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While the tide of public perception has begun to shift back in favor of higher education, the impetus remains — as it should — on colleges and universities to demonstrate their societal value.

In recent years, critics argued that a college diploma wasn’t worth the investment. Cynics suggested that young people should bypass college and insert themselves directly into the workforce.

For some, that’s the correct path. For most, recent data paints a much different picture.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics, in its report from the second quarter of 2015, found that the median earnings for a full-time worker who held at least a bachelor’s degree were $532 per week higher than their peers who earned only a high school diploma. This comes on the heels of data showing that the unemployment rate for a high school diploma recipient is double (5.4 percent) that of someone possessing an undergraduate degree.

By 2020, almost two-thirds of American jobs will require some form of postsecondary education beyond high school. And three of the world’s fastest-growing occupations (STEM, healthcare professionals, and community services) require postsecondary schooling.

Make no mistake, education arms people with the skills to achieve success.

To improve the productivity of American workers, we need to create more coherent and effective education and workforce development systems, focusing (though not exclusively) on disadvantaged youth and adults. In our global, knowledge-based economy, competitive advantage comes from a talented and trained workforce. As President Obama noted, “Education is an economic issue when we know that countries that out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow.”

The solution to our economic challenges is not to underinvest in college. Rather, it’s to increase affordability and accessibility to education, a major focus of my presidency at Niagara University. It’s also to streamline college and university operations, and realign institutional priorities to complement the needs and objectives of our region, country, and the world.

Already wielded an annual economic impact of $227 million, Niagara University’s plan is to become even more intertwined with the long-term economic success of Western New York. We’ve constructed the B. Thomas Golisano Center for Integrated Sciences and re instituted our nursing programs to support the growth of the health and life sciences in our region. Meanwhile, the Niagara Global Tourism Institute will help Niagara Falls fulfill its enormous promise as an international tourism destination.

The onus is on academic institutions to train young people in disciplines that meet the demands of firms and sectors that offer sustainable career paths. At Niagara University, this philosophy is evident in the establishment of new programs in nursing, STEM education, computer science, sport management, TESOL, and healthcare administration.

Does this mean that Niagara will abandon its longstanding tradition of preparing students in the liberal arts in favor of straight vocational training? Not by a long shot.

Niagara University has been — and always will be — an institution that values “STEAM” education, placing the arts at the core of the studies of science, technology, engineering, and math. Several recent studies have found that applied skills such as oral communication, critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork are at least as valuable to career success as technical training. After all, what CEO wouldn’t value an employee with creative, communicative, and problem-solving acumen?

As Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times columnist David Leonhardt explained to our new graduates during his commencement address last May, “College forces you to complete an obstacle course of life. You have far more autonomy. You must make many more decisions. You have many more chances to fail. Once you do, you need to pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and find another way to solve the problem in front of you. You need to rethink the problem and improvise.

“Learning how to complete such an obstacle course, gaining the confidence that you can complete one — sometimes brilliantly, sometimes just across the line — brings even more value than any book or any problem set does. When you think of college in these terms, when you think of it giving you a lifelong confidence, even if you fail along the way, you understand why college matters.”

When students matriculate through college, they come to understand the importance of passion and perseverance. In many ways, Niagara has utilized these same traits to emerge from these trying times for higher education stronger and more vibrant than ever.

By demonstrating our value to students and families, we have surpassed our goal for incoming freshman deposits. Our freshman-to-sophomore retention rate is at an all-time high. Graduate enrollment for the fall is trending significantly ahead of 2014. We are attracting more international students than ever before.

Niagara University is in the business of educating individuals for the betterment of society, framed by the service-oriented vision of St. Vincent de Paul. Like any business, we are beholden to our customers and stakeholders: you, our students, alumni, and friends.

We are laser-focused on providing you with the most efficient return on investment for your educational dollar. We absolutely cherish the blessing of creating successful futures for our students. That, Niagarans, is a responsibility we value immensely.

Should you have ideas on how we can further enhance the value of a Niagara University degree, please feel free to contact me at president@niagara.edu.

Until then,
Rev. James J. Maher, C.M.
President
Niagara University delivers the most value for a student’s educational dollar among all private colleges and universities in the Buffalo–Niagara region, according to Money magazine’s 2015 Best Colleges. NU was the highest ranked private institution in the area in the study released in August, which evaluated roughly 1,500 American schools on 21 measures of educational quality, affordability, and career earnings.

In addition, the university has attained several other national recognitions, including being named to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll in the categories of General Community Service and Education, and to U.S. Veterans magazine’s list of “Top Veteran-Friendly Schools.” The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching cited NU for its programs and activities in curricular engagement, community outreach, and partnerships. In addition, The Princeton Review listed Niagara among its most environmentally responsible colleges in the country; on its “Best in the Northeast” list of institutions in recognition of both academics and sustainability; and on its list of “Green Colleges” for demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainability in academic offerings, campus infrastructure, activities, and career preparation.

Statewide, NU’s campus is one of the best, according to student rankings compiled by Niche.com, which was founded in 2002 by Carnegie Mellon University. NU’s rank of 20 placed it among the top 2 percent in New York state and was the highest for any private institution in Western New York.

Law Day (May 1) was a fitting day for the official establishment of the long-awaited Niagara Law Center, a collaboration between Niagara University and the Bar Association of Niagara County. Bar President Matthew Mosher and Niagara University Provost Dr. Timothy Downs signed the cooperation agreement for the NLC.

The center has been operating since March, when it hosted its first Continuing Legal Education course on the university campus, bringing lawyers and jurists — including the Niagara County district attorney — to a six-hour Criminal Procedure Practicum.

Jada Pierce, who has 18 years of collegiate coaching experience at the Division I and II levels, has been named the eighth head coach in the history of the Niagara University women’s basketball program. Pierce has built a reputation as a dynamic player developer while creating effective defensive schemes throughout her coaching career with stops as an assistant at programs in the Atlantic 10, Patriot League, Northeast Conference, MAAC, and America East, as well as head coaching experience at the Division II level. She has coached 23 all-conference players, three defensive players of the year, 17 all-academic honorees, two WNBA players, and assisted four programs to five NCAA Tournament berths.

The Rev. James J. Maher, C.M., D.Min., Niagara University’s president, celebrated his 25th anniversary of priesthood on May 9. A Eucharistic Liturgy in Alumni Chapel was followed by dinner in the Castellani Art Museum to recognize the momentous occasion.

Father Maher was also included among Business First’s 2015 “Power 250,” a list of the men and women who (in its opinion) wield the most influence in Western New York, and was named the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference’s representative to the NCAA Presidential Advisory Group, part of the NCAA Division I governance structure.

He was also named a 2015 Adult Honoree by the Trey Whitfield Foundation for his commitment to ensuring that higher education, specifically at Niagara University, is accessible and affordable to young people as they pursue their dreams and live the mission of the foundation, which was founded in 1989 to commemorate the life and spirit of Trey Whitfield, a young student-athlete from Brooklyn who died tragically just prior to his high school graduation.

Ndaba Mandela, the grandson of Nelson Mandela, addressed a standing-room-only crowd at Niagara University’s Castellani Art Museum in January. In his hour-long keynote address, he spoke of the laughs, laments, and lessons learned from living with an iconic grandfather who went from prisoner to president and built a nation. The event highlighted a week’s worth of activities in observance of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

A $1 million gift from the Eastern Province of the Congregation of the Mission, received in January, will enable NU to establish an endowed fund to make scholarships available to incoming students who are in good academic standing and have demonstrated an affinity to the university’s Catholic and Vincentian mission through outstanding participation in service activities in high school, as well as to incoming freshmen or current NU students who are part of the international Vincentian community.

Salvatore “Sam” Santarosa, ’69, owner of the Santarosa Group, and Courtland “Cory” Van Deusen V, ’01, a partner with Lumsden & McCormick LLP, were among the honorees at the College of Business Administration’s annual Business Appreciation and Accounting Banquet in April. Santarosa received the Corporate Leadership Award, while Van Deusen was chosen as this year’s Distinguished Accounting Alumnus.

Niagara is enhancing its international presence with several new initiatives: academic articulation agreements with Fih Foreign Trade University in Hanoi City, Vietnam, and the Shanghai Lixin University of Commerce; a memorandum of understanding with Meio University in Okinawa, Japan; and a formal partnership with Dong Nai Technology University, a private institution based in Bien Hoa City, Vietnam.

In addition, a new partnership with De La Salle College “Oaklands” now enables NU’s College of Education to offer its bachelor of professional studies program in teacher education at another location in the Province of Ontario. NU has operated under the consent of the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities in Ontario since 1984.

Niagara University’s Purple Eagle Battalion was recognized during this year’s annual United States Army Cadet Command 2nd Brigade Leader Conference with having the highest overall average GPA, the highest average physical fitness score, and the highest average order of merit score of all 42 Reserve Officer Training Corps programs in the Northeast.
Mary E. Borgognoni, formerly associate vice president for operations and outreach at NU, has been appointed senior vice president for operations and finance. She came to NU in the mid-1990s when she was hired as an assistant director of institutional research, and was promoted three times during her first tenure at the university, eventually to director of foundations and grants. In 2003, Mary accepted a position at another institution of higher education, but returned to Niagara in January 2005 to work in the Executive Vice President’s Office, and recently spent nine months as the university’s interim vice president for institutional advancement.

Four Niagara University athletic programs were recognized in the 2015 NCAA Division I Academic Performance Program for ranking in the top 10 percent in their respective sport. Niagara men’s and women’s cross country, men’s golf, and women’s basketball all had scores in the top 10 percent in their respective sport. This is the fifth straight top-10 ranking for the women’s cross country program and the fourth straight for the men’s cross country team. The women’s basketball and men’s golf programs are in the top 10 for the second consecutive report.

Sam Santarosa, ’69 (center, left), president of The Santarosa Group, received the Corporate Leadership Award at the College of Business Administration’s annual Business Appreciation and Accounting Banquet in April, while Cory Van Deusen V, ’01 (center, right), a partner with Lumsden & McCormick LLP, was chosen as this year’s Distinguished Accounting Alumnus. Both are pictured with NU’s president, the Rev. James J. Maher, C.M., and Dr. Shawn Daly, dean of the college.
A School of Nursing has officially been established at Niagara University. The change in designation from a "department" to a "school" is an academic distinction viewed internally as a strategic branding opportunity for Niagara’s flourishing cadre of nursing programs.

Frances S. Crosby, ’67, Ed.D., who chaired the Niagara nursing department since 2006, will serve as director of the new School of Nursing. Michael H. Ackerman, ’80, DNS, assumes the position of associate director.

The School of Nursing will remain housed under the university’s College of Arts and Sciences.

In addition, a grand opening of the $1.5 million Nursing Simulation Center took place Sept. 10. The state-of-the-art facility will provide “hands-on” opportunities for students to manage patient encounters and skills in a risk-free, virtual reality environment, while supporting traditional classroom learning and clinical practice experiences.

A $150,000 grant from the Margaret L. Wendt Foundation assisted in funding the construction of this center.

Niagara University has received unanimous approval to have 24,409 square feet of its campus designated as a Start-Up NY tax-free zone, and will now seek to attract eligible businesses that support its academic mission and whose priorities align with the strategic investment areas determined by the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council.

The initiative is viewed on campus as another way for Niagara to solidify its position as a key driver in the continuing economic development of the region. The university’s economic impact on the local region is estimated to exceed $227 million annually.

