“We educate traditional students, veterans returning from war, single parents coping with tragedy and those with and without means. We do this in a way that inspires them to make a difference in the lives of others. This is the miracle of Niagara University.” — The Rev. James J. Maher, C.M. Niagara University President
This past year, I undertook a listening tour, seeking to meet with anyone possessing an opinion about Niagara University. I met with alumni, students, faculty, support staff, administrators, maintenance and food service workers. I asked them to tell me what they loved (and didn’t love) about Niagara University, and what they would like to tell the new president.

A pervasive theme throughout these conversations was that Niagara truly is an academic community, with immensely gifted faculty scholars, teachers and servants. This is a campus where 94 percent of our professors have earned the highest degree in their field, from institutions like Harvard, Yale, Princeton, the University of Pennsylvania, Notre Dame, and Cornell.

In my year or so as president, I can personally attest to the excellence of Niagara University’s professors. My travels have taken me to the greatest universities in the world, with opportunities to witness the immensity of the gifts of faculty around the globe. I wholeheartedly believe that Niagara University’s faculty are second to none in interweaving teaching, scholarship and service. Furthermore, our professors teach and research — one informs the other and adds to the richness of a Niagara education.

Students and, especially, alumni spoke fondly about how our faculty engaged them in the contemplation of truth and beauty, and taught them how to think critically. At the same time, you learned to value the dignity of the human person above all else. This is our faculty dedicated to the liberal arts education that elevates and frees the human person, while preparing students for professional life after Niagara.

That’s why our full-time students graduate in four years at a higher rate than any other public or private institution in the Buffalo-Niagara region. Ninety-seven percent are employed or enrolled in graduate school within one year of receiving their diploma. We will continue to foster an academic environment that is, at its core, seeded in the liberal arts, preparing graduates for a globalized workplace and the interface of cultures or, in the words of Father John Lynch, C.M., to be citizens of the world.

Many spoke of Niagara’s caring community, sown with deep pride in our Catholic and Vincentian mission. You’ve told me that this is a special place where community members care deeply for each other, calling forth the best in everyone. We continually seek to become a living-learning community. In response to the call of St. Francis, we endeavor to utilize our abilities to combat the globalization of indifference to human suffering.

During my inaugural address, titled “The Miracle of Niagara University: Action Is Our Entire Task,” I spoke of how this legacy would inform our future as a Catholic and Vincentian institution known for academic excellence and embracing the eternal mission of St. Vincent de Paul.

I told you that we will build on the work of this community by establishing a bridge to the world of the poor.

I said that we will employ the treasures of teaching, research and service to assist those in need, inviting them to be part of our community and enhancing our lives.

In the spirit of St. Vincent, we will bring the balm of compassion to the suffering and misery in our community.

I promised you on April 4 that we would do that, and I reaffirm that promise today.

We will tell the story of the miracle of Niagara University, a wonderfully caring community, where individualized attention is prioritized, and where the excellence of our academics and comprehensiveness of our service advance an esteemed legacy.

This is the Niagara University you have told me about, and this is the Niagara University that will inspire my best efforts as its 26th president.

Should you have any thoughts on how to advance the wonderful legacy of Niagara University, I am always willing to listen. Please feel free to contact me at president@niagara.edu.

Thank you for your support of Niagara University.

Rev. James J. Maher, C.M.
President
More than 50 runners braved rainy and windy conditions to participate in the first-ever “Run Against Hunger” held on the Niagara University campus April 5. The 5K race, which was part of a week’s worth of activities built around the inauguration of the Rev. James J. Maher, C.M., raised $1,600 for the Heart, Love & Soul food pantry and dining room in downtown Niagara Falls.

Students, alumni and friends of Niagara University accumulated nearly $300 and more than 840 pounds of food and nonperishable goods on #Giving Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2013. This was the first time NU participated in the national event, which started last year as a charitable answer to the retail shopping days of Black Friday and Cyber Monday. The proceeds from Niagara’s efforts were distributed evenly to the Heart, Love & Soul food pantry and dining room in Niagara Falls, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and Community Missions of Niagara Frontier.

The Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., Endowed Scholarship was recently established in recognition of the former NU president and his lasting, positive impact on the school. It will be available to first-year NU students who live in a rural community from one of the eight counties that comprise the Western New York region.

Three donors have already joined together to contribute a total of $350,000 to the Levesque scholarship fund. They are Denver-based CoBank; Bob Engel, ’75, the bank’s CEO; and his wife Lynda; and Farm Credit East, one of the bank’s strategic partners headquartered in Enfield, Conn. The ultimate goal for the scholarship fund is to raise at least $500,000.

Niagara University men’s club rugby team claimed its first state championship in November with a 30–25 victory over Colgate University. The win earned the team one of only 16 spots in the USA Rugby Men’s Division II College National Championship Round. Although the Eagles lost to the U.S. Coast Guard in the semi-final round, held at Salisbury State University, Md., players were pleased with their accomplishment and are looking forward to future successes.

Niagara University students continue to excel in their undergraduate research pursuits. During the spring semester, a study conducted by Dr. Joseph Little, associate professor of English, and five of his students, was accepted for presentation at the International Conference on Writing Research, one of the foremost writing conferences in Europe. Dr. Little will travel to the University of Amsterdam this August to present the group’s findings related to Sheryl I. Fontaine’s analysis of the four core functions of “freewriting,” the act of transcribing one’s unedited thoughts for an uninterrupted period of time. The students listed as co-authors are Matthew Brause, Kathryn Dickie, Allina LaMorticella, MaKayla Olden, and Bethany Young.

In addition, Amber Boyer, a junior psychology major from Buffalo, N.Y., won first place in the student poster competition at the annual convention of the Eastern Psychological Association, which was held in March. She collaborated with Dr. Tim Osberg, professor of psychology, on research titled, “College alcohol beliefs and trait urgency in relation to drinking and its consequences.” Two more of Dr. Osberg’s students — senior Joanne McKeon and junior Haley Keeley — received honorable mention in the poster competition.

Amy Domiano, ’12, and seniors Emily Senif and Ashley Gladney assisted in research with Dr. Jan van Hassel, a professor in the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, which led to the publication of National Geographic’s Visual Learning Geography of Travel and Tourism, an innovative geotourism book undertaken in association with the National Geographic Society and Cengage Learning, an educational book publisher.

The Castellani Art Museum was listed among the Huffington Post’s best art destinations in the state. Founded in 1978 by Armand and Eleanor Castellani, the museum has a permanent collection of more than 5,700 works of art, including well-known artists such as Picasso, Miro, Dali, Calder, Nevelson, Warhol, and many others. Exhibitions of nationally known and emerging contemporary artists and traditional folk arts, artist talks, workshops, and educational programming are offered each year.

The College of Education officially unveiled its Family Literacy Center on April 23. The center, which is housed in the university’s Academic Complex, is an on-campus educational opportunity for graduate students to demonstrate teaching while enhancing the literacy performance of at-risk readers and their families. The center’s programs focus on improving reading, writing and listening skills among children while supporting the literacy and basic skills of the family itself.

Congratulations to Lenora Teixeira, ’83; NU sophomore Jacey Diez; and Mary Borgognoni, NU’s associate vice president for operations and outreach. The three were named Women of Distinction by the Niagara Gazette in recognition of their dedication to making their community a better place to live.

Simon Gray has been appointed as the new director of athletics for the Purple Eagles. Gray has more than 15 years of experience in athletic administration and most recently served as the acting director of athletics at Eastern Kentucky University. Before joining Eastern Kentucky, Gray was the director of athletic public relations at the University of Richmond, where he worked with student-athletes on several community service projects, along with PR campaigns for a number of other projects. Before that, he worked as the director of athletic media relations at East Tennessee State University. He began his career in college athletics as a media relations intern for the ice hockey team at Boston College.

Niagara University’s B. Thomas Golisano Center for Integrated Sciences has earned a LEED (Leadership in Environmental Design) Certification — Gold Rating from the United States Green Building Council. LEED is an internationally recognized standard for evaluating the performance of green buildings, created by the USGBC.

In related news, Niagara University is listed among the 332 most environmentally responsible colleges in the U.S. and Canada in The Princeton Review’s Guide to 332 Green Colleges.
A pair of Pulitzer Prize-winning reporters and a hospitality magnate addressed Niagara University graduates during commencement ceremonies in May. Festivities kicked off May 8 with the awarding of advanced degrees to 364 students, including eight who were the first recipients of doctoral degrees from NU since 1948. George F. Will, Ph.D., columnist for The Washington Post and former contributing editor of Newsweek, was presented with an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters. During his remarks, Will, the father of a son with Down syndrome, praised Niagara University’s work with and outreach to the developmentally disabled community.

On May 10, 691 undergraduate students received their degrees during a pair of ceremonies held in the Gallagher Center. Paul M. McManus, ’65, delivered the commencement address during the morning event and was presented with Niagara University’s highest honor, the President’s Medal.

That afternoon, graduates heard from Andrea Elliott, the New York Times’ investigative reporter whose three-part series, *An Imam in America*, was awarded the 2007 Pulitzer Prize. Like Will, Elliott was granted an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters.

In January, 177 graduates of the College of Education’s bachelor of professional studies in education program heard from Kevin Big Canoe, a highly decorated U.S. Navy captain whose fighter jet was shot down during a Vietnam War combat mission. He received the Caritas Medal at the ceremony.

The Niagara University student chapter of the Club Managers Association of America has been named the best in the nation for a fifth consecutive year. The recognition indicates that Niagara University has maintained the most outstanding student chapter in the United States for the time period of May 2008 through December 2013. The Niagara chapter received its CMAA charter in 2007.
Two NU administrators have been named to new posts. Timothy M. Downs, Ph.D., has been named provost and chief academic officer. He had been serving as vice president for academic affairs at Niagara since June 2011.

In his new role, Dr. Downs strives to advance the university to new levels of academic excellence, expand the diversity and scope of its programs and student populations, and increase its national and international profile.

The Rev. Kevin G. Creagh, C.M., has been named NU’s vice president for university mission and ministry, responsible for senior-level supervision of both campus ministry and university mission. He had held the position of vice president of campus ministry since August 2011.

This is Father Creagh’s second assignment at Niagara University. From 1996 to 1998, he was a campus minister on campus, during which time he coordinated NU’s Community Action Program and provided faculty development for institutional mission and identity. He also coordinated the student retreat program, which addressed the issues of spirituality, human development and community service. In addition, Father Creagh served as an instructor of religious studies.

A team of four students from NU won the Western New York Chapter of the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals’ 2014 International Logistics and Supply Chain Student Competition. The competition consisted of three teams of four students from three local schools — Canisius College, Daemen College and Niagara University — in a quiz show format. The questions asked in the competition reflected the curricula used in international logistics and supply chain courses and textbooks used in higher education.

