

Misericordia

WINTER 2016

today

Archie

turns
30

University celebrating mascot's birthday and impact on campus community ...

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It is easy to stay connected with the Misericordia University campus and alumni communities through our social media channels. Did you get a new job or welcome a new addition to the family? Share your news and pictures on Facebook and Flickr. Pick one site or several in order to share your news or to simply remain informed about the latest news at your MU. Stay connected at www.misericordia.edu/social.

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University presents TA Award to Drs. Lysiak and Glazer for outstanding commitment, support

The Misericordia University Board of Trustees presented the Trustee Associates Award to Janice C. Lysiak '70, M.D., and her husband, Sidney M. Glazer, M.D., in recognition of their outstanding commitment and support of the University at the 2015 Trustee Associates Gala in Sandy and Marlene Insalaco Hall in October.

The Trustee Associates Award is given annually to friends of the University who have demonstrated outstanding dedication, service and generous support.

Dr. Lysiak, M.D., listened to her father when he said that the small class sizes and personal attention offered at Misericordia, the Sisters of Mercy-sponsored college just eight miles from their West Wyoming home, would help her realize her dream of becoming a doctor – even though the all-girls school did not have a pre-medicine program at the time.

Dr. Lysiak is eternally thankful that she took his advice. She recently retired from a 27-year career as an esteemed rheumatologist with the Kaiser-Permanente Medical Center in Orange County, California, where she was in partnership with her husband, Sidney M. Glazer, M.D., a vascular surgeon.

She is quick to credit Misericordia for proffering spirituality that inspires students to care about each other and the world around them. She is equally grateful to the University for providing a solid academic foundation that served as the springboard to her medical career.

Encouraged by numerous faculty members who took the time to get to know her and fuel her aspirations, Dr. Lysiak says she also was taught to look outside the box. She tackled what appeared to be an insurmountable challenge of passing the MCATs and getting into medical school by taking the process one step at a time. Upon completion of her Bachelor of Science degree in biology at Misericordia, she



The Board presented the Trustee Associates Award to Janice C. Lysiak '70, M.D., and her husband, Sidney M. Glazer, M.D., at the 2015 Trustee Associates Gala. Posing for a picture after the presentation, from left, are Dr. Deborah Smith-Mileski '75, vice chair, Board of Trustees; Dr. Glazer, Dr. Lysiak '70, and President Thomas J. Botzman, Ph.D.

was accepted and went on to earn her medical degree at Hahnemann University, Philadelphia, Pa. It was during her last year of an internal medicine residency at Kaiser Foundation Hospital in Los Angeles, Calif., that she met her future husband, Dr. Glazer, a surgery resident.

Inspired to help current and future Misericordia students pursue a career in medicine, the couple showed the extent of their appreciation to Misericordia by establishing the Stanley T. Lysiak Pre-Med Scholarship in 2001. The award, given in memory of Dr. Lysiak's father, benefits students with financial need who plan to major in biology or pre-medicine.

The couple also has been among Misericordia's most loyal and ardent supporters, giving every year and to every recorded campaign effort. They helped the University grow and expand facilities and academic programs by being among the leading donors to *The Campaign for College Misericordia* in 1998, the *Advancing the Vision* campaign in 2001, the *Leading from the Heart* campaign in 2005, and the *College of Health Sciences* campaign in 2010. As members of the Heart of Mercy Society, they also have pledged to include Misericordia in their estate planning.

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HONORS

Misericordia University received recognition in the 2015 CASE District II Accolades Awards program. Steve Filipiak '05, '15, web content coordinator, and Holly Ference '17, web content graduate assistant, earned a Gold Award in the Creativity on a Shoestring Category for their Storify feed that highlighted the journey of first-year students through social media. To view the Storify, please log on to: <https://storify.com/MisericordiaU/mu-first-years>.



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ON THE COVER

Happy 30th Birthday, Archie! Still as sprightly as the day he was introduced, Misericordia reflects on the proud tradition of beloved mascot, Archibald Archie McGrowl, who has been the purveyor of Cougar pride and spirit since Jan. 17, 1986. See story on Page 18.



Hospitality alive and well at the House of Mercy

Our family was fortunate to visit Ireland and the beautiful city of Dublin last summer. It was our first experience with the Emerald Isle, so our level of excitement and anticipation was high. I participated in a leadership seminar conference at St. Patrick's College in Drumcondra. My wife, Vanessa, and our daughter, Gabriela, participated in a spouse/family program that was offered in conjunction with the seminar.

Most importantly, we also knew this trip would enable us to visit Catherine McAuley's birthplace and the foundation of the Religious Sisters of Mercy. Catherine's legacy has been an important part of our family since I was named the 13th president of Misericordia University in 2013.

We were excited to learn that our visit to Mercy Center International coincided with a group led by Sister Noël Keller, RSM. Sister Noel and her group invited us to join them on their visit. Sister Noel is a Sister of Mercy, a religious scholar and teacher, who is very knowledgeable about the founding of the Sisters of Mercy. She guided us throughout the House of Mercy and provided background about the history of Catherine's vision and a sense of the place.

We learned, for example, that the sisters were instructed to dance daily and share a cup of tea—a signal of the future of Hospitality as one of our four Mercy Charisms. We also found the Sisters of Mercy were not a cloistered order. They walked the streets of Dublin, and later many cities around the world seeking those in need so they could minister to them.

Construction on the House of Mercy began in July 1824 as a home for poor women. The women were educated and found temporary shelter. The house itself is very distinct, as it is a large freestanding structure amid Georgian rowhomes.

Today, we still have evidence of her ongoing care in the form of the Catherine McAuley Centers in nearby Plymouth and Scranton. These shelters provide stable and safe housing for women with children or single women as well as counseling. The centers work with the women to help them obtain permanent housing and jobs to support themselves and their family.

A number of the volunteers who worked with Catherine were lay women. Efforts to stabilize service to the poor created a greater need, so she took steps to form a religious order that would continue the work. The House of Mercy became a convent that over time produced the beginning of the Sisters of Mercy. Today, a number of unordained volunteers serve as Mercy Associates, a parallel to the women who first aided Catherine in her efforts.

