

# BloomSBurg

THE UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE



## Ready for the Next Step

Professional U Opens Doors for Student Success & Alumni Engagement

Page 10

ALSO INSIDE

### Indomitable

Sean Sears Recovers from Injuries to Graduate

Page 14

### Recognizing Husky Leaders

Alumni Association Honors Huskies Who Have Excelled

Page 18



*President Bashar Hanna with graduate Sean Sears*

Dear BU Family,

Please enjoy the Summer 2022 edition of *Bloomsburg: The University Magazine*.

It was wonderful to host our commencement ceremonies in-person with a full stadium of graduates and their families. To see the joy on the faces of our students as they walked across the stage at Redman Stadium was gratifying. For most graduates, this was by far the biggest day of their lives and one they will not soon forget. I commend our graduates for their hard work, as well as our faculty and staff for the dedication and commitment they make each day in helping our students go beyond their limits to reach their goals.

At this year's commencement, we honored two very good friends of BU, Kerby Confer and Ronn Cort, with honorary Doctor of Commercial Science degrees. Both men delivered timely remarks with impactful messages for our graduates.

I also had the honor of recognizing two graduating seniors for some big accomplishments. Sean Sears was seriously injured in October 2020 when a motorcycle struck him. With grit and determination,

he proved doctors wrong by not only walking again, but coming back to BU and completing his senior year. He is truly an inspiration for "never giving up" and working to achieve his dream of being a college graduate. Another unique and remarkable story is Max Norfolk. Max earned his college degree before graduating from high school after starting in our Advanced College Experience program as a seventh grader. Congratulations to Max and all the members of the Class of 2022!

In this issue of our magazine, you'll get to know Craig Diehl '82, the man behind the Diehl Center for Law School Preparation. You'll also read about how BU's Professional U program is turning our graduates into prepared professionals. This unique difference-making initiative continues to grow and expand the opportunities for our students to land jobs.

Also, be sure to read the profiles of our 2022 Alumni Association Award winners. These inspiring stories show the onward and upward that a BU degree brings. Finally, read about the latest in the integration process.

As always, I thank you for your continued support of BU, and I look forward to seeing you back on campus this fall. Have a safe and enjoyable summer with your family and friends.

## **Go Huskies!**

Sincerely,

Bashar W. Hanna, President





# Big Event RETURNS IN A BIG WAY

and photos on Facebook of the student groups that had worked at their homes.

"Not only did they work hard cleaning up, but they also indulged me in lovely conversation during their lunch break," wrote resident Heather Hyatt. "From IT to communication studies, these five were from the Honors College and are the faces of our future. I thank them for their hard work and wish them all the very best and brightest future! Thank you!"

After a two-year absence, Bloomsburg's Big Event came back in big style on Saturday, April 2.

More than 1,200 student volunteers turned out on the crisp morning to visit more than 100 locations across the Town of Bloomsburg to help residents get their yards ready for spring.

Kathy and Bruce Musser shared their thanks through a letter to the Press Enterprise newspaper.

After the event, which is funded, created, and planned by the Community Government Association (CGA), numerous community residents shared thanks

"Living in a college town, sometimes we hear negative comments concerning the University. Counter that with things like the Big Event, lectures, concerts, sports programs, art exhibits, etc., as well as employment and cultural stimulation. College towns are special."



# Summer 2022



## Contents

- 4 AROUND THE QUAD
- 7 \$1 MILLION GIFT TO BOOST HONORS COLLEGE
- 8 SATISFYING THE NEED TO HELP
- 10 READY FOR THE NEXT STEP
- 14 SEAN SEARS COMES BACK FROM INJURY TO GRADUATE
- 16 COMMENCEMENT SPEAKERS HONORED AS NEW HUSKIES
- 18 RECOGNIZING HUSKY LEADERS
- 22 HUSKY NOTES
- 27 A TRAINER TO CHAMPIONS
- 31 A GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY FOR NELSON FIELD HOUSE

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**Bloomsburg: The University Magazine** is published three times a year for alumni, students' families, and friends of the university. Back issues may be found at [issuu.com/buhuskies](http://issuu.com/buhuskies).

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# THE POWER OF THREE

## Integration Update

After more than 18 months of work by nearly 1,000 individuals, the integration of Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, and Mansfield universities under the banner of Commonwealth University officially takes place July 1.

This spring the integration process took several needed steps to make the transition a reality. On March 15, initial approval by the institutional accrediting agency, Middle States Commission on Higher Education, was received.

Accreditation by Middle States is required by the U.S. Department of Education and assures students, families, and communities the University has completed a rigorous review process and provides a high-quality education.

"Together, Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, and Mansfield embody the power of three, which will create a higher education experience, the likes of which is not possible without integration," said BU President Bashar W. Hanna, who led the Northeast integration process.

"It is a testament to the hard work and dedication of President Hanna and the students, faculty, staff, and trustees at Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, and Mansfield," said Dr. Daniel Greenstein,

chancellor of Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education. "Together, they will harness the rich heritage of partner campuses and combine their strengths in meeting the high standards required for accreditation while delivering affordable, high quality, career-relevant education to all."

Earlier in March, the Board of Governors of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education voted to approve the name Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania to represent the integrated entity for Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, and Mansfield universities. Commonwealth University will not serve as the primary public-facing identifier, allowing the universities to legally become one entity while maintaining their strong brands regionally and beyond.

The final piece of the puzzle came in late April when the NCAA approved to proceed with the plan to retain a full complement of NCAA athletic programs on the campuses that currently host them.

Each campus will maintain its full menu of sports offerings and remain wholly independent of each other. All athletic programs will continue to use their respective location name, existing logos, colors, mascots, and traditions.

"I extend our thanks to our NCAA colleagues and the Membership Committee for its consideration and approval of our plan to maintain the full complement of athletic teams at Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, and Mansfield," said Hanna. "Through our collaboration, we've ensured that our student-athletes have the opportunity to compete as they do today. Intercollegiate athletics hold a special place as part of the fabric of each of our campus communities and institutional brands. Together we can confidently move forward into the 2022-23 academic year and beyond — to cheer on the Huskies, Bald Eagles, and Mounties."

Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, and Mansfield are charter members of the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference and compete primarily at the NCAA Division II level.

Bloomsburg's 23 and Lock Haven's 21 varsity athletic programs include NCAA Division I men's wrestling programs that compete in the Mid-American Conference. Lock Haven's Division I field hockey program competes in the Atlantic 10 Conference. Mansfield's 13 varsity athletic programs include sprint football, which is a member of the Collegiate Sprint Football League.

For more information on integration, visit

[bloomu.edu/integration](https://bloomu.edu/integration)

# Top Faculty Recognized

Three BU faculty members, **Kerrie DeVries**, **Christian Grandzol**, and **Scott Inch**, were named the University's 2021-22 Outstanding Teaching Award recipients by the Teaching and Learning Enhancement (TALE) Center.

DeVries is an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology; Christian Grandzol is a professor in the Department of Management and International Business; and Inch is a professor in the Department of Mathematical and Digital Sciences. The faculty were nominated by graduating seniors from the Class of 2021-22 and selected by TALE's Outstanding Teaching Award Committee.

"Congratulations to this year's TALE Outstanding Teacher Award recipients," said President Bashar Hanna. "I am grateful to Kerrie DeVries, Christian Grandzol, Scott Inch, and all our outstanding faculty members who go above and beyond in support of our students and their success."

All recipients were acknowledged at the Spring 2022 commencement ceremonies



From left: Drs. Christian Grandzol, Kerrie DeVries, and Scott Inch

and awarded a plaque. In addition, recipients are awarded a professional development stipend through the BU Foundation.

The 2021-22 Outstanding Teaching Award Committee is composed of Victoria

Geyfman, finance; Michael Hickey, history; Denise Davidson, teaching and learning; David Fazzino, anthropology; Abby Hare-Harris, biological and allied health sciences; and committee chair, Lisa M. Stallbaumer-Beishline, TALE Director.

“ The investment will allow us to enhance our high-performance clinical practice environment and graduate more highly-qualified nurses in our surrounding communities. ”

— KIMBERLY OLSZEWSKI, interim associate dean for nursing

## Grant to Support Nursing Program

Over the last several years, the importance of nurses has become increasingly evident. To help grow the nursing department at BU, the Bloomsburg University Foundation has secured a grant from the First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania (FCFP) for \$40,000. The grant, awarded via the Ralph and Josephine Smith Fund, will be used to fund the construction of a state-of-the-art Nursing Simulation Center at BU.

"We are grateful for this support from the First Community Foundation Partnership. This award will have a tangible impact on the future of nursing in our region," said Kimberly Olszewski, interim associate dean for nursing. "The investment will allow us to enhance our high-performance clinical practice environment and graduate more highly-qualified nurses in our surrounding communities."

Bloomsburg University's nursing program is ranked sixth in the state of Pennsylvania and is highly sought after by prospective students. Due to the high demand among local aspiring nurses, the program has outgrown its current space, recently increasing its graduating class by more than 30 percent. The FCFP's support will help BU meet a critical need for the University and the region.



## Student EMTs Put Training to Use By Abby Stoudt, Student Assistant

When BU students **Alex Pasculle '22M** and **Erik Josephson**, both EMTs, got an ambulance alert on their phones about a student who was having a seizure, they wasted little time in coming to the aid of their fellow Husky.

For their actions, they were presented the Husky Hero award by Dean of Students Scott Kane.

In March, a student suffered a serious medical emergency in Sutliff Hall. Pasculle and Josephson put their emergency training into action. Pasculle was in a lab class when the emergency notification read across his phone.

"I was preparing a research project when the call came in," said Pasculle. "I was alerted of the emergency through an app we use at Bloomsburg Ambulance Service that a student in Sutliff was actively seizing."

After arriving at the scene, Josephson, who also received the alert, helped Pasculle get the supplies from the ambulance to start intervention to help the student.

"Alex Pasculle and Erik Josephson epitomize the Husky Family culture of our campus," said President Bashar Hanna. "This is another great example of Huskies helping Huskies. We are a stronger and more caring community because of these efforts."

Pasculle, from Pittsburgh, has always had a passion for helping others. He is a graduate student studying

molecular biology and will attend medical school this fall.

"I became certified as an EMT when I was 16 after joining my local volunteer fire department. I have been interested in emergency medicine for as long as I can remember," said Pasculle.

Josephson, a sophomore nursing student from Marlboro, N.J., has had personal experiences with medical emergencies and knew he had to get to the scene immediately.

"When I was younger, my dad had a stroke, and we needed to call 911, and seeing what the EMTs did for my dad made me want to help someone else," said Josephson. "Once I heard the call come in over the ambulance's radio, I knew we had to get there as soon as possible."



Alex Pasculle, left, and Erik Josephson, with BU police sergeant Heather Comstock and Scott Kane, dean of students.

## BU Expands Partnerships with Johnson College

Bloomsburg continues to forge partnerships to expand opportunities for students across the state. In April, Johnson College and Bloomsburg University signed a dual admission transfer agreement. Through the agreement, students who apply for dual admission and graduate from Johnson College's Associate's Degree in Electronic Engineering Technology program are guaranteed admission to Bloomsburg University. They will enter with at least full junior standing in BU's Bachelor of Science in Electronics Engineering Technology program.

Johnson College students transferring to BU must meet minimum cumulative grade point average requirements and satisfy all other transfer requirements. All agreements become effective in fall 2022. The agreement with Johnson College is in addition to BU's admissions agreements with 17 institutions across the state.



## Student Guard Member Presents Flag to BU

Leo Malfara, a sergeant in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, was one of several BU students deployed with an aviation unit out of Fort Indiantown Gap to Iraq/Kuwait from summer 2020 – summer 2021.

Malfara was a door gunner for a Black Hawk helicopter over Iraq/Kuwait during his deployment. While serving overseas, the BU military office and BU Student Veterans Association (BUSVA) sent care packages to Malfara and the other BU students deployed. As part of his thank you to the University, he presented a United States flag that flew on one of his missions to BU President Bashar Hanna.

*Those attending the presentation were, from left: Jared Stump '22, president BU Student Veterans Association; Leo Malfara; Kimberly Speece, student secretary in the Office of Military Affairs; BU President Bashar Hanna; Jared Devlin; and Chris Shiffer, graduate assistant in the Office of Military Affairs.*

## A Top Choice for Military Students

Bloomsburg once again earned the Pennsylvania National Guard Associations' (PNGAS) Guard-Friendly School designation for 2022. BU is one of 57 colleges and universities earning the Guard-Friendly designation that recognizes the best practices of the schools that meet and exceed the standards adopted by PNGAS.

"This recognition demonstrates our University's commitment to supporting and celebrating our students who proudly defend our nation," said BU President Bashar Hanna. "As a University community, we strive to serve our

military students in exemplary ways because they deserve nothing less than our very best."

Developed by the PNGAS Education Advisory Council, the PNGAS Guard-Friendly School standards were designed to recognize colleges, universities, and trade schools that meet or exceed 10 criteria that create a supportive learning environment to assist Guard members pursuing post-secondary degrees.

