcards, and features within the Zoom app helped me to really get the needed information across,” she explains. “Zoom is an awesome tool when it comes to tutoring online; the white board and share screen features are great.”

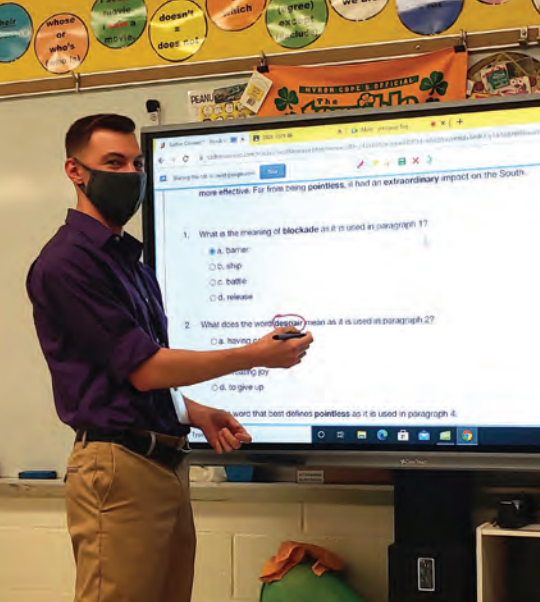
Indeed, the dean says, the younger generation’s savviness with technology currently has them “blazing trails in virtual education. They are helping students learn and helping veteran teachers manage a new normal.”

Mike Chao, professor of marketing, has also been very pleased with the tutoring program, in which he enrolled his 10-year-old son. “During this pandemic especially, kids need activities and social interactions,” he explains. “I feel my son benefits the most in these two aspects. There is an obvious morale improvement, for sure.”

“As a WP faculty member, I like this program a lot. It not only provides an opportunity for my son to interact with college students/future teachers, but also for the WP students to practice their teaching skills,” Chao says. “It is a win-win situation.”



Evie is all smiles during a virtual tutoring session led by Abigail Viola ’22



Malcolm Ireland '21 student teaching in a kindergarten class

meetings, and also to forge connections with communities outside our own.”

Professor Ronald Verdicchio '65, teacher education, forayed far beyond the campus community in his Globalization and Education course, using technology to partner with Windesheim University in the Netherlands. Verdicchio and professors at Windesheim hosted two virtual conferences for their students this spring. With wonderful student feedback on both sides, Verdicchio plans to expand upon the virtual partnership in future semesters, bringing it into a second undergraduate course he teaches, Diversity and Equity in Schools, and potentially into a graduate course as well.

“I think these experiences are important for our students,” Verdicchio says, “and the technology—in a way, COVID has given us that motivation to do things differently that we would not have done before.”

“Yes, there are wonderful things that come out of technology, and the pandemic has really increased our use of technology, which is great,” Weiland adds. “I would like to make it clear, though, that our faculty recognize the importance of in-person learning in teacher preparation. The technology demands have enhanced our teaching techniques, but we do not envision totally teaching online.

“Nothing will ever replace the value of being able to look someone in the eye to gauge what they are thinking and feeling,” she says.

# Faculty and Students in WP's PsyD Program Offer Real-World Solutions

By Theresa E. Ross '80

For people struggling to cope with daily life, clinical psychologists can offer a range of solutions that include coaching, therapy, rehabilitation, clinical assessments, and emotional support. Faculty in William Paterson University's clinical psychology doctoral (PsyD) program are uniquely qualified to help—while researching the latest therapies and teaching a new generation of clinical psychologists.

This year, faculty in the PsyD program and their students embarked on a series of initiatives that provide free mental health services to those in need. Their projects take place at the University, in the surrounding community, and among targeted populations such as New Jersey veterans and school-aged children.

In addition to benefiting service recipients, each project affords students a first-hand look at the challenges and rewards of providing mental health resources.

## HELPING OLDER ADULTS DEVELOP ESSENTIAL SMARTPHONE SKILLS

“It is exciting to try and make the world better for older people,” says Jan Mohlman, professor, clinical psychologist, and director of the PsyD program. Mohlman and her students are focusing their research on helping adults 65 and older make better use of their smartphones.

“For the past 10 years, there's been an incredible proliferation of health-related

apps geared to adults 65 and older,” says Mohlman. They range from helping people manage their medications to staying connected with family and friends via video chat. Unfortunately, as her own research has shown, many older people lack the ability to use the apps that can benefit them the most, she explains.

Through the Department of Psychology's Cognition and Emotion Lab, Mohlman and her students are developing customized training that will help older adults become more proficient on their smartphones. Participants will learn skills on the iPhone or Samsung Android through a series of video instructions and live-streamed or personalized coaching by PsyD students. The coaching will help seniors overcome any frustration and technophobia while teaching essential skills.

## IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PEOPLE WITH BRAIN INJURIES AND MORE

Professor Bruce Diamond oversees the Neuropsychology, Cognitive, and Clinical Neuroscience Lab at William Paterson. He and his students offer innovative interventions that are the hallmark of Diamond's clinical and research work, helping those in need with a range of disorders that result from stroke, brain injury, concussion, autism, and multiple sclerosis, to name a few.

As a researcher, Diamond can offer innovative and novel rehabilitation strategies that, in many instances, have been developed as part of the Lab's clinical program. Patients are referred by neuropsychologists, physicians, and other patients. One referral came from a prominent researcher who was aware of Diamond's work in the area of amnesia. For several years, the Lab has offered these services free of charge as part of its clinical research program, thereby helping individuals who may not have the money or insurance to obtain it otherwise. If patients are medically stable, the Lab can help assess issues related to neurologic,



Professor Jan Mohlman, director of the PsyD program



Professors Winnie Ma (second from right) and Aileen Torres (fourth from right) and students present joint research inspired by their work with immigrant students during the American Psychological Association's 2019 conference in Chicago

neuropsychiatric and neurocognitive function as well as in coping with activities of daily living.

"Dr. Diamond is contacted frequently through word of mouth," says Chelsea Pearsall, a doctoral student in psychology who worked with him on three different cases. In one recent case, a man came in with potential memory deficit following an injury at work. It was clear from the first couple of moments that he had some executive functioning difficulties, Pearsall explains.

"After spending five hours with us, with breaks in between, we were able to administer tests and begin putting the puzzle together," she says. The assessment showed impairment in full-term and long-term memory. And although they were not able to definitely state that it resulted from his injury at work, it provided a timeline, and gave the individual the assessment necessary for him to take it to the next step, whether that is applying for worker's compensation or disability.

"Dr. Diamond's role has been imperative in fostering my assessment learning," adds Pearsall. "I have been able to learn so much."

### WEEKLY GROUP THERAPY SERVICES FOR NEWLY IMMIGRATED YOUTH IN PATERSON SCHOOLS

Navigating a new country, a new culture, and a new language—while coping with the social, emotional, and physical changes that come with being a middle or high school student—is not an easy task. In 2018, psychology professors Pei-Wen Winnie Ma and Aileen Torres began volunteering their time to help newly immigrated children in Paterson adjust to a new life.

"The school principals and staff tell us how desperately their students need bilingual support groups," says Torres. "These children are feeling very isolated, especially those who just came over during the pandemic. They should be acclimating and meeting other children or pre-adolescents and they're not."