Restored in 1994, the present House of Mercy serves as a place of gathering for those wishing to learn more about the Sisters of Mercy and the work of its foundress. Catherine's room and her grave are both places that inspire one to consider and follow the good works of Catherine and her associates. The center also continues the tradition of Hospitality by providing visitors with a delicious scone and a comfortable cup of tea. The spirit of Catherine McAuley is definitely alive and well, embodied in the Religious Sisters of Mercy.



President Thomas J. Botzman, Ph.D.

Maybe the simplest definition of a partner is someone who stands with you to accomplish your goals. Baker Tilly, a nationally recognized, full-service accounting and advisory firm, is a valued partner of Misericordia University.

Those from the northeast United States might recognize the Wilkes-Barre, Pa., office of Baker Tilly under its previous identity as Parente, Randolph, Orlando, Carey and Associates. That firm merged into Baker Tilly in 2014 to become part of the 15th largest accounting and advisory firm in the United States with 2,500 employees.

Misericordia, its students, and visitors benefit from the relationship with Baker Tilly in multiple ways. As a corporate donor, Baker Tilly's financial support underwrites efforts such as the Ethics Institute of Northeast Pennsylvania, the Under the Stars Summer Arts Festival concerts, athletics, campus beautification, and every fundraising campaign since 1988. The firm provides extensive

accounting services to Misericordia and collaborates with faculty and students on career preparation.

"As Misericordia's valued business advisor, we are devoted to collaborating with the University to develop strategies that help direct more dollars and resources to the school's mission and participating in campaigns that align with Misericordia's student success strategies,"

says Andrea Caladie, partner, Baker Tilly.

A partner in student success, Baker Tilly coordinates the Spotlight Program, a two-day experience that provides college sophomores and juniors more insight into the firm, professional staff



Grammy winner Marc Cohn headlined the 2015 Under the Stars Summer Arts Festival.

and career opportunities. Students have the opportunity to participate in workshops and activities as well as interview for internships.

Misericordia's objective of educating caring, motivated students to succeed in their chosen fields aligns well with Baker Tilly's strategic goal to become America's finest professional services firm by attracting, developing, retaining and rewarding the best people for the organization.

Both Misericordia and Baker Tilly foster an atmosphere of service to others and stewardship for the community. "For our firm, stewardship means investing for the future with the intention of leaving everything better. Our clients will be more successful, our people will be more fulfilled, our communities will be enriched, and our firm will leave behind a proud legacy," says Caladie.

Those interested in learning more about Baker Tilly and the firm's services can visit its website at www.bakertilly.com.

– by Jim Roberts

What words can capture the legacy of a person who commits 30 years to the Misericordia University community? John L. Kachurick, D.B.A., '96, associate professor of business and former director of the Organizational Management graduate degree program, passed away Oct. 17, 2015, leaving behind a legacy of education, empowerment and philanthropy.

"Dr. John Kachurick was a true mentor to all his students and to his colleagues. His first, and most important priority, was always the student(s)," says Corina N. Slaff, Ph.D., chair, Department of Business.

Upon the announcement of a memorial Mass to honor his life, many alumni remarked online about Kachurick's attributes:

"Great teacher and a great guy..."
 "Backbone of the OM program..."

"...prepared them (students) for the real world..." "Challenged his students daily by making them think critically rather than look up the answer in the text. He spoke of his family often and his many career paths."

Kachurick was born in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. and was a veteran of the U.S. Army. He began his career in the newspaper business and was one of the founders of The Citizens' Voice in Wilkes-Barre. He is survived by his wife, two children, and two grandchildren as well as a brother, a sister, a niece, and nephews.

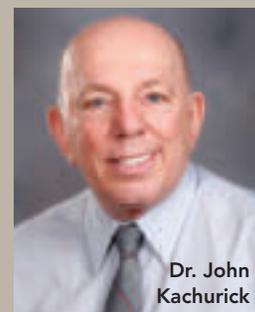
He pursued education vigorously, receiving degrees from King's College, Wilkes College and Misericordia. He received his Doctorate in Business Administration from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

"My father was the embodiment of Mercy and Service in many ways," says Karen Buckley, his daughter. "He put

others above himself and believed that giving to others and helping them to get ahead is the most valuable thing one could do."

Kachurick gave of his treasure to Misericordia, participating in fundraising efforts over a long period of time. Individuals can follow his example by making a gift to the John L. Kachurick '96 Memorial Scholarship Fund. "This fund was established to keep his legacy going," says Buckley. "During his life, he succeeded in helping other people, and that is what this scholarship is intended to do."

To contribute to the fund, please contact the Development Office at (570) 674-6433. To make a secure gift online, log on to misericordia.edu/makeagift.



Dr. John Kachurick



CAMPUS VIEWS

Princeton Review recommends Misericordia University

Misericordia has been recognized as one of the top colleges and universities in the northeastern United States, according to The Princeton Review.

One of 225 institutions of higher education recognized in the *2016 Best Colleges Region by Region* at PrincetonReview.com/bestNEcolleges, the colleges were selected based on "excellent academics" and the results of a student survey about campus experiences and college life.

Students described campus as "close-knit" and "welcoming" where "people say hello to you even if you don't know them." They also say the University's inviting atmosphere attracts a "friendly" and "very inclusive" student population. The review also states undergraduates believe the Catholic University holds true to its tenets of Mercy, Service, Justice and Hospitality.

Misericordia makes 'Best Colleges for Your Money' list

Misericordia was named to Money Magazine's 2015-16 Best Colleges for Your Money list.

The ranking is designed to help parents and students determine which of the country's approximately 1,500 four-year colleges and universities "deliver the most value."

The 736 U.S. colleges that qualified were ranked on 21 factors in three equally weighted categories: educational quality, affordability and alumni earnings.

Misericordia also earned a "B+ Value Added" grade, an additional ranking produced by Money that considered how well students at each school did versus what would be expected given their economic and academic backgrounds.

