Western New Yorkers often refer to Buffalo as the “City of Good Neighbors,” a nod to the unity of its residents and their communal embrace of the region that they call home. It has been a goal of mine since becoming president of Niagara University in 2000 to have an interpretation of this moniker applied to NU, whereby our staff, faculty and students would be regarded as a university of good neighbors.

Cultivating the bond between the university and the town that houses it, or the town-gown relationship as it’s commonly called, is mutually advantageous. Engaged universities are better able to integrate the teaching, research, and service functions of the institution, while the community is able to use university resources to drive local economic growth, promote workforce development and revive urban areas in decline.

At a time when many municipalities and businesses are striving to be leaner financially, integrating the university and the town as a unified entity makes sound economic sense. Moreover, developing a stimulating intellectual atmosphere typical of a college town helps recruit and retain students and staff, and it also improves the quality of life for both community members and college personnel.

Over the last decade, Niagara University has taken great steps toward strengthening its relationships with the cities of Niagara Falls and Buffalo as well as the many other villages and towns that make up our community. Although it is true that these affiliations usually begin with elected officials and university presidents, it is of paramount importance that outreach extends beyond administrative offices. It gives me great pleasure to say that we have buy-in from the top down, particularly when it comes to these community-oriented initiatives. We, as an institution, are committed to working closely with Buffalo-Niagara’s business and government leaders to enhance our region in strategic and sustainable ways.

This community-minded approach can largely be traced back to our heritage as a Vincentian university. Service learning, in its most fundamental sense, corresponds directly with contributing to the greater good of our community.

One of Niagara University’s flagship service programs, Learn and Serve Niagara, provides necessary assistance to the poor, infirmed, aged and youth of the local community through a variety of endeavors. Last year alone, almost 900 NU students were involved in Learn and Serve Niagara activities that provided tutoring and mentoring services to school-aged children at 130 locations throughout the region.

Niagara’s Office of Campus Ministry takes a lead role in promoting several service projects throughout the year, while each of Niagara’s four specialized colleges has followed suit, instituting a number of programs that foster engagement among faculty and students and the surrounding communities. The variety and breadth of Niagara’s community partnerships are so expansive that it would be impossible to do them justice in this limited space.

Moving forward, we realize that a meaningful partnership must exist between the city of Niagara Falls and Niagara University, one that shares a common bond and a common vision. We will continue to seek out and implement programs that are beneficial to the community and in accord with our mission as a Vincentian university. We can — and will — continue to be good neighbors.

If you have any suggestions as to how Niagara University can continue to be a good neighbor to the people in our Western New York region, please drop me a line at jll@niagara.edu.

God bless you all,

Joseph L. Levesque, C.M.
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News Briefs

The Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., Niagara University president, was twice honored for his dedicated service to the Western New York community in January. He received the Spirit of Dr. King Award at Niagara Falls High School on Jan. 13 and was honored by Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center during The Premier, the organization’s annual black-tie dinner and gala, two days later.

Dr. Marilynn Fleckenstein, associate vice president for academic affairs, received a 2011 Community Leader Award from the National Federation for Just Communities of Western New York. She was recognized in the category of Community Service/Volunteerism for the work that she performs as the founding director of Learn and Serve Niagara, a university program that was instituted in 1994 to teach faculty and students about the value of service to others, and to encourage them to support and sustain positive community relations.

Niagara University played host to the inaugural Western New York Investment Conference and Exhibition in January, an event that brought students from numerous Western New York universities to hear from some of Wall Street’s leading investment advisors regarding career opportunities in investment management. A highlight of the exhibition was the CFA Global Investment Research Challenge, in which students competed to earn a place at the national challenge.

Communication Studies Students Launch The Ridge Report

The Ridge Report, a student-produced newscast billed by its creators as “campus news by students and for students,” went live on the university’s website Jan. 5. A Relay for Life wrap-up, Jack’s Mannequin concert review, and previews of Niagara University’s theatre and men’s basketball seasons highlighted its first-ever installment.

The newscast’s invention is largely the result of a summer internship that Anna Hoffmann, a junior communication studies major, participated in at WCBS-TV, the New York City affiliate of CBS.

“During my internship, I met Peter Dunn, the president of WCBS and a 1981 alum of NU, who challenged me to create a university television station,” said Hoffmann. “When I brought that back to campus with me, I found out that one of my fellow communication studies majors wanted to do the same thing.”

That student, Sarah Kim, met with Hoffmann and Mark Barner, Ph.D., chair of NU’s communication studies department, to determine the feasibility of launching an enterprise that possessed the potential for growth and sustainability. The trio, along with university multimedia specialist Brian Rock, devised a formal plan for a monthly broadcast treatment that would feature NU topics and special events that are newsworthy but maintain longer shelf lives.

Senior Geoff Redick and sophomores Kerisa Bonville and Vince Schiano anchored the first several episodes of The Ridge Report. Future anchors will be selected through auditions.

“It’s very important that our students, particularly those studying communications, obtain the experience that they need in these types of technologies before they enter the professional world,” commented Dr. Barner. “The university’s television studio was recently updated, providing our students with a great opportunity to use high-definition cameras and top-of-the-line equipment. We hope that this endeavor will be successful in providing them with practical learning experiences outside of the classroom.”

College of Education Celebrates Ontario Commencement

Niagara University’s College of Education held its fourth Bachelor of Professional Studies Program in Ontario commencement on Jan. 26, 2011.

The Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., president of Niagara University, presided over the ceremony, which took place at the Toronto Centre for the Arts. A total of 198 teacher candidates were awarded their degrees, with both primary/junior and intermediate/senior divisions represented.

Dennis J. Mills, a noted philanthropist, former member of the Canadian Parliament and current vice chairman of MI Developments Inc., a global real estate firm, delivered the evening’s keynote address. Mills received the university’s Caritas Medal in recognition of the extraordinary manner in which he exemplifies the charity of St. Vincent de Paul.
Living Ecology

Lessons learned in a field ecology classroom came to life for nine Niagara students, who spent their winter break kayaking, hiking and biking at Everglades National Park. The 10-day trip, organized by Dr. William Edwards and his wife, Coleen, provided an unparalleled opportunity to experience firsthand the flora and fauna of seven individual ecosystems.

“It’s everything we teach in ecology right in front of you,” says Edwards, who came up with the idea for the trip several years ago, while on his honeymoon. At the time, both he and his wife thought that bringing students to the park would be an ideal way for them to learn about the ecological concepts they studied in class. This year, they had the opportunity to do just that.

For 10 days, the group explored park trails, observing the animals and plants that call the park home. They waded into sloughs, took a nighttime hike along a trail that was inhabited by what seemed to be hundreds of alligators, swam with dolphins during a visit to a dolphin research center, and visited a marine rescue center. Each day offered something new for the students, who came away with a new appreciation for the diversity that shapes the ecology.

“The Everglades is one huge classroom,” says Dan Murphy, a senior chemistry/environmental studies major. “Everything was a new and enjoyable experience, and we all learned more than we probably could have imagined.”

Dr. William Edwards, foreground, leads Annie Palermo and Jason Davis on a canoe trip through Bear Lake Canal in Everglades National Park. The trek was part of a seven-hour, 12-mile journey through a mangrove forest, across two lakes, and through tidal marshes during which the group saw American crocodiles; a variety of birds, including tri-color herons, coots, and both white and brown pelicans; and encountered a mother manatee and her baby.
Niagara University and Opportunities Unlimited of Niagara hosted an art exhibit featuring the work of Artisans Unlimited participants from the OUN day habilitation programs throughout Niagara County. The show included 41 paintings done in both realistic and abstract styles, using acrylic and watercolor paints, Chinese-style ink paintings, and printmaking.

A paper presented by senior Jamison R. Crawford at the 19th annual Illinois State University Conference for Students of Political Science in April was selected for a Best Paper Award by Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honor Society, and will be published in the fall 2011 issue of Critique, a worldwide student journal of politics. Jamison’s paper “DIMENSION DEMENTIA: A Universal Approach to Measuring Religiosity,” was one of only four undergraduate submissions chosen.

On April 12, Niagara University held a special graduation ceremony for participants in the Experience NU program, which was offered in collaboration with the Center for Joy at HANCI’s After-School Program. This first-time program gave 10 fourth through sixth graders from Harry F. Abate Elementary School a taste of what the college experience is like.

Thirty students were inducted into Sigma Alpha Sigma, the undergraduate honor society of Niagara University, at its 78th Annual Tapping Ceremony on April 9, 2011, at the Castellani Art Museum. Sigma Alpha Sigma was established by Niagara’s Class of 1933 to recognize and reward the academic and extracurricular achievements of outstanding students.

KAPPA GAMMA PI INDUCTION — Thirty-seven Niagara University students were inducted into Kappa Gamma Pi, the National Catholic College Graduate Honor Society, during a ceremony held on April 29, 2011, in St. Vincent’s Hall. Two honorary inductees, Al Oddo and James Kling, Ph.D., professors in Niagara University’s College of Business Administration, were welcomed into Kappa Gamma Pi as well.

STUDENT LAUNCHES COUNTYWIDE CABLE ACCESS SHOW — During an internship with the Niagara Falls City School District’s public relations office, sophomore communication studies major Stacey Czerwinski (center) launched NU Now, a television show that aired on an educational access station produced at Niagara Falls High School. The program, which finds Stacey responsible for set decoration, devising show treatments, and scheduling and interviewing guests, is focused on updating area residents and prospective students about current university initiatives. The first episode featured interviews with Niagara Catholic principal Robert DiFrancesco (left) and Niagara University president Joseph L. Levesque, C.M. (right).
Local falconer Pete Lutz and his peregrine falcon, Cheyenne, were highlights of Niagara’s Earth Day celebration on April 13. Sponsored by the university’s Sustainability Task Force, the day included a flying falcon demonstration, an electronics recycling fundraiser, a vegan bake sale, and an appearance by David Stapleton of David Homes and *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* fame.

In addition to inspiring awareness of the Earth’s natural environment, the event celebrated Niagara University’s distinction as one of the country’s most environmentally responsible colleges as named by The Princeton Review in partnership with the U.S. Green Building Council. Niagara was the only college in the Buffalo-Niagara region included on the list, which was published in a comprehensive guidebook of institutions of higher education who demonstrated an above-average commitment to sustainability in terms of campus infrastructure, activities and initiatives.
ReNU Niagara, NU’s community outreach program, is adding a GreenRoots Leadership Development Program to its repertoire thanks to a $27,374 grant from the Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo. The program is aimed at building a youth and adult sustainable resident leadership base in Niagara Falls to help reduce existing demographic disparities.

NU’s College of Education has launched a doctoral degree program in leadership and policy. The Ph.D. program, which started accepting applications in January, will prepare leaders to implement systemic change in an effort to further community goals and aspirations. The program will provide an interdisciplinary forum for doctoral study and research on leadership issues that directly relate to matters of those who are underserved.

The NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council awarded a $193,270 grant to Niagara University to develop and conduct a statewide disability awareness and sensitivity curriculum and the corresponding training tools for first responders. The program will provide first responders with the skills and tools necessary to communicate and assist individuals with disabilities when an emergency arises.

Dr. Abdiweli Ali, associate professor of economics, was recently appointed deputy prime minister and minister of planning and international cooperation in the transitional government of Somalia. Dr. Ali was on sabbatical leave during the spring semester to focus his attentions on his new position.

Niagara Welcomes

Robert H. Healy, veterans services coordinator. A 30-year member of the United States Air Force, Robert will be responsible for developing and implementing university strategy for increasing and retaining current and former military students and their family members, and developing relationships with local, regional, and national military and veteran organizations to create recruiting support conduits.

