



# CONNECTIONS

The Empire State College Magazine

Volume 44 • Number 1 • Spring 2019

Patrick Paul '94

**OBSTACLES ARE  
NO OBSTACLE  
FOR THIS  
IMPACTFUL CEO**



# CONNECTIONS

The State University of New York  
Empire State College Magazine  
Volume 44 • Number 1 • Spring 2019

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## INSIDE

A Message From the Officer in Charge 1

### FEATURES

Alumni Spotlights	
Patrick Paul '94, CEO Leads Anderson Center for Autism	2
Bruce Bundock '08, Artist Honors Labor Unionists	10
Empire State College Helps Rebuild Puerto Rico	6
News From the Office of Veteran and Military Education	9
Pomp and Circumstance	14
Young Alumni Get Involved	18
Rally Towels Travel the World	19

### DEPARTMENTS

Portfolio	12
Faculty and Staff Kudos	16
Alumni and Student Notes	20
In Memoriam	24

**Cover:** Photo of Patrick Paul '94 by Pace Production, courtesy of the Anderson Center for Autism

**Correction:** The photo featured on the inside front cover of the Spring 2018 issue of Connections, "The Poet's Café," was taken by Eugenia D'Ambrosio '05, whose name was inadvertently omitted. We regret the error.



## A MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICER IN CHARGE



This issue of Connections magazine marks the first opportunity I have had to speak with many of you as Empire State College's officer in charge. SUNY Chancellor Kristina Johnson asked me to assume this role last spring, following the departure of President Merodie Hancock. In the 16 years that I have been at the college, I have come to appreciate greatly the hard work our faculty, staff, students and alumni have dedicated to fulfilling Empire State College's mission of serving adult learners and their communities, both within New York state and beyond.

The important work we do at Empire State College changes the lives of individuals who, in turn, go on to change the lives of others. As you enjoy the stories in Connections, I think you will see this on full display. You will read about alumnus Patrick Paul '94 who, when faced with a life-altering injury, found Empire State College and was able to redirect his career to the leadership role of one of the nation's foremost centers offering education and support for individuals with autism and their families.

You also will read about our students and faculty traveling to Puerto Rico to aid in the island's recovery from Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Their commitment of time and talent truly exemplify the generous spirit of the college. Reading about alumnus artist Bruce Bundock '08, I was reminded of my trip last fall to The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies, where I attended the opening of "Faces of Labor: Words and Images," an exhibit of his work capturing the essence of 18 of our labor students.

In addition to these highlighted examples, this issue of Connections also showcases the important work of faculty and staff and the efforts of alumni volunteers who help the college in so many ways. As always, I enjoyed reading your news in Alumni and Student Notes. It comes as no surprise that many of you are using what you learned through your Empire State College experience to enrich yourselves, your families and your communities.

Over this past year, my goal as officer in charge has been to continue to develop the great strengths of Empire State College and to ensure that this exceptional institution continues to build upon our almost 50-year legacy. Our alumni show their confidence in our future by giving back in so many ways, and you will be proud to know that over the 24 years that Empire State College has participated in the SUNY-wide Student Opinion Survey, the college has always ranked #1 in student satisfaction across all the four-year SUNY institutions.

Thank you for your continued engagement with SUNY Empire State College and for enabling us to make the positive impact reflected in these pages.

Yours sincerely,

Mitchell S. Nesler, Ph.D.  
*Officer in Charge*



### DID YOU KNOW?

Officer in Charge Mitchell Nesler is on Twitter!  
Find him at @NeslerMitchell and say hi.







Patrick Paul '94, far right, is hands-on at Anderson Center for Autism events.

**PATRICK PAUL '94:**

# **“BUILD, STRETCH AND APPLY TO BE IMPACTFUL”**

**CEO of Anderson Center for Autism  
Says, ‘Bring It On’**

By Helen Susan Edelman

Photographs courtesy of the Anderson Center for Autism  
Jim Smith Photography  
Pace Production

Everyone calls him Patrick.

Executives, support staff, teachers, maintenance and cafeteria workers, drivers, residence supervisors, behaviorists, IT specialists, speech pathologists, family members, visitors and students greet the approachable CEO and executive director of the Anderson Center for Autism by name with a smile and a handshake, wave or high five. There are approximately 900 employees working 24/7/365 and nearly 150 residential and day students on site, but Patrick Paul '94 is unfazed — in fact seems invigorated — by the human energy he galvanizes, in his words, “to make the doughnuts together.”

The Anderson Center is New York’s largest organization dedicated to individuals with autism. Located on more than 100 acres on the Hudson River between Rhinebeck and Hyde Park, N.Y., the facility is both open and protected, designed to take advantage of the natural views and slopes, but set back from main roads. Built on the former estate of psychiatrist Victor Anderson, who founded a school there in 1924 for children with special needs, Anderson Center is unique in its singular focus on individuals age 5 to 21 and their families who are affected by the challenges of autism spectrum disorder,



The Village Center is a hub for activities.

a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, behavior, speech and nonverbal communication.

In addition to 17 residential cottages clustered around a green, the center operates 23 community-based group homes and 11 day programs, and provides robust consulting services to other organizations that serve individuals with autism and their families. Anderson also hosts interns from around the world for training that prepares them to return as experts in the field to their native countries, including several European nations, India, Bhutan, Guyana, South Africa and Ghana.

Paul's route to his current role was circuitous, but now, he says, "I have my dream job, being impactful." Growing up in nearby Poughkeepsie, N.Y., Paul was "always interested in gobbling up information as often and in as many places and ways as I could, but traditional, formal education didn't work for me. It was too restrictive. I didn't care so much about the degree as about the learning. Empire State College was that nontraditional approach that fit and allowed me to both explore and focus, culminating in earning a bachelor's in Community and Human Services with a concentration in criminal justice. There were so many who were instrumental in creating my trajectory, but I wouldn't be here now if I hadn't found Empire State College."

Spotlighting criminal justice was a logical choice for Paul. After high school and disappointing initial forays into higher education, he entered the workforce at age 20 as a Dutchess County correction officer. "I took some classes in criminal justice, just to learn, and found myself gravitating more and more to that interest," he says. "I did well on some civil service exams and ended up with the Dutchess County Sheriff's Department." The path led him next to Putnam County as an undercover narcotics agent, where he bought drugs in bars and conducted raids. He recalls. "It was fascinating."

The next step was the New York State Police Academy and, in 1985, a position as a police officer. Then, in 1988, a horrific incident while he was on patrol turned out to be pivotal. Paul apprehended a criminal who had taken the life of one man with a machete, firebombed four police cars and the church shelter where his ex-wife was living and paralyzed another man with a bullet.

"I pursued. He shot me four times, but I shot back and killed him," Paul recounts.

While convalescing from the wounds, Paul considered where his life was headed. Naturally hungry for intellectual stimulation, he turned back in 1989 to what he loves best: learning, this time with a willingness to accept more structure. Paul enrolled in two SUNY schools, virtually simultaneously, working toward bachelor's degrees in Accounting at SUNY New Paltz and in Community and Human Services at SUNY Empire, while also devouring readings and attending discussions on Eastern European history and economics, subjects that still engross him and dominate his audiobook library. By 1991, he had retired from the police force and accepted a job as an IRS agent. In 1994, he received his degrees.

***"Empire State College was that nontraditional approach that fit and allowed me to both explore and focus."***

Diplomas in hand, Paul landed a job as an accountant at a local manufacturing company, but continued to check the New York Times classifieds, which yielded an auditor position with a New York City-based accounting firm. He traveled as a consultant to companies around the northeast, many in the rehabilitation field, including Anderson. Meanwhile, he passed his CPA exam and, more importantly, became the father of a son. But, traveling was interfering with parenting, which was a high priority, so when a permanent place opened for him at Anderson in 2000, Paul didn't hesitate, starting as controller and subsequently holding positions of corporate compliance officer, chief financial officer and chief operating officer, before accepting his current role as the organization's top leader.

When Paul first came to Anderson, "The place was in rough shape," he recalls. "But I'm a decision-maker. I like problems. I like obstacles. I like issues. I even like governance." He was determined to "build, stretch and apply what I had already done — and success came out of it. And with every success,



I am motivated to do more. Here, I can be impactful, which became increasingly important to me as I got to know the kids, their families and the other employees.”

He credits former Governor George Pataki’s administration with finding funds to propel Anderson Center to become a premiere facility. New York state, Paul explains, had become “penny wise and pound foolish, for a time, allowing programs to atrophy and losing students to more vibrant, effective programs elsewhere. Pataki saw what was happening and pulled it together. We were shovel-ready with a blueprint, which allowed us to be upgraded and revitalized, so families would want to put their children in our care.”



Students benefit from high-tech learning.

The front-and-center goal at Anderson is to “empower folks who have significant challenges by unleashing their real abilities, so they can live as independently as possible and to support them — whether that means teaching them to use the toilet, exposing them to music, showing them how to make their own bed or helping them learn job skills. We have students with autism at every level of ability here. Many, many are nonverbal, but some can identify icons on iPads to get their needs met. Some will need lifelong support, but others learn to garden or work in our cafeteria and get jobs when they leave us. We can never sit back and say we’ve done all we can do. Never.”