The College of Education's Professional Development and School-Community Partnerships Program, directed by Nancy Norris-Bauer, helped to connect Ma and Torres with several Paterson middle schools, and they recently held an after-class group for School No. 15. Under their professors' supervision, WP students co-lead a group for recent immigrant students in their native languages to help and encourage them as they adapt.

In the support groups, WP graduate students who were either immigrants themselves or children of immigrants, talk with the children in their native language, whether it's Spanish, Arabic, or Bengali. They help the children grapple with issues like family separation or bullying. In many ways, the students also serve as role models, Ma and Torres explain. The professors plan to start their next support group at a Paterson high school, where they will add a career component.

"We're targeting children who have been here less than three years. And just the fact that there's a program created especially for them, makes them feel special," adds Ma.

### SUICIDE PREVENTION FOR A VULNERABLE POPULATION OF VETERANS

Megan Chesin, associate professor, and PsyD students under her direct supervision provide instrumental and clinical support to a new initiative—

helping veterans in New Jersey at risk for suicide via telehealth.

Chesin says the effort to use mindfulness-based cognitive therapy—a combination of cognitive therapy, meditation, and the cultivation of a present-oriented, non-judgmental attitude called "mindfulness"—to prevent suicide among veterans is working. In a randomized clinical trial study performed by Chesin with other researchers, findings showed that this type of treatment halved suicide attempt rates and acute hospital rates over 12 months for high-risk veterans compared to the usual treatments.

"After these promising findings, we were funded to adapt the intervention for rural veterans using telehealth," says Chesin.

Working with the veterans was "an amazing experience," says Samantha Smith, MA '17, PsyD '21, a doctoral student who co-facilitated in the group. Watching individuals make dramatic progress in the group inspired Smith to pursue more training experiences using this therapy. Smith recently accepted a position as a psychologist at a community-based outpatient VA clinic in Tampa, Florida, where she will continue bringing those therapies to the community.

### ESSENTIAL SUPPORT FOR PARENTS DURING AND POST-PANDEMIC

The pandemic has posed a multitude of challenges for parents, many of whom lost childcare, had to start managing their children's education at home, or even became unemployed.

Gregory Bartoszek, assistant professor and licensed clinical psychologist at William Paterson, is developing a virtual support group where parents can share their struggles and solutions. Along with Bartoszek, graduate students from his Laboratory of Emotions and Affective Psychopathology will assist in facilitating the support group meetings.

"Even though we're turning the corner on the pandemic, some of these struggles will continue. People feel burnt out and the stressors may have long-lasting effects on parents' and their children's mental health," says Bartoszek. "Being able to talk about parenting struggles with other parents in similar situations may be helpful by normalizing one's experiences while allowing parents to realize that they are not alone."

## In Memoriam

THE UNIVERSITY MOURNS THE PASSING OF FIVE MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY:



**Jerome "Jerry" Chamberlain**, associate professor *emeritus* of communication, died on March 2, 2021. He was 91. A graduate of Indiana University, Chamberlain joined the University in 1977, bringing his significant experience in the broadcasting industry to his teaching of television production until his retirement in 1999. Chamberlain served in

the U.S. Army, where he was a small firearms repair instructor at Fort Lee, Virginia during the Korean War. Afterwards, he worked at radio and television stations in Richmond, Virginia. From 1962 to 1976, he worked at WCAU-TV in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he directed the 6:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. evening news, as well as the long-running children's program, *The Gene London Show*, and served as an assistant director for Philadelphia Eagles games. Chamberlain held a master's degree from the New School for Social Research.



**Warren A. Helms '88**, adjunct professor of music, died on September 20, 2020. He was 58. Helms, who earned a bachelor of music degree with K-12 certification from the University, was a virtuoso pianist who worked on and off Broadway for years, including as assistant pianist/conductor for the Broadway production of *Showboat*. He

accompanied legends such as Aretha Franklin and international stars like Su-san Boyle, Clay Aiken, and the Irish Tenors, and appeared on *The Today Show* and *The View*, and at Lincoln Center and the Rainbow Room. In 2015, he worked with Broadway legend Hal Prince. Helms was passionate about teaching, and especially loved musical theater and working with singers. He taught for 16 years at William Paterson, working with music students and serving as music director of numerous productions. He also taught at the Manhattan School of Music, from which he earned a master's degree in music; The Juilliard School, and Caldwell University, and was choir accompanist and later director of music and liturgy at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Wayne. His family has established the Warren Helms Spirit of Musical Performance Scholarship in his name; those who wish to contribute can contact Maureen O'Connor, director of development, at [occonnorm24@wpunj.edu](mailto:occonnorm24@wpunj.edu) or at 973.720.3990.



**Gary Kirkpatrick**, retired professor of music, died on February 22, 2021. He was 79. Kirkpatrick, who joined the music faculty in 1973, gave his first piano recital at age 11. A graduate of the Eastman School of Music with distinction, he was the pianist with the Eastman Philharmonia on its U.S. State Department-sponsored tour of the

Soviet Union, Europe, and the Middle East in 1961-1962. He continued his studies in Vienna, Austria, at the University of Music and Performing Arts, where he received his artist diploma. The

recipient of numerous prizes in prestigious piano competitions, he performed as a soloist, soloist with orchestra, and chamber musician in more than 40 countries on five continents. He was a member of the Verdehr Trio, composed of a rare violin, clarinet, and piano combination, which commissioned more than 100 pieces by such composers as Gunther Schuller, Ned Rorem, and many others. Later, he was part of the Halcyon Trio, a trio for clarinet, viola, and piano, which commissioned a triple concerto by composer Lalo Schiffrin that was premiered by the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. Among his notable campus performances was the world premiere of a piano concerto by John Link, William Paterson professor of music, performed with the Wayne Chamber Orchestra. For more details about plans to establish a scholarship in his name, contact Maureen O'Connor, director of development, at [occonnorm24@wpunj.edu](mailto:occonnorm24@wpunj.edu) or at 973.720.3990.



**Virginia Ramey Mollenkott**, professor *emerita* of English, died on September 25, 2020. She was 88. Mollenkott, who taught at William Paterson for three decades from 1967 until her retirement in 1997, was a specialist in feminist, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender theologies. The author of 13 books, including *Omnigender: A Trans-*

*Religious Approach*, which won the Lambda Literary Award and the Ben Franklin Award, she wrote more than 150 academic and church-related publications. A trans-religious pioneer of Christian and Christian feminism, Mollenkott was a founding member of the Evangelical and Ecumenical Women's Caucus, now known as Christian Feminism Today. She was awarded the 1992 New Jersey Lesbian and Gay Coalition's Achievement Award, the 1999 Lifetime Achievement Award from SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment), and was the 2017 inaugural recipient of the Mother Eagle Award by Christian Feminism Today and the Q Christian Fellowship. Awarded an honorary doctor of ministries by Samaritan College in 1989, she received the 1979 Integrity Award for "extraordinary support of the gay Christian movement" and was lauded by the National Council of Churches for her work on its Inclusive Language Lectionary Committee. Her papers are archived at Pacific School of Religion's Center for LGBTQ and Gender Studies in Berkeley, California. A graduate of Bob Jones University, Mollenkott earned a master's degree from Temple University and a doctorate from New York University.



