“Human nature grows tired of always doing the same thing, and it is God’s will ... because of the opportunity of practicing two great virtues. The first is perseverance, which will bring us to our goal. The other is steadfastness, which overcomes the difficulties on the way.” — St. Vincent de Paul
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Niagara University’s undergraduate commencement exercises returned to Montagne Ridge this year. Here, NU’s newest alumni leave the Gallagher Center after receiving their degrees. See story on page 10.

View the Eagle online at http://eagleonline.niagara.edu/
On April 10, I had the great pleasure of announcing that the promise we made to our students and community in 2007 had not only been fulfilled, but exceeded.

We are grateful to everyone who made gifts to the Promise of Niagara, a record-breaking capital campaign that has allowed us to transform our campus, both physically and programmatically. I have already begun traveling across the country to thank and celebrate with our thousands of supporters.

Throughout the pages of this magazine, you will learn much more about the details of this historic effort and the impact it will have on generations of Niagara students.

Looking back, it’s hard to believe that five-plus years have passed since we launched the public phase of the campaign. I recall the earliest days being filled with visits to alumni and friends across the country. Continuous travel is tiring, but the enthusiasm, interest and generosity that I received from Niagarans at every stop made the effort extremely rewarding. I found it exhilarating to converse with alumni about all that we wanted to accomplish at Niagara, and how it correlated with our Catholic and Vincentian mission.

Those from the staff who helped me were amazing. They possessed the stamina, determination and expertise needed to accomplish this monumental feat. I always thanked them, but probably never enough. Here’s hoping that they understand how grateful I am — how grateful Niagara University is — for the extraordinary work they’ve done during this campaign.

There are, of course, several humorous stories that resulted from our journeys. As a matter of fact, the only time I ever really questioned if I would see the campaign’s successful completion came while traveling to Naples, Fla. — by way of Alligator Alley.

Don Bielecki and I were en route to visit an alumnus when our car’s low fuel light illuminated. Don took it in stride initially, although his nervousness seemed to increase as the gas gauge plunged closer and closer to “E.”

When we stopped to try to buy gas from someone pulled off to the side of the road, we discovered that we were less than a mile from a filling station. We just barely made it there, our arrival announced by the car’s obnoxious warning buzzer. What a relief for Don, although I’ve never allowed him to forget the story. And from that time on, we always started our journeys with a full tank of gas!

Others who accompanied me to various alumni cities would have difficulties finding the best directions to our destination. The U-turns we made were many, but they made us laugh ... most of the time! I truly enjoyed the opportunities we had to know each other better.

The most important part of this story, from my point of view, is that we were accomplishing our goal. Our alumni and good friends were generous, welcoming and gracious. They were happy to help their alma mater. Everyone gave according to their means, each gift as heartfelt and important as the next. Without those thousands of generous alumni and friends, we could never have achieved what we did.

Our very large leadership gifts served as catalysts, enabling us to construct some wonderful new facilities, which are so necessary for Niagara University at this time. And we will continue building and renovating our campus right into 2013.

A game-changing $10 million gift by Mr. Thomas Golisano, the largest single gift in Niagara’s long history, illustrated his faith in Niagara and the Western New York region. Soon, a state-of-the-art science center bearing his name will become a fixture on the south end of our campus.

We are most grateful to God for being with us and allowing us to be successful. I offer my gratitude to our generous donors, alumni and friends, each and every one of you. The Niagara University of tomorrow stands stronger because of the people reading this magazine.

Now that this important story can be placed in our history annals, we must add an epilogue dedicated to all those who will come forward to help us in the future. The story of a great and faithful university is never-ending. It lives on in the minds and hearts and generosity of all its alumni and friends. This allows us to dream, and to begin planning for what lies ahead.

Yes, another campaign story is going to begin in the near future. Until then, I look forward to seeing you in the coming year, and if you have any special ideas or comments, as always, I invite you to get in touch with me at jll@niagara.edu.

Again, thank you.

Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M.  
President
Niagara University's Eagle magazine won a Grand Award in the 2012 APEX Awards for Publication Excellence. The Grand Award is the competition's highest honor, with only 100 entries out of 3,300 selected for the award.

According to the judges, “The old magazine was good. The new version is better. Clean, elegant, large format design, well chosen and cropped photos, an appealing layout with legible typography on readable matte paper — all create an impressive backdrop for strong editorial content, with interesting profiles, features and shorts. Well done.”

The APEX Awards for Publication Excellence is an annual competition for writers, editors, publications staff and business and nonprofit communicators.

NU director of athletics Ed McLaughlin has accepted the same position at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Va., effective Aug. 13. He had been AD at Niagara since 2006.

The John R. Oishei Foundation pledged $2 million in April to support construction of the B. Thomas Golisano Center for Integrated Sciences. Construction of the science center is part of the university's $80 million capital campaign, “The Promise of Niagara ... The next 150 years.”

Dr. Debra Colley, dean of Niagara University’s College of Education, and Kalani Personius, '12, were honored by the Niagara Gazette in May as Women of Distinction for 2012. The women were chosen for their achievements, public service and entrepreneurial leadership in the Niagara community. (Read more about Kalani's good work on page 9.)

Twenty Niagara University Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets were commissioned second lieutenants in the U.S. Army during a May 11 ceremony in NU's Gallagher Center. It marked the 71st consecutive year that members of NU's Purple Battalion have taken the oath of office.

Twelve priests returned to Monteagle Ridge in May to celebrate the history of the Seminary of Our Lady of Angels, the forerunner of Niagara University. The anniversary Mass, which includes a renewal of the men’s commitment to priestly service, has become an annual tradition at NU.

Five NU students received awards at this year’s Eastern Colleges Science Conference for their presentations on the empirical and discovery-based research they have conducted in the natural sciences. Ashley Scofeld, '12, Kristina Foderaro, '12, Lisa Chute, '12, Christopher Dietz, '12, and Eric Stoutenburg, '13, were among the 16 students who received awards at the conference. Twenty-one colleges and universities from the northeastern United States attended the ECSC, which was held on April 14 at William Paterson University in Wayne, N.J.

In August, Dr. William D. Frye, associate professor of Hospitality and Tourism Management, became the 10th person to receive the Raphael Kavanaugh Champion of Education Award from the International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education since the award’s inception in 1991. This unique award is given by the I-CHRIE board of directors — upon special occasion — to honor a corporation, organization or individual who has been a longtime supporter of special initiatives that advance the mission of I-CHRIE. Previous winners include Michael E. Hurst, J.W. Marriott Jr., and Anthony Marshall.

Bisgrove Hall provided the scene May 9 where 11 participants of the Transition Readiness for Employment in the Community program received completion certificates. TREC, a collaborative program between Niagara University and Opportunities Unlimited of Niagara, assists individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities to accrue the skills necessary for community-based employment. Fifty-two participants have earned certificates since the program was launched in 2009.

Thirty-three men and women joined the more than 3,500 alumni of Niagara University’s nursing program during the annual Mass and Blessing Ceremony that took place May 8 in Niagara’s Alumni Chapel. During the ceremony, the graduates were presented with pins symbolizing academic achievement, scholarly learning, professional dedication and Christian commitment.

Anika Loeffler, ‘12, received the Best Paper Award at the 2012 Korea America Hospitality and Tourism Educators Association Conference in Las Vegas, Nev., this April. Anika’s paper, A Study of Adopters of Hotel Mobile Applications: A Diffusion of Innovation Theory, took the top prize in the undergraduate student forum category. The Glashuette (Sachsen), Germany, native is one of six German students who earned a dual degree from Niagara University and from the International University of Applied Sciences in Bad Honnef, Germany, as part of a new partnership between NU’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management and the German institution.

On April 17, seven members of Western New York’s faith-based community graduated from NU's new advanced certificate program in applied urban ministry during an event at Niagara University. The seven comprised the first cohort of graduates to complete the program, which builds on skills gained in the university's basic certificate program in applied urban ministry.

Several alumni were honored during the College of Business Administration’s 22nd annual Business Appreciation and Accounting Banquet, held this April. Donald T. Denz, ‘80, C.E.O. of Tara Cares, was honored with the Corporate Leadership Award, and Chiampou Travis Besaw & Kershner LLP, an accounting firm that features the surnames of three Niagara alumni in its title (Charles Chiampou, ’76, Robert Travis, ’77, and Kelly Besaw, ’83), was recognized as this year’s Distinguished Accounting Firm.
Lauren Merrick, ’12, and Molliann Zahn, ’12, were presented awards for presentations they made at the Conference for Undergraduate Research in Communication, held April 18 at Rochester Institute of Technology. The conference, which began in 2004 as a gathering of communication students from Western New York, has grown into a regional conference that draws nearly 250 undergraduate scholars from colleges and universities in New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Virginia.

Kathleen Gormley, ’63, Patricia Nowak Orzetti, ’63, John T. Overbeck, ’75, and Barbara Neubert Pascua, ’66, were honored by the Friends of Niagara University Theatre with Spirit of Niagara University Theatre awards during the Friends’ annual Gala in April. The award is given to individuals or couples each year who have been generous to the theatre with their time and contributions.

Eight honors students enrolled in Dr. Doug Tewksbury’s Information as Power course created a 12-minute video, Living By The Book: A User’s Guide to Facebook, as their final project in the class. The tongue-in-cheek documentary delves into the unwritten etiquette of Facebook and how college students are using it. To view the video, visit Niagara University’s YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/niagara university.

Harry Gong, NU’s director of admissions, was honored by Visit Buffalo Niagara with a Buffalo Ambassador Distinguished Service Award in recognition of his contributions as chair of the National Association for College Admission Counseling’s National College Fair in Buffalo, N.Y. The two-day fair, held annually at the Buffalo Convention Center, brings in more than 200 colleges and universities during the local tourism industry’s offseason in March and April.
It’s not often that a college professor has the opportunity to share a favorite pastime with students, but Dr. Joe Little had that unique chance when he took a group of students on a backpacking adventure to Guatemala in March.

The trip was envisioned as a way to make the work his students were doing in his Ethnography and Travel Writing course more coherent. “The students were reading about certain cultures but writing about others, and it wasn’t working as well as it could have,” Dr. Little, an associate professor of English, explains.

“So he decided to add an experiential learning component to the course that would enable his students to immerse themselves in the cultures they were reading about. He chose Guatemala “out of longstanding personal interest in travel to Guatemala,” and redesigned his course to include a nine-day backpacking trip to that country.

“We read Guatemalan ethnographies and most of those focus on Mayan cultures as well as backpacker culture because those two elements play out in Guatemala,” he says. “The Great Guatemalan Adventure allowed us to immerse ourselves in those cultures so that the students could write ethnographies based on their own field work.”

By Lisa McMahon
The trip began and ended in Antigua, a city in the central highlands of Guatemala, and included stops in the villages of Tzununa (located on Lake Atitlan, considered by many to be the most beautiful lake in the world), and Santa Cruz la Laguna.

