

A Family's Connection to Mercy and the College of New Rochelle

Trisha Blackmar had been approached with board leadership opportunities before, but something about an invitation to join Mercy College's Board of Trustees captivated her. Blackmar, then a senior editor with Sports Illustrated, felt motivated to serve a college with a mission she believed in.

"I was so impressed with the passion other board members had for the school," said Blackmar, now a vice president and internal communications manager at Morgan Stanley. "I was excited about all the ways Mercy was changing lives." Though not an alumna of Mercy, the Middlebury College graduate and mother of two marveled at the hands-on connection she saw amongst Mercy faculty and students. "There are countless stories of how the staff goes that extra mile for students," said Blackmar. Her involvement continues to grow; mentoring students and cheering in the crowd at athletic games as an avid Mavs fan.

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Students benefiting from Blackmar's mentorship certainly have had a lot to draw from. Though modest when recounting the places her career has taken her, she has been there for momentous sports moments — covering everything from NASCAR races to Final Four games to Olympic events, and she was in the locker room when the Detroit Red Wings won the Stanley Cup in 1998. Even considering these high-profile sports events, she still recounts Mercy's win this past year in the NCAA Lacrosse



Photo provided by Trisha Blackmar

Trisha Blackmar

National Semifinal as one of the best games she's seen live.

"The thrilling finish, in double OT, was one for the ages," said Blackmar.

Blackmar's relationship to Mercy was further cemented through a unique family connection. Within three years of her tenure as a trustee, the College of New Rochelle (CNR) announced it would close its doors and Mercy moved toward an agreement to welcome its displaced students and alumni to a new future with Mercy. For Blackmar, being part of this strategic planning as a member of the Board of Trustees held special significance;

her mother, Christina Hoffman Lucey, is a graduate of CNR's class of 1970.

"Growing up, I witnessed how connected the CNR alumnae were with one another," said Blackmar, who has fond memories of weekends spent with her mother's college friends and their children. She recalls many other CNR alumnae who were her neighbors or teachers during her time at Pelham Memorial High School.

In the late 1960s, Lucey, a native of Queens, entered CNR as a student already actively involved in volunteering in her community. Lucey said CNR only further developed her volunteer involvement and gave her ample opportunities to immerse herself in causes she cared about, particularly community



A snapshot from the 1975 CNR Yearbook. A young Trisha being babysat by a CNR student.



Trisha (2nd from left) and Christina (3rd from left) on a recent family vacation to Machu Picchu

Photo provided by Trisha Blackmar

activism and voter education. In looking back, Lucey notes that service wasn't explicitly taught at CNR, but rather embodied in actions by its staff and students. "The beautiful thing is it was just something in the atmosphere," said Lucey.

After graduation, while raising her young family, Lucey held roles as a Montessori school teacher and a passionate voting activist. She would translate her undergraduate experiences into various leadership roles in the Westchester community and maintain a steady involvement with CNR alumni causes; holding roles as a class reunion chair, and member of the Alumnae Association Board of Directors. Her intense involvement in the League of Women Voters of Westchester (for nine years as a board member) led her to ultimately become its executive director.

Witnessing her mother's civic involvement was formative in Blackmar's own development as a leader. "That's what it's about for me, that you get to make an impact



(left to right) Tara Alfano CNR SAS '02, GS '04, Director of Development, CNR Alumni Relations, Mary Ann Marriott CNR SAS '59, Eileen Niedzwiecki CNR SAS '72, Christina Lucey CNR SAS '70, Nancy Harkins CNR SAS '75

Photo by John Rajola

in your community," said Blackmar. Seeing the two paths of service converging between Mercy and CNR, Blackmar's work as a trustee has a new meaning.

This spring, Blackmar's parents, who now live in Corona Del Mar, California, were in town for the Trustees' Scholarship

Gala and Lucey joined her daughter for the event, reconnecting with many familiar faces from her alma mater. "My years at CNR were some of the happiest of my life," said Lucey. "To see that the legacy has continued makes us all (alumni) very pleased."