John P. Davanzo, professional-in-residence in the College of Business Administration. A former CEO and president of four Western New York hospitals, and named by Buffalo Business First as one of the top 50 people in healthcare, John will teach and mentor MBA students interested in careers in healthcare administration.

Students Team Up to Fundraise for Food Pantry

What began as a course-related consultation project for a local sweets manufacturer became a holiday-inspired fundraising collaboration to benefit a Niagara Falls soup kitchen and food pantry. In December, students in an NU business class teamed up with Niagara’s Honeymoon Sweets, a family-run confectionery company that transforms photos into edible chocolate keepsakes, and Regal Cinemas to launch a joint fundraising venture for the Heart, Love and Soul food pantry of Niagara Falls. The plan involved raffling chances to win gourmet chocolate candies that featured edible images of promotional posters for The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, a movie that was playing at the Regal Cinemas at the time. Each of the flavorful confections weighed 10 pounds.

All told, the class raised more than $500 for Heart, Love and Soul, and Niagara University’s CEO Club elected to donate an additional $1,000 to the cause, funds raised from the organization sponsoring a Turkey Trot on campus this past fall.

“We are so thankful to these students for taking the initiative to spend a large portion of their evenings — especially leading up to exam week — to support our organization,” remarked Sister Beth Brosmer, executive director of Heart, Love and Soul. “Many of these young men and women even sacrificed the opportunity to begin their holiday breaks early to take part in this project.”

Niagara University student and fundraiser organizer Grant Danby presents a Christmas stocking filled with cash to Sister Beth Brosmer of the Heart, Love and Soul food pantry while Mary Ann Hess, owner of Niagara’s Honeymoon Sweets, NU student Michelle Martineau, and Bill Angus, assistant professor of management at Niagara, look on.
Haoua Hamza, Ph.D., envisions a large net when she speaks about her recently established nongovernmental organization, the Global Network for Niger. “Like a net catches fish,” she says, “we are creating a global network to capture resources for those in need.”

The people she is referring to are the women of Niger, a landlocked country in West Africa that is one of the poorest in the world. Because their families are dependent upon them for subsistence, these women work 16-18 hours per day on difficult, labor-intensive chores. They have little money, power, or access to information, and the vast majority are illiterate. Dr. Hamza knows the situation well. She, herself, is a native of Niger. While her life is markedly different from most of her countrywomen, she is nonetheless committed to helping those who are not as fortunate as she was.

Dr. Hamza’s inspiration for this work comes from her mother, Hadjia Awa Oumarou, who served as the regional chair of the Women’s Association of Diffa for more than a decade, and who was involved in numerous projects that supported local women’s initiatives for self-sufficiency during her lifetime. Many of these activities took place in her own living room for lack of a dedicated space. “Even though my mother passed, we can still try something to continue the work,” she says. “That’s why I want badly to do something and to take others along with me to see what they can do.”

That’s where the GNN comes into play. Developed as a clearinghouse to connect Nigerien women with the resources they need, specifically in the areas of education, financial stability, and health, the organization is expected to reduce poverty and empower women socially and economically. A vital component of this plan is collaborations among government entities, individuals, and educational institutions in Niger, Europe, and the United States, including Niagara University.

“I am interested in creating opportunities for our students and faculty to be involved in service abroad,” Dr. Hamza says. To that end, she is exploring possible partnerships between Niger’s University of Niamey and Niagara’s colleges of Education and Arts and Sciences that could include exchange programs, study-abroad opportunities, and online courses. Already, several of her Niagara colleagues have offered to assist with the project.

While the GNN currently has no physical facility in Niger, the organization received a vital show of support in November when the mayor of Diffa donated a 500-square-meter plot of land on which an office will be built. Here, women will be able to access healthcare and educational programs, as well as develop skills that will help them to launch individual and collective income-generating businesses. For Dr. Hamza, this donation was tangible evidence of the trust the people of Diffa have in her project.

There is still much to be done, including securing funding, material resources, and volunteers, but Dr. Hamza is confident that the GNN will make a difference in the lives of the women of Diffa. She points to a group of women in a photo taken in her mother’s living room. “If one of these women is able to write her name in her own language,” she says, “if I can see one more woman getting healed, another girl graduating because of GNN, I think that’s success.”

— Lisa McMahon
New NU Scholarships and Endowments

At Niagara University, more than 94 percent of our students receive scholarship aid, totaling more than $2 million annually. The most recent of Niagara’s more than 130 endowed scholarships include the following:

The Niagara University Student Government Association Scholarship is an annual scholarship awarded to a returning student with financial need and a QPA of 3.0 or higher.

The Douglas Towey Memorial Scholarship for Theatre Studies was established in memory of the late brother of Brother Augustine Towey, C.M., director emeritus of Niagara University Theatre. It is awarded to theatre majors with financial need.

The Greatbatch Scholarship in Honor of Edward Voboril is awarded annually to a biology, chemical science or physical science major. Voboril is a former member of Niagara’s Board of Trustees.

The Elizabeth N. Kolber Scholarship is an annual scholarship for a student with financial need.

In addition to these endowed scholarships, there are several scholarship funds that have been established but have not yet accumulated the necessary $25,000 to become fully endowed:

The Rev. Francis X. Prior, C.M., Memorial Scholarship Fund for needy students.

Alumnus’s $1.5 Million Gift Establishes Niagara’s First Endowed Chair

Niagara University has received a $1.5 million estate gift from alumnus Dr. John J. Hughes to establish the first endowed chair at the university.

The John J. Hughes, ’67 Endowed Chair in Biology will be reserved to 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.

“This generous gift from the late Dr. John Hughes demonstrates his belief in the excellence of our faculty and the strength of our academic programs,” said the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., Niagara University president. “The United States is facing a critical need to educate young men and women in the sciences, and Niagara University is poised to provide the kind of advanced, interdisciplinary education that is vital in preparing students who will take their places as leaders in the scientific community. This endowed chair will enable us to expand our world-class faculty and enhance our student/faculty research opportunities in interdisciplinary science.”

The Ms. Julie Burdick Memorial Scholarship Fund for theatre students.

The Scott Stuart, ’86, Memorial Scholarship Fund.

The Command Sgt. Maj. Fred Kirtchen, ’80, Memorial Scholarship Fund for veterans returning to school.

The Rev. Michael Mazurchuk, C.M., ’80, Memorial Scholarship Fund.

The Rosaleen T. Carroll Memorial Scholarship Fund.

The Alfonso Oddo Scholarship for Accountancy

If you are interested in establishing a new scholarship or donating to one of the scholarships listed here, or if you would like more information, please contact the Office of Institutional Advancement at 716.286.8778.

“I was fortunate to have had the professors I did while I was at Niagara,” Hughes said at the time of his gift. “They helped me to develop the intellectual habits that I carried with me throughout my life. The current faculty is doing great things as well, most notably with student research. This endowed chair will permit the university to recruit additional top-quality people and help it to become recognized for its accomplishments in the sciences.”

The idea of an estate gift was especially appealing to Hughes. “As I was looking forward, and looking for ways to assist Niagara in a meaningful way, I recognized that with an estate gift I could make a significant contribution at the end of my life. It is my hope that others find a way to follow suit.”

Hughes’ gift adds to the nearly $15 million that Niagara’s “Promise of Niagara” capital campaign has already raised toward the science program. A majority of that funding is dedicated to the construction of the B. Thomas Golisano Center for Integrated Sciences. Construction is set to begin on the 46,000-square-foot facility this summer.

Hughes died April 27, 2011, at the age of 65.
Remembering
Gerard M. Mahoney, C.M.

I have always found it difficult to write about Father Gerard M. “Jerry” Mahoney, Niagara’s 20th president, without a touch of nostalgia affecting my words. Father Jerry was only 57 years old at the time of his death in January 1991, having served the previous nine years as superior of the Eastern Province of the Vincentian Fathers and Brothers. He had planned to return to Niagara in the near future, and I was delighted at the prospect of once again working closely with him. I served as academic vice president during most of his presidency, and kept in frequent contact with him when, as provincial superior, he assumed the role of chair of the university’s Board of Trustees in the summer of 1981.

Father Jerry’s accession to the presidency in August 1976 occurred at a turbulent time in the university’s history. A faculty union had been formed just a year before largely in response to a pay scale overwhelmed by inflation and a set of conditions governing employment ordained by the administration alone. Tough negotiations lay ahead. Moreover, the union leadership, arguing that teachers in religious orders lacked a “community of interest in salary and fringe benefits” with their lay peers, had excluded Vincentian faculty members from the original bargaining unit, an act wholly unacceptable to the Board of Trustees and the new president personally. Further, the debt arising from a decade of tremendous physical growth had gradually eaten into income for operations, and the university had slipped into the deadly habit of balancing its budget by internal borrowing from endowment. Such a crowded agenda would soon reveal whether the leader had the right stuff.

Niagara knew little about its new president. A native New Yorker, Father Jerry was ordained in 1961, and by 1964 had earned a doctorate in canon law at the Catholic University of America. Over the next 10 years, he occupied himself mainly in seminary instruction in Albany, N.Y., and Germantown, Pa., before his appointment in 1975 as superior of the Vincentian student residence in Niagara Falls. Modest yet assured, he held some things strongly. But he would explain his views softly, at times almost experimentally. At the root of his influence was his integrity: If he gave his word, he kept it. He allowed his officers the freedom to manage their own sectors though he expected and appreciated close and frequent consultations. His officers returned his confidence with deep loyalty, sensing that he cared as much about their work as he did his own. He could be impatient with those who used grand phrases for small matters or whose late afternoon “crises” (or “heavies” as he called them) could not be postponed for a fresh start the next day. As he listened, he would fix his eyes steadily, through large dark-rimmed glasses, on a speaker without causing the slightest embarrassment. He gave the impression that he had time for everyone when in reality he was the busiest person on campus.

Father Jerry had a way of choosing his words and calculating their effects perfectly. At his first general faculty meeting, a professor told him that, given the current faculty mood, he was “sitting on a time bomb.” Unfazed, the president quoted the title of a popular song — “We’ve only just begun” — and followed with a pledge that he would work closely with faculty to solve long-standing problems. His charm was in his voice — sympathetic and unmistakably born in Brooklyn.

Negotiations with the faculty union began in May 1978 after a federal appeals court declared Vincentian faculty eligible for union membership. Each side had entered the negotiations with somewhat unrealistic expectations of the other’s generosity. Over the next five months, differences over issues of salary, grievance, and retrenchment stalled the process, but in January 1979 an
agreement had been reached. For the first time in the university's history, a collective bargaining agreement defined most of the important relations between the administration and faculty.

A long era of informality at Niagara ended. Unionization brought an entirely new set of relationships to the governance of the university, embracing almost every aspect of faculty life from employment to retirement. Relationships between faculty and administration could be cordial, even respectful, but they could never again be individualized or improvised.

Change, someone said, can be at once a penalty and a privilege. Father Jerry recognized the need for a new kind of academic leadership to forge within the faculty a sense of its own corporate importance; this would be the path to shedding the insularity which hindered broader professional development. Accrediting teams tended to describe Niagara’s academic programs as "solid" or "traditional" and conducted in a friendly, even congenial, atmosphere. But was this enough? The university seemed afraid to trust its own instincts for experimentation, confusing freedom from curricular agitation with academic distinction.

In one of our first meetings, I proposed a series of changes, the most important of which called for an end to the artificial and outdated rivalry between "teaching or research" as the faculty's main responsibility. Previous chief academic officers had described research at Niagara as “subservient to good teaching.” Our new position valued teaching and research as two faces of the same thing: instructional excellence. For years, no one had seemed concerned that treating research as a useful adornment, at best, might have affected the quality of instruction. We needed to provide, systematically, money for travel to professional conferences, equipment, and research assistance, a substantial increase in the number and stipend of summer research fellowships, and reductions in teaching load. At the same time, we would establish a fund for the improvement of teaching to encourage new techniques in instruction. In short, we instituted the first formal faculty development program in the university's history. Just a few years later, an accrediting team would describe our program as “a potential model” for peer institutions. Father Jerry did not intend to change the university’s fundamental teaching mission. But he was committed to making research an essential ingredient for improving the intellectual climate of the university.