Edward J. Brennan, ’78, retired chairman of DFS Group and founder of Hand in Hand for Haiti; Kathryn T. Hutchinson, Ph.D., vice president for the Division of Student Affairs at St. John’s University; and Cheryl A. Klass, RN, ’77, senior vice president of operations for Kaleida Health and president of Buffalo General Medical Center, were named to Niagara’s Board of Trustees in March.

NU students took top honors in a variety of areas during the spring semester. A team of three marketing students won the top prize in a case study competition held by the Rochester chapter of the American Marketing Association, while NU’s student chapter of the Club Managers Association of America was named the best in the nation for a sixth consecutive year.

NU freshman Michael Crockett and sophomore Jonathan Sandonato, both computer and information sciences majors, were chosen to participate in the North American regional competition of the Bi-Annual Student Safety Technology Design Competition.

Marlen Krause, a student matriculating toward a dual degree from Niagara University and the International University of Applied Sciences in Germany, won second place in the Undergraduate Student Research Forum during the 2015 Korea America Hospitality and Tourism Educators Association Conference in April.

Clark Davis, a graduate student in Niagara’s middle childhood and adolescence education program, and Andrea Nicolia, a school counseling graduate student, were among eight selected by Kappa Delta Pi, the international honor society in education, to facilitate leadership training this summer to students in grades 6-12 from 140 countries.

Gerontology senior Kimberly Kennedy was selected as the recipient of the North Atlantic Region of Soroptimist International of the Americas’ Ethel F. Lord Fellowship Award, and James Mackey, a junior hospitality major, was named a 2015 Newman Civic Fellow by Campus Compact for demonstrating outstanding leadership and civic engagement.

Twelve clients of Catholic Charities of Buffalo’s Immigration and Refugee Assistance Program were conferred certificates in June during a ceremony celebrating the completion of the first Hospitality and Tourism Training Institute class. The 10-week hospitality/tourism industry-focused training is in partnership with NU’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management.

Dr. Debra Colley received the Community Leader Award in Education in January from the National Foundation of Just Communities of Western New York. Dr. Colley, formerly dean of the College of Education, was named NU’s executive vice president in June. She succeeds Dr. Bonnie Rose, who spent a decade as EVP. With the promotion, Dr. Colley will become Niagara University’s senior administrative officer under the Rev. James J. Maher, C.M., president. Dr. Chandra Foote will serve as interim dean of NU’s College of Education for the 2015-2016 academic year.

Several other administrators and faculty members were also honored by various organizations over the past several months. The Rev. Kevin G. Creagh, C.M., vice president for university mission and ministry, was named to the “Irish Education 100” by the Irish Voice newspaper. The “Irish Education 100,” now in its sixth year, honors leading educators of Irish descent.

Dr. Carrie Teresa, assistant professor of communication studies, received the 2015 Margaret A. Blanchard Doctoral Dissertation Prize from the American Journalism Historians Association, while Dr. William D. Frye, associate professor of hospitality and tourism management, is the 2015 recipient of the Anthony Marshall Prize from the American Journalism Historians Association, while Dr. William D. Frye, associate professor of hospitality and tourism management, is the 2015 recipient of the Anthony Marshall Award, presented by the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute.

Tom Lowe, director of ReNU Niagara, added another honor to his résumé when he was named Leadership Niagara’s Emerging Leader of the Year during the organization’s annual awards luncheon in April.

Niagara University’s Academic Exploration Program, which helps undeclared students find a major that best suits their needs and talents — while making sure they graduate on time — was honored by the National Academic Advising Association with its Outstanding Institutional Advising Program Award. AEP was one of only four programs nationwide to receive this award.
The Niagara University men’s club hockey team won its second consecutive Northeast Collegiate Hockey League championship in February, defeating the University at Buffalo, 5-4. This marks the first time in league history that the NECHL’s regular season champion also won the tournament.

Classes in NU’s new master’s degree program in healthcare administration began this fall. The program, offered through NU’s AACSB-accredited College of Business Administration, will provide the skills and knowledge to aid students desiring to work as administrators in traditional healthcare settings, such as hospitals, nursing homes and physician practices, as well as healthcare suppliers and consultants.

NU also launched a new undergraduate economics curriculum for students seeking to study the theory of business in the context of a broader liberal arts education. The B.A. program in economics will focus on the liberal arts and emphasize academic research.

Nursing instructor MariaLouise Frasini Gadawski shows the Rev. James J. Maher, C.M., NU’s president, some of the technology available in the new Nursing Simulation Center.
Fulbright Teaching Assistant Shares Culture With Students

By Lisa McMahon, M.A.’09

On a sunny April afternoon, students in Dr. Esteban Mayorga’s Introduction to Latin American Studies class participated in a discussion about Che Guevara. What made this particular discussion unique was the guest lecturer: Florencia Yuvero, an Argentinian who spent the spring semester at Niagara University as a Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant.

Since 1968, the FLTA Program has endeavored to strengthen foreign language instruction at U.S. educational institutions by establishing a native speaker presence in the classroom. The program provides an opportunity for young, international teachers to increase their knowledge of American culture while sharing the values and customs of their own countries.

Growing up in a small Argentinian town, Florencia was always interested in linguistics and the origins of words. She began studying English at the age of 12 and continued her studies in public translation at the National University of Córdoba, where she also served as a student assistant in the university’s School of Languages. After earning her degree as a public translator of English, she moved to Buenos Aires, where she obtained a job as a translator for the courts and membership in the Sworn Translators’ Association of the City of Buenos Aires.

Because the job market for translators was extremely competitive, Florencia also took on work as an English and Spanish teacher for speakers of other languages. She notes that Buenos Aires has many different “speaking communities” which are learning Spanish and English as second or third languages, and says that it is difficult for individuals in these communities to succeed in their professional and personal lives without a good grasp of the Spanish and English languages.

“I became interested in how to help those persons who have problems with languages, especially the younger generation,” she says.

To that end, she applied for a Fulbright Award. “My aim was to try to find answers to the question of how to help these students to acquire skills to understand language so that they can communicate in the best possible way and succeed,” she says.

Florencia was selected as an FLTA, and on Jan. 12, 2015, she arrived at Niagara University. For the next four months, she assisted Dr. James McCutcheon, associate professor of modern and classical languages, and Dr. Esteban Mayorga, assistant professor of Spanish and coordinator of the Latin American studies program. Florencia’s role included work in the university’s translation lab and with the conversation tables held in the Gallagher Center, assistant teaching, tutoring, grading homework and exams, and giving university and community lectures.

“Florencia enhanced my classes by bringing real South American anecdotal and theoretical experience to the discussion,” says Dr. Mayorga.

Because one of the goals of the program is to develop Americans’ knowledge of foreign cultures, Florencia was involved in several activities to share traditional Argentinian life with her students. She prepared classic foods such as empanadas, a stuffed pastry, and alfajores, lemon sandwich cookies filled with dulce de leche and rolled in coconut; held a raffle for a book by writer Jorge Luis Borges; discussed cinema through the viewing of Argentinian soap operas; and shared her music by giving basic Tango lessons.

In addition to her work as a teaching assistant, Florencia took two courses and volunteered to work on a public history project with Stephanie Bucalo, a lecturer in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages. The project, coordinated by the Hispanic Heritage Council of WNY, Inc., the Randforce Associates, LLC, and the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library, endeavors to document the Hispanic experience in Western New York since the beginning of the 20th century up until present day. Florencia assisted in translating some of the more than 50 interviews that have been collected.

While her work at Niagara kept her busy, Florencia still found time for travel. She went to Boston, New York City, and Washington, D.C., where she visited other universities, museums, and the White House. During her travels, she became more aware of the language barriers many Hispanic communities in the U.S. face, experiences she draws upon as she returns to her students in Argentina.

Ultimately, Florencia hopes that her semester in America will enable her to bring new and creative ideas to her home country to help her launch a company that provides linguistic services to foreign language learners.

“The experience has been enriching because you meet people from different places and learn from their experiences,” she says.
If the winners of the inaugural EntreprenU competition achieve their goals, Niagara Falls’ food desert will become a lot more fertile.

The Community Kitchen, proposed by juniors Maggie Hempel, Mackenzie Kutzuba, and Victoria Swider, was selected as the best idea by a panel of judges during a Shark Tank inspired event that concluded the poverty-focused social entrepreneurship competition. The facility will provide a central location in the north end of Niagara Falls where local residents can purchase healthy food at an affordable cost and learn how to use it to make nutritious meals for themselves and their families.

The judges, Congressman Brian Higgins, Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster, Field & Fork Network Executive Director Lisa Tucker, Sodexo General Manager Deirdre Bartholomew, and prominent local businessman Craig Avery, chose the girls’ idea over those of two other student teams.

“We were very impressed by the ambition and hard work of all nine students who presented today,” noted Tucker. “At the end of the day, we felt that The Community Kitchen had the best chance of hitting the ground running.”

The competition began with a launch party in September, during which students were challenged to develop new, self-sustaining, innovative ways to bring high-quality, low-cost food to Niagara Falls residents living in “food deserts,” areas where people do not have adequate access to groceries.

Intrigued by the idea of social entrepreneurship, Maggie, Mackenzie, and Victoria attended the event to learn more about the competition guidelines. Encouraged by what they heard, the three decided to form a team.

Their idea developed during the fall semester. The girls attended discussions on poverty and access to healthy food, as well as a series of workshops on innovative thinking, and met with community members to learn more about the realities and challenges they confront to put healthy food on the table. After doing some additional research and finding a similar program in another state, the students decided to pursue the idea of a community kitchen.

Guided by the tagline “Access. Knowledge. Community,” and inspired by the popularity of cooking shows, the students created a business plan for a facility where people could buy fresh food and learn how to cook it so that they can prepare healthy meals at home.

“We wanted to teach people new, fun ways to cook foods that they normally wouldn’t know how to cook, in a nutritious manner,” Maggie explains.

The students knew that they were on the right track after Mackenzie and Victoria visited Heart, Love and Soul, a pantry, kitchen, and dining room in Niagara Falls, and saw a box full of lentils on the shelf. Sister Beth Brosmer, the organization’s director, told them that their guests don’t take the lentils because they don’t know how to cook them.

“That was what solidified the idea,” says Mackenzie. “We could show people how to make something that’s available to them, something healthy that they would want to eat, so they would know how to prepare it in the future.”

In December, the girls, along with approximately 100 other students from more than 30 teams, competed for a cash prize of $500 and the opportunity to make a final pitch to the community for startup funding. They were chosen as one of three finalists and, on March 30, the girls stood on stage in the Leary Theatre to give a 10-minute presentation and answer questions posed by the panel of judges. After the panelists deliberated, the girls were awarded a check for $10,000 in startup funds to begin implementing their plan.

Now that their idea has been selected, their real work lies ahead. The three are scouting locations where their teaching kitchen can be established, and hoping to partner with a community organization to mitigate costs and drive awareness.

“It’s going to be hard to get people to come initially,” Maggie admits. “It’s a barrier we have to break.”

They are also meeting with people who can help them develop a comprehensive business plan and those who might be interested in investing in their idea. To raise revenue in the meantime, Victoria notes that they may partner with an organization to set up a food stand.

“Even if the kitchen doesn’t come right away, we can get into the community and do a pop-up market,” she says. “We need to have a good solid income to get a chef and start the kitchen.”

