

MANSFIELDIAN

SPRING 2025 *magazine*



Building a Foundation:
Robert Strohecker

PAGE 10

Maisner's \$1 Million Gift

Largest in Mansfield Athletics History

PAGE 12

**Preparing the Next
Generation of Police**

PAGE 15

MANSFIELD 

COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY



Greetings Mansfield Family,

In this issue of the Mansfieldian, we celebrate the founding of the Mansfield University Mountaineer Foundation (MUMF).

In its first year of existence, the MUMF raised more than \$600,000. Since July 2024, donors have contributed more than \$2.4 million to support Mansfield students.

These gifts are already making a transformative difference in Commonwealth University's ability to improve the lives of students. And the impact of these gifts will be felt for decades to come. Because of the generosity of donors, new scholarships will allow students to pursue their education and graduate with less debt.

Among the donors who have led this effort are Robert Strohecker, who serves as the founding chair of the foundation, and faculty emeritus Roger Maisner, whose has committed a

record \$1 million to Mountaineer athletics. Other featured donations include those from Mark Doherty '95, Counsel of Trustees member Steven Crawford '81, a memorial gift in honor of Edith Johnson '50 and the Janice Kennedy/George Cass study abroad gift.

A college degree remains a critical tool for our students' upward economic mobility; and these generous donors help our students afford a CU degree so that they can experience the transformative power of education firsthand.

In these pages, you'll enjoy the sweet story of our business student and softball player Sarah Sherman's cupcake business.

We'll also learn about how faculty in CU's online Clinical Mental Health Counseling program teach students techniques to use games to help clients.

And we will meet two CU leaders: Provost Michelle Kiec and Council of Trustees member Angela Smith. These remarkable women embody a philosophy of leading through service.

Finally, enjoy the images of our fall Homecoming festivities and celebrate the remarkable achievements of our sprint football and field hockey teams.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "B. Hanna", followed by a large, stylized flourish.

Bashar W. Hanna
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Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education

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FEATURES

Leveling Up: Navigating Mental Health Through Gaming	6
Homecoming 2024	8
Robert Strohecker, Building a Foundation	10
A Look at the Past	23

DEPARTMENTS

Campus News	2
Alumni Spotlight	16
Athletics	18
In Memoriam	22
Q&A: Trustee Angela Smith	24



The University as Servant

By Eric Foster

Dr. Michelle Kiec, Commonwealth University's new provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, talks about the role of CU as that of a servant.

"We're here to serve the needs of our students," says Kiec (pronounced "kick"), who came to CU in July 2024 from Oklahoma City University, where she served as provost and vice president for academic affairs since 2022. "We're serving the needs of our region. We're serving people in the community. And we're preparing our students for a better life, for a future, for a career to be strong contributors to our society."

Balancing those interests takes a skilled touch—the touch of an artist, a musician, a director. And that is exactly what Kiec brings to the provost role.

A musician by training, Kiec holds both a master's and doctoral degree from the Peabody Conservatory of Music at Johns Hopkins University. She earned bachelor's degrees in music performance and German from the University at Buffalo. An avid hiker, Kiec has also trekked the entire Appalachian trail, almost exclusively during weekends over two and a half years.

"At the core of who I am, I identify as a musician," says Kiec, who continues to perform chamber music as a clarinetist. "Music is a form of engaging with people. The music that I make is primarily chamber music, it involves collaboration, a give and take. How do we blend to form a whole? That's how I think about leadership. We are better together than we are apart."

"We're here to serve the needs of our students. We're serving the needs of our region. We're serving people in the community. And we're preparing our students for a better life, for a future, for a career to be strong contributors to our society."

Kiec began her career as a music faculty member at the University of Mary in North Dakota. The collaborative skills learned as a musician propelled her to academic leadership roles in North Dakota and later at Kutztown University, where she served in roles including interim vice provost for Extended and Lifelong Learning and dean of Graduate Studies, acting dean of the College of Education and dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

To Kiec, CU represents an opportunity for students. "We are an institution with campuses of three different sizes, which is unique. A student may choose a campus because it's the right size, it feels right. At the same time, they can take some courses virtually at the other campuses. And we share operational resources university-wide, which helps make the university sustainable."

High School Students Participate in Model UN Conference

CU–Mansfield welcomed 130 students from 10 area high schools to participate in the second High School Model United Nations Conference in October.

Students were assigned countries and topics in advance and conducted research in preparation for the event. Concurrent simulations of the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council were held throughout the day.

The conference began with an opening ceremony in Straughn Auditorium. Admissions Director, Sean Stout, provided a brief introduction of Commonwealth University before keynote speaker, Dr. Linda Kennedy, associate professor, gave a talk on “The

Balkanization of the United Kingdom.”

As a person of Scottish heritage, she offered an informative and unique overview of the devolution of power in the UK to its four nations: England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

From there, students moved to their respective simulations, which were run by CU–Mansfield students. Political science major, Dallas Schultz, of Wellsboro, chaired the UN General Assembly simulation with secondary education major, Ryan O’Connor, of Canton, serving as the rapporteur. They were assisted by communications major, Jaydan Montgomery, of Southfield, Michigan. Fifty two country delegations, represented by more than 100 students, debated the problem



of plastics pollution in oceans and rivers and the lack of international regulations on armed drones and killer robots.

CU Offers Credit for Learning Completed Before Enrollment

Commonwealth University is offering qualifying students a unique advantage to get a jump on earning credits toward a degree before even taking a class at CU with the Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) program through the office of Workforce Development.

Through partnerships made with several area career and training centers, CU is offering students credit for prior learning if they choose to enroll in a program at any CU campus (Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, or Mansfield) that is related to the courses or training that they have already taken.

One of CU’s partners, Keystone Central Career and Technology Center, has had at least 10 students who have completed one of several pathways to CU’s early childhood education, criminal justice, health science, or general education programs.

As another example, a Muncy High School student enrolled in the health careers program at the Lycoming County Career and Technology Center also registered in a workforce development 90-hour non-credit

phlebotomy training over the summer.

Upon successful completion of the training, students will be able to secure employment as a phlebotomist. If the student chooses to further their education in a health science program at a CU campus, they will also be eligible to earn two credits toward their CU degree with the option to earn an additional credit if the student completes an externship.

CU’s Criminal Justice Pathway Program allows students to include Mansfield’s Act 120 Municipal Police Academy as part of the two-year or four-year degree program. Through the pathway program, students will earn an associate or a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice with 20 credits to be applied toward their bachelor’s degree and also be certified as a municipal police officer upon graduation.

In addition, CU is a military friendly institution recognizing students who have served in the military and who will receive course credit toward their degree at CU for their military training and experience.

No Tuition Increase for Seventh Consecutive Year

Commonwealth University students did not experience an increase in their tuition for the 2024–25 academic year. The Board of Governors for Pennsylvania’s State System of Higher Education voted unanimously to freeze tuition, keeping CU one of the most affordable public higher education options in the state.

This is the seventh consecutive year the tuition rate will remain the same. The repeated freezes save students nearly 25% in tuition costs compared to the price if tuition had risen at the inflation rate for the last six years.



