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Alumna Jessica Davenport will dedicate her life to advocating for people with disabilities.

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“Hearing Jessica’s personal testimony makes you realize how privileged we are to serve, and the vital role education plays in our students’ lives.”

—Dr. LaVerne Harmon



Dear Friends,

Our cover story is very special. Jessica Davenport, who recently earned her B.S. in Health Sciences, graciously allowed us to tell her story — not because she wanted to be showcased, but because she plans to dedicate her life to advocating for people with disabilities. She wants everyone to know that with determination and perseverance, earning a degree is possible, regardless of obstacles. With support from the staff of the Mary Campbell Center in Wilmington, family and friends, Jessica overcame many.

As a result of a massive stroke at 19, Jessica suffers from paraplegia and has extremely limited use of her body. She is in a wheelchair and is unable to talk. Yet, she refused to allow her disabilities to control her educational dreams. When we learned how committed Jessica was to achieving her academic goals, we were honored to offer her a scholarship to Wilmington University. As you will read in our story, she worked incredibly hard to earn her degree, and we look forward to formally celebrating her accomplishments at commencement in June.

Using a speech-generating device, Jessica told us that Wilmington University instructors guided and supported her throughout her journey, and she especially appreciated the Office of Student Accessibility Services team. I have always been proud of our faculty and staff and their commitment to students. Still, hearing Jessica’s personal testimony makes you realize how privileged we are to serve, and the vital role education plays in our students’ lives.

We are also excited to offer two new sections of the magazine dedicated to Wilmington University’s School of Law and our Criminal Justice Institute. So many exciting things are happening for both.

As always, you’ll find many stories about our faculty, students, athletes, staff and alumni. Please enjoy the issue and the beautiful fall season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "LaVerne Harmon".

Dr. LaVerne Harmon
President



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WilmU alumnae bring joy to children who need it most.

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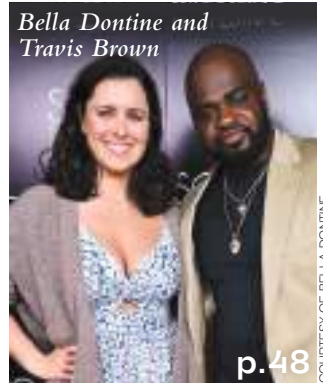
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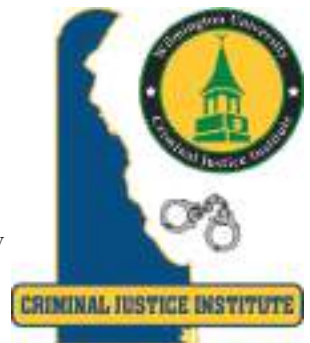
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Wilmington University School of Law

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THE NEWS





Thank You, Dr. Ingraham

DR. FRANK INGRAHAM ends his distinguished service as Wilmington University Alumni President this year, having served in the role since 2018, and as an alumni board member since 2012. He holds three degrees from WilmU: a B.S. in Human Resource Management, an M.S. in Human Resource Management, and an Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership. His academic WilmU experience made him an excellent choice for alumni president, and he served alums with dignity and respect.

Aside from his work as president, Dr. Ingraham was a human resources practitioner, certified mediator, and adjunct instructor at WilmU. He has many certifications — a few from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), plus Six Sigma Black and Green belts. He’s also written two books. One of them, “Personal Branding Life Planning Mastery,” helps readers formalize individualized brands while initiating detailed life plans.

With expertise in employee, labor and community relations and solid entrepreneurial roots, Dr. Ingraham’s leadership foundation was cemented, and his long-standing focus on conflict management enhanced his tenure. Ultimately, he has centered his efforts on helping people find their purpose and improve their quality of life, and that mission was evident at WilmU and the many places he worked.

In this case, retirement doesn’t mean slowing down. Dr. Ingraham plans to take a deep dive into his family’s genealogy. He will continue to mediate conflict issues in the community, military and workplace, then write a third book. He also plans to devote more time to his family.

“Dr. Ingraham has been an incredible leader,” says **DR. STEFANIE WHITBY**, assistant vice president of Alumni Relations and Development and director of Athletics. “The University — and the Alumni Association in particular — will be forever grateful that he chose to serve with us. Frank defines leadership. He sets goals, inspires creativity, and encourages others to step outside their comfort zones to make an impact. He believes in making the most of every opportunity, every new encounter, and celebrating the milestones along the way. We wish Frank all the best in his next chapter and look forward to staying connected.”

Dr. Ingraham is one of those rare people who is supportive and non-judgmental; a great listener who’s empathetic and kind. So, maybe we won’t see him around as much anymore, but chances are that Dr. Ingraham will still be up for lunch or some other gathering. He will most certainly remain a cherished and trusted friend to many at WilmU. **WU** —*Maria Hess*

Dr. Frank Ingraham

Prepping for a Cybersecurity Career

The last six years have been a whirlwind of academic and professional achievements for alumna **NOKWA SIBANDA**.

She moved from her native Zimbabwe to Delaware in 2017, and immediately enrolled at Wilmington University. Since then, she has earned two academic degrees from the University and accumulated an impressive list of credentials in preparation for a career in cybersecurity — a profession where women, and especially women of color, are a distinct minority. A recent study reveals that only 24 percent of cybersecurity professionals are women, and only 9 percent identify as Black.

Sibanda earned a bachelor's in Health Services/Allied Health/Health Sciences in 2020, and served as student body president for two of her four years as an undergraduate. She also was a commencement speaker. In 2022, she enrolled in the master's program in Information Systems Technologies with a concentration in Information Assurance, and received that degree in April of this year.

Sibanda says she found a sense of community at WilmU. "Everybody is so supportive and helpful on your journey, the dean and the chairs and everyone," she says.

"And in my time as student body president, I obviously got to engage with a lot of people. It was so easy to engage and connect with people."

While pursuing her master's, she found time to acquire these certifications: Master of Science in Information Systems Technologies – Information Assurance; IBM Cybersecurity Analyst; Amazon Web Services AWS Fundamentals Specialization; and Splunk Enterprise Learning (Splunk Enterprise is a data analytics platform).

In March, she used a scholarship from Women in Cybersecurity (WiCyS) to attend the group's conference in Denver. The WiCyS conference is the premier event to recruit, retain and advance women in cybersecurity. She also participated in two virtual internships last fall — with Mastercard and SAP.

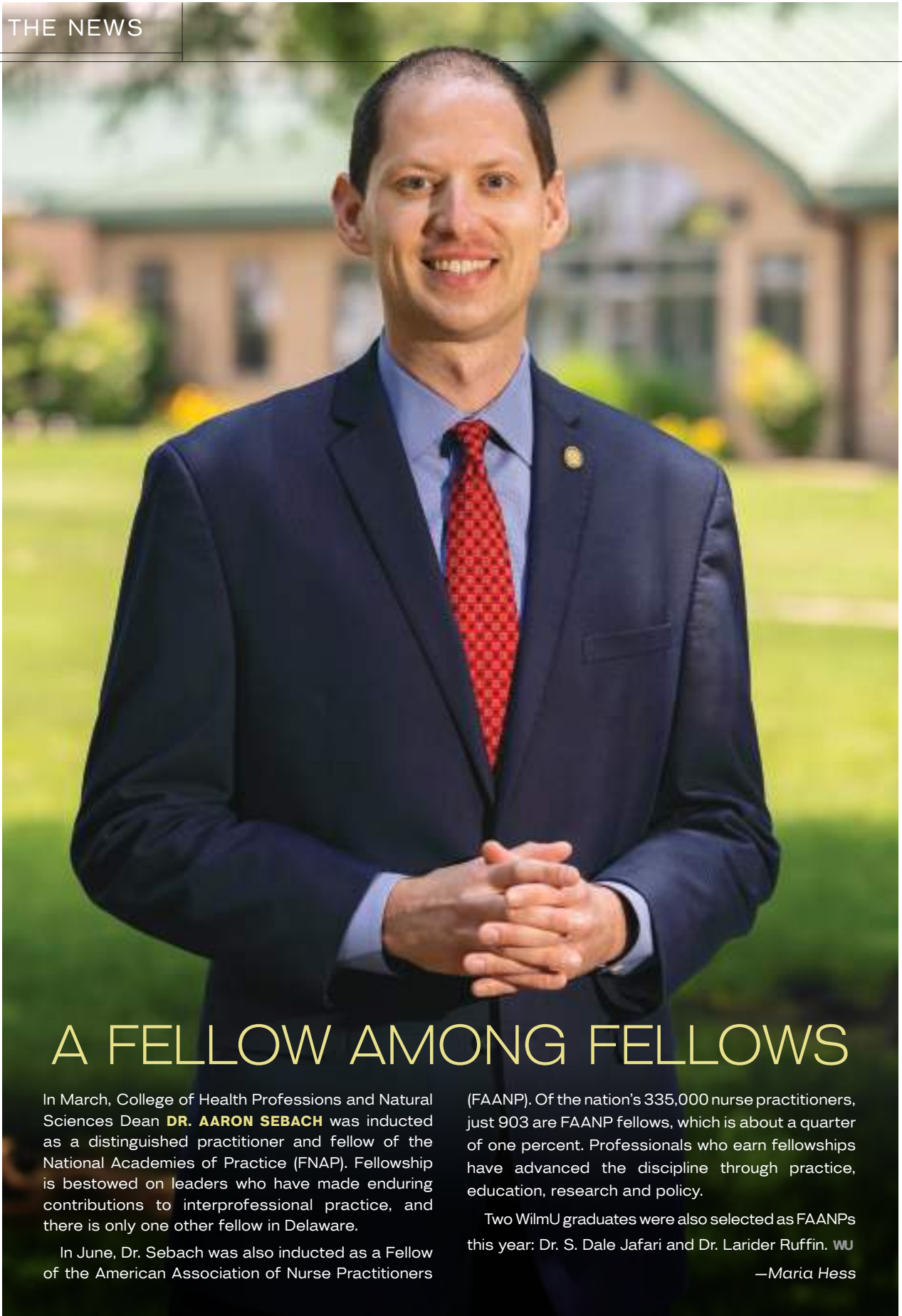
All of her hard work paid off in June, when Sibanda joined SAP, one of the world's leading producers of software for management of business processes, as a cybersecurity engineer.

Of her burgeoning career, Sibanda says: "As technology evolves, the importance of cybersecurity and compliance will receive increasing emphasis, and I'm excited to be a part of this dynamic field." **WU**

—Bob Yearick

Nokwa Sibanda





A FELLOW AMONG FELLOWS

In March, College of Health Professions and Natural Sciences Dean **DR. AARON SEBACH** was inducted as a distinguished practitioner and fellow of the National Academies of Practice (FNAP). Fellowship is bestowed on leaders who have made enduring contributions to interprofessional practice, and there is only one other fellow in Delaware.

In June, Dr. Sebach was also inducted as a Fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners

(FAANP). Of the nation's 335,000 nurse practitioners, just 903 are FAANP fellows, which is about a quarter of one percent. Professionals who earn fellowships have advanced the discipline through practice, education, research and policy.

Two WilmU graduates were also selected as FAANPs this year: Dr. S. Dale Jafari and Dr. Larider Ruffin. **WU**

—Maria Hess

Alumna Named Honorary Captain for Super Bowl LVII Coin Toss

At Super Bowl LVII, Wilmington University alumna **FABERSHA FLYNT** was on the 50-yard line as one of four Pat Tillman Scholars honorary team captains participating in the coin toss.

The Tillman Scholarship honors Cpl. Patrick Daniel Tillman Jr., a record-setting safety for the Arizona Cardinals who turned down a three-year, multi-million-dollar deal with the Cardinals to enlist in the U.S. Army after 9/11. He was killed in action by friendly fire in Afghanistan in 2004. Tillman's family created the Pat Tillman Foundation, which, according to its website, "identifies remarkable

military service members, veterans and spouses, empowering them with academic scholarships, lifelong leadership development opportunities and a diverse, global community of high-performing mentors and peers."

Flynt is one of those remarkable individuals. The executive director of Adult Education and Walton County Campus at Georgia's Athens Technical College, Flynt was married to **STAFF SGT. BRYAN A. LEWIS**, who was killed on March 13, 2006, during Operation Iraqi Freedom. After battling bouts of depression and anxiety, she created a scholarship in memory of her husband and founded an educational consulting firm that supports higher education

institutions fostering learning environments that stress the importance of diversity and inclusion for marginalized students.

Flynt earned her M.S. in Human Services at WilmU in 2018 and was awarded the Tillman Scholarship in 2021. She is pursuing a doctorate in Higher Education Administration at the University of Southern Mississippi. As stated on the Pat Tillman Foundation website, she "will use relevant scholarship and strategies to help give voice to the need for educational equality and its significance in providing 'liberty and justice for all' within higher education and beyond." **WU**

—*Maria Hess and Laurie Jensen*

Alumna Fabersha Flynt was one of four Pat Tillman Scholars participating in the Super Bowl coin toss.