The girls acknowledged that the challenge ahead is a bit intimidating, but that their efforts will be rewarded when the kitchen opens.

“That will be the best day of my life,” Mackenzie says.
Father Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., is noticeably relaxed on this sunny April day, 14 years of university presidency etched into his rearview mirror.

He's meeting with Niagara University alumni and friends in his office, the very room he lived in when the Gacioch Center was still called Meade Hall and before the word “emeritus” followed “president” in his title.

Although the space has since been renovated, much of the office furniture now is the same as it was back then, accentuated by new artwork and mementos Father Levesque collected during his term as the fourth longest-tenured president in Niagara University’s history. Sure, he’s no longer president, but Father Levesque is still very present.

Yet people are often surprised when they see him around town, even though he returned to campus — for good — last summer.

That’s because after stepping down as NU’s president, Father Levesque answered a call from the Vincentian community to serve as interim president of St. John’s University. He would attend special engagements in Western New York periodically, only to return to Queens, N.Y., shortly thereafter.

Father Levesque’s official Niagara homecoming was Aug. 1, 2014. He subsequently underwent successful knee surgery, which required about three months of rehabilitation. With that process behind him, Father Levesque is eager to ramp up his involvement in the local community.

“I’m back, ready to do more,” he said.

Father Levesque, as denoted by his new role as president emeritus, assists the university in ways “designated by the current president.” Specifically, he is focused on advancing two initiatives — student scholarships and civic engagement — that were hallmarks of his presidency and remain pillars of Niagara University’s strategic plan.

“From his inaugural address in 2000, when he pledged that Niagara University would be a great friend to the community, to his current role as president emeritus, Father Levesque has always been faithful to our Vincentian mission,” notes Father James J. Maher, C.M., the 26th president.
of Niagara University. “Father Levesque is an outstanding educator, priest and Vincentian. It is wonderful to have him back on campus, witnessing firsthand the realization of his vision.”

Fundraising for an endowed scholarship named in his honor is among Father Levesque’s top priorities. The scholarship, which is now close to 80 percent of the way toward reaching its $500,000 target, is available to NU students who live in a rural community from one of Western New York’s eight counties.

At the same time, Father Levesque is intent on reinforcing Niagara University’s Catholic and Vincentian commitment to serving those in need through the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., Institute for Civic Engagement. The Levesque Institute, established in September 2011, is the primary resource for community members looking to partner with NU’s students, faculty, and staff. Attached to a fundraising goal of $1 million, it encompasses three of the university’s flagship service programs: Learn and Serve Niagara, ReNU Niagara, and Border Community SERVICE.

As his previous modus operandi would suggest, Father Levesque is an information gatherer, keen on listening to the needs of the underserved before acting. He places great trust in the vision of Dr. David Taylor, director of the institute, whom he calls “the principal leader of all the good work that is done in the institute, along with some of his very dedicated colleagues.” He’ll also admit that he doesn’t have all of the answers, which is why he meets often with individuals like Robert Gioia, president of The John R. Oishei Foundation, and Jim Glynn, the 1957 NU graduate and Maid of the Mist chairman who is invested in numerous community-minded organizations.

“I really like all of the things we’re currently doing with the institute,” Father Levesque says. “The way I’m wired, I like getting involved in the community. I’ve been calling people in to ask, ‘What is needed in our community? What can this institute do that it is not now doing?’”

Father Levesque believes that there is opportunity to expand the institute’s work as it relates to addressing the issues of poverty and homelessness. In Niagara Falls, 44 percent of the population is either living in poverty or hovering dangerously close to the federal poverty level, according to a recent study by The Oishei Foundation.

The Levesque Institute has co-hosted a conference each of the last three years that brought together agencies and thought-leaders aimed at stemming the tide of local poverty and homelessness. Father Levesque’s intent is to enhance, not replace, the extraordinary work being carried out by many organizations like Community Missions, the Niagara Falls Housing Authority, and Heart, Love and Soul, to name a few.

“I’d like the institute to be a part of resolving the needs of the poor and homeless, if we can be,” he explains.

In addition to civic engagement, Father Levesque has been asked to offer presentations and talks in the community, and that type of work, including class lectures, might happen again in the near future. Yes, it sounds like he wants to do many of the things for the community and NU as he has done in the past.

Presently, however, Father Levesque is concentrating his efforts on uncovering new ways (and augmenting existing ones) that Niagara University can better serve the people of Western New York. The North Tarrytown, N.Y., native has retained his seat as a board member for the Niagara USA Chamber and is open to similar opportunities with other organizations that elevate the Niagara-Buffalo region, his adopted home.

“This — Niagara University … Western New York — is where I feel most comfortable. This has become my home.”

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**Help Support the Levesque Scholarship Fund**

In honor of his work and dedication to Niagara University, the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., Endowed Scholarship has been established. By contributing to the scholarship, you honor the legacy of a president and priest who has been deeply committed to impacting the lives of his students as well as those in the surrounding community.

Please use this form to make your gift to the Levesque Scholarship fund, or make a gift securely online at www.niagaraalumni.com.

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Stahura Takes the Helm
On June 1, 2015, Dr. Kurt A. Stahura took the helm of Niagara University’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, succeeding former dean Dr. Gary Praetzel and signaling the beginning of a new chapter in the world-renowned college’s history.

“I am honored to succeed Dr. Praetzel. He has established Niagara University’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management as one of the very best in the world,” Dr. Stahura says. “I hope to continue his standards of excellence in teaching, research and service, all of which support quality student experiences and preparation for entry into the global marketplace.”

A month into his new position, the Massachusetts native was focusing on expanding the college’s global and international reputation.

“Everything that we do with respect to teaching, service, and research will have a global/international focus,” he says. “We want to expose students to the extensive international opportunities available, which we wholeheartedly encourage from the minute they get on campus. We like them to think globally and have these transformative experiences, so that by the time they graduate, they will be well-prepared, creative, analytical citizens of the world.”

Dr. Stahura spent the last three and a half years in Singapore, where he most recently served as managing director for UNLV-Singapore (part of the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas). This experience has given him unique, first-hand knowledge of the burgeoning Asian tourism market.

“Singapore is in the middle of where a lot of things are starting to happen in the world and in hospitality in particular,” he notes. “I’m very much aware of the trends and that’s where I feel I can bring something here.”

To that end, he wants to create additional international experiences for students — experiences he calls “impactful and necessary” — that will prepare them to take advantage of the opportunities available in Asia and elsewhere.

“It’s in these places that they need people with the skills that we offer,” he says. “So if you can encourage students to go out and explore, they’ll get the confidence to take the skills that we impart on them and impact these places.”

Dr. Stahura also plans to continue the college’s tradition of service to the community.

“It’s another meaningful experience that impacts somebody,” he says. “When (the students) go through their four years and reflect on their experience, it’s those things that oftentimes make more of an impact than a lecture. It’s something that they take with them for the rest of their lives, just like the international experiences.”

Involvement with the local community is also on Dr. Stahura’s agenda. He hopes to facilitate opportunities where the faculty can share knowledge to “contribute to the betterment of society.”

“This is a wonderful field in that regard,” he says.

Dr. Stahura is well-prepared for this role. As a scholar and tenured faculty member at UNLV, he taught courses at both the undergraduate and graduate level, and has conducted research on a variety of cultural and social trends in leisure, hospitality, tourism, and sport.

He has also been involved extensively in executive education. His scholarly pursuits and consulting expertise have brought him to India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, China, Greece, and Turkey, and all over the United States, where he has provided consulting assistance on issues surrounding program development, organizational structuring, and communication facilitation.

Dr. Stahura has served as a journal editor and been on a number of editorial boards. He has published more than 40 articles in regional, national, and international journals, and has authored 130-plus presentations and conference keynote speeches.

Now, he is eager to shepherd the growth and continue the academic excellence for which the college is known, and is excited about the future for its students.

“I think the timing is wonderful for students in the hospitality industry today,” he says.
A Niagara University student has leveraged a self-professed social media addiction into a victory on one of television’s most popular competitive cooking shows.

Cody Candelario, a senior majoring in luxury hospitality operations, topped three seasoned cooking professionals on the July 26 episode of the Food Network’s *Cutthroat Kitchen*. Among the competitors Cody defeated was Chef Plum (Kristopher Plummer), who has been featured on multiple Food Network shows and ABC’s *The Taste*.

Hearing his name called by host Alton Brown and judge Jet Tila concluded a 16-hour day of filming for Cody, who said his burgeoning culinary skills helped him overcome the “sabotage” attempts thrust upon him by the other contestants, such as being forced to manipulate giant chopsticks to prepare a beef and broccoli dish and use ceviche marinade in his key lime pie.

For his efforts, Cody took home close to $14,000.

“I was exhausted — mentally and physically — but I knew I had won,” Cody wrote via email. “Winning brought on a wave of validation for the time I’ve spent trying to learn this craft. In my eyes, it made all the years that I’ve been overlooked and underestimated because of my age disappear.

“I’m using this win, this money, and this recognition I earned to travel, increase my knowledge, and hone this passion I have for cooking.”

The campaign to become a Food Network star began when Cody started working at Carmelo’s, a restaurant in Lewiston, N.Y. As he started posting photos on Instagram to capture his culinary creations, others began to notice.

In just a few months, Cody had developed connections with chefs, promoters, and cooking labels. Soon, a casting agent for the Food Network contacted him. In mid-December, Cody learned he made the cut for *Cutthroat Kitchen*.

The show features four chefs who are given $25,000 to spend on items that either assist in their own preparation or sabotage the efforts of their opponents. After each cooking challenge is presented, the chefs have 60 seconds to gather ingredients from the pantry and regroup for an auction to bid on culinary curve balls, such as the exclusive use of an ingredient or not allowing opponents to taste dishes. A chef is eliminated after each of the three rounds, and the last competitor standing wins the money left in his or her personal bank.

The victory will certainly bolster the résumé of the 22-year-old chef, a native of Healdsburg, Calif., who spent the summer interning at the Hotel Belvedere in Bellagio, Italy, and is completing his senior year in Niagara’s dual-degree program with the International University of Applied Sciences in Bad Honnef, Germany. But Cody prefers to keep his career options open, listing food truck owner, restaurateur, hotel owner, sommelier, Food Network judge, and even rock star as career aspirations. But his ultimate goal?

“I want to be happy,” he says.

Five years later, he and his wife returned to Western New York, where Kevin assumed the role of chief of the Lewiston Fire Company No. 1.

Kevin re-enrolled at NU in 2010, but his attempts to complete his degree were thwarted again when Ann was diagnosed with cancer. She succumbed to the disease in 2012. After Ann’s death, Kevin became ill and was unable to continue his studies.

Now 67 years old, with more than his share of health challenges, Kevin continues to work toward his B.A. in history. However, given his 3.92 GPA, his lifelong devotion to helping those in need, and the successful completion of the requisite credit hours, Niagara University presented Kevin with an associate’s degree during this year’s commencement exercises.

“The experience of Kevin Macaulay is a testament to the Vincentian life of service that we strive to instill in our students,” said the Rev. James J. Maher, C.M., president of Niagara University. “We tell our students to put the needs of others before theirs, something that Kevin did on numerous occasions. At the same time, perhaps no one has made more valiant attempts to earn an NU degree over such an elongated timeframe than Kevin Macaulay. We are honored to recognize his resolve.”