Janeyda Ortiz

NAMED STUDENT TRUSTEE

Student Janeyda Ortiz has been appointed to the Commonwealth University Council of Trustees.

A sophomore business administration major from Bethlehem, Ortiz works in the president's office at the Lock Haven campus and is a member of the women's wrestling team.

Ortiz is a peer mentor for TRIO Student Support Services, a member of the Latino Student Association, and a member and social media manager for the Eagle Eye Club. She is also a member of the Outreach for Humanity Club and Athletes Bible Studies Club a Board of Governors Scholarship recipient, and a student representative on CU's strategic planning committee.

Ortiz came to CU–Lock Haven as an experienced advocate for students. She worked to have women's wrestling added to the offerings at Liberty High School in Bethlehem and was the school's class speaker of 2023. Ortiz credits her athletic experience with giving her the tools to handle pressure well.

CU Launches Nurse Executive Program

Commonwealth University has launched a new program to prepare nurses for executive leadership roles, The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP): Nurse Executive program consists of 29 credits delivered online asynchronously over two years.

The program requires 1,000 clinical hours, half of which are part of the curriculum and half are completed outside of coursework. Throughout the program, students also complete a personalized evidence-based project that seeks to improve some aspect of the healthcare system.

CU Awarded Grant to Develop Future Special Educators

The Pennsylvania Department of Education has awarded Commonwealth University \$20,000 as part of a grant program to grow the Commonwealth's next generation of special educators. The award is part of more than \$1.4 million that was awarded to 77 local education agencies and institutions of higher education.

CU will use a portion of the funds for recruitment events for high school students interested in careers within special education. The other portion will provide opportunities for current CU students in the special education program to engage in professional development activities such as



professional conferences and advocacy events. CU has approximately 275 undergraduate and graduate students in its special education programs.



Shown, with PA Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission members (far left and far right) are Sgt. Raymi Gausline, CU-Mansfield (second from left); Chief Jeffrey Perry, CU-Lock Haven; and Stacy Wagner, CU chief facilities and safety officer.

CU Police Departments Earn Accreditation

The CU-Lock Haven and CU-Mansfield University Police Departments have both earned accreditation from the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association through its Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (PLEAC).

Accreditation is a progressive and time-proven way of helping institutions evaluate and improve their overall performance by adopting and maintaining the best policies and practices currently found in the field of law enforcement, as determined by PLEAC.

"I am very proud of the men and women of the CU-Lock Haven University Police Department (CU-LHUPD) and the collective effort made

to achieve this accomplishment" says Chris Prescott, CU-Lock Haven chief of police, also acknowledging the work of Sgt. Matthew Coford, who acted as the department's accreditation manager.

"We started this process about two years ago at Mansfield and through a ton of work, mock assessment and final assessment it became a reality," says Jeffrey Perry, CU-Mansfield chief of police.

There are approximately 1,100 police departments in the state of Pennsylvania— 177 are accredited and only 10 are departments at institutions of higher education.

The CU-Bloomsburg University Police Department had previously earned accreditation.

LevelingUP

NAVIGATING MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH GAMING

By Julie Stellfox

Mental health used to almost be taboo to talk about. Today, many people take intentional steps each day to improve and maintain good mental health.

Strategies include the expected—exercise, a healthy diet, plenty of sleep, yoga.

Dr. Stephen Kuniak, a faculty member in CommonwealthU's online Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) master's program has another strategy to add to the toolbox—gaming.

Video games, tabletop games, role playing, and fantasy literature can all help some people through difficult times, says Kuniak, who is based out of the Lock Haven campus.

Kuniak has experienced first-hand the benefits of gaming therapy and has since brought it into his own personal practice as well as his classes, many of which focus on the practical application of the content for the students to use in their future practice working with clients.

The CMHC master's program is CACREP accredited and offers several concentration and certificate opportunities for students. The program also received the Outstanding Education Program award during the 2023 Pennsylvania Counseling Associations' annual conference.

"I really think that we have the best of all worlds. Delivered online, but taught in a way that resembles a traditional on-ground program," says Kuniak, a professional counselor for nearly 17 years, who has worked in family, substance abuse, and relationship counseling.

A gamer since childhood, at Saint Vincent College Kuniak conducted undergrad research projects on the benefits of fantasy storytelling.

During his first semester of his Master's of Counseling program at Duquesne University, Kuniak was involved in a serious car accident in which his car was hit head-on by another vehicle. His right femur was crushed and he had to endure reconstructive surgery involving a titanium rod and pins being placed through what was left of his leg. It was during his recovery when he began to see a clinical application of gaming.

"I found that diving deeply into fantasy stories and particularly deep narratives in the games that I enjoyed playing were a better way to occupy my mind than the pain medication I was given. And though this wasn't any sort of magic, I realized that there were some practical utilities to games," says Kuniak.

When he began family-based counseling, an in-home model of treatment where a child is at risk of removal from their home, he found that connecting with his clients quickly was imperative to helping them. Gaming began to be a bridge that made that rapid connection possible.

"Over time, I've found more opportunities to incorporate gaming into practice and expanding my repertoire of interventions," Kuniak says. "I've made connections between the interventions and the theories that we use in counseling. I also tend to teach these in specific courses where we learn more about incorporating creative interventions to reach clients in unique and out of-the-box ways."

Kuniak has found that integrating gaming into his teaching lessons helps him reach students who are also a gamer or are interested in pop culture. “I think it also shows students how to modify theoretical perspectives or specific counseling interventions to better meet the needs of our clients,” he says.

Gaming incorporates itself well into his courses, as it lines up with art and play therapy skills and shows the students how to use other areas of interest to help their clients.

“There is a perspective that gaming is something fringe and that only maladaptive people are engaging in these behaviors, but it’s estimated that more than 60% of the population game at least one hour a week,” explains Kuniak.

“There are a lot of reasons why people game,” Kuniak says. “The stories, art, and music can all be very deep and emotionally charged, it’s not just getting high scores and completing mindless tasks. We game to feel something.”

According to the Entertainment Software Association, a non-profit organization that gathers trends and usage reports for the games industry, estimates that roughly 190.6 million people between the ages of 5 and 90 game at least 1 hour per week, and of that, 80% game socially.

In his practice, Kuniak has found that being able to “speak gamer” has helped him connect better with his clients who are members of the culture and using gaming interventions tends to help make the work more palatable for his clients.

“It provides unique metaphors to build upon and clever ways to practice skill areas without putting the client through extra challenges that might make progress as hard. I’ve found that it can help to build our therapeutic relationship more quickly and effectively,” Kuniak says. “Counseling can naturally be rather uncomfortable, and this can remove some of that discomfort for a specific population.”

Kuniak’s practice has evolved. Rather than just focusing on what he could individually do with his clients in a small amount of time, he decided to turn it into a non-profit organization that provides education, outreach, treatment, and gathers research data.

“I call the organization ‘Experience Points,’ a gamer term for the points earned in a game from completing difficult tasks, which are used to level up your character,” Kuniak explains.

“It is a really clear metaphor for what we try to do with our clients in mental health

counseling. Help them achieve experience points

through their treatment goals, in order to help them level up their mental health.”

