

MAVERICK

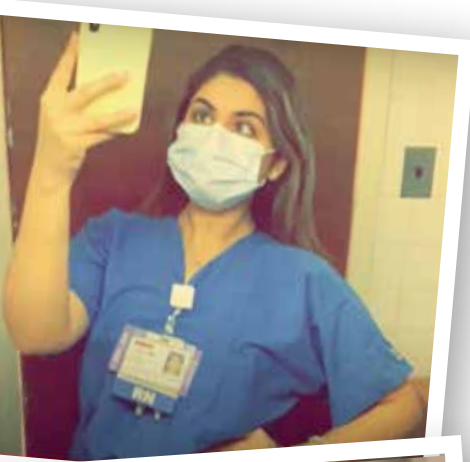
MERCY COLLEGE MAGAZINE

FALL 2020

Consumed in **SERVICE**

How our students, faculty,
staff and alumni stepped up
and answered the call to
help in the midst of the
coronavirus pandemic

MERCY
COLLEGE



Mercy College named **2020 Best College**

by Westchester Magazine



For the second year in a row, Mercy is proud to announce that it has been honored by Westchester Magazine as the Best College in Westchester. Mercy was celebrated in Westchester Magazine's annual Best of Westchester issue in July 2020. This is the second time Mercy College has been recognized as Westchester Magazine's Best College and the only college to receive the honor twice.

Mercy College finished with the highest number of votes in the College/University category in the Services section of the readers' ballot. Readers of Westchester Magazine voted during a period of online balloting from December 2, 2019 through January 22, 2020.

Consumed in SERVICE

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ALL MASK-FREE AND GROUP PHOTOS WERE
TAKEN PRIOR TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

MAVERICK

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MESSAGE FROM

President Timothy L. Hall



As Mercy embarks on a fall term unlike any other, the College stands proud of its efforts navigating the unprecedented coronavirus (COVID-19) situation and ensuring a safe and healthy reopening for students, faculty and staff.

Since March, Mercy has been here for you, continuing institutional functions and protecting students, no matter the challenges thrown our way.

From the College's remarkable pivot from in-person to online classes, to virtual physical and mental health services, to career service webinars, to countless student wellness check-ins conducted by PACT

mentors, Mercy paved a clear road for students to finish their semesters with as much support as possible.

We organized an online commencement celebrating the accomplishments of the class of 2020 graduates. Our annual Trustees' Scholarship Dinner duly honored treasured supporters and honorees, and raised an amount beyond our goal to continue to provide scholarships to deserving students.

Our success stemmed from keeping the welfare of our students and employees at the forefront of our decision-making, with the Mercy mission as our guiding light: No matter the circumstances, Mercy commits to providing personalized and high-quality learning environments for all students, including those who may be demographically underrepresented in higher education, have high financial need and identify as first-generation college students.

In keeping with our mission, the College created a Student Emergency Fund, which will exist in perpetuity to address the needs of students and keep education accessible during this uncertain and everchanging time.

As demonstrated in this edition of Maverick Magazine, along with creating opportunities for financial support, Mercy worked diligently and thoughtfully to ensure the best possible outcomes for our diverse student body.

Mercy's **OnCampus Plus** plan puts students at the center of the College's reopening, while stories of **Mavericks Making a Difference** - students, staff, faculty and alumni assisting the most in need individuals and industries during the pandemic - show the College community's determination to serve.

They include **Jesse Means, M.S. '03**, an educator in the Bronx who transitioned to remote learning with creativity and drive, **Evita Kubhar '19** and **Nyssamae Garicia CNR '19**, nurses who saved lives in the epicenter of the pandemic, and **Clinical Instructor Sherrye Samuels**, a faculty member who answered the Governor's call for additional nurses and covered shifts in overwhelmed hospitals.

While addressing COVID-19, Mercy continued to grow and deepen its impact in the community, and happily welcomed two new deans: **Peter West, Ph.D., dean of the School of Liberal Arts**, and **Stuart Sidle, Ph.D., dean of the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences**. **Louise Squitteri '65** generously donated two scholarships and impressive alumnus **Luis Torres, M.S. '00**, principal of P.S. 55 in Bronx, New York, continued to lead his high-achieving school.

Despite unfortunate circumstances, we have been successful in giving students the necessary support to continue their lives, and educations, uninterrupted. The events of the world have only deepened our understanding that education is a way to overcome adversity. As we enter a new normal this fall, we commit to keeping a route to education open, and being here for you along the road.

Sincerely,

Tim Hall
President



The *New* Normal

Mercy's Reopening Plans Put Students First

So how does a college weather a global pandemic? In Mercy's case, it meant never losing sight of its top two priorities: keeping students safe and healthy, and ensuring they will continue to receive an uninterrupted affordable education. The grounds may have been quiet, but the College was busier than ever: faculty successfully transitioned to online instruction, President Hall conferred undergraduate and graduate degrees for more than 3,000 deserving students at a special, virtual commencement ceremony, and the Admissions team welcomed hundreds of accepted students at virtual receptions during the spring.

"Our Accepted Student receptions were remarkably successful," says Vice President for Admissions Adam Castro. "We developed an innovative virtual program, which gave everyone a complete picture of life and learning at Mercy. We couldn't meet them to share the excitement in person, so we re-engineered the event for an online audience. Now they know what to expect, and we're looking forward to welcoming them as new Mavericks this fall."

The College announced its "OnCampus Plus" re-opening plan for the fall semester in June. It offers students the flexibility to access classes, student support and student life events both online and in-person. Mercy invested in both new health and safety measures, and new technology for its classrooms. Five internal workgroups developed guidelines on various aspects of the phased-in opening of college life, including academics and academic technology, the work environment, classrooms and safety, student spaces and residence halls, campus events, visitors and transportation. The residence halls, including the new Dorm34 at the Manhattan Campus, are open this

fall with limited capacity, and classes (also reduced to ensure social distancing) began as scheduled.

"Maintaining the continuity of life at Mercy College is an enormous undertaking," says Vice President of Student Affairs Kevin Joyce. "We are more than up to the challenge. Our PACT mentors who work one-on-one with students, our multi-campus Career and



OnCampus *Plus*

Professional Development team, our Residential Life leaders – everyone knows it's all-hands-on-deck for Mercy students. We can't wait to see them – but the truth is we've never stopped serving them."

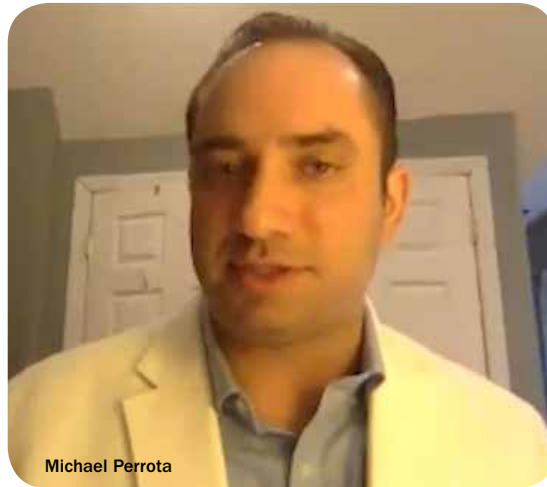
In order to keep everyone safe and healthy, the College is limiting campus access to students, faculty, staff and invited guests for the time being, and is excited to transition many fall activities to virtual events so our community can still celebrate together. These include virtual panel discussions with Mercy Leaders, student events and orientation.

Pandemic Provides Learning Opportunity *for Mercy Students*

**DISCUSSIONS
WITH MERCY
LEADERS
IN THE TIME OF
CORONAVIRUS**

The coronavirus pandemic produced a captive audience for companies to communicate to their customers, and for news outlets to convey information to their readers and viewers. With so many people stuck at home, their connection to the events of the world electronic, it provided a “living case study” for students studying advertising, public relations and journalism at Mercy College through the spring term, according to Jade Snyder, assistant professor in Mercy’s Communication and the Arts department in the School of Liberal Arts. In real time, students were able to observe and analyze “companies aligning their brands with doing the right thing as we go through the storm,” says Snyder, who teaches communications, advertising and public relations. “That’s very rare. And the communication was suddenly personal, with messaging focused on how ‘we’re in this with you, you’ve been a long-time customer, we’re thinking about you.’ The challenge for companies was how to advance the brand without appearing exploitative of the pandemic.”

Michael Perrota, associate professor and chair of the Communication and the Arts Department, who teaches journalism, pointed out that students were both studying COVID-19 through the lens of journalism and living it as well. “Students have family and friends who have the virus. They’re going out into the world – working, stacking groceries, making deliveries. You’re not studying a disaster from afar. Here you’re in it, and everyone is affected. It is a personal moment and a



Michael Perrota



Jade Snyder

teaching moment.”

Perrota and Snyder took part in Mercy’s “Discussions with Mercy Leaders in the Time of Coronavirus” series, which featured numerous professors at the College offering their expertise on various aspects of the pandemic, including the latest medical updates, keeping fit at home, the CARES Act, keeping children’s education going at home as well as others.

Perrota says his students were afforded a unique opportunity to see the pitfalls of the 24/7 news cycle when the facts on the ground are constantly changing. “We’re used to immediacy. So, when the answers aren’t fluid, or the information is not 100% accurate, or the scientists and doctors don’t know, that’s tricky: as the science changes, so does the news coverage.”

Perrota added: “Information was always gettable. Never before have you had more access to sources, because you’re home and they’re home. You can find them like never before. Yet at the same time, news outlets have to consider how much truth will frighten

an audience. Sometimes truth can put an audience on panic mode. We’re all crisis learning right now.”

Snyder notes, “It’s all a living case study for students that changes every day, and has been illustrative to the point that sometimes I just cut back my original lesson plan and said, ‘This is it: feet to the fire, every week we’re checking in on brands that are doing a great job, brands that could be doing better.’ You can’t design these case studies because they’re being built right now. It’s a great opportunity to judge a situation in its context.”

Mercy Welcomes New Deans

Peter West, Ph.D. and Stuart Sidle, Ph.D.

Mercy College welcomed two new deans during the summer of 2020. Peter West, Ph.D., joined Mercy College on June 1 as the dean of the School of Liberal Arts, and Stuart Sidle, Ph.D., joined Mercy College on July 1 as the dean of the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Both bring deep commitment and years of expertise to their leadership roles at Mercy.

West comes to Mercy from Adelphi University where he spent the past 12 years. “I am very drawn to Mercy’s mission,” West said. “And I feel that the School of Liberal Arts is really well-positioned to give students the skills they need to succeed — not only the skills to get their first jobs but the skills to help them succeed throughout their lives.”

Ever since his first visit to the Dobbs Ferry Campus, West has been captivated by the mix of programs in the School of Liberal Arts — the more traditional programs such as English and history alongside the applied programs such as cybersecurity and music production: “This provides such a great opportunity for students to recognize how those two areas are connected: the skills of critical thinking, understanding and navigating difference, being literate people and citizens of the world — and the hands-on skills taught in our more applied programs.”

As he determines his initial priorities at Mercy, West notes that the first challenge everyone is tackling is making sure that the

College can launch in the fall with dynamic, meaningful experiences for students. Beyond that, he has spent his first several months “learning about our programs from the inside, learning about the work our faculty does, learning about our students and what they find most valuable in the programs, figuring out how best to support our



Peter West, Ph.D.

Photo provided by Peter West

programs and finding opportunities to partner with the other deans.” He is excited to find ways for the School of Liberal Arts to work with the other Mercy schools to create new minors, certificates or programs that would help all kinds of Mercy students experience the liberal arts in a hands-on way and get a leg up in their careers.

Most recently, West served as the associate provost for student success at Adelphi University, and he looks forward to continuing similar work in his new role at Mercy. “In addition to the mission, I was really drawn to the fact that the deans at Mercy play a role in improving student success metrics,” he explained. “Part of a dean’s work here is helping faculty design interventions and supporting

academic structures that give every single student the maximum opportunity to succeed. That’s really important and directly connects with Mercy’s mission of making higher education more accessible.”

West joined Adelphi in 2008 as an assistant professor of English, and later served as chair of the English Department, and then associate dean for general education and academic services for the College of Arts and Sciences.

Throughout his career, West has been deeply involved with community outreach. “I’ve always tried to find partners off-campus where students can apply the learning that they’re doing in the classroom to the world outside,” he explained. “Internships are terrific and an integral part of this, but I want to get students those kinds of experiences earlier in their education as well so that they can see the value of the work they do.”

West sees the liberal arts — and by extension, Mercy’s School of Liberal Arts — as absolutely essential in higher education: “I’m a big believer that the liberal arts have incredible value in the very challenges that we’re facing right now in society — being literate about information, understanding the experiences of other people and navigating difference, and being responsible and reflective citizens. One of the great things about teaching the liberal arts is that you constantly have opportunities to connect the learning that takes place in the classroom with the world outside because these skills are ultimately transferable to any challenge. So the School of Liberal Arts is really at the center of how

“At some organizations, the mission is just something posted on the wall. But at Mercy, everyone wants to talk about it. That’s such a pleasant surprise.”

we achieve Mercy’s mission and also of how we solve the challenges of today’s society.”

West holds a doctorate in English from Emory University and a bachelor’s degree with honors in English from Wesleyan University. He has published two major works and several scholarly articles on 19th-century literature and culture.

Like West, Sidle was also drawn to Mercy’s mission: “I believe that education is one of the most powerful tools to impact social mobility. And Mercy’s desire to have an impact is extremely inspiring to me. I wanted to be in a place where I could make a difference, and Mercy is that place.”

Since stepping into his new role as dean of the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, he has seen first-hand that people at Mercy live and breathe its mission: “At some organizations, the mission is just something posted on the wall. But at Mercy, everyone wants to talk about it. That’s such a pleasant surprise. We’re not just thinking about enrollment, COVID-19 or the budget. We’re really focusing on improving students’ lives and giving them new opportunities. We’re talking about improving diversity, addressing social inequality and using inclusive pedagogy.”

People are at the heart of what excites him and drives him: “For me, it’s all about the relationships. So far, everybody I’ve met is really fantastic. I’m excited to spend more time with them and collaborate with them. It’s clear already that SSBS has a very dedicated, very strong

faculty. I need to make sure that I foster an environment where they can really focus their time on their teaching and their scholarship. I want to help the faculty, staff and students thrive. I want to help everybody be their best.” He is also excited to find opportunities for curricular innovation, incorporate more community-based learning projects and collaborate with other Mercy schools through interdisciplinary research and grants.

Most recently, Sidle served as the Executive Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence at the University of New Haven. Passionate about excellence in higher education, he takes great pride in the teaching



Stuart Sidle, Ph.D.

Photo provided by Stuart Sidle

awards he received at Saint Xavier University, DePaul University and the University of New Haven. Given this deep focus on instruction, student and faculty engagement and student outcomes are on his mind as he thinks about how to define success for the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences: “Regarding engagement, I would want to know answers to questions such as, What type of learning is taking place outside the classroom? Are students working on research projects with faculty or service-learning projects in the community? For me, a sign of engagement is when people go beyond the assigned hours to do deep learning with people different from themselves outside the classroom. Regarding outcomes, I would want to know the answers

to questions such as: “Are alumni working in their field of study or a related field? Are they happy and fulfilled in their careers?”

In his 17 years at the University of New Haven, he held several roles, including the associate provost for strategic initiatives and faculty development, interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, chair of the Department of Psychology and Sociology and director of the industrial/organizational psychology program. Before joining the University of New Haven, he held faculty positions at DePaul University and Saint Xavier University.

He sees the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences as playing a critical role in making much-needed change in the world: “Our current issues — the COVID-19 pandemic, social inequality, economic concerns, international concerns — are all things that are going to be addressed by people working in the fields supported by SSBS. How will the students in our public administration and health services management programs help transform our hospitals and healthcare systems? How will the students in our counseling programs help people cope with the stress of these times? How will the students in our international relations program use their global mindset to help solve the pandemic and other world problems? It’s really exciting to see how people use their education to help address societal problems.”

Beyond teaching, Sidle is actively involved in scholarly research and consults with companies and nonprofit organizations. He earned his master’s degree and doctorate in industrial/organizational psychology from DePaul University and his bachelor’s degree from American University.

Mercy College is delighted to welcome these two deans to the Mercy family and looks forward to seeing the School of Liberal Arts and the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences flourish under their leadership.