He admits he sets a high bar for “building, stretching and applying,” but expects the same of staff. “Anderson requires dedication,” he emphasizes. “We have struggled, from being not the best provider of services to being the best. In the past, we had great programs and vision, but not a great physical facility; now we have all of it. It’s an iterative process. Two steps forward, one step back. Be prepared not to know what’s going to happen on a given day. We have to meet the needs

and requirements of children, families, staff, community and government.” He notes that the early winter government shutdown affected Anderson both by making it difficult for the international interns to participate, as well as hobbling funding sources. “The pipeline for people and services could dry up,” he worries.

Most students come to Anderson from across New York, many from Long Island and Manhattan, but out-of-staters also are drawn from New Jersey, Delaware, Connecticut and Massachusetts to the center’s excellence. Paul notes that New York is smart to help maintain the center’s superior standards, because keeping students in their home state is “always the best choice. It’s twice as expensive for them to leave the state and, more importantly, takes them further from families. We like to keep students close to home, whenever possible.”

Working with families and the center’s board is a priority for Paul, who is a proactive networker. He maintains extensive interaction with families of students and friends of Anderson, whom he describes as “devoted,” presenting the center’s plans and goals to them, seeking feedback and acting on it. “They are integral. They bring their best to the table in time, thought and capital, as well as connect us to other resources that make a difference here, like corporations that donate money or technology. And, if family members express a concern, we welcome that. I say ‘bring it on’ and we work on it. Lots of changes are made in response to family advocacy. We’re all on the same side.”

On the community and state levels, Paul serves on boards and advisory committees, always on the lookout for opportunities to enhance the quality of life for Anderson students and their families, boost community awareness about autism and effect global change that potentiates a safer, kinder, more enriching world for individuals with autism. It might mean he’s in New York City at a gala, giving visitors a tour of Anderson, at the Mohonk Preserve — where he serves on the board — helping to develop programs for visitors with disabilities, or in Albany in a governor-appointed volunteer advisory capacity to advance the mission of improving life for individuals with autism and their families. Indeed, the indefatigable Paul is an executive, coach, fundraiser, strategist, government relations liaison, teacher, advocate and catalyst for what he feels he was “called” to do.

The dynamic head of a dynamic organization needs to respond nimbly to changes in students’ medical, emotional, educational or practical needs, employees striving for work-



Students and teachers form nurturing bonds.

life balance, facility improvements, administrative and financial matters and government regulations. Paul stays informed on relevant developments in every aspect of his domain: the latest and greatest software, architectural features that accommodate Anderson students, such as rounded corners in corridors, therapies for maladaptive behavior, as well as statistics about the alarming rise in the diagnosis of autism in the general population which is, he points out, precipitating a crunch in adequate services for individuals and their families in crisis.

***“We can never sit back and say we’ve done all we can do. Never.”***

“We want to partner as frequently and widely as we can to be a resource for people who want and need to learn about autism, as well as implement programs and services to improve quality of life for both our students and the broader community and that starts right here, being accessible,” says Paul, who is eager to “develop synergy” with SUNY Empire College. Anderson offers tuition assistance, encouraging employees to take courses related to their jobs, and already some have attended the college. He would like to formalize a relationship with SUNY Empire that would leverage its nontraditional, flexible approach to meet the Anderson staff’s needs and special interests. He was pleased when SUNY Empire administrators visited the Anderson campus and looks forward to further developing the relationship.

It is no surprise that Paul supports employees in their own goals, which he calls “the key to retention.” “Our people are important — teachers, custodians, everyone. Anderson is incredibly well taken care of — safe and clean, never in disrepair. Our team members always go the extra mile, whether it’s staying overnight and staffing the cafeteria because a storm

makes it impossible for others to get to work, or building playground structures, or taking the kids fishing. We all do our part and we express our gratitude to each other, in phone calls, emails, handwritten notes and in person. Heartfelt thanks and appreciation is like a second paycheck. My idea is to catch people doing something *good*.” He adds that while he keeps abreast of all goings-on at Anderson — from the status of invoices to the health of an employee who has been out sick — “I surround myself with talented people who know what they’re doing and let them do it. I rarely chime in, but I always follow up.”

As immersed as he is in his work, Paul does refuel, spending time with his wife, son and two stepdaughters, lifting weights and playing racquetball. He continues to be an insatiable autodidact, satisfying his quest for learning with reading, audiobooks and podcasts, and indulges his zest for travel with vacations to destinations such as Egypt and Italy, where he was fascinated by museums and local foods. Another current commitment is to SUNY Empire’s committee searching for a new president, and Paul is enthused about future active involvement with the college as an alumnus.

An intense, respectful listener, whose insights both saturate conversation and serve as a springboard for further discussion, Paul is gratified that his professional efforts, which align with his personal ethics, have translated into a progressive environment for a vulnerable population, but he is clear on what he cherishes most: “We can talk about what I’ve done. But I’d rather talk about what *they’ve* done — the students and staff — and the extraordinary contributions the people of Anderson Center have made to create and to live opportunities they all deserve for the pursuit of happiness and independence. This, above all, inspires and makes me happy, too.” ♥



Anderson Center for Autism is a safe and beautiful setting for learning.



# REBUILDING PUERTO RICO:

Students and Faculty Roll Up Their Sleeves

By David Henahan • Photographs by James McMahon '95



The mountainous terrain of Puerto Rico made traversing from jobsite to jobsite arduous. It could take 40 minutes to travel five miles, according to James McMahon '95. The team focused on fixing roofs, using corrugated steel for reinforcement.

**SUNY Empire State College** student volunteers deployed for two weeks last summer to Orocovis, Puerto Rico, to rebuild homes destroyed by Hurricanes Irma and Maria. They woke up at 5:15 a.m., picked up supplies and tools and drove a pickup for half an hour up dirt roads to Orocovis jobsites, more than 2,000 feet above sea level in the rural central mountains near the geographic center of the island.

“We pounded thousands of nails in miles of plywood,” said James McMahon '95, an adjunct instructor and coordinator of student services with the college’s Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies, who accompanied the students and spent 14 nights in a sleeping bag. “We worked long and hard on old houses and new construction. We removed and replaced damaged materials, built rafters for roofs and more. Our students learned a great deal about disaster recovery, Puerto Rico and construction and project management. I’m so proud of how well we worked as a team.”



*"I am proud and pleased that our students were able to contribute to the rebuilding and recovery of Puerto Rico."*

— SUNY Empire State College Officer in Charge Mitchell S. Nesler

The islanders also were part of the team, he emphasized. "They had nothing, but, somehow, they served us something to drink and food, even when they didn't even have electricity or running water."

Students each earned 3 academic credits for their learning. The first week, SUNY Empire students worked alongside electricians and plumbers who are members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 3, and the United Association of Plumbers Local 1. Based in New York City, both unions have partnerships with SUNY Empire, enabling apprentices to complete a degree as part of their training and education.

Gabrielle Carpenter '14, an MBA student from Glens Falls, N.Y., and former industrial electrical contractor who performed maintenance on apartment houses for years, was better prepared and more experienced than most students. She said she learned about the geology and culture of Puerto Rico and "the importance of planning and organization in a stressful environment."

"Some days, such as when we had to hike all the materials up a steep hill, were challenging," said Carpenter. "So was the weather — high humidity and very hot sun, definitely not what our team from New York was used to. Days we were on top of metal roofs in the hot sun took a lot out of us."

Alumna and student Katharina Basta '18, of Carthage, N.Y., shared Carpenter's sentiments and talked about why she volunteered and what she learned. "I learned that I am capable of so much more than most people would expect," said Basta. "Given an opportunity and pushed outside our comfort zone, women are just as capable, if not more capable, at construction work than men. With so much going wrong in this world that we have no control over, Puerto Rico was an opportunity for action and to feel empowered and aid people struck by disaster."

Basta completed her bachelor's in Science, Mathematics and Technology, with a concentration in environmental science, at the college and enrolled in ESC's Master of Arts in Teaching.

Basta and Carpenter were joined by students Ineabelle Cruz, of Rochester, N.Y., studying to complete a master's in Public Policy; Nicole Sayward, of Ithaca, N.Y., a bachelor's candidate



Top: James McMahon '95 on one of several roofs he helped repair.

Bottom: Participating students are flanked by a grateful homeowner, (far left), and a master carpenter, (far right), who were key in the rebuild effort.

in Business, Management and Economics; and Randi Searles, from Norwich, N.Y., an undergraduate in Human Development, concentrating in anthropology.

Earlier in the season, Jodi Bergman '19, a recent nursing program graduate, and Amanda Pulver, an undergraduate studying public administration, traveled to Puerto Rico with SUNY Potsdam student volunteers.

Pulver traveled to San Juan, where her group focused on repairing and rebuilding roofs, completing minor repairs





The students who traveled to Puerto Rico gathered with building trade professionals to memorialize their joint effort.

and conducting debris removal. Bergman went to Toa Baja, where she lived with SUNY Potsdam students communally in a church. Her first week, Bergman worked on a team to remove muck from flooded homes, then gut the damaged materials and sanitize the remainder. Her second week, she worked demolition and roofing, which stopped massive leaks in people's homes.