COURTESY OF FABERSHA FLYNT



Annum Nashra

YOUTH AND THE **DANGERS OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

College of Technology Dean **DR. ANTHONY CARCILLO** recently treated students, teachers and parents of Brader Elementary School in Newark to a presentation about the dangers of social media. His timing could not have been better.

According to American Psychological Association Chief Science Officer **DR. MITCH**

PRINSTEIN in a recent APA article, “At puberty, children begin to crave social rewards, such as visibility, attention and positive feedback from peers. In contrast, brain regions involved in our ability to inhibit our behavior and resist temptations do not fully develop until early adulthood (i.e., approximately 10–15 years later). In other words, when it comes to youths’

cravings for social attention, they are all gas pedal with no brakes.”

Says Dr. Carcillo: “In a national poll on Children’s Health conducted by the C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital, it was reported that 32% of children ages 7 to 9 use social media, and only 18% use no apps. With so many children on the internet and using social media,

WilmU Student Reports to United Nations Headquarters

In March, Wilmington University international student **ANNUM NASHRA** was a delegate at the United Nations for the 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. According to the U.N., the session's priority theme was innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Its review theme was "challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and empowering rural women and girls."

Nashra is from Dhaka, Bangladesh, but moved to Delaware to pursue her bachelor's in Business Analytics at WilmU, where she works as a Career Services assistant.

"Annum works earnestly to help our students navigate the available career resources in a friendly and compassionate way," says Career

Services Assistant Director **KIM PLUSCH**. "She certainly is a wonderful addition to our team."

Nashra took several undergraduate-level courses at the Independent University in Bangladesh and holds an A-level business and economics certification from the Androit International School in Bangladesh. (A-levels are internationally recognized qualifications required for entry into university courses and professional training programs.) She speaks four languages: Bengali, English, Hindi and Urdu (an Indic language like Hindi but written in Persian script), and has worked as an assistant language teacher in Bangladesh. In addition, she is the World Academy for the Future of Women project leader, and, in her spare time, she's a voiceover artist at The Tech Academy in Dhaka.

"The world needs to move at



Kim Plusch

a much faster pace to achieve the United Nations' sustainable goals," says Nashra. "We need to come up with urgent action plans, and we need collaboration and cooperation from institutions from around the world to do so." **WU**

—*Maria Hess*

Dr. Anthony Carcillo



it is critical that we inform the parents and children of ways to mitigate the dangers of social media."

The event was well attended, and participants were introduced to terms and concepts such as the importance of two-factor authentication, the dangers of sharing personally identifiable information, and how social media quizzes could be a form of social engineering, adds Dr. Carcillo. **WU**

—*Maria Hess*

A VISIONARY AMONG US

Every year, the Delaware ACE Women’s Network (DAWN) names “visionaries,” women who contribute positively to their institutions, communities, families, and careers — forward thinkers in higher education.

Wilmington University Professor and Center for Teaching Excellence Director **DR. ADRIENNE BEY** was named a 2023 DAWN Visionary.



When she received her award, Dr. Bey said she was motivated by family, people, and the human spirit. “I am always inspired by the grit and tenacity of a person’s ability to navigate obstacles and overcome challenges to achieve their goals and live their dreams.”

In her mind, great leaders are visionaries. “They see and forecast challenges and opportunities from all angles,” she said. “They see opportunities for success and groom people for that success.

Leaders are also people whom other people want to follow. Having a leadership title does not automatically make someone a leader.”

She adheres to the tenets of servant leadership, knowing when to serve, when to lead, and, she said, “when to do both at the same time.”

Leaders strive for excellence, she added. “No one is perfect, so it is unrealistic to think that every leader will achieve perfection in every endeavor. However, I do believe in the saying, ‘Always shoot for the moon because if you miss, you will still be among the stars.’”

According to its website, DAWN is committed to the advancement of women leaders in higher education. “For more than 25 years, DAWN has provided information and counsel to constituencies within the higher education community regarding policies, issues, education, and research that influence women’s equity, diversity, and advancement. DAWN provides national leadership in advancing women to executive positions on campus and serves as a national voice for women in higher education. Staff members also work in collaboration with associations and other groups in higher education on ways to improve the status of women.” **WU** —*Maria Hess*



Dr. Adrienne Bey





Dr. Hakim Stovall with Councilwoman Katherine Gilmore Richardson at Philadelphia's City Hall.

ALUMNUS DR. HAKIM STOVALL, a recent Doctorate of Prevention Science Program graduate, was awarded the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health's post-doctoral fellowship.

"I will be working with the gun violence prevention team to develop evidence-based strategies to help reduce risks," says Dr. Stovall, adding that his research will be conducted in the university's Division of Gun Violence Prevention in the Bloomberg School of Public

Health. "The Hopkins staff were impressed with the Wilmington University Prevention Science Program."

Dr. Stovall's WilmU dissertation also earned him the City of Philadelphia's Citizens Service Award, which he accepted from Philadelphia Councilwoman Katherine Gilmore Richardson.

As a subject-matter expert specializing in fatality review, Dr. Stovall has appeared on the television series "Fatal Attraction," offering crime scene analysis. **WU** —*Maria Hess*

With Wisdom and Experience

For 32 years, **DR. NANCY DOODY** has been part of the fiber at Wilmington University. She started as a secretary to the vice president for finance and soon learned that WilmU offers more than just a place to work.

“WilmU gave me a career path,” she says.

The school also provided ready access to education. While Dr. Doody pursued her bachelor’s degree in Human Resources, she worked in payroll administration. Completing her degree led to a position in HR. After earning a master’s in Human Resources Management at WilmU, she began teaching.

“Furthering my education was such an added bonus to working at the University,” she says.

In 2017, she earned a Doctorate of Business Administration. Her latest role is associate director at the Center for Teaching Excellence, where Dr. Doody is a liaison between WilmU and the people who teach at the school. That’s a natural fit, as many of her students attest to Dr. Doody’s excellence as an educator.

“A lot of instructors just say, ‘good job.’ Dr. Doody actually pointed out what I could’ve done better, or would say what I did right, or wrong, and give suggestions,” notes one student. “She also did this in her live meetings/classes where she would go over homework, upcoming assignments, quizzes, ensuring students are prepared.”

Dr. Doody empathizes with the needs of students, many of whom are



Dr. Nancy Doody

“I have always taken my classes while working full time. . . . I often tell students I started as a secretary and worked my way up through education.”

—Dr. Nancy Doody

working while attending WilmU to further their careers.

“I have always taken my classes while working full time. I understand what it is like,” she says. “I often tell students I started as a secretary and worked my way up through education.”

College of Business Dean **KATHY KENNEDY-RATAJACK** says Dr. Doody also benefits Human Resources students by facilitating a prep course

for students who want to take the certification exam.

“Nancy provides the personal touch to our students. In addition to adjunct teaching, she is also a lead for our SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management) program. She is attentive to their needs and helps students to know that they are important to WilmU and the College of Business,” she says.

Dr. Doody also volunteers her time and expertise, conducting a workshop at Delcastle High School on interviewing and writing resumes.

Another WilmU student appreciates that Dr. Doody gave students the opportunity to improve their grades by offering extra credit — and made sure live meetings were scheduled during times when students could fit them into their schedules.

Says the student, “She was always making herself available so students can reach her. The live meetings weren’t boring, and she asked the class their availability and time. That’s probably why every time there was a live class, there’d be at least 10 students because she would give us choices.”

Dr. Doody says enhancing access to courses is an integral part of connecting with students.

“I try to put myself in their place. There are work constraints, family constraints, even time zone constraints,” she says. “Being able to help students succeed makes me love my work even more.” **WU**

—Eileen Smith Dallabrida



A NEW DEAN

DR. TYLER WELLS, a collaborative, innovative, and decisive leader committed to student success, has been named dean of the College of Education and Liberal Arts. Starting as an adjunct in 2001 in the College of Education, Dr. Wells became chair of the Office of Clinical Studies in 2012, then was named director of Teacher Preparation, Community Outreach, and Partnerships. A significant accomplishment includes developing and implementing the University's Immersive Year-Long Residency Program, which received funding or grants from the Delaware Department of Education and the National Center for Teacher Residencies. Dr. Wells has led numerous activities supporting teacher development, recruitment strategies, and partnerships, and his work is having a positive

impact on the teacher shortage crisis in Delaware. He has been an educator for nearly 30 years and is experienced in early childhood education and public school elementary teaching and administration. Dr. Wells has served on several professional committees and boards, developed extensive contacts with the Delaware Department of Education, and built meaningful relationships with educators statewide. He holds an Ed.D. in Higher Education Leadership and Innovation from Wilmington University.

DR. JOHN GRAY stepped down as dean of the college and is serving as director of Special Academic Projects for a brief period before retiring from the University. He is helping to develop a Center for Doctoral Studies while supporting Dr. Wells in his new role. **WU** —*Maria Hess*

From Dreamer to Restaurateur

For 20 years, **TOMEKA CRAWFORD** worked in banking, while dreaming of opening her own restaurant.

“I knew that I needed an education if I was going to realize my dream,” she recalls.

That was a tall order for the Kent County woman, who already was working full time and raising a family. Then she discovered Wilmington University, which offered her the opportunity to take classes online, as well as in person at WilmU’s Dover Campus and Dover Air Force Base.

“Wilmington University worked hand in glove with me. The flexibility made it easy for me to say yes,” Crawford says.

In 2018, she earned a bachelor’s degree in Organizational Leadership from the College of Business. Crawford says her college experience provided her with the skills and knowledge to grow her fledging side gig as a vendor at a farmer’s market to Tomeka’s Homestyle Eatery, a brick-and-mortar soul food restaurant and catering business on East Lebanon Road in Dover.

“I learned how to organize, plan, and define a business. Accounting class taught me how to create a balance sheet,” she says.

Today, Tomeka’s Homestyle Eatery is thriving. Crawford says the organizational skills she learned at WilmU helped her enhance the flow from the front of the house to the back of the house. To adhere to COVID-19 social-distancing mandates, she refined her business plan to serving cafeteria-style, a format she decided to retain.

“I originally planned to offer table service, but cafeteria-style works much better for us,” she says.

She defined her brand with an emphasis on serving food with love and cooking with fresh ingredients.

“We cut up our own yams. It’s all fresh, not processed food,” she says.

She’s living her dream as an entrepreneur and is sharing the message that a good education helps dreams come true.

“As my children see me rise up, it’s inspiration for them,” she says. “I would not be as successful as I am without my Wilmington University education.” **WU** —Eileen Smith Dallabrida

“I learned how to organize, plan, and define a business.”

—Tomeka Crawford



Tomeka Crawford



Meet Our Engagement Counselors

Formerly called the University Information Center (UIC), the new Student Engagement Center follows WilmU's long tradition of offering exceptional student service. The center is located at New Castle's Doberstein Admissions Center (DAC), but students' needs are met virtually as well. **MEET THE COUNSELORS.** [WU](#)

Front row, from left: Dr. Lauren Havens, Kristine Henzy (frontline support), Aameena DiPersio, Fran Panarello (Student Engagement Center coordinator), Dawn Jaquette, Alexis Benzinger, Melany Golson, Shannon Hopkins (Student Engagement Services manager)

Back Row, from left: Sebastian Sabocor, Trisha Jones, Tom Hurd (Student Engagement Center director), Shai Henry, Dr. Katie Ellis (Student Engagement Services director), Gary Mayo, Jonathan Mallory, Kelli Eldreth

Not pictured: Jesse Schnatterer, Robin Foraker, Theresa Lord, Rachel Rost





Remembering Bill Smith



PUBLIC SERVICES LIBRARIAN AND ASSOCIATE Professor **WILLIAM L. SMITH II** devoted over 28 years to the Wilmington University Library. He began his career in March of 1994 as a temporary librarian charged with cataloging a collection of books purchased by the University from the closed Cushing College in Massachusetts. This work eventually resulted in Smith's recognition as Librarian of the Year by the Delaware Library Association.

As a public services librarian, Smith embodied the culture of Wilmington University regarding student services, so he always put students first. His relationship with them was that of mentor, cheerleader, teacher and dedicated listener. His name is mentioned in many dissertations for his assistance to doctoral students. In a library newsletter article from the Fall of 2008, when Smith was asked what he liked best about working in the library, he listed his relationships with students, faculty and staff.

Smith was also a loyal fan of the Wilmington University men's and women's basketball teams. He was often seen cheering on the sidelines. As a colleague, he took the time to connect with everyone, whether it be about shared favorite music (especially ABBA), musicals (Mamma Mia), TV shows (Star Trek), or sports teams (Women's UConn basketball), and his compassion for animals. His loss is felt throughout the Wilmington University community. So many students and colleagues sought out his friendly face, wise advice, and quick wit. Smith passed away on Nov. 24, 2022. He was 73.