MAVERICKS

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Shining a light on the Mercy Community's Resilience and Strength During COVID-19

At the beginning of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, accounts of the Mercy College community and the former College of New Rochelle (CNR) on the front lines of the pandemic flooded student, faculty, staff and alumni email accounts and conference calls. The stories exemplified courage and perseverance on the ground of the greatest public health emergency of our time, as well as expertise integral to the mitigation of issues stemming from an economic, health and societal crisis unlike any other.

Mercy aptly designated these individuals as **"Mavericks Making a Difference."** They consisted of health care professionals, professors, musicians, Mercy students, grocery store clerks, artists, school teachers, and more, spanning diverse backgrounds, ages and experiences.

In the face of the coronavirus situation, they demonstrated tremendous ability to navigate an unprecedented set of challenges, and rise to the occasion to help the individuals, organizations and industries impacted by the pandemic. With resolve and altruism, they provided essential services, and more, to safeguard the health and well-being of individuals most in need of additional support.

Mercy disseminated "Mavericks Making a Difference" stories through multiple communication channels, promoting their achievements to the broader community. The sampling of profiles below represents a subset of six "Mavericks Making a Difference" stories out of the more than 30 features shared in only two months time. A common theme that resonated in each story was each subject's deep-seeded dedication to service as learned through their collegiate experiences at Mercy College and the former College of New Rochelle (CNR).

Evita Kubhar '19, a member of Mercy's first four-year nursing graduating class, had to hit the ground running, fast, in her new position as a registered nurse. The COVID-19 outbreak forced her to learn the ropes of the nursing profession and her hospital at a rapid pace. "Mercy taught me well and I definitely had the

fundamentals needed to do my job. I'll be able to look back and tell future nursing students my experience — that we can handle anything that's thrown at us," said Kubhar.

Nyssamae Garcia

CNR '19, part of the last graduating class of CNR, before CNR entered into an agreement with Mercy to provide a pathway for students to continue their education uninterrupted, is now a staff nurse for a Level I adult emergency room. Even though she faced immense personal and professional difficulties during the COVID-19 outbreak, she exhibited heartening positivity: "As long as I wake up with no symptoms, that's a blessing," said Garcia. "Every day is a day toward normalcy — a new beginning."

After the nationwide school closures began due to COVID-19, former Broadway actor and current New York City public school music teacher **Jesse Means, M.S. '03** was forced to shift his curriculum to online learning. Within days, Means tore apart his one-bedroom apartment to create a virtual classroom that rivaled any other. Already armed with a green screen, he began setting up a makeshift television studio. With his at-home video editing software, working late into the night, he began to create videos for his preschool, kindergarten, first and second grade students.



Since the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation hit New York, **Sherrye Samuels**, clinical instructor, has been on the front lines, working in the Emergency Department at Metropolitan Hospital in New York City. In the thick of crisis, Samuels often thought about her nursing students. "I always tell them, 'Don't doubt your ability. Think outside the box.'"



When Marine Corps veteran and retired firefighter/paramedic **Thomas Macpherson '16, M.S. '19** decided to pursue a physician assistant career, he enrolled in Mercy's PA program. During the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Macpherson was integral in diagnosing and treating coronavirus patients, using the skills he learned at Mercy, including airway and ventilatory management, suturing, fractures and dislocations, to treat patients. "The competencies I gained from both my undergraduate degree and the Physician Assistant Program are being used



daily. I wouldn't be where I am, nor able to function at a high level, without the training I received in the Mercy PA program and the professors' dedication," Macpherson explained.

Mercy professor and epidemiologist **Rossi A. Hassad, Ph.D., MPH**, has been a reliable source of crucial public health information throughout the course of the pandemic, providing scientific counsel to audiences spanning the country and internationally through News12, Newsmax, Al Jazeera, MedPage Today and New York Magazine. He has also been a source of sound guidance and strength for the Mercy community as a panelist in two Discussions with Mercy Leaders, where he addressed best practices for the prevention and control of COVID-19, and staying healthy.

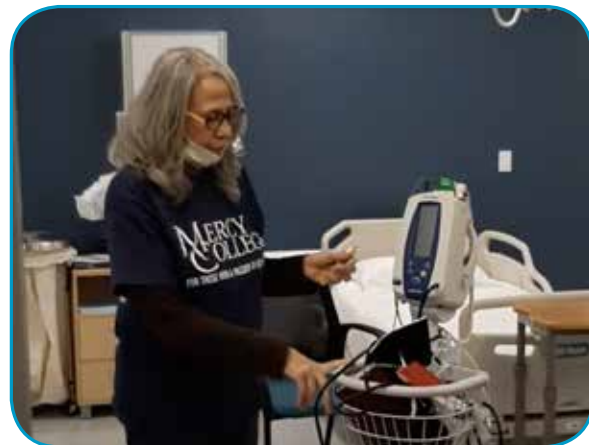


Through his expertise and work on COVID-19 he understands that the pandemic has challenged conventional medical and public health knowledge. "In the classroom, and as a professor of research, it is important to provide an objective lens, educating students about evolving research, implementing good logic and common sense as well as helping to cultivate the next generation of critical thinkers."

Mercy Donates PPE and Essential Equipment to Montefiore Hospital

To address the national shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE), **Mercy's School of Health and Natural Sciences (SHNS)** donated approximately 20,000 pieces of PPE, as well as other essential equipment, to Montefiore Hospital in the Bronx, New York. Montefiore Hospital is a valued clinical partner for Mercy College. Faculty, adjunct professors and alumni work for Montefiore, and many Mercy students are placed at Montefiore for their clinical rotations.

"We are very proud to be working at Mercy College, a place where the motto is, 'consumed in service,' and we are very proud to be able to donate these supplies to one of our sister institutions," said Miriam Ford, associate dean for nursing at Mercy's Dobbs Ferry and Manhattan Campuses.



These inspirational stories will be upheld in Mercy's history books and shared by future generations as they remember how the College community took the hardships caused by the coronavirus pandemic and turned them on their heels to ignite positive change. These "Mavericks Making a Difference" epitomize the heart and soul of Mercy College, and with great pride and admiration, will be honored for their heroic service for years to come.

Mercy College Holds First Virtual Commencement Ceremony to Celebrate 2020 Graduates



“You come here; you feel loved.

NO MATTER HOW HARD THINGS GET, YOU HAVE SOMEONE NEXT TO YOU.”

“Mercy is somewhere where you belong.

AND WHERE YOU FEEL LIKE WHAT YOU’RE DOING IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE.”

“I don’t see graduation as the end, I see it as the beginning

OF SOMETHING GOOD. AND I’LL ALWAYS HAVE MERCY TO BACK ME UP. IT’S MORE THAN JUST A SCHOOL TO ME.”

These heartfelt sentiments shared by members of Mercy College’s 2020 graduating class, who faced an extraordinary situation due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, held extra weight at this year’s commencement on May 20.

Mercy graduates adjusted to a new normal in the middle of the spring 2020 term as they experienced an abrupt transition from an in-person to

online learning format in the matter of a few days. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent social distancing mandates imposed by New York State, graduates were required to meet their degree requirements remotely.

With support from the entire Mercy College community, including PACT, the registrar’s office, the president’s office, student affairs and many other departments, the graduating class

traversed a challenging last term in stride.

The unprecedented wrap-up of the semester was made even more commemorative with the graduation of the first former College of New Rochelle (CNR) student cohort, who continued their degrees at Mercy College after Mercy entered into an agreement with CNR to provide a pathway for its students to continue their education after the institution’s

closing in August 2019.

While the COVID-19 pandemic presented a unique set of challenges for Mercy College in organizing the virtual commencement ceremony, the administration worked swiftly over the course of two months to organize an online commencement, with plans to organize an in-person event, when that is safe to do so.

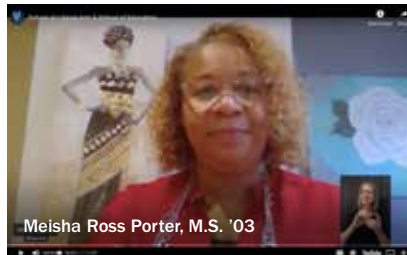
The virtual commencement included all the pomp and circumstance of an in-person ceremony and involved an integrated media strategy with engaging content from College leaders and students across multiple online platforms. On the day of the commencement, virtual videos were streamed on a dedicated microsite, www.mercy.edu/commencement. Videos were pre-recorded and watched in unison to mimic the feel of a live event. Graduates were mailed a cap and tassel and encouraged to share their “Tassel Moment,” (the movement of tassels on graduation caps from right to left to signify graduation) via social media channels.

The ceremony enjoyed by Mercy College students and their proud families, faculty, staff and alumni involved a college-wide video intended for the entire Mercy community, as well as individual, school-specific videos for the School of Business, School of Education, School of Health and Natural Sciences, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, and School of Liberal Arts. In the school-specific ceremonies, students saw their names and photos announced across the screen in correlation with their degree programs.

In the college-wide ceremony, Mercy College Provost José Herrera, Ph.D. acknowledged the students’ victories: “I want to say how very proud I am of all of you. This has not been a typical spring term for anyone, and you have persevered to this very special graduation event. Despite the calamities, you have endured to get to this point in your career.”

At the conclusion of the main ceremony, after praising the graduating students for their persistence, President Hall

expressed his thoughts on the unprecedented event. “One of the things I enjoy most about our annual commencement ceremony is getting to celebrate with you all as you cross the stage, getting to call you by name and congratulate you, so it was a difficult decision to postpone our in-person ceremony,” said Hall. “I look forward to celebrating again when we are able to safely gather together in the future.”



The school ceremonies featured remarks from Mercy College’s 2020 Honorary Degree Recipients – four individuals who have demonstrated leadership in the humanitarian, medical, philanthropic and civic fields. They included Stephanie J. Hull, Ph.D., president and CEO of Girls Inc.; Valerie Mason Cunningham, former senior executive leader at Xerox Corporation and a

Mercy College Trustee; Rajiv Ratan, M.D., Ph.D., executive director at Burke Neurological Institute and Burke professor of neurology and neuroscience at Weill Cornell Medicine; and Meisha Ross-Porter, M.S. '03, Bronx executive superintendent for the New York City Department of Education.

Hull informed the graduates, “you’ll face challenges that you’re not quite sure what to do with. But you’ll find out soon enough that ordinary success doesn’t feel nearly as good as the success that you have after a major curveball. After you’ve made your own way through the hard part.” Mason Cunningham reminded them, “You will reap the benefits of [your] determination and grit as you leave Mercy to pursue your goals and dreams. Your education is a key plank to your next opportunity, success and milestone.”

Ratan encouraged graduates to push forward, even in the face of failure. “How you respond to the inevitable failures that occur in ordinary life can determine how successful you really become,” said. Ross-Porter emphasized the importance of the spirit of gratitude: “Be grateful for the time and space that has been created to be a learner in this moment, for that is what will truly prepare you for what is next.”

In terms of what is next, no matter the uncertainty of what our world may look like in the future, one constant for these graduates will be their place in an accomplished network of alumni. As said by Hall, Mercy graduates will always be welcomed back, and as they grow personally and professionally, their collective experiences will enrich a deep-rooted alumni network already making a difference.

Congratulations to the Mercy College Class of 2020, who will be remembered for their extraordinary commencement ceremony, and their tenacity to overcome what seemed at times an insurmountable obstacle, with unfettered determination and sensitivity to the health and safety needs of our communities. As said by Mercy PACT Counselor Nicole Asamoah: “The world is excited and ready for you, so do your thing.”

The Power of Possibility

The First Mercy Scholars Graduate

In May, 19 exceptional students who at one point doubted whether they would ever be able to afford college graduated from Mercy College.



fter four years of hard work, this inaugural cohort of Mercy Scholars earned their diplomas after receiving scholarships to cover tuition, books and fees to Mercy based on their academic achievement, leadership, service

to others and unmet financial need. Now, they head to graduate school or into the workforce with minimal or no debt due to the generosity of donors who funded their undergraduate education.

The Mercy Scholars Program launched in 2016 with a mission described by President Tim Hall, who asked: “What would happen in the lives of students if they could come to college knowing that they would not be encumbered with draconian debt? How would that let them engage their full potential?” Inaugural donations from Bob and Kate Niehaus, Jim and Marsha McCormick and others made it possible for the program to accept its first cohort and inspired a whole host of donors who have supported and mentored a new group of students every year since.

By all accounts, the Mercy Scholars Program is a

tremendous success. Each year, the program accepts 20 to 25 students, and 91% of them are on track to graduate in four years as compared with a national four-year graduation rate of 53%. Scholars work hard at Mercy, earning an average GPA of 3.27. And donors praise the fact that they can meet the students they support and follow their progress over the course of four years.

“This program is one of the most direct and purposeful ways to make a deep impact on a family,” asserted Ariana Aguilar, Mercy’s director of donor relations. “In fact, the investment comes back to these students, their families and society in multiple ways. To me, the Mercy Scholars Program is emblematic of the type of programming that can truly revolutionize higher education and make it much more accessible. We are incredibly grateful for the donors who have made this possible.”

In short, the Mercy Scholars Program transforms lives and here are three examples from this year’s graduating class: Serafina Fichter, Mohamed Saleh Ahmed and Alexis Williams.

SERAFINA FICHTER '20

The seventh of nine children growing up in the Pelham Bay section of the Bronx, Serafina Fichter '20 had her parents' full support in pursuing a college education. "Even though my parents didn't go to college, they always pushed us into the direction of this better life," she explained. "They wanted us to have more than they did." Yet even with their backing, four years of college tuition was still a significant financial burden for the family. "Being awarded this scholarship and sharing the news with my parents is one of my proudest memories," she reflected.



When her beloved uncle passed away unexpectedly shortly after her freshman year at Mercy, Fichter struggled to cope with the grief at first. Eventually, she persisted with the help of her family, friends and her PACT mentor. "I am grateful that Mercy provided the environment and support that allowed me to overcome this difficult time and continue my journey," she said. "Mercy is a place where you aren't defined by how many times you fall but by how many times you pick yourself back up."

Her uncle's death inspired her to change her major from English to communication disorders so she could spend her life helping

others, just as he had done. The more classes she took in her new major, the more she fell in love with the field. "Everyone deserves that chance to communicate and to be understood." She is beginning her master's degree in communication disorders at Mercy this fall.

"Mercy is a place where you aren't defined by how many times you fall but by how many times you pick yourself back up."

Fichter appreciates what makes a Mercy education different: "The professors actually want to see you succeed. And I think that stands out from a lot of other schools that have big lecture halls where no one is raising their hands. I would never want to be in a class like that. At Mercy, the classes are so small, and I can ask questions and really know that I'm being heard."

For her, the scholarship provided motivation to work harder and achieve more: "Having a donor is very important because it gives me something to work for. If we're not working to our full potential, then why is someone investing so much in us? The donors have paved the way for our futures, and I promise we will do our best to make them proud and pay it forward."

MOHAMED SELEH AHMED '20

Reflecting on when his family immigrated to the United States from Yemen, Mohamed Saleh Ahmed '20 said, "Back then, I didn't have much hope. But now, I do. I have a lot of hopes." This quiet student is the first in his family to even graduate from high school and faced pressure to



start working instead of attending college. The Mercy Scholars Program made it possible for him to continue his education. "Without this scholarship, attending college would have been a tremendous challenge due to the expense and my family's limited ability to provide financial support," he explained.

Over the past four years, Mercy became his "second home, a family." He enjoyed the connection and camaraderie that came with getting to know the other Mercy Scholars. "This program taught me that education is not just about getting a degree," he explained. "It is also about forming a community and building a network of people who will challenge and inspire you to be better."

Upon arriving at Mercy, Ahmed planned to major in biology in preparation to become a doctor. However, he was so inspired by his first legal studies class that he decided to major in legal studies and minor in criminal justice. As someone who has experienced racism because of his ethnic background, he sees law as an opportunity to be a changemaker. "I believe that becoming a lawyer will help me defend others and stand up for my people peacefully," he

(continued)

The First Mercy Scholars Graduate

(continued from page 13)

said. “I will show people that Arabs do not kill and destroy people. Arabs, like me, can save people’s lives.” Even while still an undergraduate, Ahmed experienced the legal system up close by volunteering at Manhattan Housing Court as a Court Navigator, a role that enabled him to assist people who do not have an attorney during their court appearances in landlord-tenant and consumer debt cases.

“I’m here to be a role model for my younger siblings to let them know that if I can do it, they can do it too”

His life is on a different path because of this scholarship, and his family’s is too. “I’m here to be a role model for my younger siblings to let them know that if I can do it, they can do it too,” he said. After seeing his successes, his parents are even considering letting his sister attend high school, something that many girls in Yemen are not allowed to do. “The donors gave my family and myself the opportunity to be a success,” he said. “Now I am in the position where I can be a blessing to others because donors believed in investing in me.”