"I am proud and pleased that our students were able to contribute to the rebuilding and recovery of Puerto Rico," said SUNY Empire Officer in Charge Mitchell S. Nesler. "Compared to traditional students entering college immediately

after graduating high school, our nontraditional students have more responsibilities and constraints, in terms of job and family commitments, which limits their time and ability to travel." 🍷



Student Randi Searles proclaimed, "Female power!"

## Research on Hurricane Devastation in Puerto Rico Leads to Grant for Associate Professors

The Oral History Association, through its Emerging Crisis Oral History Research Fund, awarded a grant to SUNY Empire Associate Professors Audeliz Matias and Sheila Marie Aird for



Audeliz Matias



Sheila Marie Aird

their project "An Oral History of Hurricane Irma and Maria: A Social, Cultural, and Environmental Crisis in P.R. (Puerto Rico) and U.S.V.I. (U.S. Virgin Islands)."

"Our project seeks to document the impact of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in Puerto Rico and Saint Thomas, a U.S. Virgin Island, through a social, cultural and environmental lens, by conducting firsthand interviews. The interdisciplinary approach using oral history and science is key to this project," said Matias.

"The grant will help with the first step toward making this oral history collection possible and allow us to document the aftermath of one of the most devastating hurricanes in history," said Aird.

This spring, Aird and Matias will travel to Puerto Rico and St. Thomas and begin collecting oral history interviews on both islands. Both feel strongly that it is important to continue to document the experience and aftermath of those most impacted by this catastrophic event.



### College Receives \$40,000 Grant to Help Prepare Veterans for the 21st Century



On Veteran's Day 2018, the State University of New York announced that SUNY Empire would receive a \$40,000 grant from the Ambassador Trustee Carl Spielvogel Fund to boost educational opportunities for military students and their dependents across the state. The fund began with a generous donation by Spielvogel, a SUNY trustee, who was a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force Reserve and a member of the U.S. Army.

SUNY Empire is the largest military-aligned four-year SUNY institution, supporting 1,330 students, including 737 veterans. The money will be used to identify and track these students for both internal and external reporting, as well as to facilitate effective student support services.

"Many of our veterans have had experiences way beyond their years fighting for democracy around the globe," said Spielvogel. "As they come to New York, I am pleased to lend my personal support and provide resources to give more of them the advantage of a higher education through skills-based training, as well as a range of initiatives that will expand and improve educational opportunities."

**There are more than 1,300 MILITARY STUDENTS enrolled at SUNY Empire, including active-duty, veteran, Reserve, Guard, spouses and dependents.**

### Alumni Student Federation Board of Governors Will Recognize Veterans

The Alumni Student Federation Board of Governors will present a Veteran Service Award to an ESC alumna or alumnus veteran who has made a positive impact on the local, national or international community, the college or the veteran community. Other alumni awards are in the Emerging Leader, Community Impact and Distinguished Leader categories.

### Office of Veteran and Military Education Leader Honored With The Patriot Award

Desiree Drindak, interim director of the Office of Veteran and Military Education, received The Patriot Award from the United States Department of Defense for her "support and flexibility on behalf of military reserve employees." The award was presented by Vietnam veteran Emil Baker representing the DoD's Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Committee.



Drindak was recognized for efforts "to support citizen-warriors through a wide range of measures, including flexible schedules, time off prior to and after deployment, caring for families and granting leaves of absence, if needed." Married to a Navy Reserve pilot, Drindak understands the needs of military reservists and their families.

Drindak is the immediate past president of the New York State Advisory Council on Military Education.



Photos by David Henahan

### College Joins Americans Across the Nation to Honor Veterans

Last fall, members of the SUNY Empire State College community participated in Wreaths Across America, a national event honoring deceased veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Organized at the college by the Office of Veteran and Military Education, SUNY Empire students, alumni, faculty, staff and their relatives, the event was held at the Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery, in Schuylerville, N.Y. Volunteers, including from SUNY Empire, laid thousands of wreaths, covering every grave, including those of relatives of some students, faculty and staff.

**The New York county with the MOST MILITARY STUDENTS is Jefferson.**





**Bruce Bundock '08**

# Captures FACES of LABOR

Artist and alumnus Bruce Bundock '08, at right, with student Paula Thomas, a member of the United Federation of Teachers.

By Helen Susan Edelman  
Photographs by Marty Heitner '92

It was a 40-block walk from the bus station to the New York City gallery where artist and SUNY Empire alumnus Bruce Bundock '08 was showing his work last fall, but he was eager to hoof it with his wife, Lynn, to the opening of “Faces of Labor: Words and Images,” his solo exhibit of portraits of students at The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies. Students featured in the artwork and their families, alumni, faculty, administration and staff, labor union officials and friends of the college attended the event.

All 18 students portrayed are members of unions. In addition to making themselves available to Bundock, they also contributed personal statements examining the role of the union in their work and lives, which are hung alongside the portraits and in the show catalogue. The students include members of the United Association of Plumbers Local 1, United Federation of Teachers Paraprofessionals and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 3.

Bundock, who earned a Master of Liberal Arts at the college, wanted to “pay attention to people who fall through the cracks, those who work with their hands, and to highlight the men and women who make things happen behind the scenes.” A preparator of exhibits at Vassar College’s Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Bundock personally has handled about 3,000 works in stages of framing, mounting, installing, lighting, deinstalling, packing and shipping.

Prior to Vassar, Bundock was a master framer and painter, mostly of landscapes, before he developed a passion for portraiture. His award-winning artwork is in public, private and university collections, galleries and museums and has been featured in magazines. He also designed postage stamps for Gambia, the Maldives Islands, Antigua and Barbuda.

Bundock’s initial goal was to be a magazine illustrator, like Norman Rockwell, under whom he studied at age 16. “I drew constantly,” he recalled. “But not houses and trees. Organic shapes with color values. You leave it to the person looking at it to decide what it represents. The left side of your brain



wants to name things, your right side focuses on spatial relations. Paintings are not a language of words, but of space, color values and shapes.”

Bundock enrolled at SUNY Empire to explore his fascination with language and language patterns. “I wanted to study which words move people from their external consciousness to internal consciousness. I think we could support human excellence if we know how to model our language patterns.”

Bundock’s show was sparked by an article in *Connections* that focused on Van Arsdale’s arts program for union members studying with alumna, mentor and mixed-media artist Barrie Cline ’01, ’04. He contacted Van Arsdale’s former dean, Michael Merrill, and Director of Alumni and Student Relations Maureen Winney, with whom he brainstormed the SUNY Empire exhibit, which came to fruition after Merrill left the college.

Merrill, who attended the reception, said, “These portraits capture the quiet courage, fierce dignity and determined pride of their subjects in ways which remind us that behind every role, however obscure, is a full person. I know that the young men and women portrayed are electrician apprentices, plumber apprentices and public school classroom aides, but there are far more artists, musicians, entrepreneurs and members of various boards in this group than I imagine the uninitiated viewer is likely to expect.”

Cline said, “As artisans themselves, our students took an avid interest in Bruce’s practice. I think the whole endeavor, and all the unseen labor by the many people involved behind the scene, renders a portrait of The Van Arsdale Center and the college, while paying homage to our students.”

Vice President for Advancement Walter Williams said, “‘Faces of Labor’ beautifully highlights both the diverse stories of our students and the importance of the long-standing relationship between ESC’s Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies and our union partners. Through this unique partnership, the next generation of labor leaders are learning skills and expertise to perform on the job, as well as set the course for organized labor’s future.”

Professor David Fullard said, “Eyes bright with hope and stories that inspire, the subjects of these paintings look out at us and show us what is possible. Many of us cannot imagine their long days of labor — often starting at 4 a.m. — to care for their families, earn a living and pursue a higher education, all at the same time. These diverse individuals prove the depth and height to which the human spirit can reach.” 🍷



Christopher Saldana, a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 3.



Ana Toasperm, a member of the United Federation of Teachers.

### Comments from students portrayed in the show:

**Corbin Aldridge**, United Association of Plumbers Local 1: “The way people look at me when I’m leaving work after a hard day is like I just get dirty, like they are better than I am. People should know how hard tradesmen work and that all of our labor isn’t physical. A lot of problems have to be solved using math or science.”

**Bria Barfield**, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 3: “My dad was retired Local 3. He imparted to me guiding principles, such as being rooted in a union family and work ethic. When I became an apprentice, I realized so much of what he was teaching me came from being involved in the union way of life. I am a musician and was accepted into a music conservatory, but it could not offer enough scholarship money. I began gigging and learned that the musicians next to me had gone to high-powered institutions, yet there I was, playing alongside them. So I thought of the apprenticeship. The training program includes studies at Van Arsdale, electrical theory classes and working each day. It never was an option for me to not further my education.”