Kevin Macaulay receives his associate’s degree from the Rev. James J. Maher, C.M., NU president, and Dr. Timothy Ireland, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.
Niagara University graduated nearly 900 new alumni during a trio of commencement exercises held May 14-16, 2015. While the keynote speakers — Bruce Heyman, the United States ambassador to Canada; David Leonhardt, the 2011 Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times columnist and managing editor of The Upshot; and Margaret Brennan, the CBS News correspondent assigned primarily to report on the United States Department of State — were a main focus of the events, the mortarboard art was eye-catching as well.
Dear alumni and friends,

It’s amazing!

Amazing that 30 years have passed since I was rummaging through the old Student Center.

Amazing that we spend only 5 percent of our lives in college, yet the friendships, experiences, and knowledge we gained are the foundation for the rest of our lives.

Amazing that our connection to our alma mater never has to end.

That’s where the NU Alumni Association comes in. Our mission is simple: to establish and strengthen relationships to raise funds in support of Niagara University. Last year, we raised more than $6.7 million, thanks to the generosity of alumni and friends.

This year, we want to build on that success, but we can’t do it without your help. Please consider giving back to the place that gave you so much.

I hope to see you all at Alumni Weekend in October!

Thanks,

Frank Fiannaca, ’85
President, Niagara University Alumni Association

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Frank Fiannaca, ’85, addressed Niagara’s newest alumni at this year’s commencement. Here, he is pictured with NU’s president, the Rev. James. J. Maher, C.M., before the event.

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Niagara University Alumni Association Growing

As part of our ongoing efforts to grow the Niagara University Alumni Association and connect with alumni, the Alumni Engagement staff has been traveling the country (and the world!) to look for new places to establish alumni chapters.

Over the past year, we have nearly doubled the size of our chapter network. Today, we have 30 active chapters in regions across the country, in Canada and in Hungary. Seventy-five alumni have stepped forward to take leadership of these chapters and to strengthen the alumni network in their areas. These alumni are planning events and volunteer activities, so look for information about happenings in your area. For a list of our chapters and leaders, visit www.niagara.edu/alumni-chapters/.

Even if there is no alumni chapter near you, we are still interested in holding small alumni gatherings, so let us know if you would like us to consider setting something up in your area.

For more information about chapters, events, or volunteer opportunities, contact Howard Morgan, ’86, associate director of alumni and volunteer engagement at 716.286.8772 or hmorgan@niagara.edu.
Who Was There


Cleveland, Ohio — Indians Game — June 7, 2015 — Richard Ferguson, Gloria Sheffield, Bill Sheffield, ’68, Tom Rolle, ’75, Kathy McGaughey Ferguson, ’84, and Chas Lauria, ’75.


Two NU Grads Lead Crouse Hospital to a Top Spot in CNY Healthcare

By Lisa McMahon, M.A.’09

Crouse Hospital is a recognized leader in providing the best in patient care, promoting community health, and creating a dynamic work environment. That’s due, in large part, to the leadership of two Niagara graduates: Kimberly (Smith) Boynton, ’91, Crouse’s president and CEO; and Kelli (Riley) Harris, ’00, the hospital’s chief financial officer.

Although separated by nearly a decade, the two women, both originally from the Syracuse, N.Y., area, followed similar paths to Crouse. Both discovered an affinity for accounting while in high school, both chose Niagara University because of its strong accounting program, and both returned to Syracuse after graduation to work at PricewaterhouseCoopers (formerly Coopers & Lybrand) in public accounting, where they specialized in healthcare.

Kimberly remained with the firm until 1998, when she joined Crouse as a financial analyst. In 2003, she was appointed chief financial officer, a position she held until Jan. 1, 2014, when she was named president and CEO, the youngest in the hospital’s history.

Kimberly’s 10-year experience as CFO incorporated oversight of hospital departments not traditionally associated with finance, including construction and engineering, environmental services, political relations, and information technology, so she was well-prepared to take on the challenges of leading the hospital as CEO when the opportunity arose. To strengthen her knowledge of the institution’s clinical operations, an area with which she was less familiar, Kimberly spent time with the physicians and clinical support staff, observing their work in operating and emergency rooms and on the patient floors.

“It’s a very small window into their world, but it’s really helped me to gain understanding of what their challenges are and credibility for me and my position,” she says. She adds that the transition in leadership from the former CEO, a longtime physician with Crouse, was a smooth one, something she is proud to have accomplished.

When a position in the accounting department at Crouse became available, Kimberly reached out to her former employer, PricewaterhouseCoopers, because she knew that the firm, which had a large number of healthcare clients, would have staff with the appropriate experience.

Kelli didn’t think she was ready to leave PWC when her manager suggested she apply for the opening at Crouse. But as she considered the opportunity and what it would offer — no travel, a regular 9-5 schedule, and the chance to get her foot in the door of an industry she hoped to eventually work in — she changed her mind.

“It was the best choice I made, to be honest,” she says.

That was 13 years ago. Since then, Kimberly and Kelli have developed a strong friendship as they’ve risen through the ranks at Crouse. They note that their Niagara experience has prepared them well for the key roles they hold — both the rigorous academic curriculum they completed as well as the value system they learned. In fact, the Niagara experience is one reason Kimberly was confident Kelli was right for the job.

“We are a culture-based institution, we feel very strongly in our mission, vision, and values, and it takes a certain person to work in an institution like that,” Kimberly says.

“The values that you learn at Niagara are very similar to the Crouse values,” Kelli agrees. “We all live by them here: respect and dignity, a sense of community, and open and honest communication.”

Today, the two women are charting a course for Crouse’s future and meeting the challenges and opportunities the changing healthcare environment presents. Kelli recently spearheaded the launching of a webpage that lists the prices for its most common medical procedures online (the first hospital in Central New York to do so), while Kimberly, who was part of the team that developed Crouse’s mission, vision, and values, is focusing on furthering them through the implementation of five strategic initiatives that will expand the hospital’s services while strengthening its sense of community and dedication to providing the best in patient care.

“The people who work at Crouse are just phenomenal,” Kimberly says. “There are miracles that take place here every day.”

Additional alumni stories are available at www.niagara.edu/alumni-news.
Joseph M. Falbo Jr., ’91: Advocating on Behalf of NYS’s CPAs

By Lisa McMahon, M.A.’09

For Joseph M. Falbo Jr., CPA, CGMA, ’91, accounting is “far more than number crunching.” He views it as a caring and giving profession, and is determined to promote it as such during his term as president of the New York State Society of Certified Public Accountants, which began June 1.

“I think this is the greatest profession with the biggest hearted people,” he says. “The amount of things that CPAs do for their communities, the volunteerism and what they give back, goes very much unnoticed. They just do it because it’s a part of who they are and what they do.”

This opportunity to lead one of the nation’s largest state accounting organizations — the first NU alumnus and only the second member from the Buffalo Chapter to do so — also gives Joe the chance to reach out to the younger CPAs and invite them to take an active role in an organization that has served as Joe’s “professional home” since he graduated from NU. He notes that his membership over the years has contributed to his professional success and enabled him to take on leadership roles within the organization, including secretary/treasurer and vice president.

“It’s good for their firms, it’s good for the companies they work for, it’s good for the other younger professionals to have someone to look up to,” he says. “One of my goals will be to engage the younger professionals and let them know that there is a place for them.”

Joe’s initial interest in accounting was born of a desire to run his own business. Both his father, a carpenter by trade, and his mother, a hairdresser, had owned their own businesses, and Joe was inspired to do the same. He found he had an affinity for bookkeeping during high school and decided to major in accounting at Niagara because he thought it would enable him to pursue his entrepreneurial goals.

It did. By the time he was 30, Joe was a partner in a Niagara Falls-based accounting firm owned by NU alumnus George R. Armitage, CPA, ’54.

Because of its proximity to Canada, Joe found himself serving an increasingly international clientele. He became intrigued with the differences between the U.S.’s tax system and those of countries around the world, and how it significantly impacted the world’s economy. In 2008, when he decided he wanted to focus more deeply on this niche practice, he joined Tronconi Segarra & Associates LLP as a partner. He’s been there ever since, and now works with clients beyond Canada, including Germany, Israel, Great Britain, and the Netherlands.

While Joe acknowledges that there is obviously an element of number crunching to his work, he emphasizes that the opportunity to help business owners successfully manage and grow their businesses is what motivates him each day. “The really good days are when you have interaction with clients and they tell you how much they appreciate what you’ve been able to do for them, how you’ve helped them achieve their goals,” he says.

It’s something that was instilled in him by his parents, who “never let an opportunity to help somebody else pass by,” and strengthened during his years at Niagara and in his professional life.

“So many people gave me opportunities and helped me out along the way,” he says. “It feels good to help someone else. If you miss an opportunity to help someone, you’ve wasted the day.”

This philosophy also led him to run for president of the NYSSCPA, where he can serve the interests of its 29,000 members as well as the public. He is quick to point out that his colleagues at Tronconi Segarra & Associates made it possible for him to take on a role that requires a substantial commitment of time.

“Nothing of significance is achieved without the help of others,” he notes.

During his yearlong term, Joe is looking forward to advocating on behalf of the profession, as well as mentoring future leaders as a way of paying forward the experience he has enjoyed as a member of NYSSCPA.

“The last six or eight presidents of the society showed an interest in me personally that enabled me to get prepared to do what I’m about to do,” he says. “I hope I can discharge my duties successfully and adequately inspire another person who will come up behind me to accept the challenge.”

Additional alumni stories are available at www.niagara.edu/alumni-news.
John Katko, ’84: A Life of Advocacy

John Katko, ’84, was elected as the U.S. representative for the 24th Congressional District of New York in November 2014. He is a cum laude graduate of Niagara University, where he earned a bachelor of arts in political science and received the Niagara Medal. The Camillus, N.Y., native has been married to his wife, the former Robin Gibson (who attended NU’s College of Nursing), for 27 years. They have three sons: Sean, Liam, and Logan. We recently caught up with Rep. Katko to ask him about his career, his inspiration, and what he hopes to accomplish in Congress.

Why NU?
I chose to attend Niagara University because I was drawn to the environment of a small, Catholic institution. Additionally, a number of my family members had attended, or were attending Niagara University at the time.

And why law?
I first decided that I wanted to pursue a career in law while I was studying at Niagara University. The political science curriculum at NU was writing-intensive, which I enjoyed. I decided that I wanted to continue on a career path that would allow me to focus on writing and challenge my advocacy capabilities.

What one thing that you learned at Niagara has served you best in your career?
Niagara taught me humility and the significance of always keeping an eye on the most important things in life. I truly believe that the religion and philosophy classes required by the Niagara University core curriculum instilled in me a view of life that I would not have had if I attended a public institution.

How did you get to where you are today?
Following my graduation from Niagara University, I worked at my uncle’s insurance company for a year. I then went on to pursue a law degree at Syracuse University College of Law. Upon graduating from law school, I began a legal career in private practice at a firm in Washington, D.C. It was not long before I embarked on a career in public service, serving first as a senior trial attorney at the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in the Enforcement Division, and then commencing my 20-year career as an assistant U.S. attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice. Throughout my career as a prosecutor, I had the opportunity to serve as a senior trial attorney on the U.S.-Mexico border in El Paso, Texas, and in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Ultimately, my wife, Robin, and I returned to Camillus to raise our family. For over 15 years, I served as a federal organized crime prosecutor in Syracuse for the U.S. Attorney’s Office in the Northern District of New York. In this role, I led high-level narcotics prosecutions and was instrumental in formulating the Syracuse Gang Violence Task Force and successfully prosecuting the first-ever RICO gang case in the City of Syracuse, which led to a significant drop in the city’s violent crime rate. I also prosecuted political and police corruption cases.