ALEXUS WILLIAMS '20

For Alexis Williams '20, college was never a given. Neither of her parents earned an undergraduate degree, and although she wanted to



Alexis Williams '20

Photo by Leslie Kahan Photography

continue her education, she knew that the price tag was high — “a price tag that my family and I could not have afforded on our own.” Scholarships did not seem within reach either. As she put it, “Where I’m from, we don’t get scholarships.”

So being named a Mercy Scholar and awarded a full scholarship signified opportunity: “It shows those around me that hard work does pay off. Being a Mercy Scholar not only gives me great pride but hope that those who feel so small

in a big city can do great things with determination and self-confidence.” She sees the Mercy Scholars Program as being meaningful for her entire family: “I give them a chance to live through me, to know that we did it and that the family is successful. And also, I have little siblings, so it gives them a role model to follow.”

At Mercy, Williams majored in nursing. “I love it. I can’t see myself doing anything else.” The donor who supported her education, Bruce

Haber, Mercy Trustee and former Mercy Board Chair, recognizes her talent and determination: “When you meet Alexis, you know that she can succeed at whatever she wants to succeed at. Right now, she wants to be a nurse. But who knows? Maybe she’ll want to be the president of a hospital. The sky is the limit once you get the proper education and put it to good use.”

Indeed, Williams sets her sights high: “I don’t want to just make a difference. I want to be the difference. I want to make sure that not only am I successful but the others around me are successful too. I don’t want to be the only rose growing in the garden. I want to make sure that there’s a rose bush.”

These are only three of the many inspiring stories from the inaugural cohort of Mercy Scholars. We look forward to following the lives and careers of these accomplished young graduates as they go off into the world.

“I don’t want to just make a difference. I want to be the difference.”

By making college a reality for students with unmet financial need, the Mercy Scholars Program transforms lives and supports Mercy’s mission of serving others and increasing access to higher education. If you are interested in learning more about supporting students in this program, please contact Chief Advancement Officer Bernadette Wade at bwade@mercy.edu or call (914) 674-7596.



Mohamed Saleh
Ahmed '20



Esther Asiamah '20



Cindy Ayala '20



Niyah Belser '19



Elizabeth Braban '20



Raymond Calderon '20



Gisselle Cardozo '20



Liavy De Los Santos '20



Nathalie Delgado '20



Serafina Fichter '20

THE GRADUATING CLASS



Mercedes
Hawthorne '20



Maria Herrera '20



Diana Huaynate '20



Sofia Huyhua '20



Taliyah Schehr '20



Mariam Sillah '20



Anai Silva '20



Alexis Williams '20



Abigail Zelaya '20

“ I’m grateful for the Mercy Scholars who rewrote the trajectories of their own lives by coming to the College and doing the work to graduate on time in four years. It is an extraordinary accomplishment and I promise you those habits of resilience and dedication to the work are going to pay off for you in the future. ”

Timothy L. Hall
President

Where Does Systemic Racism Live on College Campuses?

An opinion editorial by President Tim Hall, published in The Journal News, July 24, 2020

George Floyd's murder has ignited a nation-wide focus on racism. Not just the racism of bigoted individuals, bad apples consumed with racial hatred, but the racism embedded in systems and processes and rules. Systemic racism involves structures that produce disadvantageous results for people of color, without adequate justification.

Do such structures exist in colleges and universities? Consider the impact of race on graduation from college. Black students are significantly less likely to graduate from college in the U.S. within six years than white students, as are Hispanic students.

For some in higher education, these differing results are so enduring as to seem like demographic axioms. But what if gaps in student success along lines of race are not inevitable?

At Mercy College in New York, we have begun to

defeat demography on behalf of our students. A dozen years ago, the likelihood of graduating from Mercy was overwhelmingly linked to race and the link established itself like an iron chain by the end of student's first year of college. The likelihood that either black or Hispanic students would return to Mercy after their first year was significantly less than that of white students, and this beginning led inexorably to substantial differences in graduation rates along lines of race.

Today, though, first year retention rates are roughly equal, with students of color actually retained slightly better than white students. Graduation rates differences have shrunk to no more than 10%, with every likelihood of becoming equal within the next several years.

These results are the consequence of Mercy's adoption of specific practices that have the effect of closing retention and graduation rate gaps along lines of race: intrusive advising, guided pathways to success, co-requisite remediation, and others. These results mean



that racial gaps in success at colleges and universities are not inevitable. They are consequences of specific structures within an institution, and changes to those structures can change the racially disparate results that accompany them. Mercy hasn't finished closing the racial success gap, but it has made a strong start.

The logic of system racism has always been simple. Systems argue that they do not intend results that disadvantage racial minorities. They assume that differences along racial lines are inevitable, unrelated to their systemic practices. But the logic of systemic racism collapses once we discover differing ways of structuring our systems that accomplish the same end results, but without the racial differences.

*At Mercy College
in New York, we
have begun to defeat
demography on
behalf of our students.*

The failure to explore changes to higher education structures that would close racial gaps in success is shameful. These gaps are where systemic racism mostly lives in higher education, gaps born of low expectations for students of color and inadequate support for their success. And the shame of it is not absolved by hiring a Diversity Officer or tinkering with curriculum in ways that are more racially inclusive. Nor is it absolved by simply recruiting more students of color for admission. So long as students of color are not included in success, the success of graduating most all, other gestures of inclusion are a mainly a diversion from the real scandal, which is that institutions of higher learning permit systemic racial disadvantage solely because they are unwilling to make the structural changes necessary to close the success gap.

Mercy leaders chosen to headline panel at prestigious

SXSW EDU

2020 may have been the year of the coronavirus (COVID-19), but it was also the year that Mercy College received a very prestigious honor: President Tim Hall and Vice President, Bronx William Latimer were chosen to headline a panel at SXSW EDU.

The SXSW EDU conference is the nation's premier gathering of education leaders from around the globe dedicated to the advancement of teaching and learning. Showcasing hundreds of speakers on topics ranging from emerging technology to diversity to leadership, SXSW EDU, which was cancelled due to the coronavirus outbreak, was also scheduled to feature films, case studies, workshops and live performances. Hall and Latimer, the former president of the College of New Rochelle (CNR), were to discuss "A Pathway for Students when a College Closes," a conversation focused on Mercy's groundbreaking agreement with the former CNR.

Their talk was all too timely, as colleges are closing their doors in unprecedented numbers across the country, with students who are left to fend for themselves and find their educational paths disrupted. Typically, failing institutions will try to partner with another local college that is in good standing to offer students a "Teach-Out," which allows them to continue their education. However, there is no guarantee that tuition and scholarships will be the same or that students can graduate on their current timeline. By contrast, when CNR announced its impending closure, Mercy College created a seamless pathway for CNR students to continue their education uninterrupted, accommodating almost every degree program, honoring all credits, ensuring costs would be the same or less, retaining half of CNR's faculty and leasing space on several of CNR's campuses so that students could continue attending class where they had started and graduate on their current timeline.

"The agreement between Mercy College and the former CNR was unprecedented," said Hall. "It is unique and a model for other institutions in the future. We were very proud that the SXSW EDU organizers deemed our experience relevant enough to share with a national audience."

To ensure former CNR students were able to continue their studies, Mercy received permission from state regulators to add several programs to its curriculum which were offered at the former CNR campuses. Most notable of these were two new nursing programs, which brought the total number of nursing degrees attainable at the College to six, which was also an added benefit for Mercy students. The agreement also included a meaningful commitment from Mercy to honor the history and legacy of CNR. Hall and Latimer had planned to take SXSW EDU participants step-by-step through their weeks of time sensitive negotiations, culminating in a successful agreement that was announced in March of 2019.

Unfortunately, the pandemic intervened, and in the interests of health and safety, the entire SXSW conference was cancelled within days of the panel. The College plans to work with organizers to participate in the future.

In the meantime, Hall is delighted to share best practices with institutions interested in learning about the agreement. "I am contacted by leaders at other institutions frequently wanting to learn of what we did and how we did it," said Hall.



President Tim Hall

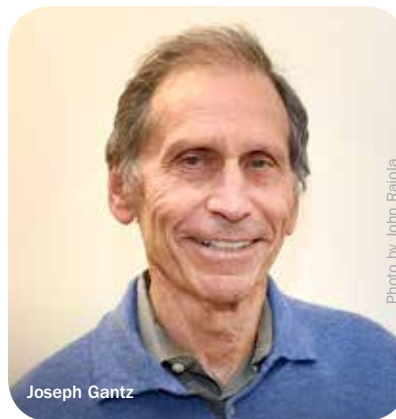


Vice President, Bronx
William Latimer

Mercy Welcomes New Leadership on Board of Trustees

In January 2020, the Mercy College Board of Trustees elected **Joseph Gantz** the new chairman. Gantz, who has served as a trustee since 2001, and most recently as chair of the development committee, is a founding partner, executive advisor and member of the investment committee at private equity firm Pine Brook Partners. He has extensive experience in corporate senior management and is an experienced and successful investor. Gantz is involved with many non-profit organizations including being on the executive committee of the board of Madison Square Boys & Girls Club, which provides a safe, stable, supportive environment for youth in some of New York City's most under-served neighborhoods. Gantz holds an M.B.A. from Columbia Business School and a B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania.

Mercy College is deeply grateful to former Chairman **Bruce J. Haber** who led the board from 2015 – 2020 and continues to serve as a trustee. During Haber's time as chairman, Mercy experienced tremendous growth including the purchase of Our Lady of Victory Academy, building Hudson Hall at the Dobbs Ferry Campus, the expansion of MercyManhattan and finalizing the



agreement with the College of New Rochelle.

Over the last year, Mercy College has welcomed five new members to its Board of Trustees who demonstrate commitment to furthering the mission of the College and providing motivated students the opportunity to transform their lives through higher education.

New members Richard Aks, Valerie Mason Cunningham, James B. Jenkins, Robert H. Niehaus, Carlos S. Passi and Christopher J. Sobecki, with their backgrounds in finance, corporate governance and business management, guide the College's

financial and operational growth and inspire broader investment in its students, faculty and staff.

Mercy College President Tim Hall is appreciative of the board members' devotion during the pandemic. "The College is fortunate to have such a dedicated and vested group of trustees. During these uncertain times, we've come together to ensure the best outcomes for students and come out stronger. We are grateful to all our trustees, especially our new members, for investing their time and expertise to ensuring that Mercy College will thrive in the years to come and ultimately continue to educate deserving students."

NEW MEMBERS INCLUDE:

Richard Aks is a retired investment banker and higher education administrator who served as Mercy College's Interim Chief Financial Officer from September 2019 to February 2020. Previously, he spent three and a half years at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ, where he was the Vice President for Finance and Associate Treasurer. Aks became a higher education executive after a 30-year career as a public finance investment banker and financial advisor at J.P. Morgan and Goldman Sachs. Aks is a graduate of Brown University and Harvard Business School. He serves on the Board's Audit, Endowment, and Finance and Control Committees.

Valerie Mason Cunningham has more than 30 years of progressive leadership and management experiences in the high-tech industry; serving both the commercial and private sectors globally. Cunningham recently retired from a successful 38-year career at Xerox Corporation with an impressive track record of fueling revenue and profit growth, transformational organization change and boosting market share growth. Cunningham graduated from the State University of New York at Old Westbury earning a B.S. in marketing and business management with a concentration in computer science. Cunningham earned an honorary doctorate of commercial science from Mercy

College. Cunningham has served as a member of the University of Connecticut-Stamford Business School's Advisory Board and on CompTIA's Vendor Advisory Council. She currently serves as the board chair of the Board of Director's and Executive Committee for Volunteer New York! and is a member of the Friends of Urban Resource Institute. Cunningham serves on the Board's Development Committee.

James B. Jenkins has more than 30 years of experience in real asset management, including commodity trade, logistics, infrastructure, risk management, compliance and corporate governance. Currently, he is president of Canachagala Corporation, which offers services

including commodity and real asset advisory, equity and capital markets investments and angel investments. Jenkins earned a B.A. in English from Amherst College. He has served as a member of the New York Board of Trade's Cocoa and Control Committees and as chairman of the Board of Directors of the Cocoa Merchants' Association of America. In addition, he has taught at three different universities. Jenkins chairs the City of Rye Finance Committee, is a member of the President's Advisory Council of the National Wildlife Federation and is a past board member of the Red Cross Metro NY North Chapter. Jenkins serves on the Board's Academic and Student Affairs, Audit and Development Committees.

Robert H. Niehaus has more than 30 years of private equity investment experience and currently serves as chairman and founder of Greenhill Capital Partners, LLC (GCP). Niehaus joined Greenhill & Co. in 2000 as a managing director and founded GCP in 2009. Prior to joining Greenhill, he spent 17 years at Morgan Stanley & Co.,

where he was a managing director in the merchant banking department from 1990 to 1999. Niehaus holds an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School and a B.A. in international affairs from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School. Niehaus and his wife, Kate, are founding supporters of and lead donors to the Mercy Scholars Program. Niehaus serves as chair of the Board Audit Committee, and on the Executive, Finance and Control, and Academic and Student Affairs Committees.

Carlos S. Passi retired as the vice president of finance at IBM Global Markets, where he was responsible for IBM's financial operations, strategies, management, and controls across the North America, Europe, Japan, Latin America, Asia Pacific, Greater China Group and Middle East/Africa. He holds an M.B.A. and an M.S. in mechanical engineering from the University of Colorado as well as a degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Chile. Currently, he serves on the Board of Advisors of the University of Connecticut's M.S. in Business Analytics and

Project Management program, as chairman of the IBM Retiree Contribution Campaign and as a retiree advisor to IBM's Corporate Social Responsibility function. He also volunteers with the Putnam Arts Council. Passi serves on the Board's Development Committee.

Christopher J. Sobecki is managing director at the Invus Group, an equity investment company that has over \$8 billion assets under management and offices in New York, Paris and Hong Kong. He currently serves on the Board of numerous companies, both private and public, where Invus is a major investor. Sobecki holds an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School and a B.S. in Industrial Engineering from Purdue University. Sobecki's wife, Patrice, is a nursing instructor and an alumna of Mercy having earned her M.S. in nursing education and B.S.N. Sobecki also has previously served as a board member of Tufts University Institute for Global Leadership. Sobecki serves on the Board's Endowment Management Committee.

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Photo by Rob Cornetta

A Sports for All Approach

Mercy's Club Basketball Team

The benefits of participating in sporting activities in college are plentiful and long lasting. Sports involvement adds richness to students' overall college experiences, offering a way to build friendships, reduce stress, exercise, gain leadership skills, or continue a beloved high school extracurricular.

Even more so, sports program staff provide an additional resource to support students' overall success, and in the case of Mercy College, go above and beyond to provide mentorship, encourage camaraderie and boost confidence.

Fortunately for Mavericks, Mercy understands the need for sports for all skill and interest levels, and provides a plethora of opportunities for students that accommodates varied interests, skill levels and schedules. Other than the varsity sports program, which operates at a required talent and experience level, and involves a significant time commitment, Mercy offers alternate program options for students: intramural sports and club sports.

In an intramural sports league, students play for fun for their college and there is no competition with other institutions. Practice and game schedules are less time consuming than club sports, and in Mercy's case, the sports played each season are based on student interest. Alternatively, club sports provide a middle ground between varsity sports and intramural

sports, offering students the opportunity to engage in structured intercollegiate competition. E-sports, which consists of organized, multiplayer video game competitions, was a recent, exciting addition to Mercy's club sports roster.

In spring 2019, Mercy launched the intramural sports program on the Dobbs Ferry Campus. "It's become a community," said participant Leo Hefferan '20, who played basketball and flag football. "I made a lot of friends and connections that I probably wouldn't have made otherwise."

Daniel Steinberg, Mercy's intramural sports program coordinator and assistant strength and conditioning coach, has seen the program's positive impact. "A man in his 50s joined intramural sports. He was a commuter student who was at college for the second time and wanted something to do outside of class," Steinberg explained.

"The other students loved the fact that he was a part of the league. It was everything that we hoped intramural sports to be — an inclusive forum for people to be physically active, gain self-esteem and have fun with a new group of people."

Robert Cornetta, hired in November 2019 as Mercy's club sport manager, has significantly grown club sports opportunities for students wishing to be part of a team. Besides expanding soccer, basketball and other sports, he has managed the launch of Mercy's new esports program.