Four area business leaders and alumni received awards at the College of Business Administration’s 24th annual Business Appreciation and Accounting Banquet. Scrufari Construction, and its owner, S. Gary Sankes, MBA’85, received the Corporate Leadership Award for its role as a leader in the construction industry; John A. Rieger, ’86, the national tax managing partner of the Financial Services Tax Practice of Deloitte Tax LLP, was named Distinguished Accounting Alumnus; Kemp Financial Group, founded by Jessica Kemp, ’04, MBA’05, received the 2014 Canadian Business of the Year honor; and Sahlen Packing Company received the Family Business of the Year award. Alexandra Sahlen, ’04, is president of the company.

Niagara University’s ROTC program was presented with the prestigious MacArthur Award in recognition of its cadets’ performance during the 2012-2013 school year. Only eight schools are chosen from among the 273 senior ROTC units nationwide for the award, which is based on a combination of the achievement of the school’s commissioning mission and its cadets’ performance and standing on the Cadet Command’s National Order of Merit List, and its cadet retention rate.

Three new members of the Niagara University Board of Trustees were named in February: The Rev. Patrick Flanagan, C.M., Ph.D., ’87, an assistant professor in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at St. John’s University; the Rev. Michael M. Nguyen, C.M., rector of the Miraculous Medal House (Vincentian College Seminary) in Jamaica, N.Y.; and Charles W. Chiampou, ’76, C.P.A., J.D., a partner with Chiampou Travis Besaw & Kershner in Amherst, N.Y.
NU Partners with Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center to Develop New Food Service Experience

By Michael Freedman

Forget what you’ve heard about “hospital food.” Visitors, staff, students, and volunteers at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center will soon enjoy an exciting new food service experience, thanks to a modern café bistro that will be created through a partnership between the hospital and Niagara University. The university’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management is working with Memorial and Cannon Design to develop the bistro, which will replace the hospital’s outdated cafeteria.

The bistro will be designed to improve workflow and enhance the customer experience while serving a variety of new menu choices in a comfortable, modern setting. The College of Hospitality and Tourism Management also will work with Memorial to introduce current best practices in customer service to the new facility.

“This new program will benefit our students by giving them hands-on opportunities to apply what they’ve learned in class to an operational facility that serves a tremendously diverse customer population,” said the Rev. James J. Maher, C.M., president of NU. “In turn, Memorial will have an opportunity to take advantage of some of the latest research into food service and customer service best practices. This collaboration speaks to our Vincentian mission by supporting service-learning activities in which students reach out with compassion to serve people’s basic needs. This partnership embodies the eternal values of St. Vincent de Paul, combining the heart of a servant with a commitment to excellence in all that we do.”

Ruffolo added that the new initiatives will positively impact local workforce development by expanding internship opportunities in career areas that are important to a healthcare industry that is increasingly focused on patient and customer satisfaction.

“In addition to patient care, medical centers offer careers in care coordination, care management, social work, patient navigation, information technology and many other areas,” Ruffolo said. “We believe there will be a number of other opportunities to help Niagara University students prepare to enter the work force.”

Memorial Medical Center and Niagara University are longtime partners in community service efforts, and Niagara students volunteer and intern at Memorial each year to fulfill community service and academic requirements.

“Like all hospitals in the United States, Memorial is graded by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on their Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems scores. The scores, which are compiled from patient surveys, allow objective and meaningful comparisons of hospitals on topics that are important to consumers.”

Joseph A. Ruffolo, Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center’s president and CEO, noted that this type of input from non-healthcare professionals will bring a whole new dimension to the medical center’s understanding of the way patients perceive the quality of the care they receive.

“Niagara students and staff will look at patient satisfaction from the standpoint of the healthcare consumer. That perspective, combined with the expertise the university brings, will benefit our patients and their families in a very meaningful and positive way,” he said.

Ruffolo added that the new initiatives will positively impact local workforce development by expanding internship opportunities in career areas that are important to a healthcare industry that is increasingly focused on patient and customer satisfaction.

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“This expansion of our relationship is a natural next step,” Ruffolo said. “Niagara University and Memorial Medical Center are mission-driven, community-focused organizations that share the same service values and the same commitment to making our region a better place to live and work. We are excited about these initiatives and the positive impact they will make.”
Niagara University students, including several members of the Niagara University Opportunity Program, gave up a pair of March Saturdays to volunteer their services with Habitat for Humanity in Niagara Falls.

The service project was organized by Sharon Green, coordinator of instructional services in NU’s Office of Academic Support. Green previously received a diversity grant from the university to fund the initiative.

According to Green, the students were compelled to support a local reconstruction project after reading Zeitoun by Dave Eggers during a summer NUOP course she teaches. The book is based on a true story that chronicles the discrimination in New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Afterward, Green’s students watched Spike Lee’s When the Levees Broke, which depicts the devastation of houses and displacement of residents, many of them New Orleans’ poorest.

Green said that her students were very moved by what they read and saw, especially after hearing that housing reconstruction in New Orleans is still ongoing, nearly nine years after the hurricane struck.

Green and her students supported Habitat for Humanity by working on a house at 54 A Street, part of the Echota neighborhood in Niagara Falls. They sanded drywall, painted walls, doors and molding, and helped with cleaning. The students, some of whom come from low-income backgrounds, learned a great deal about home construction, priming and painting, and buying and maintaining a home.

Because Habitat for Humanity requires that beneficiaries devote at least 250 hours toward rebuilding their future home, the students had an opportunity to work alongside the soon-to-be homeowner and her mother.

And thanks to Habitat’s building site manager Claudia Folsom, students also learned more about the historic neighborhood.

Funds from Niagara University’s diversity grant covered lunch and transportation costs as well as a post-service reflection. The remaining money will be donated to the homeowner so that she can personalize her new house.

Student volunteers on March 22 included, clockwise from top left, Matthew Caraballo, Zach Partner, Asia Rosado, JaRon Williams, Steele Burgeson, Caton Charleston, and Mayra Urrutia. Not pictured: Dema Isa.
This past winter break, I traveled to Enschede, the Netherlands, with nine other students from the Model UN Club on campus to participate in this year’s EuroSim conference. The conference, which is a fully functioning simulation of the European Union, challenges students to take on the role of an EU member state representative and create draft legislation that is ultimately submitted to the EU with the hope that we may inspire real-life legislation. The conference is entirely set up, organized and run by students, which allows for a high level of active, integrative learning.

My role in the simulation was council secretariat to the head of COREPER. While I didn’t have a voice or a vote in the committee, I was responsible for making sure the members stayed on track and were informed about any back-door politics other representatives were participating in. The language barrier between the students from the U.S. and those from different regions of Europe made the work challenging; we needed to be well-prepared each day so we could communicate effectively and clarify complicated topics. Over the three and a half days of the conference, we were successful in getting the draft directive to a vote, but, like the previous year, it was voted down in its final stages, which was a bit disappointing.

Fortunately, that was not the end of our trip. After the conference was over, we continued our adventure with a bike tour of Enschede and Amsterdam, cities rich history, innovation and a culture unlike our own. We had learned that the Dutch are avid bikers; in fact, there are more bikes in the country than cars, and there are such things as bike parking garages that are similar to the multilevel parking lots found in U.S. cities. To see how the Dutch lived, we rented bikes and rode the 13 miles between Enschede and Amsterdam. We found Enschede to be quaint, with strong influences of classic Dutch culture and a very residential feel. Amsterdam, on the other hand, is a much larger, liberal city, with different types of people, many tourists, and a mix of new and old Dutch culture. It was an incredible way to enhance our classroom, and conference, experience.

The students from NU enjoyed spending the day like their Dutch counterparts — biking through the cities of Enschede and Amsterdam.
Dr. Gary Praetzel Steps Aside After 35 Years at NU

by Michael Freedman
Dr. Gary D. Praetzel, the man responsible for establishing Niagara University’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management and forging NU’s reputation as a worldwide leader in hospitality training, is retiring.

Dr. Praetzel will continue serving the university as a special assistant to the president and academic vice president. He will also remain a board member of Visit Buffalo Niagara, the Darwin Martin House, and the Niagara Experience Center.

“I join the Niagara community in congratulating Dr. Praetzel for his 35 years of outstanding service,” said the Rev. James J. Maher, C.M. “In my short time as president, I have come to deeply value the excellent work of Gary, as well as his abiding commitment to our mission. His name is synonymous with our College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, and his immense positive impact on this institution and thousands of current and former students is indisputable.

“Gary Praetzel’s career as dean of Niagara University’s College of Hospitality and Tourism is the embodiment of Vincentian hospitality, utilizing university resources to impact the lives of students and the hospitality and tourism industry, as well as the lives of people living in poverty. I am delighted Gary will remain an active member of our university community.”

Dr. Praetzel has been affiliated with Niagara since 1978, when he was appointed to the faculty of the College of Business Administration as an economics professor. He was later named director of the MBA program and dean of the college, performing both roles simultaneously for eight years.

In August 1999, Dr. Praetzel was chosen to lead Niagara’s Institute of Travel, Hotel and Restaurant Administration. On Feb. 8, 2001, the institute became the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, only the fourth of its type in the country, with Dr. Praetzel assuming the title of dean.

Dr. Praetzel secured $1.5 million in grants from two major foundations, plus millions of dollars in additional funding, helping to shape the college into a leading national and international program. The college achieved a national top-20 ranking, was a founding member of The Leading Hotel Schools of the World, and forged prestigious industry relationships, including a hospitality partnership agreement with Carlson, a global hospitality and travel company.

Throughout his tenure at Niagara, Dr. Praetzel developed a knack for integrating practical learning experiences with classroom theory. Early on, it was a mentoring program that paired students with business leaders and, in 1999, the launch of the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management Alumni Association.

The focus on practical industry applications continues today in the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, with innovative programs such as work-abroad experiences in five-star properties in Lake Como, Italy, and Cusco, Peru; a dual-degree exchange program in hospitality and tourism with the International University of Applied Sciences in Bad Honnef, Germany; the Alumni Advantage and mentorship programs; a cruise course with Norwegian Cruise Lines; an annual career fair; and the college’s signature event, a yearly convocation that honors prominent leaders in the hospitality and tourism industry from across the globe.

For his efforts in promoting international understanding and community service, Schiller International University awarded Dr. Praetzel an honorary doctoral degree. He was the commencement speaker at Schiller International University in December 1997 and at Concordia College in Bronxville, N.Y., in May 1994.

Dr. Praetzel is a recipient of Niagara University’s Vincentian Mission Award, the Outstanding Volunteer Award of Family and Children’s Service of Niagara, the Pathfinder’s Award for industry/education cooperation, and was listed as one of the most influential leaders in Western New York by Business First in January 2013 and again in February 2014.

Dr. Praetzel joined the board of Family and Children’s Service of Niagara in 1997, becoming chair in 2001 until his resignation in 2004. He also served for many years as a board member of the Erie Niagara Regional Partnership. Dr. Praetzel served for 2 ½ years as chairman of the board of directors of the Buffalo-Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Buffalo Convention Center, where he has been a board member since 2004. He also served on the boards of the Niagara Frontier Industry Education Council, the Niagara County Workforce Investment Board, and The Leading Hotel Schools of the World.