I retired from the U.S. Department of Justice in January 2013 to run for U.S. Congress. In November 2014 I was elected to represent the 24th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives, which includes all of Onondaga, Cayuga, and Wayne counties and a portion of Oswego County.

Career highlights?
The highlights of my career include formulating and implementing the Syracuse Gang Violence Task Force. The Task Force’s inception changed the course of law enforcement in Syracuse, dramatically reducing violent crime in the City of Syracuse.

Why run for Congress?
I left my 20-year career as a federal prosecutor to run for public office because I believe Central New York deserves strong, independent leadership in Washington. I could not stand on the sidelines any longer and watch the divisive party politics in Washington and the negative impact that it would have on our children and grandchildren.

How will you define success in this position?
I will define success by positively impacting our community and the lives of the people who live here, and by achieving tangible results through legislation.

Tell me about the purple tie.
I wore a purple tie on Election Day to signify my commitment to working in a bipartisan manner to represent Central New York in Congress. I believe that we need to work together — Democrats and Republicans. That means reaching across the aisle and working with the other side. To get things done for our country, it is imperative that we take into consideration what both parties have to say and engage in the great art of compromise.

The purple tie was also a nod to my alma mater. It was at Niagara that I formed the foundation for my future successes.

What do you do in your spare time?
When I am home I spend a majority of my time meeting with constituents across my four-county district. But family is always first. I coach my sons in hockey and enjoy spending time with my wife, my sons, and our black lab, Sadie.

What is your philosophy in your life and career?
Treat others the way you expect to be treated.

Who has been the biggest influence in your life? What lessons did that person teach you?
My wife, Robin, has been the biggest influence on my life. Since the first day we met at Niagara University, she has consistently reinforced to me that when you are nice to the people around you, good things happen.

Additional alumni stories are available at www.niagara.edu/alumni-news/.
David Campbell, ’63: The Importance of Being There

It all began with the story of a fisherman.

Jan. 21, 2005. David Campbell, ’63, was in Phuket, Thailand, drawn there by an intense desire to help the victims of the tsunami that had ravaged that country a month earlier, and the firm conviction that his knowledge of the Internet could be key to recovery.

“I knew how effective a tool the Internet could be to change the way that things were done,” David explains.

Using a hotel room in the fishing village of Bang Tao as his home base, David spent his first day assessing the damage and connecting with others in the area willing to help. He learned that 43 fishing boats, valued at $5,000 each, had been destroyed in the tsunami. Although the loss was devastating to the villagers who depended on the boats for their livelihood, the need had not been addressed by the large aid organizations that had joined the relief efforts.

With more than 40 years’ experience in leading technology-industry businesses (including positions as president of BBN Technologies and CEO of Computer Task Group), David knew that the Internet could be used to raise money for these fishermen and their families. He captured, through words and pictures, the story of one fisherman and shared it with yacht clubs in London and Amsterdam. As members began hosting cocktail parties to raise funds to build new boats for the villagers, David helped to develop a website for the project and a network of volunteers who began building the boats. His previous service on several corporate boards enabled him to be an effective liaison between the volunteers and potential donors.

“The ability to deal with both sides of the issues was essential,” he says.

What was most important, however, was simply being on the scene. “You can't establish trust with people you don't know over the phone,” David writes in his book, Being There. “You have to do it face-to-face. And you have to do it in a language they understand.”

In all, David spent three weeks in Bang Tao and co-founded what became known as HandsOn-Thailand, which raised more than $100,000, connected more than 200 volunteers, and rebuilt five Phuket fishing villages.

David returned to his Boston home forever changed by the powerful experience he had just had and began to seek other opportunities to help disaster-ridden areas. He set his sights on Darfur, where the genocide and refugee crisis had been ongoing since 2003.

And then Katrina struck.

Using what he calls the “Goldilocks Test” — selecting an area that was big enough to support an influx of volunteers and small enough that their efforts would make a difference — David and two associates he made through his work in Bang Tao determined that Biloxi, Miss., would serve as the focus of their relief activities. The lessons they learned in Thailand enabled them to quickly update their website, assess the situation to identify the most pressing needs, and connect with individuals who helped them find a place to serve as home base.

Over the next five months, more than 1,500 people assisted the victims of Katrina through dozens of projects, from clearing rubble to replacing street signs.

“In every disaster there are things that aren't done, that become gaps in service,” David explains. “We would fill those gaps and help things move more smoothly.”

Convinced that this model was an effective way to connect the needs of a community hit by a disaster with people who want to help, David began to concentrate on moving it toward becoming a sustainable disaster response organization. HandsOn Worldwide, the name under which he had incorporated the 501c3 and its HandsOn USA project in Biloxi, became HandsOn Disaster Response, and finally, in 2010, All Hands Volunteers.

Over the past decade, more than 50 projects have been executed across the U.S. and overseas, including Cedar Rapids, Iowa, following the flooding in 2008; Haiti, after the 2010 earthquake; and Japan, after the tsunami in 2011. The April 25, 2015, earthquake in Nepal triggered a major response from All Hands, with expectations of a multiyear program focused on building homes and schools, in addition to whatever other activities meet the community’s needs. Response to Superstorm Sandy and Typhoon Haiyan is ongoing. Full-time staff has been hired, and a Southeast Asian base in the Philippines was established.

AHV provides assistance to meet both immediate and long-term needs. The organization often hires local people to augment the work of the volunteers, which infuses cash into the economy, and provides workforce training to develop a corps of residents with appropriate construction skills. In Haiti, AHV launched a series of livelihood programs to help people start and succeed in running small businesses.

“We’re fortunate that we don’t have to restrict ourselves to removing rubble and rebuilding houses,” David writes. “We can also take on projects that rebuild a community’s spirit.”

David ran AHV from his home until 2013, when his role shifted to chairman. Over the years, he spent less time on the ground at disaster sites and more time raising funds for the organization. It’s a considerable challenge, but one he finds fulfilling.

“Although the hardest part for me is the fundraising,” David admits, “when the donors see and appreciate the effectiveness of what we do and know that they’re having a positive impact, that’s a good feeling. It’s been hard and at times scary, but it’s been a very satisfying thing to have done.”

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1948
John Neary, at 91, is the oldest member of the Tom Dooley Choraliers, a men’s Irish a capella singing group. He’s been with them since the 1980s. Now retired after a 33-year career with Allstate Insurance, John enjoys spending time with his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, as well as having breakfast with his brother and friends.

1959
Jerald Wolfgang has been elected to the Society of Educational Planners board of directors. He is an adjunct professor in Niagara University’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management and director of the Western New York Regional Education Center for Economic Development.

1960 REUNION
Anthony DiLaura, D.D.S., has retired from the general practice of dentistry. He is a graduate of the SUNY at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine and served two years as a dental officer in the US Air Force. Thereafter, he maintained a dental practice for 48 years in Niagara Falls, N.Y. He has been married for 52 years to Ellen (Mason), ’60. They have four children and 10 grandchildren.

1963
Richard Davitt is a volunteer at Norton Brownsboro Hospital in Louisville, Ky. He is retired from the mathematics faculty at the University of Louisville.

1964
Paul Gromosiak, noted Niagara Falls historian and author, was honored in July with a plaque in the city’s Heritage Park. He also received the key to the city and proclamations from the House of Representatives, State Assembly, State Senate, City Council, Niagara County Legislature, and Mayor Paul A. Dyster. Paul has been involved in numerous area projects, including the Robert Moses Parkway, the Old Stone Chimney, the Niagara Arts & Cultural Center, and efforts involving Nikola Tesla and the Underground Railroad.

1965 REUNION
Robert Jordan was invested as a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre in a ceremony at the Baltimore Basilica Cathedral in November 2014.

Robert Martinez earned an MFA in creative writing from National University in January 2015. Bob, who is retired from the Quinnipiac University biology department, and his wife, Meredythe, divide their time between New Haven, Conn., and Rockport, Mass.

Thomas Rohr has been named a Top Lawyer in New York state and is recognized for having “very high” skills in knowledge of law and in legal ethics. Thomas also serves on the Monroe County Bar Association Professional Performance Committee.

1967
Col. (Ret.) Kevin Harrington retired from Chapdelaine & Company, a subsidiary of Tullett Prebon Americas, on Dec. 31, 2014, after 44 years as a municipal bond broker. He and his wife, Julie, are now enjoying travel and spending time with their three grandchildren.

1968
Edward Cassidy, M.S.Ed.’71, was named chief operating officer for Heritage Centers. He joined the agency in 1990 and has served as its chief financial officer for the past 24 years.

Rosalie (Fink) Tyrrell-Puccio retired from Massachusetts General Hospital. She is enjoying traveling with her husband, Lou, spending time with family and friends, and discovering new creative interests and talents.

1969
Dr. Thomas Webb recently retired after 41 years as an optometrist in Utica, N.Y. Dr. Webb has been active with local and state optometric associations and is a member of the Optometric Honor Society. He is a past chairman and present member of the board of directors for the Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, as well as a member of the Rotary Club of Utica. He and his wife, Rhea, live in New Hartford, N.Y.

1970 REUNION

Maj. Mark Kelly has been installed as president of the Military Officers Association of America, Fort Knox chapter, Fort Knox, Ky.

1971
Barbara Brannen has been named vice president of human resources at Pinnacol Assurance. In this role, she will oversee the company’s human resources and learning and organizational development areas.

1973
Rosemary (Ascherl) Salamone retired after more than 24 years as a school nurse with the Solvay (N.Y.) School District.

1974
Ray Grace was reappointed North Carolina commissioner of banks by Gov. Pat McCrory. He was first appointed in 2013. Ray previously served
as acting commissioner of banks, chief deputy commissioner, and deputy commissioner. He began his career as a commercial bank examiner.

Edward Lannon retired from the State of Rhode Island’s Department of Revenue after 34 years of service. He plans to spend his retirement traveling around the country and writing about minor league baseball.

Rev. Jack Loughran, OSFS, has been appointed director of formation for the North American Provinces of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales and director of the Oblate House of Studies in Washington, D.C.

1975 REUNION

Kevin Gilman was appointed to the Hunterdon Polytech Board of Education. He is president of Belco Technologies, a subsidiary of DuPont, which specializes in engineered air pollution control systems for various industries.

John Kennedy was named president of Eastside Catholic School, Sammamish, Wash. He most recently served as assistant headmaster for finance and operations at Middleburg Academy in Middleburg, Va.

Janet Schrameck has retired after a 40-year career in health and physical education.

1976

Elane Daly has joined the Unity House of Cayuga County, Inc.’s, board of directors. She is manager of East Hill Medical Center’s school-based dental program. She previously served as the director of health and human services for Cayuga County for 15 years. Elane brings 30 years of county government experience to Unity House.

1977

Dr. Jerome C. Andres was elected secretary-treasurer of the medical staff at Mount St. Mary’s Hospital and Health Center.

Cheryl Klass was named to Niagara University’s board of trustees. She is senior vice president of operations for Kaleida Health and president of Buffalo General Medical Center.