The East Coast Conference (ECC), of which Mercy is a member, was the second Division II Conference in the country to sponsor esports programs. “Esports isn’t just students playing video games — it’s an industry projected to be worth about 1.4 billion dollars,” Cornetta explained. “The ECC understands that esports forces students to learn communication, teamwork and strategy. Esports can increase STEM equity in higher education, encouraging participation in an activity involving science, technology, engineering and mathematics.”

Mercy freshman, Brooklyn resident and League of Legends aficionado Patricia Kennedy ’23 not only introduced Cornetta to the popular game but helped him design Mercy’s esports program at the encouragement of Felipe Henao, assistant dean of student affairs. One of two girls on the team, Kennedy is used to people being surprised about her love for gaming. “Not a lot of people expect girls to play a lot of video games,” she said. Kennedy and her teammates compete with esports teams from other colleges in MercyManhattan’s new, state-of-the-art gaming facility, which she commends for its level of equipment and systems.

The extracurricular activity perfectly complements Kennedy’s academic studies as she is majoring in design and animation, which prepares students for careers in animation/gaming and communication design. “It’s cool that Mercy provides the opportunity for me to pursue a career in something I love, that’s also fun,” said Kennedy.

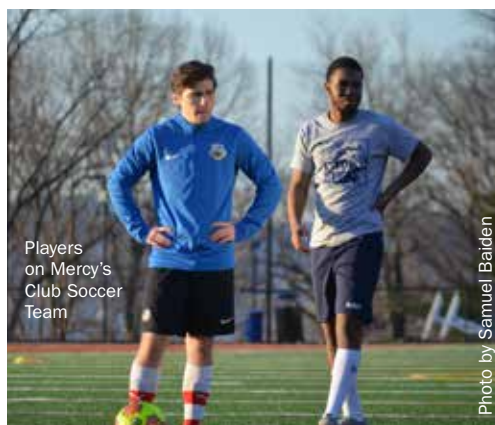
Cornetta is proud that the club sports program accommodates students like Kennedy who commute long distances and have busy schedules. “I strive to create a cohesive programming calendar to make sure that we are meeting the needs of all students,” he said.

“What is great to see is that students who participate are deeply engaged and demonstrate persistence in learning, teamwork and practicing their craft. They are staunchly dedicated to doing something that excites them — a dedication and positivity that transfers into their daily lives.”

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the intramural sports and club sports teams paused in-person practices and games. Nonetheless, staff are providing students, like Kennedy,

the opportunity to participate in remote activities, such as esports tournaments and virtual 5k races. “We have given the students some continuity of programs to make this transition period as normal as possible,” said Cornetta.

“The club sports program is an extension of the institution — it’s our job as staff members to make sure we’re getting the students access to the resources and knowledge they need, at a time when they may benefit from extra support.”



Players on Mercy's Club Soccer Team

Photo by Samuel Baiden



Member of Mercy's Esports Club

Photo by Rob Cornetta



Mercy's Club Soccer Team

Photo by Rob Cornetta



Mercy's Club Running Group

Photo by Rob Cornetta

Mercy Athletics Program Supports the “Whole” Student

In late February, when news of the emerging coronavirus (COVID-19) was barely on the horizon, Mercy College was already alerting the community about the virus spreading across Asia and Europe. By mid-March, classes had moved online, the campuses shut down, and all activities, including the 2020 spring sports season, were canceled.

The news came as a blow to student-athletes whose season ended abruptly and whose future was now uncertain. Yet then, as now, the safety and health of all members of the Mercy community were of paramount importance. Without knowing how long the crisis would last, the Department of Athletics moved quickly to offer support. By late March, they had developed a plan to help student-athletes stay in top form — physically, mentally and academically.

The plan included a series of staff meetings via video chat to address the emerging situation. Coaches and trainers, PACT mentors, faculty liaisons and members of the student-athlete advisory committee regularly gathered for connection, strategic planning and mutual support.

Danny Leon Jr.'14, M.S. '19, head coach of the women's soccer program, remembers focusing on the big picture. “Everyone thinks coaching a sport is just playing the game,” he said. “We wanted to make sure our student-athletes were not so focused on the game that they neglected other critical areas. By providing a circle of support, we know if someone's going off track, and we help them.”

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL CHALLENGES

For an athlete used to regular conditioning, practices and drills leading up to a season of competition, the sudden shift to zero activity is disruptive and potentially harmful. “A decreased capacity for cardiovascular endurance affects stamina and overall fitness, making an athlete more prone to injury,” said Dan Steinberg, Mercy's assistant strengthening and conditioning coach. Studies have shown that missing workouts and practices can affect an athlete's mental outlook and motivation,

setting a repeating cycle in motion.

Mercy student-athlete Sydney Cooper is a case in point. The psychology major, set to graduate in 2022, plays center defender on the women's soccer team. She embarked on a semester in Spain just before the pandemic hit. When Spain issued stay-at-home orders, Cooper learned she would be housebound for weeks.

“Playing my sport is the most important thing aside from school, and not having that outlet is extremely frustrating,” she said in April via video chat from Barcelona. During the peak of the pandemic, students were prohibited from leaving their housing, even for exercise. “Never in my life have I been unable to play,” Cooper recalled. “If it hadn't been for Dan's video workouts, I don't know what I would've done for all those weeks on lockdown.”



Mavericks stay engaged and fit on Zoom.

COMMITTED TO CONNECTION

Cooper avidly followed the weekly conditioning videos sent out by Steinberg and colleagues, and later the live workouts on Zoom. Several coaches prepared advanced, team-specific workouts to keep students engaged and fit.

Steinberg invited the entire Mercy community to take part. “Athletics is a communal activity, so isolation is a huge detriment — for

everyone, not just athletes,” said Steinberg.

Georgia Efthalitsides'06, head coach for women's volleyball, concurred. “Those online workouts really played a pivotal role in keeping our athletes focused” she said. “They not only helped everyone stay connected, but they also kept our players focused and motivated.” Other forms of team connections proved just as important. “Our team has a regular text thread, holds weekly meetings and pairs players for peer support,” she said.

Efthalitsides is not new to coaching during a crisis. She recalled when Hurricane Maria struck Puerto Rico, which was home to the families of several players. “We were all on campus for the pre-season, and many of the girls couldn't contact their families,” she said. “We got through it by sticking together and keeping their spirits up. We were much closer as a team after that.”



Men's soccer team wins the East Coast Conference Championship.



Women's soccer team advances past Southern New Hampshire in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.



Pedro Velazquez '12, head coach of the men's soccer team, has played soccer all his life. Taught the game as a young boy by his father, he knows the intrinsic value of committing to higher goals. "With athletics, you're always chasing something — a win, a championship, a division tournament. Good athletes are naturally driven to improve, to compete against themselves, to keep reaching higher," he said. "But student-athletes should also be well-rounded and that requires support. You can see that support coming from everyone at Mercy, from President Hall to the coaches to the students themselves. We really are all in this together, and we will come through."

A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Now, as college campuses prepare for reopening in the fall, many questions remain about how collegiate athletics will accommodate social distancing guidelines that keep players and coaches safe.

On July 17, Mercy announced that it would postpone the fall sports season until the spring of 2021. The decision came after weeks of meetings between members of the Department of Athletics, the East Coast Conference and

the Northeast 10 Conference, which governs Mercy sports organizations.

"We didn't arrive at this decision lightly," said Matt Kilcullen, director of athletics. "It's a disappointment to everyone who had been looking forward to a return to competition, but our first obligation is to the health and safety of our student-athletes, coaches and staff."

Kilcullen pointed out that Mercy is fine-tuning a more specific set of guidelines for a phased reopening of athletics, beginning with training sessions and workouts. These closely align with the College's OnCampus Plus guidelines and those recommended by the NCAA as well as local, state and federal governments.

Yet there is a bright side to this long spring of uncertainty and restraint. "Our student-athletes had our best overall academic semester since I've been at Mercy," Kilcullen said. "It was our biggest concern going into this transition, considering we could have no in-person contact. We wondered how everyone would handle it all, but everyone did well. It took collaboration, communication and dedication. Mercy Athletics came through with flying colors."

*Mercy Students
Connect and
Network with*

TOP NEW YORK

*Entrepreneurs
and
Executives*

What does it really take to start and run a business? How does someone rise in the ranks of their company and industry? How can students apply lessons learned from their degree programs to real-world job experiences?

The Mercy College School of Business provides students the answers to these questions, and many more, by giving them access to business leaders through two experiential learning opportunities: The Executive Speaker Series and the Entrepreneurship Speaker Series.

Conceptualized by School of Business Dean Lloyd Gibson, and organized by his assistant Kristin Ludl, both series help further the School's larger strategic goals. In bringing business leaders on Mercy's campus, Gibson and Ludl are raising awareness of Mercy's School of Business and its students within industry circles, providing a resource for professionals to learn industry trends, showcasing Mercy's student body as a qualified talent pool and encouraging students to build self-assurance.

"Students who attend the Executive Speaker Series and the Entrepreneurship Speaker Series learn – they learn lessons that can sometimes only be acquired by networking and building relationships with people with varying professional and personal backgrounds," Gibson described. "And, in terms of the business professionals who come to our events, we hope to position ourselves in the marketplace as a resource for their companies."

Series guest speakers include

leaders from top start-up companies to C-suite executives from New York's most established industries, such as finance, health care, real estate, media and technology. Guests discuss their experience starting businesses and elevating their careers to audiences of students, alumni and community partners. Students are encouraged to practice their networking skills during the events, dress business formal and conduct research beforehand so that they are prepared to ask informed questions.

The first event in the Executive Speaker Series happened in conjunction with the grand opening of the new MercyManhattan Campus. Titled, "The Future of Finance," the panel-format conversation featured Richard A. Rosenblatt, chief executive officer of Rosenblatt Securities and Mercy College trustee emeritus and Dan Chamby, managing director at BlackRock, with Sharon Epperson,

CNBC senior personal finance correspondent, as emcee.

Other series headliners have included executives such as Marilu Marshall, senior vice president, executive management and chief inclusion and diversity officer at the Estée Lauder Companies, and Michael Weinstein, former chief

executive officer of Snapple products and chairman and co-founder of INOV8 Beverage Consulting Group.

"When Marilu Marshall spoke at Mercy, young women in the audience were inspired to see a woman of Hispanic descent, discuss being an attorney, operating at all levels of employment and moving up in a company like Estée Lauder," Ludl described.

Additionally, Jerome Lamaar, a 35-year-old fashion entrepreneur out of the South Bronx, participated in the Entrepreneurship Speaker Series



School of Business Dean Lloyd Gibson, Marilu Marshall and Julia Wexler



(l to r) General Michael Rochelle, Kristin Ludl, Dr. Regina Gibson, Dean Lloyd Gibson, Marilu Marshall, Assistant Professor Victoria Roberts Drogin, Sophia Caputo '20, Director of Employer Relations Julia Wexler, Associate Dean Victor Petenkemani

and wowed students with his high-energy, relatability and down-to-earth candor, and, not to mention, with his roster of impressive clients such as Beyonce, Kelly Rowland, Alicia Keys, Rihanna, Jay-Z and Taraji P. Henson. Lamaar offered helpful counsel to Mercy students during his presentation, including the guidance: “Know who you are when you walk in the room.”

Lamaar’s presentation lifted the spirits of students in the audience and made them excited about post-graduation possibilities. “We wanted to produce the entrepreneurship series so students can envision creating their own career opportunities out of college,” explained Scorpio Rogers, assistant professor and director of the Mercy entrepreneurship program. “One of the things that makes Mercy so special is its exceptional diverse student body

– it is important to us to bring in entrepreneurs and business executives who are representative of our students’ varied backgrounds.”

“Know who you are when you walk in the room.”

Gibson and Ludl are happy to report that the series has led to increased connectivity at Mercy between networks of current students, business partners and alumni. For example, a Mercy alumna who, after a stellar internship performance, secured a job with Estée Lauder Companies, was present at the Marilu Marshall event. For current students in attendance, she exemplified the

possibility of career success after graduation, and acted as a vital resource.

The last in-person event finished strong in March 2020, before coronavirus (COVID-19) social distancing requirements were enforced. Rogers, and two of his superstar students, hosted an Entrepreneurship Speaker Series “Women in Tech” panel in commemoration of Women’s History Month.

Both series will continue in the fall term, this time in a virtual format due to the COVID-19 situation. Gibson and Ludl look forward to hosting Tina Thornton, H.D. ’19, senior vice president, production and chief of staff to ESPN president, and Michael Rochelle, retired United States Army lieutenant general who served as deputy chief of staff, G-1 in the Department of the Army.



Local high school students visit the Bronx Campus

Recruitment is the lifeblood of any college. Mercy's Executive Director of Recruitment for the Bronx Campus, Cecil Wright, Ed.D., has developed a multifaceted approach to recruiting — one that involves going out into the community to build relationships, as well as inviting students and their families to visit the Bronx Campus. While he is playing a long game, there are early signs that Wright's approach is working. Developing stronger community connections has led to the increased awareness of Mercy College's program in the Bronx.

"We're not only thinking about enrolling students in the next year or two, but we're also trying to build a long-term pipeline and be the community partner to help create positive change in the Bronx," Wright said. "That's done

by continuously making sure that we have a presence and a voice in the community."



Stephanie Massiah, M.S. '06 (center) and Cecil Wright pose with Jasmine Cruz '09, M.S. '20 (another school counselor at Westchester Square Academy)

In this endeavor, Wright has relied on the guidance of Mercy's Bronx Advisory Council, which was established in 2017 to better connect Mercy with the

Bronx community. The Council is comprised of several community leaders — including religious leaders, business owners and principals from local high schools. The council advises Mercy on ways to improve outreach to the Bronx community, increase Mercy's base of support in the Bronx, strengthen Mercy's programs and build awareness of what Mercy has to offer. "We're bringing the right people to the table, asking about how to best serve students and the community, and then making it happen," Wright explained.

The recruitment team often works with Bronx middle and high schools, in addition to community colleges and local businesses. For example, the nonprofit New York Edge brought a group of middle schoolers to visit the Bronx Campus this past winter while simultaneously broadcasting the visit to several other middle schools to reach

“I took a photo with a Mercy alum on 65 school visits this past recruitment year. That’s significant. And if they’re not working in schools, they work in a hospital or a bank or attend a church, synagogue or mosque. It’s a lot easier to recruit for the College because of all the alumni making significant contributions in the community.”

almost 700 students at once. “They can see what our campus looks like,” said Wright. “They can hear from current students who look like them. And they can imagine themselves at Mercy.” The recruitment team also organizes unique events and partnerships with individual schools in the Bronx such as supplying Mercy gear as prizes to encourage increased attendance.

Partnerships with Bronx churches, synagogues and mosques are

the Bronx also help to build name recognition and goodwill for Mercy. For example, students regularly volunteer at soup kitchens and perform at schools, and Mercy organizes an annual walking tour of the Bronx. Wright also notes that he meets alumni wherever he goes in the Bronx: “I took a photo with a Mercy alum on 65 school visits this past recruitment year. That’s significant. And if they’re not working in schools, they work in a hospital or a bank or attend a

time to look for her first school counseling job, she wanted to stay in the Bronx and help make a difference in the community where she was raised and where she studied. “My heart is in the Bronx,” she explained.

While Mercy recruitment staff spend a lot of time in the field, the Bronx Campus also hosts events that attract prospective students and their families. For the past two Octobers, Mercy has hosted Latinx Fiesta, a popular event that involves music, food and performances celebrating Hispanic culture. “Students want diversity,” Wright explained. “But they also want people who look like them and sound like them.” The Bronx Campus also opens its doors to all kinds of community-based organizations — hosting meetings for school principals, hospitals and the Bronx clergy, for example.

“One of the many things we do well at Mercy is provide access,”



Accepted Students Day 2019 at the Bronx Campus



Latinx Fiesta 2019

increasingly important as well. Last summer, the recruitment team hosted a back-to-school event at a mosque for the first time by leveraging the Bronx Advisory Council’s relationships. Wright notes that significantly more students of diverse faiths have enrolled at the Bronx Campus, resulting in students recently spearheading efforts to create a campus multi-faith room. Beyond active recruitment efforts, Mercy’s numerous community service initiatives and the sheer number of alumni giving back to

church, synagogue or mosque. It’s a lot easier to recruit for the College because of all the alumni making significant contributions in the community.”