Niagara was in a hurry in the late 1970s as a kind of loose-reined yet purposeful thinking dominated in the top offices. We were determined to fix our attention on academic quality and hold it there long enough to take root. The criminal justice program was reorganized, radically shifting its focus from law to the study of criminal justice as a social science. Social work was separated from sociology as its own department, and new undergraduate degree programs appeared in psychology, biochemistry, and biotechnology. A master's degree program in business administration neared completion. We adopted a plan to obtain every available professional accreditation for the academic disciplines, beginning with social work. And we applied for, and received, a federal grant of $1.5 million, enabling us to end our dependence on time-sharing terminals from local industries and establish our first academic computing center in St. Vincent’s Hall. In a single year, 1979-1980, an entirely new element of Niagara's academic culture — computing facilities for students and faculty — had been created. The next year, a degree program in computer and information sciences followed.

The president often paraphrased Dickens, saying that “we live in the best of times and worst of times.” He wisely discouraged the rhetoric of fear about diminishing enrollments heard increasingly on the campuses of other small and mid-sized independent universities. Niagara would do a limited number of things but do them well. The university would position itself as a first-rate undergraduate institution offering selected but strong graduate programs mainly in education and business. This stance was not simply intended as an insurance policy against enrollment decline. It reflected, rather, an assertion of Niagara's character and...
strength, avoiding the essentially reactive behavior dominant in colleges searching for a market on which to build a program. These colleges, Father Jerry would say, had it "exactly backwards."

Niagara’s history can never be reduced to its factual core alone. That would prevent us from understanding the ways in which a president responds to the emotional crises which inevitably find their way to university campuses. It is hard to recapture the depth of feeling which enveloped the campus at the loss of four young women, all sophomore residents of Seton Hall, in a horrific crash on Mother’s Day in 1977 or the death of the 21-year-old captain of the varsity basketball team, Phil Scaffidi, from a rare cancer of the adrenal gland in March 1980. I remember the grace with which Father Mahoney tempered the hurt and loss that mars everyday life with the strength and hope of a supernatural future as he spoke to the throngs of students and faculty who attended the funeral Masses.

Our best intentions notwithstanding, Jerry Mahoney expected that we would “probably spend more time than we would like putting out fires.” The fires came indeed but he skillfully contained them. Two of them deserve special mention. In 1978, the Niagara County legislature revived a plan to reactivate the old Hojock Railway Line, a portion of which ran through the center of the campus. The origin of this strange story is too detailed to narrate here. More important is the way in which the president mobilized the campus community, our neighbors, area politicians, and alumni to defeat the proposal. The tracks were later removed entirely.

The trauma at Love Canal began in April 1978, and it shocked the nation. But Love Canal was seven miles from the university, and the president could assure the campus community that it was safe from the hazards at that site. But in October 1979, when the Environmental Protection Agency included a site near the university, Hooker Hyde Park, in its massive lawsuit against Occidental Chemical Corp., it advertently linked in the public mind the two sites as equal threats to their respective populations. Hooker Hyde Park, of course, was not Love Canal but rather a threat that could be contained. Father Jerry remained in control of the matter. In such a sensitive situation, a clumsy hand might have caused irreparable harm. His letters and remarks to the university community and parents, based on the hard evidence of clean air, water, and soil samples, reassured his audiences that the university was safe from the effects of contamination. Through a combination of prudent management, particularly in the most critical early stages of the problem, and geological good fortune — bedrock and thick upper surface soil which prevented exposure to contamination — a crisis had been avoided.

The night before a Board of Trustees meeting in New York City in December 1980, Father Mahoney told me that he would likely become the next superior of the Eastern Province of the Vincentians. The first round of voting among the confreres had placed him far ahead of any other candidate, and his lead would probably hold on the second ballot. He felt honored by the confidence shown him by his peers, and yet he was ambivalent about leaving Niagara at a critical time.

The respect and affection for Father Mahoney extended well beyond his confreres and university colleagues. An epic coffee drinker, his early morning visits to the student center usually included a friendly chat with anyone standing nearby. Few students held him personally responsible for the university’s strict dormitory visitation policy. Faculty spoke approvingly of the spirit of change and experimentation in academic life on campus.

Niagara’s self-confidence rose noticeably during the Mahoney years. The inwardness of the past, focused almost entirely on good teaching and amiable relationships with students, would now be matched by an outward focus on scholarly achievements and recognition. Niagara entered the 1980s confident that it had at last found its academic footing.

There was an enlarged humanity about Jerry Mahoney. He never forgot that as university president a lot of people depended on him for their livelihood. Yet, he never thought of himself as the pivot on which everything turned. He appreciated the good qualities of those with whom he worked, and almost unconsciously drew out the best in them. In later years, he would occasionally lament that he had not spent enough time raising money. Perhaps. I remember telling him that I needed $50,000 to make an early start on accreditation for our social work program. Several days later, at the university Christmas party, he handed me a $50,000 check from an alumnus. He would say, too, that he should have been there.

Father Mahoney never thought much about his place in Niagara’s history. Higher interests were at stake, and the waves of contemporary praise and blame would soon fade. He made his influence felt at the moment and in the manner in which it was most needed. He probably would have smiled hesitantly if anyone had described his leadership as transformational, if by that term we mean causing a radical change in the inner character of the university. His presidency ignited a set of changes in attitude and behavior — not to mention policies and programs — which stir this university to this day, and their end, fortunately, is still not in sight. That is his legacy.

Dr. John Stranges served as Niagara’s academic vice president from 1977 until 1994. He remained a lifelong friend and colleague of Father Mahoney.
Many Niagara University students have met, fallen in love, and married, thanks to their time on Monteagle Ridge. Here are a few of those stories:

W met in the fall of 2001 as college sophomores. We both lived in Seton Hall that year, Andy as an RA and Meredith as a second-year resident. After meeting through mutual friends, we both started seeing more of each other around the dorm and around campus as well. It didn't take long after meeting for us to realize that we both had a lot in common and begin dating. After graduation, Andy got a teaching position in Meredith's hometown and moved to begin his life there. In July of 2006, we got married back where it all started five years earlier, at the Alumni Chapel on the NU campus. Little did we know when we picked Niagara as our college that we would graduate with degrees as well as someone to share our lives with!

Andy, ’04, and Meredith (Plankenhorn) Maillet, ’04

I first saw my future wife, Jan Whistler, ’71, at the La Hacienda restaurant in the fall of 1968. Don’t know if it was love at first sight, but she was definitely someone I wanted to know better. I had that opportunity on the night of Dec. 7, 1968, when the 1956 Buick owned by Dave (The Commander) Frank, ’69, did not start and we decided to go to the on-campus beer blast in the student center.

I was formally introduced to Jan, and as they say, the rest is history. We’ll celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary in September 2011.

Peter Beaucar, ’69

H e was the science guy; I was the artsy girl. We started out as best friends and the rest is history.

Todd Janicki, ’99, and I met in the Clet Hall dorm. I chose to live in Clet Hall because it was the theatre dorm. Todd was placed in Clet Hall because it was the only dorm with an honors floor. Eventually my friends and I on the fourth floor couldn’t resist meeting the honors guys on the third floor. I think we were initially attracted to the personal computer lab they had on their floor, and eventually we all became friends. It’s hard to say if we would ever have met if we didn’t start out in the same dorm.

Jennifer (Celebucki) Janicki, ’99
Here is the story of how I met Sue Francis, ’96, the love of my life. In the fall of 1994, I was the orientation chairperson and she was a junior transferring into NU. We met during orientation week activities and later saw each other outside of Ontario House, a bar in downtown Niagara Falls back in the 90s. We started dating and I proposed in October of 1996. We wed on Aug. 23, 1997. We visit NU occasionally and reflect back on all the fond memories where we met and the fun times we had with our NU friends!

Michael Townsend, ’96

A blessed, imperfect, blissful life together. That’s what we’ve enjoyed for over 32 years now as husband and wife — and we wouldn’t have it any other way.

Our friendship quickly turned to “he’s/she’s the one” love back in 1975 when we were students at Niagara University. Fred Heuer, ’77, was a marketing major from Niagara Falls and I was an English/communications studies major from Lewiston. We shared a lot of the same commuter friends and marveled that we had never met each other when we went to neighboring high schools, Bishop Duffy and Madonna.

Right away, there was laughter, chemistry, and mutual respect between us. I was quiet, artistic, and studious, and he was gregarious, athletic, and studious. We looked forward to bumping into each other in the student center between classes and decided to date only on the weekends — since we were both on the dean’s list and wanted to keep it that way.

Corny as it sounds, our romance blossomed at NU. We went to basketball games and disco dances in the Gallagher Center, saw NU Theatre productions at the Leary Theatre, and enjoyed Fred’s fraternity parties for underprivileged children on campus. We even tried out the tennis courts — but Fred quickly discovered athleticism didn’t run in my family. Still, I cheered him on at his NU softball and community league baseball games.

We saw the latest movies and concerts together and I wrote reviews for The Index. And Fred and his fraternity brothers helped me coordinate haunted houses, dance-a-thons and a pizza-eating contest for the March of Dimes, one of my college jobs.

On a trip to visit my sister and her husband in California during Christmas break in January 1977, we got engaged. Our parents were thrilled to hear the news, but reminded us that we both had to graduate before saying “I do.”

Four months later, Fred graduated. Campus felt different without him there, but we both carried on, knowing he was saving up for our first home and I would graduate in December. Back in the day, many baby boomers married young. I was nearly 22 and Fred was 23 when we wed. Like many of our peers, we lived with our parents until the “big day” arrived.

On Aug. 12, 1978, we pledged our love for one another in Niagara University’s Alumni Chapel in front of more than 100 family members, and friends.

James C. Dobson wrote “Don’t marry the person you think you can live with; marry only the individual you think you can’t live without.” Fred and I had both dated other people before we met, but we both knew after our first date that we were meant for each other. We truly felt then — and believe with all our hearts today — that God brought us together.

Ann Rooney Heuer, ’78
Jennifer Curro, ’02, and I met during our freshman year while swimming on the swim team. We began dating the end of our freshman year. Although we did not stay together through the summer, we remained friends. Over the Christmas holiday in our junior year, we began dating again. We got engaged during Christmas break in our senior year at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, and were married on July 19, 2003, at Alumni Chapel.

Jared M. House, ’02

Our love story began as the freshman Class of 1961 arrived on campus in the fall of 1957. While taking photos for The Index and yearbook, I spotted my enthusiastic future bride, Mary Jo Confrancesco, in her Class of ’61 “dink.” Shortly thereafter, I invited her to a ROTC affair at the Fort Niagara Officer’s Club and thus began our 53-year relationship and our 49-year marriage. Has it all been peaches and cream? Of course not. We’ve had our highs and lows, but through it all, we have asked the Lord’s help and guidance. We have continued our friendship with several classmates and Vincentians. We look forward to many more fruitful years.

Walter Engels, ’59

We met at Niagara while registering for classes in 1988. Ann was from West Winfield, N.Y., and Jeff was from New Hartford, N.Y., only about a 20-minute drive between us. Throughout our four years at Niagara, we built a friendship while taking classes together and heading out downtown for friendly games of darts. Frequently we would carpool home on breaks and sometimes took the same train back to central New York on holidays. While we were never romantically involved during our Niagara days, we grew as close as two people could be who had different class schedules and circles of friends. After graduating in 1992, Jeff moved downstate to begin his teaching career, while Ann married and settled down in Cooperstown, N.Y., and taught in a nearby school district.