More information on our chapters can be found at www.niagara.edu/alumni-chapters/.
Michael Anthony Rossi was selected as a member of the Nation’s Top One Percent by the National Association of Distinguished Counsel, an organization dedicated to promoting the highest standards of legal excellence.

1978
Edward Brennan was named to Niagara University’s board of trustees. He is the retired chairman of DFS Group and founder of Hand in Hand for Haiti charity, which built and operates a school for the poor in Saint Marc, Haiti.

1979
Tina Lamont has been promoted to director, inpatient utilization management and case management, at BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York. She joined the organization in 2013, serving most recently as health management consultant, state products.

1980 REUNION
Mike Bleier was reappointed to the San Jacinto River Authority Board of Directors by Texas Gov. Rick Perry. The board conserves, protects, and develops water resources for the San Jacinto River watershed.

Susan Dileno accepted the position of vice president of enrollment management at Ohio Wesleyan University.

Denise Seigart is chair of the undergraduate and master’s degree in nursing of populations programs at Boise State University.

Helen (Rush) Stevenson was inducted into the Berks County Aquatic Hall of Fame in May 2014. An outstanding age group and high school swimmer in Buffalo, N.Y., Helen qualified for state finals in all four years at Niagara. In addition to being most valuable swimmer and holding six team records including career point scorer, she was team captain in her senior year. Helen is a physical education teacher at 16th and Haak Elementary School in Reading, Pa., and department chairperson of elementary physical education in the Reading School District.

1981
LuAnne Brown was named CEO at the Buffalo Prenatal-Perinatal Network, six months after joining the organization on an interim basis. Brown spent 14 years in the Kaleida Health system as chief nursing officer and 16 years at Women and Children's Hospital of Buffalo as vice president and chief nursing officer. At Buffalo Prenatal, she’ll oversee the needs of high-risk pregnancies. The agency works to increase access to and utilization of preconception, perinatal, and postpartum healthcare services in the community. Programs focus on improving maternal and infant health outcomes for underserved and high-risk women and their families.

Patricia (Thorton) Burnham was recognized for “Service to Medical Care” at the annual dinner of the Onondaga County Medical Society in November 2014. She is a registered nurse at the Community General campus of Upstate University Hospital.

Dr. Frank R. Laurri was elected president of the medical staff at Mount St. Mary’s Hospital and Health Center.

Stephanie Nerney, a nurse at Glen Rock Middle School in New Jersey, received the district’s 46th annual Robert H. Ax award in June.

1982
Debra (Russell) Baker has been named chair of the board of directors of the YWCA of the City of New York. She is managing director and head of Global Risk Solutions at BNY Mellon, and has been a member of the YWCA of the City of New York’s board of directors since late 2009.

1983
Robert Dann has been named vice president of finance at Abt Associates. He will oversee all aspects of the company’s financial planning, forecasting and analysis activities, treasury options, risk management and insurance programs. He joins the company from ClearView Consulting Group, where he served as senior manager and consultant. He has also held senior management positions at DRS Technologies, Northrop Grumman, and HSBC Bank.

Sandra Ryan has accepted the position of vice president with Walmart Care Clinics, health and wellness division. Sandra most recently served as a chief clinical officer for CareCam Health Systems where she oversaw all clinical aspects of the company. Prior to joining CareCam, she was one of six founding officers at Take Care Health Systems and was the first chief nurse practitioner officer in the convenient care industry.

1984
Dr. Mary Giuseppetti was hired by Lifetime Health Medical Group as a doctor in the pediatric practice at Amherst Health Center.

Mary Laski Hoffman was promoted from senior vice president of operations to chief operating officer at Erie County Medical Center Corp. She previously served as chief operating officer for Lawley Benefits Group and vice president in the Catholic Health System.

Bonnie Sloma was named senior vice president at People Inc. In this newly created position, Bonnie will oversee the agency’s healthcare business development and quality standards. Bonnie, a 30-year healthcare industry veteran, previously served as vice president of ambulatory and diagnostic services at Erie County Medical Center Corp., where she developed policies, procedures, new services and programs, and quality oversight for the organization’s outpatient ambulatory and diagnostic clinics.

1987
Julie Evarts opened EvCliffe Senior Living Consulting to help families find senior living options for themselves or aging parents and spouses. She previously was a health management coordinator at Engle Hambright & Davies.

1988
Deacon Thomas Michael Mahoney was ordained to the priesthood in June by Bishop Richard J. Malone, Diocese of Buffalo, N.Y. He had a nearly 20-year career as a certified public accountant and controller before entering the seminary.

Sean O’Hern was promoted to the rank of lieutenant with the Rhode Island State Police. He is a 21-year veteran of the organization and is currently assigned as the division’s fleet manager.

1989
Dawn (Metro) Flynn was promoted to the rank of colonel in the US Army. She is the deputy surgeon for the 807th Medical Command (Deployment Support) in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Kris Olsen Riedell was promoted to chief operating officer at Alzheimer’s Community Care, West Palm Beach, Fla. She previously served as the vice president of human resources for the organization.

1990 REUNION
Stephen Freeman was promoted to colonel at Fort Bragg, N.C., in August.

1991
Kelly MacDonald was promoted from administrative vice president to group vice president at M&T Bank. As a residential mortgage risk manager, Kelly oversees a team of operations managers, underwriters, and analysts for fraud prevention, regulatory oversight, credit quality, and repurchases in the residential mortgage division.

Kendra McClain was appointed director of emergency management and community programs at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center. She has more than 15 years of healthcare industry experience. In her new role, Kendra will oversee emergency planning and disaster preparedness for the medical center and its satellite sites and provide administrative oversight for medical center community programs.

1992
Keith Flanagan is a senior internal auditor in the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities. He previously worked for the New York State Department of Civil Service as a calculation clerk and an employee insurance review clerk.

Sean McCabe was elected to another term as president of the Greece Central School District Board of Education. He was also appointed as the Western New York health and safety representative to The NYS Professional Fire Fighters Association.

1993
Tracy (Fiegl) Bates was promoted to a Level III RN at the University of Rochester Medical Center, where she will serve as a staff lactation liaison and educator for the OB/GYN department.

David Glover, M.S.Ed.’04, authored Cocktail Conversations by the Controversial Counselor, a book that explores and analyzes aspects of open communication in a variety of topics, including relationships, friendships, family, work, health, education, loyalty, mistrust, child drama, and the dating game.

Kyle Kelly was elected president and chief executive officer of AlphaStaff, a full-service national professional employment organization and HR outsourcing firm. He also has joined its board of directors. Kyle has been with AlphaStaff for more than 15 years, holding positions including president of AlphaStaff MGA, an AlphaStaff insurance brokerage subsidiary; and leader of AlphaStaff’s product development and sales efforts.
CATCHING UP

1994
Eric Connor was elected to the Grigg Lewis Foundation Inc.’s board of directors. Eric is owner of Connor Wealth Management in Lockport, N.Y.

Stephanie DeLorm has joined Limeade as vice president and national practice leader of customer success. She spent the previous 18 years at Aon Hewitt as a strategic consultant, guiding some of the nation’s largest employers on the development and implementation of HR benefits and health management programs.

Steven Kopp was elected secretary of the Roxbury Soccer Club in Succasunna, N.J.

Diane Straka was named a director at Arcara Zucarelli Lenda & Straka P.C., CPAs.

1995 REUNION
Traci Bax, M.S.Ed.’04, has been named assistant vice president of retail operations for AAA Western and Central New York. In this role, she will oversee the club’s retail operations, including insurance and financial planning services for members. Traci has 21 years of service with AAA, most recently as director of travel and insurance sales.

1996

Brendan Powers, former artistic director of NU Theatre, appeared in the opening episode of the Netflix series Bloodline. The 13-part series tells the story of a “black sheep” brother returning home to the Florida Keys, where he begins to tear the family apart.

Ellen Rychlik was a featured speaker during McKnight’s Online Expo, a webinar held in March. She has spoken on quality improvement strategies in healthcare and on effective change management at national conventions of the AMDA (The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine) and the American Health Care Association, and has presented on best practices for the New York State Health Facilities Association. Ellen is the director of nursing at ElderWood at Hamburg, in Hamburg, N.Y.

1998
Chad Share was named a liability claims specialist at Preferred Mutual Insurance Company.

1999
Thomas Devereaux is a senior manager with Freed Maxick CPAs. He manages, directs, and controls all types of engagements and is responsible for all phases of engagement including quality, budgeting, billing, and accounts receivable collection.
Leslie Maloney, M.S.Ed.’05, has been named principal of Penfield High School. She has worked for the district for the past nine years, most recently serving as the director of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, prior to taking over as acting principal.

Sarah McGarry was hired as the new head coach of the Fleming College Knights women’s basketball team in Peterborough, Ontario.

2000 REUNION

Robert Brunschmid has been named director of operations at Shea’s Performing Arts Center. In this position, he will oversee the facilities and concessions departments and the volunteer program at Shea’s. He previously served as managing director of Theatre of Youth.

Michael Dwan has been appointed to the position of village prosecutor for the Village of Lancaster, N.Y.

Joseph Hochreiter, M.S.Ed.’02, is superintendent of schools in the Hendrick Hudson Central School District, Montrose, N.Y.

Lauren Huk was named vice principal in the Peel, Ontario, District School Board.

Amy Nash was promoted from director of pharmacy operations to vice president of operations and clinical services at Reliance Rx. She is responsible for all Reliance Rx operations and clinical services including coordination of pharmaceutical services, quality control/improvement, customer service, product procurement, inventory management, data management, claim billing, company accreditations, compliance, and communications.

2001

Frank Eassa was named senior vice president in HSBC’s large corporate banking division, based in Buffalo, N.Y.

2002

Sean Bruno has been named superintendent of the Mexico Academy and Central School District, Mexico, N.Y.

Nick Carrière has been named an assistant coach for the St. John’s IceCaps, the Montreal Canadiens’ AHL affiliate. He comes to the IceCaps after 10 years as head coach of the Buffalo State Bengals.

Matthew Crehan Higgins was appointed senior director of The Pride Center of Western New York. He previously was program manager at ECMC’s Immunodeficiency Clinic.

Kristin Nylén is the owner of Oswego Family Dentistry, P.C. She and her husband, Steve Sproswon, recently relocated from Wethersfield, Conn., and purchased the practice.

Courtland Van Deusen was named partner at Lumsden McCormick, LLP. He has been with the firm since 2001. He was also honored as the 2015 Distinguished Accounting Alumnus by NU’s College of Business Administration in April.

2003

Julie Buccieri has been named 2015 All-Bee Girls Lacrosse Coach of the Year.

Steven Bulger was appointed executive director and CEO of Kids Oneida, Inc., an organization providing community-based services for families at risk in the Mohawk Valley. He joined Kids Oneida as a family-service coordinator in 2005 and was promoted to director of operations in 2010.

Adam Gierach, MBA’12, is a senior accountant with Chiampou Travis Besaw & Kershner LLP. He previously was with Dayco Inc. as a senior insurance specialist.

Anthony Vilardo has been named director of business development for the City of Niagara Falls, N.Y. In this role, he will serve as executive director of the city’s Urban Renewal Agency and the Niagara Falls City Development Corp., an agency that provides business grants and loans. He previously worked as a regional representative for Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo and as a field coordinator for the Central New York Area Labor Federation, AFL-CIO.