On one community visit, Wright met alumna Stephanie Massiah, M.S. ‘06, a school counselor at Westchester Square Academy, a high school that is just over a mile away from Mercy’s Bronx Campus. She had chosen Mercy because of the counseling program’s strong reputation and the Bronx Campus’s convenient location. When it was

Wright said. “Some of the most brilliant students I’ve met in the last couple of years didn’t know about Mercy until we visited their neighborhood. So we make sure we’re out there in the community, being good neighbors and giving back. I feel very strongly that in the next couple of years, we’re going to continue to see more and more Bronx students enroll at Mercy” — many of whom, like Massiah, want to study in the Bronx and stay in the Bronx to make a difference in their own community.

From Mercy to IBM

Making Connections Through the Mercy Network

Last winter, Ashley Dieudonne '20 seemed to have the world on a string. After successfully concluding a six-month cooperative program at IBM, Dieudonne had accepted an offer for full-time employment with the company after graduation. She was preparing for her final semester of college, after which she would embark on a promising career, and her future seemed assured.

Then the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic turned the world upside down.

The story that follows is not just about how Dieudonne overcame obstacles, but how through talent and hard work, she found success.

It's also a story of Mercy's commitment to provide students access to opportunities that can help them gain experience and resilience on their way to achieving their goals.

Most of all, it's a story about connections. The connections — between Mercy College, employer partners, students and mentors, professors and alumni, trustees and administration — these are the hallmark of Dieudonne's success in navigating a challenging situation and beginning her coveted job with just a one-month delay in her start date.

Dieudonne's achievement is closely tied to Mercy's employer relationship with IBM. IBM's Cooperative Program offers academically qualified students an opportunity to spend six months working full-time during their college years to gain experience

and develop skills that are in high demand in finance careers.

According to Julia Wexler, director of employer relations for Mercy and part of the career and professional development team, IBM has been an important employer partner, opening doors for 18 Mercy seniors who qualified for cooperative positions. Four have gone on to full-time jobs at the company, including Dieudonne. In one of those full-circle moments, Dieudonne was guided along her journey by Mercy alumna Camele Clarke-Barrett '06, M.B.A. '09, now a business planning advisor at IBM.

"My advisors helped prepare me for the work force and showed me that a minority female could rise to a position of importance..."

Not long-ago Clarke-Barrett, like Dieudonne, was a Mercy business honors student majoring in finance and harboring big dreams. "My advisors helped prepare me for the work force and showed me that a minority female could rise to a position of importance," she said. "I've seen the transformation in myself that was only possible because of Mercy. Now it's my turn to reach back and help someone

else by guiding them toward the right professional opportunities, just as my Mercy advisors did for me."

Clarke-Barrett is referring to Gary Bernstein, former professor in Mercy's MBA program and now an adjunct professor of business. At that time, Bernstein held a key executive position in IBM's division of transformation and talent development. Later, as a member of Mercy College's Board of Trustees, he enlisted the help of a colleague to establish the Career Cooperative Program at Mercy.

"When I was a new graduate, I had to open my own doors, so it's important to me to reach out a hand wherever I can," said Bernstein. "I spent 32 years at IBM, and it was always a pleasure to recommend fine, proven individuals." He recalled Clarke-Barrett's "innate intelligence and hunger to succeed," and recommended her to hiring executives at IBM. "Then I stepped back. I only had to open the door and Camele did the rest." Clarke-Barrett herself is now recruiting Mercy students to IBM by recognizing good candidates and providing mentoring. "We rely heavily on Mercy faculty and staff to help us find emerging talent," she said. It was Wexler who perceived a good fit between Dieudonne and Clarke-Barrett and encouraged Ashley to apply to the position.

Right from the start, Dieudonne worked hard and heeded the advice of her professors and advisors. "I took every recommendation, attended every networking event and corporate field trip I could to begin building connections," she said. Her diligence paid off, helping

Gary Bernstein
Retired IBM Executive,
Retired Faculty Member,
Mercy College Trustee



Julia Wexler
Director of Employer
Relations,
Mercy College



Camele
Clarke-Barrett '06, M.B.A. '09



Ashley
Dieudonne '20

her land one great internship after another: first with Arch Capital Group, an insurance firm, then Johnson & Johnson.

"Academically and otherwise, Ashley has everything you look for in a candidate," said Clarke-Barrett. "She's aggressive, confident, and has the right combination of hard and soft skills. She cares about people and she's passionate about her work. She also understands it's okay to fail as long as she examines what caused her to make the mistake. Working at IBM is a little like being pushed out of the nest. You either fall quickly or you learn to fly. That's how you grow, and that's what I spotted in Ashley."

Bernstein observed that all parties benefit from the arrangement with IBM. "The company benefits by having access to a pool of highly talented and motivated individuals. The students spend up to a year in the workforce becoming market-ready to launch their careers, either at IBM or another prestigious company," he said. "Employers that have good outcomes by hiring Mercy graduates are inclined to keep coming back to the well for more

candidates. So, Mercy's reputation grows, too."

In late spring, Dieudonne received word that her job at IBM would be delayed only by a month due to COVID-19, but would otherwise proceed as planned. She was feeling more secure about the health of three of her sisters, medical professionals who had been working on the front lines of the pandemic, and one of whom was now recovering from the virus as well as her mother, who had been forced to stop working due to a compromised immune system.

"Accepting the fact that I have to wait for my graduation ceremony has been one of the toughest struggles of my life," Dieudonne said. At this time, it's uncertain when the College can hold an in-person celebration for the Class of 2020. Dieudonne added, "It's been disappointing. But people

are dying, losing their jobs and businesses. I don't feel I have the right to be upset. It's hard, but it has given me an extra push to overcome."

During Mercy's virtual commencement celebration, which was live-streamed on May 20, each graduate's name was announced, and their photograph, school, degree and personal statement were displayed momentarily — for about as long as it would take to cross the stage and accept a diploma. For Ashley Sabrina Dieudonne, now the proud recipient of a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Finance, and one of the newest members of Mercy's Alumni Advisory Council, her personal statement read: "Big thanks to my family and friends for carrying me to this moment. Class of 2020, WE DID IT!"

Psychologist Harris Stratyner, Ph.D., '77, HD '05 Leads Way In Mind Matters and Media

As the son of an accountant in the entertainment industry, Harris Stratyner '77, HD '05 was used to being around fascinating people. With music greats like Dizzy Gillespie, his godfather, and Stan Getz as close family friends, he had no shortage of inspiration. Yet, when Stratyner first crossed Dr. Frances Mahoney's path at a college fair, something told him she and Mercy College would change the direction of his life.

Talking with her that spring afternoon, he says he instantly felt a connection and felt drawn to the institution she represented. "I was the kind of student she wanted at Mercy," said Stratyner, who admits his vision had previously been set on Columbia prior to their meeting.

**"When she told me
I could do anything
I put my mind to,
I believed her."**

Initially, Stratyner admits, he wondered if he, as an incoming Jewish student, would feel like an odd fit for a college with roots in the Catholic tradition. Mahoney, the woman who eventually became one of his greatest mentors, definitively changed that opinion. "She believed so much in what it had to offer for me that I began to as well. When she told me I could do anything I put my mind to, I believed her," said Stratyner. Something told him that Mercy would be a place he could grow in a way unique from other available academic settings.

Stratyner soon found himself with a full scholarship working toward a degree in psychology, a path only further influenced by his new mentor who served as Chair of the Division of Social and

Behavioral Sciences. "Dr. Mahoney and Dr. Ann Grow were like giants to me. They helped bring this little Catholic college into its own," said Stratyner.

Indeed, Mercy was an institution in the midst of dramatic growth in the years Stratyner spent at Mercy. Working in admissions while a student, he contributed directly to its ongoing evolution while he worked side by side with staff members bringing hundreds of new students in. "It was really an exciting time to be studying there and working there," said Stratyner, citing the expansion of its satellite campuses and the outreach to more diverse student populations, especially veterans.

Upon graduation, he continued to build his career toward a true passion, counseling psychology. Opportunities seemed to find him at the right place in his trajectory. Serving as a teaching and research assistant to Dr. Kenneth B. Clark, Distinguished Professor of Social Psychology, he was able to learn from one of the most influential voices in psychology whose work influenced the integration of American schools. Dr. Clark would serve as his referral into Seton Hall, where he would complete his doctorate.

While building his clinical practice, Stratyner zoned in on a needed focus in the field of addiction counseling. Having grown up witnessing the prevalence of addiction in the entertainment industry, Stratyner knew the dire need. "It became clear to me the great needs that were not being met for those struggling," said Stratyner. He developed a technique he termed "Carefrontation," a restorative treatment method for addicted patients with co-occurring disorders that uses a compassionate accountability approach.

In the late 1980s, Stratyner would find another passion in broadcasting, hosting a radio



Photo provided by Harris Stratyner

program "Here's to Your Good Health," on WFAS AM 1230. The show's format allowed him to share his clinical expertise with audiences throughout Westchester. The show, which ran for nearly 30 years, grew alongside him and he rose to roles directing addiction services at leading New York institutions. During his tenure as Division Director of Chemical Dependency at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, Weill Cornell Westchester, he founded The Retreat at Westchester, a world-renowned addiction program.

Today, Stratyner is a highly sought expert who is regularly seen on national media consulting on mental health topics such as anxiety, motivational psychology and addiction. He and his wife, Dr. Lynn Greene, an oral surgeon, are proud to see their daughter, Dr. Alexandra Stratyner, carry on his profession as a psychologist and partner in his practice.

Stratyner is quick to point out the weight with which he holds Mercy in the formative years of his education and believes firmly in giving back. "In my life, Mercy looms large," said Stratyner who earned an honorary doctorate from his alma mater in 2005 and served as a trustee for six years. His ardent support of the College is only further spurred by seeing in today's students the possibility Dr. Mahoney once saw in him. "Students can go as high as they want to go at Mercy."

Mercy Powers Daimeon Savage '01, M.B.A. '04 to Wealth Management on Wall Street

Daimeon Savage '01, M.B.A. '04 considers Mercy College, “the foundation for his successful career in finance,” and is now excited to pay it forward as a member of the Mercy Alumni Advisory Council. He has long been a steward of the College's programs and, with his fellow advisory council members, plans on spearheading initiatives to help people celebrate their Mercy degrees and get alumni more involved.

Savage first learned the importance of being engaged, and how to balance work, extracurricular activities and academics, at the prestigious high school Kingston College in his home country of Jamaica. A talented soccer player and honors student, he came to the United States on a scholarship to attend college in North Carolina. After two years, Savage decided to transfer to Mercy at the recommendation of a friend who believed he would thrive in the College's environment and greatly benefit from the athletic and academic offerings.

His friend was right. Savage enrolled as an international business major after transferring and graduated in two years with the support of advisors. He played soccer for Mercy, successfully balanced his work commitments and coursework and often gave speeches at campus-wide events at the request of then-President Lucie Lapovsky. He was even the voice of Mercy – when dialing the general campus phone number, Savage was the answering voice, thanking the public for calling and listing the contact roster.

Savage was an already accomplished young man in the traditional sense from his schooling in Jamaica and involvement at Mercy. But what



Photo by Joli Moniz

Mercy gave him went beyond the intellect to gain high marks on an exam.

As an international student, Mercy students, faculty and staff became his family, and elevated his confidence to succeed as a finance professional in the competitive New York market. After graduating in 2001 summa cum laude, Mercy offered Savage the role of Government and Community Relations Liaison, a full-time staff position uniquely tailored to his strengths, where he made connections with high profile community members and learned real-world skills. He also worked for Mercy's Office of Admissions and pursued his graduate degree at that time. In 2006, he was recruited by a finance firm and started a career path in his field of study managing private equity funds, hedge funds and mutual funds.

Savage continued to be sought-after by financial management firms and gained additional experience in operations and accounting. Then, he hit a bump

in the road – Savage was laid off during the 2008 financial crisis.

“I stayed diligent at that time and used my experiences from Mercy to move forward. Being on the soccer team, I learned how to thrive in stressful environments and interact with people from different cultures thanks to my teammates. Mercy also aided me in becoming fluent in Spanish, being a true team player and staying open-minded,” said Savage.

He used these proficiencies to fortunately land on his feet and has since enjoyed jobs at firms such as Goldman Sachs and his current company, State Street Global Advisors. In terms of the words of wisdom Savage has for Mercy students, he advises, “Don't take things personally, but try to use a personal touch when dealing with people. Don't take yourself too seriously but take your career seriously. Never be too proud to say I don't know, but always find the answer. And, expand your cultural horizons.”

How A Mercy Adjunct Professor and Trustee Continued Teaching Through the COVID-19 Pandemic

By Michele Quirolo '79, '82

In 2019, after 24 years and much thought, I made the life changing decision to retire as the President and CEO of the Visiting Nurse Association of Hudson Valley. I can remember thinking about what life would be like after retirement and clearly, it was not what has transpired. There were no palm trees and pina coladas, but instead a very busy calendar with limited free time.

While I knew on some level that I would continue some of my previous activities within health care, things blossomed. I continue to serve as a Board Director for the Home Care Association of New York State which keeps me current with the industry. I sub-contracted my private consulting company with a national firm and found myself traveling across the country working with other home health and hospice organizations, and health care systems. The work has been rewarding, interesting and enjoyable. Learning how health care services are managed and provided in other states, and what I could do to make the system more efficient and cost effective was the part of my previous position I loved the most. This seemed like the perfect fit for me.

While consulting, I continued to teach online as an adjunct professor in the Nursing Department at Mercy College, something I have enjoyed since 2006, and also serve as a Trustee on Mercy's Board of Trustees. Rarely without a laptop, a hotel room and an internet connection, teaching anywhere is manageable and seamless for the students.

Enter COVID-19...life changed for all as we learned about our new normal and longed for the days of moving around freely, enjoying time



Michele helping her granddaughter, Megan, with her schoolwork.

Photo provided by Michele Quirolo

with friends and family, and having a meal in a restaurant. Schools and businesses moved to a virtual environment, including all of Mercy's courses, and I had my first Mercy Board meeting on Zoom. Thankfully my classes were already online so the transition was seamless for me, however for my students, it was a much different story. Many of my students were working unusually long hours, days and nights away from home and many became sick with COVID-19; some lost family members. Working and balancing a personal and school life with so many obligations is difficult under normal circumstances, add in this deadly virus and it is nearly impossible. During the spring semester, I kept in touch via text, email and phone calls with several students as they talked about their symptoms and fears about recovery while still worrying about assignments. Even though we have never met face to face, there was an unusual closeness that developed. I was humbled and privileged to be able

to be there for them.

New York's "Pause" stay-at-home order forced us to create new ways to avoid isolation, to stay connected with friends and family, and to limit our time out of the home. Restrictions on travel limited my ability to consult and a planned trip to Italy was put on hold.

Fortunately, a few years ago, my husband and I moved to live in a two-family house with my daughter and her family. We were not isolated and lonely, and home schooling our two grandchildren became our new normal. This was quite a challenge as our fourth-grade granddaughter learned geometry that I can remember I didn't learn until tenth grade. Our 11-year-old grandson helped translate unfamiliar information as we navigated "Common Core." It is like a foreign language! We happily created a color-coded Excel spreadsheet interspersed with Zoom meetings with school teachers.

"One thing learned from being on 'pause' is that material things are less critical and having family, friends and health is paramount."

Throughout these challenges, I remain thankful as I am healthy and safe. While my view of retirement never looked like this, I am happy to be part of the Mercy College family. One thing learned from being on "pause" is that material things are less critical and having family, friends and health is paramount.

Louise Squitieri '65, Ph.D.

A Mercy College Pioneer



Photo by Sue Shea

Louise Squitieri '65, Ph.D., refers to herself and the other members of the class of 1965 as “pioneers.” And in a sense, they were. They were the first women who were not Sisters of Mercy to attend Mercy College. They saw potential in Mercy and enrolled at the College when it was located in four rented classrooms in a high school building. And, after earning their diplomas, they went out into the turbulent world of the mid-1960s to accomplish great things and build Mercy’s reputation.

Squitieri decided to enroll at Mercy primarily because the College offered her a scholarship. This created a certain reciprocity: “I took a chance on Mercy because Mercy took a chance on me.” Every day, she took two buses from the Bronx to Dobbs Ferry, a 90-minute ride each way. She reports that the education she received at Mercy was first-rate: “We had excellent instruction. Very intense. We were the beneficiaries of ideas and techniques that most schools brought in later on, like cooperative learning and mentoring.” She recalls attending etiquette lessons, volunteering at a nearby orphanage, and making trips to a tavern in town. She remembers her class as tight-knit and supportive: “We knew we had to prove ourselves, so we supported each other.”