SCARY STUFF

Campus offers up seasonal treats for young and old alike

Blood curdling screams aside, it may have looked like *The Night of the Living Dead* on campus, but the zombie attack at Misericordia University on Oct. 24 was all in good fun. The Zombie 5K Race was hosted by the Cougars Women's Golf Team and the Where's The Fun Committee. Zombie hosts doused the runners in blood-red powder at various points on the course, which included a loop on the road through nearby Fern Knoll Cemetery (with permission, of course.) Proceeds from the not-as-scary-as-it-looks fundraiser supported projects of the Where's The Fun Committee and a spring training trip for the Women's Golf Team.

More than 500 ghosts, goblins and other assorted characters were treated to candy and fun activities during the annual Halloween in the Halls spook-tacular event held on Oct. 25.

The Residence Life staff opened the doors of McHale, Alumnae, Gildea and Monsignor Andrew J. McGowan residence halls to trick-or-treaters, and provided face painting and other fun crafts in Michael and Tina MacDowell Hall.

"We are always pleased with how well behaved the youngsters are and how grateful their parents are to have a safe place for their families to trick-or-treat," said Donna Ellis, director, Residence Life. "I am not sure who has more fun, our students and staff, or their dressed-up guests."

In its 24th year, *Things that go Boom in the Night* on Oct. 28 delivered more spooky excitement – chemistry-style. Members of the Misericordia University Dead Alchemist Society made pumpkins vomit and balloons explode with a myriad of astonishing experiments

Constant Flag Carry Ceremony remembers victims of 9/11

More than 220 members of the campus and neighboring communities participated in a 9/11 Constant Flag Carry Ceremony that was held in remembrance of the 9/11 terror attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

Groups of students, faculty and staff kept the ceremony moving from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. by taking turns carrying the flag for 15-minute intervals around campus. Groups included various



Head Coach Jim Ricardo takes his turn as flag bearer as members of the men's lacrosse team make their way across campus as participants of the 9/11 Constant Flag Carry ceremony held on Sept. 11.

academic departments, student clubs, the cheerleading squad, men's and women's athletic teams, and a group of students who serve as volunteer



CAMPUS VIEWS



designed to make chemistry fun. Anna Fedor, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, coordinated the popular event that attracts hundreds of children annually.

Runners were doused in blood-red powder as part of the Zombie 5K Race hosted by the Cougars Women's Golf Team and the student-run *Where's The Fun Committee* on Oct. 24.

firefighters with the Back Mountain Regional Fire and EMS Squad.

The event began with a remembrance service in the Wells Fargo Amphitheater. It included prayers and readings from students and staff, and featured the presenting of the colors by members of the Dallas American Legion, Post 672. A minute of silence was held to memorialize when the first of two planes hit the World Trade Center in New York, N.Y., killing more than 2,600 people. A closing ceremony was held at 4 p.m. It included a prayer and readings by Lindsey Riddell '06, community outreach coordinator, who orchestrated the event, and Sister Jean Messaros '73, RSM, vice president for mission integration.

"In bringing the Constant Flag Carry to campus, I was hoping to involve as many members of the campus community as possible, in as visible a way as possible, to keep the memory and observance of 9/11 alive," said Riddell. "Not only are we honoring the thousands of individuals killed or injured in the terrorist attacks on America on Sept. 11, 2001, we are honoring the first responders, volunteers, rescue and recovery workers, uniformed safety personnel, and the hundreds of thousands of others who serve, or have served in our armed forces here at home and overseas. I am so proud of the many groups who have taken time out of their day to make this project an overwhelming success."

Misericordia ranked among best in U.S. News

Misericordia University is ranked 47th out of 131 colleges and universities in the top tier of the Best Regional Universities North category of U.S. News and World Report's 2016 edition of Best Colleges.

Misericordia has climbed 20 places in the rankings since 2007. In the latest edition, MU is included in a tight grouping of 19 colleges and universities that are separated by three points for the rankings of 34 through 47.

The University also was recognized for its commitment to veterans of the armed services. U.S. News & World Report ranked Misericordia 36th on the Best Colleges for Veterans listings among regional universities in the north.

MU receives 'Best Bang for Buck' designation

Misericordia University moved up 24 places and is ranked among the top 37 percent of all master's degree-granting institutions of higher education in the country by Washington Monthly magazine in a survey that stresses community service and social mobility of students.

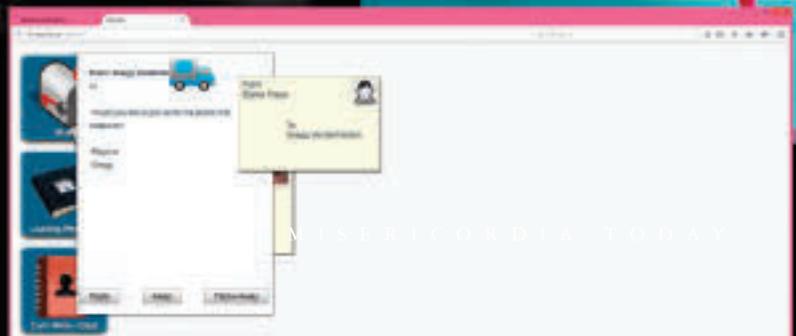
The University is ranked 255th overall among 673 other institutions that were recognized in the 2015 Master's Universities category. The rankings are based on the institution's contribution to the public good in three evenly weighted categories: social mobility, research and service.

In a separate *Best Bang for the Buck* listing, Misericordia was ranked 222nd in the nation, which recognizes "colleges in America that do the best job of helping nonwealthy students attain marketable degrees at affordable prices."

In the traditional rankings, MU ranks 23rd in the nation for service.



Denis Anson, M.S., O.T.R., the director of research and development at the Misericordia University Assistive Technology Research Institute, is a member of the global team of researchers developing Global Public Inclusive Infrastructure or GPII. In the photo illustration, he showcases various pages of GPII.



World-Wide ACCESS



Alice, Dave, Davey, Elaine, Elmer, Elod and Livia do not exist in the literal sense. Their names and personal profiles are fictitious, but the role these characters are playing in the development of a revolutionary assistive technology cannot be overestimated.