Bloomsburg University is the educational destination for more than 300 military

students and that number has been growing steadily in recent years. BU is different from many other colleges and universities in its unique approach to the different needs of military students. The centerpiece of those efforts is the Office of Military and Veterans Resources, which works for current and former military members, spouses and dependents, and ROTC cadets. BU also enables students to obtain academic credit for their military experience through a Military Academic Credit Review Board.



# An Investment in *Excellence*

## \$1 Million Gift to Boost Honors College



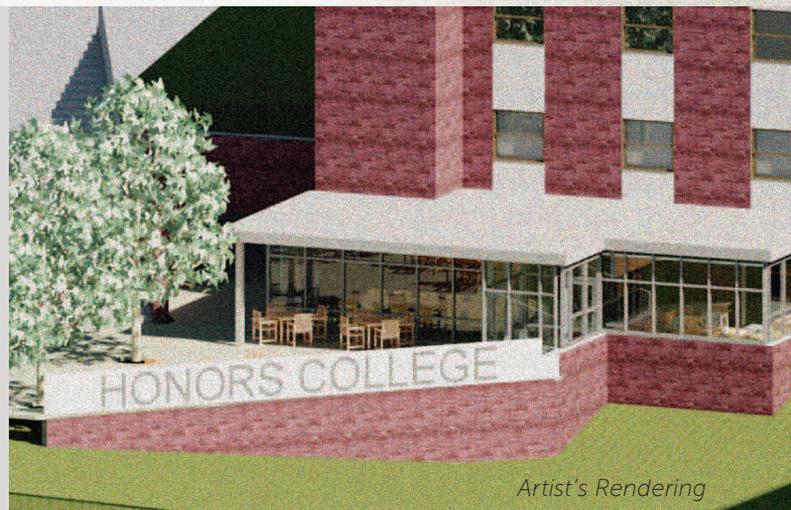
As a first-generation college student, **Steve Jones '83** came to Bloomsburg University looking to find his way in the world. Now, nearly 40 years later, he and his wife, Melanie Sanchez-Jones, have made a \$1 million gift for the BU Honors College to support the construction and enhancement of Lycoming Hall, the Honors College designated residence hall.

BU Honors College is a driving force in attracting high-achieving students and has quickly outgrown its space. The reimagined facility will provide Honors College students with a collaborative living and learning space to realize their academic and intellectual potential.

Jones, who recently retired as the president and CEO of Covanta Holding Corporation, has been a loyal donor to BU for nearly 40 years with contributions totaling more than \$2 million. Donating primarily through a foundation he created with his wife, they direct their support to high-impact learning practices, including study-abroad professional experience grants and Professional U initiatives, including support for four Professional U Faculty Fellowships.

"I came to Bloomsburg as a first-generation college student, looking to make something of myself and broaden my horizons," says Jones. "My own experience studying abroad provided me with the opportunity to do that. Bloomsburg opened those doors for me and propelled me to a very successful global career. I hope our gift to the Honors College can help provide more opportunities for high-impact practices."

"This gift from Steve and Melanie is a testament to their extraordinary generosity and vision to align their passion for



supporting BU students with the University's strategic priorities of attracting the best and brightest students for a world-class academic and co-curricular experience, and we can't thank them enough," says President Bashar W. Hanna. "Providing facilities like this to support our Honors students presents a tremendous advantage in helping us recruit high-achieving students."

The renovation of the Honors College facility will include a new entrance and outside gathering area for honors students and upgrades to the lobby, classrooms, conference rooms, and shared study spaces.

"The Honors College has experienced significant growth over the past four years," says Provost and Senior Vice President Diana Rogers-Adkinson. "This gift will help us create a space that fosters that while demonstrating to all the value of being in Honors College."

Renovations will begin in 2023 and are expected to be complete by the spring of 2024.

# Satisfying the Need to Help

## Diehl Center for Law School Preparation Opens Doors for Students

By Tom McGuire

*Becoming a lawyer had never crossed Craig Diehl's mind. That is until his business law professor told him he'd be a good one. An acumen for accounting, the seed planted by his professor, and a desire to help others, eventually put him on the path to making a \$1.5 million gift to BU to establish the Craig A. Diehl Center for Law School Preparation.*

It was tennis that brought **Craig Diehl '82** to Bloomsburg in the late 1970s. A successful career on the courts that included a then-record 99 wins led him to selection into the BU Athletic Hall of Fame in 2004.

But in the classroom, he excelled with numbers and had aspirations of becoming a CPA and working for one of the big eight accounting firms.

"In my junior year, Dr. Barbara Behr spoke to me after a Business Law class and said I had the highest grades in the class and the qualities needed for being a good lawyer," says Diehl. "I'm sure the look on my face gave away what I was thinking. There is no way I can be a lawyer."

Flattered, but unconvinced by her suggestion, Diehl graduated, became a CPA, and moved to Baltimore to work for what is now Price Waterhouse Coopers with fellow BU tennis alum Drew Hostetter '76. He was on his way to a career that would fulfill his dream.

But, like an itch you can't scratch, the desire to have a more direct impact on helping others, qualities learned from his parents, nagged at him.

"The more that I thought about how to help others, the more I came back to the words of Dr. Behr, 'did you ever consider becoming a lawyer?' I'd love to go to law school, but how? But where? How do you get in and how would I pay for it? I had lots of questions and no answers."

Diehl navigated through the application process and landed a spot at the Dickinson School of Law in Carlisle. And because he hadn't prepared all along for the rigors of law school, initially, he struggled with one thing that often impacts many first-year law students: the sheer amount of reading.

"I enjoyed reading the sports section each day, not 200 pages of law school material each night that first semester," says Diehl. "That first semester of law school was rough, but I rebounded and finished in the top 20 percent of my class. Students starting law school don't know that the first semester is really to 'weed out' those who can't cut it."

After working for a firm, Diehl started his own law firm. And that CPA license, which he still maintains, has paid off handsomely.



"Having my CPA license was a tremendous attribute and asset for me. I had a decent-sized client base for tax return preparation and grew the law business from this initial base of clients," says Diehl.

His firm further specializes in real estate, estate planning and administration, bankruptcy, corporate matters, and civil litigation.

"Many lawyers have no clue about the tax ramifications on large business transactions, so it provides me with a distinct advantage when I am trying to negotiate to assist individuals or businesses to get the best possible result for them".

Suddenly he was helping others overcome tough legal matters or deep financial



“ Dr. Hanna was beyond excited about having a resource for students who wanted to learn more about law school... before I knew it, he was calling people to get the wheels in motion.”

— CRAIG DIEHL '82



*Artist's rendering of future Diehl Center facility.*

concerns like bankruptcy. “You know, probably the greatest pride I have is helping individuals resolve difficult issues in their life or assisting businesses with strategic solutions to resolve their business matters.”

As he neared his 60th birthday, Diehl, who is also a Foundation Board member, began thinking how he could best give back to Bloomsburg, which had given him so much. He envisioned a place to help BU students with an interest in the law get answers to questions about law school so they could be better prepared.

Meeting with BU President Bashar Hanna to present his idea, he was surprised by Hanna’s reaction.

“Dr. Hanna was beyond excited about having a resource for students who wanted to learn more about law school,” says Diehl. “I thought he’d turn down the idea because you don’t think of BU as a place you go if you want to attend law school. But, before I knew it, he was calling people to get the wheels in motion. His reaction was beyond what I expected.”

Directed by Dr. Loren Selznick from the Zeigler College of Business, who worked as an attorney in New York City for years, the Center is now a hub for students who think a law career might be for them. Open to all majors, the Diehl Center sponsors a speaker series, recruiting events, visits to tour

law schools, LSAT prep course, and informational sessions about applying. Over the last five years, an average of 15 BU students have gone on to law school after graduation.

“Currently, more than 100 students have expressed an interest in the law and regularly use the Center,” says Diehl. “If the Diehl Center can help five or 10 students a year navigate the law school application process, that would be great. And if a student can determine law school is not for them, that’s just as important. It saves them time and money.”

So the student swayed by an observant faculty member is now doing what he always dreamed of: helping others.

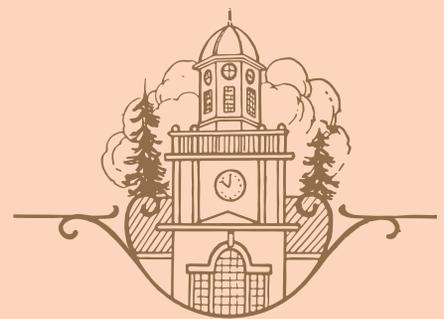


Hakeem Thomas '17

# READY FOR THE NEXT STEP

**Professional U** Opens Doors for  
Student Success and Alumni Engagement

By **Eric Foster**



*Nearly a decade ago, Dr. Lynda Michaels '87/'88M had a vision for involving alumni in the life of the University through more than socials and picnics.*

*"We started with this notion of 'how do we do alumni engagement differently?' We surveyed alumni and they said 'We want to be involved strategically and we're loyal to Bloomsburg. We love our alma mater and got a great education, but you could have done a better job with the career aspect of it,'" says Michaels, associate vice president for alumni and professional engagement.*

"We thought in terms of the student to alumni life cycle. If we are able to engage alumni with students in meaningful ways, alumni are happy, and we're modeling what it means to be an alumnus for current students so when they leave, they'll connect back and help the next generation."

Working with a team that included Erik Evans, vice president for university advancement, and leadership from the president's office and academic affairs, Professional U, one of the first efforts of its kind in the nation, was born. In short, Professional U is an engaged career community of faculty, alumni, and employer partners who support and prepare students for careers and life.

As part of the transformation, the alumni affairs, internships and career development functions, formerly separate, were combined as the Office of Alumni and Professional Engagement. Programs include the expected — workshops for resume writing and interviewing — and the unexpected.

A three-day Career Intensive Boot Camp, conferences and research days in each college all bring dozens of alumni to campus to share their experience with current students. And a dedicated financial support, Professional Experience

Grants, helps students afford to take advantage of internships and other professional opportunities. A Career Closet helps students acquire the perfect outfit for that first interview.

More than listing of programs and initiatives, Professional U effected a noticeable transformation across the campus — connecting different generations of Huskies into a family.

These programs make an impact on thousands of students each semester. In the 2021-22 academic year, more than 3,000 students participated in programs offered by the faculty and staff across campus, and another 900 students had internship experiences. In all, 60 percent of students engaged in Professional U. And alumni play a key role in that impact.

"At least once a week during the semester, somewhere on this campus, an alumnus is engaged in a program or an event for students," says Michaels.

"We have students who are reaching out to alumni on LinkedIn every day and getting answers to questions. We're doing student road trips to alumni businesses. It's about building a culture of fostering career connections."

**“ The reality of students’ experience is that they need to be mentored toward finding the right career, the right job once they graduate and faculty are in the best position to do it. ”**

— DR. CHRISTINA FRANCIS,  
*professor of English and a  
Jones Professional U Fellow*



Dr. Christina Francis



Dr. Lynda Michaels, center, with Lyza Klein '21/'22M, left, and Rebecca Nitka '19.



Nicole Stickel '22 and her adviser Michael Huben, marketing and professional sales.



Crystal Skotedis '03

“There are many skills you learn outside the classroom that are very important. Being able to make a positive impression at a dinner meeting, traveling, how you conduct yourself in a work setting. You don’t necessarily learn those things in the classroom.”

– STEVE JONES '83,  
Retired, former president and  
CEO of Covanta Holding

## TRANSFORMATIVE STEPS

**Hakeem Thomas '17**, a member of the Alumni Association Board, understands the power of Professional U as both a student and an alumni volunteer. For Thomas, who arrived at Bloomsburg fresh from military deployment in 2013, Professional U was transformative at each step of his college career.

“My first experience with Professional U was sitting down to translate military jargon to professional language for a resume,” recalls Thomas, who majored in digital forensics and now serves as cybersecurity manager for Netmaker Communications. “That morphed into them assisting me with applying for a grant to attend a student veteran’s conference.”

To prepare for the conference, Thomas needed professional clothes. “The first suit I owned was through the Career Closet. I was able to get the suit there and have it tailored to my size. A beige checkered suit. I still have it, still wear it,” says Thomas, who further prepared by attending the second Intensive Career Boot Camp. “There were a few ‘aha’ moments ... the dining etiquette dinner especially. In the military, I was used to scarfing down food. That has helped me throughout my career when I go to lunch or dinner with clients or the CEO.”

“At the conference, I landed an internship in California. It was a paid internship, but I needed a place to stay,” says Thomas, who received a second Professional Experience Grant (PEG) to allow him to take the internship. “Without the grant, I would have had to turn it down. It ended up being life-changing. A month and a half into the internship, they offered me a full-time position. I worked for them for a year and a half. And I still have that connection. I’m giving a speech for them in September. It all started with the resume, which led to the conference, which led to the internship.”