As she continued her education and began her career, Squitieri became a pioneer in another sense as well by pursuing a career in science and academia at a time when this was not a typical path for women. However, she did not realize that her path was

unconventional until later. “It wasn’t difficult to decide to study biology at Mercy because we were all women there, so we didn’t know about discrimination. And by the time we got out into the world, we weren’t about to put up with it. We were going to do what we wanted to do because we believed we could do it,” she reflected.



“I took a chance on Mercy because Mercy took a chance on me.”

After graduating from Mercy, Squitieri earned a master’s degree in biology and chemistry education from Fairleigh Dickinson University and a Ph.D. in biology from St. John’s University. Along the way, she taught for a few years in a public high school before teaching biology at one of Mercy’s former satellite campuses in Yonkers while teaching biology at CUNY’s Bronx Community College. Eventually, she became a tenured professor at Bronx Community College and then a dean at another CUNY college.

One of Squitieri’s enduring passions was ensuring that undergraduates studying science — even those attending a community college — were able to conduct research early in their undergraduate years. “Conducting research gives students the chance to see whether they like studying and practicing science before they get too far along in their education,”

she explained. “It shows them how exciting science can be.” Many others dismissed young community college students as not being capable of real scientific research, but Squitieri disagreed. While dean, she secured millions of dollars in grants to support student research. As a result, CUNY students conducted research and published their work in journals, activities that students at other institutions were not exposed to until much later in their undergraduate programs or even not until graduate school.

All along, Squitieri made a point to stay active within the Mercy alumni community. She served as president of the Mercy College Alumni Board and, true to her “pioneer” moniker, helped launch the Founders’ Legacy Endowed Scholarship, which exceeded its funding goal thanks to generous contributions from the founding classes of 1965 through 1969. She also established two scholarships that she supports every year: one for students studying the sciences and the second for students heading to graduate school. Now, she calls on all Mercy College alumni to do their part: “My wish is that all alumni feel proud to support the College and think about making gifts. And I ask the class of ’65 in particular to gift to the College the benefits of the lifestyle they’ve achieved.”

Indeed, Squitieri credits Mercy with teaching her an important lesson that guided all the successes in her career — a lesson that the College hopes to impart to all students: “At Mercy, I learned that I could do it, that I could be what I wanted to be as long as I worked hard.”

SPECIAL EDUCATION *in Unusual Times*



Photo provided by Jessica Pino

Earlier this year, for Jessica Pino '15, M.S. '16, the best part of her day was the 30 minutes every morning when she saw all eight of her preschool students. She greeted the children, and then read them a story, showed a video, sung a song or gave one-step directions (a skill they were all working on). This might seem like a normal way to begin the school day. Except for the fact that the entire meeting happened over a video call.

Like every other school in New York State, the Fred S. Keller School — the preschool in Yonkers, NY where Pino teaches — closed its doors in March due to COVID-19. Instead of spending full days with her students, Pino would see them on screen for 30 minutes per day. She spent the rest of her time supporting her students' parents by meeting individually with each family, creating and sharing instructional materials and answering parents' questions throughout the day.

Pino is the head teacher in an 8:1:2 classroom, which means there are eight students, one teacher, and two assistant teachers. Her students are children with disabilities who are considered pre-listener or pre-speaker, which means they have difficulty following directions independently and are predominantly non-vocal. Students in this type of classroom setting are typically working on skills such as responding or looking when hearing their names called, making eye contact, following simple one-step directions such as "come here" or "clap your hands," as well as learning to emit vocalizations and some forms of functional communication.

As head teacher, it is Pino's responsibility to review each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), develop an instructional "program" to meet his or her annual goals and assess progress across the school year. She explains that much of the teachers' work in the classroom aims to build on students' existing listening or speaking skills to help them attend and respond to the teachers' voices or faces. "We give a direction and then wait one to two seconds to let the student process what we're asking," she explained. "If they don't follow the direction, we model again. If that doesn't work, we may have to provide a physical prompt, so, for example, clapping their hands for them if that's what we've asked them to do or holding their hand to lead them to the table."

However, this work looks much different given that Pino's only interactions with her students was through computer screens. Parents did most of the modeling and reinforcement that she and her assistant teachers would usually do. "It was a difficult time for parents," she said, "and I really tried to give as much support as I could. I shared PowerPoint slides, activities, photos, whatever might help."

Pino earned a graduate-level certificate in applied behavior analysis (BCBA) from Mercy College in August 2020. The techniques she learned will help her increase students' meaningful behaviors and reduce those that are harmful or that interfere with learning. In one particularly memorable project for a course, she created a functional behavioral assessment and then a behavior intervention plan, skills that she used soon

after at work with a student who engaged in self-injurious behaviors. "My supervisor was very impressed that I already had some knowledge on what I was required to do for this documentation," she recalled.

There is limited official guidance about how schools, teachers and service providers should adjust special education during the COVID-19 school closures and now re-openings. Christine Lang, Ph.D. — the chair of Mercy's Department of Special Education within the School of Education who teaches some of the courses Pino took as part of the BCBA certificate program — explained that special education legislation such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) does not specifically address a situation like the COVID-19 pandemic school closure. However, a fact sheet sent out in March by the U.S. Department of Education underscored that schools are required to provide services for students with disabilities during this period and that they must provide equal access for all students to any educational opportunities offered. As Lang explained, "School districts seem to be implementing this guidance in different ways." For example, some districts are continuing to provide support virtually through teletherapy sessions according to the services specified in each student's IEP, while others are being more flexible given the obstacles to providing therapy online and are working to develop curricular and programmatic materials for parents and caregivers.

"It's a difficult time for parents and I really try to give as much support as I can."

In most cases, schools are relying on parents more than ever to help deliver instruction, especially for students who are less independent or more severely impaired. "I find that my parents are facing challenges trying to get their child to attend to them and follow directions," Pino said. "All of a sudden, students are in a setting where they're used to having free range to do whatever they want,

but their parents are placing these demands on them to sit at a table and do work, things they were never expected to do before at home."

However, Lang cautions anyone against making sweeping generalizations about special education during the COVID-19 school

"Many evidence-based practices within special education involve a multisensory approach, which incorporates visual, auditory and tactile components of instruction," Lang explained. "There's a wide array of distance-learning applications that can really be utilized effectively

Dr. Lang's Distance Learning Tips FOR PARENTS

1 - Create a Visual Schedule (weekly, daily or hourly)

Give children concrete expectations so they can see what they have to do and check those things off.

2 - Incorporate Frequent Breaks

Students are used to a lot of motion and fluidity in a classroom, so it is not realistic for children to sit for extended periods of time.

3 - Use a Visual Reinforcement Chart

This enables children to see their positive performance and monitor how much time they have left until a task is complete.

4 - Avoid Confrontation Around Schoolwork

This can create a new set of avoidance behaviors that can be challenging to overcome.

closures. "Because special education by nature is an individualized approach in which instruction is tailored to meet each student's diverse learning needs, this situation is different for every child and every family. Some students might be more independent at being able to access their instruction, and some might need a lot more hand-holding and support. And some teachers and service providers may be more skilled at delivering instruction online."

Pino remained optimistic about how her students are faring at home. For one, they have become more successful with the morning meeting: "In the beginning, it was really difficult to even have students sit through five minutes of the morning meeting. But after six weeks, they were all able to have their attention on me for the entire time." Even more exciting is that some students are truly maintaining their skills, whether that means continuing to respond to a direction the first time or continuing to emit a certain vocalization.

Technology does have a place within special education, both in classrooms and for distance learning.

to meet student goals. So this time might not be as detrimental as people are thinking just because students are experiencing different ways of learning."

Perhaps most importantly, teachers and parents have developed a closer relationship in many cases given the greater reliance on parental involvement. That is certainly the case in Pino's classroom. According to Lang, the strength of this relationship relates to student success: "Research shows that when parents are involved in their children's educations, it often leads to better outcomes for the children. This time might even help improve parent-teacher communication and interaction moving forward."

Even though she saw some bright spots with distance learning, Pino is eager to return to the classroom: "I really miss my students — seeing the smiles on their faces, playing with them, giving them hugs. I'm finding it really hard to adjust to this new world, even though I understand what is going on. So I can only imagine how my students are feeling. Their whole world has turned upside down."

Virtual Shift Opens New Door to Alumni Events

The 2020 alumni event spring calendar was shaping up to be one of our busiest ever. In early March, our Alumni Relations team was powering through finishing touches on the year's plan for a bustling schedule of volunteer events, reunions, dinners, sporting events and workshops with RSVPs rolling in. And then, like most of the rest of the world, we had to re-think everything.

Suddenly, as all in-person alumni events had to be wiped off the calendar a new challenge emerged – engaging alumni and maintaining the strong bonds through the reach of technology. This challenge involved more than just simply shifting events to a virtual platform but examining and addressing the needs of the entire alumni base. “We focused our energy on seeing what would be most useful and valuable to our alumni to carry them through these uncharted waters,” said Director of Alumni Relations and Special Events Alexis Rothenberg, M.B.A. '17.

Early on, as Zoom video conferencing began to emerge as a crucial connector, Mercy began to re-establish postponed events, like the alumni reunions, in this new virtual format. For Alice Roerig '70 of Burke, Virginia, this afforded her an opportunity she might not have otherwise had due to a curtailed ability to travel. “It was so nice to enter the chat room and see faces of my old friends, a few I've known since kindergarten,” said Roerig.

Class of 1970



The alumni relations team established a host of innovative online events for the entire Mercy and former CNR alumni communities alike. In late spring, an online book club began with great enthusiasm allowing participants to connect in a dedicated online forum. We closely collaborated with Mercy's Office of Career and Professional Development, further widening their audience of resources and workshops to our network of alumni. The Office of Institutional Advancement graciously thanks former trustee Dr. Harris Stratynier '77, H.D. '05 and Dr. Lynn Stratynier for their generous donation to support the Alumni Online Book Club.



A new online series, Discussions with Mercy Leaders in the Time of Coronavirus launched in early April leveraging some of Mercy's richest assets, its faculty, staff and alumni leaders as expert panelists. Discussions, an interactive and moderated series with the style of a virtual talk show, covered a myriad of topics including navigating finances, staying active, and addressing issues of work and home life balance amidst the landscape of a pandemic.

“I love being a part of a dialogue with our professors and other familiar Mercy faces,” said Michelle Magaletti '17 “These new resources gives us hope as we move through these tough times.”

DISCUSSIONS WITH MERCY LEADERS
IN THE TIME OF CORONAVIRUS

Thursday, Aug. 20
12:00 p.m.

MERCY COLLEGE

Coping with Career Uncertainty While Focusing on What You Can Control
Your Questions Answered

Lucinda Cross '14
President of Activate Worldwide and Activate Your Life

Julia Wexler
Director of Employer Relations, Mercy College

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR LINK](#)

For Angel Lopez '91, uninterrupted connection with his alma mater held a heightened importance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Angel received a call as part of the Alumni Connection Challenge, a groundbreaking initiative to reach out individually to more than 1,500 alums as an extra layer of support and connection during the unprecedented situation. “It was a just another reminder that Mercy is there for us. Given what a lot of us are going through, it matters.”





Carroll, 5th from right, in the Broadway musical, "CHICAGO"

Photo by Paul Kolnik

A Successful "Act II" at Mercy College

I am fortunate to have had an illustrious career in theater," said John Carroll, M.S. '18, whose performance credits include "Fossie," "Movin' Out," "CHICAGO," "A Chorus Line," "Wicked" and "Follies," among other impressive theater and television appearances.

Growing up on Long Island, New York, Carroll started dance lessons at 6-years-old, attended a performing arts high school, and, with his eyes on the prize of Broadway, followed a rigorous dance training schedule that led to his eventual acceptance to The Julliard School at age 18.

Shortly after graduating from Julliard with a Bachelor in Fine Arts, Carroll was hired to perform in a modern dance company, where he built valuable relationships with colleagues who encouraged him to think long-term about his profession. Dancers experience physical ailments and limitations in their careers, which force them to retire, sometimes earlier than expected. Carroll wanted to ensure when the time came, he took his final bow, "...with grace, rather than kicking and screaming."

Based on his deep interests in

uplifting the LGBTQ+ population and providing support for other theater performers who grapple with unique challenges that impact their mental health, Carroll decided that his "Act II" would involve pursuing a graduate degree in marriage and family therapy. Based on a recommendation from his own therapist who happened to be a Mercy alumnus, Carroll contacted Dr. Evan Imber-Black, the College's marriage and therapy program director, to learn more about the program's offerings.

Carroll was moved by Imber-Black's level of expertise, experience and influence in the psychotherapy field, her personal passion for the arts, the program's incorporation of LGBTQ+ specific issues in its curriculum and the administration's acceptance of students with nontraditional backgrounds. This inspired Carroll's decision to leave show business and enroll in Mercy's marriage and family therapy master's degree program.

"I used to be a service to the theater and the audience, and now I'm a service to my clients," Carroll explained. Currently, he works for the Institute for Human Identity (IHI), where he is proud to be employed by a leading provider

of comprehensive LGBTQ+ affirmative therapy, an opportunity he received through Mercy. Carroll started working at IHI as an intern during his graduate program's required clinical year and was hired after graduation. From practicing at IHI, he has become highly influenced in a modality called "narrative therapy," which helps people create stories about their identities that are helpful to them.

He also runs his own practice, Equity Therapy, and serves a clientele that mostly consists of the LGBTQ+ community and performing artists. "I see this as an extension of my past career and I appreciate Mercy for being a direct steppingstone," said Carroll. "Becoming a second-career student, the faculty members took a chance on me, and I'm so grateful for the valuable relationships I developed with them and knowledge I gained from their teachings."

Since graduating, Carroll has referred the Mercy marriage and family graduate program to two Broadway dancers, both of whom are currently enrolled. "I'm glad to be an ambassador for Mercy — a college that provides a pathway for people who are facing the same decisions I faced."



Photo provided by Luis Torres

Fighting the Good Fight

Inspirational Mercy Alumnus Stands Up for Children in the Bronx

Luis Torres, M.S. '00, is a veritable celebrity wherever he goes in New York City. Both current and former students recognize him as the beloved principal of PS. 55, a public elementary school in the Morrisania section of the Bronx.

One of his former students now plays for the G League affiliate of the Los Angeles Clippers professional basketball team. Torres recalls the lessons he tried to instill in him: "When he went to PS. 55, he was always in my office and destined to fail. But I kept him close and taught him as much as I could. When it was time for him to decide whether to go into the NBA draft or finish his college degree, he asked for my advice and ended up finishing his degree at Seton Hall University, like I suggested. I strongly feel that if I had not kept him close to me, he would not have been as successful." Torres also reflects on another successful former student who is now an information technology specialist: "Hearing about the great things my students are doing in the community is what keeps me going in this job. We want students to grow into successful, productive citizens."

Like his students, Torres attended New York City public schools in the Bronx. He loved art but says that no one took the time to notice or foster his passion. In high school, his guidance counselor advised him to join the military because she thought he would not succeed in college. So, he joined the United States Navy and served during Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. After 10 years of service, he returned to school, ultimately earning four degrees, including

a master's degree in education from Mercy. Upon graduating from the New York City Leadership Academy — a school principal training program — he assumed the principalship of PS. 55 in 2005.

PS. 55 was once one of the lowest performing schools in New York City. Located at the center of a public housing complex in the Bronx, it currently educates just over 500 students, 98% of whom are from families facing economic hardship.



Students use technology for literacy, math, and science support.

Photo by Luis Torres

Now, the school has turned around and is famous for its many programs, support and partnerships. State test scores are on an upward trajectory. Students and families can visit a full-service health clinic and take home extra vegetables from the school's garden. The school now has a large new playground, new computers, and extracurricular activities such as dance groups, basketball teams and tennis. Torres even recently developed a partnership with luxury watchmaker Bulova and nonprofit Windows of Hip-Hop to build a brand-new recording studio — the first ever in a New York City public school — where students will learn about music production and hip-hop.

How did Torres achieve such a

dramatic transformation for PS. 55? He began with something he calls community matching: he took stock of the resources in the school and the needs of the community, and he began to match them up. Wherever there were gaps, he looked for resources to fill those gaps. "For a long time, our school served mostly Hispanic families," he explained. "Over the last eight years, the neighborhood has started to transition to an African community. A lot of the resources in the school building were geared towards Spanish-speaking students and families. I had to make a shift and create an environment that was geared toward the changing demographics in the neighborhood." His thinking led to changes in the after-school programming and in the school's resource allocations.

The inspiration for community matching came from his master's in education program at Mercy College. "One of my professors told us about a theory of how instruction, technology, and relationships between families and the school all work together to increase student outcomes and achievement. That was the basis for my thinking around community matching, which ended up being foundational in turning around my school."