**Paula Thomas**, United Federation of Teachers: “Every one of Bruce Bundock’s portraits captures the pain, struggles, determination, love and honesty of our journeys and, above all, good, old-fashioned hard work. The college affords many students the opportunity to expand our horizons and passions with exposure to projects like this. I agreed to participate because I wanted to be a part of something that could make a difference in my life and the life of others. As a student and unionist, I do my best to make myself available to people and initiatives that support the labor movement.”

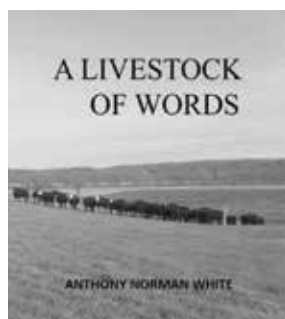
# PORTFOLIO

## Michael A. Johnson '91

### ***Report to the Principal's Office: Tools for Building Successful High School Administrative Leadership***

Professors, superintendents, principals, aspiring principals, teachers, parents and policymakers are embracing a comprehensive new book on educational leadership. Readers will appreciate Johnson's honest, forward-thinking approach, which focuses on problem-posing and solution-based challenges that principals face every day.

Johnson founded two highly acclaimed STEM-CTE high schools — Brooklyn's Science Skills Center H.S. and Phelps Architecture Construction and Engineering H.S in Washington, D.C. He is an adjunct professor of science education and former district school superintendent in New York City, Albany, N.Y., and Louisiana.



## Anthony Norman White '08

### ***A Livestock of Words***

White dedicated his first book to his first professor at ESC, Maureen Kravec, remarking, "She literally changed my life and without her I would not be celebrating the release of my first publication." He added

that he thinks about her words of advice every single day.

"A Livestock of Words" is a travel-sized book which captures what it is to be human without ever forcing the reader into a feeling. Each poem creates its own ecosystem of emotion, allowing the reader to fully experience a moment in time. Selected readings can be found at [www.anthonynormanwhite.com](http://www.anthonynormanwhite.com).



## Michael DeMasi '13

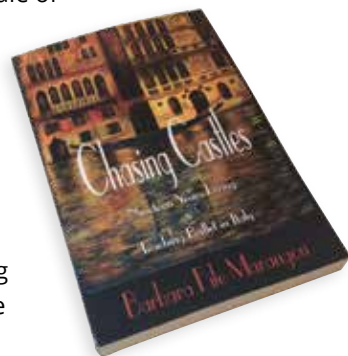
### ***What They Said***

A nationally recognized journalist, DeMasi has been writing about people, places and events in upstate New York for more than 25 years. He's been a reporter at the Business Review, in Albany, N.Y., since 2005, and was previously a reporter at The Daily Gazette, in Schenectady, N.Y., and The Post-Star in Glens Falls, N.Y. He has written about CEOs, entrepreneurs, politicians, gadflies, artists, teachers, clergy, police, prisoners, homeowners, hobbyists and his adventures as the dad of twin girls.

## Barbara File Marangon '11

### ***Chasing Castles***

Marangon is a writer, teacher, choreographer and painter. This book, her second, details 19 years of living and teaching ballet in Italy. Her incredible journey of self-discovery begins with the poignant finale of a Hollywood show and a ticket to Venice, Italy, courtesy of an appreciative cast. She eventually moves to a small Italian town with a castle and opens a ballet school. Marangon has a B.A. from ESC and now is working on her M.F.A. in Dance at the University of Oklahoma.



## James Verderame '84

### ***Electronic Masters Vol. 6***

Verderame released his second CD on Ablaze Records, now available on Amazon, iTunes and Spotify. On this disc of computer-created new music, listeners hear the wild sounds of some of today's most inventive electronic music composers.

Currently residing in Thousand Oaks, Calif., Verderame has written music for film, television and live performance. He's been a sound designer on several films, commercials and games and is co-founder of Futurity, named one of the major sound effects libraries in the Mix Magazine's Sound Effects Library Directory.



## Patricia Polak '87

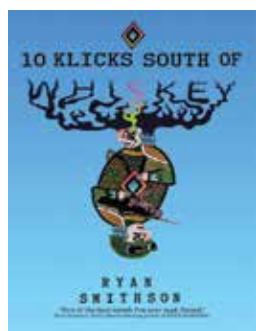
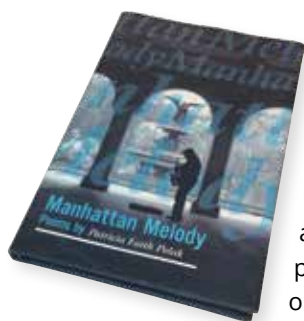
### *Manhattan Melody*

Polak is an adventurous world traveler whose experiences have led her to appreciate Manhattan and, now, to reflect in poetry on its beauty and cultural diversity.

Polak's varied verse explores the past, sipping hot cocoa at Schrafft's and devouring a nickel's worth of macaroni and cheese at the automat. It further contemplates the present: an indigo sky illuminating the city, sun glowing on the tree-shaded paving cobbles outside the Metropolitan Museum of Art, a park near the East River that welcomes nannies, a grassy café in Greenwich Village that lures guests, a chic gallery on the Lower East Side hosting

an opening and a redhead looking expectantly toward a paper-capped soda jerk in an Edward Hopper painting.

"Manhattan Melody" shares 50 contemporary verses by an award-winning poet, presenting a fresh perspective on the island she calls home.



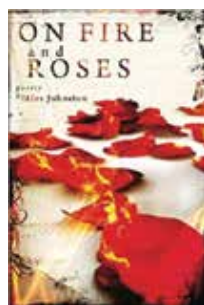
## Ryan Smithson '12

### *10 Klicks South of Whiskey*

Smithson has released his second book. This work of fiction follows his acclaimed nonfiction volume "Ghosts of War," which detailed his time in Iraq as part of the U.S. Army Reserve.

His new novel follows Charles

Main, who joins the Army instead of going to prison for a pickpocketing charge. He soon befriends Carrie Borden, one of the first female cavalry scouts in the Army, who helps him understand what selfless really means, as they are deployed together in the fight against ISIS.



## Alex Johnston, current student

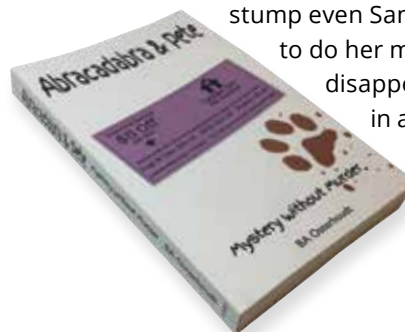
### *On Fire and Roses*

This is the first full-length poetry collection by award-winning poet Alex Johnston. The immersive compilation contains poems ranging from sentimental and touching to sinister and seductive. With this book, Johnston joins the ranks of a new generation of poetic trailblazers. This is a deeply personal meditation on his childhood, former struggles with addiction, relationships and personal growth. The author said it tackles "everything," from seemingly mundane snippets to his most intense experiences. Johnston, age 29, is in his final year at the college, majoring in Cultural Studies.

## Betty Osterhoudt '89

### *Abracadabra & Pete*

Alumna Betty Osterhoudt has released a new mystery novel about life at the Cattail Inn. Sam, the owner, has had her share of memorable guests — from a jet-setting woolly caterpillar to a soccer-playing llama. The events following the arrival of a small white rabbit, Abracadabra, stump even Sam, as Abra continues to do her magic act at the inn, disappearing and reappearing in all the wrong places.



## #SUNYEmpire Fast Facts

**The MEDIAN TIME to a BACHELOR'S DEGREE at ESC is approximately 3 YEARS.**

**Students OVER AGE 50 have the HIGHEST online COURSE COMPLETION RATES.**

# POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE

The presidential chain of office, decorated mortarboards and silver medallions are hallmarks of Empire State College commencement ceremonies. Each piece of regalia — even with modern touches — is steeped in years of tradition. A traveling mace and student speakers from all walks of life also are woven into a tableau of commencement ceremonies across the college's New York state and international locations.

Photo by Joe Putrock for the Times Union



Photo by David Henahan



Sequins. Glitter pens. Felt letters. That's the view from above during any ESC commencement ceremony. Students have been embellishing their mortarboards for years with notes of future aspirations and grand accomplishments.

*"I hope each of you will consider the impact you can have on the world and approach each day with kindness, sensitivity, honesty, integrity and the commitment to engage the world with a servant's heart."*

— Sean Coffman '13, commencement speaker

## The Presidential Chain of Office

Chains of office are one of the oldest symbols of authority and were worn as early as

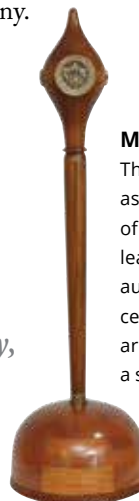


the days of the Roman Empire. Displaying the chain of office has become a treasured tradition in higher education, representing the status of the college president

during official celebrations, such as the inauguration of a new president, academic convocations and commencements. Each chain of office is as unique as the institution it represents. Empire State College's is formed with links that support a center medallion representing the official seal of the college. Directly above the medallion is a plate inscribed "President." Additional plates on each side are inscribed with the names of the former presidents of Empire State College.