**Taghi Ramin**, professor of economics, died on April 21, 2021. Ramin, who joined the faculty in 1984, taught a wide variety of courses, including Macroeconomic Principles, Microeconomic Principles-Honors, Intermediate Macroeconomics, Managerial Economics, Money and Banking, Business Statistics, and Economics for Managers

(graduate level). His research interests included microeconomics, macroeconomics, managerial economics, and international trade; he was published in *International Advances to Economic Research* and presented at international conferences. Ramin was an invited visiting professor at the Institute for Research in Planning and Development in Iran. He held a bachelor's degree from National University in Tehran, Iran; a master's degree in economics from Long Island University, and a doctorate in economics from New York University with concentrations in macroeconomics, microeconomics, health economics, and economic growth and development.



# Alumni Connections

## Alumni “Come Back” to WP for Black History Month, Women’s History Month Celebrations

Nearly 20 alumni “returned” to the University to connect with students, faculty, and staff during virtual events in celebration of Black History Month and Women’s History Month. Alumni shared their professional experiences and insights, as well as stories of where their WP journey has led them.

### Black History Month

For Black History Month, a Black Alumni Network Career Panel, “Working While Black,” featured four black alumni who spoke about their professional experiences and overcoming challenges and obstacles throughout their careers.

“It is my intent to be a change agent, to continue giving back to a community that poured into me,” says panelist **Jhree Davis-Jones ’06, MEd ’13**, founder and CEO of Cherry Blossom Healing, LLC, which provides individual, family, and couples

counseling. “It is my hope that my experiences shared will motivate participants to continue to strive to become the best versions of themselves even in the midst of adversity and doubt. The most rewarding gift is passing it forward!”

Another panelist, **Jamie Summers-Johnson ’95**, a middle school teacher and councilwoman in Orange, New Jersey, says it is essential for her to stay connected and involved with her fellow William Paterson University alumni because they have become family. “While attending William Paterson, we grew together, and we cried together,” she adds. “I am so proud of my fellow alumni. I can call on any of them for help in their various fields. That is the best feeling for me—to know that I have friends doing extraordinary things makes me smile—friends now family that I met at William Paterson University! Once a Pioneer, always a Pioneer.”



Top: Jamie Summers-Johnson '95  
Bottom: Jhree Davis-Jones '06, MEd '13

In addition to Davis-Jones and Summers-Johnson, panelists included **Dawud Brown '99**, court services supervisor—adult probation, Camden County Superior Court, and **Veronica “Roni” Mayes '90**, senior human resources associate, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. The panel was moderated by two students: Eric Lynch '23, a marketing management major and secretary of the student group Brothers for Awareness, and Machli Saint-Vil '21, a management major and president of the Haitian American Student Association. The session was hosted by the Office of Alumni Relations in collaboration with the Center for Diversity and Inclusion, Black Cultural Center, Office of Employment Equity and Diversity, and the Black History Month Committee.

### Women’s History Month

A Women’s Empowerment Social Hour drew a dozen alumnae for an evening of virtual networking with fellow WP alumni and students during Women’s History Month. **Naima Ricks '11**, director of student engagement at Saint Elizabeth University and founder of Empowered by Naima, LLC, gave a keynote address, “Dare to Dream Big.”

“I want to inspire and empower young women to live up to their biggest dreams. While understanding that everyone does not support their dream, it’s essential that dreamers are not discouraged and keep pressing forward, being mindful that their voice and their dreams work in conjunction with each other,” says Ricks. “My experiences at William Paterson University paved the way for me to become the woman that I am today. It is important to me to stay connected to WP so that I can support the experiences of the current students on campus by providing mentorship and networking opportunities.”

Her address was followed by a networking session in which panelists discussed topics including translating



Naima Ricks '11



your passions to your profession, tips and tools for expanding your professional network, how to build a mentoring relationship, and leading beyond your title.

Caroline Sanchez '13, an audio engineer/IT system administrator at William Paterson, says she was excited to participate. "Serving as a panelist for the Women's Empowerment Social Hour gave me a chance to not only connect with current students, but also celebrate the accomplishments of other alumni," she says. "It is a unique experience to be able to speak alongside women from other industries and realize that we are now able to mentor the next generation of women on their way to graduation and beyond."



The Women's Empowerment Social Hour, held via Zoom

### Other alumni panelists included:

- Melba Mullins '98, MA '00, substance awareness coordinator, Hillside Public Schools and real estate agent, Jeanius Realty
- Dr. Monica D. Burton '92, principal, East Orange School District and adjunct professor, Montclair State University
- Susette Brooks '13, director, multicultural marketing, Penguin Random House
- Michele Garcia '15, realtor, eXp Realty
- Allison Morgan '00, elementary school teacher, Edgewater
- Lauren Agnew '06, public information officer, Essex County
- Debra Gantert '77, paralegal, Riker, Danzig Law Firm
- Racquel Romans-Henry '07, MA '11, writer, advocate, and president, The Word on the Move
- Lizeth Morales '05, owner, El Gordo Restaurant
- Jennifer Olawski '09, physical education teacher, Paul Robeson Community School for the Arts, New Brunswick

The session was hosted in collaboration by the Office of Alumni Relations, Career Development Center, Center for Diversity and Inclusion, Black Cultural Center and Women's History Celebration Planning Committee.

## William Paterson Sweethearts Have Special Campus Bond

For some alumni, the connections they make on campus are extra special. Earlier this year, more than 50 WP alumni couples shared their sweetheart stories, reminiscing about their favorite memories and their journey together since graduation.

Graduates ranging from 1954 to 2019 shared their love stories—all of which started right here on William Paterson's campus. Some couples met through athletics and clubs, while others met on campus and in the classroom. All of these couples share special memories, experiences, and most importantly, Pioneer Pride!

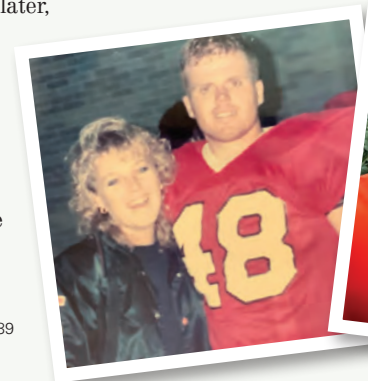
Here, a few of those special alumni couples tell their stories:

### Domenico DiMaio '97, MBA '21, history, and Iris DiMaio '96, community health

"Like many of you, our love story began at William Paterson, where we spent many hours learning and planning for the wonderful life we have today with our three active children. We reflect on our years as young Pioneers and sweethearts with nostalgia and esteem. Our story begins with many shared conversations in the Student Center over coffee and the late nights spent studying and watching the David Letterman Show in the North Tower. Our love grew stronger for each other and WP in the many activities we shared as a couple, such as resident assistants (RA), Community Health Club, and attending the Distinguished Lecturer Series, which we enjoyed. William Paterson University not only provided us with a degree but also a soulmate for life!"

### Nesma Kessler '15, nursing, and Thomas Kessler '16, nursing

"We met in a nursing class and I ended up becoming his nurse mentor. In the summer of 2015, we started dating. On our first date, we talked about being travel nurses one day and what our specialties would be. Five years later, he proposed, in January 2020—where we had our first date. We became ICU travel nurses and travel the country with our two dogs. Unfortunately, many wedding plans changed and ended up being cancelled due to COVID, and we fought through the pandemic together. We are so excited to get our RV this year and continue traveling the country!"