**Assistive Technology
Research Institute
collaborates on
international GPII
project to open the
Internet to users of
all abilities and ages**

BY PAUL KRZYWICKI



In cyberspace, these seven case studies provide faces that help to identify a technology that can be hard to grasp. Each of these personas represents someone you may know or who you can imagine living in your neighborhood. They embody the kinds of limitations that are common to using modern technology. Each is being used to demonstrate the Global Public Inclusive Infrastructure (GPII), a system currently under development that allows each user's personal preferences and needs to be stored "in the cloud," and recalled to any device.

Each GPII user's preferences is referenced by an identifying number that can be stored on a plastic card or key—sometimes the size of a credit card—which

contains a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) computer chip that is readable by computers, terminals or smartphones armed with Near Field Communication (NFC). The number also can be stored in a ring or a patterned image that can be held up to a webcam. When activated, GPII calls the owner's personal preferences onto the current device, and automatically configures it to operate the way the individual prefers.

Oftentimes, people who require special tools or settings on their computers and mobile devices to use them effectively are left with few alternatives without GPII technology. They can

make proper adjustments to their home computers, smartphones and tablets, but what happens when they leave the comfort of their homes or are without their personally configured device at a library, an airport kiosk or a family member's home? These computers are configured for "typical" users and present insurmountable barriers to people with special needs.

Take Elod, for example. He is a 62 year old retiree who has low vision, according to his profile that was fabricated by researchers. He needs assistive technology to properly access the computer, the World Wide Web and all the information and opportunity it has to offer. In order to use the computer effectively, Elod needs the text and icons on the screen to be larger than normal. When he touches his GPII preferences card to the computer, it obtains information about how it should look for him. With one swipe of his RFID card, Elod's home or public computer loads his personal preferences, in this case, for full screen magnification at 200 percent with a blue background and other private nuances. Once finished, Elod swipes his card against the computer a second time and it reverts back to the default state for other users.

"He didn't have to ask anybody for help," says Denis Anson, M.S., O.T.R., a member of the global team of researchers developing GPII and also the director of research and development at the Misericordia University Assistive Technology Research Institute (ATRI). "He didn't have to reveal that he didn't see well. With GPII, you do not have to request your accommodations because they follow you wherever you go."

The card is also secure, as it does not contain any of the users' personal information, such as Social Security numbers, bank accounts, credit cards or other valuable information. The card carries only a number associated with a preference file in the cloud. While each person is different,

Continued on next page



Denis Anson, M.S., O.T.R., director of research at the Misericordia University Assistive Technology Research Institute, demonstrates the key card for GPII.

World-Wide ACCESS

from page 9

there may be many people who share a single preference file, just as many people wear the same shoe size, according to Anson.

Livia, another of the GPII personas, is a 15 year old girl who is legally blind. She uses her key to open an on board screen reader on the computer. Since there are multiple screen readers available on the market for the visually impaired, her profile loads the one she is accustomed to using and her other preferences, including voice controls.

The average person reads about 500 words per minute, according to Anson, and speaks about 150 words. To allow Livia to keep up in school, she has learned to understand a specific voice at her reading speed of 470 words per minute. For her to work effectively, the GPII must provide the screen reader with the controls she knows, the voice she is familiar with, the rate of talking she can understand,

and many other settings. Adjusting all of these settings by hand on an unfamiliar computer, especially for someone with Livia's physical challenges, would be nearly impossible. With GPII, all of the settings are automatically adjusted to her needs. As Livia moves from class to class in school, or to the computer at the public library, her GPII preferences assure that she can keep pace with an academic class, for example, or simply understand sentences or stories.

“GPII is a transport system. It does not make assistive technology. It is like Amazon, as it delivers your technology. But unlike Amazon, GPII delivers your technology to wherever you are. Your preferences can be delivered in seconds.” — Denis Anson, M.S., O.T.R.

“For some people, the personal preference file will include hundreds of individual settings for multiple products. Since the preference file lives in the cloud, it will be available for any connected device, assuring it will behave just the way you want,”

Anson adds about the computer's reaction to the already established personal preferences.

The overarching goal of the GPII project is to ensure that everyone can access and use information technology, including the Internet and smartphones, to the fullest extent possible, no matter the barrier. Whether the limitation is due to disability, literacy, digital literacy or aging, GPII can assure accessibility. GPII does not create new technologies or services. Instead, it is creating the infrastructure for making the

development, identification, delivery and use of assistive technologies for the web easier and more cost efficient and effective.

“GPII is a transport system,” Anson explains. “It does not make assistive technology. It is like Amazon, as it

delivers your technology. But unlike Amazon, GPII delivers your technology to wherever you are. Your preferences can be delivered in seconds."

The Internet and modern technology admittedly can be overwhelming for some people, whether because of age or skillset. Consider Elaine, an elderly grandmother who wants to communicate with her children and grandchildren through e mail and the exchange of family pictures. GPII's profile for this persona after she swipes her RFID card includes the Easy 1 2 3 program that features large icons a mailbox for e mails, a photo album for pictures and an address book for contacts that easily identifies their function. Unlike some systems that allow users to communicate only with other users of that technology, the easy to understand features of Easy 1 2 3 overlie familiar programs like Gmail, Picasa and a Google address book.

"Everything is all nice and big and easy to use," Anson acknowledges while demonstrating it in the ATRI lab in John J. Passan Hall. "It is a different skin around the same program everyone else uses. Elaine doesn't have to know that all computers don't work this way.

"She can go to her neighbor's or the Bridge Club and their computer knows her interface, her e mail, her photo library. She can show her pictures or a nice message. When she's done all the stuff goes away off the neighbor's computer and she hasn't left anything behind."

Graphic elements also encourage user friendliness. An e mail is designed to look like a postcard and contains an image of the recipient where a stamp is usually placed; large rectangular buttons contain easy to understand destinations for "keep," "reply," and "throw away." Once you hit send for an e mail, the postcard is tucked neatly into an envelope, loads onto a mail truck and is sent to its destination "so there is no doubt that I sent an e mail," Anson adds.

