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BREAKING GROUND

The University is entering a significant moment in its history as construction commences on a Convocation Center and law building at the Brandywine location.



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“The buildings represent a crucial chapter in our history and symbolize progress and growth.” —*Dr. LaVerne Harmon*



Dear Friends,

As you can tell by our cover, we are in the midst of an exciting time, constructing an 85,000-square-foot Convocation Center and a three-story, 52,000-square-foot law school building at our Brandywine location. The buildings represent a crucial chapter in our history and symbolize progress and growth. They also reflect our ongoing commitment to offering the opportunities, enhanced learning environments, and state-of-the-art facilities our students deserve.

Other stories include our Spanish immersion pilot, in which the College of Business is introducing a framework to enable us to broaden our language immersion programs across various fields of study to meet society's growing demands. A DBA student has devised a plan to benefit dental patients. And we explain how two alumnae from a Doctor of Social Science in Prevention Science cohort became fast friends and built a campus wellness center together.

I hope you'll explore the many other stories that feature our faculty, students, athletes, staff, and alumni. Please enjoy the issue and the spring season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "LaVerne Harmon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. LaVerne Harmon
President



President

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WilmU Magazine is designed and published by:

Today Media Custom
Communications

1000 N. West Street, Suite 601
Wilmington, DE 19801
(302) 656-1809
www.todaymediacustom.com

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WilmU Magazine is a publication for WilmU students, alumni, staff, faculty, friends, and Board of Trustees. Produced in-house and distributed twice a year, the magazine has a circulation of more than 65,000. Personal views expressed in articles do not reflect official policies of Wilmington University.

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THE NEWS



Melissa Brady

Delaware's Principal of the Year

Wilmington University alumna **MELISSA BRADY** seemed predestined to be a teacher. After all, it was in her blood: her mother, two aunts, and her maternal grandfather all were educators.

Surprisingly, her mother, **DENISE SCHWARTZ**, who has a master's in School Leadership from WilmU and was a teacher and administrator in

the Christina School District for many years, tried to steer her daughter away from a career in education.

"She knew the amount of work was a lot, and she wanted to make sure that I really had my heart in the right place," Brady says.

Fortunately, after a brief detour into banking, Brady followed her heart, and 20 years after entering the profession,

she has been named Delaware's National Distinguished Principal for 2023 by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). Established in 1984, the National Distinguished Principals program recognizes elementary and middle-level principals who set high standards for instruction, student achievement, character, and climate

“
I loved my time
at WilmU. . . . It
was the first time
I felt really, really
good at something.
And I found an
amazing network
of people. It felt
like a family.”

—Melissa Brady

for the students, families, and staff in their communities. The honorees are selected by NAESP state affiliates and committees representing private and overseas schools.

The principal at Linden Hill Elementary School in suburban Wilmington, Brady has worked in Red Clay Consolidated School District for the past eight years. Under her leadership, Linden Hill became a National Blue Ribbon School for 2022.

Brady graduated from Newark

High School, where she was a cheerleader, a member of student government, and an Ambassador at the annual Blue-Gold All-Star football game. After high school, she initially heeded her mother's advice and majored in Criminal Justice and Spanish at the University of Delaware, graduating in 1999.

She spent three years with First USA Bank before pivoting to her true calling and enrolling at Wilmington University. “First USA was so supportive of me going back to school for Education that they allowed me to continue working until I began student teaching,” she says.

Brady chose to pursue her master's at WilmU because of its reputation for turning out educators. “Also,” she says, “as a young professional, I needed a school that offered evening classes that worked with my schedule.”

She enrolled in 2002 and received her master's in Elementary Education in 2004. Later, she earned School Leadership/Principal Certification from the University.

“I loved my time at WilmU,” Brady says. “I always tell people my experience as an undergrad was to grow up. I was in a sorority, and I learned to be independent. But my true college experience started when I got my master's. It was the first time I felt really, really good at something. And I found an amazing network of people. It felt like a family. We went through it together and it's a group that I am still friends with to this day.”

Brady, her husband, and her daughter — a junior at McKean High School — live in the Linden Hill feeder pattern, and she enjoys encountering her students and their parents away from school, whether she's walking the family dog in the neighborhood or shopping at the supermarket. She says the community — including the PTA — has been very supportive of the school.

She credits her staff — which totals 75, including custodial and cafeteria personnel — for the school's success. “Our staff is so resilient,” she says, “and they put the kids first. Our motto is ‘love, lead, and learn,’ and we do that every day.”

In presenting her award, **DORRELL GREEN**, superintendent of Red Clay Schools, said the honor “is a testament to her dedication, leadership, and unwavering commitment to our school and community. We are fortunate to have such an exceptional leader guiding our school to excellence.”

Brady calls her six years at Linden Hill Elementary “a wonderful experience.”

“I enjoy seeing students when they're excelling,” she says, “and I know that they are our future leaders. I'm energized by the resilience of children, and I'm inspired by the staff that come in and do — and I know I'm biased — what I consider the hardest work on the planet. I understand we're not curing cancer, but we are teaching the children who will. And we don't take that responsibility lightly.” **WU**

—Bob Yearick

WILMINGTON UNIVERSITY RECEIVES \$1 MILLION GRANT FROM THE LONGWOOD FOUNDATION

Wilmington University has been awarded a \$1 million grant by the Longwood Foundation to support the expansion of its Brandywine location, including a law school building and a Convocation Center.

The context of this grant cited by Longwood links the limited diversity within Delaware's legal profession and Wilmington University's long tradition as an open-access, accredited, and inclusive institution. Our private, nonprofit University serves traditional students starting their college careers, non-traditional students, and working adults seeking advancement through higher education.

"We have fostered a caring environment and offered convenience, flexibility, and affordable tuition to students from all walks of life since we were established 56 years ago," says Wilmington University President DR. LAVERNE HARMON. "Our law school mirrors that philosophy by establishing admission pathways to all qualified students, including underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, and by educating future attorneys who will reflect the populations they serve."

The law school welcomed its inaugural class in August 2023, operating at Brandywine's current single-building location, which also houses classrooms, labs, and offices for the University's other offerings. WU —*Maria Hess*





Casey Green

A Highly Credentialed Nurse and Student

MSN Leadership student **CASEY GREEN** became the 85th nurse to hold all five Emergency Nursing Certifications from the Board of Certification for Emergency Nursing. She was also named section editor of the Journal of Emergency Nursing's "Early Career Emergency Nurse Corner" and the College of Health Professions and Natural Sciences' first Exceptional Nursing Student DAISY Award recipient.

"Casey is a consummate nurse, leader, advocate, and educator," says College of Health Professions and

Natural Sciences (COHPNS) Dean **DR. AARON M. SEBACH**. "Her dedication and passion for emergency and critical nursing is remarkable and evidenced by her multiple post-nominal credentials. We are proud of Casey."

"One of the most difficult parts was finding the time to study around work," she says. "I discovered that if I tried to apply something I learned to my shifts at work, the knowledge would stick better, and I would add more to my practice. Each exam was very difficult and pass rates across the exams were less than 60%."

Green is thrilled to have chosen WilmU. "I have learned so much about nursing, leadership, education, how to provide even better patient care, and how to become a global leader in nursing. Every assessment, paper, and discussion board are enlightening and add so much to my current practice as a nurse leader."

She isn't the first WilmU student in the family. "My husband's aunt and my mentor both graduated from the Wilmington's COHPNS," she says. "I can't wait to follow in their footsteps." **WU** —*Maria Hess*

THE ALUMS WHO STARTED IT ALL

JUDITH LEMLEY ('72), is proud to say she was part of Wilmington College's first graduating class. She remembers her 1972 ceremony vividly, from the inspirational speaker to the bleachers behind the "campus" where it was held.

In October, Lemley was thrilled to reminisce with fellow graduates at a 50th Reunion celebration, which honored the classes of 1971, '72, and '73. Some alums were from the tri-state region, while others traveled from New York, Florida, and North Carolina. The alums swapped stories and shared memories, and it was nice to see **WARREN SHERROW** ('72) and **JOAN "DEE" MARTIN** ('72), who met and wed during college and are still married.

"It's amazing, the growth of the University," Lemley said in a video

during the party. Awed by her alma mater that started with 194 students and now serves over 20,000, she said, "I don't know if anyone imagined it, but there was a vision, and the University fills a need. I see a lot of happy and successful students now. I'm very pleased."

In 1968, the Tours Inn on DuPont Highway in New Castle was converted into the college. Its lobby was the original main building, and rooms were used for dorms, a cafeteria, the President's office, and Admissions and Business Affairs offices. Students like Lemley took classes in a nearby church. (The college gained

University status in 2007.)

Most students came from afar, but Lemley lived a few blocks away. She had been in the military for two years, which afforded her education benefits, and was a mother of two school-aged children, so her daytime hours were free.

"I just walked over, met the President, and they were glad to have me," said Lemley.

She received a Business degree since an Education program hadn't yet been developed. She still dreamed of becoming a teacher. Lemley later earned a master's in Education from Wilmington and then taught at her

“I don't know if anyone imagined it, but there was a vision, and the University fills a need. I see a lot of happy and successful students now.” —Judith Lemley



former high school, William Penn, for 20 years.

Lemley helped the college on weekends as a switchboard operator. She's still a fan, deeply proud that one of her grandsons is a Wilmington University graduate.

The Alumni Relations Department planned the reunion to coincide with Homecoming weekend. They supplied yearbooks, photos, and memorabilia and hosted a special tour of the New Castle campus.

Wilmington University President **DR. LAVERNE HARMON** was delighted to celebrate the former students. "It was a positive experience, not just to meet them, but to thank them for taking a chance on us. We were not yet accredited when they first enrolled, so they took a leap of faith. We have grown significantly since those days, but it all started with them. We will never take their faith in us for granted and will always be grateful." **WU** —*Maria Hess*



Judith Lemley



Joan (Martin) Sherrow ('72), and Bonnie (Sager) Gurian ('73)



WilmU Board of Trustees member Larry Miller and his wife, Florence (Bescherer) Miller ('71)



From left: Gwen (Strauss) Stern ('74), Bonnie (Sager) Gurian ('73), Elin (Juvelier) Fischer ('74), Dona (Leeds) Leibowitz ('73), Wendy (Rollins) Latham ('73)



Dr. Raymond Carr

WilmU's New Criminal Justice Course Tackles Cold Cases

Thirteen years ago, what began as a robbery in Chester County, Pennsylvania, ended in 43-year-old **THOMAS FERGUSON's** murder — and his killer is still on the loose. It's just one of the nation's many unsolved cases.

Think you can help crack one of

them? Check out Wilmington University's new Cold Case Investigations (CRJ 323) course, an elective offered by the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. It started in January 2024 and includes seven in-person sessions at WilmU's Brandywine location and seven additional online sessions.

"This is like watching Dateline and being there when they're talking about a cold case," says instructor **DR. RAYMOND CARR**, a retired FBI agent and co-director of WilmU's Criminal Justice Institute. "The course is open to everybody. You don't have to be a Criminal Justice major."

Dr. Carr and other experts will discuss biological evidence, victimology, eyewitness testimony, police lineups, false confessions, databases, and other subjects. This course will prepare students for an internship, offering more in-depth research and hands-on experience.

"This is a prelude to a Cold Case program we hope to start in September," says Dr. Carr. "It's going to be an internship that will allow students to sift through actual police notes, interviews and evidence that they will organize, digitize, and analyze. We'll be working collaboratively with police departments. And police will solve cases thanks in part to the hard work and fresh perspectives of WilmU students."