The Bill Smith Library Research & Writing Award builds on this colleague's dedication and hard work. It will seek to cultivate information literacy by connecting the library research experience with the reading and writing experience at Wilmington University. **WU**

—Jim McCloskey

If you'd like to honor Bill Smith, please consider making a memorial gift at wilmu.edu/give/library.



Jessica Davenport uses a headpiece and a magnetic sticker that nurses place on her nose. The sticker communicates with her iPad, which serves as Davenport's speaking mechanism and enables her to spell out words.

WITH HOPE, OPTIMISM AND CONFIDENCE

| BY MARIA HESS |



RECENT GRADUATE **JESSICA DAVENPORT** REFUSES TO LET HER DISABILITY IMPACT HER SUCCESS.

JESSICA DAVENPORT thinks that society undervalues people with disabilities, and she's trying to change that. "Unfortunately," she says, "we have to constantly prove society wrong."

At 19, Davenport suffered a massive stroke from a combination of birth control pills, smoking, a clotting disorder, and a hole in her heart. As a result, she suffers from paraplegia and has extremely limited use of her body. She is in a wheelchair and is unable to talk.

| PHOTOS BY SUSAN L. GREGG |

Despite her disability, Davenport recently earned her B.S. in Health Sciences at WilmU, and will accept her diploma in June. During her college years, she published a book and interned with the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) in its Division of Developmental Disabilities Services

(DDDS). The state allowed her to work with a team to help develop a curriculum for a Direct Support Professional Academy in Delaware — the first in the state — in partnership with RCM of Washington, Inc. The company has already developed similar academies in Washington, D.C., Tennessee and Ohio.

“This was actually my second internship with Wilmington University,” says Davenport, who replies via her speech-generating device. (Her first internship was at Resources for Independent Living, Inc., which provides services to individuals with severe disabilities, including unserved and underserved popula-



tions.) “I hadn’t worked for many years and wanted to get the most experience possible. Honestly, when DDDS contacted me, I cried. I was so excited. I joked with my boyfriend, ‘They must really be desperate,’ and he said, ‘No, they see potential.’”

DR. ANGELA HERMAN, WilmU’s chair of Health Sciences in the

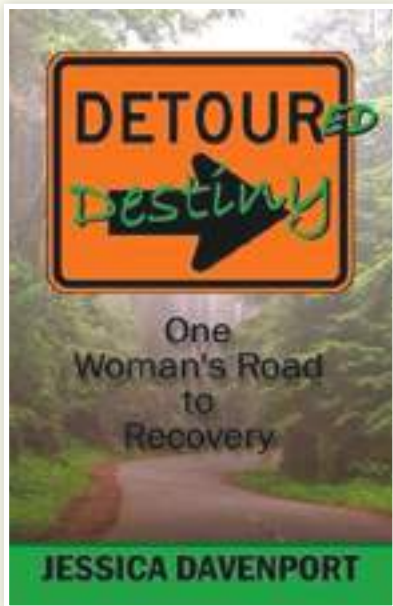
College of Health Professions and Natural Sciences, saw the same potential. “Jessica was very motivated and never let her disability define her at all,” she says.

To which Davenport replies, “I say that about myself, but it feels good knowing that somebody else sees it.”

Davenport’s 2018 book, “Detoured Destiny, One Woman’s Road to Recovery,” chronicles her physical challenges, bouts of self-doubt, and triumphs. But that’s just one tool in her advocacy arsenal. She’s a champion for people with disabilities and is committed to helping women



Davenport works with Jennifer Tozer, a manager at the Division of Developmental Services.



learn more about birth control to avoid an issue that nearly killed her.

“I wrote it because I didn’t want anyone to go through what I did,” she says, suspecting that while several factors contributed to her stroke, many women don’t realize the dangers of smoking while on birth control.

Jefferson Health’s website reports that “blood vessels in smokers can become hard and restricted. Oral contraceptives also affect blood flow as they alter hormone levels. That change in the body’s hormonal makeup thickens the blood and can cause blood clots in the legs, lungs, and veins of the brain. The combination of restricted blood vessels from smoking and thicker blood from birth control increases the risk of cardiovascular issues like strokes or heart attacks.”

The stroke devastated Davenport, forcing her to question everything she knew about life — and where hers was headed. That is until she met a woman with a brain injury who had found a job working with other people with disabilities.

“I remember telling my mom how cool that was,” says Davenport. “This woman wasn’t letting anyone tell her she couldn’t do something. I knew disabled people could work,

but I hadn’t seen stroke survivors work. I didn’t grow up around many people with disabilities and didn’t become disabled until 19, so meeting her was truly inspiring.”

Then came college, a challenging venture for those who are able-bodied and often arduous for those who aren’t. “Going back to school after a disability is extremely hard,” says Davenport. “The first few classes I took, I cried to everybody around me, saying, ‘I can’t do this.’”

Assignments that some students did with relative ease were complex for her. “When I hear able-bodied people complain about writing papers or doing homework, I chuckle and think, ‘Really? Try writing a three-page paper in APA format in a week the way I do.’”

Davenport used a headpiece and

a magnetic sticker, which nurses placed on her nose. The sticker communicated with Davenport’s iPad. That served as her speaking mechanism and enabled her to spell out words. Speech-generating devices like this address the needs of stroke victims, assisting them in communicating thoughts by electronic voice generation.

“I honestly cannot imagine how she did all the papers this program requires,” says Dr. Herman, “but it was inspirational to see just the same.”

It’s unclear whether writing in APA (American Psychological Association) format was more challenging because of her disability. Davenport is not alone in her ambivalence toward APA. It’s simply a writing style that college students



must learn. And like writing in general, some become proficient while others struggle.

According to the Stroke Foundation, one in three stroke survivors experience communication struggles. Memory, thinking and judgment are affected, and it can be hard to understand or speak complex sentences.

Davenport thrived, nonetheless. “She has so much perseverance and gumption,” says **CHRISTYN RUDOLF**, who manages WilmU’s Office of Student Accessibility Services. “Jessica found a way to educate herself. She found a way to share her story. She found a way to be an advocate. She found her independence.”

And, Rudolf adds, Davenport is a member of Delta Alpha Pi, an international honor society established to distinguish students who have attained superior academic records while managing personal setbacks.

Davenport’s academic success inspired her WilmU faculty, all of whom created an inclusive environment in which all students could succeed. That included Dr. Herman, who had brainstormed several other prospective roles with Davenport before she landed the DHSS internship.

“The opportunities for people with disabilities are always increasing in health care,” says Dr. Herman. “There is such a great need for so many hands to help others that we are finding ways to share the workload that did not exist in the past. For example, consider all the virtual health care that’s available now. Someone with a physical disability could work from home easily as a patient navigator or virtual tech assistant. The opportunities are less, of course, but I think diligent students like Jessica, partnered with universities that are truly committed to helping them achieve their career goals, can ideally be effective in working together to find jobs for them.”

Davenport had searched for a



*Christyn Rudolf,
manager of Student
Accessibility
Services*

university that provided individual attention. “My experience was great, and the faculty cared that you learned and earned good grades. I always recommend WilmU to friends,” she says, adding that the Office of Student Accessibility Services was incredible.

“I can’t think of anyone I know who has overcome so much to reach her goals and dreams,” says Rudolf. “And she does it all with such positive energy and a smile on her face. It makes my heart sing that Jessica has gotten to the place she has.”

GETTING ON WITH IT

Davenport chose self-care instead of self-pity. She has her degree. She just wants to get on with it.

“Jessica has been invited for a second internship at DHSS to continue helping with the DSP Academy project, which is very exciting for Delaware,” says Dr. Herman. “She can also gain exposure to other business units within the state. We are all so proud of her.”

As is **C. RENÉE SETTLES-BEAN**, Davenport’s site supervisor at DHSS. “Had we been speaking about this 20 years ago, when technology wasn’t

as advanced, it may have been a different story,” she says. “But given modern accommodations, along with who Jessica is as a person, her mind, humanities acumen, and values, I believe she can do anything she wants.”

If Davenport wants to support people with disabilities and help them find their voices, she can do that, too, adds Settles-Bean. “If we are to embrace an inclusive workspace, then absolutely she has what it takes to succeed. She has options, as we all do; it’s just that her approach will be different.”

American author and educator **HELEN KELLER**, who was blind and deaf, dedicated her life to advocating for the rights of people with disabilities. She said, “Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.”

Davenport has both. It’s about the message: Challenges can stop you or inspire you. In 10 years, she says, “I want to be completely experienced in a career that has been a dream for years.”

Given her tenacity, it’s more than a dream. It’s a viable future. **WU**



These volunteers and alums bring joy to children who haven't known much of it.

From left: Ashley Torbert, Brooke Mitchell, Emily Christianson, Albee Mendoza, Deonika White, Jenna Hanes, Jenn Bones, Susan Cordle, Alexis Nelson

Playtime *With* Purpose

Entertaining children and families facing health challenges brings joy to these WilmU alumnae.


— | BY BOB YEARICK | —





PHOTO BY SHANNON RITTER PHOTOGRAPHY





As leaders of Pursuit For Peace, a Dover-based nonprofit, **CAITLYN KUHN** and **LAUREN FORAKER** have brought joy to thousands of children and families facing medical challenges over the past six years.

Dressing as characters from fairy tales, the Wilmington University alumnae and other PFP members sing, dance, read, do crafts, and otherwise entertain what the organization calls Medically Vulnerable People (MVPs).

But to hear Kuhn, Foraker, and other group members tell it, they derive almost as much pleasure from their efforts as the children do.

“It’s like a full-time job, but really it’s like full-time playtime because we all love what we’re able to do for the kids,” Foraker says.

Member **JEAN BONES**, also a WilmU alum, says: “It’s so much more than dressing up; it’s providing

the gift of magic and joy to the ones who need it most.”

“It’s such a blessing to be part of,” says **BROOKE MITCHELL**, vice president of PFP and another University graduate. “One could say that it’s a way for us volunteers to serve others, but truly, this organization serves its volunteers just as much by being the most impactful nonprofit I have ever experienced.

“For me, volunteering with Pursuit For Peace has been transformative.”

Founded by Kuhn in 2017, PFP sprang from a trauma she faced as a teenager. While practicing with the Caesar Rodney High School soccer

team in Camden, Delaware, she says, “I noticed this growth that popped up on the inside of my leg. The trainer wrapped it, but it didn’t get better, and after a couple of days, my parents took me to a doctor. He immediately said it was a tumor. I went for an MRI that night, and the next day we were told that it was most likely cancer and I most likely was going to lose my leg.”

Luckily, Kuhn’s parents took her to Nemours Children’s Hospital in Wilmington for a second opinion. “It turned out to be a mass that wasn’t cancerous, and I ended up having it removed a couple years later before I



Pursuit
For Pe



LUIS DANIEL PHOTOGRAPHY

Founders Lauren Foraker, left,
and Caitlyn Kuhn



graduated high school, and it's been fine ever since," she says. "But it was a scare."

At the hospital, she encountered young patients fighting for their lives. "It was truly heartbreaking seeing the kids that couldn't have a quick fix like me," she says. "I could see how lonely and hard any type of illness can be for a child."

That memory stayed with her into adulthood. Then, a few years ago, she says, "I stumbled upon a video of a college group dressing and visiting these children that had vulnerabilities, and something in me sparked into motion. I knew I needed to do the same type of work in Delaware. I set out to find sponsors that could catch the vision and volunteers with common interests, and we hit the ground running. We never looked back once we started."

Initiated as a ministry in 2016 at Calvary Church in Dover, Pursuit For Peace was incorporated in 2018. That's when Foraker joined the organization, and she and Kuhn discovered that they had much in common.

Both share a background in music and theater. Kuhn, who began performing in church as a child, has been a singer, dancer and director in community musical theater and has given acting lessons.

Foraker also has an extensive theater background, including classical guitar and vocal performances, as well as coaching and mentoring other performers.

And, of course, they share a WilmU education. Kuhn earned a bachelor's degree in Psychology in 2016 from the University, and in 2020 received a master's from Liberty University in Human Services Counseling with a focus on Crisis and Trauma.

Foraker, who is chair of Media and Press for PFP, got a bachelor's in Communication & Media Studies from WilmU in 2019, and is working on a master's in Management, Organizational Leadership, which

she expects to complete next year.

Both took a hybrid of online and in-person courses. "I had an amazing experience there," Kuhn says. "The classroom portion was really awesome. It was collaborative, and I developed really good relationships with the teachers and the students, and we had really good discussions."

Foraker's experience was similar. "I was able to thrive and I gained many skills in collaborating both in-person and online, and I've been able to parlay that into pretty much every working environment I've embarked

on since then," she says.