We spoke on the phone briefly in the early 90s, but at that time it was obvious our lives were on different tracks. Years went by and Jeff thought of Ann often. He tried to find her online and, although that wasn’t as easy as it might be now, on Sept. 20, 2010, he found her; she was teaching English in Cooperstown. Jeff sent her an e-mail message, telling her as much as he could about the past 18 years since they had seen each other. When Ann responded, she told him that she was divorced.

We decided to get together about a week later and suddenly all the emotion and familiarity came rushing back to both of us. We sat and talked for hours, looking and laughing through yearbooks and trading war stories from our respective teaching careers and our personal lives.

Neither of us ever realized that a romance was blooming that afternoon. Later that evening, the two long-lost friends kissed and resumed a relationship that started more than two decades ago in Gallagher Center on the campus of Niagara University.

Ann (Senif) Olmstead ’92, and Jeff Owens ’92

14 eagle magazine
“Do you believe in love at first sight or should I walk by again?”
This is what passed as clever repartee on my part in the 1950s.

Susan Garlock, ’59, said, “Keep on hiking.”

Many of the details about how this romance developed at NU have faded
from my feeble memory, but how I’ve been blessed to have spent 50 plus
years with this wonderful, kind, intelligent, loving wife and mother is the
oldest story in the book. I simply got lucky. A wall hanging in Susan’s
room sums it up best: “There are many great love stories, but ours is
my favorite.”

Donald E. Yezzi, ’58

We met during orientation week outside Vinnie’s as we were preparing to walk to the
Falls. I saw Bernadette Gaughan, ’81, and I knew right then she would be the girl
for me. We never dated at Niagara, but my friend Patrick Nerney, ’81, and
Bernadette’s friend Stephanie (Nannery) Nerney, ’81, got us together in Baltimore the
summer after we graduated. We got married on St. Patrick’s Day, March 17, 1984.

Michael J. DePrez, ’81

It is said that going away to college is a life-changing experience.

My wife, Mary Leising-Marciano, ’72, and I are living
proof of this statement. We met the first day of registration
freshman year playing “musical chairs” as we waited in line to
see the dean of each of the departments we were in during the
arena registration in the upper level of the Gallagher Center.

From that day on, our relationship developed and grew, as
we did, during our four years at Niagara. This year we are
celebrating our 38th year of marriage.

There were challenges right from the start. Mary was living
off campus at the Red Coach Inn. We would see each other
at the student center between classes and I would rely on the
Niagara Falls transit system to see Mary on weekends. In
those days, underclassmen were not allowed to have cars on campus.

Dates were walking excursions to the movie houses and the other tourist
attractions in the Falls. These “walking dates” became more difficult in the late fall and
winter when the winds off Monteagle Ridge were fierce. Thank God for floor-length maxi
coats! This time together gave us the opportunity to really get to know each other,
including our past as well as our hopes for the future.

Over the years, our feet and our eyes must have touched every spot associated with the
breathless beauty around us. One wintry Saturday afternoon, we walked across the Rainbow
Bridge into Canada. It was on that cold day in the garden at the base of Clifton Hill that
I proposed to Mary.

One month after graduation, we were married. We rented an apartment in Niagara Falls
and had our honeymoon there.

Every time we think of Niagara, we think of how much it is a part of our lives. We still
meet with old classmates to have a pizza at La Hacienda or to watch a Purple Eagle team
in action. Niagara is the place where we received more than a solid education and values.
It is where we found true love.

Sam Marciano, ’72
For two months now, the Niagara women’s soccer team has had early morning practices to fit everyone’s school schedule. The sun is just starting to rise over the emptiness of the stadium. The team lines up on the sideline for their routine warm-up before another difficult fitness practice. They begin with their usual two laps around the perimeter and then go right into stretching. As the drills begin, the sun rises higher in the sky, completely illuminating the field and reflecting off the morning dew that goes untouched around the field where players have yet to run.
The scenery on campus is breathtaking at times, especially early on a winter morning.

It is the beginning of December and the first snowfall of the year has covered the NU campus with a soft white blanket of snow. There is no doubt that this snowfall is the most beautiful.

WNIA, Niagara University’s radio station, broadcasts live on the Internet where anyone around the world can listen in. The radio station was renovated this past year, allowing students the opportunity to use some of the most modern technology and learn very valuable firsthand experience. (To listen, visit http://wnia.niagara.edu/)
The moment you step into this expansive place, you feel the inspiration of many artists. The emotion and determination put into these marvelous pieces of art influences many of the students here at Niagara University, who spend hours admiring the artwork in each room. This is a great place to come if you have time between classes to relax and escape from the stresses of schoolwork and everyday life.
“Two to one, static to the sound of you and I, undone for the last time ...” Jack’s Mannequin, a rock band originally from Orange County, Calif., performs before a crowd of about 900 in the Kiernan Center during a concert sponsored by Niagara University’s Student Government Association. As the lights dim, fans crowd the stage and begin to cheer, the cold keys of the piano slowly begin to warm the hearts of the students as they sing along, swaying back and forth, snapping photos with their best friends, creating great memories.

Almost every seat in the Dwyer Arena is taken as Dave Burkholder and his team wait for the game against the UConn Huskies to begin.
Niagara University’s brand new Leary Theatre is overflowing with excited students who are preparing to go on stage for their last performance of the theatre production *Almost, Maine*. They go to the backstage room of the theatre wing to apply their make-up, change into their costumes, and do voice exercises. When they are ready, they hold hands and form a circle, taking turns to express their gratitude toward the team or to give an inspirational message before this last performance. Then they all take a deep breath as the audience quiets down, the lights dim, and the curtains open.

NU’s annual student ball has a holiday theme: “A Classic Christmas.” The Kiernan Center is beautifully decorated: tables are adorned with ornaments and presents, and Christmas lights shine along the walls. Outside, a horse and buggy wait to take students for a ride around campus. It’s very cold, so everyone wraps in blankets to get cozy and warm while they watch the snowflakes hit the ground and listen to the horse’s hooves clip clop against the cold pavement.
The lower level of the library is quiet at this time of night. It is filled with rows and rows of books, which expand and contract at the press of a button. You settle into one of the comfy chairs in the corner where the lighting will keep you awake. The desk attached to the chair is perfect for your laptop and coffee. 📚
More than 1,250 individuals became Niagara University alumni on the weekend of May 21 and 22 at commencement exercises held in the university’s Gallagher Center and the University at Buffalo’s Alumni Arena. Pulitzer Prize-winner Isabel Wilkerson, pictured left, gave the address to the undergraduates, while best-selling author Richard Florida gave the graduate commencement address. Both speakers received an honorary doctor of humane letters degree from Niagara.
Also honored during the weekend were alumni John R. Sanderson, ’75, president of Sanderson & Company Investment Consultants LLC, and Kathleen Barry Monti, ’70, MBA’85, retired executive vice president/chief administrative officer for First Niagara Financial Group and First Niagara Bank, who received honorary doctor of commercial science degrees; Julie Payette, an astronaut and public policy scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars in Washington, D.C., who received an honorary doctor of laws degree; and Martin Chalfie, Ph.D., a professor in Columbia University’s Department of Biological Sciences and winner of the 2008 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, who received an honorary doctor of science degree.
Niagara University ROTC color guard.

Franklin Moore, senior class president and recipient of the Niagara Medal.

Bryan Eckenrode, adjunct professor of fine arts.
If ever there were a “woman for all seasons,” it was Rosaleen Teresa Carroll.

The mere mention of her name ("Teresa," as she was known on the Niagara University campus) evokes an almost nonstop flood of shared memories among her former colleagues, each story giving rise to plenty of smiles.

The memories are of a kind and caring woman whose blue Irish eyes were complemented by crinkled laugh lines that betrayed her enormous sense of humor. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that a month after her death on Jan. 11, at age 80, gifts from family, friends, and former colleagues to the Rosaleen T. Carroll Memorial Fund established by her family exceeded $25,000. Niagara University plans to establish a scholarship named in her memory.

For more than 30 years Teresa was, as one of her former supervisors said, a “gate keeper” as secretary to a series of deans of the College of Arts and Sciences and later, to several of the university’s academic vice presidents. She worked full time until well into her 70s.

Teresa projected the image of the consummate professional — confident, perfectly attired and coiffed, elegantly poised and knowledgeable — who knew the demands made on each of her former bosses as she carefully managed their schedules. The long list of her former supervisors includes Father Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., Dr. John Stranges, Father Daniel O’Leary, OMI, and Dr. Bonnie Rose.

Teresa had a way of handling difficult situations, according to Dr. Stranges, former dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and former academic vice president, “in a cool, reassuring, and respectful manner, trying to solve problems as quickly as possible.” He recalled times when students came to his office, upset and needing to discuss particular problems with him. Teresa offered comfort and reassurance as she worked out a way for students to meet with Dr. Stranges despite his busy schedule. “She always knew just what to do,” Dr. Stranges recalled, adding that when speaking of Teresa “the word ‘trust’ comes to mind — trust in her judgment, competence, and reliability.”

Dr. Rose, executive vice president and vice president for academic affairs, lauded Teresa’s many professional attributes, but added that she misses her, especially her humor. “She had a wicked sense of humor!”

After retiring, Teresa remained connected with the university and didn’t miss opportunities to spend time with fellow retirees at the annual retirees Mass and luncheon or the annual university Christmas party.

A native of Toronto, Ontario, Teresa immigrated to the United States in 1959 after her marriage to James Carroll, also a Toronto native. The couple settled in the DeVeaux neighborhood of Niagara Falls, N.Y., where they raised their three sons: John, ’82; Jim, ’86; and Frank, ’88. Teresa’s husband died in 1996.

Teresa moved to the Boston area in July 2010 to be closer to her sons and their families. In addition to her three sons and their wives, Teresa is survived by 12 grandchildren, a brother, three sisters, and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held in Niagara Falls.
When Maj. Gen. Vincent “Vinny” E. Boles, ’76, returns to Monteagle Ridge in October as the featured speaker for Alumni Weekend’s “Pantheon of Warriors” event, he likely will share memorable experiences from his 33-year career in the Army. And there are many. The highly decorated general, who is the highest ranking graduate of Niagara’s ROTC program, has had a distinguished career preparing troops for, and at times leading them into, war. But what he’s looking forward to most is the opportunity to connect with the ROTC servicemen and women who have served from the 1950s on. “Just to be there and to be considered a part of that arc of history is pretty humbling,” he says.

Vinny’s humility is obvious when he’s asked about his achievements. He is proud, he says, of being considered a good teammate by his soldiers, of being thought of as someone whose best got better and who helped others be their best as well. “What it’s ultimately about is, are you a teammate folks can count on?” he says.

During Vinny’s service with the Army, hundreds of thousands of soldiers counted on him (and the units he served in) for the ammunition, equipment, and training they needed to support them in campaigns including Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was the commander in charge of the Army’s Field Support at the time of the September 11 attacks, and later, from commands in Kuwait and Iraq, he assumed control of all war reserve supplies and equipment from around the world to prepare for and support the Coalition’s operations into Afghanistan, Iraq, the Philippines, and the Horn of Africa. He was promoted to major general in 2004 and assigned as the Army’s chief of Ordnance, where his experience with the global war on terror was a crucial component in the training programs he developed for Ordnance Corps soldiers in the fields of mechanical and electronic maintenance, ammunition handling, and explosive ordnance disposal.
Vinny assumed duties as the assistant deputy chief of staff for logistics in the Pentagon in 2006, where he again played an integral role in the management and support of logistical operations worldwide, with special emphasis on operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. By the time he retired from active duty in 2009, at the age of 54, he had earned numerous awards and decorations, including the Distinguished Service Medal (two awards), the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal (three awards), the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Parachutist Badge, and the Army Staff Badge.