"I just thought it sounded really fascinating," says **STACIE SHRIVER**, a Delaware Anti-Trafficking Action Council employee who plans to take the course as a Continuing Education option. "(A cold case) could possibly be solved with fresh eyes and new technology."

Wilmington University's Criminal Justice degree and certificate programs provide theoretical, practical and professional knowledge that can lead to success in law enforcement, corrections, courts, probation, parole, private security, and more. Current students with any major can register for CRJ 323 through my WilmU. **WU**

—*WilmU Staff*

This story is from the WilmU blog. Check out more like it at blog.wilmu.edu/news.

FROM PARAPROFESSIONAL TO LICENSED TEACHER

Wilmington University is helping to blaze a new career path for teachers, partnering with the state to provide school paraprofessionals with a specialized program to complete their bachelor's degrees as licensed educators.

Currently, 7% of positions for teachers in Delaware are vacant. **DR. STACIE ZDROJEWSKI**, who chairs Clinical Studies in the College of Education and Liberal Arts, and **LARA CROWLEY**, chair of Early Childhood and Elementary Education, enrolled nine students in the Appoquinimink Apprenticeship cohort. The pilot program between Appoquinimink School District and WilmU creates a gateway for

paraprofessionals to become certified teachers.

WilmU has a proven track record in innovation in preparing the teachers of tomorrow, with such programs as the Year-Long Residency, in which students are placed in the classroom with mentor teachers, and The Promise Grant, which provides full scholarships for students of color who plan to become teachers.

The Appoquinimink Apprenticeship goal is for paraprofessionals to complete their undergraduate degrees by the end of the 2024–2025 school year. The Delaware Department of Education and the Delaware Department of Labor also are partnering with the initiative. **WU** —Eileen Smith Dallabrida

Lara Crowley and Dr. Stacie Zdrojewski



A HERCULEAN EFFORT

DR. REGINA ALLEN-SHARPE stays busy as Wilmington University's AVP of Student Affairs and dean of students. Yet, she found the time to earn the 2023 NASPA Certificate in Student Affairs Law and Policy last summer, embarking on an intensive 23-hour residential program to enhance Student Affairs professionals' knowledge of law and policy.

"My plate is always full, so there's no getting around that," says Dr. Allen-Sharpe. "Also, I'm a lifelong learner. For me, it's important to continue to learn and stay abreast of changes in my profession. The more I know, the better I'm able to serve students."

The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) website calls the course "the only certificate program in the important area of law and policy tailored specifically for Student Affairs educators."

Led by law and policy professionals, the course has many objectives, including developing abilities to work effectively with legal counsel and with "different types and sources of law, legal reasoning, legal structures related to institutions of higher education," the website states. Participants must master several competencies, including the ability to "demonstrate an understanding of the appropriate and inappropriate use of law as a tool for dispute resolution and to reason and communicate objectively regarding issues of law and policy."

A self-described nerd, Dr. Allen-Sharpe has always respected the law and is particularly intrigued with constitutional law. "It's about knowing my rights and freedoms," she says. "Throughout my career in corporate human resources and now higher education, I've always had to be knowledgeable about laws to ensure fairness and equity."

PETER LAKE, a law professor and Charles A. Dana chair and director of the Center for Excellence in Higher Education Law & Policy at the Stetson University College of Law, led the program. Dr. Allen-Sharpe discovered his publications and books through NASPA and admired his contributions to higher education. In 2012, she started attending NASPA conferences, where Lake had led workshops.

"Through his webinars and workshops, I've come to learn a great deal about higher education and constitutional law," says Dr. Allen-Sharpe. "So, last summer, NASPA offered an opportunity to train under Peter. I jumped at the offer and hoped to be selected."

It took an application, an essay, and a letter from Dr. Allen-Sharpe's supervisor, Vice President **DR. TINA BARKSDALE**, but she got in. An assessment and a personal note from Lake revealed that she excelled.

"Regina, I want to thank you for what is obviously an assessment that results from nothing short of a herculean effort . . . I also observe that you work with an extremely



large volume of material in a deep and complex way."

Lake's review compared Dr. Allen-Sharpe's case analysis to one performed by a "seasoned disability law expert or advocate," adding that she demonstrated "exemplary law, policy, and operational skills."



Dr. Regina Allen-Sharpe

The certificate gave her a deeper understanding of public policy, the difference between public and private institutions, and how political systems affect higher education. “I walked away with the knowledge of critical legal and regulatory issues that affect my work as a Student Affairs

professional,” she says.

“Dr. Allen-Sharpe has a passion for learning and is always eager to take on new challenges,” says Dr. Barksdale. “She is a remarkable leader, devoted to making our students’ experiences exceptional and nurturing her employees to thrive.”

After Dr. Allen-Sharpe was ranked in the “high competency” assessment category for the certificate program, Lake added one final thought: “What can you say to a participant who dedicates this kind of effort and turns in this type of deliverable? Bravo!” **WU**

—*Maria Hess*

Dr. Robin Weinstein

A New Dean

DR. **ROBIN WEINSTEIN** has been named dean of the College of Business at Wilmington University. A full professor, he has chaired the Human Resource Management Studies Program at WilmU and served as Chair of the Faculty Senate. He has taught various courses in Human Resource Management, Business Management, Leadership, Ethics, Philosophy, Biblical and Theological studies, and Political Science.

Dr. Weinstein is a respected thought leader inside and outside the classroom. He was named by The Press of Atlantic City in 2016 as one of 10

“Movers and Shakers of South Jersey” and one of “17 to Watch in 2017.” He is an editorial board member for the *Journal of Business and Hotel Management* and the *Journal of Business and Financial Affairs*.

An ordained minister, Dr. Weinstein inspires many, including his students, WilmU colleagues, and the Bethany Grace Community Church congregation in Bridgeton, New Jersey, where he has served as the founding pastor since 2005.

He earned a B.A. in Justice, Law & Society from Eastern University, a Master of Theological Studies in Faith and Public Policy from the Eastern

Baptist Theological Seminary (now Palmer Theological Seminary), and a Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership (Ed.D.) from WilmU. His doctoral dissertation examined the relationship between servant leadership attributes and faith development among governmental leaders.

Dr. Weinstein holds professional certifications from the Society for Human Resource Management Institute and the Human Resource Certificate Institute, along with professional certificates from the Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations. **WU**

—*Maria Hess*



TITLE DEFENDED!

WILMU CHEER EARNS 10TH UCA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

In February, the Wilmington University Cheerleading team successfully defended its Universal Cheerleading Association (UCA) College Open Small Coed National Championship, making it 10 titles since 2012. The Wildcats won eight consecutive Open Small Coed (formerly Division II Small Coed) titles from 2012 to 2019 and have now won back-to-back titles. It is the fifth national championship under current Head Coach **ASHLEY MUNDY**.

“Winning a national championship takes more than talent and hard work,” says Mundy. “It requires a lot of dedication, teamwork, and a strong sense of purpose. This year’s team demonstrated these qualities and proved that anything is possible

when we work together toward a common goal.”

Mundy says that seeing the cheerleaders hit a flawless routine in finals was a “moment of pure joy,” adding that the triumph made all the challenging moments throughout the season worth it. “While it’s my fifth as head coach, I’ve been fortunate enough to be a part of 10 national titles. Each championship has been special, and hearing Wilmington University announced as national champions will never get old.”

Mundy, her team, and the coaching staff were honored at a men’s basketball game at the Wilmington University Athletics Complex. **WU**

—Dan Lauletta





The Pros: From left: Danielle Hudson, Joe Pro, Debbie Pro, Josh Pro

JOE PRO: This President's Now a Hall of Famer

It seems that the title of “president” has followed **JOE PRO** around for most of his life.

At Chichester High School, in Boothwyn, Pennsylvania, he played football and was elected president of the senior class. Later, after he married and began raising a family, he was president of his children’s PTA.

In 1998, he earned a master’s in Business Administration from what was then Wilmington College, joined the Alumni Association and became — what else? — president of that organization from 2006–2011.

The importance of the title ratcheted up a bit in 2006, when he was named president of Pennsylvania Machine Works, a company founded by **CHARLES W. LAFFERTY** in Aston, Pennsylvania, in 1931. Pro became the first person outside the Lafferty family to lead the company.

And now he has an even more impressive title: hall of famer.

Last year, *The Wholesaler Magazine* named Pro its 2023 PVF Hall of Fame inductee. The honor recognizes his 40 years of dedication to the PVF (pipe, valves, and fittings) industry, including five years as president of the PVF Roundtable.

Pro started his career with Penn Machine in 1983, two years after graduating from Temple University with a degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Accounting. The company manufactures forged pressure fittings, specializing in the marine, nuclear power, petrochemical, shipbuilding, cryogenic, and steel-making industries, as well as many other critical industrial applications. Besides its Aston headquarters, it has a forging facility in Swedesboro, New Jersey, and a large

sales and machining center in Houston.

With a working-class, blue-collar background, Pro was a natural fit, and he climbed the corporate ladder quickly, moving from controller, to plant manager in Swedesboro, to operations manager, and finally to president.

It was during his time in plant management that he saw the need to acquire a master’s degree, and Wilmington College seemed to be the obvious choice for a man who had a demanding job in New Jersey and a busy family life at home in Bear, Delaware.

“Based on having talked to some people who previously went through the program, it was the most flexible schedule,” Pro says. “With classes at night and on weekends, it allowed me to continue working full time and also let me participate at home, where I had

two young kids who were into every sport there was.”

He related to his classmates — “people just like me; people who were working, people trying to advance their careers” — and he was particularly impressed with the instructors.

“I had 12 professors who held jobs in the real world, experienced people who could share their experiences,” he says. “And you could share what was going on in your career and get tremendous guidance and mentoring.”

It turns out that the entire Pro family has a WilmU connection. Son **JOSH** has a B.S. in Business Management and a master’s in Business Administration from the University, while daughter **DANIELLE HUDSON** holds a WilmU master’s in Management with a Marketing concentration. And Pro’s wife, **DEBBIE**, who has been with the University for 21 years, is assistant to the vice president of Administrative and Legal Affairs.

Looking back on his career, Pro is especially proud of his involvement with the PVF Roundtable. As a past president, he serves on the board of directors for the organization, which, in addition to promoting the PVF industry, has raised more than \$2 million in scholarships for students at seven trade schools and two four-year universities.

“The Roundtable provides funding for skills that our industry is desperately in need of,” says Pro.

The fundraising efforts resonate with the grandfather of five and his approach to life in general. “Be kind to others, offer yourself to anyone who needs your help,” he says. “I’ve always felt blessed that I have the education and the experience to provide time and guidance to almost anybody who has issues. It would be wrong not to share that with others.” **WU**

—Bob Yearick

The MICU nurse was recognized for compassion and kindness shown to a patient and his family.

ALUMNA **JESSICA ALIFF** HONORED WITH DAISY AWARD

JESSICA ALIFF, who works on the ChristianaCare Medical Intensive Care Unit, was nominated for the Daisy Award for her dedication and caring attitude she provided to a patient — and his family — before his death.

“Jess was probably the best nurse we could have ever asked for to take care of our loved one on his last day on earth.

“She went out of her way to shave his face, wash his hair and make him look as good as he could for us. She was very straightforward with the plan of care and made us feel comfortable on one of the worst days of our lives,” wrote the patient’s niece, who nominated Aliff for the award .



“There were a lot of us in the room that day (most of us nurses ourselves) and she went the extra mile to answer each of our individual questions, bring us waters and was there in the last moments of his life as my grandmother said goodbye to her son,” she said.

“I will never forget the impact she made on making a terrible experience better any way she could.”

Aliff first joined ChristianaCare in 2017 as a patient care technician. She earned her associate’s degree in Nursing from Delaware Technical Community College in 2018 and her bachelor’s degree in Nursing from Wilmington University in 2020. She has been working on the MICU since October 2020.