She also served as a peer mentor and became the social media manager for the Criminal Justice Association. In addition, Foraker received the Trustees Award for Service.

Kuhn, Foraker, Bones, and Mitchell aren't the only WilmU alumnae in PFP. Kuhn says nearly a third of the 30 or so members are either graduates of the University or currently enrolled.

"It's like Wildcat nation here," she says.

Sponsors, grants, and an annual

Nearly a third of the 30 or so members are either graduates of the University or currently enrolled.





PFP performers, which include princesses and a superhero resembling Wonder Woman, never break character once they arrive at an event.

gala fund the nonprofit. In 2022, the group acquired a 1,000-square-foot building in Dover as its headquarters, thanks to a \$10,000 grant from the Delaware Community Foundation.

YOLANDA RUSHDAN, senior program officer at DCF, says the grant came from the foundation's COVID-19 Strategic Response Fund, which supported efforts that helped the community recover from the pandemic.

"Pursuit For Peace has found a very unique way to bring joy to families and children who are struggling with illness," Rushdan says. "They're able to provide an experience that helps lift spirits and provide relief and encouragement to the families when they need it most."

In its brief history, PCP has worked with many groups and organizations, including Nemours Children's Hospital, Ronald McDonald House

of Delaware, Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation, the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Bayhealth Medical Group, Down Syndrome Association of Delaware, Delaware State Police, and local businesses.

One of PFP's early appearances was at Grace Presbyterian Church in Dover for Arise Delaware (now Embrace), an organization focusing on those with disabilities. Several PFP "princesses" attended Embrace's Respite night, a monthly event for children.

Says **PAIGE BAIONE**, who was executive director of Arise at the time of the event: "After parents dropped off the kids, six or seven Pursuit For Peace princesses performed songs and dances, then played and interacted with them.

"The kids loved them. They were completely taken up in the magic of the princesses. They knew the songs

and sang along and got such a kick out of dancing with them. It was such a fun evening for everyone."

Kuhn explains that PFP performers, which include princesses and a superhero resembling Wonder Woman, never break character once they arrive at an event. "Our costumes come from a company in China," she says, "and are designed to accommodate most body types, which makes it much easier to transition from one character to another."

Last February, Kuhn, her husband and their 1- and 2-year-old daughters moved from Delaware to Portsmouth, New Hampshire. She quickly joined a church, recruited two other women there, and started a second PFP chapter. There's a third chapter in Washington D.C., and Kuhn says she speaks to the leader of that chapter every week.

Foraker, meanwhile, formed her own consulting firm, Leaderly Consulting Group LLC, in March. She consults with clients on leadership, behavioral analysis, communications, and personal growth. Despite the demands of her startup business, she plans to maintain the same level of involvement with PFP.

"It's such a passion," she says. "Really a collective calling that we all have, to be able to serve the least of these. We all love what we're able to do."

Kuhn is a stay-at-home mom, but she devotes many hours each week to PFP. "My mind is continuously reckoning with what can we do better, what's our next event, what costumes need repairs," she says.

Establishing more chapters is a primary goal.

"I would love for our nonprofit to take off," she says. "We have three chapters in five years, so I would like to have three more in the next five years. I would love to continue growing and making a difference throughout the nation." **WU**



On March 20, 2023, **DEMETRICA TODD-RUIZ MADE HISTORY AS THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE APPOINTED IN SALEM COUNTY, NEW JERSEY.**

The confirmation by the New Jersey Senate marked a milestone in her journey to the bench — one that exemplifies the Wilmington University mission of excellence, leadership, and service.



A Distinguished Journey to the Bench

— | BY ROBIN WEINSTEIN | —

TODD-RUIZ has a long and distinguished career in the legal profession, beginning with her studies at Widener University, where she earned her bachelor's degree in Business Administration and a master's in Taxation. She then earned her J.D. at Rutgers Law School, gaining additional skills and knowledge necessary to make a real difference in her community.

Growing up in Cumberland County, New Jersey, Todd-Ruiz had humble beginnings, but her strong work ethic and drive propelled her forward. After graduating from Bridgeton High School in 1991, she set out to achieve her dreams. She served as a public defender, prosecutor, and eventually the head prosecutor for the City of Bridgeton.

— | PHOTOS BY SUSAN L. GREGG | —



Chief Judge Demetrica Todd-Ruiz



“Success is not just about achieving a particular goal but about doing your absolute best in whatever you do. Whatever your path, **REMEMBER TO WORK HARD, STAY FOCUSED, AND ALWAYS BE OPEN TO LEARNING AND GROWING.**” —Demetrica Todd-Ruiz



“Being the product of public education, public housing, and public assistance, I am proud to say that my upbringing instilled in me the importance of hard work and determination,” says Todd-Ruiz. “My parents always encouraged me to soar, even if that first meant learning how to crawl. They taught me that mistakes did not define me and that failure was just a stepping stone to success. These values have guided me throughout my career, and I hope to inspire others to persevere and reach for their dreams, no matter where they come from.”

In 2017, Todd-Ruiz achieved a historic milestone by becoming the first African American woman to serve on the Vineland bench. She continued to break barriers by also working as a municipal judge in Salem in 2018 and Deptford Township in 2019. Her trailblazing journey culminated in 2023, when she made history again by being appointed the first African American female Superior Court judge in Salem County, solidifying her place in the annals of legal history.

Throughout her career, Todd-Ruiz has demonstrated a deep commitment

to serving her community, both in and out of the courtroom. She has been an active member of numerous community organizations, including the Bridgeton Police Athletic League, Seabrook House, and Cumberland County Habitat for Humanity Board. She has also served on the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Advisory Council, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Gloucester and Camden Counties Board, United Way of Greater Cumberland County Board, Pittsgrove Township Recreation Committee, and the Cumberland County Empowerment Zone Corporation Advisory Council.

In addition to her community service, Todd-Ruiz has also been an influential educator, sharing her knowledge and expertise with Wilmington University students. Since 2016, she has been an adjunct faculty member in the Human Resource Management program in the College of Business, where she has helped shape the next generation of HR professionals. She also served on the Human Resource program’s advisory council, providing guidance and insight into the industry. She

taught for WilmU’s College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

College of Business Dean **DR. KATHY KENNEDY-RATAJACK** praised Judge Todd-Ruiz’s work at WilmU and her influence on its students. “Judge Todd-Ruiz is an extraordinary individual who has motivated numerous students through her unwavering commitment to justice and hard work,” says Dr. Kennedy-Ratajack. “She serves as a shining example to all students who aspire to positively impact the world, and we appreciate her contributions to our institution and society at large.”

Todd-Ruiz’s dedication to education has been recognized by her students, who have praised her teaching methods and her ability to motivate them to do their best. As one student noted, “She had incorporated various methods of teaching that help to ensure that the students learn the material in which she is very knowledgeable.” Another student said, “She helped me improve the quality of my work.” Todd-Ruiz’s impact on her students extends far beyond the classroom. She has inspired many to pursue their dreams



Todd-Ruiz's journey from public defender to chief judge has been inspirational to many.

and make a positive difference in their communities.

While Todd-Ruiz's appointment to the Superior Court bench means she can no longer teach at the University, she will continue to be an essential member of the WilmU family. As a guest lecturer and member of the Human Resource Management Program Advisory Committee, she will continue to share her knowledge and expertise with students and faculty, helping to ensure that the university remains a leader in the field of education.

"My advice to students is to seek

a mentor and pursue a career that you are truly passionate about," says Todd-Ruiz. "Find someone who can guide you, provide feedback, and help you navigate the challenges that come with achieving your dreams. It's also important to remember that success is not just about achieving a particular goal but about doing your absolute best in whatever you do. Whatever your path, remember to work hard, stay focused, and always be open to learning and growing."

Todd-Ruiz's career personifies what can be achieved through hard work, dedication, and a commitment

to excellence. As the first African American female Superior Court Judge in Salem County, she has broken down barriers and opened doors for others to follow in her footsteps. Her impact on the legal profession and her community will be felt for years to come.

If you asked Todd-Ruiz about her personal legacy, she'd say it would have nothing to do with titles or positions. Instead, she hopes to be remembered as someone who greeted others with a smile, treated everyone with kindness and respect, and always gave her best effort. **WU**

Alumnus Wilfredo Campos,
a native of Puerto Rico, is Wilmington's first
Latino police chief.

Hail to a Trailblazing Chief

BY BOB YEARICK

In January, **CAPT. WILFREDO CAMPOS** became the first person of Hispanic descent to be named Wilmington chief of police.

A significant milestone, to be sure. But something almost equally remarkable was overshadowed in the extensive media coverage that followed that announcement: According to **MAYOR MIKE PURZYCKI**, the other candidates for the position said that if they were not chosen, they hoped Capt. Campos would get the job.

This is a phenomenon that, if not unique, is at least extremely unusual in the annals of the working world. Obviously, it speaks to the high regard in which the Wilmington University alumnus is held by his colleagues.

Campos earned that respect during 27 years with the Wilmington Police



Department as he moved through various assignments and ranks. He has served in several divisions in the department, including Uniform Services, Community Policing, Criminal Investigation, and Human Resources. He also was a detective, assigned to a Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Task Force.

A native of Puerto Rico, Campos and his mother, sister and brother moved to Wilmington when he was 8 years old. He grew up on the West Side and attended Thomas McKean High School, where he played shortstop on the baseball team.

PHOTOS BY SUSAN L. GREGG



Capt. Wilfredo Campos

After graduating from McKean and attending Delaware Technical Community College for one semester, he was still unsure about his career direction. But there was a military heritage in his family — his father served 17 years in the Army and his grandfather was a Korean War veteran — so he decided to enlist in the Army Reserve. He went to basic training in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, then served four months of active duty.

His military service proved to be a turning point. The Army, Campos says, provided mentoring, structure and guidance. “When I came back, I had a different mindset, and I decided I wanted to go into some type of law enforcement. And what better way to do that than in your own city’s police department.”

The Wilmington Police Department wasn’t hiring at that point, so he took a job at DART. Meanwhile, his father-in-law, **RAFAEL COLLAZO**, a master corporal with the WPD (now retired), gave Campos the condensed version on police work.

“He told me about the job; told me the great things about it and some of the things that are not so great, such as working nights, missing out on birthdays, working holidays, things like that.”

When the WPD began hiring again, Campos applied, was accepted, graduated from the 84th Wilmington Police Academy in 1996, and began patrolling the streets of Wilmington. Like many in law enforcement, he has never fired his weapon, although he says he has drawn it a few times.

He soon recognized the need to further his education, so he went back to DelTech and earned an associate degree in Criminal Justice in 2003. Then he decided to pursue his bachelor’s degree at WilmU, enrolling in the Criminal Justice Program in 2006.

By this time, Campos had risen to the rank of corporal in the Detective Division, and he and his wife, **DIANA**,

had two young children. So, he says, “I was a full-time police officer, full-time dad and full-time student.”

Taking classes at night, he graduated in 2008.

“It was a tough two years,” he says, “but I enjoyed it. I enjoyed the interaction with the instructors and the other students. A lot of the instructors had real life experience in the field they were teaching.

“And I liked the small class size. Most of the students were just like me, working-class individuals who were going back to enhance their education. I got to interact with people from different walks of life and different professions — kind of got to share my profession and learn from them also.”

Campos has continued his professional education. He’s a graduate of the Senior Management Institute of Policing sponsored by the nationally renowned Police Executive Research Forum, and he is a Polygraph Examiner Professional graduate of the Academy for Scientific Investigative Training in Philadelphia.

While honing his professional skills, Campos also recognizes the importance of police officers being involved with the community. He serves on the board of West Side Family Healthcare and Los Jardines Senior Housing, and he makes every effort to attend police-sponsored activities in the city. That includes the monthly Community Resource Fairs, which bring together police officers and several dozen partners to extend resources to residents, and the Community Outreach Walks — weekly walks with police officers along with public health and social service providers.

His empathy for those in need, he says, has its origin in the aftermath of a fire that displaced his family when he was 12.

As he explained on the WPD website following his appointment as chief: “A house fire destroyed our

former home at 6th and Broom streets. We were fortunate to be taken in by a local family, who helped ensure we were never homeless. The kindness of those neighbors and our community has always stuck with me, and I have tried to pay that forward by helping others in my role as a police officer.

“Throughout our city, there are many who are suffering — whether due to drug or substance abuse or dependency issues, mental health needs, or poverty — and we are in a unique position to be able to reach out and help them. Often, it is not a traditional law enforcement response that can best lift these neighbors, but rather it is helping to connect them with the resources and services that can get them back on their feet. I look forward to exploring more ways that our officers can help make these connections.”

In appointing Campos, Mayor Mike Purzycki made note of the new chief’s penchant for getting involved in the community. “His decades-long knowledge and understanding of city neighborhoods and his interactions with city residents will serve him well as he takes command of an outstanding police department,” the mayor said.