**Nicole Stickel '22** took full advantage of Professional U — participating in the Zeigler Institute for Professional Development (ZIPD), mock interviews, the etiquette dinner, resume workshops, and had two internships. “I was inspired by the students around me,” says Stickel. “So I went to my professor Michael Huben and I told him I wanted to be my best self. I don’t know what I want to do, but I love speaking to people. He said you need to be in sales.” It was a great fit, and the native of Phillipsburg, N.J., graduated in May with seven job offers.

## AN INVESTMENT IN STUDENT SUCCESS

Professional U is more than a reorganization of BU’s offices. It’s also an investment from the University, faculty, staff, and alumni.

Professional Experience Grants are among the most visible examples of those investments. “We’ve touched almost every major on campus with the grants,” says Michaels. “And it opened doors that students would never have access to. And so that’s the real success story of it.”

Michaels notes that the grants are funded by the University and donors. “To start out, it was funded half by the University, half by donors. We started with \$30,000 in money from donors every year and now we have grown that to \$100,000. And that fund continues to gain support.”

One of Professional U’s early alumni champions is **Steve Jones '83**, who recently retired from his position as president and CEO of Covanta Holding. Through a foundation he created with his wife, Melanie, Jones has supported study abroad professional experience grants, and four Professional U Faculty Fellowships. (See story on page 7.)

“There are many skills you learn outside the classroom that are very important. Being able to make a positive impression at a

dinner meeting, traveling, how you conduct yourself in a work setting. You don't necessarily learn those things in the classroom," says Jones. "What impacted me was that opportunity — going abroad to study in England. Once you get into the working world, you need to travel. I have traveled all around Europe. I am appreciative of the fact that you could put me anywhere and I'd find my way around. Both from a cultural standpoint and being able to travel around the world and not get lost."

"I came from a blue-collar family. My parents hadn't been overseas. Luckily, I had the resources to do it," says Jones. "The PEG grants allow students to go out and experience that."

Dr. Christina Francis, professor of English and a Jones Professional U Fellow, works to connect professional development to students who have majors with titles not exactly matching those of a future career. "The world is a different place than when I started teaching," says Francis. "The reality of students' experience is that they need to be mentored toward finding the right career, the right job once they graduate, and faculty are in the best position to do it."

"When students graduate, they're not going to be writing term papers, so one of the things I've done is assign a similar writing assignment that they might have done on paper, but in the form of a blog," says Francis. "It's getting them to navigate the world of writing in a digital space because they're going to be writing in digital spaces."

Francis helps promote student professional development by organizing CASSH Con (Careers in Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities Conference) each fall, one of a series of events for each college that includes the CATCH (Collaborating to Assist Teacher Candidate Hiring) Conference for the College of Education, the ZIPD Conference for the Zeigler College of Business and the College of Science and Technology Pathways Conference.

The conference introduces students to alumni experiences and encourages them to see how their coursework directly applies to careers. "When they go onto the job market, instead of saying, 'I took this class,'" says Francis. "I had this class, and from this class I gained these competencies."

For **Crystal Skotedis '03**, Professional U has become part of her life. She comes to campus several times a year to participate in the weekend-long Career Intensive Boot Camps and the ZIPD Conference.

"I was a first-generation student coming from a rural area. The faculty and professors invested in me. They saw something in me and I still have much gratitude for the foundation they gave me. When I took my first post-college job, I was shocked by how good an education I received," says Skotedis, principal at Boyer & Ritter, CPAs and Consultants. "I felt committed to giving the same opportunity to the next generation of students. It's the students who really maximize the opportunity and grab on to every event, session, and roundtable who set themselves apart. Some of them have a job even before they have a resume."

Skotedis' involvement with BU students extends off-campus as well. As president of the Central

Pennsylvania Chapter of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, she has invited BU students to attend its annual conference. "Twenty students come to the conference and get to meet with FBI, IRS, OIG, AG, and fraud investigators. I've invited other colleges, but no one mounts an army of attendees like Bloomsburg does."

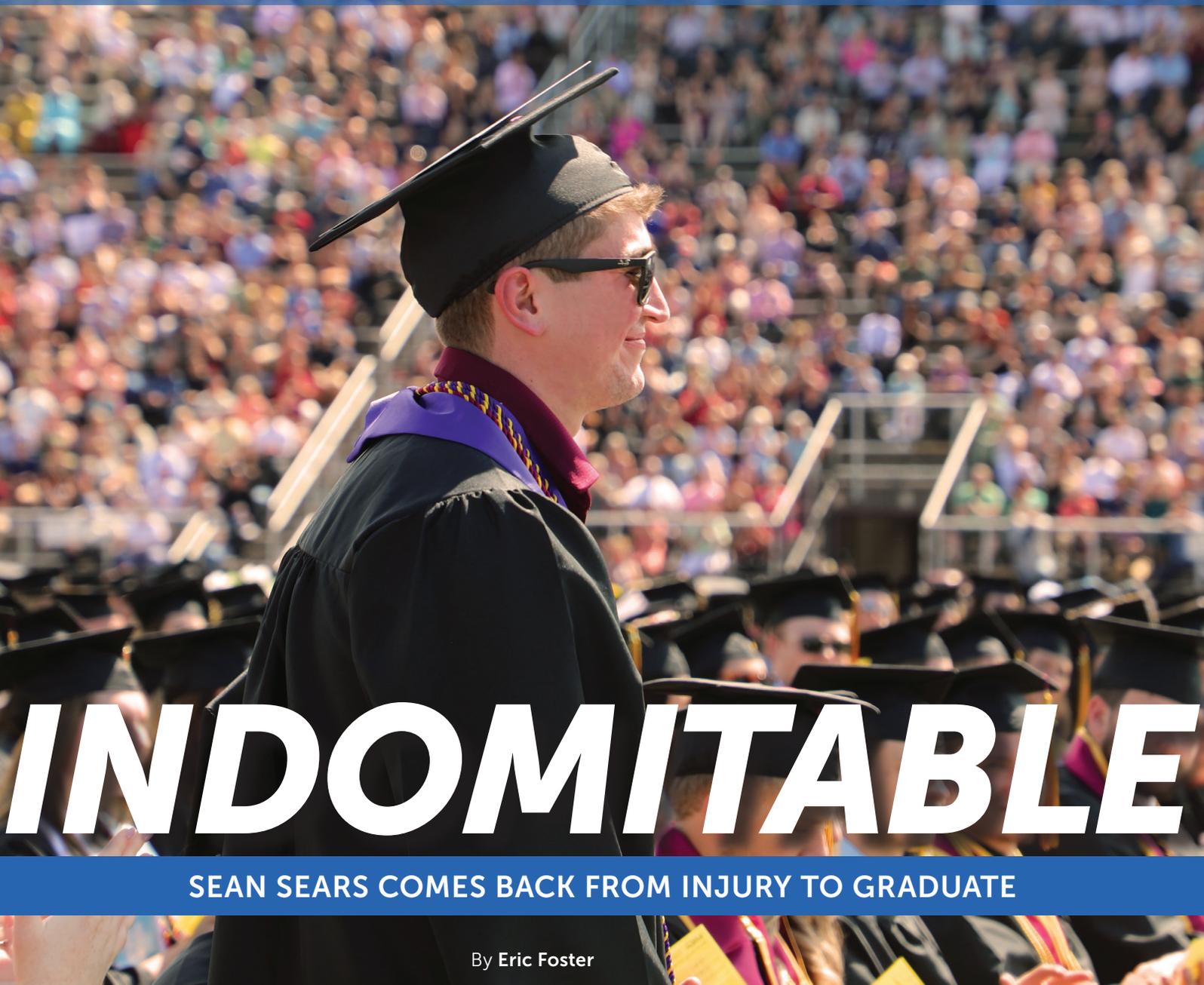
For Skotedis, the impact of Professional U on her own life has been profound. "I'm a big fan of the ZIPD Conference. It may be two days, but it lasts me the entire year because of the relationships I've made."

"Professional U has become a platform for hiring or mentoring students. We know the students by their first names when they return to the same events every year," says Skotedis, noting that she was one of the first BU graduates hired by her firm. "I was a catalyst, my supervisors saw something uniquely 'BU' in me. I've participated in hiring over 50 BU students since. It still rings true that when they start, they advance very quickly."

Jones sees the integration of Bloomsburg with Lock Haven and Mansfield universities as an opportunity to impact even more students. "The mission hasn't changed. I see this as an opportunity — bringing the best from each campus to the table and making it available to a broader group of students, and helping more students turn into fine young adults."



Steve Jones '83



# INDOMITABLE

SEAN SEARS COMES BACK FROM INJURY TO GRADUATE

By Eric Foster



The Sears family, from left: Marc, Sean, Terry, and Brianna.



Sean Sears celebrating his graduation with his team at Magee Rehabilitation in Philadelphia.

**W**aking out of an induced coma in November of 2020, **Sean Sears '22** overheard a doctor telling his mother that he may not walk again. May never be able to speak words correctly. May never go back to college.

A month earlier, on Oct. 17, Sears had been struck by a motorcycle in the early evening while walking across Lightstreet Road. The injuries were extensive. Sears' heart stopped for several minutes, his jaw and nose were broken, spleen ruptured, leg broken in three places from his knee to ankle, and a hairline fracture ran throughout his skull.

"There was a two-page long list of injuries," says Sears. "There were 18 reasons on the paper of why I should not have made it."

For Sears, not making it was never an option. And this May, he walked across the stage at Redman Stadium at commencement to receive his degree in digital forensics.

Those hundreds of steps across the stage were the culmination of support from his family, the Bloomsburg University community, and Sean's own indomitable determination.

In the months that followed the accident Sears' mother Terry visited every day.

"I convinced the nurses and doctors to allow him to listen to his favorite songs throughout the day and night by showing them medical evidence, which proved it calmed him and provided a pathway to regaining memories and connections," says Terry, who is a licensed clinical social worker in complex trauma. "We wanted those who loved him to have a way to connect with him and reach him through the medically-induced haze. We allowed him to hear their voices and messages of support and encouragement to fight his way back to them through phone calls."

To aid the family, the University provided an apartment on campus for Terry. The campus community also rallied with a Go Fund Me campaign that raised thousands of dollars to help the family with expenses.

"Bloomsburg University was truly at the heart of Sean's healing," says Terry. "From the very beginning, the University's support, guidance, and connections allowed me to focus on advocating for his needs and removed the financial burden and worry about how to make that happen from a distance."

Sean's own determination manifested itself soon after coming out of the coma. "Against the doctor's direction, I grabbed a walker," recalls Sears. "By the end of that day I was walking to the end of the hallway."

"Prioritizing the people I cared about helped me fix myself faster because I had set goals," says Sears. "I wanted to be home by Christmas. Initially, they told me it might be eight weeks minimum at the hospital and physical rehab, which I started in November. I walked out of there on Dec. 12. That was three and a half weeks rather than eight."

In addition to his family, Sears had the support of his professors, particularly Scott Inch.

"Throughout physical rehabilitation, I was emailing my adviser, Dr. Scott Inch," says Sears. Because of his head injury Sears

has amnesia of his time around the accident, and his language skills were impaired at first. "The first couple weeks of emails were in broken English. But he understood what I was saying. He wasn't just an adviser, he was a teacher and a friend."

"Over time I could see his writing improve, and that gave me hope that he was on the road to a full recovery," says Inch. "His emails were important to me and I hope they helped him in some small way. When Sean returned to class, it was clear that his focus on getting back to normal really had a profound impact on his recovery. He and I are much closer now than we were before the accident. I'm so proud of him and his determination to return to campus to finish his degree."

"Bloomsburg feels like a family," says Sears, whose parents Terry and Marc met at Bloomsburg. Sean chose BU because of its digital forensics program. "I've always had an interest in computers, but I didn't really know what direction to go with it. And then as I looked into digital forensics, it's like figuring out a puzzle and stopping the bad guys. For me it was a perfect fit."

"And Bloomsburg is very local to me — an hour and 15 minutes away," adds Sears, whose family is from Jermyn, Lackawanna County. "I've always been a very family-based person. I wanted to stay close to home in case they needed me for something."

The road to recovery wasn't easy. "Physical rehab was four times a day every day for weeks. And they'd be like, 'does this hurt? We can stop. We can take it easy,'" recalls Sears. "I'll think, no, I'm OK. We can keep going because, end goal of Christmas. In my head, I was screaming. It was painful. But if I don't keep pushing, I'm not going to make it all by Christmas."

Even when he returned home, Sean's journey was far from over. On waking from the coma, his formerly 215-pound frame had withered to 142 pounds. "I had no muscle mass. I've taught myself how to be well. I started going to the gym six days a week, gained muscle, and taught myself how to diet. Now I'm 198 pounds."

"One of the biggest hurdles I had to deal with, due to the head injury, was that my right eye wasn't able to follow things at the same rate that my left eye could. I wasn't allowed to drive. I had to go to vision therapy every day. After three months of doing that, I was able to drive again safely."

And there are lingering effects from the accident that may never go away. Such as neuropathy in his foot, which causes pain, particularly in the cold.

"I've got tinnitus in my right ear. It's just a very loud ringing." Sears has dealt with the ringing with determination and humor. "I've learned to come to terms with it so now it's just like free music. If that's the worst thing I have to deal with after everything I went through, so be it. I can walk and talk again. It's more important than to hear some ringing in my ear."