The nominator ended with this sentiment: “As an ICU nurse myself, I was beyond impressed and relieved knowing she was our nurse. She deserves this award more than anyone.” **WU**

This story was reprinted from ChristianaCares News, with permission. Find more news about ChristianaCare at news.christianacare.org.

Commemorating a milestone with the ceremonial dig. From left: Judge Joseph Farnan Jr., Wilmington University Board Chairman; Dr. LaVerne Harmon, Wilmington University President; Phillip Closius, Law School Dean; Mark Hutton, Regional President, Delaware, M&T Bank



BREAKING GROUND

Groundbreaking Photos by PAUL PATTON

Renderings by FEARN-CLENDANIEL ARCHITECTS, INC.
(Convocation Center) and BERNARDON (law building)



The University is entering a significant moment in its history as construction commences on a Convocation Center and law building at the Brandywine location. | BY MARIA HESS |



At a groundbreaking event on Jan. 25, 2024, Wilmington University officials announced the construction of two landmark buildings at its Brandywine campus: a home for the Wilmington University School of Law and a Convocation Center.

“These new buildings will provide modern and functional spaces and create a vibrant hub for learning, events, and community engagement,” says Wilmington University President **DR. LAVERNE HARMON**. “We plan to combine contemporary design elements with our historic red-brick and cast-stone palette to blend tradition and innovation thoughtfully.”

BELOW: The state-of-the-art Convocation Center will span 85,000 square feet. It will also house the University’s Criminal Justice Institute (CJI).

RIGHT: The rear entrance of the Convocation Center will feature plenty of patio space surrounded by lush greenery. It will also serve as the entrance to the CJI.





The three-story, 52,000-square-foot law building will feature a majestic, three-floor atrium with expansive windows, a welcoming main entrance and reception area, several large classrooms, and a catering kitchen. Its second floor will house a library, ample study space, and private study rooms, while the third floor contains office space for faculty and administration. Like the Varsalona building, the back of the building will be primarily glass, providing a peaceful respite for students to experience the

woodlands. The Wilmington University School of Law offers broad access to affordable legal education within a student-centered culture, serving qualified students from all walks of life, including traditional- and non-traditional-age students and professionals transitioning from other careers. Its program options and unique curricula facilitate student success in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

The 85,000-square-foot Convocation Center will feature a

BELOW: A 2,000-seat auditorium in the Convocation Center will offer a spacious stage for graduation ceremonies and other events.

RIGHT: The law school building will boast a majestic three-floor atrium with expansive windows.





2,000-seat auditorium, a sizeable stage for events and graduations, and a venue for the outside community. Its grand entrance foyer will span two stories. An Executive Meeting Room will house meeting space, and top-notch amenities will support large-scale events. Outside the main lobby, a large, open terrace will showcase scenic views and nature-based walking paths

circling the location. A wing dedicated to the University's Criminal Justice Institute (CJI), which currently operates at Varsalona Hall, will house classrooms and offices, allowing the Institute to serve the community and law enforcement professionals in a greater capacity.

Completion dates for both buildings are tentatively scheduled for 2025. [WU](#)

BELOW: The rear entrance of the law school building will echo the design of Varsalona Hall, with a façade made predominantly of glass that will provide students with tranquil views of the surrounding woodlands.

RIGHT: The three-story, 52,000-square-foot law building will offer state-of-the-art amenities, including large classrooms, a library, private study rooms, and office space. The Wilmington University School of Law welcomed its inaugural class in August 2023, and operates at Brandywine's current single-building location, which also houses classrooms, labs, and offices for the University's other offerings.





Quiz Review

Interest Rates/FEDERAL RESERVE

Statements

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— | EILEEN SMITH DALLABRIDA | —

The Spanish Immersion Pilot

The College of Business is initiating a framework that will empower WilmU to expand its language immersion programs across diverse fields of study, aligning with the demand in a rapidly evolving world.

sense



PHOTOS BY PAUL PATTON

Hispanics are the fastest growing segment of the population in the United States. No wonder businesses are looking for ways to tap this vibrant source of talent and energy.

At Wilmington University, the College of Business is leading the way for students who want to gain an edge as managers, piloting Principles of Management in a Spanish Immersion format.

“In the for-profit sector, they understand the power of the Latino wallet,” says **DR. GUILLERMINA GONZALEZ**, assistant chair for Undergraduate Business programs.

Indeed. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Latino purchasing power is currently estimated at \$3.4 trillion. In 2021, Latino income nationwide totaled \$2.5 trillion, up 4.7%. That’s more than double the 1.9% increase for non-Latinos.

Presented online, the class focuses on core managerial responsibilities: communication, planning and administration, teamwork, strategic action, global awareness, cultural intelligence, and self-management. It's a genuinely bilingual program. Instruction is in Spanish, and assignments, readings, and student presentations are submitted in English.

The pilot was designed for students who speak both Spanish and English and would prefer instruction in Spanish, either to improve their comprehension of Spanish or as an

opportunity to improve their English skills through writing.

Dr. Gonzalez says that bolstering communication across cultures is vital in ensuring smooth and accurate business transactions. Language is the ultimate connector of dots. A U.S. Committee on Economic Development study found that American businesses lose more than \$2 billion yearly because of language or cultural misunderstandings.

"It is a lot more than translation," she says. "Ideas need to be conceptualized."

Dr. Kathy Kennedy-Ratajack



The most significant demand for Spanish speakers is for hospitality managers, social workers, and health care practitioners.



The pilot is in keeping with WilmU's commitment to preparing students to meet their career goals and ensuring everyone gets a seat at the table, says **DR. KATHY KENNEDY-RATAJACK**, AVP of Academic Affairs and Partnerships (former College of Business dean).

"Bilingual academic programs nurture a broader understanding of culture in the classroom and the workplace," Dr. Kennedy-Ratajack says. "This course in the College of Business fosters education through understanding and communication



Dr. Guillermina Gonzalez



that transcends borders. Students are empowered to navigate a globalized world and become managers with empathy and respect for all cultures."

The Spanish Immersion pilot, a three-hour, once-weekly class, was designed to be accessible to students who are intent on careers in a global economy. That includes a burgeoning number of Hispanics in organizational leadership positions. Since 2012, Hispanic workers in management, professional, and related occupations have grown from 8% to nearly 11%; nearly 7% of chief executives are Hispanic. The most significant demand for Spanish speakers is for hospitality managers, social workers, and health care practitioners.

Dr. Gonzalez was formerly an

executive in both the corporate and the nonprofit sectors in the U.S., Europe, and Mexico. She began her career in marketing and sales in multinational organizations, including ExxonMobil, Mars, Tetra Pak, and Olivetti. She then transitioned to the nonprofit sector, serving as executive director of two advocacy organizations: Voices Without Borders and Delaware Arts Alliance.

"I know from experience that being multicultural allows for better engagement. It helps to build bridges in a global economy where technology has removed borders and barriers," she says. "I became the go-to person for connecting not only the Latino community but also pro-profit and nonprofit organizations."

To shape the Spanish Immersion course, Dr. Gonzalez reached out to the community to gather input on the needs of students, employers, and organizations. More than 50 individuals shared their thoughts and insights in 11 focus groups.

BRENDA SOTO, an adjunct instructor and a bilingual human resources consultant, taught the pilot. She's passionate about accessible education. As an international human resources professional, she supported the implementation and restructuring of workforce projects for Fortune 500 organizations in North America, South America, the Caribbean, and Western Europe. She also hosts an online career-coaching program called From Job 2 Joy, in

English and Spanish, that currently reaches people in America and countries such as Chile, Argentina, El Salvador, and Mexico. Soto grew up in Puerto Rico and is a former Delaware Hispanic Commission executive board member.

"When people think of Hispanic, they often think of Texas, California, and Arizona," Soto says. "But the Hispanic community also is growing in Delaware."

In the 2020 census, 10.5% of people in Delaware reported Hispanic or Latino origin, an increase of 42.4% from the 2010 census. In Sussex County, the Hispanic population has boomed, growing more than 10-fold over the past 30 years due to an influx of immigrants from Mexico and

Guatemala, according to a report by the Delaware Community Foundation. Hispanic-owned businesses grew 165% between 2013 and 2017.

Two students who completed the Spanish Immersion pilot personify the program's dual mission of serving Spanish-speaking students and native English speakers who want to improve their fluency in Spanish.

One is a native English speaker from Minnesota. Only 6% of that state's population is Hispanic, but the numbers are increasing, rising 38% between 2012 and 2020. "She doesn't come from a Latino background," Soto says. "She simply wanted to improve her Spanish and did very well."

The other student is a Spanish speaker from Texas, where 40.2%

Brenda Soto says
bilingual managers have an advantage
in better communicating with
teams, employees, and clients.
That includes the personal
touch — the skills
that help to inspire
and motivate employees.



of the population is Hispanic. She wanted to enhance her management skills in a class taught in her native tongue while improving her ability to communicate in English.

Their backgrounds are different, but their goals are the same. Both are working as full-time customer service representatives while completing their bachelor's degrees at WilmU. And both want to move into management, one in human resources in the banking sector and the other in telecommunications.

Soto says bilingual managers have an advantage in better communicating with teams, employees, and clients. That includes the personal touch — the skills that help to inspire and motivate employees.

The Spanish Immersion pilot was designed for students interested in careers in the global economy.



“It’s about bonding with your co-workers, showing interest in what other people do,” she says. “It helps in connecting people who work remotely, too.”

Research also suggests bilingual workers can command higher salaries. A study published in *Empirica*, an economics journal, found that job candidates who speak a second language can expect to earn 35% more. Research by Language Testing International (LTI), which certifies individuals in language proficiency, says nine out of 10 employers rely on employees who are fluent in a language other than English, especially when developing new markets; 56% expect demand for bilingual and multilingual speakers to increase significantly over the next five years. LTI says bilingual staff typically make 20% more than employees who speak and understand one language.

The benefits of a bilingual workforce aren’t limited to the business world. Based on the success of the College of Business pilot, the model is also being explored by WilmU’s colleges of Education and Liberal Arts and Health Professions and Natural Sciences.

Still, there are challenges in ramping up bilingual programs, Dr. Gonzalez says. The most significant hurdle is building a team of bilingual instructors. “To find instructors who are truly bilingual is not an easy task,” she says.

Establishing that infrastructure will enable WilmU to grow its language immersion offerings to various areas of study to keep pace with demand in an evolving world.

“Decision-making can be complex and multifaceted,” Dr. Gonzalez says. “Language should enhance that process, not get in the way.” [WU](#)





DBA Student Melanie Daniels

An astute DBA student may have made a breakthrough,
and dental patients will be forever thankful.



Augmented Reality to the Rescue

— | BY RUTH NORMAN | —

A severe toothache can be unbearable, and over 2 million people experience dental emergencies yearly. They suffer from excruciating pain and need immediate relief. Unfortunately, it's difficult for dentists to respond quickly to emergencies because their schedules are already packed.



In her marketing course, Wilmington University Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) student **MELANIE DANIELS** embraced the opportunity to attack this critical problem as a real-life project. As the innovations officer at Blue Diamond Dental, she was in an excellent position to analyze emergency patients' acute pain problems and evaluate possible solutions.

— | PHOTOS BY PAUL PATTON | —



REMOTE INTRAORAL CAMERAS ALLOW IMMEDIATE DIAGNOSIS OF THE PAIN SOURCE WITHOUT REQUIRING AN IN-PERSON VISIT.

Using Zoom or a similar video platform, a dentist can manipulate the intraoral camera to get close-up photographs of the patient's mouth and teeth.