Kuniak has been interviewed for his work in publications like the Washington Post and Counseling Today, was interviewed on the talk show KDKA “Talk Pittsburgh,” and has had a study on “gamer culture” published in the Journal of Creativity in Mental Health.

“It’s been really exciting to see people’s interest in the gaming culture,” Kuniak says. “It lets me know I’m finding a niche that really deserves to be paid attention to.”

“The stories, art, and music can all be very deep and emotionally charged, it’s not just getting high scores and completing mindless tasks. We game to feel something.”

— DR. STEPHEN KUNIAK



MOUNTIE HOMEcoming



Mansfield Homecoming 2024, held October 4–6, was a vibrant celebration of tradition and alumni connections.

The festivities began on Friday evening with the Alumni–Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. Honorees Randall Beasley '89, Lee Brannon '00, Katrina Brumfield '08, and Jessica Scordino '14 were celebrated for their outstanding athletic accomplishments, spanning football, track and field, and cross country. The Mansfield Music Department held the first of two PRISM concerts on Friday, featuring more than 100 student musicians performing continuous music, uninterrupted by pause or applause.

Saturday was packed with activities that brought the campus community together. In the morning, the Homecoming Community Parade wound through downtown Mansfield as students, alumni, and the Mansfield community joined the celebration. North Hall opened its doors for self-guided tours and historic displays as the iconic building marked its 150th anniversary. Local vendors and food trucks came to campus to celebrate Homecoming as part of the Mansfield Thrive Heart & Soul event, connecting university and community.

At the alumni tailgate tent at Karl Van Norman Field, attendees reconnected and enjoyed Mansfield's enduring camaraderie, while watching Mountaineer football and soccer compete. Mountaineer sprint football celebrated an exciting 58–14 victory over Saint Thomas Aquinas and the women's soccer program battled against a tough Kutztown team.

Homecoming 2024 reaffirmed Mansfield's storied traditions and the deep bonds among its alumni, students, and the broader community. It was a weekend filled with pride, laughter, and the shared joy of being a Mountaineer.





“In our home, giving and generosity were fostered. It was also expected that if successes were had, we were to be more generous.”

— ROBERT STROHECKER, CHAIR, MANSFIELD UNIVERSITY MOUNTAINEER FOUNDATION

BUILDING A FOUNDATION

For **Robert Strohecker**, Commonwealth University–Mansfield is a foundation—both of his own life and the life of his community.

By **Eric Foster**

A leader in the Mansfield community for decades, Strohecker is a natural choice to lead the Mansfield University Mountaineer Foundation (MUMF), which was formed and recognized by the Council of Trustees as an affiliated organization of Commonwealth University last spring. The recognition establishes the MUMF as the only officially recognized foundation that exists solely to support CU–Mansfield and its students.

“As chair of the board, I am committed to ensuring that the Mansfield University Mountaineer Foundation operates with transparency, integrity, and a focus on making a meaningful impact,” Strohecker says. “The Foundation serves as a beacon of support for CU–Mansfield, providing opportunities for others to invest in the future of our students and community. People want to be engaged. The Foundation creates an avenue that allows that to happen.”

The effort is already paying dividends. In its first year of existence, the MUMF raised more than \$600,000. Since July, 2024, donors have contributed more than \$2.4 million to support Mansfield students.

“Mansfield is my hometown, I grew up here,” says Strohecker ’91, whose four siblings also attended Mansfield and have gone on to successful careers in science, engineering, and business. Mansfield is special, it gave our family a significant opportunity in our own hometown. It worked out well for all of us, I hope for that to continue for future generations.”

Strohecker’s story is unique in that he is Mansfield University’s only graduate to complete their bachelor’s degree after their doctorate. “I’d been here practicing for several years, and I thought I’d like to complete my degree from MU. I initially attended MU from 1982–1985 but applied and was accepted into the doctoral program at the Pennsylvania College of Optometry in 1985, graduating in 1989, with just three



years of undergraduate credits. In 1991, I petitioned President Rod Kelchner, took two courses to complete my credit requirements, and graduated in December 1991.”

Although he’s sold his practice, he continues to see patients at his downtown location.

For Strohecker, his involvement in Foundation is a natural extension of the values he learned from his family as a child. “In our home, giving and generosity were fostered. It was also expected that if successes were had, we were to be more generous.”

To help launch the foundation, Strohecker made a \$50,000 gift to establish the Strohecker Health and Science Scholarship for CU–Mansfield students. The scholarship supports the recruitment and retention of students pursuing a field of study in health or science at the Mansfield campus.

The gift has inspired numerous others to become involved. (See Sidebar.)

A lifelong resident of Tioga County, Strohecker is very engaged in the community as president of the Mansfield Borough Council, chair of the Mansfield Borough Shade Tree Committee, as an elder for the Church of New Covenant, and an assistant basketball coach at New Covenant Academy. He served as a Trustee of Mansfield University from 1997–2022.

While committed to his hometown, Strohecker’s service has also been international—having taken mission trips for more than 25 years to make an impact in communities in Haiti, Nicaragua, Cuba, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic.

“This community is my family,” says Strohecker. “After 35 years of practice, it’s still a lot of fun. I like this region and have been blessed to live and work here. It’s a joy to serve, because you’re affecting change.”

For more information about the Mansfield University Mountaineer Foundation, visit mountaineerfdn.org.

Mansfield University Mountaineer Foundation Leadership

Senior Director of Philanthropy **Kate Billmeyer** brings more than two decades of fundraising experience to Mansfield as the senior director of philanthropy. Her previous experiences includes serving as Senior Development Officer for the Women and Children’s Institute at Geisinger Health Foundation, and development Roles at the Children’s Miracle Network at Geisinger.

The inaugural foundation board of directors includes alumni and industry leaders.

Dr. Robert Strohecker ’91, *Chair*, Optometrist, Strohecker Vision Care

Brendan Cregan ’89, *Treasurer*, Retired Principal, Hempfield School District

Bob Christie ’92, *Vice Chair*, Independent Communications Consultant

Alanna Huck ’99, *Secretary*, Superintendent, Wellsboro Area School District

Matt Baker, Former director of U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, region 3; former member of PASSHE board of governors; 13–term member of PA House of Representatives

Freddie Coleman ’87, ESPN radio host

Roger Maisner, Professor emeritus–MU, coordinator of military and veteran affairs–MU, MU athletic director–retired

Nicole Quezada, General Dentist, Complete Family Dentistry

Ann Dunham Rawson ’96, Owner, Dunham’s Department Store

Claire Yang ’04, Partner, Pricewaterhouse Coopers, LLP (PwC)

Mounties All In Day of Giving

During the Mounties All In Day of Giving held last April, 434 donors contributed \$65,121 to support Mansfield students.

“This was my first year being a part of the Mounties All In Day of Giving, and I couldn’t be more pleased with the success we’ve had and the momentum we’re building,” says Kate Billmeyer, senior director of philanthropy at CU–Mansfield. “I am so encouraged to see the growth in support we generated from last year to this year, and I want to thank everyone on campus who played a role in helping us generate that excitement among our donor base.”