Each village offered a different experience for the group, which consisted of Dr. Little, his friend Sam Lightowler, and 13 students. In Antigua, they stayed in a hostel frequented by backpackers, ate at a local Mayan food market, and socialized at night, getting a sense of Mayan culture and the relationship between Mayans and non-Mayans. In Tzununa, one of the poorest villages in the area, the group visited a school, a library, and a guitar academy.

“We spent a lot of time walking around Tzununa, exploring the area, taking photos and understanding the culture,” Dr. Little says. “It’s a very secluded Mayan culture, where the folks speak Kaqchikel, which is a Mayan language, more than they do Spanish.”

From Tzununa, the group hiked the two-hour distance to Santa Cruz la Laguna, a village that is accessible only by boat or footpath. Here, the students went to places where they could interview and observe backpackers and compare what they saw with what they had been reading in class.

Although the trip was much shorter than a typical backpacker’s, the students got a taste of what backpacking is like. Dr. Little also allowed for considerable “alone time” so students could experience the more contemplative side of the activity.

“There’s a definite spiritual dimension to backpacking,” he says. “And I think there was a natural spiritual dimension for a lot of students on this trip.”

Brittany Smykowski, ’12, a marketing major from Darien, N.Y., was one of those students. “I believe that backpacking is an experience that really expands your mind and is definitely a time of reflection,” she says. “Dr. Little suggested we bring a notebook so we could reflect on our experiences at the end of each day. It is amazing to look back and read your entries to see how you were feeling or what intrigued you for the day. Backpacking is definitely an amazing adventure filled with reflection and self-realization.”

It is also physically demanding, which came as a surprise to some students.

“The trip was breathtaking, literally and metaphorically,” says Cassandra Pericak, ’12, a French major from Buffalo, N.Y. “The views we saw are indescribable, but the strenuous hiking literally took my breath away because of the difficulty of the climb.”

While Jessica Schug, ’12, a political science/environmental studies major from Niagara Falls, N.Y., expected the trip to be challenging both physically and mentally, she says her expectations were blown out of the water.

“This trip was one of the most incredible experiences I’ve ever had,” she says. “We were constantly surrounded with the most amazing landscapes and it was wonderful to feel so close to nature. We had the perfect balance of activity and downtime, and the hiking was the greatest challenge I could have asked for. Plus, every time we would hike somewhere, the destination was so much more than worth the struggle.”

One of those destinations was the top of Pacaya, an active volcano near Antigua.

“We were not studying volcanoes, and volcanoes don’t function in Mayan culture in any way that I’m trying to expose the students to, but we went to the volcano just for a sheer backpacking adventure,” Dr. Little says.

As hoped, upon returning to Niagara, the students were able to connect their Great Guatemalan Adventure to their work in Dr. Little’s class.

“We read *I, Rigoberta Menchu* before we went on the trip to see a background of their culture,” says Courtney McClurg, ’14, a tourism and recreation management major from Perry, N.Y. “While in Guatemala, we even got to speak to some natives about how they felt about her story. It was amazing.”

Hanna Owczarczak, ’13, an education/special education/English major from East Aurora, N.Y., added that a tour guide on the trip shared his first-hand experiences with the civil war in Guatemala. “His touching story was so personal and made the horrors of war we read about realistic. He exposed students to the bloodshed and hardship these people had faced not too long ago.”

Students were also impressed by the cheerful way the Guatemalan people handled their poverty.

“The people in these villages have so little, but yet they are still so content with what they have,” says Brittany. “Everyone went about their day with a smile and was so welcoming to us as travelers.”

“I think all of us were expecting poverty to look a certain way: anguish, physical issues going on. We’d go into these villages and the kids were playing — they’re playing with a 20-year-old ball that they keep fixing — but I think it gave the students a more realistic look at poverty,” Dr. Little says. “That sometimes you can’t see poverty in the face of it, and that poverty doesn’t necessarily mean unhappy living all the time.”

However, perhaps the most valuable takeaway for the students was the experience itself.

“It was a wonderful, exciting, incredible journey that taught me more about Guatemala and even myself than I ever thought was possible in just one week,” says Jessica.

Brittany agrees. “Guatemala is so beautiful and waking up to watch the sunrise over volcanoes in Lake Atitlan was the most peaceful feeling I have ever felt in my life,” she says. “This trip has taught me so much about culture, values and what truly are the important things in life.”
Kalani Persanius, a 2012 NU graduate, was integral in the establishment of a weekly soup kitchen at St. George’s Church in Niagara Falls. Several other NU students are planning to continue the soup kitchen in the fall.
Niagara University Students Launch Soup Kitchen in Downtown Niagara Falls

By Michael Freedman

St. George’s Church is bustling on this Thursday evening in May. Those congregated come from all walks of life — young and old, white and black, Catholic and otherwise. Their appearances have been hardened by life’s sometimes unfortunate circumstances.

As four college students approach the head of the room, a hush falls over the assemblage. First, a prayer. Then, the moment of truth: “Tonight, we will be serving grilled cheese sandwiches, cabbage and broccoli soup, as well as beef and vegetable stew,” recites Kalani Personius, ’12.

It’s going to be a good night. It is any time meat is on the menu, Kalani says.

Truth is, Thursday nights have been pretty good here for months, ever since Kalani and rising NU seniors Mary Gibson and Jessica Spellane started a soup kitchen at this longtime pillar of the Falls’ east side. Their effort, along with that of the 20 or so Niagara students who have joined them, has brought much-needed nourishment and camaraderie to hundreds of disadvantaged community members on a weekly basis.

“I cannot tell you how desperate some parts of the city are for people to step up to the plate like these students have,” says Joanne Lorenzo, who oversees programming at St. George’s. “And not only have they come in with a willingness to feed the hungry, the students actually seem eager to listen to these folks, who may not have another person in the world to talk to.”

The idea for the soup kitchen arose last fall when Joanne, looking to fill the church’s only night without a community outreach program, reached out to Monica Saltarelli, ’86, a campus minister at NU. She was aware of the university’s service-learning mission and wondered if Niagara might be interested in partnering. It was.

In need of a student leader for the project, Monica recruited Kalani, a member of NU’s St. Vincent de Paul Society and the 2011 recipient of the Niagara University Student Government Association’s Compassion Award. Kalani jumped at the opportunity, signing up to organize volunteers, monitor budgets, plan menus and shop for food.

Eventually, Kalani began mentoring other students, namely Jessica, Mary and, later, Christa Mastro, ’13, so as to enhance the initiative’s sustainability.

The quartet decided that they wanted to do more than feed the hungry. Establishing personal connections became a primary goal. Kalani informed potential student volunteers that if they were going to participate, they had to invest themselves for the whole semester.

“I wanted the teams to be consistent on a weekly basis so that we weren’t just servers for the people that came to eat,” she explains. “I wanted them to get to know us, to have conversations with us and for it to be more of a community experience.”

Jessica adds, “The most rewarding part for me was talking with all the people that came in for a meal. I loved sitting down and having a conversation with them. One man came up to me and said, “Jessica, you’re a good person,” which meant the world to me. All the people that come in for a meal are so thankful, and I really love this volunteer experience.”

The soup kitchen opened at St. George’s in November, giving the student leaders time to iron out the wrinkles before Christmas break. While the university recessed for the holidays, Kalani emailed everyone who had expressed an interest in participating.

She heard back from only four people. So Kalani did what any enterprising college student does when they find themselves in a bind: She called her friends.

Word spread quickly. Within weeks, Kalani received an email from Chase Brooks, head coach of the men’s soccer team, saying that he wanted his players to get involved.

Although desperate, Kalani reiterated that the soccer players would be held to the same expectations as the other volunteers.

“They needed to prove to me that they weren’t doing it for the kudos or volunteer hours, but for the outreach experience,” she says. “I wanted to make sure that people were doing it for the right reasons and not because it would make them look good.”

The soccer team more than fulfilled its obligation, drawing additional volunteers in the process. Momentum gained. Students began taking part because their friends were involved or because they needed Learn and Serve hours. They stayed because they were making a difference.

Soon, there was a regular rotation of three five-student teams. A steady stream of 35–40 patrons frequented St. George’s every Thursday night, drawn by an outdoor sandwich board sign and the aroma of Dr. Amelia Gallagher’s homemade soup.

The group supplemented donations from the St. Vincent de Paul Society by selling concessions at home basketball games. Desserts were donated by Panera Bread, Dunkin’ Donuts, and Tops.

On May 12, Kalani graduated from Niagara University with a degree in French education, but not before receiving the department of religious studies’ Blessed Frederic Ozanam Award, the Father James O’Keefe Medal for excellence in the study of French, and a Woman of Distinction Award from the Niagara Gazette. This fall, she’ll be teaching English as a second language to elementary school students in Angers, France.

But that doesn’t mean the soup kitchen will stop serving while Kalani is overseas.

“I couldn’t imagine not being involved after the experiences I have had thus far,” says Christa, a gerontology major. “I am excited to come back and start things up again. I hope to see the project expand and grow to adapt to the needs of the community. Hopefully, we will be able to increase our involvement and interest in the project.”
Niagara University's
Commencement Ceremonies Return to Campus

By Michael Freedman

For the first time in several years, all Niagara University students were able to conclude their undergraduate careers at the same place they started them: Monteagle Ridge. Since moving graduation off campus in 1976 in favor of more spacious locales, undergraduate commencement has occurred on Monteagle Ridge only on rare and special occasions. Bringing the ceremony back to NU meant that three commencement events had to be scheduled — two on May 12 for undergraduates and one on May 13 for graduate students. All exercises took place on the upper level of the Gallagher Center.

“It was really cool to have graduation on campus, considering that this place has been our second home for the last four years,” said Derek Zeller, a communication studies graduate. “Graduating from college would obviously be exciting no matter where it was held, but having it here is definitely special.”

Niagara’s colleges of Business Administration and Hospitality & Tourism Management heard from Tom Ashbrook, an award-winning journalist and host of National Public Radio’s *On Point with Tom Ashbrook*. Ashbrook and James Boldt, ’73, chairman and C.E.O. of Computer Task Group, received honorary degrees during the morning ceremony. In the afternoon, NU’s colleges of Arts & Sciences and Education were addressed by Sylvia Nasar, best known as the author of *A Beautiful Mind*. She and Robert Clune, Esq., ’58, managing partner of Williamson Clune & Stevens, were presented with honorary degrees. Lloyd Robertson, the retired chief anchor and senior editor of *CTV National News with Lloyd Robertson*, delivered the graduate address and was the recipient of an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree. HGTV’s Mike Holmes was presented with an honorary Doctor of Pedagogy at the event.

On the Friday preceding Commencement Weekend, Niagara University hosted a number of events intended to bring the community together, including a Mass, a Senior Gala, and the first-ever Senior Class Celebration, during which Andrew Siedlecki, who graduated with a degree in biology, was presented with the prestigious Niagara Medal.