"Never give up," says Sears. "It sounds very simple. At the end of the day, that's the only decision you can really make. If something is really cutting you down, something beating you up. If you give up, then you're letting that win. As long as you never give up, even if something that can't be fixed, at least you try, which is the most important part."

# Commencement Speakers Honored as *New Huskies*

Sage advice from two business leaders highlighted the Spring 2022 Commencement ceremonies. Nearly 1,500 graduates received diplomas during the ceremonies.

Radio pioneer Kerby Confer and manufacturing firm president Ronn Cort were both featured speakers and awarded honorary Doctor of Commercial Science degrees at the ceremonies on May 15.

To the graduates of the College of Education and College of Liberal Arts, Confer advised, "Get your professional life in order before settling down. Then focus on your family like you focused on your profession and also take time to smell the roses and get to know your kids."

Confer, who has owned an interest and operated over 200 station licenses and was inducted into the Pennsylvania Broadcasters Hall of Fame in 2003, has led the Confer Radio Talent Institute held at BU each summer since 2013. He has also created a new legacy with a \$5.3 million gift to the BU Foundation designed to support and inspire the next generation of broadcasting students. The Kerby Confer Media Center, located in the soon-to-be renovated McCormick Center for Human Services, will include a fully renovated radio station, TV studio, and newsroom.

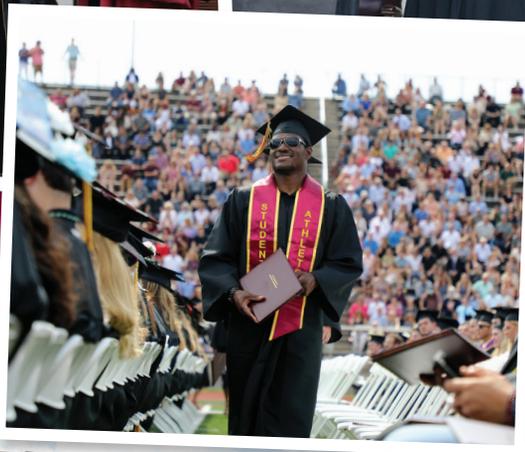
"Also, follow the job opportunity to wherever it takes you and know it will require sacrifice," added Confer. "Don't move just for more money. Be sure it is a learning and growing job with a mentor who cares about you."

Cort, president and COO of SEKISUI KYDEX, a Bloomsburg-based plastics manufacturer, spoke to the graduates of the Zeigler College of Business and the College of Science of Technology.

"At this moment, you are the future. You are relevant. You are important. You are needed. Your ideas, your talent, your passion, and yes — your hard work — is about to make a positive and meaningful difference in this world. How can I be so sure about this? Because my company has enough Bloomsburg University graduates who are thriving and making important differences for our company, our clients, and our planet," said Cort, who is a member of the Bloomsburg University Foundation Board. In 2019, with Cort as the driving force, SEKISUI SPI made a \$500,000 gift to construct The SEKISUI Professional Experience Lab for students in downtown Bloomsburg on the third floor of the Greenly Center.

"The difference that BU alumni make isn't an anomaly — it's a trend. You are ready to contribute. On day one," Cort said. "Whoever encouraged you to attend here or confirmed that Bloomsburg University was the right place for you — thank them. This school is special. It's relevant."

At the ceremony, BU President Bashar Hanna highlighted the top honor graduates from each college as well as Sean Sears, who had been seriously injured after being hit by a motorcycle in October, 2020.



# A Double Graduation for a High School Student

By **Abby Stoudt**, Student Assistant

As graduates waited to walk across the stage and receive their diplomas during commencement, computer science major Max Norfolk had a unique situation. Norfolk graduated from Bloomsburg University and Danville High School just weeks apart.

Norfolk, of Danville, started college before he had finished middle school. He enrolled in the Advanced College Experience (ACE) program at BU while in eighth grade in 2017.

"During the day, I would go to campus and attend classes like a normal college student. The only difference is that at night I still had my high school classes to finish online," says Norfolk. "I wasn't apprehensive about this when I first started at BU, because I didn't know that graduating from both college and high school at the same time was even an option."

Norfolk isn't the only member of his family to participate in the ACE program. His older brother, Zachary, participated

in the program, graduating from BU just one year after graduating from high school. His younger sister, Alexis, has just started the program while in seventh grade. Another brother, Jack, is taking general education requirements through the program while being a high school freshman.

Norfolk plans to further his academic career in a doctoral program and has been accepted into a program at Penn State. "I would love to do research in the technology industry to see the practical applications of what I work on."

Norfolk doesn't think that he has missed out on having a normal college experience by completing his undergraduate career early. "I don't think that anyone has had a 'normal college experience' because of the COVID-19 pandemic, he says.



One of his professors, Drue Coles, reflected on how Norfolk chose to complete an extra credit project with independent research on advanced elements of computer programming despite high grades in the course. "Max could be forgiven if he had coasted through his final weeks as an undergraduate, but instead, he kept a heavy foot on the gas."



## Dream Achieved *in Her Own Time*

For Jessica Kincaid, a dream deferred was not a dream forgotten. A 36-year-old wife and mother of three, Kincaid graduated in May with her bachelor's degree in social work.

"I always wanted to finish college," says Kincaid. "After graduating high school, I attended college for a few months. But my maturity, my heart, just wasn't in it. I found myself not going to class. I had kids, so then that took priority."

"However, once they got old enough, I was like, you know what? They can handle me not being around as much or be doing schoolwork at the table with them," adds Kincaid, who began her studies at BU in 2018 while working in the MRI department at Geisinger Medical Center.

"I enrolled at Bloomsburg University full-time and worked full-time. It was hard to be a full-time student, raising three children," says Kincaid, who has children Hailey, Eric and Sophia with her husband, Ryan. "But I took my education a lot more seriously than I did as a teenager. I think I'm just where I was always meant to be."

Kincaid chose social work because of her experiences working for Health and Human Services in Camden, N.J., many years ago. "I saw the poverty. I saw the children that were without, and I knew that I always wanted to be that person who makes a difference in one person's life. That's why I went into social work."

On graduation day, Kincaid had already been hired as an early intervention specialist at the CMSU (Columbia, Montour, Snyder and Union counties) Behavioral Health Development Services in Danville.

"What's nice is that my children have seen that there's no timeline on life. You do things when you're ready for it. They saw all the hard work and effort I put in, and I think it's just become a lesson for them too."

# RECOGNIZING HUSKY LEADERS

In a ceremony this June, the Alumni Association honored five Huskies who have excelled, inspired others, and shared their success with others.



**Tom Mason '84** applied to BU on the reputation of the business college but stayed for the fit. Nearly 40 years later, he has used his success to help other Huskies find their place as well.

To Mason, who describes himself as mathematically inclined, business just made sense.

"I learned what makes people 'tick,'" says Mason. "I learned it's a marathon, not a sprint. It's every day, grinding it out, and over time you get where you want to be. I liked the students at Bloomsburg because they were like me: hard-working and determined. I connected with alumni and students, and it went from there."

By his mid-30s, Mason had risen to a leadership position with his company where he could hire new associates. His first stop for recruiting? Bloomsburg. Since then, he's been helping fellow Huskies find their fit with every company for which he works. Once Mason was back on campus, he was able to reconnect with the business college and became part of the Zeigler College of Business Advisory Board, which he now chairs.

One thing Mason remembers well as a student is a business communication course that helped

## **William T. Derricott '66** **Volunteer of the Year Award**

*Teaching, Listening, and Hiring Huskies*

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## Thomas Mason '84

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him prepare for his first job through cover letter writing, resume building, and interview preparation. "That course really helped me get my first job. I felt comfortable and confident after I took that first job. That is one I will always remember."

Now, whenever there is a professional development or recruiting event on campus, Tom Mason is there — teaching, listening, and hiring Huskies. He has volunteered as an alumni panelist, resumé reviewer, and mock interviewer through the Zeigler Institute of Professional Development Conference (ZIPD) and the Career Intensive Boot Camp. In fact, he has attended every ZIPD Conference since its inception in 2011.

Over the years, Mason has not only advocated for students, he has also become an advocate for other alumni to get involved. "If you can help students who are like what you were like at their age, you will get more out of it than the students. I always feel better when I leave campus than when I got there."

Mason also volunteers during the Careers in Art, Social Sciences and Humanities conference, working to help students in the liberal arts see careers for themselves in the business world.

"We like liberal arts majors in business. They are generally good communicators and know how to connect and solve problems. They need to know that they don't have to be a psychologist or sociologist to contribute."

Mason was surprised when he received the news he had been chosen as Volunteer of the Year, "because I know there are others who do a lot," says Mason. "Bloomsburg has always been good to me and gave us all the tools we needed to be successful. I feel fortunate to be able to give back."

## Maroon and Gold Excellence Award

*An Unconventional Entrepreneur*

### Salim Weldon '08

"Popsicle" and "health food" aren't usually found together in the same sentence. Or the same wrapper for that matter.

**Salim Weldon '08** and his partner, Tona Simon, have worked hard to change that thinking. Weldon, from Philadelphia, has used his leverage and his network to make that change exponential — creating a ripple effect in his industry, his community, and on the corporate stage.

After losing relatives to health complications from obesity and witnessing the toll it took on the physical and mental health of the children in Philadelphia, the pair experimented with popsicles made of real fruit and brought them to a neighborhood cookout. The snack sold out in 15 minutes and on a whim in 2012, Whimsicle was born.

"People didn't think it would work at first," says Weldon, who serves as chief marketing agent. "But, through trial and error, we have been able to find a lot of success."

Since then, the focus has expanded from combatting childhood obesity through access to healthy snacks to creating gourmet experiences at corporate events, fairs, and celebrations. Weldon created a business model that not only provides a fun popsicle, but a user experience based around the incorporation of food, art, and fashion. Weldon brings his own videographer, customizes the sticks and the packaging, and incorporates the look and energy of the Whimsicles into wearable



food art that he designs himself.

"We're not vendors," explains Weldon. "Everything we do is an experience to engage the customer. I'm trying to start a conversation with every item I make."

Just over a decade after graduating from BU with a bachelor's degree in business management and a minor in social work, Weldon is using his unique business model to create partnerships with household names like Footlocker, Saks 5th Avenue, and Budweiser.

"I create outside the box partnerships," says Weldon. "The only way I would work with these companies is if they invested in this neighborhood, these schools."

Weldon's student career at Bloomsburg was far from assured. Because of his high school antics, Weldon's school counselor refused to support his application to BU. But Weldon had the grades, and through the efforts of the Act 101 program, and a ride from his youth football coach, Weldon arrived at BU in 2004 with a fly sense of style and a promise to his grandmother that she'd see him walk across the stage and earn a college degree.

"I had some experiences that required a tough skin and my mouth used to get me in trouble," says Weldon. "But it molded me into the person I am. Bloomsburg was a blessing and I did what I needed to do to graduate."

"There weren't too many of us, so we stuck together," says Weldon of his classmates in Act 101. "We promised we would all get through no matter how long it takes. Without them, I would not be where I am right now."

"He's always been a connector among people," says former classmate, friend, and Alumni Association board member Lamar Oglesby '07. "He is an expert networker. His networking ability will connect you with any major player in any profession."

"If you want something in this world, surround yourself with positive people," says Weldon, a devout Muslim and father of two children. "You have to figure out what you like and put in the work. We all go through phases, but respect yourselves, respect your parents, and respect your environment. Don't let anybody put you in a box."

"How Salim has grown is probably most impressive," says Oglesby. "I think anybody who knew him during college would attest to that. He always had a moral compass, but it's a lot stronger now. There's purpose behind it now."

"Bloomsburg molded my life," says Weldon. "Everybody deserves a second chance and then it's up to you what you do with it. That suit doesn't make you. My degree doesn't make me. Courage makes me. Determination makes me. I do it my way. If I fail, I failed my way and I'll be happy about that."



## Distinguished Service Award

*A Career in Real Estate and Giving Back*

### Chet Snavelly '70

Sometimes, it's not all about what you love to do, but rather the kind of life you want to live and finding a career that can get you there.

It took **Chet Snavelly '70** several years after graduation to find that perfect mix of the two. A first-generation college student and son of a Harrisburg grocer, Snavelly came to Bloomsburg as a business education/accounting major. Since then, he's developed the second largest commercial real estate portfolio in central Pennsylvania, reached the lifestyle he dreamed of, and made a difference in the Harrisburg and BU communities.

At Bloomsburg, Snavelly struggled early on; but after moving on campus his second year and joining Delta Omega Chi fraternity, he developed a sense of belonging and

*Continued next page...*

*Distinguished Service Award Winner, Chet Snavely '70 continued...*

matured. He made the dean's list his senior year and earned one of only three A's in his class of student teachers. "I loved teaching," recalls Snavely. "Then the stark reality of a teacher's salary hit me. I had bigger dreams and wanted to make a bigger impact."