Under Dr. Praetzel’s direction, the college co-founded The Leading Hotel Schools of the World with The Hotel School The Hague in Holland and The Leading Hotels of the World. For nine years, Dr. Praetzel served on the Board of Regents of Concordia College and also served on the boards of the Community Leadership Development Program of Niagara County, and a national business school accreditation body. He also served on the Industry-Education Council of the American Hotel and Lodging Association.

The Governor of New York State appointed Dr. Praetzel to the Governor’s Tourism Advisory Council in 2006. Dr. Praetzel served for many years as a member of the board of directors of the New York State Hospitality and Tourism Association and chaired the Tourism Educator’s Council of the New York State Hospitality and Tourism Association.

Dr. Praetzel helped organize student conferences and a variety of sessions at professional conferences; participates in major hospitality and tourism conferences; presented papers at a wide range of professional conferences both domestically and abroad; and was an invited speaker at the third global conference sponsored by the International Institute of Peace through Tourism in Glasgow, Scotland. He has published a broad range of articles dealing with ethics, higher education issues, curriculum, study abroad, economic policy, hospitality and tourism, and theology.
Monte 2.0 — Monte’s had a makeover! Niagara’s symbol of school spirit has a fresh look, complete with streamlined wings, taloned feet, his very own basketball uniform, and a “fierce” expression sure to intimidate rivals at the Gallagher Center and the Dwyer Arena. But this new Monte has a softer side, too, and can be seen greeting students and visitors at numerous NU events. Introduced at the Valentine’s Day basketball match between NU and Canisius, the updated eagle is the collaborative effort of Athletics, Campus Activities, and Student Government. Look for him the next time you’re on Monteagle Ridge!
The Rev. James J. Maher, C.M., was inaugurated as Niagara University’s 26th president on April 4, 2014, and a full slate of activities that highlighted the university’s rich heritage of academic excellence and community service complemented the celebration.

On April 3, a symposium addressing the topic of “The Mission of Vincentian Education,” was held in Alumni Chapel. The keynote speech was given by the Very Rev. G. Gregory Gay, C.M., ’76, superior general of the Congregation of the Mission (see page 16 for Father Gay’s presentation). Opening remarks were given by Dr. James Delaney, associate professor of philosophy, and the Rev. John Gouldrick, C.M., offered the invocation and opening prayer.

That same day, a symposium highlighting Father Maher’s focus on increasing the university’s role as an economic development incubator was held in St. Vincent’s Hall. A five-person panel discussed the role that higher education plays in the economic and social development of a region. Panelists included Dottie Gallagher-Cohen, president and CEO of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership; Patrick Whalen, COO of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus; Howard Zemsky, co-chair of the WNY Regional Council for Economic Development; Dr. Timothy Downs, NU’s provost; and Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster.


The formal presidential inauguration of Father Maher took place in Niagara University’s Gallagher Center that afternoon. Members of the Vincentian community, as well as elected officials and delegates representing fellow academic institutions, joined the NU community in commemorating the occasion. The Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., NU’s 25th president and interim president of St. John’s University, conducted the investiture of Father Maher. More than 1,100 were in attendance. A reception in the Castellani Art Museum followed.

The inaugural events concluded with the first-ever “Run Against Hunger” on April 5. Nearly 100 runners braved rainy and windy conditions to participate in the 5K race, raising $1,600 for the Heart, Love & Soul food pantry and dining room in downtown Niagara Falls.

Dr. Bonnie Rose, standing, NU’s executive vice president, moderated a symposium on higher education and economic development. The forum featured Dottie Gallagher-Cohen, president and CEO of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership; Patrick Whalen, COO of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus; Howard Zemsky, co-chair of the WNY Regional Council for Economic Development; Dr. Timothy Downs, NU provost; and Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster.

Dr. Youngsoo Choi, assistant professor of hospitality and tourism management, served as macebearer for the installation ceremony.

The Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., NU’s 25th president and interim president of St. John’s University, presented Father Maher with the presidential medallion.

Father James Maher shares a laugh with his brother, Father John Maher, ’76, before the inauguration.
Inauguration Week activities concluded with the first-ever "Run Against Hunger." While at St. John's University, Father Maher was very involved in its Bread & Life program, the second largest emergency food provider in New York City. Father Maher ran numerous NYC Marathons in support of that cause.

Jeffrey R. Holzschuh, '82, '00 (Hon.), chairman of the NU Board of Trustees, introduced Father Maher at the installation ceremony.

Father Maher accepts the mace, a medieval symbol of knowledge and power that is carried in formal academic processions, from the Very Rev. Michael J. Carroll, C.M., Vincentian provincial and vice chairman of NU's Board of Trustees.

A reception in NU's Castellani Art Museum followed the installation ceremony.

Following the "Run Against Hunger," Father Maher presented a check for $1,600 to Sister Marygrace Polino, the bookkeeper and pantry manager at Heart, Love & Soul food pantry and dining room.

A reception in NU's Castellani Art Museum followed the installation ceremony.
I am happy to be with you today and to share my thoughts and experiences regarding the relationship between education and the Vincentian charism, including sponsorship of Niagara University. This is not only a formal topic of interest to me, but also a personal one. I was educated at Niagara, graduated, and after ordination, served in the Office of Campus Ministry and taught in the Religious Studies Department. After NU, I worked as a missionary in Panama and Central America for 19 years, where education is a much-neglected commodity. Now, as superior general, I lead a community of over 3,000 priests and brothers from 55 provinces and regions located in 85 countries. We live and serve on all continents, except Antarctica. However, we have a new mission in Tierra del Fuego, the southernmost part of South America. So, when I go to visit my confreres there, I will let you all know if I can see Antarctica from our house!

My theme today is “Hard Work and Sheer Joy: Toward a Vincentian Campus Culture.” We could have a theoretical discussion on the “whys and wherefores” of Vincentian education, but I would rather focus on what Vincent de Paul often called the “practical and the possible.” My starting point is an age-old truth: that after all the teaching and learning, the goal of a Catholic and Vincentian education is to draw one out of the secure setting of classroom and campus to encounter the world of the poor and those on the margins of society. When undertaking this endeavor, one will experience disorientation, confrontation, formation, and ultimately, transformation. I will return to these themes a little later.

As one educated in the Catholic and Vincentian tradition, I have experienced each of these phases, but it is the transformative power of the Vincentian charism that has stayed with me throughout my life. In addition, it was nurtured here at Niagara. Yet, the pursuit of knowledge and its application personally and communally is found at most, if not all, accredited institutions. So what makes a Catholic and Vincentian education different from the secular, altruistic models?

To start with, there is the man for whom it is named, St. Vincent de Paul. The peasant son of a farmer in rural 16th century France, Vincent grew up in a devout, hard-working family of limited means. Vincent might have remained on the family farm like his siblings, or became a merchant in nearby Dax. So what got him off the farm to attain upward mobility? The answer is simple, but startling: Vincent sought education by disguising it as a vocation to the priesthood.

Why do I put it that way? Well, as Vincent himself admitted, his initial reasons to pursue the priesthood were flawed ones. His piety hid his desire for a better life for himself, and to receive a stable income to assist his parents. However, two undeniable truths emerged, one immediately, and another later. The first truth is that Vincent was a good student, a “quick study.” He was bright, articulate, wrote well, and in no time at all, he was able to finance his education by tutoring and helping run a small school. He obtained degrees from the University of Toulouse and in canon law from the Sorbonne. Although he was more of an applied practitioner than a theorist, his letters (of which we have over ten thousand) reveal a keen intellect, a highly analytical mind, a very refined way of self-expression, a firm grasp of details (especially regarding finances), and an ability to simplify complex matters and make them understandable.

These are all wonderful skills for a leader or educator, are they not? Vincent used them to his great advantage, mingling with people of influence and traveling all through Europe. Eventually, he became chaplain to the wealthy de Gondi family in Paris, living on their estate. On the surface, Vincent’s life seemed quite good. Given his modest origins, he seemed to have it all. But something was missing. Vincent felt an inner emptiness, a “hole in his soul.” He discovered that a good education, keen intellect, a soft landing in life, and the external status of priesthood were not enough. He wanted something more, and its absence was destroying Vincent, little by little.
This is where God waited patiently until Vincent had nowhere to go, revealing the second undeniable truth in his life: If he desired true fulfillment, he would have to learn to direct his energies, talents, and abilities not for his own gain, but for the good of others, especially the poor. To serve the poor and be their advocate meant undergoing a total life change, in short, a radical reorientation. He would have to let go of what had gotten him this far. Only God could help him take on that task!

What brought Vincent to the threshold of this self-discovery and complete about-face of his life? It did not come from the power of his intellect. He could not think or reason his way out of the quandary stalemating his soul. No, it was two unexpected experiences with the poor that opened the “eyes of his heart,” bringing about a miraculous change, in essence, and a conversion experience. They led to the birth of the Vincentian charism, which still affects our world today.

For those who may not know what I am referring to, there were two random encounters with the poor that shook Vincent to his core. The first was a sudden request he received to hear the confession of a dying man on the de Gondi estate. The second was a plea before Mass from friends of a sick family in a village for food and medicine. In the first situation, when the dying man recovered, he told Madame de Gondi that were it not for Vincent’s pastoral care, he would have died in mortal sin, and admitted that he, his family, and neighbors were unchurched.

In the case of the sick family, Vincent pleaded for help for them from the pulpit, because neighbors who feared of contracting their illness had shunned them. When Vincent visited the sick family, he saw many parishioners bringing food, most of which would soon spoil and go to waste. He knew he had to do something to organize a better response.

This is where God touched Vincent’s heart, helping to redirect his abilities to organize and motivate others for a greater good. Vincent saw the unchurched man was just one of tens of thousands in villages and towns all over France. He also realized that great efforts of charity like those who assisted the sick family were not sustainable unless they were coordinated. Therefore, from the personal disorientation and emptiness of his initial life goals, Vincent confronted the world of the poor, experiencing firsthand their sufferings, both spiritual and temporal. He saw that if he did not respond promptly and generously, innocent people would die, and souls would be lost. He had literally become a party to “life and death” situations that called for a total giving of oneself, a self-forgetfulness that only God could sustain.

Vincent’s next step was to seek formation, both human and divine. He allied himself with a renowned spiritual director to sort through this period of change in his life. He sought out like-minded people for support. Most of all, he allowed God to reawaken him from his spiritual sloth by encountering Christ in the scriptures, the daily Eucharist, and prayer. It was a gradual path, but it led him to embrace the second half of his life with a fervor and faith that was truly transformative. Yet, this transformation did not end with his death. It continued for centuries, and it is alive and well today in the religious communities and lay organizations that Vincent founded to carry on his charism of charity and justice for God’s poor.

Niagara University is a manifestation and continuation of the vision of Vincent de Paul. A motto on Niagara’s website proclaims that NU provides “education that makes a difference.” I am sure this is true, but the question you must always ask is “what is the difference?” What difference does a Niagara education make for students, faculty and staff, and the community?