Torres believes that education is one in a hierarchy of needs: "People have five basic needs: food, shelter, safety, health and then education is the fifth priority. Now with this COVID-19 pandemic, education becomes the sixth priority because technology access is the fifth." These other needs must be met before students and families can focus on education.

In addition to improving the quality of the education at PS. 55, Torres is focused on his families'

other needs, including their health and wellness. First, he expanded the school nurse's office into a full-service clinic for students and their families, which is run by Montefiore Health System and staffed by a doctor, a nurse, a dentist, an ophthalmologist and a psychologist. "The clinic helped our attendance rate rise from 87% to closer to 92 or 93%," Torres said.

Noting the existence of a food desert in the community — an area where it is difficult to buy affordable or good-quality fresh foods — Torres partnered with nonprofit Green Bronx Machine to create a health and wellness center in the school. Now, the school produces vegetables all year long in towers using aeroponic technology, which means that the plants require less water than in traditional gardening methods. Students grow and eat the vegetables, and the school also donates organic produce every week to cancer patients who live in the neighborhood.

Beyond his work in his school and the surrounding community, Torres has spearheaded other initiatives as well such as providing free, televised educational programming to Bronx families and students during the COVID-19 pandemic via BronxNet's television channels and organizing remote learning for Puerto Rican students who were affected when Hurricane Maria devastated the country. His leadership is legendary, and he has received many awards and accolades. In February 2020, he was honored with a Mercy College Alumni Achievement Award for his outstanding accomplishments and was also inducted into the Mercy College Alumni Hall of Fame. Previously, he was named 2017 Educator of the Year by the New York League of Puerto Rican Women, NAACP's Outstanding Educator 2014, Daily News Hometown Hero 2013 and ASCD's Outstanding Young Educator 2011.

As he looks ahead, Torres is as optimistic as always about P.S. 55 but aware of new challenges to come with the financial crisis sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic. Officials in the New York City Department of Education are proposing widespread school budget cuts. Torres stresses that schools cannot afford to go backwards, so he calls on everyone — all government agencies, partners, communities, businesses, colleges and their alumni, citizens — to think about better ways to fund schools so pandemics and financial crises do not affect the quality of instruction. "The purpose of our lives is always to make the world better than how we left it," he said. "And if that's why we're here on this planet, we cannot afford for these inequities to exist and to persist. But the only way that's going to change is if everybody says enough is enough. I will use every ounce of energy and all the air in my lungs to fight for our children."



To Educate, Protect and Serve

A CNR Alumna's Life in the Public Interest

“You cover the fire,” said College of New Rochelle (CNR) alumna Pat Keegan '73, referring to a lesson she learned as a journalist in the first phase of her career. “No matter the beat you're assigned, when news breaks and you're the one available, be prepared to jump at the story.”

This saying would ring true throughout Keegan's rewarding career, from local Westchester County journalist, to educator, to her current position as United States Congresswoman Nita Lowey's district director. The honored responsibility, which she has held for 26 years, is coming to an end in early January when Congresswoman Lowey retires from office.

Some may say Keegan's calling to public service was foreordained. Her late father Joseph M. Keegan, who served four terms in the New Jersey General Assembly and a single term in the New Jersey Senate, would inspire her lifelong objective of advancing the greater good.

“Raised in a political family, I would attend high-profile gatherings as a child, including my father's swearing in and events hosted by the governor,” explained Keegan. “I was 8-years-old when President John F. Kennedy was elected, and I remember attending his inaugural parade fondly.”



In addition to her upbringing, Keegan's experiences in and out of the classroom as a CNR undergraduate student prepared her for graduate school, as well as her work in journalism, education and government. The women's college was led by then-President Sister Dorothy Ann Kelly, OSU who would influence Keegan and her classmates to realize their dreams. Renowned for greatly expanding CNR's policies and programs, leading global innovations in higher education and paving a pathway for women in the field, Kelly was the first woman to head the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

“While it was a time when things were not as open to women as they are now, she taught so many of us to ‘go in there and do it.’ She instilled great confidence in us,” said Keegan.

After graduating from CNR, Keegan enrolled in Columbia University's Master of Journalism program, where she would be thrown into many New York City neighborhoods on assignments, standing side-by-side with famed city reporters such as WNBC-TV's Gabe Pressman, acclaimed for his coverage of events including the assassinations of President Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as the Beatles' first trip to the United States.

Following graduation from Columbia University, Keegan worked at a group of eight local newspapers known as the Gannett Westchester Newspapers, rising in the ranks to become education editor. After the birth of her two children, she worked as a freelance writer, and taught undergraduate journalism at Pace University and graduate journalism at Iona College. Recruited by then-State Education Commissioner Tom Sobol, she next accepted the job of director of communications for the New York State Education Department, where she worked for three years before receiving word from a friend about an opening in Congresswoman Lowey's office.

Without hesitation, as if it was in her blood, Keegan seized the opportunity. Now, as Congresswoman Lowey's district director, Keegan serves New York's 17th congressional district. With pleasure and enthusiasm, she has led constituent services



Class of 1973 45th Reunion, June 2018. Keegan is front row, far right.

and community outreach for an expansive region that includes the Lower Hudson Valley, Central and Northwestern Westchester County and Rockland County. In her role, she assists countless individuals with the navigation of complex economic and social issues related to federal agencies.

Among many standout moments, Keegan cites one that involved a 13-year-old girl awaiting emergency heart surgery. The imported medical device her surgeon needed was locked in a major delivery company warehouse 1,000 miles away. Two federal agencies needed to sign off, on a weekend no less, before the package could be delivered to the New York hospital. Keeping true to her nature, Keegan intervened using her reporting and research skills to impel the right people to deliver the device on time.

As one of the longest-serving district directors in the country, she takes pride in mentoring and learning from her counterparts. She has most enjoyed watching the Congresswoman present a Purple Heart to a World War II veteran

joined by four generations of his proud family. She has organized roundtable discussions where college students informed the Congresswoman that her bill to raise the maximum award for federal Pell Grants and distribute them year-round enabled them to stay in college and earn their degrees.

*As one of the
longest-serving district
directors in the country,
she takes pride in
mentoring and learning
from her counterparts.*

“Pat Keegan has done an incredible job as my District Director for the last 26 years. Under her energetic and compassionate leadership, my office has helped

thousands of constituents and developed strong relationships with dozens of community organizations,” said Congresswoman Lowey of her esteemed colleague.

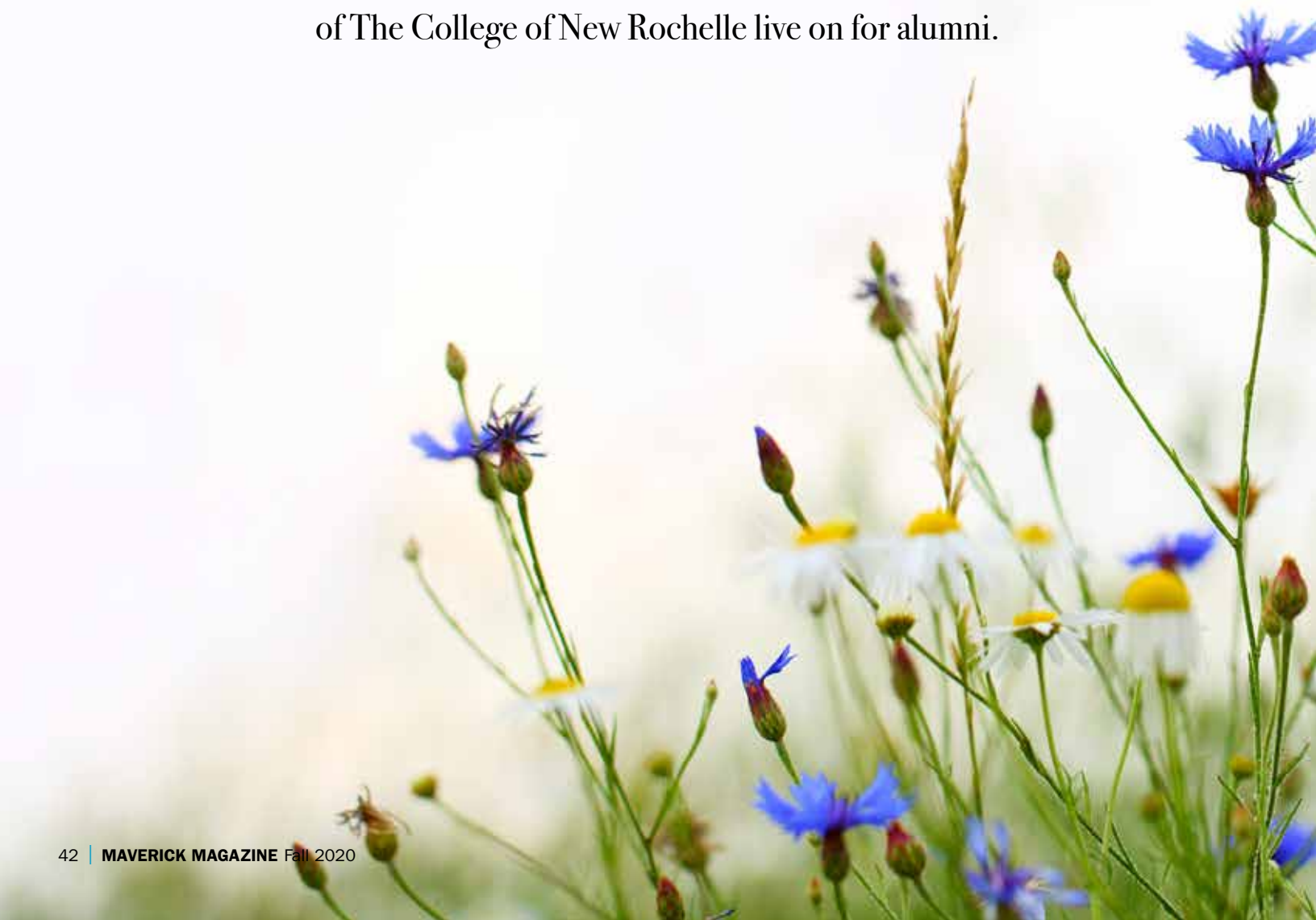
With humility and sophistication, Keegan has stood side-by-side with noted community leaders since grade school and has developed close relationships with these individuals at the forefront of organizations and industries generating solutions to some of the most complex social issues of our time. “Many of them have become personal friends and have made my work very rewarding,” said Keegan.

Post-January, you will likely find Keegan at her beloved Jersey Shore family home catching up on newspaper and magazine articles from years past and devoting more time to bond with her dear friends, including several CNR classmates.

You will also find her doing what will always light her fire, one that will never dim – leveraging her valued relationships to serve the community and bring people together, powerfully striving for the greater good.

Resilience Steers New Era for CNR Alumni

Reconnecting with an institutional legacy is no small task, particularly when that institution has closed its doors. Yet, the newly established CNR Legacy Council is working hard to ensure that the rich traditions of The College of New Rochelle live on for alumni.



Of the 40 alumni volunteers serving on this newly established council, three past presidents of the former Alumni Association now lead efforts that focus on community outreach, mentoring, programming, reunions, fundraising and stewardship of a permanent collection of CNR memorabilia. All of these efforts intended to engage alums in new and meaningful ways while upholding treasured CNR traditions. Marlene Melone Tutura '71, Rosa Puleo Napoleone '75 and Mildred Perez '95 make up what Eileen Niedzwiecki CNR '72, Director of Development has dubbed the "triumvirate" who now guide the activities of CNR alumni. They are transferring their loyalty and dedication to their alma mater into a new era with Mercy College.

Tutura said joining forces as leaders was driven by the shared passion of all three women to work side by side with Mercy going forward. "In our hearts, we knew relationships had to be sustained. We all embraced what CNR meant to us, and Mercy recognized that and gave us a platform and a home for our alums."

The capacity for this new platform to engage alumni was evident early on said Tutura. She describes her confidence in the plan as she observed the commitment expressed by President Hall to excite and inspire many other alumni to consider joining the effort. "We could feel there was a real thirst to explore how these two institutions could align. We all felt it," said Tutura. She watched as her new council's thoughtful action plans transformed into live events that attracted many CNR alums. Large Town Hall meetings and smaller intimate gatherings both worked to build momentum for a union of mission.

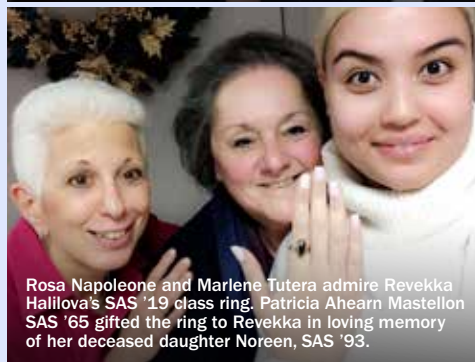
For Napoleone, the process of implementing a whole new start



L to R: Alumni Board members Renee Blackwell SAS '95, Claudia Benitez SAS '16, Janice Conlon Collins SAS '69 with Marlene Melone Tutura SAS '71, Chair of the Board of Trustees, Mildred Perez SAS '95 President of the Alumni Association, and fellow Board member Rosa Puleo Napoleone SAS '75.



CNR President Bill Latimer, Mildred Perez, Marlene Tutura and Mercy President Tim Hall collaborate to preserve the history and legacy of The College of New Rochelle.



Rosa Napoleone and Marlene Tutura admire Revekka Hallilova's SAS '19 class ring. Patricia Ahearn Mastellon SAS '65 gifted the ring to Revekka in loving memory of her deceased daughter Noreen, SAS '93.



Alumni Association President Mildred Perez SAS '95 confers with Former CNR Athletic Director Alyssa Kaufman after a presentation to the Board of Directors.

Photos by John Vecchiolla

at Mercy was a sign of hope and recovery. "Many of us went through all the stages of grief prior to the closure. Planning a new council became a rallying cry to keep something of our alma mater alive." She describes the unique synergy of her fellow volunteers as fuel for the creation of task forces to take the next steps. Community service projects, mentoring opportunities, plans for a center for leadership, and most excitingly, a last reunion weekend on the former New Rochelle campus were in the works.

With months of planning coming to fruition, all these activities loomed large on the

horizon and then the unthinkable world events hit. To a group of alums all too familiar with challenge, this was another harrowing blow. This is a group that is undeterred by challenge, says Napoleone. "We've had good training in going forward when the way looked uncertain." Tutura agrees. Though the pandemic crisis currently keeps the CNR alumni body physically apart, it is not putting any damper on the enthusiasm and hope for the future when all will be able to reconvene.

I know that all of us are looking forward to picking up where we left off," said Tutura.



ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS RECEPTION

In early February 2020, Mercy College hosted the Alumni Achievement Awards Reception at Marina Del Rey in Bronx, New York. The evening, which began with a cocktail reception, celebrated the incredible achievements of our alumni while raising support for the newly established Alumni Legacy Scholarship Fund.

Five accomplished Mercy alumni were honored for their numerous contributions to the community, their role as inspiring leaders in their fields and their dedication to strengthening Mercy's programs. Over 100 guests gathered to celebrate our 2020 honorees; Judge Christie Magno D'Alessio '98, Damion Fray '98, George Longworth '93, Lori Oliva Smittle '89 and Luis Torres, M.S. '00.



Honoree Luis Torres, M.S. '00 with President Tim Hall



Honoree Lori Oliva Smittle '89 with Cristin Grogan



President Tim Hall (center) with Honorees George Longworth '93, Christie Magno D'Alessio '98, Lori Oliva Smittle '89, Luis Torres, M.S. '00 and Damion Fray '98



Honoree Christie Magno D'Alessio, President Tim Hall and Pete Magno



Edie Magnus, M.S. '14, Executive Director of Media and Innovation with Honoree Damion Fray '98



Honoree George Longworth '93 with President Tim Hall

Photos by John Raiola

Essential Scholarship Dollars Raised at



MERCY'S FIRST VIRTUAL TRUSTEES'

Scholarship EVENT



Irene Buckley



Marlene Melone Tutura SAS '71



Samuel Acheampong '20



Kevin Lessing
Lessing's Food Service Management



Brett Herschenfeld
SL Green Realty Corp.

Despite the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Mercy College continued the tradition of raising scholarship funds for deserving students and recognizing distinguished honorees for their dedication to the community at its first Virtual Trustees' Scholarship Event on June 2, 2020. Nearly 700 viewers from 30 states visited the event website.