After graduation, he tried his hand at a variety of jobs. He worked as a manager trainee for Traveler's Insurance, carpet firm sales manager, and an accountant for the Pennsylvania State Police. While with the state police, he spent much of his free time at the Harrisburg Area YMCA. "I would meet all kinds of people and later, I could call on them and they knew me," says Snavely.

When none of those jobs satisfied him, Snavely's father introduced him to a friend in real estate. It was a perfect fit. Snavely tapped into his talent for customer service and made the million-dollar sales club his first year. He moved to commercial real estate in 1976. Then, on New Year's Day in 1980 in the midst of a struggling economy, high interest rates and an energy crisis, Snavely opened Anchor Commercial Real Estate.

"I was young and I thought I could do this on my own," Snavely says. "I was going to make it because I was going to die trying."

Snavely spent the next 30 years developing and revitalizing building sites and residential neighborhoods, leasing commercial buildings; eventually specializing in medical buildings in the early 2000s. His firm soon became the second largest commercial operation in Harrisburg.

As he built his company, Snavely became heavily invested in the YMCA, which had done so much for him as a young professional fresh out of college. He served on the executive committee for nearly 30 years and brought their annual campaign revenue from \$58,000 to \$800,000.

"The YMCA is of crucial significance and an incredible community force," says Snavely. "We turn nobody away. The Y was good to me, and I always felt it was important to give back."

"Chet knows everybody in the community," says Rich Curl, president and CEO of the Harrisburg Area YMCA. "There's a lot of people who have a lot of acquaintances, but he knew their names, he knew about their lives. He's a big advocate of Harrisburg and all things Harrisburg."

Snavely was an early member of the Zeigler College of Business advisory board, and at the annual ZIPD Conference, he's shared his wisdom with other first-generation students looking to make their impact on the world. "Bloomsburg taught me independence and how to get along with people and there's a confidence that goes with that. I am able to work with students and pass along my thoughts for the business curriculum."

He has also been a member of the BU Foundation board, where his expertise in commercial real estate was key acquiring downtown properties for affordable student housing and instrumental in solidifying the University's presence downtown with the Greenly Center on Main Street.

"I've always wanted to be proud of the buildings I created and to add to the aesthetics of a neighborhood, not detract."

"It took me a few swings of the bat to find where I fit, but real estate has been very good to me. I wanted to make an impact and create something that will last, and I think I've done that. There is a saying to whom much has been given, much is expected," says Snavely. "And I've been given a lot."



## **Distinguished Service Award** *Making An Impact Across the Globe*

### **Lt. Col. Michael Kwasnoski '95**

**Lt. Col. Michael Kwasnoski '95** has traveled the world and made a difference in his Air Force career. It was a journey that began at BU but served him well as he's traveled the globe.

While his military career has taken him all over the world, Kwasnoski credits Bloomsburg for opening up the possibilities; not only through coursework, but through professional development experiences like study abroad and student organizations.

very positive. He graduated with a finance degree and briefly worked as an admissions counselor before joining the Air Force and receiving his master's degree in international business. He met his wife, Margo, while in grad school and the couple has two children, Noah, 16, and Selah, 14.

"The College of Business prepared me to problem solve, work on a team, analyze information, and communicate in the federal space," says Kwasnoski. "BU opened up my world view and was a jumping-off point for international travel and set me up well to work in an international environment. It also prepared with an emphasis on ethics and service to the broader community, which dovetailed with military service."

While in the Air Force, Kwasnoski was honored as a top instructor for ROTC at the University of Arizona, has served as squadron commander, and spent time in high-profile positions at the Pentagon and with NATO. He has been deployed to Afghanistan, Turkey, Italy, Belgium, and Southwest Asia and is currently an instructor at Naval Post Graduate School in California, teaching resource management to military leaders from all over the world. He has been honored as Air Force

Officer of the Year on several occasions.

"I wanted to see the world and serve my country and work in a job that I could be proud of," says Kwasnoski. "The military has given me that and it has been so rewarding. After 25 years it just keeps getting better. That's why I'm still in uniform."

Of all his accomplishments, Kwasnoski is most proud of the ways in which he has been able to make a positive impact on others, whether it was through assisting the Afghan police, carrying out a project in the Pentagon, or by volunteering with veterans' organizations in every community in which he is stationed. Kwasnoski has worked to feed the homeless in Hawaii, coached soccer in Virginia, and basketball in Belgium.

And, he has continued to maintain the BU legacy started by his dad. He has been a regular contributor to scholarship funds, and has referred many students to BU. In every instance, he is grateful for the ways in which his college and career experiences have allowed him to make friends around the world and appreciate the diversity of human life on this planet.

"Of all the many differences we have, so many aspects of our humanity transcend time and culture and nationality. Having friends and colleagues around the world has given me an appreciation for differences in culture, language and experience. There is beauty in that kind of diversity."

## Honorary Alumni Award

### *A Husky By Choice*

## The Honorable Mary Jane Bowes

Until this year, the closest Mary Jane Bowes had been to being a Husky was that she was married to one and wore her Husky pride as a member of the Council of Trustees. She laughs, recalling how much her husband, Jerry Morgan, loves his alma mater and how he always insisted they detour through Bloomsburg anytime they were in the area.

After years of marriage, that pride rubbed off. Though Bowes did not attend BU, Husky grit is reflected in her career path. A Georgetown University graduate and a Justice on the Pennsylvania Superior Court since 2002, Bowes has broken glass ceilings and served as an inspiration for the Huskies she mentors on both the Council of Trustees and those she hires in clerkships. She fought a negative evaluation from the Pennsylvania Bar Association prior to the election for the Superior Court by using their criticisms as talking points to prove them wrong.

"I turned the negative into an opportunity for me to move forward. Once I was elected, I tried to do the best job possible for the citizens of Pennsylvania," says Bowes. "You can't be defeated by others' impressions of you. So much of life is showing up and trying hard."

She was retained 10 years later, and the Bar Association gathered impressive and positive feedback from her colleagues and the community. She was retained again in 2021.

Bowes was appointed by Gov. Tom Corbett to the Bloomsburg University Council of Trustees in 2013 and served as chairperson through some of the most challenging transitions in University history. It didn't take long before she fell in love with BU "hook, line, and sinker."

"The people are so special," says Bowes. "Everyone is dedicated to the students and to doing all they can to ensure an outstanding education for the students. And the students are eager to make a life for themselves."

Bowes clearly has the heart of a Husky; citing hard work, dedication and focus as her personal measures of success and ones that she regularly sees in Bloomsburg students.

"We have a fair number of students who are first-generation so there is a greater appreciation than there might be in families who have gone to universities all over the country and a seriousness you may not find from other institutions," says Bowes. "They come very serious about obtaining their degree and learning all they can. It's easy for me to maintain a focus

on the students. We have a powerful mission to help students at such a critical point in their life. I've always had the courage of my convictions. Keep your eye on the mission and goals and objectives and try not to get distracted."

Despite the last few challenging years, Bloomsburg University is well on the pathway to additional growth and success through the integration process. "A path is seldom straight and smooth. When you look back, those bumps and challenges were the things that made you stronger or moved you in a direction what is ultimately where you're supposed to be."

For the Honorable Mary Jane Bowes, that path has made her an honorary Husky.

"Now my husband and I are on equal footing," says Bowes. "We can both claim Bloomsburg as our home. That is a wonderful thing. I am surrounded by Bloom graduates so I know the quality and character of these folks and I will say the highest honor of my life is to be considered an alum of Bloomsburg University."



## 70s

**James Doyle '72** received the Fran Fisher Award for Excellence in Sports Journalism with Andy Ulicny. The duo has called games together for the past 33 years — primarily for Bloomsburg University, Berwick, and Southern Columbia high schools, and were presented with the award by the National Football Foundation and the Central Pennsylvania Chapter of the College Football Hall of Fame.



**Barbara Hudock '75**, CEO and founding partner of Hudock Capital Group, has been recognized by *Barron's* and *Forbes* as being among the highest-ranked financial advisors in Pennsylvania

and America. In March, *Barron's* included Hudock in its 2022 list of America's Top 1,200 Financial Advisors, and among 48 Financial Advisors in Pennsylvania it recognized. In April, *Forbes* released its 2022 Best-In-State Wealth Advisors list, naming Hudock as one of the top Wealth Advisors in Pennsylvania.

**William Mansell '75** was inducted into Pottsville's Nativity BVM High School Athletic Hall of Fame. He graduated from Nativity in 1970, participating in wrestling, track, and cross country. His passion for wrestling is evident in his numerous awards in the sport. He coached various youth teams and was a wrestling coach for 25 years.

**Retired Lt. Col. Brent C. Bankus '79**, Collections Division Chief; U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, recently published a book and an article. His book, "They Also Served: The Pennsylvania State Defense Forces, 1918 to 1953," was published by Sunbury Press. His article, "U.S. Involvement in Small Wars: A Cold War Focus," appeared in the Winter 2021-22 issue of *Infantry*.

## 80s



**Anthony DiValerio '82**, managing director, private wealth adviser, and global sports and entertainment director at Morgan Stanley Private Wealth Management, has been named to Morgan Stanley's Chairman's Club, a group of the firm's successful financial advisers.

### **Carol Vance (Wary) Edwards '82**

recently published two books. "Adventures from the Edge" chronicles her travels in Central America, cruise ships, and an African safari. Her second book, "Jean Colarusso Fearless Friend of the Poor" describes the philanthropic life of a woman who worked with Mother Teresa in Mexico and impoverished people in Nigeria and the America southwest. She has also published a children's book, "Andrew Christopher Edward."

**Vicky Lysek Kistler '82** was named Allentown's community and economic development director. She oversees the bureaus of health, building standards and safety, planning and zoning, and special events, along with the offices of business development, housing and federal grants and human relations. Kistler has served as Allentown health director for 15 years.

**Ernest Long '84** has been hired as managing editor of *Lehigh Valley Business* and the *Central Penn Business Journal*, both BridgeTower Media publications. Long had been at the *Morning Call* in Allentown for 34 years, most recently as a content editor in charge of sports. He was also an assistant sports editor, a desk editor and copy chief, a reporter, and a sports news assistant.



### **Kent Overholt '84**

was recently named to the 2022 *Forbes* "Best-in-State Wealth Advisors" lists for Washington, D.C. Overholt is senior vice president for wealth management at Merrill

Private Wealth Management. Since arriving at Merrill in 1987, Holt has developed extensive insight into the complex investment decisions, opportunities, and challenges facing ultra-high-net-worth families. He is a co-founder of the nonprofit organizations Collect 4 Kids and Dancers Make a Difference.

## 90s

**Matthew Cutler '91** retired as a detective after 27 years of service to the City of Poughkeepsie (N.Y.) Police Department. Cutler began his career in 1994 and has been assigned to the Patrol Division, Community Policing Unit, and the Neighborhood Recovery Unit. In 2003, he was promoted to detective and has been assigned to the Child Advocacy Center (CPCA) for the last 15 years. At the CPCA, he worked on behalf of abused children. Cutler was also a crime

scene technician, former member of the Emergency Services Unit, and senior member of the City of Poughkeepsie Hostage Negotiation Team.

**Scott Davis '91** has been promoted to president and chief operating officer of Ekso Bionics Holdings, Inc., an industry leader in exoskeleton technology for medical and industrial use. Davis served as Ekso's executive vice president of strategy and corporate development since April 2021. He has more than two decades of worldwide leadership success in fast growing high-tech companies. Previously, Davis served as chief executive officer of Globalmatix, Inc.

**Joseph White '91** has been chief financial officer of Liberty IT Solutions since its inception in 2013. Liberty IT is a government contractor and preferred partner in the implementation of leading technologies at the Department of Veterans Affairs and other federal agencies. Liberty was acquired by Booz Allen Hamilton in June of 2021.

**Jeffrey Hughes '93M** has joined the Ares Management Corporation's Credit Group as a managing director to lead the firm's new effort in sourcing and managing privately placed investment grade credit investments. With more than 25 years of experience, Hughes was previously a senior director at Nuveen LLC and a vice president at Alliance Bernstein.

**Douglas P. Hibshman '93** was named Fox Rothschild's Washington, D.C. Office Managing Partner. Hibshman is a partner in the litigation department and represents national and international clients in the defense, health care, engineering, information technology, construction, manufacturing, and services industries with all manner of complex contract, compliance, tax controversy, and litigation issues.



### **Christopher Beadling '94**

was installed as president of the Pennsylvania Association of Realtors. The vice president and broker of record for Quinn & Wilson, Inc. Realtors in

Montgomery County, Beadling has been a Realtor for 20 years. He teaches Realtor ethics courses and has taught technology best practices at the national level. He also developed a real estate technology company, which he later sold. In 2015, he served as chair of the Suburban Realtors Alliance board of directors,

## HUSKY NOTES

an industry and consumer advocacy organization.

**Michael DeStefano '94** has been named chief operating officer of RKL LLP, a central Pennsylvania CPA accounting and business consulting firm.