Throughout All In, donors were presented with various matching gift opportunities and challenges, further magnifying the effect of their contributions. Among the lead gifts were a \$10,000 matching gift from Mansfield alumnus Mark Doherty ’95 and a \$5,000 challenge gift from Roger Maisner, former Mansfield director of athletics.

Save the date for All In Day of Giving, April 10–11, 2025!



Maisner's \$1 Million Gift

LARGEST IN MANSFIELD ATHLETICS HISTORY

Roger Maisner, Mansfield faculty emeritus and former athletic director, has committed a record \$1 million towards student-athlete scholarships through the Mansfield University Mountaineer Foundation, making it the largest gift in the history of Mountaineer athletics.

The gift will provide \$100,000 for immediate use scholarships supporting the men's and women's basketball, softball, and baseball programs.

"This has been a goal for a long time. I'm honored, humbled, and excited to be able to support Mansfield in this way," explains Maisner, now in his 49th year at Mansfield. "I hope this gift motivates and inspires students and student-athletes in how important it is to give back and set the example."

"I want someone to beat it," Maisner says about his record contribution to athletics.

Having always wanted to be a teacher and coach, Maisner came to Mansfield in 1976 as an instructor in health and physical education, assistant basketball coach and head golf coach. He coached 21 total seasons as an assistant and head basketball coach, head baseball coach and head golf coach. Maisner was named the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC) Baseball Coach of the Year in 1984. He was inducted into the Mansfield Alumni-Athletic Hall of Fame as an assistant basketball coach on the Mountaineers 26-win PSAC Basketball Championship team of 1984.

In 1985, Maisner was named director of athletics at Mansfield, a position he held for 28 years. He led the transition of Mountie

athletics from NCAA Division III to Division II and helped raise millions of dollars for student-athlete scholarships. Maisner played a lead role in many additions to and construction of athletic facilities including Lutes Field, Shaute Field, Spaulding Field, the soccer field and major upgrades to Van Norman Field, Maxson Track, Russell Field, and Decker Gym.

As a faculty member in the Health and Physical Education Department, Maisner taught kinesiology, coaching, and athletic administration classes, activity courses, and many different health and continuing education courses. As a professor and director of athletics, he worked directly with over 15,000 Mansfield students, staff, and administrators in 20 sports and a dozen academic courses.

After 37 years in athletics, Maisner continued to teach and was asked to be the first coordinator of military and veteran affairs. In that role, he was responsible for creating the Veterans Support Group, a committee of faculty, staff, students and community members. This group established the Military Resource Center, the Student Veterans Organization, the annual Military Appreciation Luncheon and raised thousands of dollars for student scholarships. Even after his retirement from the university in 2022, Maisner continues to serve in the coordinator role with Military and Veteran Affairs as a volunteer.

Maisner was selected to join the inaugural Board for the Mansfield University Mountaineer Foundation.

A RECORD YEAR *of Generosity*



Mark Doherty '95 Makes \$500k Gift for Athletics

Former Mansfield football and track and field standout, Mark Doherty '95, made a \$500,000 gift to support student-athlete scholarships for Mansfield athletics.

Of the gift, \$250,000 is allocated to the Tom Elsasser Memorial Scholarship to provide immediate

use scholarships for student-athletes, \$125,000 establishes the Tom Elsasser Track Scholarship, an immediate use scholarship for track and field student-athletes. The additional \$125,000 establishes the Tom Elsasser Men's Basketball Scholarship, an immediate use scholarship.

"It is truly an honor to be part of this scholarship in coach Elsasser's name," says Doherty. "Coach instilled many of the values that have contributed to my success, not only on the field but also off the field. I feel privileged to be able to give back in this way."

Doherty's gift is in honor of his late football coach, Tom Elsasser, who passed away on May 7, 2023. Elsasser served as the head coach of the Mountaineer football team from 1983–1995 and holds the record for longest tenure as well as most wins of any coach in Mansfield football history.

After his retirement from coaching, Elsasser served as the director of academic advising for the university's athletic mentoring program that he and admissions counselor Jamie Butsko developed in the late 1980's. Following his full retirement from the university, Elsasser continued to attend games, alumni golf outings and events that brought together the past and present of Mountaineer athletics.

Doherty played under Elsasser for the 1991–94 football seasons and was also a record-setting track and field student-athlete. During the 1994 season, Doherty set school records for catches and receiving yards and would later be named the MU Fall Athlete of the Year. Doherty played professional football in Europe for two years following graduation. On the track, he set school records in the 400m and 500m dashes, where his times still rank high on the Mansfield all-time record list today.

Elsasser was inducted into the Mansfield Alumni–Athletic Hall of Fame as a coach in 2003 and Doherty was inducted in 2008 for his contributions as a member of the football and track teams.

Doherty graduated from Mansfield with a degree in criminal justice in 1995 and a master's degree in special education in 1998. He is the owner and co-founder of Foundation Lending, a premiere investment, construction, and commercial lender.



Edith Johnson '50 Gift for Music

A \$300,000 gift from the trust of Edith Johnson '50 will support music students at CU–Mansfield. The gift was made by Ken and Charles Johnson in memory of their late mother on what would have been her 96th birthday.

"Our mom was so passionate about music," says Ken Johnson. "Being able to educate people on the proper fundamentals of any instrument they chose was not just a gift, but her calling. To be able to have her legacy live on through support to her alma mater is a blessing that can't be put into words."

The gift will support an endowed music scholarship for future music students at Mansfield, provide unrestricted funds to recruit and retain Mansfield music students, and to support student priorities. A classroom will be named in Johnson's memory in recognition of this historic gift.

"This generous gift will be used immediately to support Mansfield music student needs and experiences," says Nate Rinnert, co-assistant chair for the Commonwealth University Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance. "We plan to name Butler 102 in Edith Johnson's memory as the Edith Johnson Music Education Center, as this is the hub of music education activity and resources at Mansfield."

Born in Marienville, Edith graduated from Mansfield with a bachelor's degree in music education in 1950. She went on to teach grade school music in Kansas City, orchestrating many performances and shows throughout her career. After retiring from teaching in schools, Edith continued to teach piano in her home on her beloved Steinway grand piano until her last recital in 2013. In total, Edith taught piano for 70 years. She passed away peacefully to the sound of classical music in 2022.

Janice M. Kennedy/ George W. Cass Gift for Study Abroad

A newly-endowed scholarship—the Janice M. Kennedy/George W. Cass Scholarship — Americans to Study Abroad—will help Mansfield students learn from experiences beyond the United State.

Funded by Will W. Kennedy III, the gift honors Kennedy’s mother, Janice Kennedy, a 1946 Mansfield graduate and longtime home economics faculty member at Mansfield. She was deeply inspired by the words of Dr. George Cass, a former Mansfield sociology faculty member who, on the day of her graduation, told her, “I will help you, you will help others, and the help will never stop.” This endowed fund will support CU–Mansfield students pursuing study abroad opportunities for at least one full semester, ensuring that deserving students have the resources they need to gain invaluable international experiences.