## Mace

The mace has its roots in the Middle Ages as a weapon used to protect processions of eminent figures, such as kings and religious leaders. Over time, the mace came to symbolize authority and today is carried at the head of ceremonial academic processions. While many are ornate, Empire State College's mace is a simple, classic design that features a wooden staff and head and a metal inset of the college seal. New York artisans designed the mace in the mid-1980s and its holder in 2001.







The familiar marching tune “Pomp and Circumstance” marks nearly every commencement ceremony. Composed by Sir Edward Elgar, the processional became a staple of graduations in 1905, the year Elgar received an honorary doctorate from Yale University. The distinguished melody accompanied the coronation of King Edward VII, where it served as a recessional. Other universities followed suit — Princeton, University of Chicago, Columbia — until “Pomp and Circumstance” became the song that most students hear at graduation.



### Seal

The college seal incorporates the imagery of the New York Coat of Arms created during the American Revolution. Liberty stands to the left of the shield, symbolizing rebellion against the tyranny of King George. Justice, blindfolded, with scales in hand, stands to the right. At their feet is a banner proclaiming “Excelsior” or “Excellence.” The two figures support a shield with the sun rising in the west over a mountain range and the Hudson River, the latter signaling New York’s great commercial and economic potential. Above the two standing figures is a book, the universal symbol of learning.



*“Great success is not confined to a particular age group. In the face of great adversity, and what others may perceive as failure, we have an opportunity to take on challenges and pursue our goals. We all have time to succeed.”*

- Rebecca Reese '16, commencement speaker



### The Medallion

Empire State College’s medallion is a flat, silver disc emblazoned with the college seal. It was presented to ESC’s founding president, James W. Hall, on Empire State College’s 20th anniversary in April 1991 by the Alumni Student Association.

*“Think about what your next mountain will be and keep climbing.”*

- Mark Rider '14, '18, commencement speaker

## #SUNYEmpire 2018 Fast Facts

**3,415 STUDENTS** received an associate, bachelor’s or master’s degree.

Our **YOUNGEST GRADUATE** was age **19**; our oldest celebrated a **74th BIRTHDAY** this year.

Approximately **650 GRADUATES** were **OVER AGE 50** and nearly **450** were **UNDER 25**, with every age represented in between.

SUNY Empire Class of 2018 graduates live in **EVERY COUNTY** in New York, in **39 STATES**, including Alaska and Hawaii, and in **19 COUNTRIES** around the world.

2018 graduates attended more than **750** previous colleges, transferred in more than **122,000 CREDITS** and were awarded **57,000 CREDITS** for prior learning.



Our graduates’ experiences are forever memorialized in their diplomas and the college is excited to welcome thousands more to our alumni family in the coming months.

### New York State Ceremonies in 2019:

**Albany** — Sunday, June 2, 1 p.m.

**Brookville, Long Island** — Saturday, June 15, 1 p.m.

**Buffalo** — Wednesday, June 12, 6:30 p.m.

**Manhattan** — Friday, June 14, noon

**Manhattan** — The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies, Friday, June 14, 6:30 p.m.

**Purchase** — Monday, June 3, 6:30 p.m.

**Rochester** — Tuesday, June 11, 7 p.m.

**Syracuse** — Thursday, June 13, 6:30 p.m.

### International Ceremonies in 2019:

**Athens** — Wednesday, July 3

**Beirut** — Friday, July 11

**Prague** — Friday, June 21

**Tirana** — Friday, July 5

Learn about this year’s graduates and see photos from 2018 commencement ceremonies at [www.esc.edu/commencement](http://www.esc.edu/commencement).



**Letitia James**, an adjunct at The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies, was elected New York state attorney general last November.

Mentor **Donna Gaines** published "Why the Ramones Matter" celebrating the musical, cultural, political and socio-historical impact of the famed rock musicians.

Associate Professor **Gayle Stever** published "The Psychology of Celebrity." The book explores why people are fascinated by celebrities they've never met, the difference between fame and celebrity and how social media has enabled a new wave of celebrities.

**Ruth Goldberg '95**, a mentor in the Department of Arts and Media, taught "The Hero's Journey: Myth and Dramatic Structure for Filmmakers" at the International School of Film and Television in Cuba.



Associate Professor and Chair of the School for Graduate Studies Education Department **Donna Mahar** was a TeachNY Implementation Fund Award recipient.

Mahar's project, "Digital Badges, Micro-credentialing and Cross-level Collaboration in a Virtual Teaching Laboratory," received \$15,000 from the SUNY's TeachNY Implementation Fund initiative.

Master of Arts in Adult Learning Mentor **Dianne Ramdeholl** authored a chapter in "Teaching Race: How to Help Students Unmask and Challenge Racism."

**Lear Matthews**, mentor, was a featured speaker at Trinity College presenting "Invisible Yet Resilient: West Indian Immigrants — Transnational Experiences, Challenges and Benefits."

Professor **Tom Mackey**, Department of Arts and Media, co-edited "Metaliterate Learning for the Post-Truth World," which addresses the challenges of the



post-truth world.

**Richard Savior**, assistant professor, Business, Management and Economics, published "A Mature Institutional Model of Internationalization in MENA

Universities" in the Journal of Education and Human Development.

Associate Professor **Tracy Galuski** co-authored "Open-Ended Art for Young Children" about activities where children are free to use their imagination.



**David Fullard**, who spent 30 years as a captain on Rikers Island before becoming a professor at SUNY Empire, had an article published in City Limits titled "Addressing Trauma

is Key to Stopping Violence on Rikers and the Jails That Will Replace It."

**Bessie Walker '93**, who received the Empire State College Foundation Excellence in Support Services Award, is an office assistant at the college's Nanuet location. She has been at the college for 45 years.

"Shiva is Satisfied" — Professor **Robert Congemi's** 13th novel — follows the lives of a narrator and his family and close friends as they struggle with the most catastrophic times in today's world.



School for Graduate Studies Associate Professor **Jason Russell '02** published "Making Managers in Canada, 1945-1995: Companies, Community Colleges, and Universities."



**Debra Kram-Fernandez**, Child and Family Studies mentor, presented a workshop at the International Association for Social Work with Groups in Kruger National Park, South Africa.



"Women and Gender in International History: Theory and Practice," by Professor of Historical Studies **Karen Garner**, was published.



Associate Professor **Roxana Toma** attended the Mediterranean International Congress on Social Sciences in Budapest, Hungary, and presented "Social Capital and Corruption: A Case Study on Lebanon."

Mentors **Rhianna Rogers** and **Elizabeth Bradley** received a SUNY Annual Explorations for Diversity and Academic Excellence Grant for projects titled "The Buffalo Project: An Ethnographic Student-Based Study of Greater Buffalo, N.Y." and "Minority Faculty Mentoring at a Distance: Program Implementation and Evaluation."

"Intimate Mobilities: Sexual Economies, Marriage and Migration in a Disparate World," co-edited by SUNY Empire Professor **Nadine T. Fernandez**, was published.

Literature, Communications and Cultural Studies Professor **Elaine Handley** published a chapbook of poems titled "Securing the Perimeter."



**Nazik Roufaiel**, professor and department chair of Accounting, Economics and Finance and online curriculum coordinator of Accounting and Finance, presented two papers at the World Business Congress in Hong Kong.

Mentor **Mark Soderstrom** presented "Automated Bodies: Social Reproduction and Revolutionary Feminism through Speculative Fiction" at the Embodiment in Science Fiction and Fantasy Interdisciplinary Conference at McMaster University.

Interim Provost **Meg Benke**, a Middle States commissioner, spoke at the UUP Voices conference on a panel on shared governance.

Professor **Lorraine Lander** published an article in Sustainability: The Journal of Record titled "The Good Life versus consumerism and greed: Reaching a better understanding of barriers and motivators for sustainability."



Associate Professor **Nicola Marae Allain** is the new interim associate dean of the Division of Arts and Humanities. She joined SUNY Empire in 2002 as director of curriculum and instructional design in the former Center for Distance Learning. From 2010 to 2016, she was a faculty mentor and academic area coordinator in humanities/digital media and a core faculty member for the Master of Arts in Learning and Emerging Technologies (MALET). Most recently, she was an associate professor in the Department of Arts and Media, online curriculum coordinator for digital media, as well working with MALET.

**Gerry Lorentz** has been named faculty associate for outcomes assessment in the Office of Academic Affairs. Lorentz will be working with Interim Vice Provost for Academic Administration **John Lawless** and the Office of Decision Support on the college's ongoing efforts for continuous academic improvement. Lorentz brings substantial depth and breadth of knowledge and experience to the faculty associate role. He first joined the college in 2007 as dean of the Northeast Center and served in that capacity until the college's reorganization in 2016. Since then, he has been a professor/mentor in Historical Studies based at the college's Latham location, mentoring and teaching students in both online and face-to-face modes.

Professor of International Business and Management **Bidhan Chandra** moderated an international alumni panel in Dubai focusing on growth and career opportunities. Also present and speaking at the event were Associate Dean **Julie Gedro**, Lebanon Residency Program Director **Jeannine Mercer** and International Education Executive Director **Francesca Cichello**.