Melanie Daniels

“I am blessed to have been given this opportunity to participate in the DBA program, most importantly the courses that specifically enhanced my overall analysis, critical thinking, and evaluation skills,” says Daniels. “This project was birthed out of my marketing course, where we specifically studied the jobs-to-be-done process. Taking concept to implementation has been the greatest contribution to my work. I’m excited to say I very quickly am becoming an expert in the dental industry field of study.”

Daniels started by delving into various aspects of the problem. The initial analysis showed that 7% of Blue Diamond’s patients had emergencies. Interestingly, most emergency patients had not been making regular dental visits. Thus, the lack of routine dental monitoring contributed to the complexity of diagnosis and treatment.

A longer-term solution could be to decrease emergency cases by increasing preventive care. However, changing behavior is complex, so shorter-term solutions are also needed.

Next, Daniels analyzed how long it took to relieve patients’ pain. Her research showed that the average time from an emergency patient’s initial phone call to getting in the office and out of pain was between six and 24 hours. One reason for slow relief was that the dental practice had to work the patient into the day’s schedule. If that schedule was full of existing patients, the patient was scheduled as far out as the next day.

After characterizing the problem, Daniels researched possible solutions. She considered both technology and process innovations. From a technological perspective, augmented reality was identified as a promising

solution. Researchers have developed remote intraoral cameras that allow immediate diagnosis of the pain source without requiring an in-person visit. Using Zoom or a similar video platform, a dentist can manipulate the intraoral camera to get close-up photographs of the patient’s mouth and teeth.

Augmented Reality for Remote Diagnosis

Emergency patients at home simply need to connect to the video platform and open their mouths. The augmented reality software uses high-resolution intraoral camera technology installed on computers throughout the dental office. When patients join the call, they’re instructed to turn on the camera light on their phone and focus it on the tooth or teeth causing them pain. Then, the dental team member can take pictures of the problem teeth, which are transformed into radiographic images that clearly indicate the dental issue.

Daniels analyzed the costs and benefits of the remote intraoral camera and showed acceptable payback. Consequently, Blue Diamond Dental purchased the equipment. But the innovation didn’t stop there.

Process changes were needed to complement the new technology to reduce the time for emergency patients to get relief from acute pain. One process change entailed asking basic



When patients join the call, they're instructed to turn on the camera light on their phone and focus it on the tooth or teeth causing them pain. Then, the dental team member can take pictures of the problem teeth.



“I HOPE TO MOVE MY RESEARCH TO ACTIONABLE AND EXECUTABLE PROCESSES *within the Delaware dental community and speak nationwide on this and other successful dental business processes.*”

—Melanie Daniels

questions when patients requested treatments. These questions were designed to aid in swiftly diagnosing whether the problem was an infection or something else. In some cases, the diagnosis could be made based on the answers. In others, the responses could guide examinations with the remote intraoral camera. This instrument looks like a large pen that takes high-resolution footage or images of a patient’s mouth.

Now, when an infection is diagnosed, the antibiotic prescription is immediately sent to a pharmacy. Thus, the phone-call-to-treatment time for infections has been reduced from four to two hours.

For emergency patients with conditions other than infections, the remote camera allows prompt decisions on whether a dentist or another specialist should treat the patient. In either case, having a detailed, preliminary diagnosis guides the subsequent treatment, reducing the time for achieving pain relief.

How Patients Feel about the New Technology

Blue Diamond Dental’s emergency patients are enthusiastic about the augmented reality camera and the streamlined processes. “I was amazed with the way they were telling me what was happening in my mouth just by the positions I was placing my phone camera,” says one

patient. “They had me in the office within a couple of hours. I love this new process.”

Another says, “The office got my son out of pain in an hour. We answered some questions. They told us he had an infection, and before they could remedy the issue with the tooth, the infection had to be eliminated. The pharmacy called soon after I hung up with the dental office, saying the prescription was ready.”

The augmented reality camera and process improvements benefit emergency patients and dental practices. Both revenues and the effective use of diagnosis time have been enhanced.

Another benefit of the new technology and processes is building trust, satisfaction, and stronger relationships with emergency patients. Regular checkups could avoid many dental emergencies. Providing excellent service to emergency patients may lead to a more positive attitude toward preventive dental care. Avoiding pain through prevention is the best treatment of all.

“I hope to move my research to actionable and executable processes within the Delaware dental community and speak nationwide on this and other successful dental business processes,” says Daniels. **WU**

Dr. Ruth Norman is a professor at Wilmington University. She played a key role in the founding of the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program.





Daniels developed a process improvement that allows emergency dental patients to achieve pain relief much more quickly.



BFFS LEAD CAMPUS WELLNESS CENTER

BY BOB YEARICK

ALUMNAE **DR. DIANE MUSSOLINE** AND
DR. KRISTEN WILSON SPUR INNOVATIVE
MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES.

Sometimes, the stars just align. That seems to be so in the case of **DR. DIANE MUSSOLINE** and **DR. KRISTEN WILSON**.

The two mental health professionals arrived on the Rowan College of South Jersey (RCSJ) campus in Sewell about a year apart — Dr. Wilson in 2017 and Dr. Mussoline in 2018. Neither had earned a doctorate at the time, but that would soon change.

The New Jersey natives quickly became colleagues and best friends. As they exchanged ideas, they realized they shared a vision for a campus wellness center.



PHOTOS BY PAUL PATTON



“We wanted it to be like an open-for-all hub where students can feel holistically supported,” says Dr. Mussoline. What’s more, they wanted the center to be as much about prevention as it would be about treatment.

Both were planning to pursue doctoral degrees, and that’s when Dr.

Mussoline came across Wilmington University’s Doctor of Social Science in Prevention Science program. She shared her discovery with Dr. Wilson, who had earned a master’s in Administration of Human Services at WilmU in 2015.

“They taught me skills I didn’t know, like grant writing, budget

preparation, and things like that,” says Dr. Wilson. “It was a no-brainer to get my doctorate at Wilmington.”

They were especially pleased that the doctoral program dovetailed nicely with their vision for the RCSJ’s wellness center. Says Dr. Wilson: “The mental sciences world is focused on treatment, and the idea



cohort,” says Dr. Mussoline. “We decided to pursue it as kind of a duo.”

Then, once again, the stars aligned. “Right around the time we were finishing our doctorate, this opportunity came to us to restructure the previous counseling and wellness center,” Dr. Mussoline says.

“And through what we learned in our doctoral program, we created the Center for Wellness and Support, which has been a wonderful gift and journey to do together. It was a collaborative approach from the top down, but we were kind of the main players.”

She explains that the two sought to create not only a wellness hub on

campus but a culture of wellness.

“We wanted to allow students to be successful academically and emotionally — without material hardship,” she says. “Kristen concentrated on the basic needs and securities side, whereas I was more on the mental health side. We were the direct line for them to get whatever level of care and help was appropriate.”

The division of responsibilities reflects the paths the two took to arrive at RCSJ.

Dr. Wilson’s academic journey got off to a bit of a slow start. A 2005 graduate of Millville High School, she eventually earned an associate degree from what was then

“WE WANTED TO ALLOW STUDENTS TO BE SUCCESSFUL ACADEMICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY — WITHOUT MATERIAL HARDSHIP. ... **WE WERE THE DIRECT LINE FOR THEM TO GET WHATEVER LEVEL OF CARE AND HELP WAS APPROPRIATE.**” —*Dr. Diane Mussoline*



Dr. Kristen Wilson and Dr. Diane Mussoline

that we could prevent some of these things resonated with us.”

Encouraged by RCSJ’s President, **DR. FREDERICK KEATING** — who earned *his* doctorate in Organizational Leadership from WilmU — they enrolled in the program in 2020.

“Kristen and I were in the same



Dr. Kristen Wilson

Cumberland County College and is now the Cumberland Campus of RCSJ.

It was, she laughs, “a storied journey” to get that first degree. “It took me seven years because of life just happening,” she says. She took some time off and worked various jobs, including server and bartender.

One of those jobs was at a drug and alcohol rehab facility. “That’s when I decided to major in Psychology,” she says.

And she did just that, earning an associate degree in 2012. Then, it was full speed ahead. She immediately enrolled at Temple University and received her bachelor’s in Psychology in 2014, followed by a master’s at WilmU a year later.

After Temple, she gained valuable experience while working for SERV

— Services Empowering Rights of Victims — which provides sexual violence services in three southern New Jersey counties.

“That’s where I fell in love with the idea of prevention science,” Dr. Wilson says. “I was a sexual-violence prevention educator, working with youth on media literacy.”

She talked to middle schoolers about how movies, television, commercials, print ads, posters, and other media can influence behavior — usually subtly and often negatively. “We looked at the subtext of what some of those things mean — how do certain movies promote rape culture, for instance,” she says. “We tried to teach young folks how to distinguish between movies and reality.”

She found a challenging audience at the middle schools and Boys & Girls

Clubs of Gloucester County. She says of the grant-funded project, which lasted just over a year, “Working with middle schoolers really prepares you for other hard audiences. Middle schoolers, man, they don’t give you a break. But I loved doing the work.”

Dr. Mussoline’s academic trajectory was more conventional. After graduating from Haddonfield High School in 2003, she enrolled at James Madison University in Virginia, majoring in Interdisciplinary Liberal Studies. She stayed at the school for a fifth year to earn a master’s in Elementary Education in 2008.

Returning to New Jersey, she taught students with disabilities in Sewell for six years. In 2012, she enrolled in night classes at The College of New Jersey in Ewing, and two years later got an Educational Specialist degree in Marriage and Family Therapy/Counseling.

The degree triggered a professional change of direction for her. “I left the teaching world after I got my Ed.S. in Family Therapy and started doing work in some agencies,” she says. She was a mental health therapist for the Moorestown Visiting Nurse Association, then served as a habilitation counselor at Rutgers University for almost three years before joining RCSJ.

Dr. Mussoline is the school’s executive director of Behavioral Sciences, and Dr. Wilson is director of Behavioral Sciences. Together, they run two wellness centers, one on the main campus and another on the Cumberland County branch campus.

They generally split responsibilities based on their professional experiences: Dr. Wilson concentrates on students’ basic needs and security, while Dr. Mussoline focuses more on mental health issues. Neither provides direct counseling; rather, they conduct initial triage to determine students’ presenting needs and the resources that are available to help them.

“Then we assist with that linkage to the appropriate level of care,”

says Dr. Mussoline, “and we do ongoing case management with them to ensure that the support services they’re getting are benefiting them.”

She says that the residue of the pandemic is still apparent among college students. “We saw an increase in mental health-related challenges then,” she says. “Specifically, a lot of depression, anxiety. The social isolation really impacted students’ ability to socialize. Physical activity decreased, and that upended the typical college experience and influenced a lot of coping strategies, like alcohol and drugs. So, there have been a lot of compounding effects due to the pandemic.”

Economic needs are obstacles for many RCSJ students, says Dr. Wilson. “We’re dealing with many first-generation college students and a lot who are caring for dependents. We have a lot of single moms. Inflation is hitting them especially hard. We’re seeing a lot of food insecurity and housing insecurity. Rents are skyrocketing; transportation is an issue.”

The students don’t have time, she says, to worry about issues outside their world, such as politics, climate change, or war in the Middle East.

“Our students are just trying to get through the day. They’re concerned with getting to class, doing homework, going to work, picking up their kids, and getting dinner on the table. All that causes stress and mental health issues.”

“I can relate,” she adds. “I was a low-income community college student, and I worked full-time, sometimes two jobs. It’s not easy.”