Andrew Faccione '89 and Jill Howell Faccione '89



# WP Sweetheart Couples



Left 2 photos: Domenico DiMaio '97, MBA '21, and Iris DiMaio '96  
Right 2 photos: Nesma Kessler '15 and Thomas Kessler '16  
Center 2 photos: Brittany Lee Jones '16 and Brandon Jones '15

when they did; we married, started our family and careers all because of this University. William Paterson University played a huge part in our personal and professional success. That is why we are still involved with the University to date.”

*Please visit [wpunj.edu/wpcouples](http://wpunj.edu/wpcouples) to see more.*

*Did you meet your sweetheart at WP? Share your story with the William Paterson University Office of Alumni Relations at [alumni@wpunj.edu](mailto:alumni@wpunj.edu).*

## Brittany Lee Jones '16, music, and Brandon Jones '15, finance

“Brandon and I have a peculiar sweetheart story. We happened to massively bump into one another my first day as a Willy P transfer student, spring 2013. Head down, attentive to my schedule in hand, I began walking up the Student Center steps as he began walking down, and then toe to toe, chest to chest, we collided. He helped me recover my books from the floor while giving me these intense ‘googly eyes’ that revealed a keen interest. I thanked him and kept it moving to my class. He had this charm about him that made me feel like he just might ruin my life. I noticed him around campus, often reflecting on the memory of my first day bumping into him. I noticed his involvement and over the years, even after he graduated, I watched how impactful and impressive he became and how often he’d come back to campus for various occasions and events—never, ever imagining that I was watching the man who would be my husband. My unspoken admiration was just that, at least until spring break of 2016. My best friends and roomies at the time joined what might have been nearly the entire WP Class of 2016 in Miami for spring break. While there, I posted a picture of myself on Instagram that apparently caught Brandon’s eye. I immediately received a message from him in response to my photo, which read, “gorgeous...you know you never apologized for bumping into me that day. We arranged to see each other the same day I got back to campus from Miami. Today we are happily married over a year and enjoying every moment of it. We have to thank WP for that.”

## Andrew Faccone '89, communication, and Jill Howell Faccone '89, sociology/anthropology

“Jill and I first met passing each other into the entranceway of the South Tower. I saw her first, she didn’t see me. We were officially introduced at an Alpha Sigma fraternity party, which I was a member of, and the rest is history. Jill and my parents were at every football game no matter the weather or location. The importance of sports continued with both of our children all through their athletic careers at every level. We were there for all of the athletic events. William Paterson University enabled both of our lives to cross paths



President Richard Helldobler with alumni at Homecoming 2019

## SAVE THE DATES

### Homecoming and Family Day - Saturday, October 9

Join us on Saturday, October 9, for a fun-filled day with festivities for the whole family. Cheer on the Pioneers as William Paterson University takes on Christopher Newport University.

Come home to WP to gather with friends for a pre-game tailgate, enjoy food and games at the carnival, and support Pioneer Athletics by catching a game.

### Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony – Sunday, October 10

Congratulate the newest WP Athletic Hall of Fame inductees and celebrate all Hall of Fame members at the WP Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony.

### Fall Football and Pre-Game Tailgating

Join us for tailgating at every home football game:

Saturday, September 11 vs. Fairleigh Dickinson University

Saturday, September 25 vs. SUNY Maritime College

Saturday, October 9 vs. Christopher Newport University – Homecoming

Saturday, October 30 vs. Kean University

Saturday, November 6 vs. Montclair State University

Alumni are invited to gather with friends and family for pre-game tailgating ahead of each home game. Then, join us in the stands to cheer on the Pioneers to victory. Celebrate your WP school spirit and Pioneer pride.

WANT TO GET TOGETHER WITH YOUR CLASSMATES OR MEMBERS OF YOUR STUDENT ORGANIZATION OR CLUB? IF YOU’RE INTERESTED IN PLANNING AN ALUMNI TAILGATE GATHERING, PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE OF ALUMNI RELATIONS AT [ALUMNI@WPUNJ.EDU](mailto:alumni@wpunj.edu).

# Alumni Connections

## Class Notes

**1968 JOHN SAMAHA** was profiled in an online article in which he reflected on attending WP and running his own farm stand, Samaha's Farm, in Aberdeen. Samaha was a music teacher for 37 years in Hazlet, retiring in 2005. He and his wife continued to work the farm, passing it on to their daughter and son-in-law in 2012.

**1973 RICHARD BLONNA**, professor emeritus of public health, has been elected to the City Council in Marco Island, FL.

**1978 STEWART WOLPIN** has covered consumer technology products and companies for four decades and reviewed nearly every type of video, audio, and home office device. Since 1988, he has written about and/or reviewed products for a plethora of trade publications including *U.S. News & World Report*, *Mashable*, *Recode*, *Huffington Post*, *Tom's Guide*, *Rolling Stone*, *Popular Science*, and more.

**1979 JERI LYNN PIECHOSKI** recently published, *Alphabet Soup for the Bored!*, a coloring book alternative for the visual thinker and doodler. Piechoski was inspired to create a coloring book that allows individuals to think outside of box and be creative. The book provides 26 letters with plenty of open space for inspirational coloring and doodling. She spent 17 years as an elementary school art teacher...

**ROBIN SCHWARTZ**, internationally known photographer and a William Paterson professor of art, was interviewed by Simon Hewitt, a Swiss researcher working on a museum project to exhibit painter John Day's paintings and drawings found in a warehouse in New Jersey. Schwartz took two semesters of color theory with Day, who had studied with the famous painter Josef Albers.

**1981 BARBARA KUSHNER** received a 2020 Paterson Alliance Extra Mile Award for volunteers who have gone the extra mile. Kushner, an accountant in WP's School of Continuing and Professional Education, was nominated by her co-workers, and recognized during a virtual ceremony in October 2020.

**1982 MICHAEL DISABATINO** operates an accounting firm, We Do Books, with offices in Wickenburg and North Scottsdale, AZ. His mission is to cater to small businesses with fewer than 10 employees.

**1984 FRANK ATTALLA** has been named a partner at EisnerAmper LLP in the firm's financial services group. Attalla has more than 30 years of experience in public accounting, with 20 years focused in the financial services sector...

**DEBBIE O'BRIEN, BA '04** was re-elected to the West Milford Board of Education. She is a case manager at the Highlands Family Success Center and a mentor for the University's Pesce Family Mentoring Institute...**JENNIFER RANU** recently published the book, *Colorful Journey*, a fictional tale that shares the history of Paterson, the first planned industrial city in America. This is Ranu's third published book since retiring after 35 years as an educator.

**1985 DIANE LEVA** has been named vice president, commercial lender at Columbia Bank New Jersey in Fair Lawn. She previously served as vice president, business relationship manager at Santander Bank.

**1988 GARY STAGER** has launched a new publishing company, Cymbal Press, to amplify the words and wisdom of musicians and music educators. The company's first book, *Life in E Flat - The Autobiography of Phil Woods*, is a memoir of jazz legend Phil Woods. The foreword to the book was written by Bill Charlap, WP's director of jazz studies.

**1990 KEVIN LENAHAN**, chief financial officer of Atlantic Health, has been named to ROI-NJ's list of "ROI Influencers: Healthcare 2020 (Hospital Heroes)." According to ROI, Lenahan "was in charge of sourcing and obtaining PPE for the entire Atlantic Health System. The challenge grew more difficult by the day during the height of the pandemic, but Lenahan managed to find a way to keep Atlantic caregivers and their patients safe." Lenahan is a member of the University's Board of Trustees.