Ironically, a career in the Army was one of the furthest things from Vinny's mind when he left his hometown of Bronxville, N.Y., for the Niagara University campus in 1972. His father, an Irish Catholic immigrant who worked in the restaurant business, had expected that his son would follow in his footsteps. But Vinny had other ideas. Deciding that he had to come up with a “Plan B,” he enrolled at Niagara as a business major, not quite sure where the degree would take him. In his sophomore year, at the urging of friends who were in the university’s ROTC program, he took a military history class. He enjoyed it so much that he changed his major to history, and although he was unsure about what he’d do after graduation, he said he never thought about making the U.S. Army a career.

Even after Vinny learned about and applied for the ROTC scholarship that would pay for his last two years at Niagara, he never expected to spend more than the required four years in the Army. But a leadership development course he took during the summer between his junior and senior year changed his mind. He “got turned on” by the cadets he was training with and the opportunities he was given to lead, he says, and he discovered that he enjoyed getting tasks accomplished and had an aptitude for doing so. He especially liked the fact that the Army’s values-based environment mirrored Niagara’s, and that anyone who embraced the Army’s standards could succeed. “I found that tremendously liberating as a young man,” he says.

So Vinny returned to Niagara with a new enthusiasm for the ROTC program. He planned to pursue service in infantry, military police, armor, or military intelligence, but was commissioned as a second lieutenant of Ordnance. His disappointment was tempered by the fact that only a handful of his classmates received assignments.

After graduation, Vinny headed to Fort Knox, Ky., to begin service as a maintenance officer. In 1982, he and his wife, Cheryl, also a Niagara alum from the Class of 1976, moved to Berlin, Germany, where he was chosen to be an aide to Maj. Gen. John H. Mitchell, a position that he calls “the most seminal development opportunity of my life,” and one that confirmed his decision to make the Army his lifework. Although his goals were characteristically modest — he wanted to become a major — his knowledge and skills propelled him up the Army’s career ladder until his retirement two years ago.

Vinny’s military leadership and logistics expertise serve him well in his new vocation as a speaker, teacher, consultant, corporate board member, and executive coach. While on active duty, he conducted dozens of presentations for the Army’s outreach program and today, he speaks to groups, sharing the lessons he learned while leading one of the most important and complex supply chains in the world.

— Lisa McMahon

Niagara to Honor “Pantheon of Warriors”

On Saturday, Oct. 8, 2011, Niagara’s servicemen and women from the 1950s to the present will be honored for their contribution to our nation’s defense at the “Pantheon of Warriors,” a ceremony that will highlight the university’s military tradition. Graduates of Niagara’s ROTC program who were commissioned, called to active duty, and served during a wartime period are invited to attend the event, during which they will be individually recognized and thanked for their service. Maj. Gen. Vincent E. Boles, ’76, the highest ranking graduate of Niagara’s ROTC program who were commissioned, called to active duty, and served during a wartime period are invited to attend the event, during which they will be individually recognized and thanked for their service. Maj. Gen. Vincent E. Boles, ’76, the highest ranking graduate of Niagara’s ROTC program, is the featured speaker for the event, which will take place at 10 a.m. in the upper level of the Gallagher Center. A luncheon will follow. To make your reservation or for more information, contact Jaclyn Rossi, assistant director of alumni relations, at jrossi@niagara.edu or 716.286.8770.
Dear fellow alumni,

Our Alumni Association is growing and planning activities across the country to connect with and engage our alumni. But we need help from everyone to make our events successful. Recently, the alumni executive committee held a meeting to plan some special initiatives to reach out and include more alumni in our activities. Those plans include:

• Encouraging our more established alumni to connect with our younger graduates so that they stay involved with Niagara and attend local chapter events. To contact all alumni, it is critical for us to have the most current information; you can update yours using the Eagle's Nest (www.niagaraalumni.com). We have reached out to thousands of alumni through social networking sites like Facebook and have explored an “app” to enable alumni with smart phones to stay in constant contact with Niagara through the Eagle’s Nest. These types of initiatives will help us to continue our growth and contact with all alumni. Also, we plan to actively market news about our Niagara alumni in all markets with an existing chapter, so watch your local news for these kinds of stories.

• Undertaking an aggressive plan to strengthen our existing alumni chapters, such as those in Charlotte and Boston, and add more alumni events in areas including Dallas and Colorado. We will need your involvement to make this happen. A list of existing chapters and chapter leaders is printed in each issue of the Eagle; contact those individuals listed and get involved now! Visit the Eagle's Nest for news of our progress.

• Extending the true Vincentian philosophy by challenging the NUAA board and chapter leaders to identify a community service project in each area. Contact the alumni office to report your involvement in community service projects. We plan to acknowledge the successes of these projects throughout the year.

Three years ago, we had the idea of reestablishing the Niagara Alumni Association. The success we realized from those three years allows us to expand on the initiatives listed here. But we need your continued involvement and support. Please update your information on the Eagle’s Nest and continue to visit so you can stay active with the Alumni Association.

I’d like to thank everyone for their great encouragement, and I am genuinely excited about these plans for the next two years. Together, we will continue to strengthen our support of all the alumni and show the pride of the Purple Eagles!

Sincerely,

Martin Byrne, ’78
President, Niagara University Alumni Association

Alumni Chapters

Albany Chapter
Bob Sheehan, ’85
518.441.2758
rjsheehan2002@yahoo.com

Atlanta Chapter
Melinda Smith, ’78
404.934.6135 or 770.935.4511
msfundraiser@bellsouth.net

Boston Chapter
TonyLista, ’80
508.951.2641
tonylista@aol.com


Martin Byrne, ’78, with Barbara Malinowski, ’59, a member of the Niagara University Alumni Association executive committee.
Mark Your Calendar

Alumni events are a great way to stay connected to Niagara, no matter your location! We have a lot in store for our chapters in the upcoming months. Don’t forget to add these dates to your calendar and check out the Eagle’s Nest at www.niagaraalumni.com for more information.*

Don’t receive our e-mails about events? Send your updated information to alumni@niagara.edu!

July
23 Albany — Saratoga Day at the Races

August
13 Buffalo/Niagara — Boat cruise on the moondance Cat

September
15 Buffalo/Niagara — Presidential reception
21 National Capitol — Buffalo Nite
22 Tri-State — Presidential Reception
TBD Chicago — Networking event

October
7-9 Alumni Weekend
TBD Raleigh and Charlotte, N.C. — Networking event

TBD Events in Atlanta, Cleveland, Central New York

How do I register for an event?
1. Online at the Eagle’s Nest: www.niagaraalumni.com
2. By phone at 716-286-8787
3. By mail:
   Alumni Relations Office
   P.O. Box 2008
   Niagara University, N.Y. 14109-2008

*Event calendar is subject to change. The listing includes only the confirmed events as of printing. Check the Eagle’s Nest for the full listing.

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In the Spotlight
www.niagaraalumni.com

Intrigued by the Power of the Media

Jack Essig, ’92, loves what he does. It’s apparent in the energy and enthusiasm with which he describes his job, his sales and marketing team, and his community service activities. And it’s one of the keys to his success. The others? A supportive wife and a strong work ethic that has propelled him to the position of senior vice president and publisher of Men’s Health and Women’s Health magazines and websites, responsible for advertising sales and marketing for the two brands.

“I’ve always liked magazines, advertising, and media,” Jack says. “The idea of influencing millions of people and the power of the media intrigued me.”

Jack got his start as a sales/marketing coordinator at a weekly trade publication in Manhattan. He sought out opportunities to go beyond his job duties, earning the notice of his supervisor and a promotion to a junior sales position eight months later. His trajectory to his current role at the bestselling (single copy) men’s magazine included launching Bob Vila’s American Home magazine for Hearst Publications and positions with Traditional Home and Men’s Journal Magazine. He joined Men’s Health 10 years ago as advertising director and was promoted to associate publisher just two years later. In 2005, he was named to his current position, taking on the additional roles of senior vice president and publisher of Women’s Health in 2009.

Like many in the industry, Jack is spending much of his time investigating the opportunities presented by the changing media landscape and developing content for readers who get their information in a variety of ways. One of his most recent projects was developing an advertising program to launch Gatorade’s G Series Fit low-calorie beverage that combined traditional advertising avenues as well as newer ones like webisodes (video that appears on the Internet rather than on broadcast or cable television).

“It’s an exciting time to be in media, but with that comes a learning curve,” he says. “It’s a whole new ballgame. The way our jobs are evolving is making all of us step out of our comfort zones. There’s something exhilarating about that.”

One of the most successful initiatives Jack has launched on the event front is the Men’s Health Urbanathlon, a signature event that extended the brand to a first-of-its-kind race platform. Introduced in 2006 in New York City and later expanded to Chicago and San Francisco, the Urbanathlon incorporates iconic city landmarks into the race, including the staircases at 7 World Trade Center in New York City and the bleachers in Soldier Field.

“It’s really taken off,” Jack says, noting that he has participated in each of the Urbanathlons. “Thirty thousand racers from 34 states participate, from weekend warriors to elite athletes. Our readers love it because it is a completely different race experience and requires unconventional training.”

Proceeds from the event go to the Challenged Athletes Foundation, an organization that provides opportunities and support to people with physical disabilities so they can pursue active lifestyles through physical fitness and competitive athletics. Jack, who serves on the foundation’s council, calls the people it serves “the most inspiring group of individuals I’ve ever worked with.”

Jack also mixes business with service as a member of the National Father’s Day Committee, using Men’s Health as a forum to recognize “everyday” fathers as “All-Star Dads” alongside celebrity dads at the Annual Father of the Year Awards in New York City.

Although he hesitates to call himself a triathlete, Jack participates in several such races each year, including the Malibu Triathlon and the South Beach Triathlon, which are sponsored by Men’s Health and Women’s Health. “It’s one way I live the brand,” he says.

Since Essig has been at the helm, Women’s Health was named Advertising Age’s 2009 “Magazine of the Year” and both Men’s Health and Women’s Health were named to Adweek’s annual Hot List. In 2007, Essig was named to Advertising Age’s prestigious “40 Under 40” list that recognizes excellence in the publishing industry. He has also been honored by Media Industry Newsletter at its annual Sales Executive of the Year Awards.

Jack credits these accomplishments to a team that shares his passion and conviction for the brands and a supportive wife (Kathy Smith, ’93) who takes care of things at home, including their four daughters, so that he can stay focused on work. Even with this strong support system, balance is sometimes elusive for Jack. He notes that although he sometimes must accept quality time over quantity time, he prioritizes weekly family dinners, kids sports, and date nights with Kathy. “I’m no different than any other busy dad,” he says. “What I work hardest at is keeping balance.”

Despite the challenges of career and family, Jack loves what he does and is aware of the impact he has on his readers. “I’ve been incredibly blessed,” he says. “I consider myself lucky to have had the opportunities I’ve had. We change people’s lives for the better everyday.”

— Lisa McMahon
classnotes
CA&S = College of Arts & Sciences
CBA = College of Business Administration
CE = College of Education
CN = College of Nursing
CH = College of Hospitality & Tourism Management
ITHRA = Institute of Travel, Hotel & Restaurant Administration (pre-CH)
TTT = Transportation, Travel & Tourism (pre-ITHRA)

1960s Michael Ricci, ’69 (CA&S), Auburn, N.Y., is the author of a monthly column for the Auburn Citizen. He has written for the newspaper since March 2010. The father of seven boys and five girls, Ricci founded three organizations in the Auburn area: the Kids Sandlot Baseball League, which was the first in his community to include girls; the Boys and Girls Baseball League; and the Auburn Spelling Bee for Grades 1-8, which was later expanded to include children from across New York state and other states. All three organizations continue today. The former English teacher recently retired from a 52-year tenure as a high school baseball umpire. He is a member of the Toastmaster’s Club at the rank of Advanced Communicator Silver and is working toward the Gold ranking.