**John Kveragas '94** has been named senior vice president and chief auditor of WSFS Bank, the primary subsidiary of WSFS Financial Corporation. Kveragas has more than 20 years of auditing experience and most recently served as the Chief Audit Officer for Bryn Mawr Trust.

**Mitch Parker '97** has been promoted to vice president/chief information security officer at Indiana University Health in Indianapolis, Ind. After graduating from BU, he earned a master's degree in information technology leadership from LaSalle University and an MBA from the Fox School of Business, Temple University. Parker has been at IU Health since 2016 and has worked in the information security field for 20 years.

**Thomas Murray '99**, co-founder of A Path to Wellness Integrative Psychiatry, Greensboro, N.C., completed the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business certification program in Entrepreneurship in partnership with Babson College in December 2021. A Path to Wellness Integrative Psychiatry provides innovative, socially just, and recovery-oriented mental wellness services, psychotherapy, and relationship and sex therapy.

**Jacqueline Stephen '99/'02M**, director of the office of distance learning at Mercer University in Atlanta, received a Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program award to Azerbaijan. She was selected for her expertise in instructional and curriculum design. Her research has examined factors associated with persistence of undergraduate online students.

## 00s

**Angela Charnosky '01** has joined Weis Markets as senior director of enterprise services. Charnosky brings over 20 years of progressive technology experience in health care and industrial manufacturing. In her new role, Charnosky will join Weis Markets' information technology team and oversee a team of enterprise architects, business systems analysts, and project managers.



## Langello Scores a First as Alabama TV Sports Director

**Rosie Langello '16** has been named sports director at WSFA-TV in Montgomery, Ala. She is the first woman to serve as director in the station's 67-year history.

"She brings strong storytelling abilities, a fun, bubbly spirit, as well as a commanding presence," says Scott Duff, the general manager at WSFA. "Her energy is infectious and her passion for sports is as strong as I have ever seen."

Sports have been a huge part of Langello's life from an early age — from playing soccer as a child to coaching the Lebanon County Special Olympics soccer team with her father. At BU she was a video director and news writer for BUNow.com, a radio personality for 91.1 WBUQ [now WWSK], and an intern in the sports information office with Tom McGuire. She then earned a master's degree in journalism from Northwestern University.

Langello began her career as a producer at WBRE/WYOU-TV in Wilkes-Barre, then took her first on-air job at WTAJ in Altoona. At WTAJ she covered Penn State athletics before landing her first big break when she was hired at WPRI in Providence, R.I.

"Take the job right out of college even if it's not what you want. I took a production job and I wanted to be a sports reporter," said Langello. "Getting your foot in the door is more important than starting on-air right away. I produce every single day. I am so thankful for that first production job. So, if it is offered, take it."

In Providence, Langello covered the New England Patriots, Boston Bruins, Boston Celtics, and the four NCAA Division I teams in the state. She also increased coverage of local high school sports in June and won a New England Emmy award for most outstanding sports feature for a story on a high school football player's viral moment caught on camera, sparked by his bond with his father.



**Yvonne Wenger '02** has been named director of community affairs for the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Most recently serving as the director of communications

for Baltimore Council President Nick Mosby, Wenger has nearly 20 years of experience as a journalist, including at *The Baltimore Sun*. Her in-depth research and reporting on poverty and the root causes of challenges in Baltimore City often led to greater scrutiny of existing problems and improvements in policies and structural practices. Her award-winning creation of the multimedia presentation "The Wait," which outlines her personal story of caring for foster children and eventually adopting her daughter Adeline, inspired numerous others to become foster parents.

**Thor Edmiston '03M** has been named superintendent of the Warrior Run School District. He was previously director of curriculum and instruction at Mid-West School District.

**Lucas Blair '04** has been named chief technology officer for InContext Solutions, the global leader in 3D simulation software for retail. Blair will lead the acceleration of InContext's platform strategy and innovation roadmap and manage all teams in the areas of 3D content, software architecture, R&D and Innovation, UX/UI, and data science.

**James Smith '04** has been named vice president for finance and chief financial officer of United Health Services (UHS) and UHS Hospitals in the greater Binghamton, N.Y. area. In his new role, Smith will manage the financial operations of the health-care organization. Smith, a certified public accountant, joined UHS in 2018 as senior director and system controller, supervising all accounting for the UHS healthcare system.

**Carol Kupsy '05** has been promoted to assistant vice president, assistant controller at First Columbia Bank & Trust, headquartered in Bloomsburg. Kupsy has 29 years with First Columbia.



**LeeAnn Gephart '06** has been named SVP, chief consumer banking officer at First Citizens Community Bank in Montoursville. She has over 15 years of experience within the banking industry.

She volunteers time to numerous non-profits, including serving as co-founder, race chairman and board member at K's for Cancer of Lycoming County, the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, the Agency Engagement Committee, the Pennsylvania Bankers Public Relations Committee, and as a board member at L.I.F.E. Child Care Learning Center. In 2019 and 2020, Gephart was awarded the Foremost Under 40 Award by *Pennsylvania Business Central*.



**George Aulisio '07** has been named dean of the Weinberg Memorial Library at the University of Scranton. He has been serving as the interim dean since July 2021. Having

earned a degree in philosophy at BU, he earned a Master of Science in library and information science from Drexel University, a Master of Liberal Arts in philosophy from the University of Pennsylvania and is completing his Ph.D. in philosophy at Temple University. He recently published a book on philosophy collection development for an imprint of the American Library Association, and he served as editor of the *Library Materials and Pricing Index* from 2018-22.

**Kevin O'Donnell '07** has been named assistant to South Middleton School District superintendent James Estep. O'Donnell has 15 years in education, mainly with the Mifflin County School District, where he was the chief academic officer.

**Rachael Prosseda '07** and her brother Luke have taken over the Vineyard Restaurant in Fountain Hill Borough, adjacent to Bethlehem.

**Michael Keller '08** has been named marketing manager for Barry Isett & Associates (engineers and consultants) for the Lehigh Valley region. His previous experience included marketing roles for nonprofit organizations including Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation, the Greater Lehigh Valley

Chamber of Commerce, and Discover Lehigh Valley.

**Shawn Clark '09** and his wife Melissa recently purchased the former Rothermel-Heizenroth Funeral and Cremation Service in Elysburg; Rothermel-Heizenroth Funeral Home in Mount Carmel; and Kull-Heizenroth Funeral Home in Ashland. Clark formerly owned and operated a funeral home in Lansford for 10 years.



**Anthony Postupack '09**, senior commercial loan officer with Mauch Chunk Trust Co., was elected to the board of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Business Alliance Business

Finance Corp. His primary role will be to review and approve SBA 504 loan requests for business customers and offer his knowledge of commercial lending and credit. He is a graduate of Leadership Carbon in 2012, Schuylkill Executive Leadership in 2021, as well as the Pennsylvania Bankers Association School of Commercial Lending in 2013.

## 10s

**Jennifer Yeatts '10** has been promoted to client relationship manager for SEK, CPA & Advisors. Based in the Hanover office, Yeatts specializes in audit and accounting services to nonprofit organizations, local government entities, and employee benefit plans. In the community, she serves as an annual gala volunteer with Sweet Charities and as a member of the Hanover Area Young Professionals.

**Christopher Bizup '11** was promoted to sergeant in the Somerset County Sheriff's Office. Bizup became a Somerset County (N.J.) corrections officer in 2013 and the following year, attended the Passaic County Police Academy Class 14-44 and graduated with the Class Marksman Award.

**Matthew Kennedy '11** has been elected to the C.F. Martin & Co. board of directors, a closely held family business. The nephew of Chris and Diane Martin, Kennedy has been a full-time employee of Martin for nearly a decade and has held a seat on the board of the Martin Guitar Charitable Foundation.



**Christine Pangelinan Orlando '11/'21M** has been named director of philanthropy for the Community Giving foundation in Berwick. Orlando has been with the Foundation since 2009, and has held

roles in communication, development, and grant making. She most recently served as senior program officer, where she implemented and facilitated the grant making, Youth in Philanthropy, a nonprofit leadership series, and scholarship programs.

**Kenneth Lawson '12** has been promoted to vice president – relationship manager for commercial and middle market lending at Lakeland Bank, a community bank that services New York, New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania, and parts of Connecticut. Lawson joined Lakeland in 2015 and has served in increasingly responsible roles.

**Dominick Mireles '12** has been named director of the Office of Emergency Management for the City of Philadelphia. Mireles has been with OEM for over seven years, serving as deputy director

for operations. He oversees all aspects of the city's planning for, response to, and recovery from emergencies, disasters, and complex planned public events.

**Melanie Ortiz '12** has taken ownership of the Lewisburg Studio. A photographer, Ortiz is also a former New York City and Philadelphia model.

**Kelli McGeehan Fester '14** has been named vice president, e-banking and customer support manager at First Columbia Bank and Trust, based in Bloomsburg. Fester began her career in banking in 2018 as a customer support supervisor.

**Sean Acton '15** was promoted from controller to CFO at Shades of Light, a lighting and home décor company based in Midlothian, Va.

**Daniel Croall '15**, an officer with the Winston-Salem, N.C., police department, was honored with the Life Saving Award by his department for saving the life of a man who was shot.

**Bryce Foster '15** is in Europe teaching English at IES Jaime Ferrán, a high school near Madrid, Spain.

## 20s

**Chad Cooperman '20** is coaching baseball for the Northwestern Lehigh School District.

**Brennen Foster '20** is an engineering field technician with American Engineers Group, Harrisburg.

**Angela Atherton Crossley '21** has been named vice president, e-banking and deposit solutions officer at First Columbia Bank and Trust, based in Bloomsburg. Crossley has more than eight years of banking experience with First Columbia.

**Brooke Norton '21M, AGNP-C**, has joined the gastroenterology and hepatology team at Guthrie in Sayre with clinical interests in general gastroenterology, swallowing disorders, and irritable bowel syndrome.

## Marriages

Ray Kowalski '00 & Chris Kupchik

Maria Pettinato Bozzo '13 & Mark Bozzo

Scott Brown '14 & Rachel DeFrain Brown '15

Kylie Vuksanic Dominski '13  
& John Dominski '14

Lauryn Filipkoski Kobrynich '10  
& Christopher Kobrynich

Jason Oldenbittel '16  
& Leslie Hess Oldenbittel

Brittany Cavanaugh Smith '14 & Sean Smith

Rebecca Zamonas '16 & Michael DeMarco

## Births

Kathryn (Guenther) Vagell '06 & Craig Vagell, a daughter, Evelyn Catherine Vagell, Dec. 22, 2020

Lauren Erdman-Sheeler '14 & Ben Sheeler, a daughter, Olive Ann, July 31, 2021

Kimberly (Berger) Golomb '14 & Jason Golomb, a son, Matthew William, Feb. 1

Bradley '10 & Caitlin (Waymire) Fritz, a daughter, Brynlee Ann, Feb. 4

Amy (Wislock) Shultz '11 & Peter Shultz, a son, Aaron Joseph, Feb. 4

Jay '07 & Ashley '09 Collins, a daughter, Maeve Beverly, Feb. 8

Nicole (Hoffman) Wenner '07 & Joshua Wenner, a son, Kason Ernest, Feb. 15

Tim '09 & Kristy (King) Sones, a daughter, Sage Hadleigh, March 10

Jacob '12 & Kelsey (Bruce) Olsavsky, a daughter, Eleanor Quinn, March 11

Brianna (Taylor) Morrison '15 & Ryan Morrison, a son, Deegan Ronald, March 29

Michael '15 & Jesseca '11 (Whitenight) John, a daughter, Erica Carol, April 5

Alissa (Dewalt) Tobias '15 & Christopher Tobias, a son, Jaxon Ryan, April 23

Erik '13 & Kasi (Ristine)Beagle, a daughter, Amelia Hope, April 27

Weston Brehm '13 & Jackie Zeisloft-Brehm, a son, Ernest Hiram, April 30

Kayla Lynn (Hanley) Huntington '16 & Tyler Michael Huntington, a son, Carter Michael, May 4

Anysia Ensslen-Boggs '05/'07 & Christopher Boggs, twin sons, Walter Harold and Peter Joseph, May 10

Lindsey (Allegar) Shultz '12 & Brett Shultz, a son, Jamison Taylor, May 19

Caitlin (Tevis) Persico '11 & Christopher Persico, a son, Calvin Arthur, May 31

## In Memoriam



### DONALD CAMPLESE

*Professor Emeritus and Area Real Estate Developer*

**Professor Emeritus Donald Anthony Camplese**, 88, of Bloomsburg and Marco Island, Fla. passed away peacefully on April 16. He embodied the American dream as a first-generation American, his father immigrating to

the United States from Italy and his mother immigrating from Portugal.

He earned a Master's Degree of Education and a Doctorate of Education from West Virginia University. He served his country during the Korean War, stationed in Germany and playing basketball for the United States Army from 1957-59. He married Kay Rosencrance in 1970 at Bucknell University, where he was a professor, and later settled in Bloomsburg where he was a professor at Bloomsburg University and a prominent real estate developer. He retired as professor emeritus in 1992 from BU, then focusing on real estate development.