**1992 CHRISTINE CONFORTI** published a book, *The Legend of the Season: Magic of the Pearls*, an inspirational story about love and cooperation. It includes 25 illustrations painted by the author depicting moments imagined in this legend, which is set in Paterson, where Conforti was raised.

**1993 STEVEN BLAHUT** has been promoted to manager of the Corporate Service Department at Belfint Lyons & Shuman CPA, with offices in Delaware and Pennsylvania. Blahut has worked for the company for nearly 20 years.

**1994 SUZANNE BLIESATH** was elected to the West Morris Regional High School District Board of Education. She is a veterinarian at Black River Veterinary Hospital in Chester...**DAVID DETWEILER**, a saxophonist and composer, released *Astoria Suite*, his third album as a leader. The album began as a series of individual compositions brought about by his return to New York with his wife after living in Florida.

He is currently an assistant professor of jazz saxophone at Florida State University...**JOSEPH FARNSWORTH**, a jazz drummer with deep ties to the western Massachusetts music scene, has released a new recording, *Time to Swing*. He has become one of the premier drummers in the genre, performing with everyone from McCoy Tyner to Diana Krall...**PAUL KRASSEN** has released an album, *Making Time*, with saxophonist Larry McKenna. A pianist, he is managing partner of Dimotec LLC, a payment services consulting company.

**1996 MICHAEL OWENS** has been promoted to chief of police for the Cranbury Police Department. Owens has been a police officer with the department for 22 years...**MICHAEL PARENT** has been named principal of Glen Rock Middle and High School. He previously held positions at Dumont High School and Passaic County Technical Institute...**GINA VERGEL**, senior director of communications at Fordham University, was recently named by *PRNews* as one of the country's "Top Women in PR" for 2020. Vergel joined Fordham as a staff writer in 2007, and previously was a newspaper and radio reporter.

**1997 DANIELLE GREEN** has been named chief operating officer at SPAN Parent Advocacy Network, an independent, parent-led, non-profit organization in Newark. She previously served as interim executive director and director of operations at Eskolta School Research and Design, a non-profit education consulting firm...**MARK HOUSEL** was named the 2020 Elementary Physical Education Teacher of the Year by the New Jersey Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. He is a physical education teacher at Beeler School in Marlton.

**1998 BRENDA HURTUBISE** was named president of Outcomes Matter Innovations, LLC. She has more than 20 years experience in healthcare operations and previously served as vice president of Outcomes Matter and vice president of Regional Cancer Care Associates, Hackensack Division at John Theurer Cancer Center...**EDWARD NESTOR** retired from the Jersey City Police Department and has been appointed chief of staff to the director of the Hudson County Correctional Facility...**ROY STRUNIN, MBA**, joined Marketing Direction in St. Petersburg, FL, as lead marketer. He has nearly three decades of marketing experience, specializing in supporting B2B clients in the life sciences and technology sectors...**MATTHEW WHELAN, MA**, was named president of Caldwell University. Prior to joining Caldwell University, Whelan served as vice president for

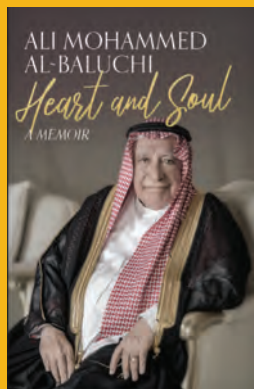
university enrollment strategy and relationship development at Stony Brook University.

**2000 JOHNATHAN BLAKE**, a jazz drummer, recently received a songwriting grant from the newly formed Jazz Coalition Commission Fund. Blake was one of 50 musicians selected for this grant, which provides commissions for artists to create new pieces of music that respond to and/or reflect the challenges of the COVID-19 era.

**2002 THERESA BUTLER** was named Kittatinny Regional High School's Teacher of the Year. This is her 17th year as a teacher...**BHARAT RANA** is the CEO of Dental Health Associates, one of New Jersey largest multi-specialty dental practices. DHA serves nearly 1,000 patients a day, many of whom come from underserved communities...**NIRVAT SHAKER** was promoted to assistant vice president—internal audit specialist at Lakeland Bank. She joined the bank in 2017 as assistant treasurer, internal audit specialist.

**2003 CALEB CAVILEER** won a second term on the Absecon City Council. He is a second grade teacher in Absecon...**THOMAS MCGUIRE** was named to the board of trustees of the Howard Hospital Foundation in Howard County, MD. A researcher, computer security professional, and educator, McGuire is co-founder and chief technology officer of the Howard County-based cybersecurity firm Bantam Technologies...**LUCAS PILIPSKI** joined Seelos Therapeutic as executive director of clinical operations. He has more than 17 years of industry experience, including positions with Sanofi S.A. and Shire Pharmaceuticals.

**2004 JOHN FUQUA** is the founder of Life Worth Living Inc., a non-profit organization created to help guide and assist youth and young adults away from drugs, gangs, and bad choices...**HENRY LUDENA** was appointed to the detective bureau of the Summit Police Department. He is a nine-year veteran of the force...**JASON SCHLERETH** was named president of Immaculate Heart Academy in the Township of Washington, effective July 2021. He previously served IHA as principal, vice-principal, and director of athletics...**TYSHAWN SOREY**, a composer and multi-instrumentalist, was profiled in *The New York Times Magazine* in January 2021. Sorey, who has performed nationally and internationally with his own ensembles, as well as numerous artists of note, has composed works for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, Alarm Will Sound, and Opera Philadelphia in partnership with Carnegie Hall, among others. He was recently appointed Presidential Assistant Professor of Music at the University of Pennsylvania.



## Ali M. Albaluchi '77, MA '78, Publishes Memoir

Ali M. Albaluchi '77, MA '78, is publishing his memoir, *Heart and Soul* (Medina Publishing, May 2021), which details his lifelong dedication to personal and professional growth, his unwavering commitment to community service, and his devotion to nurturing enduring friendships with people around the world. The book provides insight into life in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia in its early days of nationhood, and his more than four-decade career with Aramco, where he rose from office boy to general manager of community services.

A longtime friend and supporter of William Paterson University, Ali is graciously donating profits from the book to the Ali M. Albaluchi Endowed Scholarship, which has been providing scholarship support to deserving students for nearly 20 years. The book is available for purchase on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and [barnesandnoble.com](https://www.barnesandnoble.com).

**2006 MICHELLE (ENJOLI) BEATO** is contributing author to *Hispanic Stars Rising: The New Face of Power*, a book that shares stories about the experiences, challenges, and successes of Hispanic stars nationwide... **CHRISTOPHER IRVING, MA**, was appointed as a commissioner of the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools. He is the superintendent of the Teaneck school district... **JAVIER SILVA** was appointed chief financial officer for the City of Paterson. He began working for the city as senior accountant in 2007, and was promoted to comptroller in 2016.

**2007 JAY DECKER**, a teacher at the School of Information Technology in Paterson, who served in the U.S. Army Reserves, was featured in a new video produced by William Paterson's College of Education that focuses on attracting more veterans to public education... **ANWAR GOLDEN** serves as the assistant principal and athletic director of Penns Grove High School. Among his other community initiatives, he recently organized free testing sites for COVID-19. Golden strives to build a community of leaders and achievers... **CHRISTOPHER MARTIN** was named partner at SobelCo, a leading provider of tax, accounting, and advisory services. He joined the company in 2015 as a manager in the audit practice.