As reported in the Wilmington News Journal, Hispanic leaders and community members were pleased with the appointment. “This is huge, and I am ecstatic,” Councilperson-At-Large **MARIA CABRERA** said. “Wilfredo is a good person; he gets along well with people and he’s fair. I think he’s going to get the respect from within that the chief should get.”

Campos succeeds **ROBERT TRACY**, who had been chief since Purzycki took office in 2017 and last year moved on to lead the St. Louis Police Department. During most of Tracy’s tenure, gun violence in the city rose markedly, reaching record levels in 2021 before dropping dramatically last year. In 2022, the WPD recorded a 58% reduction in murders, a 30% reduction in shooting incidents, and



“I want to represent everyone well — the entire city and the police department.” —*Capt. Wilfredo Campos*

significant decreases in most major crime categories.

As Wilmington’s 33rd chief of police, Campos says his first objective is to build on those accomplishments. He credits the 300-plus men and women of the WPD for their work in reducing crime, and he says they will continue to employ evidence-based crime reduction strategies such as CompStat and Group Violence Intervention.

CompStat Methodology Crime reporting involves statistical analysis and information sharing that is now a central component of modern policing. Group Violence Intervention

is aimed at preventing crime, replacing enforcement with deterrence, and fostering stronger relationships between law enforcement professionals and the people they serve.

The 50-year-old Campos well knows the challenges facing today’s police officers, who are constantly scrutinized in social media, their actions recorded on cell phones and body cameras. And he welcomes all of it.

“Police work evolves, and we have to evolve with it,” he says. “When you do the right thing a hundred percent of the time, there’s no need to worry about a body camera or somebody

filming you. It’s just another tool for us to use, and it’s welcome. It holds everyone accountable, not just police officers but also the public.”

In accepting the job, he stated that he’s both humbled and proud to be the city’s first Hispanic police chief. But he says he feels no pressure because of that distinction. “I want to represent everyone well — the entire city and the police department.”

Though soft-spoken, Campos exudes an unmistakable confidence in his ability to lead the WPD. “I’ve been a policeman now for 27 years,” he says, “so I know my job, and police work is a passion for me.” **WU**

SPORTS

ALL STORIES BY BOB YEARICK



Scott Borgmann was elected to the NCAA Division II National Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, representing the Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference at the national level.

ADVOCATING FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES

Sophomore pitcher represents CACC on national committee

These are exciting and transformative times in college athletics. Such issues as the transfer portal, name, image and likeness (NIL), and gender equity are changing the landscape of NCAA sports while empowering student-athletes.

And sophomore **SCOTT BORGMANN JR.**, a promising pitcher on the Wilmington University baseball team, finds himself in the midst of it all.

Last March, Borgmann was elected to the NCAA Division II National Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), representing the Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference (CACC) at the national level. He is the first Wilmington University student-athlete to serve on the committee.

With 24 members, the SAAC is the primary governance arm representing student-athlete interests in Division II affairs. Members serve as student-athlete liaisons who monitor and discuss happenings on campuses, within conference, and at the national level.

Borgmann, an excellent student and one of four baseball players on WilmU's SAAC, was notified about his nomination to the national committee by his head coach, **BRIAN AUGUST**, during practice in February. August and the rest of his staff enthusiastically endorsed the idea, telling Borgmann that serving on the committee would be a terrific opportunity for him to grow as a student-athlete while making valuable connections.

Calling it "an honor to represent and serve the CACC," Borgmann says, "I'm very passionate about providing a voice for collegiate student-athletes and I want to make a positive difference for our division. I know this leadership role is going to come with challenges, but I'm ready to work with my fellow student-athletes to take them on."

"We are tremendously excited that Scott will have a chance to represent Wilmington University and our Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference on the NCAA National SAAC," says Athletic Director **DR. STEFANIE WHITBY**. "He will have a chance to collaborate with student-athlete leaders from across the country and top NCAA administration. There are a lot of significant changes taking place right now in collegiate sports and Scott will have a first-row seat to these important conversations."

In April, Borgmann attended his first meeting — for

Division II East Region schools — in Pittsburgh. Some 200 student-athletes and faculty members attended, he says. Meetings are scheduled throughout the year in such cities as Indianapolis, Atlanta, Phoenix, and Nashville, culminating with the annual NCAA Convention in January in San Antonio. The NCAA covers all travel expenses and hotel accommodations.

While his committee work has been demanding, it also has enabled the Sports Management major to get a solid understanding of the increasingly complex rules governing college athletics. And, as his coaches predicted, he has established important connections. **CHARLIE BAKER**, who became NCAA president in March, was among the many people he met during the five-day Pittsburgh event.

"In today's world," says Borgmann, "relationships and connections are what lead to opportunities. I plan to be a professional baseball scout, and being in this position and being able to learn from some of the best in the business will help tremendously for when I become a scout."

As a freshman in 2022, the graduate of Calvert Hall College High School, in Towson, Maryland, appeared in eight games on the mound for the Wildcats, with one start. Pitching 17 innings, he was 2-1, and struck out 14 batters. At the plate, he went 6-for-17, with three doubles and three RBIs.

Borgmann sat out last season as a result of Tommy John surgery, but August is counting on the 6-0, 185-pound right-hander to be a regular in the Wildcat pitching rotation this fall. "Scott is one of our better pitchers," August says, "and he's a leader both on and off the field. He's truly an ideal student-athlete."

Now in his 19th year as the Wildcat skipper, August was named CACC Coach of the Year for the third time in 2022 as he led WilmU to victory in the CACC Tournament for the ninth time since 2007.

"He's easily the best coach I've ever had when it comes to baseball knowledge and relating to a player, because he was a good player himself," Borgmann says. "I'm a big proponent of being pushed every day, and he pushes his guys and makes them tough. He prepares you for life, because life is tough."

But, he adds, "I love Aug and I know he loves me." WU

GOING THE DISTANCE

Given all the signs in his back story, it's surprising that it took **KEITH JONES** so long to arrive at Wilmington University.

To start with, says the school's longtime cross country coach, "I'm about as local as you can get."

True. He grew up in New Castle — Penn Acres, to be exact — and his mother still lives just a couple of streets south of the WilmU campus. "Sometimes I invite recruits to her house for dinner," Jones says. "We get a big laugh out of it."

What's more, long before Keith was born, his late father, Ken, was a bellhop in the early-1960s at the Tour Inn Motor Court on DuPont Highway — which would become the original location of Wilmington College in 1968.

Jones' pre-WilmU résumé also includes stints as track and cross country coach at several Delaware high schools, including Ursuline Academy, where he coached indoor track along with Stefanie Scalessa — the future **DR. STEFANIE WHITBY**, WilmU's current director of Athletics.

But it wasn't until 1996 that Jones himself arrived on campus — as an adjunct instructor. A 1985 graduate of St. Mark's High School, where he was a four-year letterman in outdoor track and cross country, he held a bachelor's in Psychology and a master's in Physical Education with a concentration in Sport Psychology from the University of Delaware.

It was his belief in the role of psychology in athletics that brought him to WilmU. In 1995, he designed a course on the subject and pitched

Keith Jones is the University's longest-tenured coach, as well as one of the most successful.

it to the University's administration. It was approved, and Jones taught the course every spring for 25 years. Among his first students were Associate Athletic Director **ERIN HARVEY** and Vice President of Student Affairs and Alumni Relations **DR. TINA BARKSDALE** (then **TINA SCOTT**).

A few years later, the hyper-energetic Jones — who was competing in road races in Wilmington and Philadelphia — took a look at WilmU's sports programs and noticed that cross country was not among them. So he suggested that the University sponsor a team.

Jones reasoned that cross country is a relatively inexpensive sport, and the school's booming enrollment might include some promising runners. Plus, he wanted to coach the team. "I took a shot," he says.

In May of 2001, the Athletic Department added a cross country program, to begin that fall. "So I only had that summer to recruit a team," Jones says. When describing that period, he sometimes resorts to humorous hyperbole: "I would go around campus and if people were walking without a limp I'd tap them on shoulder and say, 'Hey, would you like to run?'"

"I got five guys and two girls that first year," he says. "Two of the guys were ex-Salesianum football players who had no intention of running. But

we got through that first season."

Twenty-two years later and counting, he is the University's longest-tenured coach, as well as one of the most successful. His men's teams won the Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference (CACC) championship in 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2018 and 2019, and he was named CACC Men's Coach of the Year in 2012, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2018 and 2019, and Women's Coach of the Year in 2009.

His athletes have also excelled individually. WilmU has turned out 80 All-Conference runners (50 men, 30 women), nine CACC Rookies of the Year, eight Conference runners-up, seven Conference Champions, 14 All-Regional runners, and three National qualifiers.

His teams have included student-athletes from as far away as Georgia, Arizona, and Texas, but his usual recruiting area is Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.

While the Wildcats' winning record helps attract runners, Jones also assures prospects that "they will have time to train, time for academics, and time for themselves."

Distance running, Jones points out, is not for the weak. "Cross country takes discipline, and they become experts at dealing with pain. I think it leads to doing well in the classroom."

He and his assistant, **MEGAN BURANEN**, take a personal interest



Keith Jones

in each team member. “We’re very involved with them,” he says. “We reach out to them all the time, checking in often and being encouraging and letting them know we’re here to help.”

Both Jones and Buranen regularly join the women’s team on their weekday afternoon and weekend morning training runs. “Running with them, they can see how fired up you are and how passionate you are for the sport,” Jones says. “And in this sport, that’s the key. If you’re not hungry for it, it can quickly fade.”

“We talk about everything,” says **ALEXA CROWELL**, last year’s CACC women’s 5K champion. “Classes, what

running shoes to get, life.”

Now studying for her MBA, Crowell finished her eligibility last year. “I’ve loved every minute of being on the team,” she says. “I’m very sad that it’s all over. The coaches have supported me academically and in my sport. I absolutely love Coach Jones. He’s one of the best coaches I’ve ever had. He’s more than willing to listen to any concern you may have. He supports you, and he challenges you.”

Of all his teams, there’s one that Jones is most proud of. “In 2013, we had a men’s squad that was phenomenal,” he says. “We swept the entire conference that year. The team finished one, two, three, four, five,

and got a perfect score of 15. That was never done before or since. We went to the Regionals in Boston, with 30-plus teams. We finished third, qualifying for the National Championships — the only time in the history of the conference that any team has taken a full squad to Nationals.”

Reflecting on his more than two decades at WilmU, Jones is most impressed with the school’s tremendous growth, both in academics and athletics.

“Enrollment has exploded,” he says. “The faculty, especially on the adjunct side, has increased a ton. The Pratt Student Center used to be our gym; now we have a beautiful athletic complex on Route 40 in Bear, and we have a turf field there.

“And our sports teams have really taken off. The number of teams has probably doubled. Talent-wise, it’s amazing how well we do.”

He points out that for the 13th time in the last 14 seasons, WilmU won the CACC’s Alfred R. Restaino Sr. Cup for overall excellence in male sports. The Restaino Cup is awarded annually to a conference member for men’s sports and for women’s sports. The Wildcat men first captured the trophy in the 2009–10 academic year and never relinquished it, winning it 11 straight years before Concordia captured it in 2020–21 — only because WilmU athletics were suspended that season due to the pandemic.

Jones, who has taught Phys Ed and Health at Mt. Pleasant High School since 2004, lives in Newark with his wife, Michelle. He says he has no plans to retire from either teaching or coaching in the near future.

“We’re poised to do really well this year,” he says. Then, using one of his favorite terms, he adds, “I’m still fired up. And I want to get back to the Nationals.” **WU**

ALUMNI

BELLA DONTINE and TRAVIS BROWN: Budding Hollywood Careers

by Maria Hess

College of Technology alums **BELLA DONTINE** and **TRAVIS BROWN** are earning their stripes as Hollywood producers — and in Tinseltown, that’s no easy feat. Released in May, their feature film, “Devil’s Hollow,” earned serious buzz at its West Coast premiere in February at Grauman’s Chinese Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard.

A southern Gothic crime thriller, the film centers on a man on house arrest at his farm attempting to save his estranged daughter from his former partner-in-crime.

Scoring Official Selection designations at Louisville’s International Festival of Film and the Golden State Film Festival and hitting the SOHO International Film Festival, among others, “Hollow” has been fueled by reviews from A-listers like **OCTAVIA SPENCER** and **HUGH JACKMAN**. Spencer complimented the film’s “rich cinematography and powerful performances,” while Jackman called out star **SHULER HENSLEY**’s



Bella Dontine

“haunting performance.”

The nods, Dontine says, “were surreal, but it feels wonderful to know it’s getting out there and being seen after all the hard work everyone put into it to bring it to fruition.”

Brown agrees, calling the attention humbling. “It certainly helped with landing a lot of eyes on our film, as well as attracting a solid distributor, Lion Heart Distribution, to help get our movie out there,” he says.