The College celebrated five honorees including Irene Buckley, who recently retired after 39 years at Mercy and most recently served

as chief of staff to President Tim Hall, with the Award for Lifetime Achievement; and Marlene Melone Tutura SAS '71, who served in many roles at the former College of New Rochelle (CNR), including past chair of the Board of Trustees, Director of Alumnae/i Relations and Director of Housing, with the Inaugural CNR Legacy Award. Samuel Acheampong '20, a cybersecurity major and immigrant from Ghana who has secured a coveted full-time job with ConEdison, received the Award for Student Achievement. Two companies who have been integral to the College's successful operations

and expansion were honored with the Award for Community Partnership: Lessing's Food Service Management, one of the oldest family-owned food service companies in the country and Mercy's food service vendor, and SL Green Realty Corp., the landlord for the MercyManhattan Campus in Herald Square.

The event showcased the power of education, perseverance and leadership, and raised more than \$300,000 for the Trustees' Scholarship Fund and Student Emergency Fund that provide needed support to Mercy's most deserving students.

Featured here are published books and scholarly articles by Mercy College faculty from the past year. If you have been recently published and would like to be featured in an upcoming issue of *Maverick Magazine*, please email pr@mercy.edu for consideration.



Mercy Authors

SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND NATURAL SCIENCES



Kaitlin Dondorf-Brooks (Assistant Professor, Communication Disorders), **Francine Seruya** (Professor, Occupational Therapy), **Rebecca Trenz** (Associate Professor, Psychology) and **Mónica Stanton-Koko**

"Parenting With A Disability: A Descriptive Analysis of Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Women in Vocational Rehabilitation"

Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling, 2020



Geetha Surendran (Associate Professor, Chemistry), **Mackenzie McAteer '18**, **Peter Zanchelli '18** and **Ilirian Dhimitruka** (Visiting Professor, Chemistry)

"Assessment of Hydroxycinnamic Acids Potential for Use as Multifunctional Active Ingredients in Sunscreens, Via a Comparative UV Spectroscopy Analysis"

Journal of Chemical and Pharmaceutical Research, 2019



Adrienne Wald (Assistant Professor, Nursing)

"Emergency Department Visits and Costs for Heat-Related Illness Due to Extreme Heat or Heat Waves in the United States: An Integrative Review."

Nursing Economics, 2019

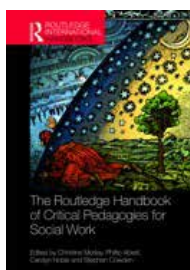
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES



Tanya M. Grant (Assistant Professor, Criminal Justice)
"Families and Female Victimization"

in F.P. Bernat and K. Frailing (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Women and Crime*

John Wiley & Sons, 2020

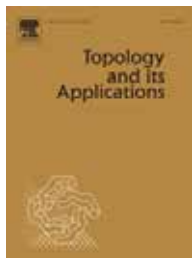


Carolyn Hanesworth (Assistant Professor, Social Work)
"Reaching Back to Go Forward: Applying the Enduring Philosophy of Jane Addams to Modern-Day Social Work Education. 32-44"

in Christine Morley, Phillip Ablett, Carolyn Noble, Stephen Cowden (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Pedagogies for Social Work*.

Routledge, 2020

SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS



Cheng (Jeff) Chang (Assistant Professor, Mathematics) and Su Gao

“The Complexity of the Classification Problems of Finite-Dimensional Continua”

Topology and Its Applications, 2019



Austin Dacey (Assistant Professor, Critical Inquiry)

“Come Now, Let Us Reason Together: Cognitive Bias, Individualism, and Interactionism in Critical Thinking Education”

Informal Logic, 2020

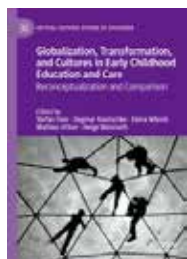


Marc Palmieri (Instructor, Communication)

Streaming Passion

Dramatists Play Service, 2020

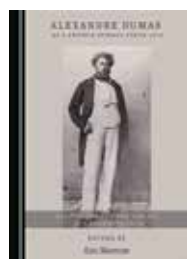
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



Stefan Faas, Dagmar Kasüschke, **Elena Nitecki** (Associate Professor, Childhood Education); Mathias Urban and **Helge Wasmuth** (Associate Professor, Childhood Education) (eds.)

Globalization, Transformation, and Cultures in Early Childhood Education and Care: Reconceptualization and Comparison

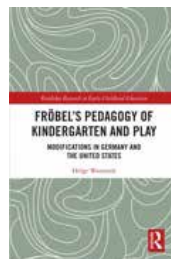
Palgrave MacMillan, 2019



Eric Martone (ed.) (Associate Professor, Secondary Education; and Interim Dean)

Alexandre Dumas as a French Symbol since 1870: All for One and One for All in a Global France

Cambridge Scholars, 2020



Helge Wasmuth (Associate Professor, Childhood Education)

Fröbel's Pedagogy of Kindergarten and Play: Modifications in Germany and the United States.

Routledge, 2020

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



Tom Coughlan (Associate Professor, Business), David J. Fogarty and Sara R. Fogarty

“Virtual Proximity to Promote Expatriate Cultural Adjustment, Innovation, and the Reduction of Stress Levels”

International Journal of Applied Management and Technology, 2019



Laurent Alfandari, **Victoire Denoyel** (Associate Professor, Business), and Thiele Aurélie

“Solving utility maximization selection problems with Multinomial Logit demand: Is the First-Choice model a good approximation?”

Annals of Operations Research, 2019

LIBRARY



Karen Venturella and **Moddie V. Breland** (Assistant Professor, and Director, Mercy Library)

“Supporting the Best: Professional Development in Academic Libraries”

Journal of New Librarianship, 2019



Bernadette M. López-Fitzsimmons (Adjunct Librarian) and Kanu A. Nagra

“Google vs. Library Databases: Engaging Twenty-First Century Undergraduate Students in Critical Thinking”

Journal of Electronic Resources Librarianship, 2019

Mercy CLASS NOTES

1960s

Adrienne (Rinaldi) Marra '68 is a retired elementary school teacher who previously served as a legislative aide to Virginia Senator William Mims. She and her husband, Albert were married in Mercy's Rotunda and celebrated their 50th anniversary this summer.



Joan Wolf '65 is looking forward to the publication of a new novel "The Portrait," her 53rd to be due out in October. She lives in Connecticut with her husband and her terrier, and her two grown children live nearby. You can find more at www.joanwolf.com.



1970s

Curtis Archer '79 serves as President of the Harlem Community Development Corporation, a role he has held for nearly 14 years.



Katherine Felton '73 recently co-produced and served as chief videographer for the film "Claudette Colvin Day at St. Helena's." The film, highlighting the civil rights leader, was broadcast during BronxNet TV's Black History Month programming block.

1980s

Patricia Babbage '82 of Newtown, CT was recently named director of the Hilltop Senior Center in Bridgewater. Previously she was the assistant director of the Oxford Senior Center in Oxford.



Alison Christmas '88 recently started a new position at Mercy College as Clinical Administrative Assistant in the Physician Assistant Program. She also serves as a member of the Mercy College Alumni Advisory Council.



Juan Nunez '86 was recently installed as Diversity Officer at Westfield State University in Westfield Massachusetts. He brings to this role more than 20 years of experience in both public and private sectors as a diversity practitioner.



1990s

Angel Lopez '91 recently retired as a marriage official from the City of New York. He and his wife, **Doris Munoz-Lopez '95, M.S.'08**, a New York City public school teacher with P.S. 66 in the Bronx, have two children; a 16-year-old daughter and a 10-year-old son.



Dr. T. Anthony Spearman '95 is the president of the North Carolina NAACP. He holds a Master of Divinity degree from Hood Theological Seminary in Salisbury, North Carolina and a Doctor of Ministry from the United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.



Peter Volkmann, M.S. '90 was recently appointed as Police Commissioner of Hudson, NY. He brings to this role more than three decades of service to the public, beginning his career as a patrol officer for the Ossining Police Department from which he retired in 2006.



2000s

Cheryl Brannan, M.S. '02 was recently inducted into the Westchester Women's Hall of Fame at an event at the Woman's Club of White Plains. She is the founder of Sister to Sister International and the Yonkers chapter of the Westchester Black Women's Political Caucus.



Nakia James Jenkins, M.S. '01 is a partner of an executive search and consulting firm, On-Ramps with an extensive background in the nonprofit sector. She recently became a member of the Mercy College Alumni Advisory Council.



Stephen Luciana, M.S. '07 was recently appointed the new director of health, physical education and athletics for the Mahopac Central School District. He previously



served in a similar role as director of physical education for the Pelham Public School District.

Stephen Noonan, M.S. '03 was recently married to Mark Anthony Lowe at the Harvard Club in Manhattan. Stephen is the founding principal of the Maxine Green High School for Imaginative Inquiry in New York City.



Luke Sotherden, M.S. '05 was recently named the principal of Port Chester High School, having served previously as the school's assistant principal for nine years.



Yvette Vegerano, M.S. '02 has been a teacher in the New York City School District for 23 years. She received her certification to teach Common Branch, with an extension in Bilingual Education and Special Education.



2010s

Margaret D. Fountain Coleman, M.S. '11 was recently honored as 2019 Woman of the Year by the Luther V. Garrison Sr. Masonic Foundation in Yonkers. She is an associate minister at the Messiah Baptist Church and is a special education teacher with Yonkers Public Schools.



John Carroll, M.S. '18 was selected by Forbes as a Forbes Under 30 Scholar. He is a licensed marriage and family therapist in Manhattan.



Alisha Carter '17, a current master's degree student in school counseling, has been selected as a finalist for the Miss New York USA Pageant. She hopes to bring awareness to children's mental health issues through her competition platform.



Sahmahrah "Marah" Guillaume '15 recently wrote a book entitled "You Bring Me Joy," a collection of poems focused on self-love, healing, purpose and joy.



Matthew Mayer, M.S. '14 has been accepted into the SUNY Master Teacher Program, a program launched by Governor Andrew Cuomo. He currently teaches Forensic Science and Honors Biology at Newburgh Free Academy in Newburgh.



Sheri Murphy, M.A. '18 is a meditation instructor and Reiki master/teacher. She has traveled broadly, living in New Mexico, coastal Ireland, and Cape Breton Island and presently lives in northern Maine.



Lauren Singelakis, M.S. '18 started a new position as Senior Director, System Wide Laboratory Operations for Mount Sinai Health System.



In Memorium

Peter C. Allison '83

Ann Balascio '99

Carole A. Bergen, Assistant Professor of Mathematics

Christopher Bilodeau '17

Katherine C. Bryant '77

Howard Canaan, Professor of English and Humanities

Jorge J. Ibanez Delgado '78

Kerri A. Kennedy Tompkins '93

Corrine Koslowski '17

Barbara Limberg '69

Joan McManus '82

Diana E. Neversson '06, Adjunct Professor in the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Ruth Rivera '10, M.S.'14, Adjunct Professor in the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Frank V. Romano '00

Paula K. Shelley '66

Carol A. Sung '85

Dawn Thackeray '82

Michael T. Variano '01

Therese E. Vnuczenski '86

Lawrence Corbett Ward, Associate Professor of Business

CNR CLASS NOTES

1980s

Virginia Cruz SAS '88 started a new position as a Rescue Task Force EMT for the NYS Department of Homeland Services and Emergency Services.

1990s

Kelly Homan SAS '95, GS '03 was honored with the distinction of Beaufort County School District (South Carolina) 2020 School Counselor of the Year.



Kathy Reilley Fallon, M.D., SN '90 was named a 'Dame of Malta' by the Order of Malta, a voluntary lay Catholic order that provides humanitarian assistance and medical and social services.



2000s

Sandy Cayo-Alassan SN '08 assumed a new position as Vice President of Clinical Performance and Transformation at New Jersey Hospital Association. She is also a clinical assistant professor at New York University.

Susan Glaud SNR '08 started a new position as Project Trainee at Coalition for the Homeless: First Step Training Program in New York. She was previously a child protective specialist with the NYC Administration for Children's Services.

Hyrije Mahmuti SAS '05 started a new position as a Financial Advisor at Morgan Stanley.

Alberta McLaughlin SNR '05 was recently featured in the Salisbury Post for her work as a victim advocate for the Salisbury Police Department in North Carolina. She previously served as



a prison chaplain. Police Capt. Melonie Thompson noted, "She has a lot of compassion and she feels for people and meets people where they are."

Lorraine Santiago SN '08 is now Diabetes Staff Nurse Educator at the NYC Department of Education. She previously served as a Public Health Nurse Supervisor for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Kay Trocino Casanova SAS '08 was promoted to Manager of Utilization Management at VillageCare in New York. Prior to joining VillageCare, she was a case manager at Healthfirst.

Dana Tulotta GS '03 has been appointed assistant headmaster at Greenwich High School in Connecticut. Tulotta has spent her entire teaching and administrative career within Greenwich High School. She initially taught a variety of math courses for 11 years and was honored as a Greenwich Distinguished Teacher in 2007.

Jenell Wilkie SAS '05 was promoted to Vice President at Deutsche Bank.



2010s

Bettina Aquilino SN '18 started a new position as a registered nurse at Westchester County Medical Center.

Nadasia Blackman SAS '19 is now a Habilitation Specialist at ADAPT Community Network in NYC.

Gilda De La Rosa SN '19 started a new position as a neuroscience nurse at Montefiore Health System in New York.

Gloria Twumasi SN '19 is now a neuro stepdown registered nurse at Mount Sinai Hospital.

In Memorium

Rosemary Gerard Klemann SAS '39
Sr. Virginia Maxwell, OSU SAS '43
Elizabeth Behan Marcy SAS '44
Sr. Mary Boyan, OSU SAS '46
Anna Drago Ferrari SAS '46
Florence Mullen Indiveri SAS '46
Sr. Alice Bouchard, OSU SAS '47
Peggy Judge Berger SAS '47
Vincentia Corbetta Landolfe SAS '48
Mary Boyce Anderson SAS '49
Sr. Maria Rosa Deiso, OSU SAS '49
Sr. M. Celeste Cour, OSU SAS '50
Jacqueline French SAS '50
Audrey Reis Prescott SAS '50
Jane Crabtree Stark SAS '51
Agnes Neill Williams SAS '51
Sr. Mary Jane Robertshaw, OSU SAS '51
Claudette Gauvreau Doran SAS '52
Sr. Marjorie Stumpf, OSU SAS '52
Anne Donohue Reid SAS '53
Alice Cronin Sheridan SAS '55
Mary Jane Kenny Truckenbrodt SAS '55
Mary Sullivan Roge SAS '55
Rosamond Dausey Stott SAS '56
Marie Higgins Grady SAS '56
Catherine Leddy Pucciarelli SAS '56
Maureen Murphy Pugsley SAS '56
Claire Senger Kingsley SAS '56
Patricia McEvoy SAS '58
Nancy Fearon SAS '65
Eileen Kennedy Tonsmeire SAS '67
Patricia Murray Zahniser GS '75
Rosemary DeGeorge GS '76
Sr. Theresa Kelley, RDC GS '76
Patricia Hurley Cherico SN '80
Donna Laviano SAS '80
Denyse McAlpin SAS '80
Diana Andrews SNR '81
Maria Mercader SAS '87
James Pasternak GS '91
Beth Greenapple GS '95
Paula Pryce-Bremmer SAS '97
Br. Pius Blandino, OFM Cap SNR '99
Lori McLane-Francis GS '99
Melissa Childakos SN '05
Thomas Taaffe, Faculty Emeritus Philosophy



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During the coronavirus pandemic, Mercy College is working hard to meet the needs of current and incoming students...but we can't do it alone. When you make a gift to the College, you're opening the door for Mercy students just like you. Join the effort and help provide immediate support to students who need it most. If you're able, please make your gift today!



To read Mohamed's full story
see page 12.

YOUR DONATION AT WORK

Mohamed Saleh Ahmed '20
Scholarship Recipient

"The donors gave my family and myself the opportunity to be a success. Now I am in the position where I can be a blessing to others because donors believed in investing in me."

For Mohamed Saleh Ahmed '20, college seemed unimaginable. The first in his family to graduate high school, Mohamed faced pressure to start working instead of attending college. **Then Mercy College opened a door.** Thanks to a group of generous donors, Mohamed received a full scholarship and has now completed his undergraduate degree. The scholarship changed the lives of Ahmed's entire family. Inspired by his success, his siblings now see a path to their own higher education – an opportunity not always afforded to recent immigrants.

Make a gift of \$25 or more

And we'll send you an Alumni T-shirt as an expression of our gratitude.

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