Thanks to the school’s partnerships with Acenda Integrated Health and Uwill, a student mental health and wellness online platform, the Center for Wellness and Support can act as a referral hub and offer students extensive resources and services, many of which are free.

Dr. Keating has high praise for his fellow WilmU alumni. “These ladies are exceptional in their work and



Dr. Diane Mussoline

ability to put together such a project on two campuses, especially after coming out of the post-pandemic arena,” he says. “They’ve led the charge from the beginning. They’re meeting students all day, every day, doing referrals and follow-ups. The wellness center has been very successful.”

“It’s satisfying work,” says Dr. Mussoline. “It’s nice to see students on the other end of their challenges, where they’re succeeding and where supports that we led them to benefit them and give them a fresh perspective on life because now they’re not navigating some of these challenges on their own. It gives you hope that things can get better. Of course, sometimes it’s hard when they’re unwilling to access the support. So, you see both sides of that.”

Says Dr. Wilson: “I absolutely love my work, helping them to navigate referrals, etc., and learn what the gaps are, and then, OK, how do we strategically figure out how to meet those needs? It’s great.”

The two colleagues have adjoining offices, and when their doors open, they often talk back and forth.

And the conversation isn’t always about work.

“We’ve built this wonderful friendship,” says Dr. Mussoline.

“Over the years of working together, we’ve experienced births, deaths, the pandemic, grad school, and major work changes together,” says Dr. Wilson. “I’m very grateful for our friendship, in and outside work.”

Stars, colleagues, offices: They’re all aligned on the Rowan College of South Jersey campus. **WU**

SPORTS

HALEY DOWNIN: OFFICIALLY ELITE

by Bob Yearick

Anyone connected with the Wilmington University softball program over the past four years has known that **HALEY DOWNIN** is elite. Now, it's official.

Last May, Downin received the NCAA Elite 90 Award, which honors the student-athlete with the highest cumulative grade-point average participating at the finals site for each of the NCAA's 90 championships. The first Wildcat athlete to be named an Elite 90 award winner, Downin was presented with the award at the banquet that began the week-long NCAA Division II National Softball Championship in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

The individual accolade capped off a historic season of achievements for the Wildcat team. They won the Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference (CACC) Regular Season Title, the CACC Tournament Championship, the NCAA DII East Region 2 Tournament, and the East Super Regional Series

to advance for the first time to the NCAA DII Softball Championships.

What's more, their peers selected Head Coach **MIKE SHEHORN** and his staff — **JAMES BRITTINGHAM**, **TOM FREELAND**, and **JERRY GRASSO** — as the 2023 ATEC/NFCA Regional Coaching Staff of the Year.

Downin, a graduate of Chesapeake High School in Pasadena, Maryland, has excelled in the classroom and on the playing field since enrolling at WilmU in 2019.

Shehorn recruited her as a pitcher, but her freshman season in the circle was cut short by COVID. Last year, she played primarily first base, and in previous years she pitched and played second.

Thanks to her athleticism, the 5-foot-7 Downin can play anywhere, and she has. Last season, Shehorn used her as catcher for a couple of innings, marking the ninth position she has played for the team.

In 2023, Downin hit .306 while collecting six doubles, a triple, a homer, and 21 RBI. She's a career .322 hitter with 143 hits, 30 doubles, three triples, two homers and 57 RBI. She has scored 83 runs and stolen 28 bases in her four years. She's also made 38 pitching appearances for the Wildcats, totaling 137.2 innings and registering a 4.42 ERA with 80 strikeouts.

Clearly a high achiever in the

classroom, Downin received a bachelor's degree in Psychology last spring, finishing with a 3.99 cumulative grade point average. She's currently pursuing a master's in Applied Family Science. After earning that degree in 2025, she says she will immediately begin studying for a second master's in School Psychology.

Of her academic achievements, Downin says: "I'm very strict about school work, and I'm very organized. I get everything done weeks ahead of time. My anxiety makes me do things early instead of procrastinating, which I guess is a good thing."

A standout in both basketball and softball at Chesapeake High, Downin was recruited by several schools, including George Mason, the University of Maryland, Seton Hill, and the University of Delaware.

She says she chose WilmU because it's only a 90-minute drive to her home in Pasadena, and she "loved the coaches."

"I also liked the atmosphere," she adds, "and the fact that there were no dorms was a big selling point for me. I like having more of a homey feel."

One of the team's four co-captains, she's enjoying her last year of athletic eligibility while living with a softball player and a basketball player in an apartment on Route 40, across from the school's athletic complex.





Haley Downin

She originally intended to play both basketball and softball at the University. "I was going to redshirt the first year for basketball and see how things went," she says, "but there was a coaching change, so I decided to let that go and focus on softball."

"Softball has been an interesting journey for sure," she says. "COVID messed it up a little bit, so I never really had a freshman year. Now that we're finally back to normal, it's been really fun. Going to the College World Series last year was an amazing experience. We had a great time bonding together and going to all the different events. I can't ask for anything more than that."

Downin and Shehorn connected almost immediately. "Coach Mike and I have always had a really good, open relationship," she says. "He tries to have that with everybody. He can be serious, but he does like to have fun. And he's also very family-oriented. When we travel, he makes sure the schedule allows us to get together with our families."

Shehorn calls Downin "one of our leaders."

"She handles so many things, like updates on meetings, making sure everyone has the right gear," he says. "She takes the initiative on these things. And she's not just a vocal leader; she also leads on the field."

Downin hopes to pursue a career as a middle school psychologist while coaching basketball or softball. "I usually help coach my high school basketball team while we're on winter break," she says.

When she's home, she also plays in pickup games at the high school gym with her dad and what she calls "his old man crew."

She calls her father, **LEROY**, her hero. "He still tears it up on the basketball court," she says. "We're both very competitive, and I would love for him to be on my team all the time, but the other players say that's not fair." Two Downins on the same team? That does seem unfair. **WU**

Kate Warrington Hugelmeyer



**KATIE WARRINGTON
HUGELMEYER:
FIRST INDIVIDUAL WILDCAT
IN THE CACC HALL OF FAME**

by Bob Yearick

Fortunately, the phone call came during a lull in the full-time job of raising her two preschoolers. Still, **KATIE WARRINGTON HUGELMEYER** almost didn't answer it.

"It was so out-of-the-blue," she says. "I was like, who is this number from Connecticut calling me?"

Turns out it was the commissioner of the Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference (CACC), calling to tell Hugelmeyer that she had been elected to the CACC Hall of Fame, thus becoming the first individual Wildcat to receive that honor. She joins the 2012 golf and the 2015 baseball teams as WilmU's only representatives — so far — in the Conference HOF.

Hugelmeyer says she was only 5-foot-4 "in my cleats" when she pitched for WilmU from 2011 to 2013, but she looked like a giant to opposing batters. She was just Katie Warrington back then, and she brought a competitive fire and an arsenal of pitches to the circle: fastball, changeup, drop, screwball, and her favorite, the curveball.

That talent produced conference, regional and national accolades. She was a two-time CACC Pitcher of the Year (2011 and 2013) and a three-time First-Team All-CACC honoree. She was also a First-Team Daktronics All-East Region selection and earned honorable-mention All-America status from the organization in 2013.

Hugelmeyer set school records that may never be broken, including 645 career strikeouts — 137 more than the second-place Wildcat pitcher. Her other records: a career 1.09 earned run average, including two seasons with infinitesimal ERAs — 0.96 in 2011 and 0.99 in 2013; the single season record of 230 strikeouts, in both 2011 and 2013; the single game strikeout record (20), and 10.20 strikeouts per seven innings for a career.

She held opponents to a cumulative batting average of .180

as she went 45-22 and threw 23 shutouts (17 solo and six combined) during her career.

As a Sports Management major, the Townsend, Delaware, native also excelled as a student. She was a CoSIDA Academic All-American in three straight seasons, including first-team honors in 2013. She was named the CACC Female Scholar-Athlete of the Year in both 2012 and 2013.

Hugelmeyer wore WilmU green and white for only three years because she spent her freshman year at Liberty University. The oldest in a tightknit family of three sisters and one brother, she says she was "miserably homesick" at the Lynchburg, Virginia, school.

Enter Wilmington University and **ERIN HARVEY**. Currently the school's associate athletic director, Harvey was the Wildcat softball coach from 2007–2012, and she was well aware of Hugelmeyer's achievements at Red Lion Christian Academy.

"She was without a doubt one of the best pitchers in the state in high school," says Harvey, "so when we heard in the summer of 2010 that Katie was looking to return to a school closer to home, we reached out to her about coming to and playing for Wilmington."

Hugelmeyer accepted the offer almost immediately.

"Wilmington was a perfect fit," she says. "I loved it. I could live at home, and the softball was super competitive. A lot of the girls were ones I had played against in high school, and everybody's family came to most of the games."

Harvey credits the fireballing righthander with immediately making the softball program better.

"Right from the onset, she established herself as a dominating force in the circle," she says. "A power pitcher, she threw with pinpoint accuracy and very rarely was she behind in the count, which exemplified the 'get ahead, stay ahead' philosophy when attacking opposing offenses."

Hugelmeyer was as happy in the

classroom as she was on the diamond. "I got a great education at Wilmington," she says. "I feel I had excellent teachers. One of things I liked is that a lot of them are not fulltime so what they're teaching you at night is what they have done all day. They're able to give real-world examples of what you're studying."

She continued her studies and earned an MBA with a concentration in Organizational Leadership in 2016. She then worked in human resources, including three years for the State of Delaware.

She married JP Hugelmeyer, a classmate at the University, in 2012. He is the manager of a chemical blending plant in Bear, while she has been "concentrating on being a mom" for the past few years.

"The kids will only be young for a short time, so I'm enjoying it now," Hugelmeyer says.

Wrangling her two preschoolers has left little time to make the trip from the family's Middletown home to watch Wildcat softball. "The games are usually in the middle of the day, and mid-day is naptime," she says.

Hugelmeyer describes being elected to the CACC Hall of Fame as not only surprising but "very humbling." WilmU will host the 2024 CACC Tournament in May, and the plan is to have her on campus during the Awards Banquet to be officially inducted.

"My whole family is coming; they're very excited," she says.

Harvey credits Hugelmeyer with being instrumental in laying the foundation for the successes the Wildcat softball program has achieved over the last decade.

"I am so grateful to the Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference for bestowing this honor upon Katie," she says. "No one is more deserving. She truly exemplified the term 'student-athlete' and she is a phenomenal representation to be the first individual from WilmU inducted into their Hall of Fame." **WU**

ALUMNI

DR. MARIETTA DANTONIO-MADSEN: A Divine Calling

by Maria Hess

Wilmington University alumna and adjunct professor **DR. MARIETTA DANTONIO-MADSEN** has dedicated her career to serving multicultural populations through art.

“Whenever I see a need, I have always felt that if I have a skill set that can help different people and communities, I feel responsible to help them,” she says. “When I pray, if I feel directed to serve people, I always do what is asked of me.”

Much has been asked of her through prayer, which is why Dr. Dantonio-Madsen considers every project a privilege. “I trust I am being directed by God,” she says. She has also felt a connection to **DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.**, who believed in life’s interconnectedness. In a sermon, he said, “All life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality.”

“By working harmoniously, we can have a force of energy that consists of love rather than hate,” says Dr. Dantonio-Madsen. “That is the whole focus of my outreach work: It’s about the power of love.”