Clarence Sundram, ’69 (CA&S), Delmar, N.Y., the leading national expert on the provision of care to developmentally disabled persons and other vulnerable people, has been appointed special advisor on developmentally disabled persons and other vulnerable persons to New York state Governor Andrew Cuomo. In this position, Sundram will evaluate and provide recommendations concerning the management, design, and structure of state agencies operating or overseeing programs or facilities for vulnerable persons. Sundram will also coordinate with the Governor’s Spending and Government Efficiency (SAGE) Commission to evaluate and provide recommendations concerning the management, design, and structure of state agencies operating or overseeing programs or facilities for vulnerable persons.

1970s Brendan Coyne, ’70 (CA&S), Cornwall-on-Hudson, N.Y., was elected the 28th mayor of that village in March.

Mark D. LaRoach, ’70 (CBA), Endicott, N.Y., was appointed superintendent of schools in the Vestal, N.Y., central school district in March 2010.

Thomas M. O’Neil, ’70 (CA&S), Rochester, N.Y., has been appointed interim president and chief executive officer of Bishop Kearney High School.

Hon. Sara Sheldon Sperrazza, ’72 (CA&S), Niagara Falls, N.Y., was recently re-elected to a second 10-year term as Niagara County Court judge and surrogate. She is also a supervising judge for town and village courts in the eight counties of Western New York.

Mark A. Cavanagh, ’73 (CBA/Accounting), Oneida, N.Y., has been promoted to senior vice president, mortgage originations, at Oneida Savings Bank.

Mary Jane (Grajewski) Gross, ’73 (CN), Piedmont, Calif., founder and former president and CEO of Stars Behavioral Health Group, is the recipient of the 2011 National Council of Behavioral Health Care Award of Excellence for Visionary Leadership, and the 2011 Alameda County Women’s Hall of Fame Award in Health. Both are in recognition of the significant contributions she has made to the field of behavioral healthcare. (See article on page 40).

J. Michael DeVoria, ’74 (CBA/Accounting), Macedon, N.Y., has been appointed to senior vice president, business banking market executive, with Five Star Bank.

Harold “Buzz” G. Garlock, ’74 (CBA/Commerce), Orlando, Fla., has recently been appointed senior vice president and public funds manager of the Fifth Third Bank in Tampa Bay.

Margaret (Meade) Gerlach, ’75 (CN), Rochester, N.Y., received certification in wound ostomy continence nursing and foot and nail care from Emory University. She is also certified in geriatrics and is working at Highland Hospital in Rochester, N.Y.

Edward A. Johnson Jr., ’76 (CBA/Accounting), Kenmore, N.Y., was named vice president for financial affairs at D’Youville College.

Pamela Brady-Webb, ’78 (CN), Humble, Texas, has been appointed an ambassador by the National League for Nursing. In this role, she will keep faculty and educational leaders in all schools of nursing informed about the NLN’s programs, grant opportunities, and member involvement initiatives.

Martin Byrne Sr., ’78 (CBA), Syracuse, N.Y., has been elected to a two-year term as president of Niagara University’s Alumni Association, which works closely with the Office of Alumni Relations.

Michael S. Gawel, ’78 (CBA/Accounting), Niagara Falls, N.Y., tax principal at S&D Consulting, Inc., has been named manager of the organization’s new office in Orchard Park, N.Y.

Anthony A. Murad, ’79 (CA&S), Utica, N.Y., has been recognized for the third consecutive year in Upstate New York Super Lawyer Magazine. Super...
Kovach’s New Chapter

Nearly a decade ago, when others his age were beginning to think about retirement, Larry Kovach, ’67, was beginning a new chapter in his life. After 34 years serving in financial and administrative positions for organizations such as Price Waterhouse; Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease (one of the top-grossing law firms in the nation); and the El Paso Buzzards minor league hockey team, Larry jumped on the opportunity to try something new: working with the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon.

“I had spent my working life in professional/business environments,” Larry says. “When something else materialized involving something totally new and different, something out of my comfort zone, I had to consider it. It was an opportunity to learn and work in a new area along with relocating to a part of the country that I had never been to.”

As finance officer, Larry played a pivotal role in directing the tribal government’s fiscal practices. In 2007, he was asked to take on additional financial responsibilities for the Spirit Mountain Casino, the tribe’s casino/hotel/conference center in Grand Ronde. A year later, a gaming consultant recommended him to Miko Beasley Denson, chief of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, who offered him the position of executive vice president/CFO of the tribe’s Pearl River Resort. In 2008, Larry became CFO for the tribe.

The reservation in Mississippi is a long way, literally and figuratively, from Larry’s roots in Niagara Falls, Ontario. His parents, John and Mary, were immigrants from Yugoslavia and Ireland, respectively. They had little formal education, but their devout Catholic faith and strong belief in education led them to make the sacrifices necessary to send their only child to Catholic school. When John died after a three-year bout with cancer, Mary continued to work as a housekeeper in the parish rectory to support her son’s education. Larry graduated from Notre Dame College School, where the priests encouraged him to consider Niagara. He enrolled as an accounting major, graduating magna cum laude and earning a full scholarship to the University of Notre Dame Law School. Before he completed his first semester, however, his mother became ill and could no longer work, so Larry left South Bend and took a job with Price Waterhouse’s Buffalo office, launching his career in the financial services industry.

Larry worked his way up the corporate ladder at Price Waterhouse (where he eventually became national director of financial services) and served as chief operating officer at several law firms, then spent three years managing venture capital projects along the U.S./Mexico border. In 2000, when the economic slowdown caused the venture capital industry’s sharp decline, he accepted an offer from a law firm in Dallas before he found the job in Oregon, which ultimately led to his current role with the Choctaw tribe.

Today, in what he has called “the legacy part” of his career, Larry relishes the opportunity to assist the Choctaw people. The best part of the job, he says, is “the chance to work with the tribal chief in providing tribal members with the opportunity for a better life through education, training and employment, within their own environs and culture.”

— Lisa McMahon

Lawyers is a rating service of outstanding lawyers from more than 70 practice areas who have attained a high degree of peer recognition and professional achievement. The selection process is multiphased and includes independent research, peer nominations, and peer evaluations.

Charles Trascritti Jr., ’79 (CBA/Accounting), Naperville, Ill., has been named vice president of corporate development for Morrison Management Services, the healthcare division of Compass Group PLC.

1980s Craig R. Dumbleton, ’81 (CE/French), Sanborn, N.Y., is vice president of key account relationships and marketing at Try-It Distributing Co., Inc.

Bernard J. Turi, ’82 (CA&S/ Psychology), Utica, N.Y., associate general counsel and claims attorney, has been promoted to senior vice president with the Utica Mutual Insurance Company, the Utica National Insurance Group’s principal member company, located in New Hartford, N.Y.
Dr. James P. Pellow, ’83 (CBA/Accounting), Pelham, N.Y., has been named president and CEO of the Council on International Educational Exchange, effective June 1, 2011. He will become the fourth president and CEO of CIEE in its more than 63-year history.

Robert C. Capuano, ’84 (CBA/Accounting), Tampa, Fla., has accepted the position of treasurer of the board of directors for the Lions Eye Institute for Transplant and Research.

Timothy Dupree, ’86 (CBA), Los Angeles, Calif., has been named associate director of sales and marketing for Montage Hotels & Resorts. This follows an 18-year career with Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts.

Kenya Mann Faulkner, ’86 (CA&S/Criminal Justice), Amherst, N.Y., has been appointed to the position of associate attorney for T ransplant and Research.

Dr. Stephen Cook, ’92 (CA&S/ biology), Fairport, N.Y., assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Rochester Medical Center, was recently honored by two organizations for his advocacy, research, and work in childhood obesity prevention. In March, he received the David Satcher Community Health Improvement Award by the URMC’s Center for Community Health. This award is presented to individuals who have made significant contributions to community health in the greater Rochester region. In April, he was given the American Heart Association’s Science Advocate of the Year Award, which is given to a medical professional who is actively engaged in communicating with lawmakers on behalf of the association’s heart and stroke issues. Dr. Cook is chairman of the Childhood Obesity Committee for the New York state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, a member of the National Advocacy Task Force of The Obesity Society, and serves on state and national committees of the American Heart Association. He was instrumental in developing the Healthi Kids initiative in Monroe County, N.Y., and its policy agenda to reverse childhood obesity. Dr. Cook is also actively involved in the American Heart Association’s public policy agenda as a member of its You’re the Cure nationwide network of volunteers.

Kimberley A. (Shepard) Minkel, ’88 (CA&S/Biology), Lancaster, N.Y., has been named executive director of the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority. She is the first woman to be appointed to this position in the history of the NFTA.

Kimberly Reimels, ’98

Hometown: Harrisburg, Pa.
Degree: B.S. in biology
Current job: Financial advisor

My best memory at Niagara is: getting to meet the Barenaked Ladies. I walked into the Gallagher Center during the band’s sound check and they asked if they could sing to me. A personal serenade from the band is pretty neat!

My favorite hangout was: Gallagher Center.

The most important life lesson I learned at NU was: to give back to your community.

I am inspired by: my family; they are truly fantastic people.

The three words that describe me are: honest, loyal, and energetic.

When I’m not working you’ll find me: hosting a segment for a local TV show about food, running, knitting, or hanging out with friends and family.

I still want to learn how to: speak Spanish.

Five random facts about me:
1. My father, uncle, two brothers, and sister all graduated from Niagara.
2. My dream is to one day host a show on the Food Network or QVC.
3. I can whip up a batch of homemade chocolate chip cookies in less than 10 minutes.
4. In one day I saw the St. Louis Arch, the Washington Monument, the Statue of Liberty, and Niagara Falls.
5. I ran my first half marathon last year in Richmond, Va.

We’d like to get to know you better! In each issue of the Eagle, we’ll spend a minute (or so) with an alum from a random area of the country and ask a few questions to find out more about him or her. Will you be next?

Dr. Bradley J. Porfilio, ’92 (CA&S/History), Glen Carbon, Ill., won the Critics Choice Award from the American Educational Studies Association for a volume he co-edited: The destructive path of neoliberalism: An international examination of education.

Dr. Elizabeth J. Heavey, ’95 (CN), Rochester, N.Y., has published a textbook for practicing nurses that provides a clinically based resource for understanding statistics. She uses the book in the course she designed and teaches in SUNY Brockport’s RN to BSN program.

1990s Gary W. Ferris, ’90 (CA&S/Communications), Schenectady, N.Y., has been appointed executive director of the Adirondack Saratoga chapter of the American Red Cross.

Michael S. Harrington, ’91 (CA&S), Glenmoore, Pa., attained the distinguished “Leaders in Law” ranking in the 2011 Chambers USA Guide.
Impeccable Taste

To us, it’s a strawberry. But to Gerard Mosciano, ’62, it’s a complex mixture of more than 800 organic compounds that together contribute to a flavor that we perceive as the small, edible red fruit.

Jerry is a creative flavorist, a chemist who creates artificial and natural flavors. Keeping the end product in mind (which can include foods, beverages, confectioneries, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and nutritional products) he uses aromatic ingredients, botanical extracts, and essential oils to match its basic flavor profile and desired physical form. He compares the work to an artist who knows which paints to combine to create the exact color he is looking for.

“It’s an art and it’s a skill, but you have to know what the ingredients can do,” he says.