2004

Dennis M. Baker, SJ, was ordained a Jesuit priest on June 13, 2015, at the Fordham University Church by the Most Reverend Matthew H. Clark, bishop emeritus of the Diocese of Rochester, N.Y.

Bridget (Schumacher) Doloresco was named outreach librarian at the Niagara University Library.
Wendi (Minier) Jones is a marketing analyst for Sona Medspa in Charlotte, N.C.

Brendan McDermott, M.S.Ed.’07, was appointed Village of Lewiston recreation director.

Michael Sarkissian was promoted to senior manager at FedEx Express, overseeing the Rochester and Ithaca stations. He also was selected to lead the on-road driver performance portion for a select audit team.

**2005 REUNION**

Shelly (McLaughlin) Cieslak is operations manager in the Franklin, Tenn., corporate office of The Hotel Group.

Marie Davidson received the Staff Longevity and Dedication Award during the 25th anniversary celebration of Passage House, an emergency domestic violence shelter in Niagara Falls, N.Y. The ceremony was held in February 2015.

Jesse Gasbarro was promoted from manager to senior manager at Freed Maxick CPAs. He will manage, direct, and control all types of engagements and will be responsible for all phases of engagement including quality, budgeting, billing, and accounts receivable collection.

**2006**

Marty Byrne Jr., joined the Huntington Agency to work in business development and client relationships. He formerly was a commercial lines marketing representative and account manager with Brown & Brown Empire State in Syracuse, N.Y.

Jodie Papa was named manager of the National Fire Adjustment Company’s Buffalo office. She has been employed by the organization since 2001 in various capacities and is a licensed public adjuster in New York, New Jersey, and the Province of Ontario, Canada.

Capt. Steve Szymanski assumed command of The Judge Advocate General’s Legal Center and School’s Student Detachment in July. Steve was hand-picked to serve in one of only five command positions in the Army’s JAG Corps. He will be primarily responsible for leading, planning, and executing the rigorous initial training/education course for all incoming Army judge advocates.

**2007**

Katelyn Allan, MBA’09, was named police clerk for the Lewiston, N.Y., Police Department. She earlier served the town in its financial department.

Kristen Jeckovich, M.S.’09, joined Lippes Mathias Wexler Friedman LLP as a legal assistant in the Real Estate Practice Group. She is responsible for assisting the group’s members with the execution of complex residential and commercial real estate transactions.

Laurie Laughlin, MBA’08, was named 2014 Employee of the Year at MJ Peterson Real Estate. A member of the accounting department, Laurie also assists the IT and property management divisions.

Katherine (Nickels) Romagno joined Pickney Hugo Group as a senior account manager.

**2008**

Marisa Giambanco has been promoted by North American Breweries to associate brand manager for Magic Hat, responsible for managing all of the company’s year-round beers and small batch programs. She previously served as marketing coordinator, ABM for Pyramid and Portland Brewing, and associate content marketing manager at NAB.

Lana (DeBacco) Perlman has been named to Buffalo Business First’s 2015 30 Under Thirty. She is the director of visitor services at the Niagara Tourism and Convention Corp. in Niagara Falls, N.Y.
Stephanie (Milicia) Robinson, MBA'09, has been promoted to manager at Chiampou Travis Besaw & Kershner LLP in Amherst, N.Y. She joined the firm in 2010 as a staff accountant.

Christopher Salada was appointed director of the materials management department at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center. He will oversee Memorial’s clinical and nonclinical purchasing, receiving, distribution, and inventory control processes. Previously, he served as a supply chain coordinator for the Eastern Niagara Health System.

Robert Shankland is assistant general manager at the Hilton Garden Inn Buffalo Downtown, Buffalo, N.Y.

Julie Syruws, MBA'11, has been promoted to senior accountant at Chiampou Travis Besaw & Kershner LLP in Amherst, N.Y. She joined the firm in 2011.

2009

Amanda Moses is a senior accountant at Lumsden & McCormick, LLP. She will be responsible for tax compliance services to businesses and individuals. Amanda is also co-owner of Revolution Indoor Cycling in Buffalo.

Michelle Wienke was promoted to chief experience officer of the Erie County Medical Center in Buffalo.

Lydia Wittcop, MBA'10, joined the board of directors of Crisis Services Inc. She is a supervisor at Dopkins & Company.

2010 REUNION

Derek Gerega, MBA'11, was promoted from senior accountant to supervisor at Freed Maxick CPAs. He will assist in managing engagements, supervising staff, engagement planning, budgeting, operating as a direct point-of-contact with clients, and training employees.

Robert Hauk was promoted to corporate central revenue manager for Hyatt Hotels.

Chelsea Latta was admitted to the New York State Bar and named an associate at Hodgson Russ. She represents multinational corporations in the preparation of temporary work permit petitions and assists in the preparation of employment-based permanent residence cases for outstanding researchers and multinational managers and executives.

2011

Crystal Bojanowski, MBA'12, was promoted from staff accountant to senior accountant at Lumsden & McCormick, LLP. She is responsible for tax compliance services to individuals, concentrating on matters related to estates and trusts.

Kaitlyn Johnson was promoted from staff accountant to senior accountant at Freed Maxick CPAs. She will plan, direct, control, and review engagements while supervising on-the-job training of staff accounts.

Caitlyn Kilkenny, MBA'12, was promoted from staff accountant to senior accountant at Freed Maxick CPAs. She will plan, direct, control, and review engagements while supervising on-the-job training of staff accounts.

Kayla Kreis is wedding market manager and sales coordinator for the Saratoga Convention and Tourism Bureau.

Alexis Lyon has been promoted to tax senior at Dannible & McKee LLP. Previously, she was a staff accountant with The Bonadio Group.

2012

Brianna (Murphy) Allen has been named head coach for the Houghton College softball program. She served as an assistant with the Highlander program this past season, in addition to her role as the department’s facilities marketing and scheduling coordinator.

Taryn Burkholder was named head women’s lacrosse coach at Muskingum University. She previously served as assistant coach for the Morrisville State College Mustangs in Morrisville, N.Y.

Megan Dyster-Colosi is a staff accountant at Semanchin & Wetter LLP.

Marc McKenica, MBA'13, is a tax staff accountant with Freed Maxick CPAs. He performs accounting services and the detail work of tax returns, and assists in preparing financial statements.
CATCHING UP

2013

Jadaiman DaCosta is a research assistant with Via Evaluation, focusing on data management, data collection and analysis, and internal reporting.

Joseph Lapoint, MBA’14, joined the Bonadio Group as an assistant accountant in the commercial division.

Gabrielle Lustrinelli joined Kinahan Associates LLC as an assistant project manager.

Mike Mucci has returned to Niagara University as head coach of the men’s and women’s tennis programs. Mike, a three-time MAAC All-Academic member and a three-time ITA Scholar-Athlete honoree, was a member of the men’s tennis team from 2010-13. After graduation, he worked as an assistant tennis professional at Park Country Club in Williamsville, N.Y., and as an assistant tennis pro at Transit Valley Country Club in Amherst, N.Y.

John Osberg was promoted from client engagement lead to VP of client relations at EmergenceTek Group Inc. He maintains strategic business relationships with clientele and manages the talents acquisition division.

David Piraino joined Tronconi Segarra & Associates as a staff accountant.

Lamont Singletary has been named manager of the new Tenth Street Café at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, a collaborative effort by the hospital, NU’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, and Cannon Design to deliver an exciting new food service experience to hospital visitors, staff, students, and volunteers. Lamont is a former supervisor at the Top of the Falls Restaurant and catering manager at The Silo in Lewiston, N.Y., as well as a supervisor, teaching assistant, and sous chef at Niagara University.

James Voutour was elected president of the New York State Sheriffs’ Association during the organization’s 81st annual Winter Training Conference. He has served as sheriff of Niagara County for the past seven years and has been a member of the Niagara County Sheriff’s Office for 22 years.

2014

Nicholas Beauchamp, MBA’15, is a staff accountant with Toski & Co., CPA, P.C.

Reese Bedient, MBA’15, joined Chiampou Travis Besaw & Kershner LLP as a staff accountant.

Michael Benedict has been hired as assistant coach for the Corpus Christi IceRays. He is a former forward for the IceRays, having spent the inaugural 2010-11 junior season with the team.

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

Jessica Lamar joined Buffamante Whipple Buttafaro, P.C., as a staff accountant in its Orchard Park, N.Y., office.

2015

Courtney Corbetta has joined the Boulders Broadcast Network as on-field host and dugout reporter for the Rockland Boulders, a new minor league professional baseball team located in Ramapo, N.Y.

MARRIAGES AND ANNIVERSARIES

Col. (Ret.) Richard Rodney, ’52, and his wife, Kathleen, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Dec. 18, 2014.

Fred DeJohn, ’55, and his wife, Donna, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on June 19, 2014.


Eric Bilson, ’01, married Tricia Burns, M.S.Ed.’08, on Oct. 4, 2014.


Monica Prunty, ’03, married Richard Cristiani on Oct. 25, 2014.

Frances Manino, ’05, M.S.’06, married Adam Sassone on Oct. 11, 2014.


**BIRTHS AND ADOPTIONS**

Phillip Alterio, '91, and his wife, Kathryn, welcomed a son, Samuel David, on Feb. 6, 2014.

Shannon Welch, '97, and her husband, Rich Gannon, welcomed a daughter, Kaylin Sage, on Sept. 4, 2014.

Sarah (Wolcott) Nelson, '00, and her husband, Matthew, welcomed a son, Dominic Matthew, on Dec. 22, 2014.

Joel McAndrew, '02, and his wife, Susan, welcomed a son, Christian Michael, on July 14, 2015.

Kristin (Nylen) Sprowson, '02, and her husband, Steven, welcomed a daughter, Kalin Elizabeth, on May 31, 2014.

Laura (Sager) Stevens, '02, MBA'05, and her husband, Michael, welcomed a son, Carter Michael, on Jan. 23, 2015.

 Rachelle (DiMatteo) Strickland, '02, and her husband, Robert, welcomed twin sons, Paul Lorenz and Luke Matteo, on Jan. 9, 2015.

Theresa (Gleber) Ashbery, '03, and her husband, Jason, welcomed a son, Blake Anthony, on April 30, 2015.

Wendi (Minier) Jones, '04, and her husband, Tavis, welcomed a daughter, Sabrina, on March 11, 2015.

Nicole (Wood) Lenci, '04, and her husband, Thomas, welcomed a son, Gabriel Malcolm, on Nov. 14, 2014.

Jacquelyn (Vescio) Masker, '04, and her husband, Jason, welcomed a son, Seton Jason, on Sept. 10, 2014. Seton was named for Seton Hall, where Jacquelyn and Jason first met.


Daniel, '05, and Wendy (Putt) Pautz, '04, MA'07, welcomed a daughter, Taylor Anne, on July 5, 2014.

Robin (Hackney) Jones, M.S.Ed.’06, and her husband, Nathan, welcomed a daughter, Stella Grace, on Jan. 9, 2015.

Colleen (Smith) Neffke, '06, and her husband, Adam, welcomed a son, Keegan Owen, on Nov. 13, 2014.

Alan, '08, and Jenna (Ambrosia) Gansworth, '08, welcomed twins, Grace Luella and Alan Thomas Jr., on Nov. 2, 2014.