**2008 JUSTIN KAUFMAN**, a jazz pianist, was featured in an article in *Vail Daily* in Vail, CO, about his experience at the Vail Jazz Workshop in 2003 and traveling the world educating others about jazz... **ASMAR MIKAL WILLIAMS-HEMBY** published his first novel *Scandalicious* (2013), and has since released two more: *Harlem Boyz* (2013) and *Jersey Lovers* (2015). He also formed his own publishing imprint, Jerzee Boy Publications, LLC, and began a career as a voiceover artist.

**2009 CARLOS CANO, MA '17**, was appointed director of admissions communications and marketing at Georgian Court University... **JENNIFER OLAWSKI**, a teacher at Paul Robeson Community School for the Arts in New Brunswick, was featured on *The Today Show* in December 2020 for her mission to make sure every student in her class receives a holiday gift... **ORLANDO PAGAN**, a teacher at the School of Government and Public Administration in Paterson, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps, was featured in a new video produced by William Paterson's College of Education that focuses on attracting more veterans to public education.

**2010 FRASER CAMPBELL, MM**, a composer and saxophonist, released a new album, *Haar II*. His music has been performed at BAM, Le

Poisson Rouge, Place des Arts Montreal as part of Festival Quartiers Danse, MassMOCA, and New York Live Arts, among others... **NATHAN WEBB, MM '15**, a drummer, is a member of Big Beat Big Band, which released a new album, *A Very Big Beat Christmas*.

**2011 AUDREY GREEN-HILL** was named a 2021 Association of American Educators Foundation Advocacy Fellow. She is a family community engagement specialist at Marion P. Thomas Charter School in Englewood... **CHRIS PATTISHALL, MM**, a pianist, released his debut album, *Zodiac*, in February 2021. The album is a reworking of the 1945 work *Zodiac Suite* by composer and jazz pianist Mary Lou Williams. The album's release was covered in an article in the *New York Times*... **MARK PAWLAK** was part of the audio engineering team for Big Beat Big Band's new album, *A Very Big Beat Christmas*. He did the mastering.

**2012 KATHERINE CHECKLEY, MA**, is a teacher/writer who writes about motherhood and for a number of women's/mother's empowerment programs... **WILLIAM DOUGHERTY, MM**, pianist, is a member of Big Beat Big Band, which released a new album, *A Very Big Beat Christmas*... **JAMIE INSALACO** debuted his first feature film, *Will Reading*, a comedy in which friends reunite to join their buddy's widow in searching the house for money he hid from the IRS. In addition to directing, he was a supporting actor in the film, which is available on Amazon Prime Video... **EDDI KHAYTMAN** is the founder and owner of PromoAmbitions LLC, which offers web design, SEO, online marketing, and 3D printing services for a variety of companies. He also does photography and video work. Khaytmann uses a portion of the profits to give back... **RYAN STAIGER** teaches physical education at Atlantic County Institute of Technology. He and his brother founded Atlantic Coast Basketball LLC, which runs AAU basketball tournaments and basketball camps throughout South Jersey.

**2013 CHRISTOPHER BAUER** was appointed assistant U.S. Attorney in the Northern District of West Virginia, working in the criminal division in the Clarksburg office. Bauer, who received his JD/MBA from West Virginia University, most recently served as a term law clerk for the Honorable Irene M. Keeley, Senior United States District Judge... **MARLON FLORES**, a bilingual teacher at New Roberto Clemente School in Paterson, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps., was featured in a new video produced by William Paterson's College of Education aimed at attracting more veterans to public education... **GIAN PAUL GONZALEZ-ALBERTI, MED**, joined

Grand Canyon University as an adjunct professor in the College of Education. He is executive director of the Hope + Future Center, an after-school program, as well as a motivational speaker and a team chaplain for the New York Giants... **MATTHEW HILLBLOM** plays bass with the Ty Mares Trio which made its debut at Long Beach Island's Kubel's Too in November 2020.

**2014 NAEEM BOUCHER** is a real estate investor and the founder of Naem Boucher Properties, a real estate team based in Montclair... **DANIA MARTINEZ** was elected to the Paterson Board of Education. She is the founder of Women's HERstory, a women's empowerment organization... **JOSHUA NOVEMBER** plays electric and upright bass with the Big Beat Big Band, which released a new album, *A Very Big Beat Christmas*... **CALEB RUMLEY, MM '16**, is a trombonist with the Big Beat Big Band, which released a new album, *A Very Big Beat Christmas*... **RYAN TOMSKI, MM**, pianist, is a member of Big Beat Big Band, which released a new album, *A Very Big Beat Christmas*.

**2015 PHILIP ENGSBERG, MM**, was part of the audio engineering team for Big Beat Big Band's new album, *A Very Big Beat Christmas*. He was the mixer... **ALLISON (MCKENZIE) RUMLEY** is lead vocalist with Big Beat Big Band, which released a new album, *A Very Big Beat Christmas*... **ANGELICA SANCHEZ, MM '17**, was included in a Musicalmemoirs blog post, *Women in Jazz*, for the duo piano recording *How to Turn the Moon*... **RYAN STAPLETON** joined the Marlboro Township Police Department. He recently worked for the Belmar Police Department... **MATTHEW TISCHIO** is a saxophonist with the Big Beat Big Band, which released a new album, *A Very Big Beat Christmas*... **ROBERT WHETHAM** is the team owner of the New Jersey Knights, established in 2021 as the newest expansion team in the American Basketball Association. They will begin playing in fall 2021.

**2016 KARALYNE BROWN** was named assistant coach of the women's basketball team at The College of New Jersey. She is a concierge specialist with Microsoft... **TONEE BURLEY, MS '18**, was awarded the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's 2020 Distinguished Early Career Professional (ECP) Certificate and is president-elect of the Hawaii Speech-Language-Hearing Association... **JOSHUA CASE, MAT**, contributed to a chapter devoted to culturally responsive teaching in *The New Teacher's Guide to Ten Common Challenges*. He is the head coach of New Jersey City University's eSports program which

won the ECAC Super Smash Bros Ultimate Championship... **COURTNAEY CHELF**, a U.S. Army ROTC cadet while at the University, was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the medical service corps shortly after graduation. Now a captain, she is a student at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, preparing to become a Psychological Operations Officer within Army Special Operations... **ERIC ZOLAN** is the guitarist with Big Beat Big Band, which released a new album, *A Very Big Beat Christmas*.

**2017 LAUREN BARNES** is pursuing a doctoral degree in applied mathematics at New Jersey Institute of Technology... **AGUSTIN CASTILLO**, a teacher at the School of Information Technology in Paterson, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps., was featured in a new video produced by William Paterson's College of Education that is aimed at attracting more veterans to public education.

**2018 JOHANA CABA, MA '20**, is the public information officer/social media coordinator for the County of Essex... **LAUREN JIMENEZ** was named head girls basketball coach for the North Bergen Bruins.

**2019 CECIL ALEXANDER, MM**, was featured in an article in *Jazz Guitar Today* on his career as a guitarist, composer, and educator... **RYAN DOYLE** works for business publisher Uner Barry in the editorial department creating original content for COMTELL, Foodmarket.com, and SeafoodNews.com.

**2020 VINCENT DORIO** was named a probationary police officer with the Lyndhurst Police Department... **EMMA GRITSCH** is a student at Union Theological Seminary, where she was featured in a student profile article on the school's website... **ANTHONY MORREALE** was named a probationary police officer with the Lyndhurst Police Department... **IMGE ULUDOGAN** is a health education field representative for the Morris County Office of Health Management. She recently gave a presentation at the Senior Resource Center and Washington Township Public Library in Long Valley on "COVID-19: What Seniors Should Know."