“It was wonderful to be able to celebrate the great achievements of our students together as one family — on campus,” said the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., NU president. “I want to thank everyone who was involved in making the weekend successful, and I am hopeful that this will become an annual tradition for Niagara University.”

![James Boldt, ’73 (above left), and award-winning journalist Tom Ashbrook, received honorary degrees during the morning undergraduate commencement ceremony, while Robert Clune, Esq., ’58, and Sylvia Nasar, author of *A Beautiful Mind*, were presented with honorary degrees during the afternoon ceremony. They are pictured with Niagara’s president, the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M.](image1)

![The Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., with honorary degree recipients Mike Holmes, host of HGTV’s *Holmes on Homes* (left), and Lloyd Robertson, the retired chief anchor and senior editor of *CTV National News with Lloyd Robertson*.](image2)
Niagara University Alumni

What are some of your fondest graduation memories, both on and off campus?

Like • Comment • Share

Anita (Monroe) Cronk, ’69: Graduation on campus, nurses’ ceremony in the chapel, tears in my father’s eyes. I was the first Monroe to graduate from college in 1969.

Sheila Miller Mayson, ’75: I graduated in 1975 ON CAMPUS. Ours was a big class, so it was great fun seeing each person walk up to get her or his diploma. It was a hot sunny spring day on campus. The ceremony was held outside between the library and the science building. I can’t imagine it having been held any other place.

Clayton Ehrenreich, ’80: @ NF Convention Center. They forgot the school of arts and sciences in the procession. We were waiting in a side room till they noticed the hold in the class. We had to make a fast entrance.

Joan McCool, ’80: A certain group of girls, not having the wisdom yet to believe in a good nite’s sleep. … showering, getting all beautiful and hopping in a big blue convertible and driving to the NFCC, only to be late and leaving the car illegally parked right in front of the convention center! Yeah, it was ticketed!

Tom Fraley, ’95: I was called, walked across the stage, stopped half way and threw my arms up. The whole place went nuts! My claim to fame!

Annmarie Thomas, ’01: The Class of 2001 had their ceremony in what is now the casino!

HGTV’s Mike Holmes gives his signature “thumbs up” during the graduate commencement on May 13.

Derek Zeller’s helmet cam recorded his walk across the stage. To view, visit http://youtube/B1GeKxv6ik.
Success, Scholarship, Stewardship: A Promise Fulfilled

By Lisa McMahon

Campaign Complete!
At 9:45 a.m. on an unseasonably warm Thursday morning in March, Don Bielecki, vice president for institutional advancement at Niagara University, called the staff together in the Clet Hall conference room.

“Today,” he said, “is the first day of our next capital campaign. Congratulations from the bottom of my heart, and from Father Levesque and the Board of Trustees, for all the hard work it took to complete the Promise of Niagara campaign.”

It was a long, hard road that took almost 10 years and more than 14,500 donors to complete. Along the way, there were obstacles to overcome: a campaign goal that was nearly three times more than the university’s campaign consultants recommended could be achieved; an 18-month recession that started in December 2007 and has been called the longest and deepest downturn for the U.S. economy since the Great Depression; the fact that the university had never, up to this point, engaged in a comprehensive campaign and had no strong history of philanthropy; and a growing public questioning of the value of higher education.

But through the perseverance and steadfastness of those charged with undertaking this extraordinary endeavor, the Promise of Niagara campaign not only met its goal, but exceeded it, raising $82.5 million for the university.
The Planning Stages

The first discussions about taking on a campaign began in January 2003, at a dinner at the home of Robert Dwyer, ‘65. Bob, who had just been named chairman of the university’s Board of Trustees, was one of the first to recognize the need for the university to undertake a comprehensive fundraising campaign. At the dinner, he encouraged those in attendance to consider launching one.

“Bob encouraged us to do it for the good of Niagara, and it was very inspirational,” recalls the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., Niagara’s president.

Bob also asked Robert Daino, ’66, a member of the university’s Board of Advisors, to join him in taking a major role in the campaign cabinet.

“I was very pleased to have been asked to be involved early on and to do whatever I could,” Bob Daino says. “Although Niagara did not have a long history of putting capital campaigns together, I was optimistic about it, and I thought it was necessary for us to undertake this campaign to stay competitive in the academic environment in Western New York.”

At about this same time, a comprehensive campus master plan for the university was in development. The plan suggested a major reorientation of the campus and the addition of several buildings. As the members of the university’s Administrative Council and Board of Trustees considered possible campaign priorities, they looked to this plan for direction.

After much discussion and debate, it was decided that capital projects would be the focus of the campaign, including an academic complex to house the colleges of Business and Education, a new science center, the renovation of the Gallagher Center food court and the Leary Theatre, a new Vincentian Residence to replace Meade Hall, and the expansion and enhancement of the campus’s athletic facilities. These updates would create an active and vibrant campus life.

In 2004, Niagara University launched “The Promise of Niagara … The next 150 years” capital campaign. Its theme, inspired by the sesquicentennial that the university would be celebrating in 2006, represented the commitment that Niagara made to its future students: to give them the best college life and education possible, in an environment that continued the university’s Catholic and Vincentian mission.
The Silent Phase

During the first three years of the campaign, the “silent phase,” some $26 million was raised. Alumni and friends of the university stepped forward in support of the vision of a transformed campus.

One of those donors was Jerry Bisgrove, ’68, whose $5 million gift was the largest single gift ever received by Niagara at that time. His donation was directed toward the construction of new facilities for the College of Business Administration.

“I would never be where I am today without my Niagara education,” he said. “Countless times I have come to rely on the values and strong ethics that were so much a part of my Niagara education.”

As the campaign was closing in on $60 million, it was becoming clear that even that amount would not be adequate to finance the kind of broad-brush transformation envisioned by the university’s administration.

Don Bielecki was just one month into his new role as vice president of institutional advancement when he held a special teleconference among key administrators and campaign cabinet members to recommend that the campaign goal be raised to $80 million.

“Identifying a campaign goal is both a science and an art,” Don explains. “I strongly felt that $80 million was achievable because of the strong case for transformation and the passion of Niagara’s alumni to be part of that transformation.”

While some may have doubted the university’s ability to raise such a considerable amount of money, Bob Dwyer was confident that it could be done. “It is a realistic goal because that is what it will take to allow Niagara to transform our physical and academic environment in order to grow stronger and more competitive,” he said at the time. “And it is achievable, with strong support from our benefactors, alumni and friends, and through the hard work of our president and the entire campus community.”

Marsha Joy Sullivan, a vice chairperson for the campaign, also believed that the goal was achievable. “At that time, there began to be the possibility of some significant gifts from some of the cultivations that were under way. As we began to put the solicitation list together and started some early conversations, the team gained confidence that it could stretch the goal. It was a pretty exciting time.”

Marsha added that she felt the research being conducted in preparation for these solicitations would help them achieve the higher goal. “I was impressed with the research and exploration that was being done to identify a variety of philanthropic opportunities, both public and private, and cultivate those that could be successful.”

Don also suggested that the public phase of the campaign begin in May, with an expected end date of December 2011. It was a risky decision, because the university had raised only 33 percent of the new goal at that time, and campaigns generally secure 46 percent before going to their public phases. But Don was sure that Niagara would successfully raise $80 million in that time period, and the board agreed.

On May 2, 2007, Niagara shared its ambitious campaign goal, and its equally challenging time frame, with the public during a news conference at the Castellani Art Museum.

“At this point in time, we begin a public effort to garner the resources needed to chart the history of Niagara for another 150 years,” the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., said at that time. “This is a pivotal day that will be looked on as the beginning of a new era of excellence for Niagara University.”

His words were prophetic. Over the next five years, Niagara’s campus underwent significant transformation with funding from the campaign.
The Public Phase

Just seven months after the Promise of Niagara campaign went into its public phase, the United States went into a recession. Members of the cabinet and the advancement staff were persistently working toward securing the money necessary to complete the campaign, but the economic downturn was impacting their efforts.

Bob Daino recalls being concerned if there would be enough people who were willing to support the campaign during this most difficult time. “The financial meltdown was affecting everyone’s ability and willingness to contribute to any organization, no matter how worthy,” he says. “However, as I thought more about our prospective donors, I was confident they would recognize the importance of supporting our mission.”

Father Levesque and Don Bielecki remained positive that the goal would be reached, and the advancement team redoubled its efforts to share the vision of a transformed university with alumni and friends.

Support for the campaign continued throughout the recession, but the economy did take its toll, and by fall 2011, it was apparent the $80 million goal would not be reached by the original December 2011 deadline. Father Levesque and Don Bielecki, in consultation with the Advancement Committee of the Board of Trustees, decided to extend the campaign into the following spring.

“I think we all knew that we were going to be close to achieving our goal at the end of the year, and it if was a matter of a few months to achieve the goal then I think we were all comfortable with that,” says Jeffrey Holzschuh, ’82, board chairman.

That decision proved to be a prudent one. On March 22, 2012, a gift was received that put the campaign over the $80 million mark.

“I was extremely proud of everyone involved in the campaign, from Father Levesque and Bob Dwyer, to the entire advancement team,” Bob Daino says. “They never gave up.”

“The credit ultimately is Father Levesque’s,” Marsha Joy Sullivan adds. “It was his vision and belief in that promise that people ultimately invested in. You invest in people, you don’t invest in bricks-and-mortar. They invested in Father Levesque.”

The Campaign Leadership

When the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., was named president of Niagara University in January of 2000, he was unaware that the university would be undertaking a comprehensive campaign in the near future. While his background encompassed teaching and administrative work, he had never done any fundraising before, so he was uncertain about his ability in this area. However, he was determined to learn what he needed to, and to seek help when necessary, in order to fulfill his role in the campaign.

By all accounts, he not only fulfilled them, but excelled.

“The greatest strength of this campaign was, without a doubt, the charisma of Father Levesque,” says Don Bielecki. “Father truly cares about our alumni and donors as people first. He is compassionate, he is driven, and fundamentally superb at ‘making the ask.’ The successes of this campaign are directly attributable to his leadership.”

Bob Dwyer recalls having some uncertainty as well. “When I was asked, 10 years ago, to be national chairman of this aggressive campaign, I had some questions. How effective would I be in this position? Would the Rev. Joseph Levesque, who was new in his role as president of Niagara, be a good fundraiser? It was a pleasant surprise to discover how good Father Joe was at raising money, and in the end, I think we made a good team.”

Another team that was vital to the success of the Promise of Niagara was the campaign cabinet. Its members were charged with assisting the advancement staff in identifying and visiting potential donors.

“Th...
The People Who Made it Happen

This remarkable achievement could not have happened without the generous support of donors, both alumni and friends of Niagara University. During the numerous visits that were made throughout the country, donors were apprised of the ways in which the university demonstrated its faithfulness to its mission, and they responded with their support of that mission and the vision for the university’s future.

Some were inspired to make their gifts because of their fond memories of Vincentians and professors.

A donation from Dick, ’49, and Therese Chapdelaine toward the cost of building the Vincentian Residence was a way to pay back the kindness shown to them by the Vincentian priests and brothers. “The main reason is affection and what the Vincentian fathers did for me,” Dick said at the time. “Throughout my life, they were always there.”