Anna (Cosgrove) Moran, '08, and her husband, Andrew, welcomed a son, Brayden Lawrence, on Aug. 29, 2014.

**IN MEMORIAM**

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


16. A number of NU alumni celebrated the wedding of Jessica Bova, '09, and Ryan Mahoney, '09. Front row, l-r: Conrad Lauer, '09; Ashley Steeves, '09; Jessica (Bova) Mahoney, '09; Ryan Mahoney, '09; Brenna Walsh, '09; and Kyle Sander, '10. Back row, l-r: Zack Vogel, '08; Adam Lynch, '08; Kevin Zola, '10; Shannon Pielicher, '09; Jaclyn Rossi, '08, M.S.Ed.'10; Marisa Giambanco, '08; Christiana (Curcio) Nagel, '09; Jeffrey Sheridan, '08; Courtney Donahue, '08; Kristie (Miskey) Pellicore, '09; and Stephanie (Gardina) Sander, '09. 17. Sabrina Jones 18. Alan, '08, and Jenna Gansworth, '08, with twins, Grace Luella and Alan Thomas Jr.
Raymond C. Firestone, ’49, passed away on April 24, 2015. Our condolences to his wife, MaryJo Bunsa Calamai, ’78.
James P. Hayden, ’51, passed away on April 14, 2015.
Eugene Corasanti, ’52, passed away on March 5, 2015.
James McGann Sr., ’53, passed away on Dec. 5, 2014. Our condolences to his sons, James McGann Jr., ’82, and Kevin McGann, ’83; to his daughter, Sharon (McGann) Sullivan, ’85; and to his daughters-in-law, Mary Kay (LeBoo) McGann, ’82, and Sheila (Gaffney) McGann, ’84.
Frank A. Parry, ’53, passed away on July 26, 2015.
John F. Donohue, ’56, passed away on May 9, 2015.
Philip J. Devine, ’58, passed away on April 18, 2015.
Monsignor Theodore W. Kraus, ’59, passed away on April 13, 2015.
Susan (Garlock) Yezzi, ’59, passed away on Jan. 18, 2015. Our condolences to her husband, Donald Yezzi, ’58.
Michael Cuddy, ’61, passed away on Nov. 13, 2014. Our condolences to his son, Christopher Cuddy, ’85.
Frederick J. Leo, ’61, passed away on Dec. 26, 2014.
MaryAnn (Thomas) Boord, ’63, passed away on Aug. 16, 2014.
Philip S. Caponera, ’63, passed away on Nov. 1, 2014. Our condolences to his daughter, Tracey Caponera, ’90.
Thomas J. Hogenkamp, ’63, passed away on March 10, 2015.
David N. Lincoln, ’64, passed away on July 11, 2015.
Our condolences to John Donatelli, ’72, on the death of his wife, Margaret Donatelli, who passed away on May 22, 2015.
Joseph Dugan, ’72, passed away on May 25, 2015.
Donald N. Grasso Sr., ’72, passed away on May 21, 2015.

Gary V. Caruso, ’74, passed away on May 21, 2015. Our condolences to his wife, Elizabeth (Sacheli) Caruso, ’75, and to his daughter, Ellen Caruso, ’05.

Our condolences to Amy (Tutino) Piatak, ’75, on the death of her mother, Theresa Cappelli Tutino, who passed away on Nov. 27, 2014.

Gary V. Caruso, ’74, passed away on May 21, 2015. Our condolences to his wife, Elizabeth (Sacheli) Caruso, ’75, and to his daughter, Ellen Caruso, ’05.

Our condolences to Amy (Tutino) Piatak, ’75, on the death of her mother, Theresa Cappelli Tutino, who passed away on Nov. 27, 2014.


Our condolences to his daughter, Carly Joy, ’18, on the death of her father; to Susan (Strong) Dunn, ’89, M.S.Ed., ’91, on the death of her brother-in-law, Kevin Dunn, who passed away on April 16, 2015.

Double Grads — Class of 1969 friends (l-r) Bob Rahemba, Mike Gyscek, Anthony Caccomo, and Terrance O’Conner have more than NU in common. All are also graduates of Our Lady of Lourdes high school in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., and attended their 50th reunion in August.

Terry Lee Vaught, ’83, passed away on May 3, 2015. Our condolences to Rosemary Basta, ’84, on the death of her husband; to Stephanie Rockwood, ’82; Dr. Joanne Basta, ’84, ’87, adjunct professor of mathematics and psychology at NU; and Christine D’Aloise, ’89, on the death of their father; and to Francesca Rockwood, ’18, on the death of her grandfather, Alexander Basta, who passed away on May 13, 2015.

Carmen J. Caggiano Jr., ’84, passed away on March 11, 2015. Our condolences to his wife, Jennifer (Cipollitti) Caggiano, ’84.

Our condolences to Tom Lizardo, ’84, on the death of his mother; and to Jackson Lizardo, ’16, on the death of his grandmother, Rev. Dorothy Lizardo, who passed away on June 24, 2015.

Our condolences to Frank Fiannaca, ’85, on the death of his mother-in-law, Julia VanWyk, who passed away on March 9, 2015.

James E. Comerford, ’86, passed away on July 12, 2015.

Our condolences to Lee (Geary) Morgan, ’87, on the death of her husband; to Dr. Mary Anne Milone, ’78, on the death of her stepfather; to Howard Morgan, ’86, associate director of alumni and volunteer engagement at NU, on the death of his father-in-law; and to Matthew Morgan, ’17, and Melissa Morgan, ’19, on the death of their grandfather, Donald E. Geary, who passed away on July 22, 2015.


Our condolences to Jeffrey Dunn, ’90, on the death of his brother; and to Susan (Strong) Dunn, ’89, M.S.Ed., ’91, on the death of her brother-in-law, Kevin Dunn, who passed away on April 16, 2015.

Our condolences to Judith Kennedy, ’90, on the death of her father, William J. Kennedy, who passed away on Aug. 31, 2015.


Meghan McGivney, ’91, passed away on April 2, 2015.

Our condolences to Jill (Kindelan) Casullo, ’01, on the death of her husband, Ryan Casullo, who passed away on May 23, 2015.

Our condolences to Stanton C. Warren, ’04, on the death of his father, Stanton A. Warren, a retired professor of economics and finance at Niagara University, who passed away on Dec. 22, 2014.

Our condolences to Casey Sanvidge, ’06, MBA ’08, and Brittany Sanvidge, ’11, MBA ’13, on the death of their mother, Marilyn Sanvidge, who passed away on June 6, 2015.


Sister Anne Mary Dooley, SSJ, passed away on Feb. 2, 2015. She taught religious studies at Niagara University for many years.

Jagat P. Jain, a retired Niagara University accounting professor, passed away on April 22, 2015.

Terry Judd, an adjunct professor in Niagara University’s theatre department since 1997, passed away on Feb. 15, 2015. His wife, Robin Patterson, is an adjunct professor in the department.
Boko Halal: A Counter-Narrative to Boko Haram

I was born and grew up in Diffa, a small city in southeastern Niger, West Africa, in the early 1960s and 1970s. On Feb. 7, 2015, Boko Haram attacked my hometown. Family and friends scattered. Some fled to Niamey, Niger's capital city, almost 1,000 miles west. They have been told they can return, but continued attacks make this unwise.

If I had been born some 40 years later and some 100 miles to the south, I might have been taken by Boko Haram in their infamous kidnappings in Nigeria’s border state. I might have been sold as a slave, married off in my early teens, or had a bomb strapped to my chest for a suicide mission — although the distinction among these fates is nominal.

When I was growing up, my parents wrestled with traditional and cultural pressures that said girls should marry in their early teen years, rather than studying. I was the eldest daughter. My mother contacted my uncle, who was studying public administration in Ottawa, Canada, to share the family’s concerns. I was lucky; my uncle returned to Niger with his degree, and I, at age 12, went to live with his family in Zinder, over 250 miles west of Diffa, to pursue my education. That is part of the reasons you are reading my story today.

Niger’s government, with the support of multilateral organizations, has done much to advance girls’ schooling. Yet, much more remains to be done in a nation where the literacy rate for young adult women is half that of young men, and the overall illiteracy rate is still high. I am very privileged and grateful for the opportunities I have had to pursue my education due to Niger’s policy of universal primary education as well as Great Britain and U.S.’s support for my post-secondary study. As a doctoral student at Kent State University, I focused on girls’ schooling and gender gap in educational outcomes in Niger for my dissertation. I could have picked any topic, but this one was dear to me. It felt good to do something and give back.

But in examining some hard realities, I am led to say scholarship is not enough. My mother was chair of the regional chapter of Women’s Association of Diffa for at least two decades. Before she passed in 2011, I told her about my intention and passion to found an NGO to aid the women’s group she led. Although she did not live to see this far-reaching effect of her decision to support my education by sending me to live with my uncle, our organization has now been granted formal not-for-profit standing after four years of collaborative effort with faculty and staff at Niagara University. The mission of the Global Network for Niger is “to empower girls and women of Niger for a sustainable future” in a Sahelian environment.

Why is Boko Haram in Diffa? First, the city is within walking distance of the Nigerian border to the south — about as far away as Niagara Falls, N.Y., is from Niagara Falls, Ontario, right across the gorge.

Boko Haram has used suicide bombing attacks across northern Nigeria. People from these areas have fled to the region of Diffa, especially to its state capital. Since November 2014, the city’s population of nearly 50,000 has more than doubled; hence, the urgency to create refugee camps across the state. Many families, including my own, have taken relatives and strangers as refugees into their homes.

Boko Haram, now allied with the so-called “Islamic State” (ISIS), exploits an extremist perspective of Islam, bolstered by traditional and rural perspectives that girls are to be married as children. The belief is a reaction against the post-colonial legacy of Western education in Africa. The word “Boko” in the Hausa language means “Western education”, and “Haram” in Arabic means illegal, prohibited. The phrase means Western education is unlawful, illegal, prohibited.

What is the real end game? Oil? Probably. Diffa is located strategically in an oil-rich area of Niger. The loosely organized coalition of fundamentalists presents themselves as purifiers of religion and culture. They can recruit child-soldiers with thinly disguised bribes, including cash and girls, in the expectation of controlling a lucrative natural resource. If the girls’ parents object, they are expendable.

The president of Niger, Mahamadou Issoufou, has declared that nobody attacks Niger with impunity. The FDS Army of Niger, backed by the special forces of France, Canada, and the U.S., successfully repelled Boko Haram back into Nigeria, secured the bridge, and are now investigating. Over 160 recruits are undergoing interrogation. Five people in my community are dead; at least 15 are wounded. Sporadic attacks continue further east in communities bordering both Nigeria and Chad. The official number has not yet been disclosed.

“Boko Halal” is my counter-narrative to this ongoing threat. “Halal” (in Arabic) means legal, lawful, and permissible, just the opposite of “Haram.” The objectives of my counter-narrative include identifying and supporting programs and actions that advance girls’ education and female literacy, protect the dignity of refugees, and contribute to an interfaith dialogue.

There are so many reasons I am impelled to establish this counter-narrative: Human dignity must be preserved; the constitution of Niger proclaims that my country is a secular, democratic, and social republic; I am an educator; it is a right for all children to be educated, girls as well as boys. I can remember that many of my peers were not able to pursue their education as I was. As their hatred extends to other faiths, my immediate family is Muslim, Jewish, and Christian. I care for and respect them all.

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