Jerry didn’t plan to become a flavorist. When he graduated from Niagara with a natural science degree, he began working for the New Jersey Health Department as a food chemist. After a year he went to a technical placement company that placed him with International Flavors & Fragrances as an instrumental chemist. There, he performed analyses of the flavor ingredients in various food products.

For several years he commuted from his home in New Jersey to IFF’s flavor laboratories in New York City, but as his family grew (he and his wife, Barbara Nebel, ’62, have four children), his desire to spend more time at home grew with it. So he inquired about other positions within the company and, after proving that he had the appropriate skills, was given the opportunity to apprentice with a senior flavorist.

“A lot of people can taste, but there is a difference in the way my brain is wired,” he says.

Jerry studied for a total of seven years under the tutelage of his mentors before earning certification from the Society of Flavor Chemists and the title of senior flavorist in 1974. He then pursued a creative flavor career with a small company in Philadelphia where he says he got his first “real affirmation” that he could do the job. “It was me, a blotter, and a wall of bottles,” Jerry recalls. Without the assistance of a research and development department or analytical instruments, he created his first commercial flavor sale, a cherry used in hard candy. “It was my finest moment,” he says.

Since then, Jerry has fabricated thousands of flavors, a process that can take anywhere from a few hours to more than a year. After spending almost 40 years creating flavors for several flavor companies, Jerry established G. Mosciano Ltd. as an independent flavor consultant. He served as president of the Society of Flavor Chemists and of The Chemical Sources Association, and recently edited the book Successful Flavors.

Now retired, Jerry still consults on flavors, meeting with several senior creative flavorists for tastings each month, the results of which he uses in the monthly column he writes about the organoleptic characteristics of flavor materials for Allured Publications’ Perfumer & Flavorist. He notes that people's perception of flavors is very subjective and has evolved over the years. Despite the consumer’s changing tastes, what was true when Jerry began his career is true today: “The best flavor is the one that sells.”

— Lisa McMahon

Gerard Mosciano, ’62, with an odor blotter that he uses to evaluate the aroma of a flavor ingredient. The blotter, which is identical to those used in department store perfume counters, allows the evaporation of a perfume or flavor ingredient so that its top notes, middle notes and substantivity can be determined.
Helen F. Donohoe, M.S.’96 (CE/Education), Burlington, Ontario, Canada, is co-author of the published curriculum resource titled French as a Second Language, for use by teachers in Ontario classrooms.

Theresa (Hanson) Leslie, ’96 (CA&S/Spanish), Fort Collins, Colo., has been promoted to vice president of billing administration and data support at American Support in Chapel Hill, N.C., an organization which offers billing services, tech support, and customer service call center operations and management.

Hon. Christine L. (Strenkoski) Robinson, ’96 (CA&S/Criminal Justice), Venice, Fla., has been appointed to the Sarasota County Board of Commissioners by Florida Governor Charlie Crist.

Kimberly Ann Schwenzer, ’98 (CA&S/Theatre), Webster, N.Y., received recognition as the top salesperson of CGI Communications for two years in a row.

James DeVivo, ’99 (CA&S), Woodbridge, N.J., recently achieved doctoral candidacy in the educational theatre program at New York University. He will begin working on his dissertation in fall 2011.

2000s Victoria Abrams, ’00 (CE/English), Newport, R.I., has been promoted to human resources director at The Newport Harbor Hotel and Marina. She has been with the hotel for four and a half years and was previously the sales coordinator in the sales and catering office.

Carmen Floyd Calloway, ’00 (CA&S), New York, N.Y., starred in the new William Finn/James Lapine musical Little Miss Sunshine. Based on the Academy Award-winning film, the musical had its world premiere at the LoJolla Playhouse in March.

John M. Coyle, ’00 (CA&S/Political Science), Boston, N.Y., is an associate attorney with the law firm Chelus Herdzik Speyer and Monte.

Richard L. Myles, M.S.’01 (CE/Education), West Henrietta, N.Y., is beginning production of Mental Scars 2, the sequel to his 2009 horror film. Myles, who will star in the film, is co-creator of the DeadZone Magazine, the Apple iPhone’s first and only interactive horror magazine. In addition, his song, The Beat Never Stops, has been selected as the theme song for the cable-TV show Eye On Entertainment. The song is off Myles’ Ambient Nights Vol. 2 album.

Timothy J. Gentner, ’03 (CA&S/Mathematics), Buffalo, N.Y., has been promoted to underwriting manager in BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York’s general business unit.

Amber Zito, ’03 (CA&S), Lakewood, Ohio, has been selected to present research she conducted on suicide in the terminally ill population to social workers at Hospice of the Western Reserve in Cleveland, Ohio, as well as to medical providers in Ashtabula County, Ohio.

Deidra Desrocher, ’04 (CH), Rochester, N.Y., was promoted to event planner/manager at Locust Hill Country Club in Pittsford, N.Y.

Patricia Freedman, ’06 (CA&S), Elmira, N.Y., has been promoted to ticket office manager at Watkins Glen International Raceway.

Carol (Cali) Lea Gilbert, ’07 (CH/Sport Management), Sausalito, Calif., completed her master of arts degree in sport management at the University of San Francisco in December 2010.

Eric R. Soro, ’07 (CBA/Accounting), North Tonawanda, N.Y., has been promoted to the senior tax advisory group at Dopkins and Company, a certified public accountants and consultants firm.

Robert M. Ingrasci Jr., ’08, Niagara Falls, N.Y., has been promoted to senior accountant in the tax department of Lumsden & McCormick. Ingrasci recently passed all four parts of the CPA exam and earned his hourly requirement to be a CPA.

Christopher J. Patti, ’08 (CBA/Accounting), Cheektowaga, N.Y., has named him a senior accountant with the certified public accounting firm Brock Schechter and Polakoff.

Robert A. Dornan, ’09 (CBA/Accounting), Rochester, N.Y., has been promoted to partner and director of 401K advisory services with the Angelo Planning Group, LLC, a wealth management and estate planning firm in Rochester.

Camille E. Granchelli, ’10 (CH/Tourism and Special Events), Baltimore, Md., has accepted the position of assistant manager of event services with the Buffalo Waterfront Marriott.

Jeffrey Ryan, ’10 (MBA/Accounting), Buffalo, N.Y., has been named a staff accountant with the firm Chiampour Travis Besaw & Kershner, an Amherst accounting firm.

Matthew E. Sajn, M.S.’10 (C.E.), Fenwick, Ontario, co-wrote the narrative for the music video Highway, which he filmed with his band, Northern Primitive.

Kevin Gleason, ’11 (CBA), Johnstown, Pa., co-drove with his father and brother in Grand-Am’s Continental Tire Sports Car Challenge series, which started in January at Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach, Fla.
Jerry Nashel, M.S. ’76 (far right), sent in this photo from a year-end appreciation dinner held for student staff in 1976. Jerry was a resident assistant on the seventh floor of O’Shea Hall during the 1975-76 academic year. Some of his fond memories include painting a “Seventh Heaven” mural on the wall across from the elevator; false fire alarms; having his door “pennied,” (four pennies were glued to his doorjamb); and water wars. If you have a “Fond Memory” to share, send it to Lisa McMahon, editor, at lmcmahon@niagara.edu.

Editor’s Note: Thank you to Mark Caloza, ’82; Victoria C. Omeltchenko; Mary Deegan Egan, ’84; Isabel Menendez, ’80; Terri (Abrams) Connor, ’83, and Mary Beth (Sowers) O’Brien, ’80, who helped to fill in the blanks about the “Fond Memories” photo published in the November/December 2010 issue of the Eagle. The picture was from the freshman orientation parade, an annual event that helped to welcome incoming freshmen to the Niagara University community. Each year, teams of students would dress up in outfits corresponding to the theme of the parade and walk from the campus to the Falls along Route 104. Residents who lived along the way would set up chairs on their front lawns to watch the festivities and cheer on the students. Later that evening, a party was held to award prizes to teams for creativity, spirit, and enthusiasm. While the parade is no longer a part of the orientation activities, new students participate in a convocation, a sports day carnival and barbeque, and enjoy a fireworks display as part of their welcome to the campus.

Fond Memories

military news

Robert Laver, ’71 (CA&S), Dumfries, Va., retired in January 2011 after 39 years with the U.S. Army in various military and civilian positions.


Lt. Col. Michael E. Rutkowski, ’93, Alexandria, Va., has been selected for program management/battalion for Aviation Systems at Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, Ala.

marriages


Theresa Ditlow, ’02, Chicago, Ill., to Nicholas Griffiths, Dec. 11, 2010.

Michelle L. Mott, ’02, Lockport, N.Y., to Phillip Silvestri, Clarence, N.Y., June 26, 2010.


Jacob Scott Wolff, ’09, Batavia, N.Y., to Elizabeth Louise Grinnell, Batavia, July 31, 2010.

births

To Mr. and Mrs. William Bradley Blaisdell IV, ’91, Ellsworth, Maine, a daughter, Alexandria Ray, Oct. 5, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Dominic Cristelli, ’92, Smyrna, Ga., a daughter, Audrey Kate, Dec. 9, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Michael Puma (Suzanne Lalor, ’93), Ossining, N.Y., a daughter, Cassidy Elizabeth, Oct. 6, 2010.

To Dr. and Mrs. David W. Hojnacki (Kristen M. Colucci, ’97, M.S.Ed.’99,’06), Grand Island, N.Y., a son, Rocco Eugene, Nov. 17, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Craig J. Thrall (Mary M. Mahar, ’97, M.S.’99), Lockport, N.Y., a son, Maxim David Rollin, Nov. 23, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Mark J. Nairus, ’98, Parma Heights, Ohio, a daughter, Peyton Christina, Jan. 11, 2011.

To Dr. and Mrs. Todd Janicki, ’99 (Jennifer Celebucki, ’99), Dublin, Ohio, a daughter, Lauren Elizabeth, Nov. 16, 2010. (Read their “Love Story” on page 12.)


Robert C. Roman Sr., '60, Pearl River, N.Y., Sept. 18, 2010.


Lydia Anna Wozniak, '72, '75, Santa Clara, Calif., March 5, 2010.

Ottavio J. Forlivio, '73, Plantsville, Conn., March 1, 2011.


To Mr. and Mrs. Timothy Synor (Cathie L. Petheram, '99), Sanborn, N.Y., a son, Nathaniel Timothy, Oct. 25, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Steven B. Parsons (Jennifer Lynn Ruettmann, '99), East Amherst, N.Y., a son, Nathanial Robert, Oct. 5, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Jason Ciurzynski (Anne M. Pignataro, '00), Cheektowaga, N.Y., a daughter, Elena Caroline, Jan. 6, 2011.

To Mr. and Mrs. Michael Gutmann, '01 (Kimberly C. Costello, '02), Charlotte, N.C., a daughter, Madelyn McNally, Sept. 8, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Rafael Nunez (Angela M. Rizzi, '01), Binghamton, N.Y., a son, Alexander Emilio, Aug. 11, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. William (Bill) Lenz, '02, North Merrick, N.Y., a daughter, Abigail Katherine, and a son, Kyle Jason, Dec. 9, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Peter Arena (Kathleen Marie McMillan, '03), Amherst, N.Y., a son, Henri James, Sept. 20, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Jonas van Cleef, '05 (Emily Murphy, '05), Hazel Park, Mich., a daughter, Avalyn, Dec. 21, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. John Siwicki (Nichole Marie Tubiolo, '05), Rochester, N.Y., a son, John Patrick, Sept. 22, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth E. Warren (Kristen N. Yacono, '05), Alden, N.Y., a daughter, Brooke Marie, Dec. 10, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Nemi, '06 (Danielle M. Milleville, '06), Lockport, N.Y., a son, David Robert, Dec. 15, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Timothy Synor (Cathie L. Petheram, '99), Sanborn, N.Y., a son, Nathaniel Timothy, Oct. 25, 2010.