“Octavia Spencer actually posted about the film to her Instagram page on the day it released, which I know gave us massive exposure and greatly helped with the overall sales of the film.”

Now based in Los Angeles, Dontine and Brown met at WilmU while working on a student film called “The Average Guy,” says Dontine. “Our professor, **CALVIN HILL**, directed. I auditioned for the lead role, and Travis was working on the project.”

Both attribute their chops to WilmU.

Brown, who in 2010 earned his undergrad in Studio Production with a minor in Digital Film-Making, says WilmU offered “a very hands-

on learning environment, which was extremely vital and helpful in preparing me for a career in film and TV. I’m more of a visual learner, so being able to actually see how it’s done versus being told how it’s done





Travis Brown

“ I knew I was ready to work professionally as a filmmaker due to the preparation and foundation I received at WilmU. ” —Travis Brown

helped me a great deal. WilmU taught me about editing, cameras, and the overall art of narrative storytelling.”

By the time he graduated and made his move to LA in 2015, he adds, “I knew I was ready to work professionally as a filmmaker due to the preparation and foundation I received at WilmU.”

He has since received multiple awards as a producer, director, and writer. For his short film, “The Norwalk Witness,” Brown took home the Narrative Short prize from the International Independent Film Awards in 2020. He also founded the LA-based Browntown Studios, a production and media services company.

Dontine, enrolled as **MICHELLE WILLIAMS**, graduated in 2016 with a B.S. in Video and Motion Graphics

and a minor in Digital Film-Making. Also an award-winning producer, actor and writer, she has appeared in numerous films and television shows and is equally comfortable behind the camera. She’s been the assistant director on the award-winning film “Delaware Shore” and assistant director and writer on Brown’s “The Norwalk Witness.”

“WilmU has been such an integral part of my journey in the film industry because it taught me so much, from the smaller, hands-on classroom to the connections I made that have been sustained since being a student,” says Dontine. “There are so many little things I remember while on set from my days at WilmU, like, audio is the most important thing. That was drilled into me in audio class. An audience will forgive you

for bad camera angles, a bad storyline, etc., but what sets an amateur apart from a professional is the audio.”

She grew up performing around the East Coast, but when she attended WilmU, she says, “I got to see behind the lens, so to speak. As much as I love being in front of the camera, I always knew I wanted to know all the ins and outs of film-making to be the best storyteller I could possibly be, and WilmU really helped give me the foundation I needed to begin my career as a writer, producer, and one day, a director.”

Next for the pros is the feature film “A Lion’s Game,” which they co-wrote and produced. Brown directed, and Dontine has the lead role. Post-production wrapped this past summer. Info, including release dates, can be found on Instagram (@alionsgamemovie) and Facebook.

“Bella and I also have several other feature films that we co-wrote and will be producing together,” says Brown.

The world sees Hollywood as one big, glitzy red carpet, but succeeding in the intensely competitive entertainment business can be brutal — anything but glamorous. It takes passion, perseverance, and buckets of sweat and tears. Brown and Dontine are aware of the hardships. They have tough skin. And they’re just getting started. **WU**

Dontine and Brown’s major is now called Video and Film Production. To learn more about the undergraduate program, visit wilmu.edu/technology.

DR. ABI BAKARE: A Leader at the Mint

by Eileen Smith Dallabrida

The next time you count the change in your pocket, think of the people who earn their living literally making money.

DR. ABIODUN (ABI) BAKARE, chief learning officer at the U.S. Mint, is responsible for helping 1,600 government employees do their jobs better at six locations across America. His drive to help people prosper is rooted in the volunteer work he began as a boy in his native Nigeria.

“I have a passion for caring for other people, for giving them the tap to head them in the right direction,” he says. “I derive joy when I see people who are happy doing what they want to do.”

Motivating others is a skill he honed at Wilmington University, where he earned his Doctor of Education degree in Organizational Leadership. **DR. JONATHAN WILSON**, a classmate in Dr. Bakare’s cohort at WilmU, says his commitment to caring shined through in their studies together.

“Abi has a unique ability to bring people together, foster collaboration, and create an environment conducive to growth and innovation,” says Dr. Wilson. “His friendly and approachable demeanor made him a trusted confidant and mentor to many of us.”

As a teen, Dr. Bakare volunteered with the Red Cross and dreamed of becoming a physician. He soon

learned he had a better head for business than science. But how to channel his acumen for organization into nurturing others?

Then it hit him. He would devote himself to keeping organizations healthy. In 2004, he earned his B.S. in Human Resources Management and Labor Relations at Lagos University, where he was active in student government and human rights advocacy. He then took a job as a fundraising officer for an international nonprofit group for orphans in West Africa and was one of only 70 young adults worldwide to be selected to attend a humanitarian conference at the United Nations in New York City.

He was immediately smitten by North America and its abundant opportunities for personal growth.

“I thought maybe I could start a new life here,” Dr. Bakare says. “It was such a welcoming culture.”

He briefly considered studying in Newfoundland, Canada — “but I was concerned that it is so cold,” he says. In 2011, he enrolled in Cheney University in Pennsylvania, earning a master’s in Public Administration. He got a job as a training and development manager for the City of Philadelphia, where he immediately launched a program to help employees earn their GEDs, their first step in moving up the ladder.

“They might have been cleaners,

and they eventually moved up to careers in civil service,” he recalls.

His ideas for helping employees advance on their career paths soon attracted attention. In 2013, the City of Philadelphia agreed to pay his tuition in WilmU’s doctoral program to broaden his skills and knowledge base. But the commitment was still a stretch. His first child was only three months old, and he was working full-time.

Dr. Bakare says WilmU’s commitment to flexibility and empathy for the needs of career-minded adults helped him manage his schedule. His classes on campus were held 5–10 p.m. on Fridays, which meant he had to travel to Delaware from Philadelphia only one day a week.

“Wilmington U understands the practicality of working and going to school, which made all the difference in me achieving my goal,” he says.

The relationships he formed in Ed.D. Cohort 24 provided an extra layer of support, with the added benefit of creating lifelong friendships.

“We still meet once a year. It was a wonderful group, a great group of professionals, people you want to be around forever,” Dr. Bakare says.

DR. TIERRA M. PRITCHETT recalls him as a motivated, engaged student intent on developing leadership skills.

“Dr. Bakare was one of my favorite



COURTESY OF ABIJODUN BAKARE

Dr. Abi Bakare

“ I have a passion for caring for other people, for giving them the tap to head them in the right direction. ” —Dr. Abi Bakare

classmates. He is a very ambitious and avid learner, always excited to gather more knowledge to share with others. He came into the program aware of this plan and ready to execute,” she says.

After earning his doctorate, he took his leadership skills to the U.S. Postal Service and the U.S. Treasury before accepting his current role at the U.S. Mint. Dr. Bakare, who now

lives with his wife and two children in suburban Washington, D.C., has met with human resources teams at mints in Denver, Philadelphia, and West Point, New York, to identify gaps in training. He also is exploring apprentice programs in manufacturing to ensure the government maintains a pipeline of talent to produce currency and military medals seamlessly.

He recently launched a monthly

newsletter for employees, ensuring that manufacturing workers have access to the same information about professional growth opportunities as administrative employees.

“I want employees who are on the floor, who don’t get emails, to have this news about training, employee development, and competency,” he says.

The pandemic heightened the need to develop technology to assess the needs of workers and the effectiveness of training and other initiatives.

“Before COVID, I was like a school principal,” he says. “I would go to each floor, look in each classroom, and see how the learning programs were deploying. Now, we’re using the video experience to communicate more and more.”

His former classmate, **DR. FRANK INGRAHAM**, says Dr. Bakare embraced education as a collegial and collaborative experience that enriches others.

“He always contributed to each course and each class during our doctoral studies in a way that benefited each of his cohort colleagues,” says Dr. Ingraham. “Specifically, Abi would contribute meaningful content associated with the course materials and relate it to some aspects of his dynamic personal and professional life journey. Each cohort member grew as a result of Abi’s sharing and then translated the newly learned information in a way that was directly applicable in life.”

In his work, Dr. Bakare continues the WilmU tradition of taking lessons from the classroom and applying that knowledge directly to careers.

“I am a lifelong learner,” says Dr. Bakare. “Starting when I was a teenager, I wanted to empower people around me to learn how to do things — and now it is my life’s work.” **WU**

STAY INVOLVED

WITH YOUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP IS FREE!

Become an active member of your local chapter. Learn more about Wilmington University Alumni Association's events and meetings by visiting



WILMU.EDU/ALUMNI

1992



LORI JOHNSON-VEGAS M.S. in Human Resource Management, of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, was

named National Mother of the Year by American Mothers, Inc.

1994



MATTHEW BRAINARD B.S. in Elementary Education 1-8, of Wilmington,

was inducted into the Delaware Baseball Hall of Fame.

1996



CHRIS SZEP M.S. in Human Resource Management, of Northeast, Maryland, was

appointed director of Development at The Alliance of the Arts.

1997



JOSEPH PRO, JR. M.B.A., of Bear, was inducted into the Pipes, Valves, Fittings (PVF) Hall of Fame.

1998



DAVID FREDERICK M.Ed. in Special Education, of Rehoboth Beach, was named the 2023 Delaware Association

of School Administrators Principal of the Year.

2000



BRIDGET AMORY Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Innovation, of Milford, was named interim superintendent of

Milford School District.

2001



MURRAY (RAY) HOY Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Innovation, of Salisbury, Maryland, retired as president

of Wor-Wic Community College.

2004



MELISSA BRADY M.Ed. in Primary Education K-4, of Wilmington, was named Delaware's 2023 National

Distinguished Principal by the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

2005



AMANDA DILL B.S. in Finance, of Felton, was named AVP and head of Mortgage Lending at County Bank.

2006



WILFREDO CAMPOS B.S. in Criminal Justice, of Bear, was sworn in as the first Hispanic police chief in Wilmington. (Story on page 40.)



BERNICE HERING-WHALEY DBA, of Bear, was named a Placers Professional leader.

2007



ALMAR DYER M.Ed. in School Leadership, of Pennsauken, New Jersey, was named director of Human Services, Camden,

New Jersey.



KATIE MEYER M.S. in Human Resource Management, of Worthington, Minnesota, was named vice president of Human Resources

at Minnesota West Community and Technical College.

2008



MICHAEL LOVETT B.S. in Organizational Management, of Hockessin, was appointed

president and COO at Consensus Health.

2010



PAUL GUENTHER M.B.A., of West Chester, Pennsylvania, was named a 2023 VISTA Millennial

Superstar.



EMILY LEHNE Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, of Milton, Pennsylvania, was named principal of

Beacon Middle School.



RICHARD POTTER M.S. in Organizational Leadership, of Denton, Maryland, was appointed

the State of Delaware's Chief Diversity Officer.

2011

BETH LARAMORE M.S.N. in Family Nurse Practitioner, of Hurlock, Maryland, opened Pioneer Therapy Center in Salisbury, Maryland.



LISA DELLA VECCHIA Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Innovation, of Mount Laurel,

New Jersey, was named interim superintendent of Delran School District.

2013



DANA BLAIR M.Ed. in School Leadership, of Cherry Hill, New Jersey, was named director of Special Education of Haddonfield School

District.

JACQUELYN BLEVINS M.B.A., of Smyrna, retired from Chesapeake College as its assistant director of the Workforce Investment Board. She served the State of Maryland for over 30 years.

2014



KIMBERLY HUGHEY M.S. in Administration of Justice, of Wilmington, was promoted to warden of Baylor Women's Correctional

Institution.



JANEICE PAMELA SCOTT M.Ed. in Education Studies, of Newark, received "Best in New Titles" recognition at London's 2023 Book Fair for her book, "From Kindergarten to Kollege in 10 Steps."



SUSAN CASE SWEENEY Ed.D. in Organizational Learning, Leadership and Innovation, of Wilmington, was

appointed to Miller Industries' Board of Directors.

2016



EDWARD HUEY B.S. in Criminal Justice, of Milford, retired on March 1 after serving the Milford Police Department for

33 years.

2017



TINA ELLIS B.S.N. in Nursing, of Northfield, New Jersey, was named director of Clinical Services for Angelic Health Hospice

Care.



HOLLY GRUHLKE DBA, of South Heart, North Dakota, was named vice president of Academic Affairs at Dickinson State

University.

2018



ABIODUN BAKARE Ed.D. in Organizational Learning, Leadership and Innovation, of Greenbelt, Maryland, was named chief

learning officer at the Department of Treasury of the U.S. Mint.



KASEY REVEL M.Ed. in School Leadership, of Greenwood, was named Indian River School District's 2023-24 Teacher of

the Year.