The difference I think is necessary is to develop a “Vincentian campus culture” permeating Monteagle Ridge from top to bottom. Certainly, one sees this reality in reviewing NU’s past storied history. There is the 158-year legacy of the Vincentian community, whose priests and brothers founded a seminary that evolved into a university, benefiting students and impacting Church and society. There is the sterling example of laity among faculty, staff, and administration who lived the Vincentian charism and passed it on. Finally, the “Vincentian culture” shines forth in the lives and achievements of NU alumni. Some returned the kindness and acknowledged the Vincentian charism as generous and faithful.
benefactors. Others used their talents and applied the charism to make a difference in their communities. Many alumni have done both, thank God!

But, practically speaking, what does this “Vincentian campus culture” mean to us today? At its core, a Vincentian campus culture has several salient features. It is imbued with faith in God, and a reverence for the dignity of all persons. It provides opportunities to serve the poor and marginalized as Jesus did, whom Vincent took as his inspiration and source of strength. It is a community of scholars seeking truth, and committed to excellence in academic and co-curricular endeavors. It is a welcoming, worshipping community, whose members act honestly and with integrity. It is a community that reflects upon itself and is renewed.

This Vincentian campus culture is both transitory and transcendent. Every four years, its student community is remade. Over the years, its faculty and staff come and go. But the values it espouses are enduring and life changing. For prospective and new students, Niagara is a place; but for Niagarans who embrace and live this Vincentian culture, it is a way of life, one that is transformative. That is why this Vincentian culture has a lifelong impact on its members. In sum, a truly Vincentian campus culture makes it possible to “be good, do good, and be a force for the good.” Those are the words of Father Thomas Judge, a Vincentian who labored in the deep South, accompanying Black Catholics back in the dangerous days of segregation. “Be good, do good, and be a force for the good” — I think that simple sentence says it all!

I was encouraged that at a November 2013 meeting of the presidents of five major Vincentian universities — Niagara, St. John’s, DePaul, All Hallows in Ireland, and Adamson in the Philippines — they wrote and released a common statement on Vincentian sponsorship of universities. They shared it with our General Council in Rome, and we were pleased with its depth and scope. I believe this is a valuable resource for all in the university community who desire to promote a true Vincentian campus culture.

While this excellent document should be read in its entirety, let me share with you four key points I believe are crucial in developing a Vincentian campus culture:

- First, Vincentian colleges and universities should, according to local circumstances, admit and promote the development of the poor. In accord with the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul, all students should be imbued with sensitivity for the poor.
- Second, that they be places where Catholic intellectual, moral, and social traditions are taught in their great richness to the next generation, seeking to nourish the gift of faith.
- Third, that they always serve the poor by providing access to higher education for poor and marginalized students to attend these institutions, and that they direct the expertise of faculty and energy of their students to the service of the poor.
- Fourth, that they develop a distinctive Vincentian theology of service, and include reflection on the encounter with Christ in the midst of the experience of service.

What these key elements highlight are a need for access and witness. First, some thoughts on access. Those living in poverty do so without the hope of a future. They cannot access common services we take for granted, such as an ATM cash machine or email. Today, we hear repeatedly of two disturbing trends: the “feminization of poverty” and the “working poor.” Single mothers and even grandmothers, tasked with raising their grandchildren, often live hand-to-fist in meeting the needs of their young and staying ahead of eviction notices and bill collectors. Even when working to earn an income, they often do not succeed. The number of homeless families in shelters and people using soup kitchens and food pantries in the United States is at record levels. It makes me proud as a Vincentian that Niagara
and St. John’s universities are affiliated with Heart & Soul and Bread and Life soup kitchens, where students and staff often contribute their time. However, the numbers of poor people continue to grow steadily.

That is why access to education is the only hope for lifting the poor out of a destructive and generational cycle of poverty. I commend Niagara for taking the lead in providing scholarships, grants and financial assistance to give the poor access to education. But we must do more. When I visit our missions in developing nations, I am always struck that one of the first works begun is a school or catechetical center, where reading and writing are taught. In some mission provinces, the number of schools often equal churches and pastoral centers. In India, where less than 2 percent of the population is Catholic, over 20 percent of the schools in the country are under Catholic auspices. So whether in the first world or developing nations, access to education is essential to promote lasting change and improvement for the poor.

The second area is what I call witness. Niagara University has a great presence in Western and upstate New York, and throughout the East. The Vincentian-based witness of students, staff, and faculty on behalf of the poor has had a profound and lasting impact. Over the years, I have met people ranging from new office staff to trustees at Niagara who are mesmerized by the Vincentian mission. It is a credit to what has been done, but no time to rest on your laurels.

Pope Francis has captivated many across the globe with his warmth, simplicity, and advocacy for the poor. In his writings and homilies, the Holy Father coined a phrase as true as it is haunting: “the globalization of indifference.” Listen to his words: “The culture of comfort, which makes us think only of ourselves, makes us insensitive to the cries of other people, indeed; it leads to the globalization of indifference. We become used to the suffering of others: it doesn’t affect or concern me; it’s none of my business.” (Homily, Lampedusa 8 July 2013)

One way of developing skills to understand access and to do witness is to engage in reflection. The sponsorship document called for development of a Vincentian theology of service, involving reflection and dialogue. I cannot think of a better way to grow in understanding how to enter the world of the poor and to accompany them. St. Vincent told his missioners and lay workers to remember that, “God asks first for the heart, then for the work.” In developing new methods of Vincentian witness, you will do a great service for yourselves and the poor.

In summing up my thoughts, let me return to my first premise on what happens when one first enters into the world of the poor; namely, the stages of disorientation, confrontation, formation, and ultimately, transformation. While this may seem unsettling or even threatening, it is true. However, this occasion is also one where God’s grace can do wonders, breaking down barriers, helping us to affirm our common humanity, and put aside outward differences of race, class, gender, ethnic, and religion. That is why I discussed St. Vincent de Paul in such detail. He developed a spirituality of service, finding Christ in the poor and the poor in Christ. Despite his many activities and accomplishments, Vincent was, first and foremost, a “mystic of charity.”

You and I may never reach the same level of achievement, selfless service, or mysticism of St. Vincent. But we can try, can’t we? Niagara University is the place where this wonderful “labor of love” can begin, grow, and lead us more deeply into the beauty and mystery of learning how to serve the poor in Christ. I will close with a proverb summarizing our Vincentian charism:

“I slept peacefully, and dreamt that life was sheer joy. I awoke suddenly, and discovered that life was hard work. I served my neighbor faithfully, and behold! Hard work became sheer joy.”

In doing the hard work of promoting and living a Vincentian campus culture, may you experience the sheer joy of what it means to be truly Vincentian in thought, word, and deed!
You served on Niagara University’s Board of Trustees from 2010-2013, so you are undoubtedly familiar with the university. What is your vision for NU?

FATHER MAHER: I would like to build upon the many great things that occurred under (former president) Father Levesque’s tenure. I would like to create a very high-level learning community at Niagara that fully embraces and promotes our Catholic and Vincentian mission, and direct our focus on highlighting our great students, faculty, and academic programs.

You were at NU’s fellow Vincentian university, St. John’s, for the past 22 years. Yet the challenges each institution faces are unique. What do you see as the challenges for Niagara?

The challenges really lay in the differentiation of size. St. John’s has over 18,000 students, with a major campus in New York City. At Niagara, we have around 3,700 students and are one of 21 colleges and universities in the Western New York area. There are fewer high school students in the region and we are all working to enroll students from this shrinking pool of applicants.
What is your initial focus for Niagara?

My initial focus has been to listen and learn from the Niagara community.

What future objectives do you have?

I would like to find ways to support the great work our faculty and students are doing in our vibrant living-learning community, and to continue to prepare our students for an international workplace by recruiting them from New York and other states, and Canada and other countries. I would also like Niagara to have a regional impact through our service, teaching and research, and work hand in hand with the Buffalo Billion’s efforts. As a Vincentian university, I would like to impact the lives of those living in poverty in Niagara Falls and the region.

How do you define a successful presidency?

A successful presidency is one that is focused on outcomes, on building of community, and on mission, in the context of higher education.

What about Niagara resonates with you the most?

The people at Niagara, because they are so committed to the university and our mission. We Vincentians often speak about how edified we are by our lay colleagues’ commitment; it challenges us to be better Vincentians and educators.

How do you view NU’s relationship with its alumni?

I regard the relationship with our alumni as a lifeline for our university community and our students. In many respects, alumni offer a look both at the past and to the future. They give witness to a successful life at Niagara and after graduation.

Going forward, how do you want to see that relationship enhanced?

Engaging our alumni by reaching out to them and by inviting them into our university life will enhance the relationship between alums and Niagara.

If you were to tell alumni one thing, what would that be?

Do not be shy about sharing your time, talent and treasure, because our great faculty and students are the direct beneficiaries of your support.

What’s the best advice you ever received?

Don’t be afraid to surround yourself with great people.

What is the first thing you think of when you wake up in the morning?

I’m thankful to God for another day.

What’s a recent book you read?

The Priority of Christ, by Father Robert Barron.

What’s your favorite line from a movie?

“You can’t handle the truth.” Jack Nicholson said that to Tom Cruise in A Few Good Men.

What three people, living or dead, would you like to have dinner with?

Jesus Christ, St. Vincent de Paul, and Rosa Parks.

What’s your favorite sport to watch?

Baseball, especially the NY Mets.

What’s your favorite comfort food?

Greek salad.

What’s on your iPod?

Ted, Real Politics, Politico, Roman Missal.

If you were given one Mulligan, the chance to do one thing over again, what would it be?

It is not so much of a Mulligan, but I did so much traveling my first year (visiting about 25 chapters nationwide), that I would like to see much more of the Niagara and Western New York region. I am truly enjoying the beautiful summer weather.

If in high school, you would have been considered the person most likely to...

Be a good friend.
Dear fellow alumni,

Warmer weather has finally arrived on Monteagle Ridge, and with it comes another frenetic end to the school year. I was asked, in my role as president of the Alumni Association, to offer some remarks at the commencement ceremonies and officially welcome the graduates as our newest members. It is a privilege to put on a cap and gown and sit on the platform with our distinguished deans, honorees, and members of administration as part of the ceremonies.

In my remarks, I noted that my wife, Maureen, and I were also celebrating our 40th graduation anniversary and shared our experience since graduation in a five-minute countdown. Judging from the audience’s laughter and tears, I think they liked it:

“Allow me a few minutes to share with you our life’s journey since we sat in your seats over 40 years ago:

• In our 20s we started careers, got married and started a family.

• In our 30s we raised a young family while juggling careers, sometimes putting them on hold and making sacrifices — like staying in on Saturday night watching lousy TV shows like Love Boat and Fantasy Island. No “on-demand” or Netflix then!