Dr. Dantonio-Madsen has spent most of her career in healing through the fine arts, having earned worldwide recognition and numerous awards, including President Obama’s Presidential Award for Lifetime Volunteer Service and the Smithsonian



Dr. Marietta Dantonio-Madsen

Award for Technology and Art. Her many presentations include “Transforming Your Trauma” for a conference at the African American Museum in Philadelphia, and creating the “Operation Desert Art” campaign, in which she raised \$150,000 for art supplies sent to the U.S. Army in Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Storm. She has also worked with the Delaware Department of Justice to create a Healing Arts curriculum for incarcerated youth in Delaware. Her juried exhibits have appeared at the United Nations, many local and international museums, and several countries, including India, Egypt, and South Africa.

She teaches Color Theory to undergraduates at WilmU, where she

earned an Ed.D. in Higher Education Leadership. She is also the Arts and Humanities faculty chairperson and a professor at Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, where she founded The National Art Educators Cheyney University Fine Arts Honor Society and the Epsilon Pi Tau Technology Honor Society.

At Cheyney, she partnered with The Apologues, a traveling community museum dedicated to healing and assisting urban communities plagued by violence and trauma through the arts.

“I got a phone call from (television host and founder) **ZARINAH LOMAX**,” says Dr. Dantonio-Madsen. “She looked me up and saw all the projects I had done and wanted to collaborate. I told her I would as long as I could use my theories on how I approach healing arts projects.”

The project was called “Healing Arts Anti-Gun Violence, The Power of Love,” and resulted in a 20-by-8-foot tapestry and a documentary that focused on 36 families who had lost loved ones to gun violence. The intensive community effort joined Cheyney faculty and students who worked with families impacted by gun violence.

“Initially, I wanted 20 mothers to come, and we would match them with 20 students,” says Dr. Dantonio-Madsen, but many more showed up



The “Healing Arts Anti-Gun Violence, The Power of Love” project resulted in this 20-by-8-foot tapestry focused on 36 families who lost loved ones to gun violence.

— and brought their families. For the tapestry, the artists chose to use heart shapes to represent the aching hearts, and individual panels depicted the stories of every murdered child.”

“I came up with a pattern,” says Dr. Dantonio-Madsen. “The students met the mothers and families, about 400 people in all.”

Dr. Dantonio-Madsen offered weekend painting sessions, served meals, and help from Cheyney’s Art Department and a brilliant seamstress, the tapestry was completed. She told her students to ask each mother (or family member) what message they would give their children in heaven if they had the chance. Those messages were added at the bottom of every panel.

Above the panels were the black, yellow, white, and red colors of the Native American Medicine Wheel. Dr. Dantonio-Madsen made 600 prayer ties of the same colors by hand for the families.

The project took a year. “It was an amazing celebration,” says Dr. Dantonio-Madsen. “The mothers had asked me to make t-shirts with their children’s names, so each parent, student, and volunteer got one.”

Dr. Dantonio-Madsen doesn’t believe in coincidences, so when

magical things happen, she isn’t surprised. During this project, a colleague told her about Logo Motive, a printer in Rehoboth Beach, so she hired the company sight unseen to print the shirts. “When I went to pick them up,” she says, “the printer said, ‘I didn’t want to tell you this, but my husband was killed by gun violence in New York. I am still healing from it, and this project helped me.’”

That magical connection seems to transpire with every project Dr. Dantonio-Madsen takes on, perhaps because she embraces a calling to respect and celebrate diverse cultures and actively seeks to expand her understanding of the differences among people.

She has spent much of her own money on her work. “I don’t worry about funding,” she says, adding that she hates writing grants but grudgingly admits to their importance in the arts. “If this is what I’m supposed to do, the money will come, one way or the other.”

Dr. Dantonio-Madsen has a deep enthusiasm for delving into different cultures. For her dissertation, *Libertas Create: The Efficacy of the Cultural and Spiritual Connections in Healing Arts*, she worked with the Delaware Lenape tribe in Dover, Delaware, to observe the effects of healing through the arts

and ultimately establish a curricular framework.

She also formed a nonprofit called Totem Rhythms, which offers outreach to the Native American community and strives to maintain the cultural heritage of Indigenous American Indian peoples through totem pole-building projects.

Dr. Dantonio-Madsen comes across as someone entering a thrilling career path, notwithstanding her extensive decades-long experience. Her spirituality feeds her vitality and deepens her passion for fostering connections and building communities through art. To her, art inspires people to share stories and appreciate the beauty of diversity. Her teaching philosophy goes beyond the strokes of a brush; it encompasses fostering an inclusive environment where everyone’s voice is heard and celebrated.

With her work fêted worldwide, Dr. Dantonio-Madsen has left an indelible mark on those around her, and despite her success, she remains humble.

“I’m called to do this work,” she says. “So, I’m fearless.” **WU**

Contact Dr. Dantonio-Madsen at marietta.t.dantoniomadsen@wilmu.edu.

DELL SCOTT: Runway Ready

by Eileen Smith Dallabrida

DELL SCOTT designs glamorous fashions that have graced runways in New York, Paris, and Dubai. But her most important design is the plan for her life, an intricate tapestry that weaves her international formal wear and accessories brand with writing motivational books, working in her family's accounting business, and her role as a wife and mother.

"Nothing about my journey has been cookie-cutter," she says.

Scott fell in love with fashion as a young girl, devoting hours to styling outfits for paper dolls. "Every week, my mom took me to the store to see the latest Barbie fashions that were out," she recalls.

After high school, her parents urged her to go to college. Scott opted to take a gap year as a junior accountant in her father's firm in New Castle. One year turned into a decade. When she enrolled at Wilmington University, she was 28, married, and had a toddler.

"When I did go back to school, I was laser-focused, dean's list every semester," she says.

Scott was a full-time student in the College of Business while continuing to work full-time in accounting. She took core courses in face-to-face classes and electives in an online setting. Instructors allowed her to adjust her schedule at tax time, Scott's busiest season at work. "That flexibility made it possible for me to be there for my family, keep working, and finish my degree," she says.

During her senior year, Scott



became pregnant with her second child, born a few months before her final exams. He's now 19.

"The faculty gave me their full support, allowing me to reschedule my finals so I could graduate on time," she says. "Going to a school where the instructors and administration truly understand what is happening in the lives of their students made all the difference."

ANGELA BLUE, a fashion brand consultant and designer chair for Philadelphia Fashion Week, says Scott's business acumen gives her an advantage in a competitive field.

"Most designers are creative but aren't business savvy, which makes their journey so much harder. It's great

to be creative, but you also have to understand the bottom line," she says.

Blue says Scott is a role model for young entrepreneurs. She's a strong, confident designer who knows what she wants to achieve for her business yet remains open to seeking and taking advice.

"She is well packaged, creating a full brand with a team that is flawless," Blue says. "Dell has grown so much, achieving international recognition in only a few years, and each collection only gets more beautiful."

Scott's garments are known for precise construction, fluid lines, and impeccable embellishment. Her look is feminine and sophisticated, characterized by metallics, mesh, and



Scott's look is feminine and sophisticated, characterized by metallics, mesh, and pearls, and includes show stoppers such as full-length evening gowns.



Debbie Dickinson led Scott's New York Fashion Week show in a black satin petal gown with pearl trim.

pearls, and includes show stoppers such as full-length evening gowns, two-piece sets, and structured mini dresses. She's built a network of local seamstresses and manufacturers in Dubai to produce her work.

MARTHA MORGAN, owner of the iconic Morgan's boutique in Wilmington, recognized Scott's talent on the runway of First State Fashion Week in 2017. She offers Scott's Diva Couture line of accessories and made-to-order garments in her store. She says the designer's maturity and commitment to her craft shine through in her collections.

"The quality of her work is fierce and fabulous, with a consistent level of excellence," Morgan says. "From a spiritual standpoint, Dell thinks of her work as a blessing to others. That's important in the fashion world, where so many people are consumed with self-promotion."

Through her writing, Scott encourages women to embrace their dreams. Her latest book, "She Designed A Life She Loved," was released in November 2023. "It's about movement. If you take one step, God will jump you five steps," she says.

She showed her first collection at New York Fashion Week in 2018, and presented in Los Angeles in 2019. Her career took a downturn in the pandemic, when formalwear went into mothballs as events were canceled.

"In 2020, COVID came, and I was dead in the water. By 2021, I didn't know if I even wanted to do fashion anymore. I could not get motivated," she recalls.

The opportunity to develop a global presence reignited her fire. In 2023, Scott presented in Dubai and Paris. Her *Emerge* Collection debuted at New York Fashion Week earlier that

year. **DEBBIE DICKINSON**, a supermodel in the 1970s, led the show in a black satin petal gown with pearl trim and a plunging neckline.

Scott had admired Dickinson since her youth, when she spent hours paging through fashion magazines picturing Dickinson, **CAROL ALT**, **BEVERLY JOHNSON**, **CHERYL TIEGS**, and other luminaries of the runway. Scott invited Dickinson to lead her show after hearing that the model is pursuing an acting career and looking for opportunities to enhance her profile.

"Never negate the power of networking. You never know who will become an integral part of your journey. You could be sitting next to someone who has the key to unlock the door that you need opened," she says.

The designer is also savvy about promoting her brand, establishing a Dell Scott Club on Facebook whose followers receive daily updates and notifications, says **SARAH RODOWICZ**, acting regional director for Fashion Group International (FGI) Philadelphia. Scott is an FGI board member.

Recently, Rodowicz, Scott, other FGI members, and their families met at Winterthur Museum to see an exhibit on **ANN LOWE**, the sublimely gifted yet often unsung African-American designer whose works include **JACQUELINE KENNEDY**'s wedding dress and the elaborately embellished gown **OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND** wore to accept her first Academy Award. Many attendees were struck that Lowe's business struggled financially despite her talent and hard work.

Rodowicz says Scott sets an example for other designers in successfully balancing art and business.

"Dell is great at running a financially sound enterprise while nurturing her creativity," she says. "She takes care of herself yet prioritizes kindness to others." **WU**

— ANNUAL —

WILMINGTON UNIVERSITY

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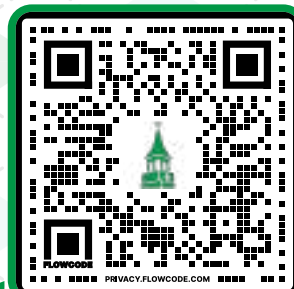


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1977



ROBERT SNYDER B.S. in Criminal Justice, of Manitou Springs, Colorado, announced his retirement from

Forest Products Commodities Management.

1981



SCOTT PHILLIPS B.S. in Criminal Justice, of Wilmington, was elected New Castle County sheriff.

1999



GARY HEVERLY M.S. in Community Counseling, of Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, was named principal of

Mifflin County Academy of Science and Technology.



JAIME SOWERS Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Innovation, of Arvada, Colorado, was featured in

Authority Magazine. His article was titled, "5 Things That Should Be Done to Improve the U.S. Educational System."

2002



DAVID MEIENSCHIN B.S. in Human Resource Management, of Salisbury, Maryland, was named chief of

police of Salisbury.

2003

KIMBERLY BRATTEN B.S. in Human Resource Management, of Milton, co-founded The Party Place Company.



ANDRE BOGGERTY B.S. in General Studies, of Dover, was elected at-large city councilman for the City

of Dover.

2004



VERNON ROSS, JR. Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Innovation, of Norristown, Pennsylvania, joined the

Pottstown Hospital Tower of Health Board of Trustees. He was also appointed to a three-year term to the Montgomery County Youth Center board by the Honorable Carolyn T. Carluccio of Montgomery County.

2005



MATTHEW MCGINNIS M.Ed. in Elementary and Secondary School Counseling, of Salisbury, Maryland, was

named director of Athletics of Delmarva Christian Schools.

2006



MICHAEL PATTERSON B.S. in General Studies, of Smyrna, was named a human resources partner by Croda Inc.