2019



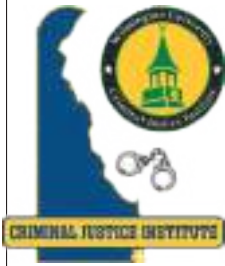
MARIETTA DANTONIO-MADSON Ed.D. in Higher Educational Leadership and Innovation, of Wilmington, was

recognized for her work in "Healing Through Art."

2020



MARK FORMAN M.Ed. in School Leadership, of Socorro, New Mexico, was named director of Aldo Leopold Charter School.



CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE

Managing a Media Firestorm



JULIE PARKER, a nationally regarded police and crisis communications expert, brings her considerable knowledge to the CJJ from Nov. 29–Dec. 1, 2023, at WilmU’s Brandywine campus. Parker will teach the course, “Managing a Media Firestorm: Crisis Communications for Command Staff and PIOs.”

The communications pro believes that regardless of how well a communications plan is written, it will only be effective if the team implementing it is appropriately trained. That’s where she comes in.

“The three-day course is designed to prepare public safety leaders and PIOs for public messaging when

crises strike,” says CJJ Director **DR. RAY CARR**. “Critical incidents occur internally and externally, and communicators need to know how to manage them while protecting their organizations’ reputations.”

Parker is president and CEO of Julie Parker Communications, a woman-owned boutique firm based

in Washington, D.C., that guides organizations on media and social media messaging and public relations strategies. She earned Emmy and Edward R. Murrow Awards as a television news reporter and covered significant national stories, including the 9/11 attacks.

She began her communications career in 2012 by training police public information officers nationwide, then became a regular guest lecturer



Chris Covelli



Christopher Mannino



Julie Parker

at the FBI National Academy and a senior media advisor for the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

“We are honored to welcome Julie,” says Dr. Carr. “She will bring the level of expertise we have been privileged to offer to regional law enforcement officers, professional communicators, and the general public.”

Instructors joining Parker will be **CHRIS COVELLI**, a Chicago-area deputy chief and public information officer who served as lead PIO throughout the aftermath of the 2022 Highland Park, Illinois, parade mass shooting, and **CHRISTOPHER MANNINO**, a retired Chicago-area police chief with 25 years of law enforcement experience. **WU**

—Maria Hess

While the course is open to the public, it is geared toward PIOs. The three-day cost is \$495. Registration is required at cji.wilmu.edu. Training certificates are available upon request.

COURSE TOPICS

“Managing a Media Firestorm: Crisis Communications for Command Staff and PIOs” is a three-day course from Nov. 29–Dec. 1, 2023, at WilmU’s Brandywine campus. The following courses will be included:

- Run It Like a Newsroom: A Public Information Philosophy
- Highland Park, Illinois, Parade Mass Shooting Communications Debrief
- Messaging in Real Time through Social Media (with case study)
- Managing Misinformation Online and in the Media
- Navigating Media Relations
- Winning the News Conference from Prep to Post-conference

The three-day course is open to the public but geared toward PIOs. The cost is \$495. Student and group rates are available. Registration is required at cji.wilmu.edu. Training certificates are also available upon request.

The True Crime Lecture Series

Since its inception in October of 2019, the Criminal Justice Institute’s True Crime Lecture Series has welcomed 20 internationally renowned speakers and authors and entertained nearly 4,000 fans.

Fortified by their combined 62-year tenure in the FBI, CJI directors **SCOTT DUFFEY** and **DR. RAY CARR** utilize their extensive FBI contacts, mostly FBI agents, profilers and authors, and invite them to detail the most famous (and infamous) cases in law enforcement history. That’s a real “get” for true crime buffs, and fans from the tri-state area have been riveted.

Duffey, who manages the True Crime Lecture Series, constantly updates the schedule. “It’s been inspiring to bring such high-level cases to our audiences,” he says. “That includes cases like the Unabomber, Waco, and the Pizza Bomber, to name a few. Even though I spent my career in the FBI, I always learn new things about the investigations, as do our true crime enthusiasts.”

Author, prosecutor and FBI agent (*ret.*) **TERRENCE HAKE** and Private Investigator **DAVE MAC NEIL** are lined up, and new speakers are booked often.

Visit cji.wilmu.edu for the latest.

TERRENCE HAKE:

Operation Greylord

Nov. 25, 2023



Terrence Hake served for five years as the prosecutor in the Cook County State Attorney’s Office in Chi-

cago and later as an FBI agent in Chicago. In April of 1980, he assisted the FBI and the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Inspector General in investigating the Cook County Court system. For nearly four years, he worked undercover, posing as a corrupt prosecutor by accepting bribes from attorneys and later as an attorney in private practice making payoffs to judges and court personnel for dismissing cases. The investigation, known as “Greylord,” resulted in bribery and tax charges filed against 103 judges, lawyers, and other court personnel. By the time the final Greylord trial concluded in 1997, Hake had testified against 23 defendants. It is one of the FBI’s most successful undercover investigations.

After serving in federal law enforcement for 23 years, Hake retired from the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Inspector General. He returned to practicing law as an assistant state attorney in Cook County. A 1977 Loyola University of Chicago School of Law graduate, Hake authored “Operation Greylord: The True Story of an Untrained Undercover Agent and America’s Biggest Corruption Bust.”

The Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas



True Crime Lecture Series

- All true crime lectures are presented at the DoubleTree by Hilton, 4727 Concord Pike, in North Wilmington, from 5:30-8 p.m. Light fare.
- Law enforcement officers can receive training credit hours for each lecture.
- The series is free and open to the public, but registration is required at cji.wilmu.edu.

DAVE MAC NEIL: Boston Marathon Bombers

Feb. 13, 2024



Dave Mac Neil was instrumental as the local crime scene point-of-contact during the investigation and capture of the Boston Marathon bombers. He is the president of MacNeil Investigations & Forensic Consulting and a detective for the Watertown (Massachusetts) Police

Department, working in its Division of Criminal Investigations.

Mac Neil, a licensed Massachusetts private investigator, is a sought-after speaker, appearing at conferences, symposiums, and seminars and specializing in forensics best practices, crime scene investigations, and violent crimes.

A graduate of Western New England College, Mac Neil also attended the National Forensic Academy Session XVII, an intensive 10-week training program designed to meet the needs of law enforcement agencies in evidence identification, collection, and preservation, and took specialized courses from the DEA, FBI, and United States Secret Service academies. He has served the Licensed Private Detectives Association Of Massachusetts, Inc. as a board member and chair of its Education Committee. In addition, Mac Neill teaches for the U.S. Department of Justice LEIC National Forensic Academy.

STEVE LAZARUS: Atlanta Bioterror Attack

March 12, 2024



A first-time author, retired FBI special agent, and United States Air Force veteran, Steve Lazarus served 22 years in the FBI: the first half investigating drug trafficking organizations and violent street gangs in Atlanta, then as a bomb technician, which took him to

Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan as part of the Global War on Terror. After retiring from the FBI in 2018, he spent several years as a national security contractor in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

His debut novel, “Call Me Sonny,” was inspired by one of his real-life cases. After arresting a subject who threatened to unleash a bioterror attack on the Atlanta subway system, Lazarus and his partner were on the receiving end of a death threat from the soon-to-be convicted felon. The subject would spend the next 25 years in prison, but Lazarus wondered if he could make good on his threat, even from behind bars. The most logical solution would have been for him to hire a hit man, which inspired the novel’s premise. Written throughout a year in Abu Dhabi, the Florida Keys, and Texas hill country, the book incorporates the personalities, anecdotes, and experiences of Lazarus’s multi-faceted FBI career. He hopes it will be the first in a series of Bryce Chandler crime thrillers.

DANIEL J. DESIMONE: Chicago Mayor Corruption

May 14, 2024



Daniel J. DeSimone is an honorably discharged and decorated veteran of the United States Armed Forces, having served domestically and internationally in the military police ranks for nearly five years. Following his military service, DeSimone served for 23 years as an FBI

special agent, holding various positions of increased responsibility in his six field and headquarters assignments.

DeSimone worked extensively with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies while leading several multi-agency task forces. He served as case agent for several successful criminal and national security matters, and held key roles in high-profile matters such as 9/11, Waco/Koresh, O.J. Simpson, and La Cosa Nostra, where he successfully infiltrated a faction of the Gambino crime family in a long-term FBI undercover operation. DeSimone also taught FBI special agents and National FBI Academy attendees.

As the FBI’s former chief of Undercover and Sensitive

Operations, and a certified FBI undercover operative, he understands the complexities and challenges of law enforcement operations. Before his retirement from the FBI, DeSimone was its lead to the private sector, gaining important knowledge, understanding, and experience in the relationship between the public and private sectors. He received written accolades from three FBI directors for whom he served.

In terms of public service, DeSimone was awarded knighthood in 2011 under order of Pope Benedict XVI. Following his career in government service, he was senior director of Investigative Resources at Thomson Reuters, where he served as the company’s chief interface with law enforcement agencies across the United States and members of the corporate security ranks. He is a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Association of State Criminal Investigators, and co-founder of the Lewes, Delaware, Police Foundation.

DeSimone is also a Delaware licensed private investigator. In 2021, he delivered United States Department of Justice resources to Sussex County, Delaware, to teach police de-escalation training to multiple law enforcement agencies. **WU**



Wilmington University
School of Law

WILMINGTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

Non-Traditional Law Students

by Jeffrey Zavrotny

Over the past five years, more than 20% of all applicants to law school were 29 or older. Additionally, about half of all law school applicants over the same period were at least two years out of college when they applied to law school. So, the perception that all law students are young 20-somethings heading right to law school from college is inaccurate. A significant percentage of law applicants come to the process with more experiences and hopefully with a little more wisdom than assumed.

There are myriad reasons why non-traditional students choose to return to school and pursue a law degree. Some students have a passion for the law, want to make the world a better place, are looking for a career change, or see a law degree as a way to advance in their current careers. The reasons they return are of less significance than the process each student should go through to consider if law school is right for them at this particular point in time. Law school is different from most graduate programs, and prospective students must understand these differences to create the best opportunity for success.

Law school is different because of the nature of the study of law itself and the expectations placed upon students. The study of law is more than learning facts. It is more than learning what the law actually is. It is more than knowing

about the trial process or any other legal proceeding. The study of law is about learning to think like a lawyer. Thinking like a lawyer requires a student to approach every problem with a critical eye. It requires that students look at a problem from many directions. It requires that students not just find an answer but understand why that answer is correct. It requires students to support their answers with facts and how to explain that answer as a reasoned argument. It also requires that students know the counter-arguments just as much as they know their own. That transformation of the student's thought process begins with the very first class. This shocks many new law students accustomed to easing into a field of study.

Law school also places high expectations upon students. Most law schools have mandatory grading curves. These curves are meant to reward those students who perform well and to inform those who don't perform well that they are struggling. These curves can be harsh and lead to academic dismissal for some students. These expectations are not arbitrary. They are necessary to facilitate student success in law school and hopefully on the bar exam.

Non-traditional students also should consider more mundane factors when determining if law school is something they should pursue. Time allocation, family responsibilities, and expectations of employers are extremely important

considerations. Law schools are still very traditional by nature. For example, there are strict limits on the number of missed classes. Students must request a leave of absence if they need to skip a semester. There are minimum course



loads, and generally, course offerings have less flexibility. Balancing life outside of the classroom with external considerations is a must.

Even with the rigor of the classroom and the competing interests of school, work, and family, thousands of non-traditional students apply, enroll and graduate from law school every year. There are many reasons why non-traditional students succeed despite all the challenges. Probably the most important reason is the level of maturity a non-traditional student brings. A student with a previous career, graduate degree, or other accomplishments approaches law school from a different perspective than a younger student. Their previous successes inform them on how to approach the practical as-

pects of legal training. Many of these students understand what is required in a professional environment. They take on the challenges of law school as if it was a job and hold themselves to a high standard. These students also have experience managing multiple tasks and deadlines, which is invaluable as a law student. (Imagine having required readings for classes, exam preparation, and writing a legal memo simultaneously.)

Even more valuable than managing law school tasks, non-traditional students have experience balancing their lives with education and work. They tend to categorize, compartmentalize, and place issues in their proper perspectives. For example, earning an A in a class may be less important to a

non-traditional student than actually understanding the material covered in the class. These students are more interested in the intellectual growth provided by a legal education.

Non-traditional students can be just as successful or more successful in law school as traditional students. Once a student has adjusted to and mastered the demands of law school, the experience is incredibly rewarding. The experience can be compared to that of raising a child. In the midst of it, it seems like it will never end. But when you are done, you will look back and wonder where the time went. **WU**

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Jeffrey Zavrotny

A Recipe for Career Success

by Kim Gattuso and Heather Karns



Heather Karns and Kim Gattuso

Building a law school's professional development office from scratch is akin to making a complicated dessert. Both require several individual components combined in specific ratios to produce the desired result. Adding Wilmington University School of Law's student-centered approach to the mix is the proverbial cherry on top. Crafting a robust career services office with a focus on student success involves balancing a variety of components, including supporting and advancing students' career goals, connecting students with members of the bench and bar, preparing students for the job application process, aiding students in building a network, and immersing students in experiential learning opportunities. Finding the right balance of these elements creates a recipe for career success.