William Gacioch, ’61, too, felt compelled to show his appreciation of the Vincentians, and directed his gift toward the renovation of Meade Hall, where he waited tables and manned the switchboard while he was a student. “My parents believed in good schools and my mother encouraged me to look at Niagara even though we didn’t have the money,” he explains. “Father (Edward) Burke was very instrumental to my education, and my experience working in Meade Hall had a direct impact on who I am today.”

The late Dr. John J. Hughes, ’67, was inspired to make an estate gift to establish the first endowed chair at the university because of the professors he had while he was a science major at Niagara. The John J. Hughes, ’67 Endowed Chair in Biology will support the research, teaching and scholarly activities of a distinguished scientist and serve as a catalyst for Niagara to build upon and expand its programs in the interdisciplinary sciences.

Mary Ellen Korndoerfer, ’73, established an endowed scholarship for the nursing completion program in the names of the Rev. John G. Nugent, C.M., and Sister Bernadette Armiger, D.C., who had helped her achieve her aspirations of becoming a nurse.

Others wanted to honor loved ones with their gifts.

Pamela R. Jacobs-Vogt and her family made a donation to honor the memory of her late husband, Dr. Lawrence D. Jacobs, ’61, an internationally acclaimed researcher who developed the first treatment proven to slow the progress of multiple sclerosis. While the gift was applied toward the construction of the science center, the intent was to encourage students to follow the example of Dr. Jacobs by pursuing careers that improve the lives of others.

“I was extremely proud of everyone involved in the campaign, from Father Levesque and Bob Dwyer, to the entire advancement team,” Bob Daino says. “They never gave up.”

The Vincentian Residence
“Niagara has always recognized and encouraged Larry’s work,” Pamela said. “It seemed most appropriate for our family to honor Larry and thank Niagara by making this gift to the science center. It will serve as a way for future generations of the Jacobs family, as well as Niagara University students, to know more about Larry’s research. We also hope it will serve as an inspiration for students to pursue careers in the science field.”

Dr. Thomas Summers, ’84, and his wife, Jennifer, honored his mother Louise, a retired teacher, by establishing a special award for students planning to work in underserved school districts. Robert Mitchell and Mary Rinker established scholarships in memory of their loved ones, who, coincidentally, were both members of the Class of 1973 — Robert’s wife, Beverly Tierney Mitchell, and Mary’s brother, Lt. Col. Walter J. Mazurowski. Dennis Prouty, ’65, carried out the wishes of his uncle, Ronald Kopenski, by establishing the Mary Ward Kopenski Scholarship in memory of Ronald’s late wife.

Christopher Coyer, ’93, wanted to honor his parents, Richard and Barbara, with a scholarship in their name in gratitude for the opportunity they gave him to go to college. Tragically, Richard passed away just days after Christopher told him about the scholarship, but Christopher says he was thrilled by the gesture. “He was overwhelmed that we would do that for him and my mother,” he said.

The Castellani family continued their parents’ legacy with a gift to the Castellani Art Museum on the university’s campus. “The art museum is a very special place for our family,” said Robert Castellani, a 1964 Niagara University graduate and current member of NU’s Board of Trustees. “We want to continue the legacy that our parents left and support the museum as a premier resource for students, the university and the community.”

Many were so impressed by the academic direction the university was taking that they felt compelled to help, including B. Thomas Golisano, whose $10 million gift, the largest ever received in Niagara’s history, will provide nearly a third of the funding needed to build the science center. Golisano praised the university’s “thoughtful attention and careful plans to radically alter science instruction at NU” and credited this as the reason he felt confident in making this investment in Niagara.

Others agreed. Michael Kakos, M.S.’60, and his wife, Aimee, for example, made a contribution because they were pleased with the plans for the science building. “I was impressed with the technological areas into which the college is evolving,” Michael said. Similarly, Judy Quigley Ruse, ’69, offered her support because she recognized the critical need for a science building that would facilitate a higher level of learning and research than was possible in DePaul Hall. She made an additional gift to ensure that this new building will be filled with students who are academically gifted in math and science and focused on careers in those fields. “The idea is to create a special recruitment program with a financial incentive to entice these students, who normally would not have considered Niagara, to come,” she says. “We have an enthusiastic, charismatic faculty, and we will have a state-of-the-art building that can accommodate a larger number of students. Now we need to attract talented students who aspire to go into the United States workforce in the math and science fields, which is something the country desperately needs.”
There were many alumni who made contributions simply to thank the university that had prepared them for their post-graduate lives and careers, including Ed Riedlinger, ’71, who noted that Niagara’s “small school atmosphere and the values-based education was extremely important” in his professional life. Like Ed, Rob Fitzgerald, ’74, and his wife, Mary Ellen, and James, ’73, and Mary Boldt, MBA’92, contributed because of the knowledge and values that they learned at NU. Salvatore Pace, ’61, was grateful for the start he got at Niagara, which led to his fulfilling a lifelong dream of becoming a pilot. And Gary Shank, ’85, and his wife, Diana, gave their support in gratitude of the great memories and good friends Gary made while at Niagara. ‘It’s impossible to put a value on your Niagara experience,” he said, “but it’s important to give back.”

James Glynn, chair emeritus of Niagara’s Board of Trustees, has been a steadfast supporter of his alma mater since he graduated in 1957. During the campaign, he and his wife, Mary, made yet another significant gift to Niagara, half of which was given as an unrestricted endowment, which provides the university with a steady source of income that it can use at its discretion to meet its most urgent needs at any given time.

The other half established the Vincentian Scholars Program, a unique, four-year service and learning experience that will prepare students to step in and assist local, regional and national organizations that work with the poor and oppressed.

“Our love for Niagara — both the university and the local community — also motivates us in our desire to partner with the university in developing an ongoing program that will make a real difference in the lives of the marginalized,” James said.

Some gifts had unusual inspiration. Dick Brown and his wife, Jane, named Niagara in their wills as a tribute to Dick’s grandfather, Marcus Brown. Marcus, a Jewish immigrant and merchant, is credited with saving the Seminary of Our Lady of Angels (the forerunner of Niagara University) from foreclosure when he fought his way through a snowstorm to provide the seminary with the $3,000 it needed to pay the mortgage company.
George Wiegers, ’58, was so taken by Elizabeth Ann Clune, daughter of his classmates Robert and Jo Ann Clune, and her ardent love of theatre, that he made a donation to the theatre and ensured that it would be named in her honor.

The theatre also provided inspiration for the “Three Men From Mars,” high school classmates of Brother Augustin Towey, C.M., director emeritus of NU Theatre. According to Brother Augustine, Drs. Hugh Babinski, Dick Cheshire and Gordon Weil “wanted to do what they could to see that our physical theatre is renovated to equal the excellence of our theatre program,” so they developed a fundraising proposal that was accepted by the university.

Vincent Russo, ’68, an avid baseball fan, wanted people to know of Niagara’s proud baseball history. His gift was directed toward the Kiernan Center, where a locker room will be upgraded and named for Joe McCarthy, a former NU student and the "winningest" manager in New York Yankee history. “It’s about honoring Joe McCarthy and creating a level of interest about not only McCarthy, but also the other baseball players who have played at Niagara,” he said.

The Niagara University community accepted the challenge, too. The faculty and staff participation rate of 90 percent was well above average when compared to other colleges and universities.

“I truly believe that our faculty and staff understand that their support for the university and Father’s vision will enable us to best serve our students,” Don Bielecki says.

Dr. Nancy McGlen, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and her husband, Joseph Gadawski, ’58, wanted to ensure that students have ample research opportunities during their studies at Niagara, so they established an endowed fund. “We are strongly committed to the importance of student research as a critical part of the educational experience,” Dr. McGlen said. “Having the opportunity to do research really makes a difference.”

Students also understood the importance of contributing to the campaign. One of the most significant student gifts came from the Student Government Association, which established an endowed scholarship in its name to assist an undergraduate student who is a demonstrated leader in his or her community and/or on the Niagara campus. Chris Zukas, ’12, who was president of NUSGA at the time, noted that, “It was very important to us to figure out a way to make a significant, lasting impact on the current and future students of Niagara University. Endowing an annual scholarship in perpetuity seemed like an especially meaningful way to do exactly that.”

Outside grantors, which contributed $17 million to the Promise of Niagara, were also an important factor in the campaign’s success. Foundations like Statler, Baird, and Avon supported the campaign’s academic priorities with gifts directed toward program enhancement and research.

Greatbatch, Inc., established The Greatbatch Scholarship Fund in Honor of Edward Voboril, the company’s former president and CEO, to provide scholarships for students pursuing studies in the biological, chemical and physical sciences. “Niagara is a little jewel, both in terms of academic excellence and the community spirit you find at that school,” Voboril said.

The Margaret L. Wendt Foundation and the James H. Cummings Foundation directed their gifts toward the construction of the science center, as did the John R. Oshei Foundation, whose $2 million award brought the campaign total past the $80 million mark and ultimately ended the campaign.

In all, more than 70,000 gifts were received during the Promise of Niagara, and each one represents a strong faith in Niagara on the part of the donor.

“It says a lot about the school, first and foremost,” says Tom O’Brien. “People give for a reason, and it’s not just because they’re asked, and it’s not because there might be a tax deduction, it’s because they believe in something. We’ve received 80 million reasons why people believe in Niagara.”

Editor’s note: The individuals and organizations mentioned in this story were selected because they are representative of the variety of ways and reasons donors supported the campaign.
“Niagara holds a very, very important place in our higher ed community relative to what distinguishes us, and that’s the mission,” says Marsha Joy Sullivan.
A New NU

One needs only to step onto the Niagara campus to see the transformation already taking place as a result of the success of the Promise of Niagara campaign. Business and education majors are now able to learn their professions in an environment that replicates the real-world settings in which they will work, such as a Wall Street trading room floor and a pre-K-12 classroom, thanks to the addition of the Academic Complex/Bisgrove Hall. Student-athletes compete on state-of-the-art playing surfaces, and theatre majors perform in a space that provides an excellent backdrop for teaching and learning, as well as a comfortable and engaging audience experience.

The university's Vincentian fathers and brothers now live in a contemporary, two-story residence with updated accessibility conveniences that were not available in Meade Hall. This new facility paved the way to transform Meade Hall into the Gacioch Family Alumni and Admissions Center, which will provide a place for alumni to remember the past, and for potential students and their families to feel and live the tradition embodied in the building.

And, of course, the B. Thomas Golisano Center for Integrated Sciences, already under construction, will enable students to work collaboratively with faculty mentors in a facility that features a cutting-edge blending of teaching spaces and technologies.

These are the visible signs of the transformation of Niagara. But there are numerous changes that can't be seen, yet will contribute substantially to the university's future.