DELL SCOTT B.S. in Accounting, of Clayton, an international fashion designer and entrepreneur, was named Designer to Watch by Coffee

Flair Magazine and L'Officiel Paris, both in 2023.

2007



CANDICE RACITE Ed.D. in Higher Education Leadership and Innovation, of Pennsville, New Jersey, was elected to the Boys & Girls

Club of Gloucester County board.

2008



LINA MILLER M.Ed. in Applied Technology in Education, of Greenwood, Delaware, published "Decode by Heart," a decodable

children's book series.



MICHAEL MORRISSEY M.S. in Administration of Justice, of Dagsboro, Delaware, was named police chief of Fenwick.



JASON SCOTT M.Ed. in Elementary and Secondary School Counseling, of Rehoboth Beach, was named assistant principal of Milton

Elementary School.

2009



VANESSA SMITH B.S. in Accounting, of Wilmington, was named CEO of Smith & Associates Tax Business.

2013



FELICIA WILLIAMS B.S. in Business Management, of Carrollton, Virginia, retired from the U.S.

Air Force.

2014



CLEOTRINA SHIPMAN-TINCH M.S. in Management, of Newark, was voted Hodgson

School 2023-24 Teacher of the Year. She is also Hodgson's DEI coordinator.

2015



SHAVONNE BRATHWAITE Ed.D. in Organizational Learning, Leadership and Innovation, of New Castle,

was appointed to the Ability Network of Delaware board.

2016



TAMALA WESCOTT M.S. in Management, of Virginia Beach, Virginia, co-founded The Party Place Company.

2019



JOSE AGUILAR-GARCIA ICER in Web Applications Development, of New Castle, was named CEO of VPS Music LLC.

2020



JESSICA ALIFF B.S.N. in Nursing, of Newark, received ChristianaCare's Daisy Award.

2022



PRECIOUS BENSON M.S. in Management, of Seaford, was named director of finance and operations for Sussex

Montessori Public Charter School.

2023



IAN POPE M.B.A., of Kirkwood, Missouri, was named director of sustainability for McCarthy Holdings.



Wilmington University
School of Law

WILMINGTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

These Wilmington University alumni were so impressed with their time at Wilmington University that they placed their faith in the Wilmington University School of Law.

Alums Attend Law School by Maria Hess

KENDALL PARLIAMENT

During her undergrad and graduate studies at WilmU, **KENDALL PARLIAMENT** found her professors “personable and caring,” she says. “I also feel like WilmU has given me wonderful experiences to launch my career into HR.”

That launch was successful. Parliament has excelled in the human resources field, serving over eight years in her current role as a senior human resources business partner at University Pennsylvania Health System (UPHS) in Philadelphia, and in other HR roles at Amazon FC in Robbinsville, New Jersey, and The Open Door Of New Jersey in Toms River. She also served as executive director at the Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Chester, Pennsylvania.

Parliament’s experience has deepened her understanding of HR functional areas, including labor law compliance, employee relations and performance management, leave of absence and ADA accommodations. She consults with many clients and thrives on mentoring business owners and managers from small to mid-size employers. Parliament understands unique business needs and the importance of establishing authentic professional relationships.

“I’m looking to expand into this



Kendall Parliament



Dalton Lahti



Sumanth Kaza

field, becoming a general counsel for UPHS,” she says, adding that she will focus on corporate law.

At WilmU, Parliament earned a B.S. in Communications and an MBA, with a concentration in Human Resources Management. She also earned an Associate of Applied Science in Journalism at Rowan College at Burlington County, in Pemberton, New Jersey. Parliament is a Society for Human Resource Management member.

DALTON LAHTI

DALTON LAHTI enjoyed his undergrad years at WilmU so much that he enrolled at its law school immediately after graduation. “I finished my last semester, then after the summer break, started my first semester of law

school,” he says. “The timing with the law school opening couldn’t have been better for me.”

Yet, Lahti doesn’t see himself practicing law. “I plan to go into government and politics,” he says. “However, if I were to practice law, I would want to work in employment and labor law, representing employees or labor unions.”

Lahti is a camp counselor at Fair Hill Nature Center in Elkton, Maryland, where he creates and executes lesson plans for children ages 5–14 during summer camps. Via lecturing, hands-on experiences, art, games, and activities, Lahti focuses on plant and animal identification, map reading skills, the water cycle, geocaching, and survival skills.

At WilmU, Lahti earned a B.S. in Law, Policy, and Political Science, with a concentration in Government and Public

Policy. He also holds an Associate of Arts degree in Paralegal Studies from Cecil College in North East, Maryland.

SUMANTH KAZA

When **SUMANTH KAZA** heard about the Wilmington University School of Law, he knew he needed to be a part of it.

“WilmU is a vibrant university (that has) the support of the Delaware legal community,” Kaza says. As a member of its first class, he says, “I could not pass up the opportunity to help shape the law school.”

He has spent the past 20 years in the financial-services technology field, working with the latest technologies that support investment management companies and banks. Currently an IT program delivery manager at Vanguard in Malvern, Pennsylvania, he has various responsibilities, including managing teams of developers, project managers, technical leads, and quality assurance testing, and overseeing the development of business capabilities, project management, process improvements, and the delivery of investment management tools and applications. He has also worked as a collections strategy manager at JP Morgan Chase Bank and Barclays, both in Wilmington. He also holds certifications as a Scrum Master (Agile Project Management methodology) and business analyst, and from the Information Technology Infrastructure Library. In addition to law school, Kaza is working on his Amazon Web Services certification, which provides cloud expertise to IT professionals.

Using his extensive experience, Kaza wants to practice corporate law. “Given Delaware’s unique place as the heart of global corporations,” he says, “I found that WilmU is situated near where many key legal decisions are made relating to U.S. corporations.”

Kaza earned a B.A. in Biological Sciences at George Washington University and an MBA from WilmU. **WU**

WilmU Law Professor Awarded ‘Top Lawyer’ Honor



Nicole Mozee

NICOLE MOZEE, J.D., an assistant professor at the Wilmington University School of Law, remembers her late father as a “civil rights champion” and knows “he would be so, so proud” that Delaware Today magazine named her a Top Lawyer for civil rights. “I am very, very honored and humbled to have received this recognition,” says Professor Mozee, who made the magazine’s annual list of exceptional Delaware lawyers. “I just do what I love,

and I do it with passion.”

WILLIAM MOZEE, a lifelong welder, taught her “the notion of fairness and equity — and the importance of treating everyone with respect and dignity,” Professor Mozee says. In the 1970s, “being a Black welder, he was not afforded the same promotional opportunities,” so he organized walkouts to protest racial discrimination and ultimately won a class-action lawsuit against his employer, Jeffboat Inc., in Jeffersonville, Indiana.

“That’s just one of many examples” of his advocacy that motivated her to become a civil rights lawyer, says Professor Mozee, the first in her family to go to college. “No matter your circumstances or where you come from, if you have the passion, if you have the perseverance, you can reach that goal.”

While deputy attorney general for the Delaware Department of Justice’s Division of Civil Rights and Public Trust, she successfully prosecuted the Division’s first hate-crime conviction as well as the state’s first conviction of a sitting elected official. Professor Mozee also served as associate legal counsel for Delaware **GOV. JOHN CARNEY**, a staff attorney at Delaware Volunteer Legal Services and a labor law enforcement officer for the Delaware Department of Labor’s Office of Anti-Discrimination.

“We are proud that Nicole is a member of our School of Law faculty,” says **PHILLIP CLOSIUS**, J.D., the law school’s dean. “Her recognition as a Top Lawyer in Delaware only confirms our belief that Nicole will be an excellent teacher and an outstanding faculty member. Her award is well deserved and is only the beginning of the plaudits she will receive as a legal academic.”

William Mozee not only inspired his daughter’s legal career but also her love of teaching. As the head welding instructor at Delaware Technical Community College, he guided and encouraged students — just like Professor Mozee does today.

“You have the power to be a change agent,” she says, “to positively uplift and support others, to advocate for others who are often overlooked.” **WU** —Emily Ryan

Teaching Students to Succeed

It is an oft-quoted maxim that if you give a person a fish, you feed that person for a day, but if you teach that person to fish, you feed that person for a lifetime. Nowhere is this maxim truer than in legal education. Given the wide array of practice areas, from divorce law to personal injury, to mergers and acquisitions, it would be impossible for any law school to teach students every trace of doctrinal knowledge during the few years those students are in law school. In part because of this impossibility, law schools instead teach students a smaller subset of core doctrinal knowledge while primarily focusing on the skill of “thinking like a lawyer.” Thinking like a lawyer requires that students have a rigorous analytical approach to complex problems and the tools necessary to solve those problems. Thinking like a lawyer requires being able to assess strengths and weaknesses and develop a practical plan based on this assessment.

Yet, as much as law schools profess that they teach students to think like lawyers, few empower students to apply this skill to their legal educations. This is one of many ways Wilmington University School of Law differs. At Wilmington Law, formative assessments are used to empower law students to take responsibility for success in their legal careers.

For every law student, one final hurdle stands between graduation and practice — the bar exam. Every jurisdiction administers a bar exam to test both critical thinking skills as well as “minimum competency” in applicable state law. No lawyer can be licensed to practice in the United States without passing



Veronica J. Finkelstein

the bar exam in at least one state. The bar exam is challenging. The test taker must demonstrate knowledge of a wide variety of subject areas while answering multiple-choice and essay questions under intense time pressure.

Students who seek admittance to the Delaware bar face additional challenges. Delaware requires one of the highest passing scores in the country on its bar exam. In addition, the Delaware bar exam is one of the few bar exams that has eschewed the uniform exam format adopted by most other states. Delaware tests 10 specific subject areas compared to the seven on the uniform exam. Several of these subjects, including Delaware business law and Delaware civil procedure, reflect the unique character of legal practice in Delaware. Delaware has been the premier state of formation for business entities since the early 1900s. With corporations coming from across the country to litigate their disputes in Delaware’s business-oriented Chancery Court, membership in the

Delaware bar requires a sophisticated understanding of corporate law. Passing the Delaware bar exam may not be easy, but passage guarantees membership to a highly exclusive club.

With this backdrop in mind, Wilmington University School of Law has designed its curriculum not to teach law students to pass the bar as a singular goal, but rather to give them the tools necessary to steer their own academic success. Wilmington Law seeks to break down barriers for its students, not only through its unique curriculum that emphasizes subjects critical to the development of any Delaware lawyers but also by testing substantive knowledge and legal reasoning using methods that introduce students to the structure of the bar exam. Students are not taught “to the bar” but rather are evaluated on their underlying professional development using tactics designed to familiarize students with the bar exam’s format and style. The curriculum demystifies the bar exam while teaching students the substantive knowledge and legal reasoning skills they will need for practice. At Wilmington Law, doctrinal courses cover the same subject matter as other law schools. However, through the formative assessment process, students also develop personal responsibility for their learning. In each class, they learn what worked for them and what didn’t, and they can use this information going forward to evolve their law school development. In other words, students become equipped to assess their learning and, thereby, improve their academic outcomes.

In many other law schools, students in doctrinal courses are evaluated using

a single examination administered at the end of the semester. The format of this exam varies from professor to professor. Unless students take the initiative to seek feedback after the semester has concluded, they never learn anything about their performance on the exam. They may simply receive a grade for the course as a whole. This gives students no details about what they got right and wrong on the exam itself. Even worse, in some cases, when students seek feedback, they learn that the exam grading is subjective.

In these law schools, students may learn doctrine — but they rarely learn how to evaluate and improve their performance in real time. They are given some fish but left to their own devices to learn how to fish.