### #SUNYEmpire Fast Fact

Over the last 12 academic years, the **MEDIAN AGE** of our students has **DECREASED from 33 to 30.**



## CHANCELLOR'S Awards for Excellence

*Six faculty and staff received Chancellor's Awards for Excellence and were honored at commencement ceremonies.*

**David Puskas**, Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Professional Service. Puskas has been at the college since July 2005 and is interim director of Academic Review, Genesee Valley, in the Office of Academic Review within Academic Services.

**Thomas McElroy '96**, Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Professional Service. McElroy has been at the college for more than 25 years. He is director of prior learning for the Office of Academic Services and former president of the faculty Senate.

**Seana Logsdon**, Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Professional Service. Logsdon is director of Academic Support in the Office of Student Affairs in the Buffalo and Rochester regions. She has been building academic support offerings at the college for more than a decade.

**Rhianna Rogers**, Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. Rogers, an associate professor of Interdisciplinary Studies, in Cheektowaga, has been at the college since August 2010. She holds multiple appointments, including undergraduate roles in the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences and Humanities, the School for Graduate Studies and International Education.

**Debra Schubert**, Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Classified Service. Schubert has been at the college for more than 15 years. She is a secretary in the Office of Academic Affairs, located in Saratoga Springs.

**Margaret Tally**, Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. Based in Manhattan, Tally is the coordinator of the Master of Arts in Social and Public Policy. At ESC since 1992, Tally's teaching areas include Social Policy Perspectives, Ethics in Social Policy and Media and Public Policy.



## FYI

The college's Corning location moved last October to 8 Denison Parkway East, Suite 204, Corning, NY 14830-2638. This new location, central to the Southern Tier, was chosen because of its proximity to downtown Corning's many businesses, which will assist with establishing new partnerships in the region. The new location is also closer to Corning Community College, with which ESC shares a robust Pathways transfer agreement. This new space was designed to accommodate multiple learning modalities.

# YOUNG ALUMNI *Leadership*

Ada Martinez



As all alumni know, Empire State College has been a welcoming institution for adult learners for close to 50 years. More than 84,000 alumni have come through our doors and many younger adult students are seeing the value of the college and our unique mission.

In a specific effort to engage younger adults, the Alumni Student Federation Board of Governors has formed a committee to look at ways to reach alumni in their 20s and 30s. We'd like to introduce you to a few of these alumni.

**Ada Martinez '14** is an organizer for the NYS Nurses Association and has been a federation board member since 2016. "Young alumni bring value to the ESC college community. Their leadership is important because it provides loyal support for the college and current students. I think it's important to be part of the ESC network, so we can support and motivate other ESC students to find it within themselves."

**Eleni Moraites '16, '18** is an employee relations specialist at Northwell Health. She joined the federation board last fall. "Young alumni leadership is important because it allows me to continue to have relationships with faculty and staff, while engaging with new students. Seeing and hearing from young alumni leaders makes students feel like their goals are obtainable and keeps them motivated. They are passionate about sharing new ideas."

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*Interested in how you can help? Want to join the Young Alumni Committee? Have any ideas for Alumni Under 40 events? Please reach out to us at [alumni@esc.edu](mailto:alumni@esc.edu). We'd love to hear from you!*



Eleni Moraites

## INSPIRE. EMPOWER. SUPPORT.

Inspire curiosity and empower success by supporting today's and tomorrow's students with a gift to

**The Fund for Empire State College.**



Visit [www.esc.edu/SupportESC](http://www.esc.edu/SupportESC), or call 800-847-3000, ext. 2337 to make your gift today.





# Our SUNY Empire Our Global Footprint

SUNY Empire students, alumni, faculty, staff and supporters are all over the globe — and we can prove it. Our community has been busy rallying around the world to show pride in ESC. Check out some of the places our #Rally4Empire towel was spotted.

*Let's hear your #Rally4Empire Cry!*



Photo by Louise Winney



Clockwise from top left: **Joshua Ham '17** is all smiles in front of Vaduz Castle in Lichtenstein. Director of Alumni and Student Relations **Maureen Winney** with international jazz great **Kenny Barron '78**, who showed his ESC spirit while performing at the Umbria Jazz Festival in Perugia, Italy. **Deborah Brown '07, '08** celebrated her 50th at Vatnajökull National Park in Iceland. **Suraj Holzwarth '89** cruised Tutka Bay in Alaska. **Kathy Eagan '95** and her daughter, Beth, traveled to Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa, with the #Rally4Empire towel. New Yorkers **Heather Elford '14** and **Mollie Muenzen '13** shared their SUNY Empire #Rally4Empire pride at the Grand Canyon.

See all the rally towels at [www.esc.edu/alumni](http://www.esc.edu/alumni).

**Want to #Rally4Empire on your next adventure? Request a towel at [alumni@esc.edu](mailto:alumni@esc.edu). Share your photos using #Rally4Empire on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, or email them to the Office of Alumni and Student Relations at [alumni@esc.edu](mailto:alumni@esc.edu).**

# ALUMNI AND STUDENT NOTES

## CENTRAL NEW YORK REGION

**Cheryl Costa '15**, a military veteran and retired information security professional, was a speaker at the International Unidentified Flying Objects Congress. Costa also contributed short stories to "Adirondack Mysteries and Other Mountain Tales, Volume 3."

**Patricia Festa '14**, district treasurer for Auburn Enlarged City Schools, has joined the Unity House board of directors in Auburn.

**Gary Finch '90** won re-election as New York state assemblyman in the 126th district.

**Peggy Lynn '05** paired up with fellow singer/songwriter Dan Duggan for a residency with first-year music students at Alfred University last fall. Lynn is the 2013 recipient of the SUNY ESC Altes Prize.

**Arline Marino '81** is enjoying retirement after a 70-year career in public service. Marino was instrumental in establishing the accounting, medical records and personnel office at the former Taylor-Brown Memorial Hospital.



**Troy Waffner '00** was appointed director of the New York State Fair. The appointment, announced by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, comes after Waffner served as interim director for the past five years. In 2018, the fair set an attendance record of 1,279,010; eight of the fair's 13 days saw new daily attendance records.



*"I thought SUNY Empire would allow me to achieve a college degree while working full-time, maximize the credits I had accumulated from my prior studies, give me credit for what I learned through some of my life's experiences, and allow me to study material that was of interest to me. I was correct."*

— Jonathan Darche '00

**Morgan Pierce '15** was named a Carthage Area Hospital Employee of the Quarter last summer.

**Emad Rahim '02, '03** delivered the keynote address at Ashford University's fall commencement. Rahim also received the 2018 Community Impact Award from Empire State College's Alumni Student Federation Board of Governors.

**Tamara Reese '05** was named to Central New York Business Journal's "40 under 40." Reese is the co-founder of Visionary Minds, a publicity and entertainment media company in Syracuse.

**Lynne Ryan '07** is now chief financial officer at United Way of Central New York.

**Keith Young '87** is the new director of St. Bonaventure University's physician assistant program. Young was previously a clinical associate professor of physician assistant studies at Clarkson University.

## GENESEE VALLEY REGION

**Susan Boss '17** was named senior vice president of housing services at PathStone Corporation, in addition to her role as executive director.

**Kristine Bouyoucos '14** had the first solo exhibit, "Notations: Imagery of Words & Music," in the Central Library of Rochester and Monroe County's year-old Anthony Mascioli Gallery.

**Timothy Cosgriff '93** had his artwork displayed at the Eastman Museum as part of the "Sweet Creations" exhibit. His work pays homage to the Empire State Building.

**Joseph N. Glasgow '96**, professor at Mitchell Community College and former business professor at the University of Phoenix, contributes to various news media outlets, including SVL Free News.

**Lynn Holley '76** is both founder and director of the 3 Minute Film Festival, which screens films in Santa Barbara, Calif. The festival entered its fifth season



**Kristen Kurtz '16** won first prize in the global soil painting competition held by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Kurtz is the current manager of the Cornell Soil Health Lab.



**Michael Mandina '90** is president of the nation's largest prototype optics manufacturer, Optimax Systems Inc., in Ontario, N.Y.

Optimax supplies precision optical components, such as semiconductors, aerospace and medical instruments, for the military and industry in the United States and abroad, including for NASA.

Mandina began his career at Ilex Optical Co. as a process engineer and later worked at Melles Griot Inc. as manufacturing manager, while attending SUNY Empire State College. He graduated with a B.S. in Applied Physics. Mandina joined Optimax in 1990 as part owner and president. The company was a start-up and he was its first full-time employee.

in January 2019. This international film festival draws entries from around the world. Holley curates the festival, which presents awards for original music judged by professionals in the field of film and music.



**Christopher Moss '11** was recently elected to a four-year term as the new Chemung County executive. Moss previously served as Chemung County sheriff.

**Angelica Perez-Delgado '06** has been selected president of the Ibero-American Action League in Rochester. Perez-Delgado was previously with Villa of Hope as the nonprofit's chief administrative officer/ chief compliance officer.