Surviving are his wife Kay, a retired BU faculty member, son Cole Camplese '96M and his wife Kristin, daughter Kitt Camplese and her husband Steven Sheldon, son Donn Trenton, son Slade Camplese, and eight grandchildren. Celebrations of life will be planned at a later date for his family and many friends in Bloomsburg.

## Obituaries

Sara Jean Eastman Ort '43  
Joseph Kulick '49  
Celestine Longo Pekala '49  
Richard Stout '49  
Eleanor Poust Blackwell '50  
Delphine Buss Hamershock '51  
Charles Brennan '53  
Carolyn Yost Karas '55  
Irene Sones Huntsman '56  
Shirley Krum Thomas '56  
James Monaghan '57  
Thomas Reimensnyder '57  
Carl DeFebo '58  
Betty Stiff Laise '58  
A. Paul Franklin '59  
David Hauck '59  
Glenn Henninger '59  
Duane Hunter '59  
Jay Long '59  
Paul Crisler '60

William Vincent '60  
Mary Ann Kiessling Beasom '61  
Andrew Litavec '61  
Robert Orlandini '61  
Joseph Rishkofski '61  
Robert Vitacco '61  
Bonnie Rice '62  
Donald Poust '63  
Mary Jane Llewellyn '66  
Ruth Fahringer Hicks Nailor '65  
Barbara Nicholls Faust '65  
Rose Chiki '66  
David Conner '66  
Patricia Omara Lobus '67  
Kenneth Brown '68  
Frank Ferrari '68  
Albert Kieski '68  
Thomas Sipe '68  
Robert Ulrich '69  
Frances Arre '70

Joseph Delinsky '70  
Ildra Mielke '70  
Chester Bayliff '71  
Harold Kistner '72  
Sarah Anne Fellows  
Hubler Fallon '73  
Donald Geyer '73  
Donna Marie Petroski '73  
Ruth Ann Russell Stassi '73  
Janet Constantine '74  
Sally Derr McCloskey '74  
Richard Chukonis '76  
Frederick Colyer '76  
George Dauber '76  
Matthew Connell '77  
Robert Zegment '78  
Carol Killheffer Keene '79  
Richard Laubach '80  
Velma Herold Lungler '80  
Pamela Marshall Alex '81

Barbara Wasmuth Gombert '82  
Gemma Duffy '83  
Daniel English '85  
Anthony Eisenberg '87  
Charles Stoops '88  
Eugene Meek '90  
Susan Weaver '91  
Tammy Zeiber '95  
Christy Lopes Bossley Phillips '97  
Mindy Flegel Rouzer '97  
Amy Hall-Coulbourn '98  
Billy Miller '99  
Robert Williams '00  
Georgia Carinci '04  
Patrice Lyons Rives '05  
Joseph Godish '06  
Meagan Wentz '10  
Timothy Slattery '14  
Jamey Shade '17

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# A TRAINER TO CHAMPIONS

BU GRADUATE GIVES HELPING HAND TO SUPER BOWL CHAMPS



By Michael Gilger

*In the world of athletics, there are few contests that loom larger than the Super Bowl. Athletic trainer **Lawrence Jones '15M** has been a part of the NFL's biggest show twice.*

*An assistant athletic trainer for the Los Angeles Rams, Jones was on the sidelines helping players at Super Bowl LVI. It was the second time Jones made an appearance as part of the athletic training team at a Super Bowl, having joined the Rams staff in 2018 as a seasonal intern. But in 2022, it was different. The Rams left the field as victors.*

Jones' Super Bowl journey began on Danny Hale Field in Redman Stadium in 2014 and 2015, helping BU athletic trainer George Salvaterra treat Husky football players while he was completing his graduate athletic training program.

"It's funny, when I began my undergraduate education at Florida Atlantic University (FAU), I started out as an engineering major. After I went to my first calculus class, I went right to my adviser to change majors immediately. From there, I transitioned into more of an exercise science or physiology path," says Jones.

Following his undergrad at FAU, Jones applied to Bloomsburg for its athletic training program. A native of New Jersey, Jones knew about Bloomsburg because his family owned a tree farm in Benton, just over 16 miles from campus.

"I'm extremely grateful for my time at Bloomsburg," says Jones. "I met a lot of lifelong friends there and I have to give a big shout out to George Salvaterra. He's the one that really sent me down the right path and really got me going in athletic training."



Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania Summer 2022

"He had a huge impact on my life," says Jones of Salvaterra, who is still an athletic trainer for the Huskies. "He's a legend in the profession. He taught me a lot and is like a father figure to me. He taught me more than anyone else in my entire professional career has. I spent two football seasons with him and he's really the one who got me a chance in the league."

Jones says Salvaterra helped him get a summer internship with the Philadelphia Eagles in 2016 and 2017. The internship began before training camp in mid-July and lasted through August, giving Jones some firsthand experience of what it is like being an athletic trainer for an NFL team and what it takes to make it in the league. Having a foot in the door with the Eagles actually led him to becoming an expert on feet.

"I was fortunate to be there with their foot and ankle specialists, and that gave me some good exposure to everything," says Jones.

Jones was in Philadelphia for his summer internship and was around the team during the summer before their historic Super Bowl run in the 2017-18 NFL season. While Jones was not along for the whole ride, he still cherished the opportunity of being around the team prior to that season.

"Even though you're not part of the team and don't get the perks like I do now with the Rams, you still feel like you played some sort of part in it. But I enjoyed their run more as a fan. Growing up in that area, I was always an Eagles fan, so that year was special," he says.

Following his summer internships in Philadelphia, Jones landed a seasonal internship with the Rams in 2018. The seasonal internship was a two-year stint that lasted the duration of the

regular seasons and the organization hired him for a full-time assistant athletic trainer position in 2020, which is the position Jones now holds with the team.



Jones is one of six full-time assistant athletic trainers with the Rams, which is led by Dr. Reggie Scott, the vice president of sports medicine and performance. Along with sharing game day responsibilities, full-time trainers are delegated into a sort of a subcategory that is suited to their expertise. For Jones, he is head of the foot and ankle committee and oversees evaluations and research practices to prevent and treat injuries.

"There are a lot of layers to it for me specifically. From cleat-surface interaction and footwear selection to biomechanics and those type of things," says Jones.

Jones begins each season evaluating players to determine their best footwear selections, and that includes using technology to monitor a field's firmness based on a variety of variables, such as the length of a blade of grass. As technology continues to progress, Jones expects the evolution of his job to evolve as well. "We have a lot of really cool things coming down the pipe that we are super excited about."

With the evolution of athletic training and applicable technology, very specific aspects of the game are considered to prevent injuries and allow players to perform at the best of their abilities.

His advice to students graduating today. "Continue to learn, don't be afraid to work, and build relationships in your field. But the biggest thing is to just be ready to work hard."

***That's the Husky Spirit.***



Larry Jones with BU trainer George Salvaterra.

Larry Jones with fellow Los Angeles Rams trainers.



## Chris Bess SELECTED TO LEAD MEN'S BASKETBALL



**Chris Bess** did not travel the traditional route to becoming Bloomsburg University's newest men's basketball coach. His journey started playing a different sport.

Initially recruited to play football for Edinboro University, he walked on to the Fighting Scots basketball team appearing in 101 games and serving as a team captain for the 2009-10 season.

Off the court, Bess, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in finance and a minor in economics, was chosen to represent Edinboro at the 2010 NCAA Division II Leadership Academy. He was a member of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, and the recipient of the 2009 Edinboro University Ebony Excellence Man of the Year Award.

After graduation, he served as an assistant coach at his high school alma mater and was self-employed as a player development specialist. In that role, he built his network of contacts on the high school, AAU, and collegiate levels, which led him back to

Edinboro as an assistant coach for the men's team. Later, he spent five years as an assistant coach with Edinboro's highly successful women's program.

"It is a tremendous honor to be chosen as the next head men's basketball coach at Bloomsburg University," says Bess. "My family and I are extremely excited and grateful for the opportunity and cannot wait to become a part of the Bloomsburg family. Playing and coaching in the PSAC, I have always admired Bloomsburg University and its athletic department. Husky basketball has such a proud history, and I am honored to lead this program and these young men as we push forward and strive for greatness."

As for his coaching philosophy, Bess has a name for it. "Core Four. Stay versatile; always compete; grow daily; and serve others. I believe these principles lead to success in basketball and life and will serve as the foundation of our program."

## Jumping Into BU History

Women's track and field standout **Ashley Blannard** jumped her way to earning the Outstanding Field Athlete of the Meet Award at the 2022 PSAC Track and Field Championships.

Blannard, from Larksville, posted first-place finishes in the triple jump (11.87m) and long jump (5.75m) at the PSAC Championships in May to win the award, which is voted on by the conference coaches. She became the first BU athlete to win both the long and triple jump events in the same championship meet since 2016 when Kaylee Caruso '17 won both titles.

Blannard's performance at the outdoor championships came just two weeks after she shattered a program record in the triple jump. On senior night at the Maroon and Gold Invite in Bloomsburg, Blannard set the record with her jump of 12.14 meters.





## Defense Leads to Honors

Three sports. Three Defensive Player of the Year honors. Quite a year for the Huskies.

Women's soccer player **Natalie Holmes**, volleyball's **Alyssa Cianciulli**, and women's basketball's **Emma Saxton** were all named as the top defensive players in their respective sports — a rare accomplishment.

BU's first athlete to receive the postseason award was Holmes, who led the women's soccer team to a PSAC title and a 16-5-2 overall record. Holmes has been a huge factor in the Huskies' success over the past four seasons, holding teams scoreless 14 times and limiting opponents to a total of 65 shots on goal and 135 total shots this season.

In volleyball, Cianciulli earned the award after leading all of NCAA Division II in digs per set with an average of 7.00. Cianciulli's 749 total digs this year is a program record and she eclipsed the 2,000-dig mark for her career, finishing with 2,142 digs in three seasons with the Huskies.

Saxton averaged 1.9 steals per game in addition to 6.2 rebounds per game and a team-leading 13.4 points per game. She helped the Huskies hold teams under 50 points in a game nine times.



## Home Run Kings

Every baseball player, no matter the age or level of play, dreams of hitting a home run. Two BU players got to experience that thrill a record-setting number of times as **Kyle OFier** and **Ben Newbert** each shattered a school home run record this spring.

OFier became the program's all-time leader in career home runs when he hit his 38th against Adelphi in mid April. The homer shattered a 33-year record previously held by former Major League player Matt Karchner (1986-89). OFier finished his career with 47 long balls to establish a new record.

Less than two weeks after OFier became the all-time leader in career home runs, Newbert broke a six-year-old record with his 17th homer of the season against Mansfield, breaking the BU single-season record. Newbert finished the season with a PSAC-leading 22 round-trippers. OFier finished second to Newbert in the PSAC with 19 home runs — the second-best mark in school history.

In all, Newbert and OFier combined to hit 41 of the team's school record 79 home runs this season. Over the last five seasons, the teammates combined for 92 home runs and helped the Huskies win conference championships in 2019 and 2021.