The university's emphasis on active learning will be enhanced through endowed professorships and visiting professors, by new programs in all four colleges, and by improvements to existing academic programs, thanks to the endowments established during the campaign. New scholarships will attract talented, bright, and promising young people to Niagara. The university's most critical projects — those that most affect the quality of life for all students and have the most pressing financial need — can be undertaken because of the dollars donated to the Niagara Fund.

The success of the Promise of Niagara campaign will enable the university to fulfill its promise to provide a Catholic and Vincentian, values-based education for generations of students, and to develop leaders who will make a difference in their local communities and the larger world. And it will ensure its position as a regionally important Catholic university.

"Niagara holds a very, very important place in our higher ed community relative to what distinguishes us, and that's the mission," says Marsha Joy Sullivan.

The End?

Perhaps the most significant accomplishment of the Promise of Niagara campaign is the way it positioned Niagara University to continue to build resources for the future.

“This campaign, and the future campaigns, will continue to be critical in that regard,” says Jeffrey Holzschuh. “Niagara’s ability to continue to invest in technology, student scholarship, faculty education, and increased infrastructure will ensure that the university is kept in its right place for the next 50 or 100 years. I think we will continue to try to raise the profile of the university as it relates to advancement, and this is a great first step.”

Marsha Joy Sullivan notes that the realization of the gift from B. Thomas Golisano was a turning point in the university’s ability to attract future gifts of that size. “There were many other universities, particularly some of our closest competitors, that were in the running for that gift,” she says. “It’s a very, very competitive philanthropic environment, so I felt tremendous pride in the university’s ability to set the right course and engage donors at that level.”

For Father Levesque, the success goes beyond that.

“It’s the reaffirmation of the university that is so important to me,” he says. “The donors appreciated that the mission they learned and profited from still exists, and they showed this appreciation by giving back. This support, which is so vital in enabling us to continue to educate generations of students, was a resounding confirmation that what we have been doing for more than 150 years is making a difference in the world.”

“IT’S THE REAFFIRMATION OF THE UNIVERSITY THAT IS SO IMPORTANT TO ME,” SAYS FATHER LEVESQUE.
Dear fellow alumni,

My term as president of the Niagara University Alumni Association is ending. These past two years have been busy and rewarding, and I am thankful for the support and encouragement I received from the executive committee, the NUAA board, and especially, Art Cardella. Art was a driving force behind the reinstatement of the NUAA, and his drive and determination to grow alumni involvement made my term very enjoyable. I personally want to thank him for his dedication to Niagara and wish him well as he retires this summer.

I would also like to thank my family for their support and encouragement during my term as president. My wife and children continue to be my constant source of energy. The memory of my father and his role as alumni president was a constant reminder of the importance of this association, and I feel very fortunate to have followed in his footsteps. The Byrne legacy will always be alive and strong in Syracuse.

The initiatives we identified for the NUAA, including community involvement, social networking “apps,” and continued direct contact with our alums, will be undertaken by the next NUAA president, but we need your support, as well, to make this board strong. I urge all Niagara graduates to reach out to your chapter leaders and get involved so we can continue our growth and you can stay connected to our great university.

There are a lot of exciting things happening on campus, due in great part to the successful completion of the Promise of Niagara capital campaign. There are new buildings and new students on campus, and the B. Thomas Golisano Center for Integrated Sciences, scheduled to open in fall 2013, is under construction. Please plan to visit this new complex on your next trip to campus.

Although my term as president is over, my work with the NUAA will continue. I will serve in my role as a board member in central New York and as a member of the executive committee. Please contact me or any NUAA member to stay connected or reconnect with Niagara. The pride of the Purple Eagles will continue to grow with your support.

Sincerely,
Martin F. Byrne Sr., '78
President, Niagara University Alumni Association
Who Was There

President’s Reception — Maggiano’s Little Italy, Atlanta, Ga. — June 8, 2012 — Charlie, ’80, and Jackie (Sheridan) Balunek, ’78.


Kimberley Minkel, ’88: Moving Transportation Forward in WNY

When Kimberley Minkel, ’88, accepted a job 25 years ago as a researcher for an incubator company focused on bioremediation, a new technology at that time, she thought it would be something to do while she studied for the MCATs and made her plans to attend medical school. What she didn’t know was that the job would change her career focus, ultimately leading her to the position of executive director of the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority.

“Never did I dream that I would end up in transportation,” she says. “What’s ironic is that my grandfather and my great-grandfather were in transportation, so I think they would be amazed if they were alive today to see where I ended up.”

That first job, isolating the bacteria used in cleaning up oil spills at gas stations, piqued her interest in environmental health and safety, a field that she did not know existed until then. From there, Kimberley went on to take managerial positions with local and regional organizations, building an impressive résumé that included experience in the environmental and safety regulations business and compliance managing. She also married her college sweetheart, Mark Shepard, ’88, and had a son. In 2002, while she was pregnant with her daughter, she joined the NFTA as its director of health, safety, and environmental quality. This role gave her the opportunity to “be physically in every area of the Authority” and gain a comprehensive view of how the organization worked.

So when Larry Meckler, longtime executive director of the NFTA, announced that he was going to retire in 2010, Kimberley knew she had the knowledge and experience to take on this leadership role. After a national search, the NFTA’s Board of Commissioners unanimously selected her to fill the position. She is the first woman to hold the post in the organization’s 45-year history.

She took the helm at a tumultuous time for the NFTA. Budget concerns, increased focus on the environment, and a “mass exodus” of personnel, many of whom held key roles, were issues that needed to be tackled immediately. But Kimberley has always enjoyed a challenge. Some of her most memorable professors at Niagara were those whose classes were considered by most to be difficult, and she says she likes going into an impossible situation and trying to work her way through it. “I guess I like puzzles and I really felt that I could do the job,” she says.

The job is a substantial one. As executive director, Kimberley heads an organization that owns and operates the Niagara Falls International Airport, the Buffalo Niagara International Airport, the Port of Buffalo, and the Niagara Frontier Transit Metro System, Inc., which provides service on 76 bus routes and one light rail line, carrying about 27 million passengers annually.

Despite her extensive knowledge of the organization, Kimberley admits her first year was a difficult one. One of her first actions was to put together what she calls “five focus areas.” The areas centered on people, both the NFTA’s employees and the community it serves; economic sustainability; quality improvements; environmental sustainability; and community partnerships.

“We’ve had a lot of success in many areas,” she says, noting that new training and succession plans have been implemented, the budget has been balanced, and quality improvements have been made. In addition, the NFTA is forming a citizens advisory panel to engage the community on a regular basis so that continuous improvement can be made.

One of the things that Kimberley is most proud of accomplishing during her time at the NFTA is the subsurface-engineered wetlands that were established to reclaim spent deicing fluid in storm water runoff at the Buffalo Niagara International Airport.

“At most airports, ours included, when you spray the planes, the deicing fluid just goes off into the neighboring creeks and streams,” she explains. “We were the first in the nation and still the only one to put in a treatment system using manmade wetlands.”

The project took about five years to complete. Because it was new technology, Kimberley did extensive research (which included a trip to Alaska to learn about the wetland treatment technology that state used in its strip mining industry) and treatability studies to test the process on a small scale before the system was installed in 2009.

The area appears to be a grassy field, and that’s the beauty of it, says Kimberley, who notes that most treatment facilities have a distinctive look and smell. And it saves the NFTA half a million dollars every year. In fact, the project has been so successful that it received the Diamond Award in the Environmental Category by the New York branch of the American Council of Engineering Companies and the national ACEC’s Honor Award. The EPA is also looking at it as a model of best practice.

Today, from her office on the sixth floor of the building on Ellicott Street in Buffalo where the NFTA’s fleet of buses come and go, the soft-spoken, petite woman reflects on the 15 months she has served in the NFTA’s top spot. The things she likes best (“The diversity. We’re planes, trains, buses, boats. It’s always something different.”), those that keep her up at night (“Tragedy. I always worry about what can go wrong. Before, I was responsible for risk management so I always do the ‘what if.’”), and how she prepares for her day (“Usually when I’m driving to work or the night before, I lay out a plan as to where I’m going to focus my time and energy for the day, and then I consider it a success if I can cross off half the items on the list.”). Although her attention is focused on running all aspects of the NFTA, her particular interest in the environment remains a priority.

“Public transportation is an extension of environmental,” she says, noting that when people take the NFTA’s buses and rail service, it reduces the region’s carbon footprint. “My goal is to make the world better as a result of our activities.”

Read more alumni stories at www.niagara.edu/featured-alumni/
Dr. Paul Harrigan, ’97: Serving Those Who Served

By Lisa McMahon

Listening to Dr. Paul Harrigan, ’97, speak, one immediately gets the sense that he is a warm, compassionate man. He is quick to laugh and uses adjectives like wonderful, great, nice, and sweet to describe the people he’s known. As he discusses his work as team leader and director of the Buffalo Vet Center, that impression only grows stronger. And you know that his life’s path has taken him exactly where he was meant to be.

Paul grew up in Lewiston, N.Y., the youngest child of parents he describes as “real hard-working folks.” His dad was a union bricklayer, his mom a telephone operator. As a child, Paul spent a lot of time with his grandfather, who instilled in his grandson a love of history and an appreciation for veterans.

“I remember him hanging around with his WWII buddies when I was a kid and how he’d get dramatic when he told their stories,” Paul says.

A self-described average student, Paul briefly considered attending college after graduating from Lewiston-Porter High School, where he participated in Model UN and was in the Key Club. But he knew money was tight and none of the college programs really appealed to him. Influenced by his interest in history, the veterans’ stories he had heard as a youth, and his brother, who was serving in the U.S. Navy at the time, Paul decided to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps during his senior year.

Paul spent the next four years in the Marines, a tour of duty that included a deployment with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit to evacuate embassies in Liberia, which was in the midst of a civil war at the time. This experience had a profound effect on him. “I remember looking out from the ship at the ocean and deciding that, no matter what I did with my life, there would be a humanistic element to it,” he says. He was just 21 at the time.

When his tour was over, Paul was ready to give college a try. He completed an associate’s degree at Niagara County Community College (where one of his professors, a practicing psychologist, became a mentor to him and inspired him to pursue a career in psychology) and attended the University at Buffalo before transferring to Niagara University’s psychology program on a full-tuition scholarship. Here, professors including Dr. Peter Butera, Dr. Timothy Osberg and Dr. Burt Thompson encouraged him to take on work in research and assessment, and convinced him to continue his education after earning his bachelor’s degree. So Paul headed for New York City to pursue a master’s degree in counseling at Columbia University, and then to Florida to pursue a doctorate at the University of Miami. His fieldwork centered on serving veterans, first at the Miami Vet Center and then at the veterans hospital there.

With this experience under his belt, Paul returned to New York state to work at a home-based primary care program at the VA Medical Center in Bath. He then took a job at the VA Center in Batavia, working with veterans who suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse. In April of last year, he accepted the position of team leader at the Buffalo Vet Center, joining what he calls “a team of heroes,” most of whom are overseas veterans themselves. Together, they provide nonmedical counseling and assistance to veterans and their family members who are experiencing problems and issues related to active military service in a war zone or in the course of deployment during war.