Wilmington Law is different. Faculty here take a uniform and systematic approach. From the first year on, all doctrinal courses include two formative assessments administered throughout the semester. The purpose of forma-

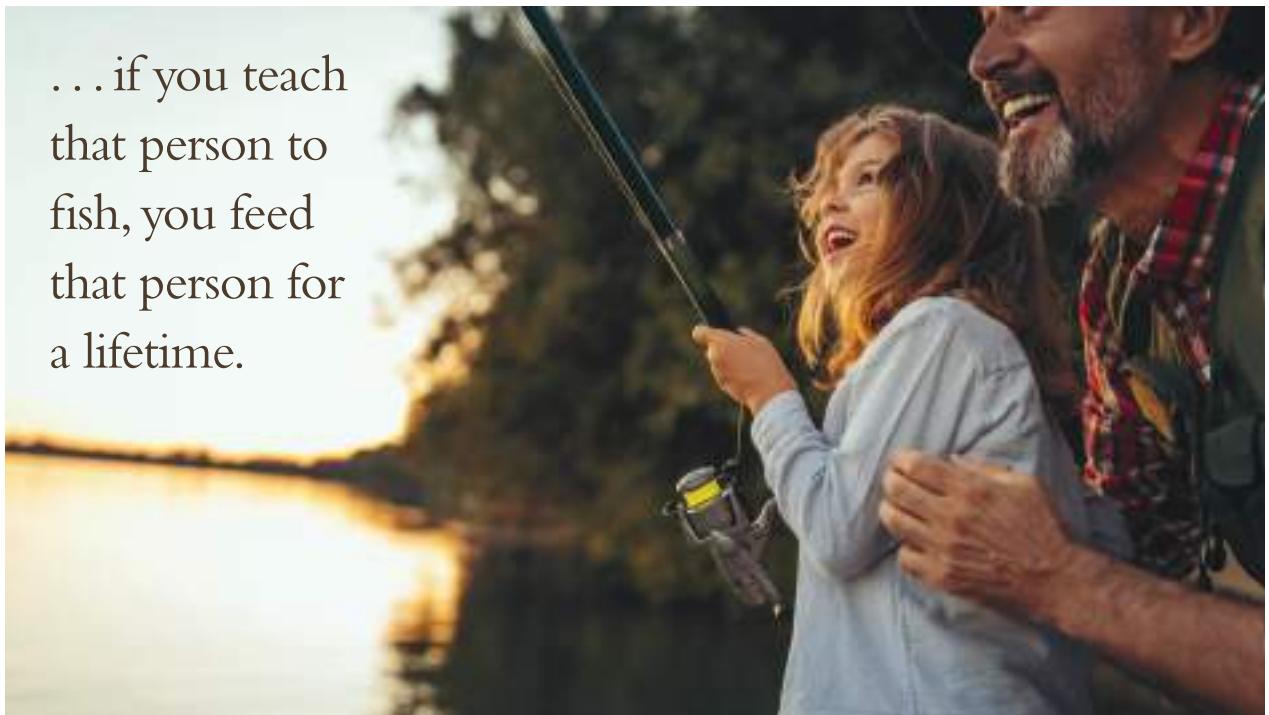
tive assessment is to monitor student learning and provide ongoing feedback. Twice during the semester, students take either a multiple-choice or essay exam designed to mimic bar-exam question style and time constraints closely. Faculty then grade these exams, testing how well students demonstrate doctrinal knowledge.

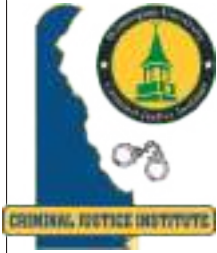
After grading the exams, faculty meet with students to review their responses. Students learn, in real time, how they performed and why. These formative assessments help students identify strengths and weaknesses and enable them to exercise control over their own learning. Students learn how to communicate effectively. They learn to identify flaws in their own legal reasoning. The formative assessments test the same doctrinal knowledge as those given in other law schools, but the formative assessments at Wilmington Law go beyond testing knowledge to endow students with skills they can use to guide their learning going forward.

In the process, these formative assessments also demystify the bar-exam process. By the time Wilmington Law students answer their first multiple-choice question on the bar exam, those students will have answered similar questions more than 500 times before. Moreover, these students will have analytical skills that they know work — because they used those analytical skills on themselves. Each piece of feedback received on a formative assessment was an opportunity to self-evaluate and either reinforce effective learning techniques or pivot away from ineffective ones. Long before they sit for the bar exam, Wilmington Law students will have learned to be expert fishermen, and, with some luck, they will soon be employing their analytical skills as members of the Delaware bar. **WU** — *Veronica J. Finkelstein*

Veronica J. Finkelstein, J.D., is an associate professor at Wilmington University School of Law. Learn more about her at law.wilmu.edu/faculty/veronica-finkelstein.

... if you teach
that person to
fish, you feed
that person for
a lifetime.





CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE



CJI Consultant Mike Terranova and Delaware Animal Services Chief Mark Tobin set the stage for graduation.

The First State-Run Animal Control Officers Academy

The CJI, in partnership with Delaware Animal Services, created the nation's first state-run Animal Control Officers Academy. In October, a graduation ceremony celebrating the new-

ly minted animal control officers was attended by luminaries such as State Sen. **STEPHANIE L. HANSEN**, Delaware Animal Services personnel, including **CHIEF MARK TOBIN** and Executive Director **CHRISTINA MOTOYOSHI**,

Delaware Department of Agriculture State Veterinarian **DR. KAREN LOPEZ**, State of Delaware Captain and Investigator **REBECCA STRATTON**, and members of the Brandywine SPCA. The ceremony was led by CJI Consul-

tant and former New Castle County Police Captain **MIKE TERRANOVA**.

During the 110-hour (or three-week) course, officers earned five certifications, including handcuffing techniques, Law Enforcement Information Sharing Service (LEISS); Armament Systems and Procedures (ASP, better known as batons), pepper spray, and taser. Trainees were also educated on animal cruelty, arrest, search and seizure laws, rabies protocol, and de-escalation techniques for special populations.

Instructors included several high-

ly regarded state and county police, as well as Tobin, a nationally certified K9 instructor and former master corporal of the New Castle County Police K9 Unit. The WilmU alumnus also founded a K9 Police Academy via a partnership with Delaware Technical Community College and supervised over 36 units in the Mid-Atlantic area.

“Working with Wilmington University and the CJI has helped build a foundation for the state of Delaware and the service we provide to its residents,” says Tobin. **WU**

—*Maria Hess*



Trainees were educated on animal cruelty, arrest, search and seizure laws, Rabies protocol, and de-escalation techniques for special populations.



Besides offering remarks, Sen. Stephanie L. Hansen handed graduates commemorative General Assembly pins.



Newly minted animal control officers. From left: Devaroo Shelton, Marissa Hoyes, Grace Bentley, Justin Madden, Payton Hadley, Clement Barnwell, Trey Thompson

True Crime Lecture Series

Famous speakers covering infamous cases continue to thrill audiences of the CJI's True Crime Lecture Series.

May 14

SPECIAL AGENT DAN DESIMONE (ret.)

An FBI Undercover Operation as a Las Vegas Escort Manager

An honorably discharged and decorated veteran of the United States Armed Forces, **DESIMONE** served the military police domestically and internationally and the FBI as a special agent. He held various positions in six field and headquarters assignments, including chief of both Undercover & Sensitive Operations and the Domestic Security Alliance Council. In honor of his service as lead FBI agent in charge of the Pope's visit to America, he was awarded knighthood by **POPE BENEDICT XVI**

in 2011. Today, he is the senior director of Investigative Resources at Thomson Reuters, where he works with law enforcement and government agencies nationwide. DeSimone is a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, FBI Law Enforcement Executive Directors Association, National Capital Region's Government Business Executive Forum, and the Directors of the Law Enforcement Legal Defense Fund board.

Sept. 10

ANNE BEAGAN, FOUNDER OF ABP AND FORMER FBI SPECIAL AGENT

According to its website, ABP is a "modern film and television entertainment company dedicated to developing



Dan DeSimone



Anne Beagan

and producing authentic true crime content. The core of production is inspired by first-hand knowledge of the FBI, its procedures, practices and insight into events that shape the current political, societal and cultural paradigm. Broader scope of content is developed around crime and true crime." **BEAGAN** served in the bureau's largest field divisions, New York and Los Angeles, and had "unprecedented access and extraordinary insider status, not only to the FBI, but also to a wide-ranging network of subject matter experts, renowned film-



ART FROM ANNEBEAGANPRODUCTIONS.COM

makers, and talent.” This positioned her to produce realistic content for world-wide audiences.

After transitioning to the New York FBI’s Office of Public Affairs as its entertainment industry liaison, Beagan “built wide working relationships handling diverse media projects: feature films, television series, documentaries, books and magazine articles, often featuring the FBI. (Her) talent for thinking outside the box is well known both inside the bureau and out, and has successfully led to her work on several ground-breaking media projects resulting in strong, trusted industry relationships that stand to this day,” according to the ABP website.

The company’s most high-profile ventures include “The Following,” “The Wolf of Wall Street,” “Tower Heist,” “Mr. Robot,” “The Wizard of Lies,” “The Informer,” “The Looming Tower,” “Billions,” “Sleeper Cell,” “Madame Secretary,” “In the Footsteps of Willie Sutton,” “The Irishman,” “Inside the FBI: New York,” and “CNN Declassified: Untold Stories of American Spies.”

Beagan has worked with some of the most prolific directors in the entertainment industry, including

MARTIN SCORSESE. WU

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.



Scott Duffey

INTERVIEWS AND INTERROGATIONS

The CJI sponsored a one-day training opportunity for law enforcement to explore interviews and interrogations. This class was designed to enhance critical skills in the foundational principles of interviews. Taught by CJI Co-Director

SCOTT DUFFEY, the training encompassed developing rapport, understanding interviewees, detecting deception, and the eight steps of an interrogation. Video-recorded interviews supported the training. WU





Violent Crime Symposium

The CJI's Violent Crime Symposium brings together regional law enforcement professionals and nationally known speakers. This year's event, from April 23–25, is no exception.

The Institute will welcome renowned speakers **COL. DANNY R. STEBBINS** (ret.), **SUSAN CONSTANTINE**, Special

Agent **TRENT VILETA**, Naval Officer and Civilian Defense Contractor **ROY HALLUMS**, Detectives **RICHARD NILSEN** (ret.) and **FIL WATERS** (ret.), Special Agents **THOMAS F. O'CONNOR** (ret.) and **VINCENT P. PANKOKE JR.** (ret.), and Cornell University Guest Lecturer and Apex Risk Consulting Principal **KYLE R. VOWINKEL**. [WU](#)

Topics include:

- **Lessons Learned from Sandy Hook**
(Col. Danny R. Stebbins)
- **The Human Behavioral Academy: The Human Body Doesn't Lie**
(Susan Constantine)
- **Murder at General Wayne Inn**
(Richard Nilsen)
- **The Interrogator**
(Fil Waters)
- **The Murder Investigation of Mollie Tibbetts**
(Trent Vileta)
- **Buried Alive: From Kidnapping to Dramatic Recovery**
(Roy Hallums, Thomas F. O'Connor)
- **Who Betrayed Anne Frank: A Cold Case Investigation**
(Vincent P. Pankoke Jr.)
- **Boy in the Bunker**
(Kyle R. Vowinkel)

The **VIOLENT CRIME SYMPOSIUM** takes place at DoubleTree by Hilton, 4727 Concord Pike, in Wilmington. Registration fee is \$99. Contact the CJI at cji@wilmu.edu or (302)295-1125.

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AUGMENTED REALITY TO THE RESCUE

This DBA student may have uncovered something that will please dental patients.

Read her story on [page 32](#).