## Wrestlers Named Scholar All-Americans

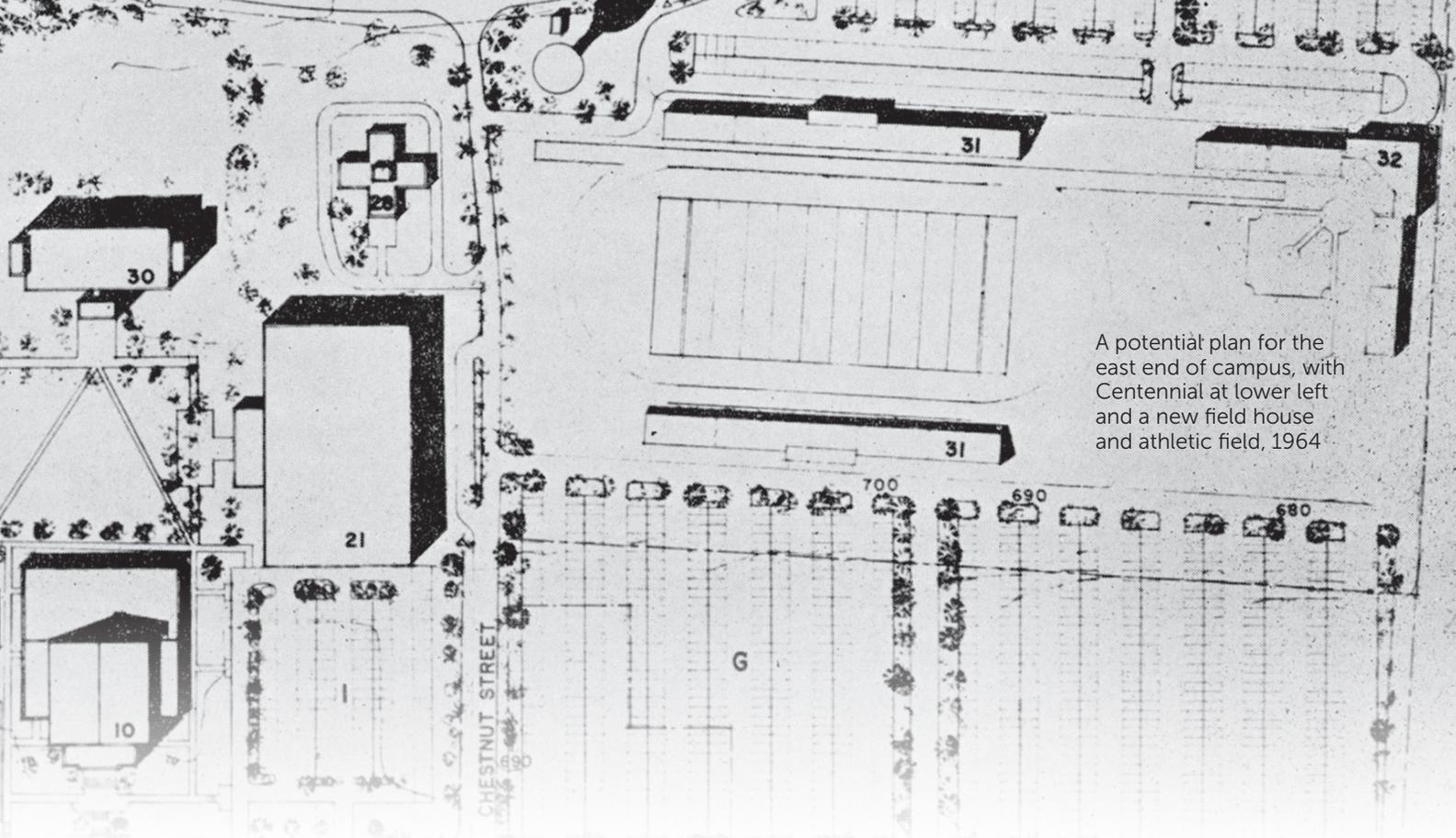
BU wrestlers **Alex Carida** and **Josh Mason** were named 2021-22 Division I Scholar All-Americans by the National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA) for the second straight year.

Mason led the Huskies with a 3.88 GPA in finance while posting a 20-10 overall record and earning a win in the NCAA Championships. The redshirt junior landed a spot in the national tournament after posting a second-place finish at 141 pounds at the Mid-American Conference (MAC) Tournament. His win at the NCAA tournament came through a fall in his opening bout.

Carida was named a Scholar All-American after maintaining a 3.67 GPA in supply chain management while going 26-10 on the season and 13-1 in dual matches. The senior also had 11 bonus point wins and was selected as a NCAA Championships alternate. He finished the season placing fifth at the MAC Tournament in the 157-pound class.

The two helped the wrestling team post a 9-6 record for the 2021-22 season.





A potential plan for the east end of campus, with Centennial at lower left and a new field house and athletic field, 1964

# A GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

## FOR NELSON FIELD HOUSE

By Robert Dunkelberger



Elna Harrison Nelson, 1950

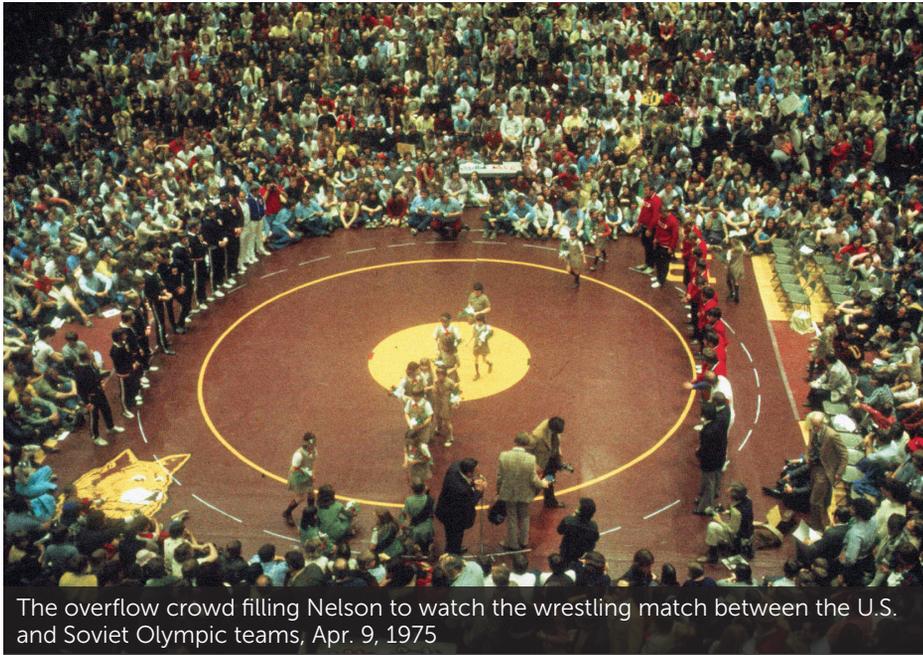
This fall marks 50 years since the opening of Nelson Field House and the start of its 50th season hosting athletics. Yet the field house's location on the hill overlooking the campus was not the original plan.

The first gymnasium opened on (lower) campus in early 1894, a state-of-the-art facility attached to the dormitory building, later named Waller Hall. By the 1930s, it was too small and funding was obtained from the federal government in 1937 to build a modern gym. Construction began early the following year and Centennial Gymnasium was dedicated in May 1942.

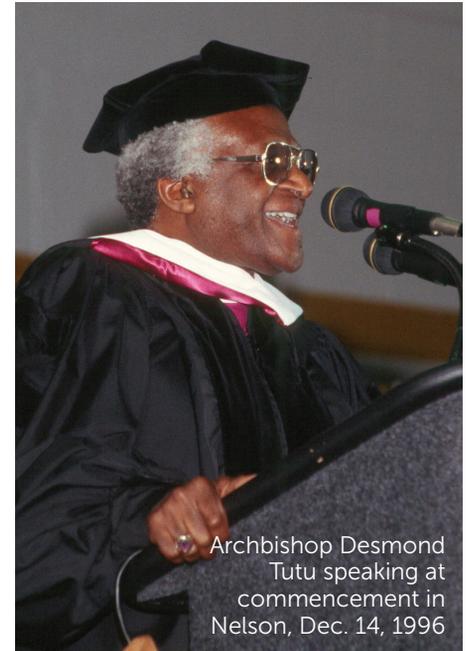
With enrollment growth in the early 1960s, planning began to replace the gym with a field house for both physical education classes and intercollegiate athletics. A master plan developed in 1964 designated a new location for the campus athletic fields — the current site of Andrus Library — next to which would be a field house near Centennial.

This was the plan until the decision was made not to use the land on the upper campus, acquired in 1962, for a junior college. With enrollment projected to grow rapidly for years to come, the majority of athletic teams would find a home there, while the main campus was to be the location for academic and student support buildings.

A new master plan was finalized in 1967. With the change in location to a hillside, the field house had to be redesigned. Further funding delays pushed groundbreaking to 1970. In August 1972, the field house was completed, built at a cost of \$2.6 million with a gymnasium, movable bleachers to seat 4,000, a swimming pool, classrooms, offices, locker rooms, and other athletic facilities.



The overflow crowd filling Nelson to watch the wrestling match between the U.S. and Soviet Olympic teams, Apr. 9, 1975



Archbishop Desmond Tutu speaking at commencement in Nelson, Dec. 14, 1996

The first athletic event held in the new field house proved a victory for the men's basketball team over West Chester on Dec. 2, 1972. A full house of 2,800 fans saw the Huskies rout the Rams 79-51. A week later, the wrestling team defeated Edinboro in its first match in the new venue. More sports began competing in the building, with men's swimming facing Monmouth College on Dec. 6 and, in the wake of Title IX, the college added a women's swim team. The women's team's first meet at the new pool took place on Feb. 7, 1973, in a victory over Mansfield.

On May 5, 1973, the field house was dedicated and named for 1911 graduate Elna Harrison Nelson. He returned to Bloomsburg in 1924 to head the health education department, became the first athletic director, and also coached the baseball team for many years. Following his retirement in 1946, Nelson served as president of the Alumni Association until his death in 1961.

One sport, women's basketball, would take another five years to make it to Nelson. The team continued to play in the smaller and cozier Centennial Gym until the women hosted and defeated Kutztown 73-61 on Feb. 2, 1978.

Intercollegiate contests were not the only sporting events held in Nelson. The facility also hosted international wrestling exhibitions, most notably one featuring the Soviet Olympic team. On April 9, 1975,

it competed against the United States Olympic squad before an overflow crowd, filling the bleachers and the floor around the center mat.

In addition to athletic events, concerts too big for the Haas Center have been staged at Nelson, in the 1970s and 1980s by big-name acts such as Billy Joel, Hall and Oates, and Pat Benatar, and in recent years, rap and hip-hop musicians. Nelson has also been the site of commencements. The first ceremony was on May 24, 1973, with the most prominent and best-

remembered on Dec. 14, 1996, when South African Archbishop and Nobel Peace Prize winner Desmond Tutu was the honored commencement speaker.

Nelson itself has changed, undergoing extensive remodeling that concluded in 2010. An additional sport, women's volleyball, now competes there. For 50 years, Nelson has served the Bloomsburg community, through athletics and numerous other events, and continues to be a landmark on the upper campus.

The first women's swimming team to compete in the Nelson pool, 1973





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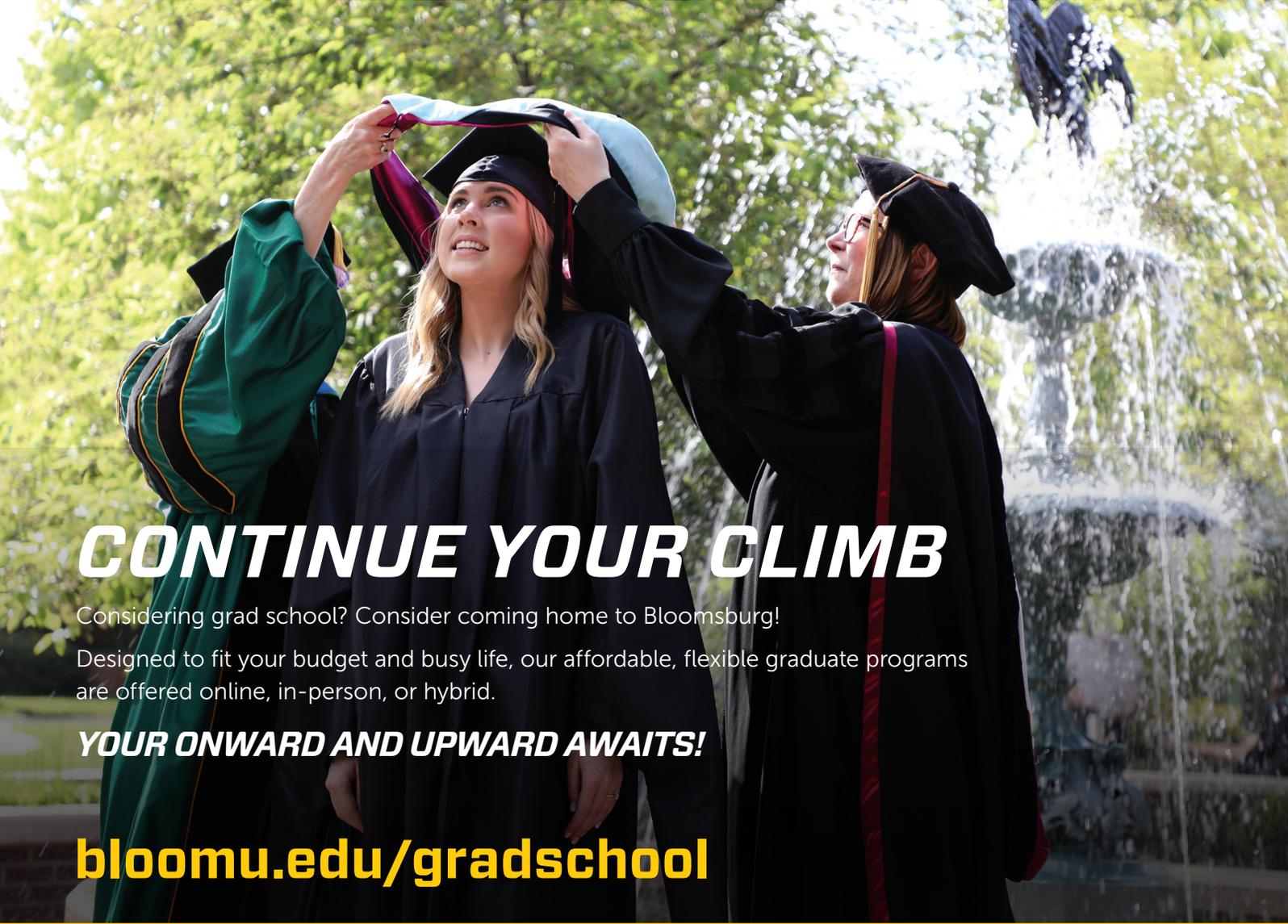
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