“This all goes back to my granddad,” Paul says. Because of him, “I always had this connection with the vets, and I’m proud to be in a position now to help them. It’s just a real pleasure.”

Paul’s days are full, and he balances the administrative responsibilities of his position and one-on-one counseling sessions with the veterans. It’s a challenging, yet rewarding job.

“When you’re side by side with someone and you see he’s not making the right choices yet, you hang in there knowing they’re doing the best they can, and that can take time and patience and understanding and a lot of acceptance,” Paul says. “But to be there, to help those who fought for the peace actually have peace in their lives, is just a wonderful experience. It’s such an honor to do this.”

Read more alumni stories at www.niagara.edu/featured-alumni/
1959
Jerald Wolfgang was elected chairman of the board of the United Way of Greater Niagara.

1960
Sal D'Aquino reports that the middle school youth group at his church, Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Bradenton, Fla., donated $850 to the Wounded Warrior Project in memory of Sal's classmate, Paul J. McCarthy, ’60, a decorated Army veteran with three combat tours in Vietnam. Sal notes that the student group, known as S.W.A.G. (Students Worshiping Almighty God), was able to raise that amount by “spreading the word” among their friends and families, who matched the donations the students made.

1962 REUNION
Joe Wolf was inducted into the Greater Buffalo Sports Hall of Fame in June in recognition of his outstanding service and accomplishments as administrator and ultimately athletics director at St. Joseph’s Collegiate Institute in Kenmore. Joe’s varsity baseball teams won more than 130 games and two Georgetown Cups; his football teams were 97-7-4 and had eight undefeated seasons. Under his leadership as athletics director, St. Joe’s athletics grew from six to 16 sponsored sports programs, and the school’s athletics teams won 273 championships, including 31 Monsignor Martin Association overall sports program Supremacy Cups. Joe served more than 46 years at St. Joe’s before his retirement in June of 2008.

1963
Joe Baxter was inducted into the Boys & Girls Clubs of Providence Alumni Hall of Fame on May 16. Joe is a district manager for Staples, Inc., in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. For six consecutive years the district has been placed in the top 10 percent of all Staples districts in the country.

1965
Edward J. Kampf recently completed his seventh dental mission trip to Guatemala. He is teaching at New York University College of Dentistry.

Ed Mayer is the associate university registrar at Illinois State University in Normal, Ill. He has spent his entire working life in higher education: as a philosophy instructor at the College of St. Teresa in Winona, Minn., and at Quincy College in Quincy, Ill.; and as registrar at Quincy College, Beloit College, and the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn.

1967 REUNION
Monsignor Raymond Chappetto, SOLA ’70, has been appointed auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Brooklyn by Pope Benedict XVI. He was ordained on July 11.

1968
Patrick A. Monti, M.S.Ed. ’73, completed his 43rd year of coaching boys basketball. He has served the past four seasons as mentor and associate head coach at Naples High School in Florida.

Salvatore “Sam” Santarosa was elected to the Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center board of directors in March. Sam is president and sole director of Buffalo Fuel Corp., Singer Transport, Santarosa Trucking Inc., International Waste Removal and Santarosa Sales and Service Inc. He is a former board chairman of the Independent Health Corp. (now Independent Health Association), and has served on numerous other boards, including the YMCA of Niagara Falls. He also has done financial and management consulting for local and state government agencies.

1969
Anthony Caruana, M.S.Ed. ’75, was re-elected to his second four-year term as town supervisor for the Town of Tonawanda, N.Y., the third-largest suburb in Western New York.

Michael Ricci retired in 2009 from his career as an English teacher. During this time, he continued the high school baseball umpiring career he began in 1952 and continued over a 50-year period. In 2010, he began a new avocation as a monthly newspaper columnist in his Auburn (N.Y.) Citizen. The column is called Watch Your Language and deals with many aspects of our English language.

Charles B. Wydysh retired in May after 34 years as a federal prosecutor. He started his career at the Erie County District Attorney’s Office, and in 1978, joined the U.S. Justice Department’s Organized Crime Strike Force, where he led a series of high-profile mob prosecutions, including Leonard F. Falzone, a union member with alleged ties to organized crime in
Buffalo, and Robert E. Delano, the former Buffalo city parks commissioner and the target of one of the biggest public corruption cases of the last 50 years.

1971
Carmen A. Granto has been elected chairman of the board of trustees of Mount St. Mary’s Hospital and Health Center in Lewiston, N.Y. Carmen, the retired superintendent of schools of the Niagara Falls School District, is the first nonreligious chair for Mount St. Mary’s since the Sisters of St. Francis founded it in 1907. He first joined the Mount St. Mary’s board in 1999.

David Porretta, professor of physical activity and educational services at The Ohio State University, has been selected as a fellow by the International Federation of Adapted Physical Activity in recognition of his scholarship and service to adapted physical activity around the world. He was recognized at the 2011 International Symposium of Adapted Physical Activity in Paris.

1973
Jack Yanno recently wrote a book entitled A Journey Across the Diamonds, which details the history of Clarence baseball. Jack’s passion for the game of baseball as a player and a coach began at the age of 15 and led him to Clarence, where he spent 30 years as a resident teacher and high school coach. Jack was honored by the Town of Clarence Baseball Association with induction into its Wall of Fame in 1998. Jack lives with his wife, Ursula, in the Tampa Bay, Fla., area, and has two sons, Anthony and Scott.

1974
Ray Grace has been nominated banking commissioner by North Carolina Governor Bev Perdue. Ray, who joined the N.C. Office of the Commissioner of Banks as an examiner trainee in 1974, was appointed chief deputy commissioner in 2010.

Maryliz Valli was named Service Excellence Helping Hands Volunteer of the Year for Cook Children’s Hospital in 2010. She was recognized for sharing her gift of music as an atrium pianist with the patients, families and staff at the hospital, which is located in Fort Worth, Texas.

Lt. Col. Lynn Walker, M.S.Ed.’76, has retired from the Army Medical Service Corps, and was appointed chaplain in the Civil Air Patrol, USAF Auxiliary, effective March 1, 2012.

1975
Marilyn Lojek was elected to a three-year term on the United Way of Greater Niagara board.

Marilyn Marini-Farber recently retired from her position as migrant outreach R.N. with InterCare Community Health Network. She was with the organization for 10 years, providing outreach nursing to migrant workers and their families from May to October of each year.

1976
James Rosebrock was elected to the board of directors of the Western Maryland Interpretive Association in April. The association is a not-for-profit cooperating association of Antietam and Monocacy national battlefields.

1977 REUNION
Col. Mark Lindon recently completed a tour in Kabul, Afghanistan, as a contractor working for the Department of State.

Robert Travis joined the board of trustees for Mount St. Mary’s Hospital in Lewiston, N.Y., as the vice chair and treasurer. He is a partner with Chiampou Travis Besaw & Kershner LLP.

1978
Joe Giarrizzo, M.S.Ed.’05, has been named business administrator for the Grand Island Central School District. Previously, he served a similar role for the Tonawanda city schools. Before that, Joe was finance director for the Niagara Falls City School District from 2002 to 2009 and served on its board.

Nancy Langer was honored by the St. Thomas More Guild for her work as president of the Nativity Miguel Middle School of Buffalo.

1979
Lina Marchionda-Salvatori, M.S.Ed.’81, was recognized as Ontario Counselor of the Year by the Niagara University College of Education. Lina is a counselor at Blessed Trinity Catholic Secondary School, Niagara Catholic District School Board.

1980
Kenneth K. Conte accepted the position of vice president and chief financial officer of Frontier Oilfield Services, Inc., in Texas. Prior to joining Frontier, Kenneth served as executive vice president and CFO of NYTEX Energy Holdings, Inc., in Dallas, Texas.
Kathy Meyer is celebrating 25 years as a Consolata Missionary Sister. She has been working as a missionary in Kenya since 1991.

Ed Reilly, a journalist with WKBW-TV's Eyewitness News in Buffalo, N.Y., received the Backpack Multimedia Journalist of the Year award at the inaugural Buffalo Excellence in Media Awards on April 12. Ed started his career with WKBW as an intern in 1980. Since then, he has been recognized with numerous awards for his work, which includes traveling to the United Arab Emirates to cover USAFR 914th in the first Gulf War, covering Pope John Paul II's visits to Miami and Toronto, and working on the nationally acclaimed Cry for Life project, which promoted a drug-free lifestyle for teenagers and received an award from the White House.

1981
John Ottaviano joined the law firm of Rupp Baase Pfalzgraf Cunningham & Coppola LLC in an of counsel capacity. He focuses his practice in the areas of commercial real estate development; commercial litigation; corporate, municipal law; wills and estates; and local development corporations. He will head the firm’s Lockport office.

1982 REUNION
Kevin A. Brauer, senior vice president, member relations, for Alloya Corporate FCU, has taken on the added responsibilities of chief operating officer in the corporation’s Albany, N.Y., office. In this role, he will be responsible for leading the company through several operating changes and fulfill a key role in the integration of operations between Alloya and any future strategic partners. Kevin will also maintain his current responsibilities, which include executive oversight of the corporate’s sales, member call center, marketing and payments processing operations, and relationships with various credit union organizations. Kevin is a certified public accountant and a member of the American Institute of CPAs. He has more than 20 years of service at Alloya.

Christopher Ross has been appointed to the Buffalo Public Schools Foundation’s board of directors. The foundation invests in Buffalo city schools by purchasing athletic uniforms, funding summer music camps, supporting arts programs and other projects to benefit city school students.

1984
Mark Gabriele joined the board of trustees at Mount St. Mary’s Hospital in Lewiston, N.Y., as its secretary. He is with the law firm of Harris Beach.

Larry Sirianni was inducted into the Stamford Collegiate Wall of Fame on May 10, 2012. Larry was the department head of the Secondary School To Community department at Stamford from 1991 to 1994. He coached football for three years and rugby for one year. He was principal from 1997 to 2003, and during his leadership he was instrumental in instituting the Stamford Wall of Fame.

1985
Mark Tambini has been selected as a member of the media center operations committee for the 2013 PGA Championship, which will be held at Oak Hill Country Club in Rochester, N.Y.

1987 REUNION
Bob Jellinick was promoted to first vice president in Merrill Lynch’s Williamsville office.

Michael J. Knight Sr. was recently elected as president-elect for the National Client Protection Organization, Inc., an educational resource for the exchange of information among law client protection funds throughout the United States and Canada. Michael previously served for six years as counsel to the NCPO before his election to the current two-year term. He is also deputy counsel to the New York State Lawyers’ Fund for Client Protection.

Ted Ritter has been promoted to special projects manager: external affairs at the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority in Newark, N.J., the nation’s fifth-largest metropolitan planning organization. In this role, Ted represents the organization at partner agency meetings, conferences, and special events. He’s also responsible for relationship/consensus building, developing media products and presentations, and writing material for the agency’s publications and website. Ted, who holds a master’s degree in journalism and public affairs from American University, has been with the NJTPA since 2001, after a 12-year career as a broadcast journalist. He and his wife, Susan, live with their daughters, Jayne and Dorian, in Westfield, N.J.