**2021 MARY ELLEN LEVINE, DNP** was named 48th president of the New Jersey State Nurses Association.

## Mourning the loss of . . .

- |   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| '44 HELENE GOODMAN ARONOFF*<br>Boca Raton, FL<br>February 15, 2021            | '69 ROSEMARIE DODD<br>West Barnstable, MA<br>November 18, 2020            | MARGARET WILCOX CRAIG, MA<br>Wyckoff, NJ<br>August 3, 2019       | '91 GERALD HUNTER<br>North Caldwell, NJ<br>November 20, 2020   |
| '57 JANE DIXON FREDERICKS*<br>Fort Myers, FL<br>October 25, 2020              | '70 GRACE GAUS DONNELLY,<br>MA '77<br>Mahwah, NJ<br>November 23, 2016     | '80 GEORGE PETERSEN, MED<br>Clifton, NJ<br>March 30, 2020        | CHRISTOPHER WOJCICKI<br>Little Ferry, NJ<br>November 14, 2020  |
| '58 CATHERINE KELLY<br>Trumbull, CT<br>February 6, 2021                       | LEE LANCELLOTTI<br>Vernon, NJ<br>February 17, 2021                        | ELLEN FLACH PRENDERGAST,<br>MA<br>Durham, NC<br>January 13, 2021 | '92 ADELE DEMARCO, MS<br>Ridgewood, NJ<br>November 14, 2020    |
| JEANNE (MAICKI) MARKHAM,<br>MA '66*<br>North Haledon, NJ<br>September 5, 2020 | '71 HELEN BURNS HANSON, MA<br>Naples, FL<br>January 1, 2021               | '82 MARY DUFFY DUNN<br>Riverview, FL<br>November 7, 2020         | '96 ELAINE BUSCEMI, MED<br>Naples, FL<br>November 9, 2020      |
| '59 DIANNE MORRIS GREFF<br>Wayne, NJ<br>January 29, 2021                      | '72 CHRISTINE KOCZWARA, MA<br>Cookeville, TN<br>November 24, 2020         | JOHN RICE<br>Newark, NJ<br>September 15, 2020                    | '06 KATARZYNA TIELUSZECKI<br>Toms River, NJ<br>October 4, 2020 |
| '60 JOE CLARK<br>Gainesville, FL<br>December 29, 2020                         | '77 CAROLYN MCIVER FIMIANI<br>Leland, NC<br>July 26, 2020                 | '84 DANIEL COLLINS<br>Randolph, NJ<br>March 4, 2020              | '12 JENNIE ALONSO BYRAM<br>Morristown, NJ<br>January 22, 2020  |
| ROSEMARY JOURNICK<br>RACKIEWICZ*<br>Brunswick, ME<br>October 14, 2020         | WILLIAM MORGAN*<br>Mt. Arlington, NJ<br>November 6, 2020                  | '85 DIANE DAVALOS<br>Knowlton Twp., NJ<br>December 10, 2020      | '13 STEPHANIE HILL<br>Upper Arlington, OH<br>December 22, 2020 |
| '62 BEVERLY CLANCY<br>Murrells Inlet, SC<br>February 22, 2021                 | JOHN RATZER<br>Hamburg, NJ<br>February 22, 2021                           | LOUIS SARREL<br>Rockaway, NJ<br>April 21, 2020                   | '20 ANEFT BUDHAI<br>Paterson, NJ<br>November 16, 2020          |
| RONALD GRUNSTRA<br>Ocean City, NJ<br>December 28, 2020                        | '78 BEVERLY CROOK<br>MORTENSON, MA*<br>Frederick, MD<br>December 11, 2020 | '90 NITA KLASKOW, MED<br>Scotch Plains, NJ<br>January 1, 2021    |  |
| '64 ELAINE HANCLICH GARDNER<br>Hawthorne, NJ<br>December 1, 2020              | '79 KATHLEEN CAREN<br>West Milford, NJ<br>July 19, 2020                   | HELEN SAVAS, MA<br>Racine, WI<br>October 28, 2020                |  |

*\*Heritage Society Member:  
loyal donor who has given to the  
University for 20 or more years, no  
matter the giving level*



The University mourns the loss of **Thomas Kennedy '52, MA '59**, on December 3, 2020. He was 90. Kennedy, who earned a bachelor's degree in education and a master's in guidance, served in the U.S. Coast Guard during the Korean War from 1952 to 1956. Following his military service, he was a teacher and principal at Berkeley Elementary School in Westwood for 30 years. While at the University (then known as New Jersey State Teacher's College at Paterson), Kennedy was

a co-captain of the award-winning fencing team under legendary coach Ray Miller, and in 1952, was part of the men's epee team that placed third at the National Open Epee team championship. An article in the May 2, 1952 issue of *The Beacon* outlined his achievements during his senior year: "The outstanding individual performance of the year was turned in by Tom Kennedy, a senior in the General Elementary Curriculum. During the course of the season, Tom compiled a record of 27 wins and 3

losses. An amazing feature of Tom's record is his participation in foil, epee, and sabre."





# Pioneers Go Virtual

## Your Virtual Connections

Throughout this past year, while alumni have not been able to come together in person, the Office of Alumni Relations has provided many ways for you to stay connected to William Paterson and your alumni community in online and virtual formats. Graduates have had access to a variety of virtual programs and activities, such as the Virtual Book Club, social events, lifelong learning opportunities, career development programs, reunions, affinity gatherings, regional activities, and more. Subscribe to the WPUNJ Alumni YouTube channel to view past virtual sessions that are available for on-demand viewing. Here are just a few:

### VIRTUAL ALUMNI WINE TASTING

Enjoy a virtual wine tasting from the comfort of your own home! Explore wines from the Paso Robles region of California with two wine educators who will lead you through a tasting of four wines from two popular vineyards. You'll learn about the rich history and traditions of the area, along with the details, similarities, and variances of the featured wines.

### WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE IN NEW JERSEY

Professor George Robb, history, who teaches courses on the history of the British Isles, the British Empire, and the history of crime, leads an illustrated talk that discusses some of the important events and people of the women's suffrage movement in New Jersey.

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGH TEACHING: EXPLORING THE ALTERNATE ROUTE TO TEACHER CERTIFICATION AT WP

Learn about opportunities to join the teaching profession through alternate route certification programs. Hear from College of Education professors Alison Dobrick and Julie Rosenthal, and learn about opportunities to become early childhood, elementary, high school, or English as a Second Language (ESL) educators through WP's alternate route programs.

### NAVIGATING THE CHANGING FINANCIAL TIDE: PROTECTING YOUR LEGACY THROUGH HOLISTIC PLANNING

This webinar features an impressive panel of industry leaders who share the new tax proposals and planning options to help preserve your legacy. Featured presenters include Russell J. Fishkind Esq., partner, Saul Ewing LLP and member, William Paterson University Foundation Board; Maria Rollins '91 CPA, MST, managing partner, KRS CPAs, LLC and member, Cotsakos College of Business Advisory and Advancement Council; and Saul Simon '84 CFP®, CFS, RFC, financial advisor/wealth manager, Simon Financial Group.