Additionally, the GPII interface allows users to adjust text size, fonts, line spacing, contrast, language, foreground and background, and more. It will also be applicable for

ATMs, cell phones, kiosks and other portable devices. Banks in Spain are planning to field test it within the year, according to Anson.

GPII has been in development since 2011. Europe was the first to commit financial resources. Since then, the United States, through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research or NIDILRR, and Canada have supported it as well. More than 50 researchers with backgrounds in computer programming, engineering, information technology, occupational therapy and more are engaged in the project.

Anson is working to develop the GPII Shopping and Alerting Aid tool. It will help people with physical and other related challenges determine what assistive or adaptive technologies they need. The tool enables users to select from 149 options that identify need under categories like hearing, vision, touch, operability, speech, understanding orientation and more. Each area contains subsets that expand the

query and, in turn, narrow the field of options.

"Simply giving a person with a limitation a list of hundreds of possible products is of little use. It is too much information about things I don't care about," says Anson. "The user, though, can indicate they would like larger print and to be able to set the text and background color. The Shopping Aid can filter thousands of possible products to just those that provide the requested features.

"Now I can look through a small set of products to find the things I want," Anson adds. "The people who manufacture assistive technologies currently are not competitors for GPII. GPII is the way of delivering their products to their customers. It saves time, money and, more importantly, it helps people in need navigate countless products in the commercial marketplace that may or may not meet their needs."

GPII will advance to the testing phase by late 2016. It will be showcased at the annual Rehabilitation Engineering & Assistive Technology Society of North America Conference in Arlington, Va., in June.

ATRI

The Assistive Technology Research Institute (ATRI) at Misericordia University is a regional resource that provides information and education in the application of assistive technology and universal design principles that helps individuals with limited function to participate in their personal lives to the greatest extent possible.

ATRI's activities include research into the usability of devices and products that are specifically marketed to individuals with disabilities and are intended to improve their function, as well as products that are intended for the general population, but have been designed to be used by people with functional restrictions and able-bodied individuals.

Denis Anson, M.S., O.T.R., is the director of research and development for ATRI. He holds bachelor and master's degrees in occupational therapy with training in research, gerontology and nerve/muscle physiology from the University of Washington, Seattle, Wash. He has been actively involved in computer and assistive technology applications for rehabilitation for more than 35 years.

He is also a member of the Rehabilitation Engineering & Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) Hall of Fame. He was elected to RESNA's board of directors in 2013. RESNA is dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of people with disabilities by increasing access to technology solutions. An international membership organization, RESNA advances the field by offering certification, continuing education, professional development, promoting research, developing technology standards and more.



BY PAUL KRZYWICKI

Growing opportunities to expand the mind

Occupational therapy research project studies effectiveness of a transitional vocational training program for special-needs students at Lands at Hillside Farms



JACKSON TWP., Pa. – The crisp fall morning does little to deter Brandon Dewey, 17, of Dallas from preparing a portion of the Dream Green Farm Program’s farmland at the Lands at Hillside Farms for planting its most popular crop – garlic. Dressed in a short-sleeved pocket T-shirt, the Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18 (LIU-18) student carefully follows a string-lined path to punch small holes in the earth with a long garden tool handle. Fellow LIU 18 student Josh Lockavich of Luzerne follows closely behind, planting the varietal bulbs in the holes, some eight-inches apart, and covering them with loose soil.

It is planting season – at least for the Music, Inchelium red, German red and Polish Softneck garlic crops – and the 10



Jack Brady, LIU 18, job coach, background, watches Dream Program students Josh Lockavich, center, and Jonathan Andrews separate hay to spread onto the newly planted crops in order to protect them from the harshness of winter.

LIU 18 students who plant, harvest and sell the produce in support of the Dream Green Farm Program, a transitional vocational training internship that offers work skills to students with learning needs. Housed on the 412-acre Lands at Hillside Farms, the collaborative program features about two dedicated acres of farmland, a general education building, storage shed, and an assortment of equipment.

"It's a learning experience," Dewey acknowledges, while taking a short break. "It's pretty fun, also. Our boss teaches us a vocabulary word of the day. We have to learn things like planting and tilling. There are so many other things to do here. We learn people skills when we are down there (at the Wilkes-Barre Farmers Market). Math is a good idea, because you have to count the cash and give people their change."

The Dream Green Farm Program was born in 2009 with the assistance of a \$99,000 United States Department of Agriculture grant. The program between Lands at Hillside Farms and LIU 18 has grown from a start-up to a self-sustaining operation that also provides assistance to operations at the nonprofit landmark in the Back Mountain.

On this day, the students prep and plant the last section of the garden for garlic. A blanket of hay already covers the bulbs that were planted earlier in the week. Before the full onset of winter, the students and the Dream Green Program manager and job coaches will till over the rest of the garden and plant winter rye as a cover crop to protect nutrients in the field. Many of the crops they will plant in spring will be grown from seed during the winter in the greenhouses on the historic farm. Those seedlings become tomatoes, peppers, squash, cucumbers, strawberries, leaf lettuce, pumpkins, flowers and more in early summer.

"The students that attend Hillside love talking about the program," says Allison Hausman '17, O.T.S., Lancaster, Pa., a Misericordia occupational therapy student who is studying the program. "They're all very excited to be there and they actually do have an interest in farming and what they are doing there."

In between the planting and harvesting of their crops, the students and mentors treat the experience as a real-life working farm where students grow an agriculture-based skill set, while also developing people and other important life skills, such as entrepreneurial, mathematical, physical and mechanical. They tend to the fields and garden crops in season, but they also split fire wood to heat the greenhouses, care for farm animals, complete routine maintenance on power equipment, and seek alternative means of making money to sustain the farm during the winter. That diversification has led to growing sales for their holiday pine and spruce wreaths that come complete with berries and bows, Christmas cactus plants and dried flower arrangements. The students also receive a stipend for their hard work, which adds another layer of accomplishment, according to Brian Novicki, LIU 18's transitional coordinator.