• In our 40s our careers were put on autopilot while we navigated the dreaded eight-year time warp all parents experience, including your parents: The time from the end of grammar school to the end of college; a time you thought would never end and then all of a sudden it’s over and you find yourself sitting on a gymnasium bench on a morning in May watching your son or daughter transform into an adult as a college graduate. It then hits you and you think — it was worth it. The first it is, of course, your son or daughter here today. The second it is your parents’ personal journey of challenges, sacrifices, and unconditional love they willing gave to make this moment happen for you today. They won’t share their it with you — it’s too personal, it’s too private — so just hug them again today and say thanks!

• In our 50s we became empty nesters and watched our children launch and sometimes re-launch their careers, pursue relationships, and get married.

• We begin the 60s repeating the circle of life by juggling our careers again; this time to travel to see our kids. We now look forward to staying in on Saturday night with our granddaughter. We just might rent some old episodes of Love Boat and Fantasy Island on Netflix just to get even!”

My two-year term as president is in the home stretch and ends after Alumni Weekend (Oct. 9-12) when our president-elect, Frank Fiannaca, ’85, takes the helm. In the meantime, we have a summer filled with alumni events, so watch for the announcements in our monthly newsletter as well as in email blasts.

Finally, a brief note about the Office of Alumni Engagement, the NU professional staff who make the Alumni Association happen while working with its volunteer leadership. Christine O’Hara, ’86, M.S.Ed.’01, and her staff have done an outstanding job this past year. Here are a few of their accomplishments:

• The number of alumni events almost doubled.

• The number of attendees increased from 2,341 in 2013 to 3,579 in 2014.

• The Niagara Fund raised $925,000, which is slightly more than the previous year.

• The President’s Scholarship Dinner raised over $155,000, and the new NU Alumni Legacy Scholarship Fund received $7,000 to start the endowment.

• NU’s president, the Rev. James Maher, C.M., visited 25 chapters during his national tour.

Enjoy the summer, travel safely, and make memories to share with your classmates at your next milestone reunion. I am looking forward to celebrating my 40th this October.

Sincerely,

Jeff Dann, ’74
President, Niagara University Alumni Association

Give2gether
The New Website of Alumni Engagement

If you’ve recently gone on the Niagara University alumni engagement website and saw something different — don’t worry, you’re in the right place. Your Alumni Engagement team unveiled a new website to help better connect our alums with each other as well as with the university. You will still find us at www.niagaraalumni.com, but in addition to registering for events and keeping updated on university and alumni news, you can give to the university and even begin your own fundraising campaign to help support your alma mater!

Please check the website out — if you have any questions, contact the office at 716.286.8787.
Who Was There


Naples, Fla. — National Tour with the President — Feb. 8, 2014 — Dr. John Cossentino, ’54, and John Sparks Moore, ’54.


Western New York — National Tour with the President — April 2, 2014 — Ann Marie Kraft Ziske, ’83; Robert Ziske, ’83; Bob Drozdowski, ’80; Tim Palisano, ’85; Howard Morgan, ’86; and Frank Fiannaca, ’85.


Tampa, Fla. — National Tour with the President — Feb. 10, 2014 — Jaclyn Rossi, ’08, M.S.Ed.’10; Edward McMahon, ’83; Anthony Carzo, ’88; Christine O’Hara, ’88, M.S.Ed.’06; Barbara Goodall Scinta,’75; and Paul Stephenson, ’60.

Carlos Roberto Jaén, ’79, M.S.’82: Building Joyful Practices

Dr. Carlos Roberto Jaén, ’79, M.S.’82, identifies strongly with the Vincentian tradition. Growing up in David, Panama, he attended the Vincentian high school where his mother had worked and, after graduation, accepted a scholarship from Rev. Maurice Roche, C.M., to Niagara University. He even keeps an image of St. Vincent at his desk.

So it’s no wonder that he has dedicated his life to serving others as a doctor, researcher and professor of family and community medicine.

“Much of what I do in terms of service and imagining new ways of providing healthcare, of making changes for people who need it, is very much resonant of what I learned at Niagara,” he says.

Dr. Jaén’s career has taken him from Monteagle Ridge, where he earned both bachelor’s and master’s degrees in biology; to Buffalo, where he obtained an M.D. and a Ph.D. from the University at Buffalo; to Cleveland, where he completed a residency in family medicine and a fellowship in primary care research; and back to Buffalo, where he was recruited as vice chair of research in the Department of Family Medicine. During his nine years there, he became involved in a community-based needs study of Buffalo’s West Side Latino community. The study was instrumental in replacing Columbus Hospital with a long-needed diagnostic and treatment center that houses an array of primary medical services. It also led to the establishment of UB’s Center for Urban Research and Primary Care, for which Dr. Jaén served as founding director.

The work was rewarding for Dr. Jaén, and he planned to continue it and live in Buffalo for the entirety of his professional career. However, a phone call inviting him to apply for the position of professor and chair of the Family and Community Medicine Department in the School of Medicine of the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio changed all that. After traveling to the school and meeting then-president Dr. Francisco Cigarroa, Dr. Jaén decided to make the move to Texas.

The position enabled him to continue the work he is passionate about — making patient-centered care and community health “more effective, safer and more joyful.” His research on patient-centered medical homes, which provide coordination of care across several medical specialties, incorporate the use of technology, and foster personal relationships between patients and care providers, led to the first large-scale national demonstration project. The results of the project were published in a special supplement of the Annals of Family Medicine in 2010.

It also gives him the opportunity to engage with the next generation of medical professionals and to help them recognize, by example and service, that family medicine is taking care of the patient and their families holistically.

Dr. Jaén has also become known as an international leader in smoking cessation research. His interest in the topic began in graduate school, when he conducted a study of 1,800 smokers for his Ph.D. dissertation. In 1996, he was appointed to a national panel that published smoking cessation guidelines, as well as to the two subsequent panels that published updates. He co-chaired the most recent one. He says that making smoking cessation treatments accessible for people has always been a particular interest of his.

In recognition of his many accomplishments, Dr. Jaén has been selected to the Best Doctors in America yearly since 2002. In 2005, he was appointed to the National Advisory Council to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and serves as chair-elect of the American Board of Family Medicine. He is also the recipient of a Generalist Physician Faculty Scholar Award from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, a Cancer Control Career Development Award for Primary Care Physicians from the American Cancer Society, and holds a Dr. and Mrs. James L. Holly Distinguished Professorship. Niagara recognized him in 2009 with a Dean’s Award from the College of Arts and Sciences, and in October of 2013, he was named to the Institute of Medicine, one of the highest honors in the fields of health and medicine.

He has never lost sight of what initially drew him to the field of medicine, however — service to the patient. “I am at heart a clinician,” he says.

As a physician, Dr. Jaén is able to put into practice what he advocates: being available to patients when they need him and providing a welcoming environment where they are motivated to make the changes they need to become healthier. “A joyful practice, for me,” he says, “is the goal.”
Malinda Bratosh Wheeler, ’81: Serving the Victims of Crime

A

n aptitude test Malinda Bratosh Wheeler, ’81, took while she was a senior at Gowanda High School indicated that she should pursue a career as a minister, in social work, or as a nurse. Today, she combines elements of all three professions in her role as founder, director and owner of Forensic Nurse Specialists, Inc., a professional nursing corporation in California that provides examinations to victims of sexual assault.

Malinda first learned of the nursing specialty more than two decades ago, when she was looking for new material to teach the students in her senior nursing courses at Long Beach City College. She attended a seminar that discussed the forensic aspects of trauma nurses and discovered that nurses were starting to bridge the gap between healthcare and the legal system. These practitioners, who had a specialized knowledge of the legal system, not only tended to rape victims’ immediate health needs, but also conducted evidentiary examinations, provided medical testimony in court, and consulted with legal authorities on these cases. Malinda thought that this emerging specialty was an opportunity to combine her past hospital bedside experience, which she gained early in her career, with her interests in caring for the mental and emotional health of a patient and in the legal system.

When Malinda began networking with her peers across the country to find out more about forensic nursing, she discovered that many of these specialists were getting their foot in the door by serving as sexual assault nurse examiners. She also learned that in California, where she now lived, many emergency rooms did not have staff with the time or education to do a thorough exam and welcomed the assistance of outside providers. Malinda did a community needs assessment to determine if her adopted hometown of Long Beach needed such a service. It did.

So Malinda launched her company in 1993 and, 10 months later, contracted with the City of Long Beach to provide forensic nursing services through the Sexual Assault Response Team program she had initiated, which brings together a rape crisis center advocate, a forensic nurse, and the police department to support a victim through the examination and criminal justice process. The examinations are conducted in the privacy of a dedicated area in a hospital, where a victim can tell his or her story to the team at one time rather than reliving the trauma over and over again by meeting separately with each individual member.

When she started, Malinda worked with one hospital and one police agency and provided services for five to 10 cases each month. Today, her program assists with between 80 and 100 cases each month at seven different hospitals and in cooperation with 60 police agencies throughout Los Angeles and Orange counties.

The victims with which Malinda has been involved have ranged in age from three months to 92 years. She notes that one of her first big cases involved a serial rapist and a victim named Grace whose strength moved Malinda in a way she has never forgotten.

“There are people who touch you and you remember their story and carry it with you,” she says. “Grace is that person for me.”

Because of Grace’s determination and the evidence Malinda provided, the attacker was found and prosecuted. While that is not always the case, there is a 97 percent conviction rate when SART evidence is presented at trial.

Malinda’s role has evolved over the years, and today, she is administrator, supervisor and trainer for the 12 nurses on her staff. She also does consultation work with area district attorneys, is a guest lecturer on forensic nursing for local nursing programs, frequently presents on SART and related topics, and has served as an expert witness on more than 100 sexual assault cases.

The desire to help others, which inspired her to enroll in NU’s nursing program more than 35 years ago, still motivates her work today.

“Seeing my business grow and expand every year has been rewarding,” she says, “because we are serving not only the victims of crime, but society in general. I don’t get up and go to work in the morning — I get up and work my mission. My team of nurses and I are in a battle every day against the evil people do.”
D.J. Kiernan, ‘02: Selling Luxury

D.J. Kiernan, ‘02, is in the business of fulfilling champagne wishes and caviar dreams. For the past seven years, he has worked in the yachting industry, on both the wholesale and retail sides of the business, an opportunity that enabled him to live in some of the most glamorous locations in the world and socialize with captains of industry and royalty. Today, he’s using the knowledge he gained and the contacts he made to launch his own enterprise, Connect K3, a business development consultancy with a focus on wine and gourmet food.

D.J.’s interest in hospitality and tourism was ignited when he was a child taking familiarization tours with his mother, a Dallas-area travel agent. Early jobs selling caviar and fine foods and interning in product development and marketing with Adventure Tours, USA, solidified this desire. He began looking into four-year programs in travel and tourism and discovered what was then the Institute of Travel, Hotel and Restaurant Administration at Niagara University. It was a perfect fit for D.J.’s professional aspirations.