From left: Rod Pursell '88, family friend of Will Kennedy; Will Kennedy; Kate Billmeyer, senior director of philanthropy MUMF; Dr. Jonathan Rothermel, associate professor and study abroad coordinator, CU–Mansfield.

Kennedy has committed a total of \$52,000 to establish this scholarship. This includes a \$50,000 endowment to create a permanent fund and an additional \$2,000 for the early activation of the scholarship, allowing for immediate distribution to students in the first year, one for fall and one for spring. The fund will be awarded annually, starting

in the 2024–25 academic year with its first recipient being Ashley Newell '24.

“The greatest challenge I faced at Mansfield was learning to explore beyond the boundaries of my personal comfort. I believe this space is where true growth takes place, making foreign exchange opportunities an excellent addition to higher education,” says Newell.

Steven Crawford '81 Gift For Scholarship Fund



Steven Crawford '81, a member of the CU Council of Trustees, has reaffirmed his dedication to his alma mater by establishing a new scholarship fund aimed at supporting future students. Raised in Millville, Crawford is a first-generation college student. Faced with financial constraints and limited options, he chose Mansfield for its

personalized approach and supportive environment.

Despite working throughout his college years to supplement his student loans and receiving limited financial aid, he graduated with a degree in political science. His career trajectory is a testament to his perseverance and commitment. Starting in government relations, Crawford quickly rose to prominent roles including secretary for

legislative affairs and chief of staff under Gov. Ed Rendell. He now leads Wojdak Government Relations.

As a long-serving member of the Mansfield University Council of Trustees and a passionate alumnus, Crawford has been instrumental in advocating for and supporting the university. The scholarship fund established by Crawford will provide crucial support to students based on a combination of academic excellence, financial need and civic engagement.

“I want to ensure that financial barriers do not prevent talented students from completing their education,” Crawford says. “Education was a pivotal factor in my success, and I believe in giving back to support those who face similar challenges.”

Crawford underscores the collective responsibility to support public education, acknowledging the role of taxpayers and community members in his own educational journey. “Many people contributed to my education, and it is only right that I give back to help others succeed.”

PREPARING THE *next generation* OF

POLICE

By **Eric Foster**

From left Christopher Wheeler, director of Mansfield Public Safety Training Institute, and Jim Bodine Act 235 Program director/Public Safety Training Institute training coordinator.

For nearly 50 years, the Act 120 Municipal Police Academy at Mansfield has prepared police officers to better serve their communities.

The Academy's 26-week program includes the courses you'd expect—emergency driving, defensive tactics, firearms. But the most important lessons may be the most personal.

"The most important trait for a police officer—being in physical shape, using firearms, driving? That's not the key," says Chris Wheeler, a veteran of the Pennsylvania State Police. "You need to be able to communicate. If you can't communicate, you're not an effective police officer. People call the police because they have a problem. Law enforcement is about solving problems. If you can't communicate, you're part of the problem, not part of the solution."

Wheeler is director of the Mansfield's Public Safety Training Institute, which runs the academy and provides initial and continuing professional education for criminal justice practitioners, first responders, public safety professionals, and the public. However, the institute's signature program is the Municipal Police Academy, established in 1977 and one of only 17 pre-service municipal police academies across Pennsylvania certified by the Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission. The academy is a full time, six-month program, running from each May to November and encompassing 919 hours of training.

"A part of our success is that we select a small number of cadets. Our maximum class size is 24," says Wheeler. "That helps with getting more one-on-one time versus cadets getting lost. And we have a really good cadre of instructors, drawn from local, state, university and federal police officers."

For Wheeler, directing the Public Safety Training Institute is a natural extension of his own career. After serving in the U.S. Navy, he joined the Pennsylvania State Police in 1994 and became an instructor for the State Police in 1996. A long-time instructor at the academy, Wheeler became its director after retiring from the State Police in 2017.

"We attract cadets from all over the state, many from local counties. The majority are from a rural area. Our average cadet is in their mid-20s. Some as young as 18 and some as old as their late 40s," says Wheeler. "For some of our cadets, this is a second career. A lot have had this motivation to do it forever. It's something they really wanted to do and it's now or never." The curriculum encompasses both academic and applied components.

"The classroom work is very challenging," says Wheeler. "Constitutional law, where the authority to police is derived from. Criminal law, arrest, search and seizure. Most of the statutes were written by attorneys and the legislature and not in the plainest terms. Cadets learn what this law really means. We do that early on and apply it throughout the academy."

And then there are the applied lessons — driving, active assault training, and tactical positioning.

"Younger people learn differently. When I was going through bootcamp in early 90s and State Police academy, you didn't question 'why' and if you did, the response you got back was 'because I said so,'" says Wheeler. "That's not an effective way to teach. We explain the 'why.'"

Graduates of the Academy are a testament to its quality—garnering a 95% job placement rate and consistently ranking among the top in Pennsylvania police academies in state certification examination scores.

For Wheeler, the human element remains key.

"As a police officer, you can plan your day, get reports done, get supplemental interviews done. But five minutes later you don't know what call you're going to get," he says.

"An officer has to wear so many hats. You have to have integrity, a sense of right and wrong, and some empathy. Nobody is born saying their goal is to be a victim of this crime or a defendant of that crime. You have a job to do, and you represent your agency and society at large. And you want to represent society as its best. That should be every police officer's goal."



BAKING UP A BUSINESS EDUCATION

By Drew Patrick

During the COVID 19 lockdowns of 2020, many of us were looking to learn new things or take on new hobbies. Sarah Sherman, a 16-year-old high school sophomore at the time, now a junior Mansfield business administration major and softball player, was no different.

Sherman, who had been making dinner for her family since middle school, loved the creativity of cooking—substituting ingredients to create experimental dishes. Then, she decided to take it a step further and create her own business.

“During COVID, I baked all the time. I had my driver’s permit, so I practiced driving by delivering cupcakes,” says Sherman, of Macungie. “Specializing in cupcakes has allowed me to stay in my own zone. I do have the popular flavors, but I also try to add something new.”

After sharing a cupcake with her sister’s friend who loved it so much, he asked her to make him some for Mother’s Day—her first order. Sherman and her mother wrapped a dozen cupcakes in a shoebox and delivered them to him herself.

“I learned how to not spread myself too thin. I would do some midnight baking and get my name out where I could. I made gift and raffle baskets and I networked with the chambers.”

That first order lit a spark for Sherman, who then created social media accounts and the brand Sarah Jane’s Cupcakes. Over the summer of 2020, Sherman grew the company and was invited to have pop-ups

to sell her treats at local Lehigh Valley shops and events.

While baking is more of a science, Sherman kept creativity in the recipe by offering a multitude of flavors. And as her company grew, the world drifted back into normalcy and Sherman began to play summer softball again.

“The immediate challenge was over the summer with softball tournaments every weekend,” Sherman says. Then on Wednesday,

Thursday, and Friday during the week, I was baking and had pick-ups and deliveries. It was a huge learning experience. My mom owns a business and I learned a lot from her like how to say no, time management, and pricing.”

Right from the start Sherman knew she would have to make sacrifices—trying to make a name for her business, while also making sure her main focus was on school.