The program, though, is more than simply caring, nurturing and cultivating crops. It's about "helping young people adjust from the school system to whatever comes next," Novicki says. "There's a multitude of things happening here. It's a good feeling to see their excitement and growth. The rewards are the thank-yous from the students or when they tell you they love it here. We are pleased with what we have. Our relationship with Lands and Hillside Farms is great."

About 30 young adults 16 to 21 years of age have participated in the program since its inception. The Department of Occupational Therapy at Misericordia University added the program as a pediatric fieldwork experience for juniors in the program last spring. The relationship between the program participants, LIU 18, Lands at Hillside Farms and the University expanded in the fall with the start of the two-year, faculty-student research study, "Effectiveness of a Transitional Agricultural Training Program for Adolescents with Autism and Developmental Disabilities Based on Outcome Measures."

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Growing opportunities

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“We will measure the vocational program outcomes for students with special needs as they transition into adulthood,” says Jennifer Dessoye, O.T.D., O.T.R./L., assistant professor of occupational therapy at Misericordia University, “and work to understand if this program increases skills needed to be employable after the students graduate from high school at 21.”

Misericordia University occupational therapy majors are required to conduct research as part of the five-year academic program’s curriculum. The six students involved in the study voluntarily chose to study the novel program for their own individual reasons. For Erin Huff ‘17, O.T.S., Sugarloaf, Pa., it was both personal and professional, as the Hazleton Area High School graduate was influenced by Dr. Dessoye’s past research, “The Effectiveness of iPad Handwriting Applications on Improving Visual Motor and Handwriting Skills in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder,” and her older brother, Zach, 27, who has Down syndrome.

“I have a brother with special needs who is not at that level of function, but his peers could have benefitted from a program like this,” says the daughter of Kim and Gary Huff. “Growing up with a brother with special needs has made me never look at them differently. Seeing the impact his different services, such as occupational therapy, had on – not just him but my whole family – was what made me choose this profession.

“This profession means a lot to me,” Huff adds.

Student researchers developed and presented the application for the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Misericordia with assistance from Dr. Dessoye, the faculty research advisor. Once approved, the students began gathering data in September. The five data collection points with students will be completed in September 2016. It will take an additional nine to 12 months for the entry-level master’s degree program students Alyssa Auer ‘17, O.T.S., Fallon Cooper ‘17, O.T.S., Meghan DiGerolamo ‘17, O.T.S., Quinn Fohlinger ‘17, O.T.S., Hausman and Huff to analyze the information, which is using a set of qualitative (observations and interviews) and quantitative (standardized assessments

using Texas Functional Living Scale, Beery Test of Visual Motor Integration and Allen Cognitive Levels) outcome measures.

The research is being conducted to measure the effectiveness of the transitional program and its efficacy to further the development of

transitional programs for people with physical, emotional and developmental disabilities, according to the IRB.

“If the outcome measures resemble these expectations, the effectiveness of the program will be validated and evidence-based,” says Hausman. “It will justify this program and others like it as suitable for more state funding. Improvements can then be made to the program based on the study’s findings to further benefit the students in the program and the development of the functional capabilities in the target areas.”

“A positive outcome would be creating an array of programs similar to the Dream Green Program across our region and nationally,” adds Dr. Dessoye, “to allow other students with special needs to access the clear benefits of a horticultural transitional program.”

STUDENT RESEARCHERS:

The following Class of 2017 OT students are participating in the study: Alyssa Auer, Fallon Cooper, Meghan DiGerolamo, Quinn Fohlinger, Allison Hausman and Erin Huff.



Misericordia University student researchers are studying the Dream Green Program at the Lands at Hillside Farms. Participating in the study and program, from left, are Jack Brady, LIU 18, job coach; Erin Huff ‘17 and Allison Hausman ‘17, Misericordia student researchers; Jennifer Dessoye, O.T.D., O.T.R./L., assistant professor of occupational therapy, Misericordia University, and Brian Novicki, LIU 18, transitional coordinator.

Asia Thompson '17 and her children, Zaire, left, and Kaitlyn Denaye, right, enjoy a walk on the Misericordia University campus.



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Student shares story of poverty and hunger on Capitol Hill

BY MARIANNE TUCKER PUHALLA

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The memories are painful, enough to make her cry. As a homeless 18-year-old and the mother of two infants, Asia Thompson '17 had no choice at the time but to sleep in her car with her children. At times, she faced the unconscionable decision of feeding herself or feeding them the only things she could afford – rice or pancakes.

Today, the 23-year-old English major is enrolled at Misericordia University through the Ruth Matthews Bourger Women with Children Program. Fueled by that pain and frustration, the New Jersey native is working to earn her college degree and, in turn, improve

their lives. Thompson also is choosing to share her story in the hopes that she can make a difference in the lives of the 15.5 million children in America – a staggering 21 percent – who faced hunger and poverty in 2014, according to Feeding America®, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization.

During face-to-face meetings on Capitol Hill on Oct. 8 with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsak and U.S. Sen. Bob Casey Jr., D-Pa., her message was simple: "When is it OK for kids to go hungry?" Thompson was one of eight storytellers brought to Washington, D.C., from across the country as part of the grassroots Day of Action, "Community Voices: Why Nutrition Assistance Matters," by The Center for American Progress (CAP), a Washington, D.C.-based think tank and public policy research and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the lives of all Americans.

At the time, Congress was embroiled in a budget stalemate that Vilsak admitted might threaten funding of subsidy programs such as the

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, better known as the SNAP and WIC programs.

Thompson brought others in the room and herself to tears as she told Vilsak of the struggles she faced after escaping an abusive relationship and how nutritional subsidies helped her bridge the gap from being homeless to being a successful Misericordia student. She emphasized that those subsidies are equally critical now to help her cross the next bridge in her life – from being a student to a successful professional.

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Asia Thompson '17, center, nutritionist Clancy Cash Harrison, left, and Katherine Pohlidal, director of the Bourger Women with Children Program, advocated for nutritional subsidy programs during a day of meetings on Capitol Hill.