D.J.’s career got a jumpstart while he was still an undergraduate. Dr. Gary Praetzel, who was director of the institute at the time, introduced him to alumna Tamara (Jurkowski) Quilty, ‘89, manager of corporate incentives for the Plano, contractor, working directly for the vice president. During which he was given first-hand experience in the world and socialize with captains of industry and royalty. Today, he’s using the knowledge he gained and the contacts he made to launch his own enterprise, Connect K3, a business development consultancy with a focus on wine and gourmet food.

D.J.’s tenacity earned him the brand-new position of marketing specialist for Merle Wood & Associates and the opportunity to work for Wood himself, arguably one of the most successful yacht brokers in the world. He spent more than a year learning about the marketing side of the industry before moving on to create the charter division for Feadship, the leading builder of megayachts worldwide. As manager, D.J. served both the wholesale and retail sides of the division, and met some of the wealthiest individuals in the world. One of his most memorable experiences was hosting a familiarization trip for charter brokers on the 214-foot motoryacht “Trident.” D.J. occasionally lived on the boat while he conducted the tours in Italy, the south of France, and in the Bahamas. He even was able to take his parents on the yacht for a dinner prepared by a Michelin chef, one of the 15 crew members who worked and lived aboard full time.

“It was a special treat to be able to share that kind of experience with them,” he says.

While D.J. relished his work with Feadship and the outstanding experiences it afforded him, he wanted to expand both his management experience and his knowledge of the charter industry. When Camper and Nicholsons, the global leader in luxury yachting activities, offered him the position of director of charter marketing for the United States, he readily accepted. In only six months, D.J. was promoted to worldwide director of charter marketing, overseeing offices in both the United States and Europe.

The work was exciting and fast-paced. D.J. lived in Monte Carlo for the better part of a year, and spent a few more months in the south of France. He even had the opportunity to enjoy dinner with a baron on the baron’s yacht. The two hit it off, and afterward, the baron sent D.J. an Alessi ballerina toothpick dispenser, identical to the one D.J. had admired while on the yacht.

“Of all the things I was ever given by my clients, I think that one was one of the most special because it represented the opportunity I got to have onboard his yacht and eat good food and taste good wine together and be able to relate to each other,” D.J. says.

Eventually, the extensive time and travel required to oversee offices in multiple time zones took a toll on D.J. and, after about 18 months, he requested, and was granted, a Fort Lauderdale–based position as a yacht charter broker.

It was what he considered to be his dream job, but he soon realized that it wasn’t what he expected, and that “threw me for a loop,” he says. So he resigned and took some time to reevaluate his career goals.

Entrepreneurship had always intrigued D.J., and with the connections he had made in the yachting industry, he was well-positioned to launch a consultancy to assist companies in the luxury industry. He is already helping Eten Food Company expand its wine business into yacht provisioning, and he brought in his certified sommelier business partner to offer educational activities and wine-tasting experiences. On their first deal, they worked with a client to complete a vertical of Penfolds Grange in magnums. It’s a job that brings him back to the caviar business and draws on his experience as a study-abroad student in Switzerland, where he studied oenology and traveled extensively around Europe during the summer before his junior year.

It’s also an opportunity to practice the servant-leadership he learned while at Niagara.

“It all comes down to service to others,” D.J. says of the work he now does. “It just happens that I get to do it in a very luxurious circle.”

Additional alumni stories are available at www.niagara.edu/alumni-news/.
1943
Robert Gorman received the St. Joseph Archdiocesan Medal of Appreciation for his dedicated service to the parish.

1959 REUNION
Barbara Malinowski was honored in the healthcare category at the National Federation for Just Communities of Western New York Inc. Community Leader Awards Luncheon in January. Barbara was recognized for her advocacy and service on healthcare issues. She is a parish nurse coordinator at Mount St. Mary’s Hospital in Lewiston, N.Y., and is very active in Niagara University’s Alumni Association and Nursing Alumni Council. She also established and coordinates the health ministry program at the Heart, Love & Soul food pantry in Niagara Falls.

Jerald Wolfgang has been named to the board of the Niagara County Industrial Development Agency. He is the director of the Western New York Regional Education Center for Economic Development.

1962
Edward Ladley stepped down from his position as head coach of the Wahconah regional basketball team in December. Edward, who won 516 games, five Western Massachusetts titles and a state championship during his 42-year career with the team, will serve as assistant coach.

1963
Elizabeth (Cassidy) Mueslle, and her husband, Stan, are living in Tanzania to help introduce and spread computer literacy in that country through their Global Outreach NGO. Betty is teaching computer literacy in two of the secondary schools in Iringa and facilitating service-learning projects with local universities. She is also involved with a nutrition awareness program with the goal of curbing the large numbers of children under five who die from severe malnutrition.

1969 REUNION
Joseph Caruso has joined CresCom Bank as a senior mortgage loan originator. Previously, he was with Bank of America.

1970
Joe Bioty has been named president of Automated Precision Inc. Joe, who has led API as COO since 2010, as well as from 2003 to 2007, has been associated with high technology businesses for more than 40 years. As API president, Joe will have full authority over API’s global operation, which is headquartered in the United States and supported by offices in China, Germany, India, and Brazil.

Linda (Grant) Morrisey was inducted into the U.S.A. Martial Arts Hall of Fame. She was also recognized with a Chinese Female Martial Arts Living Legend Award for her 38 years in the martial arts.

1971
Col. (Ret.) Thomas Brady has been named director of the Department of Defense Education Activity. He is the first retired service member to hold this post.

Joe Cozzo was named vice chair of the board of the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York. Joe is president and chief executive officer of Buffalo Hearing and Speech.

Neil Moran was appointed to WealthGuard, Inc.’s Founders Circle, a group of leaders from numerous industries who bring their respective experience and influence to assist the organization's
direction and growth. Neil, who is currently vice president of MSA Investigations, has more than 40 years of experience in the private sector and with the FBI. He is also a certified fraud examiner.

1973
Pam (Tubridy) Baucom produced a seven-part, 14-hour film on the lives of Theodore, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. It is scheduled to air on PBS over seven nights, beginning Sept. 14, 2014.

1974 REUNION
Robert Smith III was promoted to group vice president at M&T Bank. He previously served as business banking manager in the Credit Shared Services Department.

1975
John Prior accepted the position of director of quality and compliance at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston and Houston.

Thomas Sacco was promoted to president and CEO of Homestyle Dining in Plano, Texas, the parent company of Bonanza Steakhouse, Ponderosa Steakhouse, and Bo's Steak & Grill.

1976
Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Vincent Boles published a book, 4-3-2-1 Leadership … What America’s Sons and Daughters Taught Me on My Way From Second Lieutenant to Two-Star General. He is a frequent speaker on leadership to corporate and association audiences.

Brian Hassett received the Albany Boys and Girls Club Community Impact Award. In addition, the United Way of the Greater Capital Region, which he leads as president and CEO, was recognized as Nonprofit of the Year by Albany Business Review in November 2013.

Richard McKnight has retired from the Utica National Insurance Group.

1977
Deborah Wood Johnston received her master’s degree in nursing in December 2013. She is an adjunct instructor in the associate degree nursing program at Jamestown Community College, where she is involved in the simulation lab and the enhancement of student outcomes. She previously served as a staff nurse and charge nurse at WCA hospital in Jamestown, N.Y.

Michael Anthony Rossi was selected as one of the Top 100 Criminal Defense Lawyers in the State of New York for 2014 by the American Society of Legal Advocates, an invitation-only, nationwide organization of elite lawyers who combine stellar legal credentials with a proven commitment to community engagement and the highest professional standards. Fewer than 1.5 percent of all lawyers were recognized by ASLA for their exceptional legal talent.

Ernest Smith, M.S.Ed.’77, was elected chairperson of the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission, the binational entity that owns and operates the Rainbow, Whirlpool Rapids and Lewiston-Queenston bridges between Canada and the U.S. Ernest was appointed to the commission in November 2009. He retired from Canada Immigration after more than 31 years of service, and has experience in such areas as enforcement, operations and intelligence. Since retiring, Ernest has been contracted by the International Region of Citizenship & Immigration Canada to work as a visa officer in England, Hong Kong, Trinidad, Saudi Arabia, and the U.S.

Rocco Surace Sr., a partner with The Bonadio Group, was elected to a three-year term on the Insysie Consulting board of directors. He is a member of Niagara University’s Board of Advisors.
1979 REUNION

Thomas C. Beatty, chief deputy in the Niagara County Sheriff’s Office, received the Carl Draxler Award from the New York State Sheriff's Association Institute in recognition of his exceptional career achievements and conscientious devotion to duty.

Patrick Quigley has been named general manager of Micronics Inc.'s filter cloth division. Prior to joining Micronics, a global provider of aftermarket filtration products and OEM custom filter presses, Patrick was the general manager of Clear Edge US, where he oversaw its manufacturing operations in New York and Mexico.

1980

Susan Dileno was appointed vice president for enrollment at Ohio Wesleyan University. She previously served as vice president for enrollment management at Baldwin Wallace University in Berea, Ohio.

Stephen Walter was promoted to administrative vice president at the M&T Insurance Agency. He previously served as corporate controller overseeing financial reporting and information technology.

1981

Kathleen (Sullivan) Doerner received a 2014 Health Care Achievement Award from the Rochester Business Journal in recognition of her outstanding contributions to healthcare. She is a senior nurse manager at the Lipson Cancer Center, Rochester General Health System.

Col. (Ret.) Gerald Manley was selected as the director of the Headquarters Department of the Army Directorate of Mission Assurance at the Pentagon, Washington, D.C.

1982

Kevin Brauer was named chief operating officer of VServe, a division of VSoft Corp., a global provider of information and technology solutions for financial institutions. He joins the VSoft leadership team after more than 20 years at Alloya Corporate Federal Credit Union. Kevin is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the New York State Society of Certified Public Accountants.

A Life on Display — Several years ago, when Jerry Ognibene, ’59, retired from his career in higher education, he began building a model train layout with his wife of 52 years, Rosemary (affectionately known as “Bunny”). The couple included replicas of places that were meaningful to them throughout their early lives, including childhood homes, movie theatres, shops, and yes, even Niagara University. Spanning an area representing Bunny’s hometown of Buffalo to Jerry’s of North Collins, the 12-by-6-foot layout features country settings, a cityscape, and Niagara’s Clet Hall in the center, above a ravine that resembles the Niagara River Gorge. Although Jerry admits to taking artistic license with many of the replicas, including the addition of a wall around Clet Hall, the layout serves to provide a tangible memory of their lives in Western New York.
Dr. Linda LeMura was appointed 14th president of Le Moyne College in Syracuse, N.Y., effective July 1. She is the first laywoman to lead a Jesuit college or university. She has served as the provost and vice president for academic affairs at Le Moyne since March 2009. Prior to that, she served for two years as acting and interim provost and as the college’s dean of arts and sciences from 2003 to 2007.

Bernard Turi was elected chair of the New York Insurance Association at the association’s annual meeting on Nov. 14. Bernard, senior vice president, general counsel and director of risk and reinsurance at Utica Mutual Insurance Company, will serve a one-year term that began in January. He has been a member of the NYIA board since 2007, serving as an officer of the association since 2010, most recently as first vice chair.