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To Mr. and Mrs. Jonas van Cleef, '05 (Emily Murphy, '05), Hazel Park, Mich., a daughter, Avalyn, Dec. 21, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. John Siwicki (Nichole Marie Tubiolo, '05), Rochester, N.Y., a son, John Patrick, Sept. 22, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth E. Warren (Kristen N. Yacono, '05), Alden, N.Y., a daughter, Brooke Marie, Dec. 10, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Nemi, '06 (Danielle M. Milleville, '06), Lockport, N.Y., a son, David Robert, Dec. 15, 2010.

To have a Mass celebrated at Alumni Chapel, call NU’s campus ministry office at 716.286.8400.


Harry Crook, '47, Omaha, Neb., March 6, 2011.


Lydia Anna Wozniak, '72, '75, Santa Clara, Calif., March 5, 2010.

Ottavio J. Forlivio, '73, Plantsville, Conn., March 1, 2011.


A Pioneer in Cardiovascular Health

As a child, Regina (Houghton) Deible, ’85, would tend to the injuries her four siblings and neighborhood friends would sustain during their outdoor pickup games of baseball, basketball, football, and the like. A few years later, she administered insulin shots to her diabetic grandmother and helped to manage her other necessary care. So it came as no surprise when Regina enrolled in Niagara University’s College of Nursing. It seemed to be her destiny.

The Rochelle Park, N.J., native (who now lives in Annandale, Va., with her three children and her husband of 20 years, Dan), has put her nursing degree to use in a variety of settings. From bedside nursing to ICU nursing, research work to management, she has taken advantage of whatever opportunity came her way during the past 25 years. One of the most life-changing opportunities came shortly after graduation, when she took a position as a research coordinator in the field of interventional cardiology at the Washington Hospital Center. Despite the fact she had “absolutely no prior experience,” Regina worked with some of the pioneers in the field and “was personally involved in almost every single early device, stent, and acute MI (myocardial infarction) trial.”

“I started in the field when there weren’t any approved devices and had the chance to follow pivotal technology from the bench to bedside,” she says.

Her early on-the-job experience led to opportunities to design training programs for novice coordinators, and she later joined Georgetown University’s faculty to teach the process. Today, she divides her time between working in a cardiac catheterization lab at the National Institutes of Health Heart Center at Suburban Hospital in Bethesda, Md., and consulting with the medical industry on research trials. She has more than 120 publications, abstracts, and presentations to her name, and her first book chapter on the topic was recently published in the third edition of Invasive Cardiology: A Manual for Cath Lab Personnel. In January, Regina was honored by the Foundation for Cardiovascular Medicine with the John Tworoger Achievement Award for her work in advancing and promoting CV medicine while remaining committed to the hands-on care of patients.

Although she had little interest in research while she was at Niagara (“... the nursing research class was the singular class that I least enjoyed,” she says), once she was out of school she “found research to be a nice little niche field” that provided the intellectual stimulation she desired to complement her bedside work.

Regina credits the education she received at Niagara with preparing her for her dual roles as researcher and clinician. “Looking back, I marvel that we did as much as we did. Technically, we all double-majored and completed all those clinical requirements that weren’t even credit hours,” she says, jokingly adding that the nursing students were “more than a bit bitter on those snowy mornings at 6 a.m. when our friends all slept in as we ventured into Buffalo for our clinicals!”

With plans to stay active in the field and ultimately earn a doctorate degree, Regina also sees a more Vincentian pursuit in her future. Noting that her hospital has a “Mobile Med” program that provides screening, diagnostic testing, and therapeutic techniques for cardiovascular diseases to the uninsured, she says that this is just one example of how she can use her experience and expertise to help those in need. “I think the future holds many hours of volunteer opportunities for me,” she says, “and I look forward to those days ahead.”

— Lisa McMahon


Daniel S. Sim, ’06, La Vergne, Tenn., March 25, 2011.

with sympathy

To Jean (Clary) Mullane, ’53, Lockport, N.Y., on the death of her sister, Lorraine C. Monin, Sept. 6, 2010.


To Barbara (Giordano) Mastriani, ’70, Shenectady, N.Y., on the death of her mother, Gilda Giordano, Aug. 9, 2010.


To Dr. Susan Kay Roll, ’74, Clarence Center, N.Y., on the death of her mother, Onnolee G. (Hartwig) Roll, Oct. 25, 2010.


To Lori (Cincebox) Caufield, ’81, Rochester, N.Y., on the death of her husband, Richard D. Caufield, ’80, March 13, 2011.

To Greg Reinhardt, ’81, Queens, N.Y., on the death of his wife, Ann (Kremer) Reinhardt, ’81, Jan. 7, 2011.


Apologies

The names of the class agents representing Niagara’s Class of 1960 during Alumni Weekend 2010 were inadvertently omitted from the dinner-dance program booklet. Many thanks go out to Dennis J. Carroll, Anthony DiLaura, F. William Joynt, Joseph A. Matturro, Michael O. McGuire, and Thomas E. Wolff for contacting their classmates to invite them to the reunion weekend.

Joseph Latona, ’70, Farmingham, Mass., was mistakenly listed among the deceased members of his class at Alumni Weekend. He would like to let his classmates and friends know that he is alive and well, and living in Massachusetts.
Changing Lives

Mary Jane Gross, ’73, discovered early in her nursing studies that what patients often needed most was someone to talk with. This insight has guided her career and motivated her to become an entrepreneur and advocate for people with mental illness.

For the past 40 years, Mary Jane has dedicated her life to bringing high-quality mental health treatment and cost-efficient services to children, families, and communities who cannot afford them. Her extensive health and mental health nursing and administrative experience spans all levels of healthcare delivery. She is a member of numerous state and national organizations and has served on many of their boards. She was also one of the first supporters of the California Mental Health Services Act, which provides funding for transformational change in the mental health system.

But perhaps her greatest accomplishment is the founding of Stars Behavioral Health Group, one of the largest mental health organizations in California with 15 locations and more than 1,000 staff serving over 25,000 clients each year. These clients are poor, homeless, uninsured and underinsured adults, youths, and families who would have no other way to access the mental health services Stars provides.

Mary Jane’s introduction to the mental health field came in her sophomore year at Niagara, when Sister Bernadette Armiger, then dean of the College of Nursing, encouraged her to apply for a National Institute of Mental Health grant. “It was a time when they desperately needed mental health nurses,” Mary Jane notes. As a recipient of the grant, Mary Jane was required to attend graduate school, so she enrolled in the community mental health nursing program at UCLA after graduating from Niagara. There, she learned about programs and services designed to enable the poor to receive treatment in their communities rather than in hospitals and institutions, and was inspired to focus her career on providing quality behavioral healthcare in the most comfortable and compassionate settings possible.

As founder and former president and CEO of Stars Behavioral Health Group, Mary Jane has designed, implemented and operated a wide variety of innovative mental health prevention, early intervention and treatment services that adhere to stringent quality standards and evidence-based practices to ensure successful outcomes for clients. The organization, which is viewed as “a place where lives are changed,” has enabled thousands of clients to achieve and maintain recovery, develop meaningful lives and live as independently as possible.

This work is closely aligned with the principles Mary Jane learned while at Niagara. “The Vincentian values of working with the poor and needy and ministering to the sick are values I have kept and practiced my whole life,” she says. “I credit Niagara with infusing these values into my education, and the nursing faculty for demonstrating how this is implemented in nursing practice on a daily basis. These values have been with me and I have used them to guide my life and career.”

Mary Jane’s tireless commitment and visionary leadership has earned her numerous awards and recognitions. Two of the most recent include the 2011 National Council of Behavioral Health Care Award of Excellence for Visionary Leadership, and the 2011 Alameda County Women’s Hall of Fame Award in Health. Both are in recognition of the significant contributions she has made to the field of behavioral healthcare and to the citizens of the counties Stars Behavioral Health Group serves.

Now retired, Mary Jane continues her work as a senior advisor to the organization she founded. And although she now is involved more with the administration of the company than with providing direct care to its clients, she says that she never “lose(s) touch” with nursing. “Every day, I use the nursing process that I learned at Niagara to think through problems and determine solutions to help people in difficult situations,” she says. “It’s a way of thinking and acting. This, together with the lens of Vincentian values, determines the actions of how I live my life and what nursing is about.”

— Lisa McMahon
Monteagle Memoirs

Editor’s note: The following is an excerpt from an essay by Franklyn E. Daily Jr., ’39, sharing some of his memories of being at Niagara in the late 1930s. For the full story, visit the Eagle online at eagleonline.niagara.edu.

His first day: In September of 1935, Niagara University welcomed the largest incoming class in its history. One hundred twenty-five young men arrived on campus that fall. I was privileged to be one of the new arrivals. Newspapers covered the event. My picture appeared in both the Niagara Falls Gazette and in the Buffalo Courier-Express, under the horizontally outstretched arm of entering freshman basketball phenom Gene Seymour, with classmate “Butts” Bittner under his other arm. Gene was a near 7-footer intended to make the starting five on Taps Gallagher’s varsity basketball team. Gene never did, but I became assistant to the assistant manager of the team.

Vincentians: Father Glavin, prefect of discipline; Father “Okie” O’Connor, my confessor; Father Francis L. Meade, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; Father Noonan, university president; Father Illig, who taught apologetics; and Father Desmond, rector of the seminary, who had the ability to converse with young men both seriously and informally.

Memorable professors: Erich Buchterkirchen was my German professor. He had one of the larger department offices on campus, with a wall behind him that featured a huge swastika flag. He thought we should emulate German students (whom he said were given a tankard of beer to put on their shoulder and then had to drain the contents) and took us to Hannel’s Bar downtown.

Professor O’Connor was a polio victim who made his way around campus trying not to wince from his pain. He never complained. He taught solid analytic descriptive geometry. His teaching tool? The walls in the classroom came to a point on both sides of his desk. The intersections formed the convenient Cartesian coordinates for the x-, y-, and z-axes. What an outstanding teacher he was!

NU Athletics: Our hoop team played a semifinal national championship game at the Palestra in Philadelphia against Temple and lost by one point. Niagara’s basketball court was on the top floor of St. Vincent’s, directly over our freshman and sophomore dorms on the third floor. Our class provided “swivel hips” Morgan Davis to football and he could run with the ball. We also had Franny Blake, the first man I ever saw who could “palm” a basketball.

My one memory of baseball is of a small group meeting in the refectory on a warm early fall afternoon in 1936 to hear a talk on baseball. It was advertised to feature a key baseball man. Imagine my surprise to be sitting next to Connie Mack, the famed manager of the Philadelphia Athletics.

Meatime: Niagara’s refectory was our dining hall. The Sisters who operated it baked delicious rolls on Sundays, but you had to get there early enough. I got there early enough. Although the Sisters did not have a lot of money to work with, they did have advantages: Niagara had its own dairy, orchards, and fields of Niagara (green) grapes. We ate a lot of applesauce. Cousin Tommy Dailey and I, always hungry, used the orchards as meal supplements.

Student laundry: The U.S. Post Office offered a standard-issue suitcase that a student could buy to put laundry for shipment back home. Mothers would ship back the fresh clothes in that same suitcase. Some students shipped every week, some shipped every month!

Dorms: Our cots were side by side in the freshman dorm on the third floor of St. Vincent’s Hall. About 80 of us slept there; we were allowed one footlocker between adjacent cots. No space for any more cots or footlockers. No walls to break up that big dorm room. No air conditioning to freshen the air. The janitor, and I recall him well, put the morning coffee grounds from the refectory on the oiled floor and then would sweep them up to clean the floor each day. That helped a lot!
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