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“There were days when I didn’t know how I was going to feed my children. No parent should have to face that,” she told Vilsak. “Getting help from the subsidies allowed me to survive until I discovered the Bourger Women with Children Program. I found a home at Misericordia and the help I needed to get my life on track. The difference is amazing. My children, now 4 and 5, are no longer just surviving. They are living a healthy lifestyle and thriving – they are more energetic and are doing really well in school.”

Vilsak opened the 40-minute meeting by saying his department has worked to improve access to and quality of school

These issues impact real people in a really personal way. It is important for Congress to have these stories in front of them.

“I understand better than you might think,” added Vilsak, who spent time in an orphanage as a child. “I have personally seen the many sides of poverty.”

Sen. Casey was equally supportive during his face-to-face meeting with Thompson. “No child should ever have to live that way (in poverty). Asia, thank you, for being so brave and using your own life as a way to inspire others,” he stated. He expressed an interest in meeting with the mothers in the Bourger Women with Children Program. Misericordia’s Office of Government and Foundation Relations is working to arrange the visit.

“Subsidies such as SNAP and WIC are crucial components in the Bourger

Women with Children Program,” Program Director Katherine Pohlidal told the senator. “Misericordia relies on donations and grants to provide tuition assistance and housing for the women and their children, but we would not be able to provide funding for food. Each mother is required to work as a part of the program. With all they have to juggle – their full-time studies, work and raising their children – it would be nearly impossible for them to work additional hours to pay more for food. In the end, it is likely that a cut in the subsidies would prevent most women from participating in our highly successful program.”

While in the nation’s capital, Thompson and Pohlidal also met with key staffers for U.S. Sen. Patrick Toomey, R-Pa., and U.S. Rep. Lou Barletta, R-Pa., who promised to share what they heard with their legislators.

The Day of Action concluded with a Congressional Senate briefing where Thompson was one of four speakers to share their stories of nutritional struggles with more than 50 legislative aids and other Capitol Hill staffers, including a representative of the National Parent Teacher Association. The moderator was Ellen Teller, director of government affairs for the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), who directs FRAC’s legislative agenda.

Thompson’s story and that of others in the Bourger Women with Children

Program came to the attention of CAP through nutritionist Clancy Cash Harrison, a registered dietitian who is employed by Misericordia to provide nutritional education to the women and children in the program. She was among the voices heard during the Capitol Hill visit.

Working with Jennifer Folliard, director of the Academy for Nutrition and Dietetics, Harrison arranged for Thompson and other Bourger program mothers to be interviewed for National Public Radio’s StoryCorps series. The mission of StoryCorps projects is to honor and celebrate the lives of



meals and efforts are underway to eliminate abuse of the programs. He told the group he fully supports renewal of the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act, but others on Capitol Hill need convincing. “When President Obama hired me, my instructions were to help feed the kids,” Vilsak said to his guests. After listening to Thompson and three others speak, he added, “Yours are stories that policymakers need to hear.

Asia Thompson ‘17, above left, with nutritionist Clancy Cash Harrison and Katherine Pohlidal, director of the Bourger Women with Children Program, advocated for nutritional subsidy programs during a meeting with Sen. Bob Casey.

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsak, at right, with Asia Thompson ‘17 promised to give President Obama a copy of the Center for American Progress book featuring the stories of two Bourger Women with Children students.



everyday Americans by recording their stories. CAP representatives heard the stories and asked Thompson and Harrison if they would participate in the Day of Action, sponsored by the Food Research and Action Center, Witnesses to Hunger, Feeding America, the Coalition of Human Needs, and the Academy for Nutrition and Dietetics, the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals.

Catherine St. Louis on Oct. 24 and in a related story on Forex Report Daily, a news site that provides up-to-the-minute foreign trading stories from around the world.

Taking what he had heard from speakers during the Day of Action, U.S. Rep. James P. McGovern, D-Mass., spoke about the Community Voices campaign on the floor of the House of Representatives on Oct. 21.

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— *Asia Thompson '17*

“Even as a dietician, I found that I had my own misconceptions about poverty,” said Harrison, who provides nutritional counseling, helps manage an on-campus garden and offers cooking lessons for the mothers and the children in the Bourger program. “There is a need to debunk the stigma attached to subsidy programs. By coming together to speak out, we are able to shed light on these critical issues.”

News and social media coverage of the Day of Action went viral with the hash tags #Voices4Nutrition, #EndHungerNow, #MUtoCapitolHill and #MisericordiaProud. In addition to local television, magazine and newspaper stories, Thompson was featured on the websites TheNation.com and TalkPovery.org, and in the story, *Four Mothers School Bill O’Reilly on Child Hunger*, after the conservative pundit claimed stories of childhood hunger in America have been fabricated. Founded in 1865, The Nation is considered America’s oldest weekly magazine. Thompson also appeared in a video recapping the Day of Action produced by CAP and posted on the organization’s Facebook page.

Thompson provided statements for stories about the Day of Action on FirstFocus.org and the Coalition of Human Needs website, and subsequently was asked by the New York Times to comment when the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended pediatricians routinely screen for nutritional deficiencies. She was featured in the story by reporter

His speech can be viewed on YouTube. Links to the related articles and videos are posted at www.misericordia.edu/MUtoCapitolHill.