1983

Frederick Pepperday has joined New England Financial of Upstate New York as a financial representative. He is a 20-year veteran of the insurance financial services industry and a member of the Million Dollar Round Table.

1984 REUNION

Julie Bargnesi was appointed by New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo to serve on the board of the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corp., a subsidiary of Empire State Development, which was created in 2005 to spearhead the redevelopment of Buffalo’s waterfront. Julie is a registered nurse and a senior partner in the Buffalo law firm of Damon Morey. She concentrates her law practice in the area of healthcare and medical malpractice.

1985

Col. Daniel J. Christian took command of the Army Reserve’s 95th Division in a ceremony on Dec. 14, 2013. Daniel has served in the Army Reserve for 32 years. He currently lives in Dothan, Ala., where he is vice president of the information technology organization for AAA Cooper Transportation, a national transportation carrier in the U.S. and international territories.
Richard Howse was promoted to vice president of marketing and business development for Volkswagen Credit in Herndon, Va.

Margaret White, M.S.’00, a family nurse practitioner, has joined InvisionHealth in the Town of Tonawanda, N.Y.

1987

Dorrie Jennings Darcy accepted the position of school nurse at Tecumseh Elementary in the Jamesville Dewitt School District.

1988

Christine O’Hara, M.S.Ed.’06, was named to the Leadership Niagara Executive Board. She is Niagara University’s executive director of Alumni Engagement.

David A. Urban has been admitted to the partnership at Chiampou Travis Besaw & Kershner LLP. David joined the firm in 2007 as a senior audit manager.

James Walsh Jr. was elected to a 10-year term as a Monroe County Family Court judge in November 2013. Jim was previously a Monroe County assistant district attorney and counsel to Monroe County Sheriff’s Office. He was also a litigator for several Rochester, N.Y., law firms and most recently was in private practice specializing in family law and criminal law.

Jean (Yurgealitis) Walsh was recently promoted to assistant director of nursing at the Episcopal Church Home in Rochester, N.Y., where she has worked for eight years. She previously held the position of clinical coordinator on the rehab unit and was most recently nursing educator. Jean and her husband, Jim, have two daughters, Erin and Shannon. Erin joined the NU alumni in May.

1990

Dr. Robert J. Gadawski was elected vice president of the medical staff at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center. Robert has been a member of Memorial’s medical staff since 1997. He is board-certified in pediatrics and has served as chief of the department of pediatrics since 1999.

Elsa Guarda is the proud great-grandmother of Lola Alexandra Maicher-McGee. Lola was born on Feb. 12, 2014, to Elsa’s granddaughter, Claire McGee, and Sasha Maicher.

1991

Nancy Kasprzak-Whitmore was re-elected secretary of the New Directions Youth and Family Services board. Nancy, who is vice president of Niagara’s Choice Federal Credit Union, has served on the board for 12 years. New Directions’ mission is to foster resilient, self-reliant families and permanence for at-risk children in the shortest time possible, by promoting safe, respectful, responsible, and goal-directed behavior.

Lt. Col. Rich Rouleau has been assigned to the 1st Canadian Division as a U.S. Army exchange officer. He recently returned from a one-year deployment to Saudi Arabia.

Todd Werth was promoted to supervisor of the FBI’s Youngstown, Ohio, office, with oversight of six counties in Northeast Ohio.

1992

Timothy Belavich has been appointed deputy director of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Statewide Mental Health Program, where he has served as acting deputy director since 2012. Tim has been acting director of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Division of Health Care Services since 2013. Prior to this appointment, Tim served in multiple positions at California State Prison and at San Quentin State Prison. He was a clinical psychologist at the Rehabilitation Associates of the Midwest from 1999 to 2001.

Lt. Col. Larry Colby recently completed a three-year tour as military assistant in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) and Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs) at the Pentagon and was awarded the Defense Meritorious Service Medal. He also was recently selected to attend a master of science program at The Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy, National Defense University, in Washington, D.C.

Dominic Cristelli has been promoted to director of the East region for Tribridge, a technology services firm specializing in business applications and cloud solutions.

David Granville, employment and training coordinator for Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority, was named to the Villa Maria College board of trustees.
1993
Steve DeSutter joined Focus Brands Inc., a multiconcept franchisor, as president and chief executive officer in March.

Robert Frost retired from his position as a middle school counselor at Wilson Central School. He recently published his first book, *Wounds*, a book of poems, which is available at Amazon.com or through rmfrost@yahoo.com.

Lt. Col. Mike Rutkowski joined the J8 Department at the Pentagon in June. He previously served as battalion commander.

1994 REUNION
Susan (Jachim) Latessa has joined POMCO Group as account manager.

1995
Thomas Landers has been promoted to principal on the tax team in the Bonadio Group's East Aurora, N.Y., office.

1996
Melissa (Thomas) Backus was named assistant director of the Office of Student Conduct at Rutgers University.

1998
Mike Drinkwalter has been named sales manager at The Westin Hilton Head Island Resort & Spa. He will handle all group clients in the northeast and Canada.

Patrick Whipple was appointed director of school improvement for the Genesee Valley Educational Partnership. In this role, he will assist school districts in aligning local prerogatives with state and federally mandated programs. Patrick most recently served as K-6 principal and director of pupil services for the Lyndonville, N.Y., school district.

2000
Paschal Frisina earned two master's degrees from Niagara University in May: an M.S.Ed. with certifications in social studies 5-12 and theatre arts K-12; and an M.A. in Inter-disciplinary Studies, during which he completed a capstone project on the importance of theatre arts in America. Paschal is the theatre arts director at St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute in Buffalo, N.Y. He lives in Amherst with his wife, Kristen (Nixon), '02, and children, Gabriel and Liliana.

Kelli Harris has been named chief financial officer of Crouse Hospital. She has been with Crouse since 2002 and most recently served as director of finance and patient financial services. She previously worked for Price-waterhouseCoopers.

Robert Smith IV was promoted from bank officer commercial lender to assistant vice president commercial lender at Evans Bank.

2001
Nicholas Morreale has been promoted to principal at Chiampou Travis Besaw & Kershner LLP. He joined the firm in 2006 as an audit manager and has become one of the leaders of the Employee Benefit Plan practice, responsible for coordinating the firm’s audit- and accounting-related training efforts.

Janelle Pedulla, MBA'13, was hired as an assistant accountant for the Bonadio Group’s tax team.

2002
Franco Balassone, director of the Northtowns Boys & Girls Club of Black Rock/Assumption, accepted the School Age Program Award from the Child Care Resource Network during its annual awards ceremony on May 6. His program was recognized for its responsive and committed staff who welcome all children and give them the self-confidence they need to succeed in school and in life.

Steve Weigand joined Blue Bridge Financial, LLC, as controller. Steve was most recently senior accountant with The Bonadio Group and also served as audit supervisor with Gaines Kriner Elliott LLP.

2004 REUNION
Jeremy Cortash, M.S.Ed.’05, is assistant principal at Annandale High School in the Fairfax, Va., County Public School System.

John Lechanski joined King Industries in Norwalk, Conn., as an instrument and electronics engineer. He earned a master's degree in chemical engineering in June 2013.

2005
Kevin Hinkley was hired as an associate at Lippes Mathias Wexler Friedman LLP in Buffalo.

Melissa Lanigan, tax senior associate of Dermody, Burke & Brown, CPAs, LLC, has successfully completed the certification process to earn her designation as a certified public accountant. She joined the firm in 2007.
CATCHING UP

2006
Laura DeBacco joined The OB/GYN Center at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center as coordinator. She will direct operations at the center and provide outpatient obstetric and gynecologic care for the center’s patients. She previously was a physician assistant at Mount St. Mary’s Neighborhood Health Center and at Women’s Medicine of Niagara in Lewiston. Laura holds certification from the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants, and is also certified in the use of the daVinci Robotic Surgical System. She is a member of the American Academy of Physician Assistants, New York State Society of Physician Assistants and Western New York Physician Assistant Association.

Alicia Kwiatkowski is reservations manager for the Mandarin Oriental in Miami, Fla.

Jackie Meyers has joined Annese & Associates, Inc., as a sales service specialist, based in the Syracuse office. Jackie will be responsible for developing and managing Annese Branded Services accounts which include both managed/cloud and professional service offerings across the company’s Western New York territory. She began her career at Carousel Industries in Syracuse as a marketing specialist and was most recently employed with Vandis as an account manager.

2007
Sara Carella was elected treasurer of the Leadership Niagara Executive Board. She is director of finance at Family & Children’s Service of Niagara.

Maria A. Dojka has been promoted to the position of supervising senior accountant in the accounting and auditing department at Tronconi Segarra & Associates, LLP. Maria joined the firm in 2008.

Paul Kloosterman has been named finance director for the Town of Lewiston, N.Y.

2008
Andrew Fox, MBA’09, was named a supervisor in Toski & Co.’s audit and compliance department. Toski & Co. is an EFP Rotenberg company.

Robert Ingrasci was promoted to manager at Lumsden & McCormick, LLP. He previously served as senior accountant. Robert provides tax compliance strategies to businesses and individuals concentrating on issues related to estate planning and wealth management.

Adam Lynch is an associate attorney with Lipsitz Green Scime Cambria LLP in Buffalo, N.Y.

Laura (Remmes) Markle was promoted to tax manager at Chiampou Travis Besaw & Kershner LLP.

2009 REUNION
Julianna Hawley was promoted to project manager with Waste Management in Morrison, Tenn. She previously served as a project specialist in the company’s Waco, Texas, office.

Christopher Stacey, MBA’10, was promoted from staff accountant to senior at Szymbowski & Associates CPAs, PC, in Williamsville, N.Y.

2010
Jenna (Coons) McDonnell graduated from the George Mason University School of Law in May 2013. She was admitted to the New York State Bar in January 2014 and works as an associate attorney for Gibson, McAskill & Crosby, LLP.

Justine Mejak is an academic advisor with Bryant & Stratton College in Orchard Park, N.Y., and is pursuing her master’s degree in higher education administration.

Kristen Perri joined The Martin Group in 2013 as a brand manager. Previously, Kristen served as an account executive for Wynne Creative Group.

2011
Sara Bauer was named to the St. Catharines Sports Hall of Fame for her personal hockey accomplishments, which include being a former First Team All American; a top three finalist and the winner of the Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award as the top NCAA women’s hockey player; and a former most outstanding player of the NCAA Frozen Four.

Suzanne Curry, MBA’13, joined Chiampou Travis Besaw & Kershner LLP as a staff accountant.

Maureen Lynch was promoted to vice president, speed-to-market process and portfolio management, at Rich Products Corp. She formerly served as sales and operations planning leader. Maureen was also recently named to the Women’s Foodservice Forum’s “Making Their Mark” list.
Alexis Lyon was named to the tax and audit department at Dannible & McKee, LLP, Syracuse, N.Y. Previously, she was a staff accountant with the Bonadio Group's Rochester office.

Daniel Montante, MBA’12, has been promoted to in charge accountant on the audit team in the Bonadio Group’s Amherst, N.Y., office.