"I learned how to not spread myself too thin. I would do some midnight baking and get my name out where I could," Sherman says. "I made gift and raffle baskets and I networked with the chambers."

Sherman started at CU – Mansfield in 2023, which brought new challenges of navigating college life and being a member of the Mountaineer softball team. Sherman made the decision to focus more on college and scale her business back a bit.

"During my freshman and sophomore years, the business took a backseat," Sherman explains, doing most of her baking over the winter and summer months.

"I could continue my business on the side and work towards a full-time job. I hope to work in digital marketing or sales and do an internship in the field to learn exactly what I want to do," she says. "It's a dream to have a storefront but it's years down the line and I honestly think it's bittersweet because regardless of what happens, I really did enjoy everything I learned and was able to do it from high school to now. It's a cool story and great to think back on."



MAKING TRACKS AT THE OLYMPICS TRIALS

By **Drew Patrick**

Mansfield cross-country and track and field student-athlete Angie Colon knows how to move fast, even while just walking.

A junior music education major from Farmingville, New York, Colon competed in June at the Olympic Trials in the 20K racewalk for Team USA track and field. One of the youngest in the competition, Colon finished 14th with a time of 2:00:01.

Racewalking differs from running in that one foot must appear to be in contact with the ground at all times. Race judges carefully assess that this is maintained throughout the race.

It's a discipline that Colon has competed in since high school.

"My high school is nicknamed 'racewalk university.' Our coaches are very knowledgeable and the wife of one of my coaches is a two-time Olympian in the race walk. I've racewalked since I was a freshman in high school. When I started, I was not good but I kept pushing and pushing and then I made Nationals my sophomore year of the indoor

season and then I kept making Nationals from then and then COVID happened my junior year," says Colon. "That's when I realized I still wanted to racewalk in college so I found Mansfield."

Colon's experience in racewalking outside of university has given her an opportunity to bond with seasoned athletes in the sport.

"I go to bigger meets and I'm the youngest one there and there's not many college athletes there. It's all professional athletes and people who I've looked up to," says Colon. "I think that has forced me to kind of grow up in the sport faster and take my sport really seriously."

"The Olympic trials were very intense," adds Colon. "You could feel the tension of all the people who wanted to make the Olympics.

Thankfully the racewalk is such a small community. I know all the competitors, I've raced against them before, so even on the line, we were all chitchatting and the older women were telling me how proud they were that I'm here."



Preparing for Olympics trials is as mentally challenging as it is physically.

"I'm very comfortable in mile 3K, 5K, and 10K because I've been doing them for so long. But 20K and 35K, those are pretty rough. Including the Olympic trials, I have raced three 20Ks this year and I also raced a 35K. Training is intense. My long walks are 18 to 22 miles," Colon says.

Mentally, most athletes don't race for two hours and it is hard to stay in race mode that long, which is not even including the time before the race," she adds. "I'm in race mode for three to five hours and it's very mentally draining."

But at the Olympic trials, "when I got on the line, as soon as the gun went off, I was so nervous but I was just smiling," Colon says "It was such a good experience."

CLASS OF 2024



Football

RANDALL BEASLEY '89



Football

LEE BRANNON '00



Track & Field

KATRINA BRUMFIELD '08

Cross Country/
Track & Field

JESSICA SCORDINO '14

MOUNTIES ENSHRINED

The Mansfield Athletics Hall of Fame Class of 2024 was officially inducted at the annual Hall of Fame ceremony on Friday, Oct. 4 as part of Homecoming Weekend. The honorees included Randall Beasley '89 (football), Lee Brannon '00 (football), Katrina Brumfield '08 (women's track and field), and Jessica Scordino '14 (women's cross country/track and field).

Mountie Athletes Set Classroom Record



Following the 2023–24 academic year, a school-record 84 student-athletes were named Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC) Scholar-Athletes, proving once again the Mounties win in their field of competition and in the classroom. To earn this honor, a student-athlete must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or higher during the academic year. The women's cross country team led the entire PSAC with a remarkable team GPA of 3.889.

Hannah Meyer '24, a sports nutrition major from Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, was named to the prestigious 2023–24 PSAC Fall Top Ten list. Meyer is the 27th student-athlete to earn the award in Mansfield history.

The PSAC Top Ten Award is selected by PSAC sports information directors to recognize student-athletes who distinguish themselves in the classroom and in the arena of competition, broken up into fall, winter, and spring honors. To be considered for the Top Ten Award, a student-athlete must be a starter or an important reserve and maintain at least a minimum 3.50 cumulative grade point average.



Forging Community Connections

Commonwealth University Trustee Chair John Wetzel spent a February morning at CU–Mansfield where he hosted a workshop with community leaders and elected officials to discuss ways to serve the students and people of the Northern Tier.

SPRINT FOOTBALL TEAM MEMBERS EARN HONORS

Cahsid Raymond was named the Collegiate Sprint Football League (CSFL) Offensive Player of the Year in December. He was one of 11 members of the Mansfield Mountaineer sprint football team to earn All-CSFL accolades.

This is the sixth consecutive season for the Mounties to earn double-digit conference honors. Mansfield finished 3–5 on the season but finished 3–1 in the division.

Raymond earned his second career Offensive Player of the Year award, and his third First Team bid as the only Mountie on the top team. Raymond was also named the CSFL Most Valuable Player.

Jameson Ricigliano Jr., Jackson Taylor, and Jack Gartner earned Second Team honors.

The seven Mounties to earn spots on the All-Honorable Mention teams were Marcus Quaker, Marcus Melle, Aaron Thomas, Ian

Mapp, Chase Thompson, Kellen Herman, and Nolan Zona.

Raymond in his triple threat role as a quarterback, running back and wide receiver and was unstoppable. The senior posted 604 rushing yards and 386 receiving yards, leading the team in both categories. While leading the CSFL in all-purpose yards at 1,159, his rushing yardage put him third in the league in rushing and fifth in the conference in receiving. The Philadelphia native posted nine rushing touchdowns and a 91-yard receiving touchdown, while breaking the record for the longest rushing touchdown of 99 yards. In the pocket, Raymond became the program's all-time leader in career passing touchdowns with seven for the year and 686 passing yards. The captain contributed 210 total yards and about two touchdowns per game.



MOUNTAINEERS NAMED TO DII FIELD HOCKEY ALL-AMERICANS TEAMS

Mansfield Mountaineer field hockey players Kenedy Stroup and August Lewis finished their careers with more National Field Hockey Coaches Association (NFHCA) All-American status in their accolades.

Both Stroup and Lewis have now been named All-Americans in consecutive seasons, with Stroup earning her first career First Team bid and Lewis represented on the Second Team.

This is third season that coach Brittany Hansrote '09 has had multiple All-Americans. Stroup becomes her fourth First Team selection and the pair add to her nine total members with the All-American status.

Lewis's highlight season finishes an amazing career in the cage. The Delaware native reached the most career wins in program history after her 33rd against Slippery Rock to add to her collection of records. Named the NCAA DII Defensive Player of the Week once and a PSAC Defensive Player of the Week twice, Lewis led the conference in saves (108) and finished tied for third in the country in save percentage (.831) and eighth in the country in goals allowed average at 1.10.