**Joseph Petrillo '81** was awarded STAR-NY Mastery of Practice and STAR-NY Team Spirit awards. Petrillo is an adjunct math instructor at Genesee Community College.

**Michael Weed '11** joined the Monroe Community College Foundation board of directors. Weed is president of Graywood Companies, Inc., a real estate organization.

**Tamika Williamson '07, '08** is the new assistant controller at Canandaigua National Bank & Trust. Williamson brings 20 years of finance expertise to the role.

## HUDSON VALLEY REGION

**Obed Figueroa '97, '00** recently wrote a children's storybook that increases awareness about the health professions titled "Marcus Learns About the Different Types of Doctors." Figueroa is a published researcher with Stony Brook University.



**Maj. Richard L. Mazzone '11** was promoted from captain and assigned as the 35th commander of Troop K for the New York State Police. Troop K covers

four counties, Columbia, Dutchess, Putnam and Westchester.

**Peter Sestito '03** was named director of communications for Greystone Programs, Inc., a nonprofit organization that provides essential services and life-enriching opportunities to more than 60 children, adults and families with autism and other developmental disabilities.

## INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

**Livia and Fiona Hoxha**, twin sisters and current students at the college's Tirana location, traveled to New York to deliver presentations at the Fall Student Conference. Both study Business, Management and Economics, with concentrations in finance, and are graduating with bachelor's degrees in June. Fiona presented on handling stress through the college experience, while Livia presented on the National Action Plan of Albania, an initiative geared toward improving the quality of life of Albania's youth.

**Rosine Labaki '01** is working as the registrar at the Emirates International School Meadows. Previously, Labaki worked for eight years as the director of catering and events within the hotel industry in Dubai.

**Gerard Mounayer '10**, vice president at Lockton MENA, was part of a panel presentation at the second annual alumni student event in Dubai. His brother, **Georges Mounayer '10**, is creative director at Innocean Worldwide, in Dubai. Both brothers are graduates of the Lebanon Residency Program. Also presenting were **Tarek Abou Zeinab '02**, **Charles Saliba '98** and **Rosine Labaki '01**.

## LONG ISLAND REGION

**Layla Abdullah-Poulos '10, '16** published multiple manuscripts highlighting Muslim fiction in The Journal of Popular Romance Studies.

**Leora Cohen-Rosenberg '18** assisted her mentor, Associate Professor **Menoukha Case**, with introductory text for a book on women, gender and sexuality studies.

**Lori de Iulio-Casdia '99** was recently named to the "Top 50 Women in Business" list by the Long Island Business News. Iulio-Casdia is the founder of LDC Strategies, a full-service marketing and public relations firm.

**Donna McNaughton '90** was appointed city councilwoman of Glen Cove. McNaughton, an eighth-generation city resident, is a lawyer with her own practice.

**Naureen Virani '18** has taken a position as junior documentation specialist and chief financial officer assistant at Interactive Brokers Group in Connecticut. Prior to that, she was interning in the Office of Alumni and Student Relations at Empire State College.

## NEW YORK CITY REGION

**Nancy Azara '74** was part of a panel discussion focusing on the #MeToo movement for an "Artist Talk on Art" last fall in New York City. The event focused on how the #MeToo movement is affecting the art world and the lives of artists.

Current students and alumnae **Margaret Blair '17** and **N. Regina Jackson '18** both delivered presentations about their study-abroad trips, funded in part by the SUNY Diversity Abroad Honors Scholarship Program, at the Fall Student Conference this year.

**Raul Manzano '05**, an arts and media mentor at Empire State College, had two entries accepted to the juried national art competition hosted by Arc Gallery & Studies in San Francisco.

**Ana Maria Lucaciu '12** performed at the SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Dance fall concert. The concert highlighted a program of world premieres alongside historical restagings.

**Shanon McAlister '07** joined Hub International Northeast Limited as the new business development associate.

**Michael Parks**, a current undergraduate studying Public Affairs, recently performed



in the touring cast of "Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas" at the Palace Theater in Schenectady, N.Y.

**David Perez '11** was promoted to acting chief and commanding officer of the public safety force in Co-op City. Perez has been part of the NYPD for 26 years.

**Charles Small '97, '00** was promoted to chief clerk of the Brooklyn Supreme Court. Small has 27 years of previous experience and now will serve one of the largest and busiest courts in the United States.

## NIAGARA FRONTIER REGION

**Allison Agnello '15** was recently appointed assistant director of human resources at Genesee Community College.

**Tara N. Burgess '06** is the new executive director of Every Person Influences Children, in Buffalo. She previously worked for 10 years at the Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies.

**Patricia Furness '16** is the new assistant director of operations for Genesee Community College. She served as a campus center associate for 27 years.

**Bryan Gazda '04** was appointed administrator and clerk treasurer of Depew Village. Gazda has 18 years of experience in East Aurora and seven in the Village of Manlius.

**Daniel Gibson '14** received the Mental Health Hero Award at The Dale Association awards dinner in Lockport last fall. Gibson is currently the outreach care manager at Family and Children's Service of Niagara.

**Rev. Linda Haight '12** was welcomed as the new pastor at The North Ontario United Methodist Church last fall. Haight is only the second female pastor in the 149 years of pastoral records at the church.

**Tanya Moore '04** is now chief financial officer at the Charter School for Applied Technologies. Moore began working for the school in 2005 and has more than 34 years of experience in the field.

**Mary Jo Noworyta '10** was hired as a social worker for Meals on Wheels of Western New York. Noworyta will manage a client base of approximately 600, working closely with families on nutrition and support services.

**Damon Piatek**, a current student, and **Susan Walsh Schubbe '08** both received a C-Level Executive Award from Buffalo Business First. The C-Level Awards recognize Western New York's top executives for their leadership skills. Piatek is the current co-owner of Welke Customs Brokers USA Inc. Walsh Schubbe is the chief human resource officer at Curbell Inc.

**Felicia Stanley '04** is now the mental health counselor at Bestself Behavioral Health Child Advocacy Center.



**Warren Abriel '83** retired as chief from the Albany Fire Department. Abriel began his career 46 years ago and has been the city's fire chief since February 2014.



New York Army National Guard **Maj. Christopher Jensen '98**, a former infantry officer and combat veteran who fought in Iraq, took

command of the Kingston-based 104th military police battalion. Jensen, a member of the New York Army National Guard since 1991, serves as director of military personnel, supervising all personnel actions of the Army Guard's almost 10,000 soldiers across the state.



**Capt. Bernard Rivers '16** was appointed director of the Division of Law Enforcement (DLE) in the New York State Department of

Environmental Conservation. He had been acting director since March. Previously, he served in DEC's central office in Albany as head of DLE's Office of Professional Standards.

He will lead 289 environmental conservation police officers across the state as the enforcement arm of DEC, tasked with safeguarding the state's natural resources and enforcing environmental conservation law protecting fish and wildlife, environmental quality and the citizens of New York.



## NORTHEAST REGION

**Wales Brown '15, '18** and a current student, presented at the Annual Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education conference and had his paper published in the proceedings.

**Brian Farley '01, '05** recently wrote "In Other Words," bringing together many aspects of the experiences of his Christian journey.

**Sister Mary Lou Liptak '83** is leading two parishes in Albany and fulfilling her calling. Liptak is the parish life director at St. Lucy/St. Bernadette Church. The Albany diocese has been a pioneer in appointing a nun to this role traditionally filled by priests. Her story is told in a new documentary about Catholic women in the clergy, "The Calling."

**Terpsie Toon '05** led senior dance workout parties at the Lake Placid Center for the Arts last winter. Toon danced with the Radio City Ballet Company and the Rockettes and spent 13 years dancing in professional musical theatre.

**John Woodward '93** recently retired after a 24-year career as Schenectady County clerk. Woodward is now serving as Rotterdam town historian.

## OUTSIDE NEW YORK STATE

**Julia E. Antoine '94** has written more than 50 books. Her writing spans the genres of children's books, romance novels, short stories and even business manuals. Antoine's most recent book is "But for the Love of My Father, A Memoir."

**Greg Chako '09** performed for the first time in Buffalo this past October. Chako is a jazz guitarist, recording artist and educator from Cincinnati, Ohio.

**Judy Emerson '10** is an English language fellow with the U.S. Department of State and recently taught English to international students in Khovd and Ulaanbaatar in Mongolia.

**Nancy Langer '91** delivered the 2018 commencement address to Finger Lakes Community College graduates at their spring ceremony.



**Ellen Sue Spicer-Jacobsen '94** recently published a book, "For the Love of Clotheslines," inspired by a trip to Italy that triggered childhood memories. This photo book can be enjoyed by young and old alike and makes a pitch for bringing back clotheslines as a way of "going green."

## SCHOOL FOR GRADUATE STUDIES

**Sandra Barkevich '13, '16** is teaching at Pathways in Technology Early College High School, one of the top five innovative high schools in the country in 2018.

**Erik Chocianowski '17** is on the faculty at Nassau BOCES Long Island High School for the Arts in the theater department. He previously served as a visiting lecturer for Nassau BOCES LIHSA for three years.