Student Career Goals

Desserts come in all shapes and sizes. Some prefer a sweet dessert, while others prefer savory. There are simple desserts and very decadent. Just as there are many variations to satisfy, the variety in career goals is equally diverse. Each student enters law school with a unique background and life experience, and each has plans to obtain a Juris Doctor and (likely) take a bar exam. Some students come to law school with career aspirations that are well-defined, such as working as a solo practitioner with a general practice in a smaller town, working in a large law firm on government contracts or bankruptcy, representing the underserved through Legal Aid, or serving the community through government service, just to name a few. Alternatively, other members of our inaugural class may have goals that are

not yet fully formed. Each student's journey during and after law school is unique. WilmU Law helps each student evaluate career options by exposing them to various career paths available with a law degree, assisting students in charting a course toward personal career goals while helping them learn about themselves, and educating students on the esteemed role and responsibility lawyers hold in our communities. Although charting a career path can be daunting, by providing an outline, action steps, and support, we hope to facilitate a positive and manageable experience.

Job Application Process

As with most things in life, what you put into something directly correlates with what you get out of it. Put simply, ingredients matter. Good ingredients and best practices yield optimal results. The same is true of the job application process. Quality application materials are essential to securing a position that will aid in advancing one's career goals. Throughout the job search process, it is important to keep in mind several key points. At a minimum, job application materials will consist of a résumé and cover letter and may also include a transcript and writing sample. These documents form the basis of a potential employer's first impression. As such, they should be tailored to the specific employer, clearly express your interest, and address how your unique experiences and skills might best serve the organization. Another aspect to consider in a job search is focusing on volume. Increasing your volume by submitting more appli-

cations and broadening your job search will bolster your results. Rather than focusing narrowly on a specific area or type of position, approach a robust job search by removing search filters to yield more potential opportunities. The greater the number of applications sent, the better your chances of being invited to an interview. Often it is easy to combine the ingredients and just let it bake without another thought. While that might be the easier route, checking as you bake is important. The same is true for applications. Just because you sent materials and are now waiting and hoping for a reply does not mean the process is complete. It is always good practice to follow up to ensure your application materials were received and demonstrate continued interest. Over time, your applications and targeted follow-up will lead to an interview and offer. Lastly, while you might have the “perfect position” in mind, the reality is that it may take some time to get there, and sometimes our plans change along the way. It is important to focus on gaining experience. The truth is there is something you can learn and new people to meet with every position and at every organization. Keep in mind that your first job does not need to be your last job. No matter the position, you will gain valuable experience and increase your connections along the way.

Mentoring

Over the past decade, we have seen a resurgence in the vocalized need for mentoring across all professions. The legal profession and environments where lawyers work are no exception. Due to the ethical standards and expectations of those who help us in our most critical moments, the need for mentoring may be even greater at the beginning of your law school journey. The question then becomes: What is mentoring, and

why is it so important? While some may use the term more casually, a true mentor is an experienced and trusted advisor. Like a head chef, a mentor is an individual who has gained knowledge and wisdom through experience and, as a result, can offer support, perspective, and guidance. Mentoring allows someone with this experience to share unique insight with someone less experienced in a specific area, field, or topic. Mentoring must be received; therefore, the person being mentored (often referred to as the “mentee”) needs to be open to accepting the guidance. The mentor-mentee relationship is ineffective if the pair does not have a general understanding of what each wants out of the relationship and some guidelines for how to fulfill those expectations. WilmU Law is excited to introduce mentoring into the first-year law student (1L) experience. Each 1L will be paired with a mentor based on student preferences. These mentors will have the unique opportunity to become involved in the lives of our new law students. Through regular interaction, mentors will bring to the forefront topics of importance to the legal profession and the legal career trajectory of students. Mentoring topics include professionalism, civility, societal responsibilities of lawyers, community involvement, and supporting the communities they serve with pro bono legal work. This mentor-mentee exchange will not only immediately connect students with a practicing attorney or judge in the community, but the information exchanged will become part of the student’s legal education and provide insight that will come from beyond the classroom.

Networking

Just as you need to preheat an oven before baking begins, students need to

start engaging with members of the legal community and learning more about different areas of practice and potential career paths during the first semester of law school. Whether through the mentoring program, engagement with panelists and speakers at the law school, attendance at local state bar functions, or interacting with classmates and colleagues, students’ focus on making and maintaining connections throughout law school and beyond is paramount. The process of building a robust network is similar to the artful assembly of a layered cake where the people you meet and the paths you cross combine and layer to create a cohesive unit. Assembling this network takes time, so taking advantage of every opportunity to make connections will benefit students throughout their legal careers. One of the most important aspects of networking is remaining authentic and allowing others to get to know who you are and what you are about. Making connections with classmates and members of the legal community exposes students to different career paths, environments where lawyers work, and significant issues facing the legal community. Creating a network also provides avenues for future referrals and opportunities for collaborations. It enables students to create a support system for sharing challenges, seeking advice, and finding solutions to unique or complex issues. WilmU Law supports students with their networking efforts by creating workshops and events focused on improving networking skills, developing strategies tailored to students’ career goals, and fostering opportunities to meet and interact with members of the legal community.

Experiential Learning

Once the baking process is complete, each dessert needs to cool and stabilize

before it can be presented artfully. In addition to equipping students with the tools to advance their legal careers, WilmU Law's curriculum provides practical legal training through experiential learning opportunities in the legal community. These opportunities allow students to gain pragmatic, real-world experience beyond the confines of the classroom and present a mechanism by which students combine legal theory with its application in the professional setting.

Through experiential learning, students work on resolving legal issues on active cases with actual clients under the supervision of a practicing attorney. This real-world experience exposes students to a wide range of practice areas and various legal environments, including law firms, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, corporate legal departments, and judicial chambers. Another important aspect of experiential learning is reflection on the experience and insights gained. With the focus on required courses in the first two years and externships and experiential learning in the third year (or fourth year for evening students), students will have essential courses before working with clients in a supervised setting. They will be expected to reflect on their daily activities.

Under WilmU Law's proactive approach to learning, students graduate with all the ingredients necessary to navigate the next step of their professional journey. By crafting a thoughtful and intentional plan focused on individual student achievement, WilmU School of Law is building what it hopes will be a dynamic and energetic approach to student career success — layer by layer. **WU**

Kim Gattuso, Esq., is associate dean of Experiential Learning at Wilmington University School of Law. Heather Karns is its associate dean of Career Services.



The Modern Law Library... and AI

by Harvey Morrell

“**L**ibraries in the future are going to be mostly digital,” former SUNY-Buffalo Law Library Director Jim Milles said in 2005.

What do you see when someone says “law library”? I suspect most people picture a large room full of law books, with attorneys or law students sitting at long tables poring over a stack of those books. Until recently, this picture would have been a fairly accurate representation of academic law libraries due to the rigid interpretation of ABA Standard 606, the Standard that governs the type of collection a law library must have to gain or maintain accreditation. Because the official interpretation of Standard 606 noted that a collection consisting of only one format was likely to violate the Standard, most libraries continued collecting the same materials in digital and print formats.

It wasn't until the financial crisis hit in 2008 that academic law libraries were forced to change (law firm libraries had already

changed in response to rising prices and space limitations). Suddenly, academic law librarians were required to make drastic budget cuts. For example, the materials budget went from over \$1 million to just under \$500,000 at the library where I worked. First to go were print copies of regional and state case reports from states outside the library's jurisdiction and the state codes from other states. Law reviews and many loose-leaf materials followed. When all these materials are available digitally 24/7 from at least three fee-based providers and many free sites, not to mention being updated faster and more reliably, it doesn't make sense to continue collecting them in print.

Another change that facilitated the transition toward a more digitally-driven future was eliminating volume and title counts from statistics collected by the ABA and U.S. News. The ABA mandates law libraries to align with the mission of their respective institutions, which can vary significantly across universities. Consequently, law libraries catering to diverse institutional missions will adopt distinct approaches.

In line with the mission of Wilmington University Law Library, the institution aims to provide an affordable education that equips aspiring lawyers with the skills necessary to navigate today's increasingly competitive and digital marketplace. This training involves utilizing various legal research databases and leveraging artificial intelligence (AI).

AI has become a prevalent topic in news stories, with numerous reports covering its influence in the legal field. One story highlighted a lawyer who faced sanctions after incorporating several fabricated cases (machine hallucinations) generated by ChatGPT into a court filing. Another story celebrated the fact that AI achieved scores in the 90th percentile, demonstrating its capability to pass the Uniform Bar Exam (UBE).

These stories predominantly describe generative AI, a type of artificial intelligence that leverages machine learning algorithms and large language models (LLMs) to generate novel content. Unlike traditional AI, which is programmed to respond to specific inputs, generative AI is designed to be creative and produce original outputs, encompassing diverse domains such as art, music, text, and voice synthesis.

The use of generative AI in law schools is still in its early stages, but it clearly has the potential to revolutionize legal education. Legal databases like Lexis and Westlaw have used traditional AI for several years to generate search results in response to natural language search prompts. With the maturation of generative AI, both services are investing in AI and integrating it into their product offerings. It should be mentioned that when Lexis and Westlaw first came onto the legal market, they suffered some of the same deficiencies that generative AI currently has with reliability and scope of coverage. Now they are how most legal research is done today.

The use of AI in law schools is likely to continue to grow in

the years to come. As AI technology develops, it will become more powerful and sophisticated.

This will allow AI to automate even more tasks and provide more insight. AI can help law students become more effective lawyers by offering assistance in the following ways:

Legal research: AI-powered legal research tools can help law students find relevant case law, statutes, and regulations quickly and easily. These tools can also help students identify and analyze legal issues.

Document review: AI-powered document review tools can help law students review large volumes of documents quickly and accurately. These tools can also help students identify potential legal issues and to flag important documents.

Document drafting: AI-powered drafting tools can help law students draft documents, like contracts, quickly and accurately. These tools can also help students identify and address potential legal issues.

Legal writing: AI-powered legal writing tools can help law students improve their writing skills. These tools can provide feedback on grammar, style, and clarity.

However, there are some challenges that law schools face in incorporating AI into their curriculum, including:

Cost: AI-powered tools can be expensive. This can make it difficult for law schools to afford to implement these tools on a large scale.

Accuracy: Currently, AI-powered tools are not always accurate. This can lead to errors in legal research, document review, contract drafting, and legal writing.

Ethics: There are ethical concerns about the use of AI in law schools. For example, some people worry that AI could be used to automate tasks performed by lawyers, which could lead to job losses. Others worry that AI could be used to create biased or unfair systems.

Despite these challenges, the use of AI in law schools is expected to continue its growth trajectory. The benefits AI offers are too significant to disregard. The dynamic landscape of legal education demands an embrace of technological advancements that can empower law students and equip them with the necessary skills to thrive in an evolving legal profession. As AI continues to evolve, its integration into legal education will play an increasingly vital role, fostering innovation and driving progress. **WU**

Harvey Morrell is the law librarian at the Wilmington University School of Law.



President Dr. LaVerne Harmon (front row, far left), Board of Trustees Chairman Judge Joseph Farnan Jr. (back row, far left), and Dean Phillip Closius (back row, far right) welcome the law school's inaugural class.

The Wilmington University School of Law's Inaugural Class

The Wilmington University School of Law welcomed its inaugural class in August during festive and robust student and faculty orientations. Wilmington University President **DR. LAVERNE HARMON** offered personal greetings to each student, followed by inspirational welcome remarks. Dean **PHILLIP CLOSIUS** offered introductions and led workshops. Board of Trustees Chairman **JUDGE JOSEPH FARNAN JR.** administered the Honor Code Oath to students, and the law school's advisory board presented a vision for the future Delaware legal community. Five other Delaware lawyers talked to the students about the transition from law school to practice. Law faculty and staff presented additional workshops covering the challenges

of law school, legal research, wellness and balance, and other topics. Several WilmU representatives offered helpful information to law students, including accessibility services, campus safety, and financial aid. On the final evening, students enjoyed dinner with members of the legal community.

"This is a historic time for our University," says Dr. Harmon. "We celebrate this major milestone and the first class of the Wilmington University School of Law. Like all of us at WilmU, Dean Closius puts students first, and I know he will lead our law school with integrity and respect."

"We couldn't be happier with our 20-person first class," says Dean Closius. "The class epitomizes the mission and values of both Wilmington University and the School of Law." **WU** —*Maria Hess*

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THE TRAILBLAZER

Alumnus **WILFREDO CAMPOS**, a native of Puerto Rico, is the City of Wilmington's first Latino police chief.

Read his story on page 40.