On the offensive side, Stroup's All-PSAC First Team bid was her second consecutive honor. The midfielder finished out her career sitting tied for fifth in program history with 18 career assists. The Millerstown native posted the 13th most shots in the PSAC with 51 on the year, adding to her three goals and three assists on the season.

The two captains led the team to back-to-back postseason appearances for the first time in program history and remained in the national polls all season.

BOUND BY A LOVE OF FOOTBALL

College Football and Mansfield brought them together as students; Keeps them together as alumni

By **Ryan McNamara**

It was Mansfield and college football that brought a group of freshmen together during their first days on campus. More than a decade later, Mansfield and college football continue to keep these Mounties together thanks to a unique, annual tradition.

With their own season finished, a group of Mansfield sprint football student-athletes decided to take a road trip to one of college football's hallowed grounds to watch Notre Dame host Northwestern in the fall of 2014. In the shadow of Touchdown Jesus, the group of Mounties unknowingly kicked-off a tradition that would take them around the country together.

"We could never fully enjoy watching college football since we were in-season and playing," explains Tim Carr, former Mansfield defensive lineman. "Since we were done playing, we decided to go to a big college football game as a group."

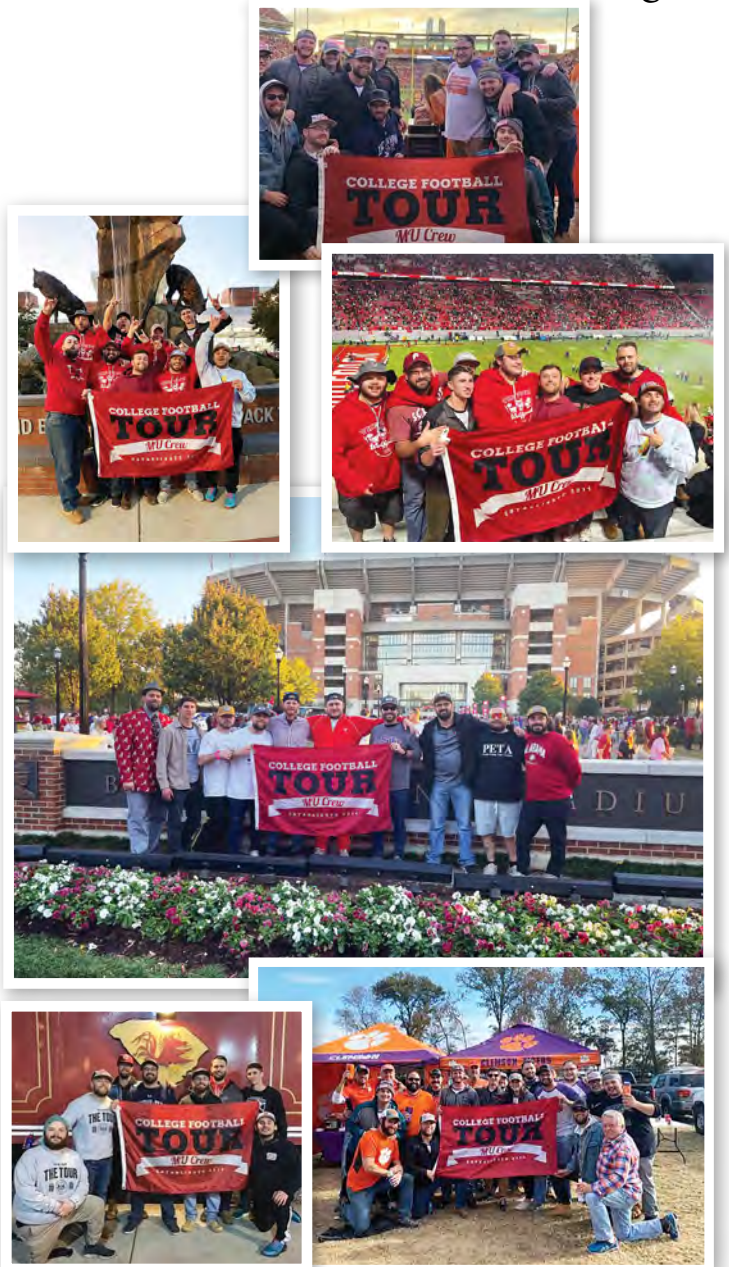
The following year, the group of now alumni planned another trip, this time heading south to Morgantown to watch West Virginia host Texas. In year three at Rutgers, "The Tour" took on its own identity as Dylan Loucks—a graduate of the Mansfield graphic design program—created a logo and ordered T-shirts. The next year, the group proudly displayed its custom Tour flag at Rocky Top in Tennessee.

Since then, The Tour has made stops at Michigan, Clemson, South Carolina, NC State, Alabama, and Pitt. The group immerses itself in the culture and uniqueness of each campus, connects with as many people as possible, and trades its custom gear with the fans.

"It's what college football is all about," says Carr. "We work really hard to keep it going."

Prior to each year's trip, members of the group offer suggestions of new locations, which then move to an official ballot that the group votes on to decide their next destination. After each trip, one person is selected to record the weekend's events in a memory book.

The Tour members now live across five states (Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Georgia, and Missouri), making the annual



“We feel lucky we get to do this with each other every year.”

gathering even more special. At each game, the group will invite fellow Mounties living in the area to join their tailgate.

"Mansfield has so many ways of bringing people together," says Carr. "We had such a good experience at Mansfield, we wanted to keep that connection alive."

Mansfield Voice Students Win Recognition at Singing Auditions, Competition

Voice students from CU–Mansfield won recognition at the Allegheny Mountain Chapter (AMC) National Association of Teachers of Singing Student Auditions at Penn State University last fall. There were approximately 100 audition entries from around Pennsylvania.

The voice faculty at CU–Mansfield, Dr. Todd Ranney, Dr. Alissa Rose, and Jordan Schreiner, entered students in the auditions, and all had student winners at the competitions. Students competed against others of a similar age and experience level and the top three winners in each category were featured in a final concert at the end of the auditions.

All students received comment sheets from the judges, who are voice teachers and NATS members. These auditions were a great opportunity for the students to get feedback about their singing, hear other students from around the area and be exposed to a wide variety of repertoire.

NATS is the largest association of teachers of singing in the world, with members in more than 25 countries, and the student auditions are one of the major activities of each NATS chapter.