**Mary Ellen DeCarlo '08, '12, '14** received an honorable mention in Buffalo Business First Magazine's feature "Who's Who in Healthcare." She is vice president of operations at TeamHealth.

**Eve Hens '16** was elected president of the YWCA in Batavia. Hens, also a graduate of the United States Air Force Academy, is purchasing director for Genesee County.

**Christine Johnson '94** was promoted to chief financial officer of Friendly Senior Living. Johnson is a certified public accountant and registered nurse who has been with the organization since 2014.

**Althea Luehrsen '02, '10** spoke at Trocaire College's 59th commencement ceremony last fall. Luehrsen is a member of the SUNY Empire State College Foundation board and chief executive officer of Leadership Buffalo. She is a lifelong resident of Western New York.

**Ushona McLean '06, '13** was appointed to the grant-funded position of coordinator of CSTEP (Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program) and STEP (Science and Technology Entry Program) at Mohawk Valley Community College.

**Patrick Murphy**, a current graduate student, was recently appointed executive director of the Saranac Lake Area Chamber of Commerce. Murphy comes to the chamber from The Wild Center, where he served as community outreach and group sales coordinator.



**Jodell Raymond '04**, at right, has been named executive director of the Victor Chamber of Commerce. Raymond previously worked as director of marketing and communications for the Susan B. Anthony Museum and House.

**Lynn Stephens '01, '04** accepted a full-time position as a research scientist with The Concord Consortium after consulting on education research projects for several years. She is currently working on two large projects funded by the National Science Foundation.



We love seeing your furry friends sporting SUNY Empire orange! Tag us on social media @sunyempire with photos of your pet in college swag and you just might be featured in the next issue of Connections. This beautiful service dog belongs to student **Allie Quinn**.

Instagram: @joeysjourneytoservicedog



## KEEP IN TOUCH

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www.linkedin.com/school/empire-state-college

**Jeff Welton '10** was selected by Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo among 275 educators from across New York state to join the New York State Master Teacher Program, a network of dedicated professionals teaching science, technology, computer science, robotics, coding, engineering and math courses across grades K-12.

## SCHOOL OF NURSING AND ALLIED HEALTH

**Suzanne Caligiuri '14** works as a hospital nursing services consultant for the New York State Department of Health. Caligiuri is enrolled in the college's Master of Nursing Administration program.

**Scott Giordano '18** works as an emergency department clinical coordinator at Southwestern Vermont Medical Center.

**Jennifer Pettis '17** was appointed associate director of programs at Nurses Improving Care for Healthsystem Elders at New York University, bringing 25 years of experience to the position.

**Aqueela Zainul '17** is now a public health nurse with the New York City Department of Health.

## STAY TUNED...

On Nov. 1, 2019, the Alumni Awards Program will begin accepting nominations for four annual awards. Entering its fourth year, the program highlights alumni in the following categories: Emerging Leader, Community Impact, Veteran Service and Distinguished Leader. Visit [www.esc.edu/alumni](http://www.esc.edu/alumni) for current and upcoming information and to read about past winners.



2018 award recipients pose for a celebratory photo with Officer in Charge Mitchell Nesler. Left to right: John Corrou '94, Erin Sullivan '03, '14, Emad Rahim '02, '03 and Nesler.

Photo by David Henahan



## IN MEMORIAM

### ALUMNI

**Christina Arvidson '16** passed away on Nov. 5, 2018. She was a professional photographer and earned a Bachelor of Science from the college.

**Andre Bermudez '12, '13** earned a graduate certificate from the college and went on to earn his MBA. He worked for the Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and was an avid musician.

**Timothy Collins '00** was a long-time resident of Central New York. Collins was a member of the United States Marine Corps and, after ESC, went on to law school. He was an active college volunteer, presenting at open houses and offering legal advice to alumni and students.

**Rosalie N. Curran '75** passed away on Nov. 16, 2018. She received her Bachelor of Arts and was one of the earliest ESC graduates. She was the proud mother of Empire State College graduate

**Brian Curran '80.**

**Kathleen Curry '99** obtained a Master of Arts in Medieval Music and Literature. She was a professional string bassist with orchestras and chamber groups across the United States and a dramatic soprano soloist.

**Paula J. Hanmann '93** was very active in the community, serving on the Westfield Academy and Central School's board and as treasurer of the Westfield Community Kitchen. She earned a B.S.

**Susan Hoyt '01** was a champion for women long before she was executive director of the Erie County Commission on the Status of Women. She was a founder and board member of the Buffalo Green Fund and a member of the Buffalo Planning Board. She also was a long-time board member of the New York State William B. Hoyt Child & Family Trust Fund.

**Grace Ketterer '01** began her career as a clothing buyer for Belk Department Store in Manhattan and subsequently became a computer support specialist for both the state of New York and Atlantic County before retirement. She earned a Bachelor of Professional Studies.

**Mary Lang '88** began her tireless work in education law at the newly established Education Law Clinic at the University at Buffalo Law School in 1972 and soon became office manager. She retired in 1993 as associate director. She earned a Bachelor of Science.

**Jean Schmitt '77** was a registered nurse who graduated from St. Luke's School of Nursing and received her B.S. and teaching certification from ESC. She was a school nurse and health teacher at Valley Central High School for many years.

**Michele Scanlin '01** passed away on Nov. 25, 2018. She began working at New York Telephone Company as an operator and retired as a control center manager from Verizon in 2002. She and her daughter co-owned and operated Sposa Bella Dress Shop in Canton.

**Jeremy VanNostrand '06**, a New York state trooper from Rotterdam, passed away suddenly on Nov. 27, 2018, on his way to work at the Troop G Station. He earned a Bachelor of Science from the Johnstown location and was an outstanding trooper.

### FACULTY

**Desiree "Desi" Benet**, adjunct instructor in the Division of Human Services, passed away on Dec. 27, 2018. She spent four decades in social work and child protective and family services before retiring and coming to the college.

**Troy Jones** was a highly respected Educational Studies mentor at the college's Staten Island location. He joined the college in 2012 and taught statistics, educational studies and children's literature. Jones took great pride in his teaching and work in New York City public schools, where he collaborated with local organizations to support informal internship programs.

**Thelma A. Jurgrau** died on Jan. 21, 2019. She received her doctorate in Comparative Literature from the CUNY Graduate Center and was a cherished retired professor at the college's Metropolitan location. She was the editor of the first American translation of George Sand's autobiography, a founding member of Les Amis de George Sand and a dedicated pianist.

**Bill McClary** was a part-time mentor through both the Center for Distance Learning and International Education from the 1980s through 2012, and a marketing professional at General Electric. He mentored hundreds of students across the country and remained committed to assisting students with their goals throughout their careers.

**George P. Pilkey** passed away on February 11, 2019, hiking and communing with nature. He was a professor and mentor, retiring in August 2018. A born educator, he never lost his enthusiasm for working with students. Donations in his memory may be made to the George P. Pilkey Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 164, Middle Grove, NY 12850. A scholarship will be awarded annually to a Human Services student at the college.

**David Porter** passed away on Dec. 29, 2018, surrounded by his family. Porter graduated from Oberlin College in 1961 and studied at the Paris Institute of Political Studies. He completed his doctoral studies in politics at Columbia University. He taught at the college's Hudson Valley location for 25 years.

### STAFF

**Hope Ferguson Morgan**, senior writer at the college, passed away on July 20, 2018. Alumni and readers of this magazine will remember her byline on countless articles and interviews with alumni, students, faculty and staff for more than 20 years.

**Michael T. Shpur** joined the college purchasing department in 2009 after a long career as a golf pro and club manager. Shpur was successful in cutting costs, obtaining high-quality services and developing vendor relationships.





## DID YOU KNOW?

Empire State College has more than 80 active corporate and community agency partnerships.

Empire State College also has partnership agreements with all 36 SUNY and CUNY community colleges.

*Here are some ways alumni can help open doors:*

- Host an information session.
- Provide student internships.
- Let us know if your company or organization would be interested in partnering with Empire State College to provide educational benefits for employees.
- Update your employment information at [www.esc.edu/alumni](http://www.esc.edu/alumni).



# “I’m GIVING BACK to a place that gave so much OPPORTUNITY to me.”

When Rachel Thibodeaux '96 realized that job titles and promotion considerations took into account one's education level, but not their capabilities or experience, she set a goal to receive her bachelor's degree. She found SUNY Empire State College and, with the help of her mentor, realized that her experience was her education.

Six years later at her graduation, Rachel met a woman whose son had graduated on the same day. She saw how different everyone's paths could be, but how they all led to ESC. Inspired by her classmates' stories, Rachel made the decision to join the Boyer Legacy Society. “The idea that by donating you can help someone else reach their goals is powerful. I'm giving back to a place that gave so much opportunity to me.”



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To learn more about the various ways you can join Rachel in creating a lasting impact, please visit [www.esc.edu/PlanGifts](http://www.esc.edu/PlanGifts), or contact Toby Tobrocke at 800-847-3000, ext. 2372, or [Toby.Tobrocke@esc.edu](mailto:Toby.Tobrocke@esc.edu).



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