1988
Joe Arlaukas was inducted into the Frontier Field Walk of Fame in a ceremony on Aug. 19. The Frontier Field Walk of Fame is a walkway within the ballpark which features the names of fans, players and media throughout Rochester, N.Y., sports history.

Lynn Scarpelli has been named national sales manager for Grand Lucayan, Bahamas, the premier resort on Grand Bahama Island. Lynn joins the Grand Lucayan team with more than 25 years of experience in sales and marketing, particularly in group sales in Florida and the Northeastern United States. She is a member of various organizations including Meeting Professionals International, National Association of Professional Women, the Auction Committee for Broward Boys & Girls Club, and is on the board of directors for Hoping for a Cause, which benefits the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation.

1989
Col. Carl Pfeiffer, MBA’96, recently published a book entitled It Never Ends, The Terrible Life of Carl, a humorous memoir/autobiography centered on his childhood. Now retired, Col. Pfeiffer works for U.S. Central Command at Mac Dill Air Force Base. During his career, he deployed to Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom III, and as a battalion commander he led his tank battalion to New York City in the aftermath of the terrorist attack on Sept. 11, 2001. His military awards include the Iraqi Campaign Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, the Bronze Star Medal and the Legion of Merit. He and his wife, Jane, have two children, Chris and Rebecca. They live outside Tampa, Fla.

Anne Snyder was named executive director of Sisters Hospital Foundation. She joined the foundation in 2001 as a development officer and was most recently chief development officer.

1990
Andy Touma, M.S.Ed.’98, was elected to a three-year term on the board of the United Way of Greater Niagara.

1991
Lt. Col. Jeffrey Abramaitys was deployed with I Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group (Forward) as executive officer of Task Force Belleau Wood.

Kimberly Boynton was elected senior vice chair of the United Way of Central New York’s board of directors. She has been a board member since 2006 and previously served as secretary and treasurer.

James Ebenhoch has been named director of the Department of History, Government and Journalism at the John A. Bennett Education Center, and the Annual Fund.
Joseph M. Falbo Jr. received the Special Recognition Award from the New York State Society of Certified Public Accountants at the society’s 115th Annual Election Meeting and Dinner on May 10. He is the sixth person to win this award, which recognizes members who have made extraordinary contributions to the NYSSCPA. Joseph, a tax partner at Tronconi Segarra & Associates LLP in Buffalo, served as secretary/treasurer and Finance Committee chair for the NYSSCPA when the society was reorganizing its internal budget process. Working with other NYSSCPA leaders, Joseph established a new internal financial reporting system that provided board members and staff leaders crucial information. He joined the NYSSCPA in 1994 and has served in a variety of leadership roles.

1992 REUNION
Mark Montitello was recently promoted to senior vice president, human resources, with FTD.

1993
Christina Curley accepted the position of special events and convention sales director for Warren County and the Lake George Chamber. A native of Saratoga Springs, N.Y., Christina has more than 15 years in the hospitality and convention sales business, most recently at the Courtyard by Marriott in Saratoga Springs.

Robert C. Frost retired from his position as a middle school counselor at Wilson Central School in June. His first book, Wounds, was published in June as well.

Wendy (Lugo) Gallegos teaches Spanish in southwest Florida. In 2007, she achieved National Board Certification for Professional Teaching Standards in the area of world languages. She was awarded the Golden Apple for excellence in education that same year.

David Sharpe joined Buffalo Capital Strategies as vice president of investments.

1994
Matthew Celenza joined Barclays’ Wealth and Investment Management Division in Los Angeles as managing director — wealth management. He brings 15 years of experience to Barclays, obtained through positions with Morgan Stanley Smith Barney and Citigroup. Four years ago, Matthew co-founded The Wilshire Group, a team serving ultra-high net worth individuals and families with a full suite of wealth management and planning capabilities. Matthew serves on the board of A Better LA and is a volunteer coach with the American Youth Soccer Organization.

Yolanda (Bostic) Williams is the principal policy analyst for the New York State Assembly.

Michael Aquino joined Buffalo Capital Strategies as vice president of investments.

Christopher Falsion is the district manager at Absolute Security, a Top 5-authorized ADT dealer. He also helped to launch the company’s first North Carolina office.

Stephen Ostaszewicz, MBA02, has been appointed president of the American Hockey League’s Hamilton Bulldogs. Stephen brings extensive business knowledge and hockey experience to his new role, gained through positions with Mabe Canada (GE Appliances Canada), KPMG LLP Chartered Accountants, Top Shelf Sports Management Inc., the Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League’s St. Catharines Falcons, and the National Hockey League’s Columbus Blue Jackets. While at Niagara, Stephen served as a graduate assistant in sports information from 1999-2001.

Nalini Packianathan recently joined UB|MD Internal Medicine, a member of UB|MD Physicians’ Group. She is working in the Internal Medicine Clinic at the Erie County Medical Center.

1995
Carrie Silliman was named vice president of the Epilepsy Association of Western New York board of directors. She is a nurse practitioner with ECMC.

Robert Perno was promoted to assistant regional manager for Michigan and Ohio with Merchants Insurance Group. He previously served as corporate sales specialist with the organization.

Katie Renda has been named an associate attorney at Chelus, Herdzik, Speyer and Monte.

2001
Annmarie Thomas was named a “Most Valued Performer” at Sedgwick for her exceptional commitment to the organization’s core values, vision and mission. It is the highest level of recognition a Sedgwick employee can receive. Annmarie has been with Sedgwick for eight years and currently serves as a corporate training consultant for the organization, which is a third-party administrator for claims, working primarily with Fortune 500 companies.
Alumni from Niagara University took first place at the 62nd annual Little Three Alumni Golf Tournament at Hickory Stick Golf Club in Lewiston, N.Y., on June 25. More than 120 golfers participated in the event, which is touted as the oldest continual alumni competition in the United States.

Dan Gadawski, ‘12, Howard Morgan, ‘86, and Joe Gadawski, ’85, shot a team total of 237, giving Niagara bragging rights and the Dr. Vincent Marino trophy until next year’s competition. This is the 10th time Niagara alumni have won the event.

Next year’s event is scheduled for June 17 at the Westwood Country Club in Amherst, N.Y.

Mark Mistriner has been recognized by the American Culinary Federation as the 2012 Northeast Region Chef Educator of the Year. He is chair of the Business and Hospitality Division and coordinator of Culinary Arts at Niagara County Community College.

Brianne (Napoli) Pagliardini received a master’s degree in school counseling from the University of North Florida on April 27, 2012. She will be moving from teaching in the classroom to working as a professional school counselor for the upcoming school year.

Amber Zito, LISW, LMSW, was promoted to clinical supervisor at Hospice of the Western Reserve in Cleveland, Ohio. She has also been invited to serve as a member of the agency’s Ethics Committee and as a panel member for the local presentation of the 2012 Hospice Foundation of America’s Teleconference. Amber credits the excellent education she received in NU’s social work program for her ongoing success.

Sara Caliva has been named communications coordinator for Catholic Charities of Onondaga County. Sara most recently worked as a freelance marketing consultant.

Matthew J. Nethercott completed his Ph.D. in chemistry at Michigan State University in March 2012 and accepted a postdoctoral scholar position at the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy. His Ph.D. dissertation, Sample preparation and 2D solid state nuclear magnetic resonance studies of the FP-Hairpin construct of the HIV gp41 protein, contributed to two papers in peer-reviewed journals: the Journal of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry.
John Sabloski was awarded his Juris Doctor degree from Western New England University School of Law in Springfield, Mass., on May 18, 2012.

Katherine (Piwtorak) Sumner has been accepted into the D'Youville College Physician Assistant Program. She is a medical assistant in neurosciences at Kaleida Health in Buffalo, N.Y.

2007 REUNION

Nicholas Hossfeld was promoted to manager with Chiampou Travis Besaw & Kershner LLP. He joined the firm in 2007 as a staff accountant.

Angela Keppel, a planner with TVGA Consultants, recently achieved certification through the American Institute of Certified Planners.

2008

Stacie Ann (Blaut) Glielmi is a third-grade teacher at Tri Valley Elementary School in Grahamsville, N.Y.

Michelle Keim is the assistant events coordinator with the Peace Center for the Performing Arts in Greenville, S.C.

2009

Mark Anastasia Jr. has become a member of the Financial Services Institute in Washington, D.C., an advocacy organization for independent financial services firms and independent financial advisors. Its mission is to create a more responsible regulatory environment for independent broker-dealers and their affiliated independent financial advisors through effective advocacy, education, and public awareness. Mark is a financial advisor with L&M and a registered representative with Securities America, Inc.

2010

Jacob Jankowski, MBA'12, joined Lumsden & McCormick as a staff accountant. He is responsible for tax compliance services to businesses and individuals.

Lauren Kenney was recently hired by The Saturn Club in Buffalo, N.Y., where she assists in the business office with billing, member marketing, member and guest functions, and special projects for the controller and general manager.

Peter A. Roberti, MBA’11, has been appointed professional wardrobe consultant by Adrian Jules Custom Clothiers. Peter will be working with clients on the importance of their image and appearance in the workplace. He is also responsible for developing lead generation and sales for the retail division.

2011

Eva Biggers was accepted into the Culinary Institute of America’s Accelerated Wine and Beverage Program. She will start her studies in the fall.

2012 REUNION

Brett Baldeck joined WBKO in Bowling Green, Ky., as a multi-media journalist. He previously worked as a web producer at WIVB in Buffalo, N.Y.

Wynton Bernard was selected in the 35th round of the Major League Baseball Draft by the San Diego Padres. The senior outfielder was named First Team All-Conference in the Metro-Atlantic League while playing for Niagara University this past season.

Kyle Brellof joined Lumsden & McCormick as a staff accountant. She will be responsible for auditing and accounting services to commercial businesses and exempt organizations. She previously worked as a medical bookkeeper for People Inc.

MARRIAGES

Patrick Swift, '82, married Sharon Johnston on May 7, 2012.

Yolanda Bostic, '95, married Zaron Williams, '95, on Oct. 22, 2011.


Theresa Gleber, '03, married Jason Ashbery on May 12, 2012.

Aniela Marisa Baj, '05, married Myo Thant on May 6, 2011.

Samantha Anne Campanella, '06, married Devin Farley on July 30, 2011.

Katherine Marie Piwtorak, '06, married Miles Sumner on Dec. 9, 2011.

Nick Beckman, '07, married Melissa Higgins, '08, on April 14, 2012.


Robert Morgan, '07, married Jessica Fuhrey, '08, on April 13, 2012.

Stacie Ann Blaut, M.S.Ed.'08, married Nicholas Glielmi, '08, on Sept. 10, 2011.

Anna Maria Cosgrove, '08, married Andrew Moran on July 7, 2012.