AMC NATS WINNERS

Ethan Hinshaw, *Bensalem*

Independent Studio TBB Classical

Hayley Ridge, *Roaring Branch*

Independent Studio Treble Classical

Bobby Repp, *Thomasville*

Independent Studio TBB Classical

Justin Knarr, *Bechtelsville*

Independent Studio TBB Classical

Taylor Stevens, *Waynesboro*

Independent Studio Treble Classical

Mayson Bryant, *Etters*

Independent Studio TBB Classical

Jeremiah Loubriel, *Reading*

Independent Studio TBB Classical

Carter Route, *Canton*

Independent Studio TBB Classical

Hannah Confalone, *Pen Argyl*

Independent Studio Treble Musical Theater

Mathew Thomas, *Philipsburg*

Independent Studio TBB Musical Theater

Emma Richman, *Sayre*

Independent Studio Treble Musical Theater

Shley Underdue, *Mansfield*

Adult Classical

AMC NATS SEMIFINALISTS:

Maggie MacAdams, *Bensalem*

Independent Studio Treble Classical

Phillip Peters, *Clearfield*

Independent Studio TBB Classical

Amber Lavoie, *Natick, Mass.*

Independent Studio Treble Classical

Victoria Wormuth, *Mansfield*

Independent Studio Treble Classical



Emma Richman



Carter Route



Mathew Thomas

In Memoriam

Ruth Bunn Zeigler '49

Fanny James Marshall '52

Lorraine Brass Thurston '54

Marlene Borck Wetmore '56

Kathryn Cawley Clancy '59

Beverly Gesford Root '62

Jacqueline Duval Barney '64

Patrick Charney '64

David Dunlap '64

Paul Hunt '65

Charles Allen '67

Robert O'Connor '68

Cynthia Gorman

Bogdanoff '75

Diane Jenkins '76

Rhonda Neidigh Haas '77

Jan (Johnston, Nimec) Birchall '79

Sue McCracken Flynn '92

Carole Sell Unger '92



▲ The WNTE staff in 1979

WNTE: MANSFIELD'S LOUDEST VOICE

By **Eric Foster**

In 1968, when Mansfield's campus radio station WNTE 89.5 first went on the air, the Beatles "Hey Jude" topped the Billboard's top 100 singles.

The station broadcasts live from a studio, coined the "Fishbowl," in the center of the Alumni Hall Student Center Game Room.

Tune-in and in addition to music, you'll hear news, sports, podcasts, and campus information.

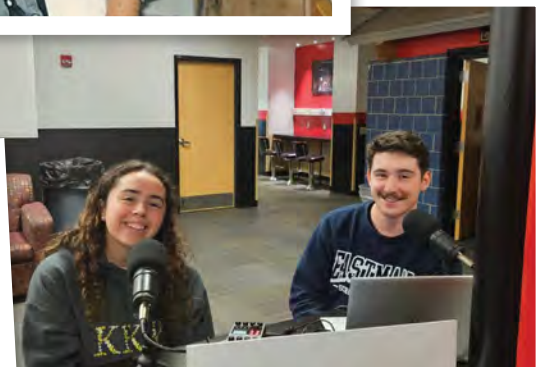
Staffed by students, the station uses automation software when program slots cannot be covered.

The broadcast signal reaches a 12-mile radius from its central location in Mansfield, but thanks to the internet, the broadcast can be streamed online anywhere in the world at wnte895.wixsite.com/wnte/.

Alumni are encouraged to participate by recording liners, and by hosting live shows. DJ are services are also available. Those interested should contact wnte@mansfield.edu.



▲ Bryan Lane '88 in the studio



▲ Valerie Miller, station manager, and Jon Consadine, assistant station manager and DJ services

◀ Lacey Rodgers, program and social media manager



Angela Smith

Trustee

Interview by **Eric Foster**

Trustee Angela Smith, a Clinton County native and 2007 Lock Haven alumna, is a Spanish teacher and elementary Spanish program coordinator in the Bald Eagle Area (BEA) School District. At BEA, she created and produced a unique curriculum and fun-to-learn Spanish introductory program that has her also reaching every elementary student from kindergarten through fifth grades in the four-school district.

Smith graduated summa cum laude from Lock Haven with a bachelor's degree in education with a concentration in Spanish and a minor in mathematics. Smith continued her studies and graduated from the University of Boston Massachusetts with her master's degree in applied linguistics with a concentration in ESL.

When not working, Smith enjoys being with her family, travels to Costa Rica to continue connections made during her study abroad with Lock Haven, serves at her church, and volunteers with Clinton County Police Camp Cadet, which exposes children to law enforcement work.

Q | Why did you choose Lock Haven? Why did you major in education with Spanish and math?

A | I'm a local—born and raised in the county—and Lock Haven has the best education program in the area. For math, I was good at math, it came naturally. So growing up I would help my siblings with homework and people suggested I become a teacher.

As for Spanish, in high school my family was visiting the southern U.S. and we met someone from Mexico and I was able to communicate. I found language to be like a math equation that never ends. I fell in love with the language and culture. With Spanish you're always learning. I enjoy the challenge of working with people—the "aha" moments. I love learning and love helping others to learn with me.

At BEA, I collaborate with elementary, middle, and high school programs. My Lock Haven professor, Eduardo Valerio, had a focus on teaching languages to younger children, so I felt very prepared to instruct the diverse range of ages.

I created the elementary program with two periods a day, a video camera and a student helper. I teach the students through videos and I visit them on a rotation. I don't know of any other program like it. Then I work at the middle and high school with Andrea Simpson, another proud Lock Haven alumna.



Q | How did you become involved as Trustee?

A | Living in Lock Haven, I'm close to what's happening. When I heard there was a position open, I really wanted to serve and give back. I was part of the Lock Haven board before integration. With integration, I was asked if I was interested in continuing. It was yes, I'm still in it for the right reasons.

Q | What value does the integrated Commonwealth University bring to the region?

A | The value of CommonwealthU is making potential possible. We had to adapt and grow. It brings more to the table, not less. CU gives all of our students, faculty, and staff the opportunity to grow.

CU offers opportunity for central Pennsylvania. Students don't have to go as far away for college and families can use the resources they may have needed for a college farther away for other things.

Each campus has its own culture and each has been able to preserve their own identity. I really appreciate that. Maintaining the culture of the campuses has been critical.

Q | You travel frequently to Costa Rica. What have you gained from that experience?

A | Before college, I met an exchange student from Costa Rica, Noemy, in the community and was impressed with her. I knew to be good enough to teach it, I needed to live in the Spanish-speaking culture. I chose Costa Rica to do my exchange from Lock Haven.

I still had Noemy's telephone number and I made arrangements to visit. She was eight months pregnant when I visited but she welcomed me kindly. I made a



life-long connection. When I came back to Lock Haven, I felt ready to teach. I had the experience.

Now, I've been to Costa Rica 21 times. I've taken students there. I've watched Noemy's daughter grow up. I talk to them regularly; they are family.

Q | What role does service play in leadership?

A | If you do not serve, you should not lead. I am a woman of faith and that faith shapes my purpose. I serve in my church extensively. I serve in my local community, in my job, and in my work as a trustee.

I am very thankful for my family. My parents raised me to be thankful for what we had. We started out with little and built a life for our family.

Q | What are your favorite books?

A | The Bible and, this is different, but Victorian novels. Life is so serious, I often use reading time to relax. One book that has impacted my approach is the "Five Love Languages." It's about the concept of caring for others in the language they understand. Professionally, that has shaped how I teach, especially in dealing with students who may have come from different circumstances.

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MOUNTIE PRIDE!*



Open Monday through Friday 8 AM to 4 PM in Alumni Hall



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SPIRIT STORE**

mansfieldspirit.com