### THE CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE STUDIES: CONNECTING THE CURRICULUM

Professor Alison Dobrick, director of WP's Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, and advisory council members Professor Laura Fattal, teacher education, and Professor Miryam Wahrman, biology, discuss the Center, their research, and how it connects to the Holocaust. Learn about the history, activities, and faculty contributions to the Center and how it serves William Paterson and the greater community.

To check out upcoming virtual events and activities, and for more information about the WP Virtual Book Club, visit [wpunj.edu/alumni](http://wpunj.edu/alumni).

## Tap Into Your Career Resources

Are you currently searching for a job, considering a career transition, or looking to take your career to the next level? The Office of Alumni Relations and the Career Development Center provide a wide range of career services to support William Paterson alumni in their career endeavors.

### JUMP START YOUR 2021 JOB SEARCH SERIES

To help alumni in their career search, the University launched *Jump Start Your 2021 Job Search*, a virtual series of monthly career workshops earlier this year. The series offers alumni the opportunity to learn the key elements of a job search strategy and a step-by-step approach to landing the job they want.

Executive coach Robert Hellmann, president of Hellmann Career Consulting, a certified GetFive Senior Career Coach, and a LinkedIn Certified Professional Recruiter, leads the series, providing an informative and strategic approach while taking the guesswork out of the job search.

To date, four sessions in the series have taken place:

- "Plan and Organize Your Job Search Campaign"
- "Revitalize Your Marketing Materials—Resume, LinkedIn Profile, Pitch"
- "Get Good at Getting Interviews—Tap into the 'Hidden' Job Market"
- "Turn Interviews into Offers"

These sessions can be viewed on demand on the WPUNJ Alumni YouTube Channel.

Alumni are invited to join in the final interactive session:

- "Effective Salary and 'Job' Negotiation – Make Thousands in Minutes" | Tuesday, June 22, 2021

Registration is required for each session. Please register online at [wpunj.edu/jobsearch](http://wpunj.edu/jobsearch). Upon registering, you will receive a confirmation email with details on how to join the webinar.

### HANDSHAKE

Through the Career Development Center, alumni have access to Handshake, an online portal where you can view job postings, access and attend career and networking events, and more.

Alumni have access to the full resources of the Career Development Center for up to one year after graduation. Resources include career coaching, resume review, mock interview, job search support, and more. Visit [wpunj.edu/career-center](http://wpunj.edu/career-center) to learn more.

### HIRE A PIONEER

Is your company looking to hire? Recruit a fellow Pioneer! Our campus recruiting program is designed to help you make connections with our qualified and diverse students and alumni. Employer engagement opportunities include career and internship fairs, networking events, access to Handshake to post jobs and internships, and more. Contact [CareerDevelopment@wpunj.edu](mailto:CareerDevelopment@wpunj.edu) to learn more.

### LINKEDIN

Don't forget to join the official William Paterson University Alumni Group to connect with fellow Pioneers, build professional connections, and stay informed on career and professional resources and events.

# Alumni Connections

## Alumni Exhibit Pioneer Spirit—Supporting Students

The spirit of giving has been especially vibrant in and around the William Paterson community this past year, despite—or perhaps inspired by—the challenges faced by all during the global pandemic. Here are just a few examples:

### PRESIDENT’S LAPTOP CHALLENGE

The University hosted a Zoom with President Helldobler for alumni on November 19, 2020, with nearly 70 alumni participating in the event. In addition to discussing the latest University news, accomplishments, and plans, and providing an opportunity for alumni to ask questions, President Helldobler announced the President’s Laptop Challenge, asking alumni to collectively raise \$500 to fund one laptop for a student in need. His call to action was met with a resounding Pioneer response—as alumni donated more than \$7,000, funding laptops for 14 deserving students. Peter Grisafi ’66, MA ’69, a member of the Alumni Executive Council, led the effort by making a \$500 matching gift, followed by Linda Niro ’76, a member of the William Paterson University Board of Trustees and Foundation Board, thereby inspiring others to do the same.

### GIVING TUESDAY

The University’s annual Giving Tuesday campaign, celebrated on December 1, 2020, raised nearly \$29,000 for eight different crowdfunding initiatives across campus, including support for the Pioneer Food Pantry, a scholarship for students who are involved with the campus radio station, Brave New Radio, and research stipends for Honors College students. Jim Nall ’71, Foundation Board member, and Aaron Van Duyne III ’75, MM ’08, chair of the Foundation Board, generously supported the day through matching gifts.

“The generosity of University alumni, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community benefits our students in numerous ways for generations to come,” says Pamela Ferguson, vice president for institutional advancement and president of the Foundation. “We are so incredibly thankful for the extra recent support shown to our students as they work to receive the greatest gift of all: education.”

wanted to be,” Roberts says of the latter, a huge smile across his face.

Thus, the Novartis Biome Digital Innovation Lab was born.

“We started this journey from scratch. We had to make what started as a bullet point on a PowerPoint presentation into a real organization, with real jobs and real output, all between January and October of 2018,” Roberts explains. “As a result of the lessons I learned throughout my life, beginning as a student-athlete at William Paterson and through the incredible hands-on education I received, I knew I could achieve this goal.”

Thanks to his successful launch of the Novartis Biome and its initiatives like the HealthX World Series—where competitors were charged with creating digital technologies to improve the monitoring and management of heart failure—Roberts was selected as Medical Marketing and Media’s Healthcare Transformer for 2019.

The COVID-19 pandemic, Roberts says, only sped up the work the Novartis Biome was already pursuing: connecting healthcare providers to a digital ecosystem that would impact the lives of their patients. For example, virtual doctor visits suddenly went from “something nice to have to an overall necessity during the pandemic,” Roberts explains. Figuring out how to best make such interactions virtual were among the exact issues the Biome was trying to tackle pre-COVID.

“As an undergraduate student, he had shown his potential to achieve a remarkable future career in science. It comes to me as no surprise that he is a business leader and a co-founder of the Novartis Biome,” Professor Menon says. “I am sure he will reach still greater heights.”

Albies echoes the sentiment. “I didn’t know it at the time when I tried to cut him from the team, but I could see it down the road: Robin was on a mission,” he says. “I think that’s the way he is with his whole life. He isn’t going to be denied.”

Roberts’s advice for first-generation and immigrant students like himself? “‘Afraid’ and ‘unsure’ should be your home base. Revel in it. If you’re doing it right, you’re always going to feel afraid and unsure and you are never going to see the end very clearly, if at all, and that’s okay.”

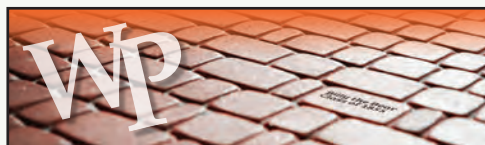
“Still today, I don’t know what the future holds,” he adds with a smile. “When people ask me where I see myself five years from now, I say ‘Five years ago I couldn’t have told you I’d end up here, so I have no idea. I try to stay true to who I am and remain relentless in pursuit of whatever I set my mind to. It’s the one thing I know will get me through any obstacle.’”

## Stay Connected

For information about events, reunions, and activities, to update your contact information, or to share your news and accomplishments, visit [wpunj.edu/alumni](http://wpunj.edu/alumni).

Follow us on social media to keep up with current events announcements, activities, alumni spotlights, and more.

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# PartingShot



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👤: @ham\_solo23 | Marc Hamon



20 Program  
Creates a  
Supportive  
Space for  
Students