BIRTHS AND ADOPTIONS

Timothy Reardon, '89, and his wife, Joni, welcomed triplets William Patrick, Lucy Christine, and Daniel Ryan on March 8, 2012. They join big sister Grace.

Dominic Cristelli, '92, and his wife, Melanie, welcomed a daughter, Avery Grace, on April 24, 2012.


Marianne (Head) Cosialls, '00, and her husband, Olivier, welcomed a daughter, Mathilde Ruby, on Feb. 22, 2012. She joins big sister Madeleine Claire.

Darcy (Oliver) Meyer, '00, and her husband, Jeff, welcomed a daughter, Olivia Loreen, on Aug. 29, 2011.

Scott, '01, and Elizabeth (Hylkema) Becraft, '01, welcomed a daughter, Alexandra Kathleen, on April 19, 2012.

Julie (Niemiec) Hamilton, '01, and her husband, Jason, welcomed a daughter, Ella Olivia, on Feb. 1, 2012. She joins big brothers Colin and Bryce.

Angela Harding, '01, and her husband, Jason Grasman, welcomed a son, Jackson Dean, on April 20, 2012.

Barbara (Manning) Houck, '01, and her husband, Chad, welcomed a daughter, Emma Grace, on Feb. 18, 2012.

Kimberly Ann (Kotlarski) Marano, '01, and her husband, Jamie, welcomed a daughter, Gianina Grace, on April 6, 2012.

Janelle (Wegener) Dengate, '02, M.S.Ed.'10, and her husband, James Kelley, welcomed twin sons James Edward and Benjamin Robert on Sept. 18, 2011.


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CATCHING UP

Ashley (Ryan) Winters, '03, M.S.Ed.'07, and her husband, Anthony, welcomed a son, Jackson James, on March 20, 2012.


Sarah (Pempsell) Hummel, '04, and her husband, Justin, welcomed a daughter, Jocelyn, on April 4, 2012.

Bryan, '05, and Laura (Murray) Kleinhaus, '05, welcomed a son, Colin Patrick, on March 13, 2012.


Aniela Marisa (Baj) Thant, '05, and her husband, Myo, welcomed a daughter, Aleksandra Jasmine, on April 15, 2012.

Aaron, '06, and Jennifer (Kemak) Brown, '06, welcomed a son, Anthony, on March 5, 2012.

Amy Mortimer, '06, and her husband, Michael, welcomed a daughter, Alekandra Jasmine, on April 15, 2012.

Kristen (Hamilton) Coley, '07, and her husband, David, welcomed a daughter, Lily, on Sept. 7, 2011.

Stacie Ann (Blaut) Glielmi, M.S.Ed.'08, and her husband, Nicholas, welcomed a son, Jace Michael, on Feb. 14, 2012.


Donald M. Curry, '50, passed away on April 23, 2012.

Philip Freeman, '50, passed away on Nov. 28, 2011.


Joan (Carveth) Hausner, '51, passed away on Sept. 23, 2010.


Monsignor Rupert A. Wright, '52, SOLA'S6, passed away on July 3, 2012.


John A. Nemet, '58, a former professor of accounting and tax courses at Niagara University and chairman of the accounting department, passed away on March 24, 2012.


Robert J. Spath, '59, passed away on April 13, 2012.

John F. Trabold, '59, passed away on April 17, 2012.


Our condolences to Joy A. Massaro, '62, M.A.'75, on the death of her husband, Dominick Massaro, who passed away on June 4, 2012.

Our condolences to Mary Ann (Thomas) Boord, '63, on the death of her mother, Marie Thomas, who passed away on Jan. 14, 2012.


Maralee Kirwan Battaglia, '65, M.A.'74, passed away on April 16, 2012.

Our condolences to Mary Ellen Gallagher Fraser, '65, on the death of her husband, Ian Fraser, who passed away on May 27, 2012. Ian was the son-in-law of the late John J. “Taps” Gallagher, legendary Niagara University basketball coach who guided the Purple Eagles for 31 seasons.

J. Timothy McMahon, '65, passed away on June 24, 2012.

Nicholas Reed, '66, passed away on July 19, 2012.


Nancy Kelly, M.A.'69, passed away on April 17, 2012.


Anne Marie Virtuoso, '71, passed away on July 6, 2012.

Peter E. McHugh, '72, passed away on March 23, 2012.

Michael J. Diggins, M.S.Ed.'73, passed away on May 11, 2012. Our condolences to his wife, Maureen (Purcell) Diggins, M.S.Ed.'73, and his daughter, Maryellen Diggins, '95.


Our condolences to Lt. Col. Lynn Walker, '74, M.S.Ed.'76, on the death of her mother, Dolores Dahlam Walsh, who passed away on April 27, 2012.

Wayne Eadie Sr., M.S.Ed.'76, passed away on June 22, 2012.

Christopher P. Leven, '76, passed away on Feb. 25, 2012. Our condolences to his son, Daniel Leven, '06.

James P. Kaicher, '81, passed away on May 12, 2012.

Mark C. Pacer, '85, passed away on June 14, 2012.
CATCHING UP

Fond Memories

A “Gay Nineties” parade was a highlight of Moving Up Day, 1961. The Class of 1962’s float depicted an 1890 beach scene at Atlantic City.

Our condolences to Keith Sanger, ’85, on the death of his wife, Claudia Tripi-Sanger, who passed away on April 14, 2012.

Our condolences to Mark Tambini, ’85, on the death of his mother, Frances Joan Tambini, who passed away on March 5, 2012.

Our condolences to Colin Bruce, ’86, and to Jon Bruce, ’89, on the death of their mother; and to Tina (Fratello) Bruce, ’91, on the death of her mother-in-law, Patricia Bruce, who passed away on Feb. 19, 2012.


Georgia A. Brannan, ’87, passed away on Dec. 30, 2011.

Our condolences to Dr. Jacob L. Lochner, ’87, on the death of his father, Jacob L. Lochner IV, who passed away on Feb. 27, 2012.

Our condolences to Michelle Gigante-Todaro, ’88, on the death of her father; and to Paul Todaro, ’87, lecturer of theatre and fine arts at Niagara University, on the death of his father-in-law, Joseph Gigante, who passed away on Feb. 26, 2012.

Our condolences to Karen Courtney, ’89, on the death of her husband, Stephen Roberts, who passed away on Feb. 11, 2012.

Dorothy (Cannon) Dinda, ’91, passed away on Nov. 7, 2011. Our condolences to her husband, Stephen Dinda, ’64.

Our condolences to Michelle (Lazarczyk) Tosi, ’93, on the death of her mother, Yvonne Lazarczyk, who passed away on June 24, 2012.


Joyce A. Murphy, ’98, passed away on May 6, 2012.

Our condolences to Kevin Pole, ’98, on the death of his wife; to Alan, ’69, and Maryalice Pole, ’69, on the death of their daughter-in-law; and to Stephen, ’95, and Colleen (Dec) Pole, ’95, and Lindsay Pole, ’05, on the death of their sister-in-law, Amy Pole, who passed away on May 17, 2012.


Our condolences to Dr. Debra Colley, dean of the Niagara University College of Education, on the death of her father, Bruce Colley, who passed away on March 30, 2012.

Bruce R. Powers, founder and former director of Niagara University’s communication studies program, passed away on April 3, 2012.

Our condolences to the Castellani family on the death of Marie Castellani O’Donnell, who passed away on June 3, 2012. She was the daughter of Armand and Eleanor Castellani; and the sister of Carla Castellani, adjunct professor of theatre and fine arts and assistant manager of the Castellani Art Museum shop; Diane Castellani; Anne Incorvia; Robert Castellani, ’64, member of the Niagara University Board of Trustees; Lawrence Castellani; James Castellani; Mark Castellani; Christopher Castellani; Alfred Castellani; and Daniel Castellani.
March 22, 2012, is a momentous date in the history of Niagara University. It’s the day that we successfully completed our $80 million campaign, “The Promise of Niagara … The next 150 years.”

And I say “we,” because without the generous support of you, our alumni, we would not have been able to do it.

When I was asked, 10 years ago, to be national chairman of this aggressive campaign, I had some questions. How effective would I be in this position? Would the Rev. Joseph Levesque, C.M., who was new in his role as president of Niagara, be a good fundraiser? It was a pleasant surprise to discover how good Father Joe was at raising money, and in the end, I think we made a good team.

But perhaps the most pressing question I had was about alumni giving. At the time, our alumni giving rate was 12 percent, extremely low in comparison to other institutions. Conventional wisdom says that it is very rare for someone to give a major gift to an institution if they had never before contributed to it, and campaign consultants advised us against setting such a bold campaign goal. We would need to change the culture of philanthropy at Niagara before we could ever expect to raise $80 million.

Despite the questions I had, I never doubted our ability to achieve our goal. I was confident about Niagara’s potential, and I knew that, even if we failed to raise the $80 million, we would still be much farther ahead than we’d be if we set and achieved an attainable goal. We had to do this, and we had to do it now, if Niagara was to stay competitive in the changing academic environment that was impacting all the universities in our peer group.

So we had to roll up our sleeves and work a little harder. It was vital that Niagara succeed in this campaign, and to do that, we needed to create our own luck by believing in ourselves, having a plan, and expecting to win. This strategy served us well and encouraged donors to support us with unprecedented gifts, like those from Tom Golisano and alumnus Jerry Bisgrove.

However, campaigns are not successful solely because of the large gifts. They are successful because of the strong support of those closest to the cause, in this case, you, our alumni. You understood the importance of helping Niagara to continue to graduate individuals who are not only leaders in their professions, but people with values and morals that make a difference in the world. You knew that this is what differentiates Niagara from other academic institutions: Not only does it deliver a first-class education, but it also instills exceptional values in our students. And you became much more aware of the importance of annual giving. Together, we accomplished something thought to be unattainable, in an extremely challenging environment, and we all have to feel good about what has just taken place.

As a result of your generous support, the campus atmosphere has changed dramatically. There’s an excitement here that sends a strong message to potential students — that this is the place they want to be for the next four years. The faculty and staff are energized by the transformation taking place, and you, as alumni, can continue to be proud in saying that you are a Niagara University graduate.

So congratulations! This is a tremendous achievement, and one that will elevate Niagara to prominence as a regionally important Catholic university.

Robert J. Dwyer, ’65, ’90 (Hon.)
National Chairman
“The Promise of Niagara … The next 150 years”
When you make a gift to the Niagara Fund, you are helping continue the great traditions of Niagara University for the students of today ... and tomorrow. Niagara Fund gifts are used to:

- Provide students with scholarships and financial aid
- Help make campus improvements
- Provide support for our athletic teams
- Allow for continual faculty development
- Fund student development and community outreach initiatives

For more information, or to make a gift to the Niagara Fund, please contact Christine S. O’Hara, ‘88, MS.Ed.’06, Executive Director for Alumni Relations and Annual Giving, at 716.286.8792 or cohara@niagara.edu.

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