Megan Spiegelhoff was hired as a risk analyst at Walsh Duffield Companies Inc. in Buffalo, N.Y.

Matthew Stacey, MBA’12, was hired as an in charge accountant for the Bonadio Group’s tax team.

David Wesolowski, MBA’13, was hired as staff accountant at Lumsden & McCormick, LLP in Buffalo.

Michael Zeoli Jr., MBA’13, was hired as a staff accountant at Tronconi Segarra & Associates LLP in Williamsville, N.Y.

2012

Eric Fry joined Chiampou Travis Besaw & Kershner LLP as a staff accountant.

Michelle Martineau joined Chiampou Travis Besaw & Kershner LLP as a staff accountant.

Deborah Micholas received the 2014 Nursing Distinguished Preceptor Award from the University at Buffalo School of Nursing. She works in the surgical recovery/orthopedic unit at Kenmore Mercy Hospital.

Leah Pollack, MBA’13, was hired by The Bonadio Group as an assistant accountant for the Healthcare/Tax Exempt West team.

Morgan Weir, MBA’13, joined Chiampou Travis Besaw & Kershner LLP as a staff accountant.

2013

Andrae Bent joined Toski & Co.’s audit and compliance department. Toski & Co. is an EFP Rotenberg company.

Lindsey Bowman was promoted from marketing assistant to tourism sales coordinator at The Niagara Tourism & Convention Corp. She assists the director of tourism sales in generating business from the group and consumer markets.

Matthew Dombrowski was hired by The Bonadio Group as an assistant accountant for the Government Compliance and Labor team.

Sarah Gagne is working in the Tax and Business Services Department in EFP Rotenberg, LLP’s Canandaigua office.

Nicholas Iacona was promoted to group ticket representative with the Buffalo Bisons. He has been with the club's public relations game-day staff for the last two years.

Kelsey Kuppingger was named a staff accountant at Lumsden & McCormick, a Buffalo certified public accounting firm.

Jesse Lewandowski, MBA’13, joined Chiampou Travis Besaw & Kershner as a staff accountant.

Allie Martucci joined Keenan Communications Group as an associate, focusing on social media and public relations.

Karen Miranda was hired as an administrative and accounting assistant at Walsh Duffield Companies Inc. in Buffalo.

MARRIAGES

Kristy Cragg, ’00, married Adam Sokol, ’09, on Sept. 13, 2013.


Sara Umhauer, ’08, married Kerry Hall on Sept. 21, 2013.

Heather Black, ’09, married Andrew McCue, ’09, on Sept. 8, 2013.

Mary Hooper, ’10, married Jeffrey Skrzynski on Sept. 7, 2013.


Christopher Baxter, ’11, married Brenna Miller, ’11, on June 1, 2013.

BIRTHS AND ADOPTIONS

Melissa (Thomas) Backus, ’96, and her husband, Richard, welcomed a son, Nolan Thomas, on Dec. 18, 2013.

Charles Cutler, ’96, and his wife, Lisa, welcomed a daughter, Analisa Rose, on Feb. 5, 2014.

Eric, ’97, and Terry Lynn (Sheesley) Herr, ’97, welcomed a son, Grayson David, on Dec. 9, 2013.


Pete, ’99, MBA,’00, and Sheryl (Klick) Strobl, ’00, welcomed a daughter, Vienika, on March 7, 2014. She joins brothers Pete Jr., Kaiser and Bastien.

Kelly (Crumb) Moran, ’00, and her husband, John, welcomed a daughter, Leah Mary, on Jan. 9, 2014.

Viviana Olvera-Matasaru, ’00, and her husband, Sebastian, welcomed a son, Nathaniel Joseph, on March 7, 2014. He joins brother, Ty, and sister, Mia.

IN MEMORIUM


Colleen (Smith) Neffke, ’06, and her husband, Adam, welcomed twin daughters Savannah Rose and Adie on Jan. 14, 2013. We are sad to report that Savannah passed away on Sept. 30, 2013. Our condolences to Colleen and her family.

Michael, ’09, and Lindsay (Kriger) Johnson, ’08, welcomed a son, Colton Michael, on June 19, 2013.

To have a Mass celebrated at Alumni Chapel, call NU’s Campus Ministry Office at 716.286.8400.


Louis J. Pacella, ’49, passed away on April 17, 2014.


John A. Guthlein, ’52, passed away on Nov. 25, 2013.


Our condolences to Myra (Smith) Milleville, ’52, on the death of her husband, Arthur Milleville, who passed away on Dec. 1, 2013.


Chester J. Jablonski, ’53, passed away on April 25, 2014.


Donald W. Homik, ’56, passed away on March 27, 2014.


Jerome N. Clune, ’58, passed away on April 8, 2014. Our condolences to his brother, Robert Clune, ’58, and to his sister-in-law, JoAnn Clune, ’58.

Gerald E. Hund, ’58, passed away on April 13, 2014.


Hugh Murphy, ’59, passed away on Nov. 21, 2013.


Peter W. Gallivan Sr., ’60, passed away on Dec. 12, 2013.

Our condolences to Carolyn Morris Lambert, ’62, on the death of her husband, Dr. Benjamin J. Lambert III, who passed away on March 2, 2014.


Dorothy (Edgette) Bigham, ’67, passed away on Feb. 9, 2014. Our condolences to Chuck Edgette, ’60, and Col. Peter Edgette, ’67; and to her sister, Carol (Edgette) Rossi, ’74.

Peter C. Buckley, ’68, passed away on July 8, 2013. Our condolences to his sisters, Ellen (Buckley) McGuinn, ’70, and Ann (Buckley) Wenzel, ’75.

Sister Margaret Mary Gleason, M.S.Ed.’71, passed away on Dec. 10, 2013.

Sarah Maria Rotella, ’71, M.S.Ed.’75, passed away on March 4, 2014.


John J. Pilato Sr., ’72, passed away on Nov. 15, 2013. Our condolences to his grandson, John C. Pilato, ’12.

Thomas C. Prendergast III, ’72, passed away on Dec. 9, 2013.


William Duff, ’73, M.S.Ed.’95, M.S.Ed.’97, passed away on Dec. 15, 2013.

Ronald T. Goss, ’73, passed away on April 19, 2014.


Our condolences to Maryliz Tompkins Valli, ’74, on the death of her father, Gerald Walter Tompkins, who passed away on Feb. 19, 2014.

Our condolences to Richard Ruhl, ’75, on the death of his mother, and to Tracie (Lannen) Puzzella, ’04, on the death of her aunt, Alice N. Ruhl, who passed away on Aug. 20, 2013.

Werner Birrer, M.S.Ed.’76, passed away on Nov. 19, 2013.

Our condolences to Josephine Loughlin, ’76, on the death of her mother, Helen Latus Loughlin, who passed away on Jan. 18, 2014.

Anthony O’Connor, ’76, passed away on March 25, 2014. Our condolences to his wife, Mary (Frio) O’Connor, ’76.


Our condolences to Lynn Reilly, ’78, and to Tara (Reilly) Kirkpatrick, ’88, on the death of their father, Francis A. Reilly, who passed away on Oct. 24, 2013.


Our condolences to Margaret Paolini, ’81, on the death of her mother, Jane Paolini, who passed away on Nov. 17, 2012.

Bruce Dent, ’82, passed away on Dec. 1, 2013. Our condolence to his wife, Robin (Lineberger) Dent, ’83.

Daniel G. McCann, ’86, passed away on Nov. 28, 2013.


Frederick L. Goltz, ’92, passed away on March 16, 2014.

Nairn Tait, ’92, passed away on Nov. 5, 2013.


Morgan C. Brooks, Ph.D., associate professor of mental health counseling at NU, passed away on Feb. 1, 2014.

Barry S. Donner, former NU professor of law, passed away on April 13, 2014.

On April 25-26, Niagara University Rugby Football Club alumni returned to Monteagle Ridge for their 38th annual reunion weekend. The weekend included a mixer, a rugby match, and a banquet and awards dinner. Rob Jochen, ’07, of the Modern Era (left) and Bill Loftus, ’82, of the Classic Era, were inducted into the NURFC Hall of Fame during the dinner. They are pictured with the Rev. James Maher, C.M., NU’s president.
Good afternoon. Greetings of peace to each of you, those who sit up front and those who sit in front of those up front, those who sit at the sides, and those who sit anywhere I’ve not mentioned, peace. We gather for an important occasion in the life of Niagara University, the inauguration of the university’s 26th president, Father James Maher.

This is also a significant moment for the students, faculty and staff of the university, and the residents of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, Western New York, and our neighbors in Ontario. For myself, I am honored to be the spokesperson for the community.

We welcome you, Father Maher. We welcome you as a community leader, as an educator, and as our brother. We are happy to have you among us.

Through the influence and guidance of the Vincentian community, Niagara University has thrived and given abundant witness to the legacy and tradition of St. Vincent de Paul. Quite literally, you stand on the shoulders of the many that have gone before you, your Vincentian brothers and the women and men who served with them at Niagara since 1856. These shoulders provide you with remarkable support and offer challenge on your inauguration day.

The residents of our city and county yearn for fresh and creative ways to address the serious social and economic needs experienced by our sisters and brothers living in poverty. The university, and you as president, are uniquely positioned to lead, inspire and call students, faculty, staff, and area leaders to work together, in order to renew, repair, and address systems and policies that perpetuate poverty and hold the community captive.

We look forward with anticipation to your leadership. We know you will be accountable to the Vincentian tradition, to the ancestors who hold you on their shoulders through their example and sacrifice.

Now, more than ever, we need the clarity and charity of St. Vincent in caring for the poor, and we need new St. Vincents birthed among Niagara students to be leaders in a world where so many people live in desperation without sufficient food, adequate education, housing, and personal dignity. We challenge you to lead Niagara in being a powerful force for good and to constructively push away roadblocks that allow poverty to hold our region hostage.

You are in the prime of your life. Spend your “prime-time” working diligently to serve the university, and to be a catalyst for change in the community; we need you. With St. Vincent as your inspiration, we pray that you take to heart his wise counsel to “never feel excused from the responsibility of working for the poor.” We promise to support you with our prayers, to challenge you with our questions, and to accompany you on the journey ahead.

Sister Beth Brosmer, OSF
Executive Director of Heart, Love & Soul Food pantry in Niagara Falls, was one of the speakers. Her presentation follows.
Come celebrate with fellow classmates this October and make this a reunion to remember! Niagara’s Alumni Weekend 2014 celebrates classes with years ending in 4's and 9's, but we welcome all alumni to join the party and the fun!

In addition to old favorites like the Welcome Back Social and the Alumni Celebration Dinner, we’ve added a special 50+ Eagles Mass and brunch for alumni from the Class of 1963 and before. We’re also spotlighting our club and intramural sports alumni during a special social in the Kiernan Center.

Mark your calendar now and look for a formal invitation to come.

Save the Date
Alumni Weekend 2014 • Oct. 9-12, 2014