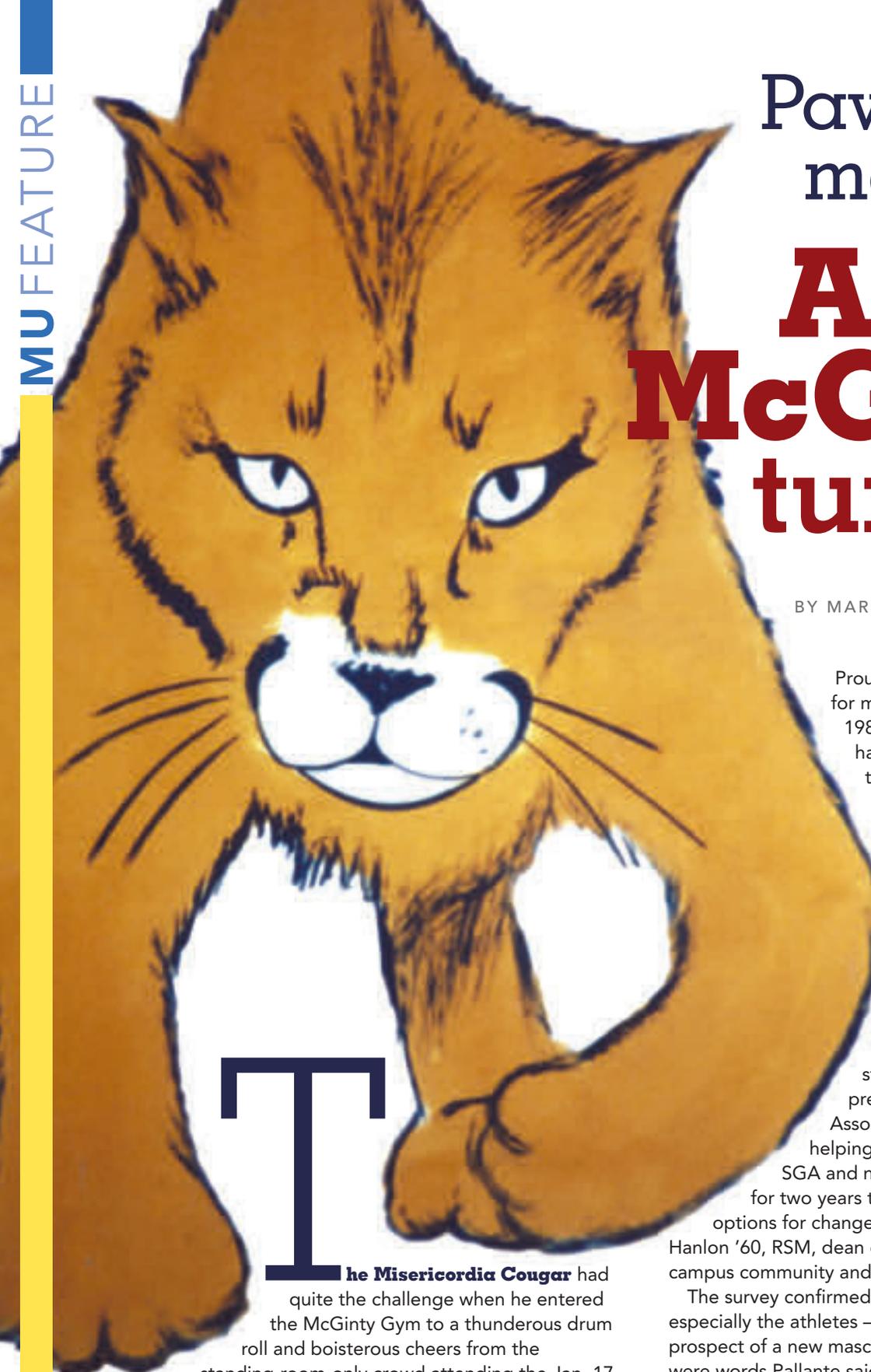
What is next for the newly energized Thompson and her children, Zaire, 5, and Kaitlyn-Denaye, 4? With a 3.5 GPA, the English major has plans to attend a study abroad program in Ireland in March. She is also on track to participate in a yearlong Master’s of English Literature program at the University of Reading, in Reading, England, following her graduation from Misericordia in 2017. The children will go along, of course.

Although her current long-range goal is to earn a Ph.D. in literature, her day of advocacy on Capitol Hill may already be influencing her future plans. “I am hoping to go back to D.C. and advocate on other issues and policies, such as domestic abuse. We need more truth-tellers to educate the public and the policymakers,” she said.

“This whole process has made me realize just how much people don’t understand about hunger. We really need to get people to talk about the issues that impact so many,” she added in retrospect. “I hope this effort raises awareness that not everyone receiving benefits is abusing the system. The stigma attached to subsidy programs is unfair – there are families who need help to reach their goals and get their children out of poverty.

“Thanks to the government and Misericordia – I’m that story,” Thompson adds.

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Paws-etively
marvelous:

Archie McGrowl turns 30

BY MARIANNE TUCKER PUHALLA

Proudly known as “The Highlanders” for many years, student athletes in the 1980s felt the burgeoning campus had outgrown the nickname for the athletic program’s men’s and women’s teams. Despite a fondness for their four-legged Highland terrier mascot named McGinty, they expressed interest in a name that would do more to invigorate support and let the world know that Misericordia athletes were a force to be reckoned with – on and off the playing field.

Maria Pallante '86, a field hockey player who served as editor of the student newspaper and later as president of the Student Government Association (SGA), was among those helping spearhead the movement. She says SGA and newspaper leaders worked together for two years to educate the campus and present options for change. In the spring of 1985, Dr. Martha Hanlon '60, RSM, dean of students, agreed to poll the campus community and alumni for their opinion.

The survey confirmed Pallante’s theory that students – especially the athletes – were enthusiastic about by the prospect of a new mascot. “Dull, intangible and too long,” were words Pallante said surfaced in the survey regarding “The Highlanders” nickname. The survey also revealed that the overwhelming choice for a new mascot was a cougar, which Pallante said coalesced with ‘Cordia, and would hopefully steer people away from Miseri, an unflattering, yet often-used Misericordia nickname.

The **Misericordia Cougar** had quite the challenge when he entered the McGinty Gym to a thunderous drum roll and boisterous cheers from the standing-room-only crowd attending the Jan. 17, 1986 basketball game. As then-College Misericordia’s new mascot, he was charged with igniting the spirit of the sleepy, rural campus and energizing support for the men’s and women’s athletic programs at the dawn of a new era of co-ed enrollment.

With a curl of his lip and a flick of his tail, the era of Paw Power was born.

Alumna Judy Walsh Daley '70, public relations director at the time, says the college spared no expense in attaining the inaugural costume – contracting with Pierre's Costumes, a premier costume and mascot company in Philadelphia, Pa. Today, the company lists the Temple Owl, the Villanova Wildcat and the Rutgers Scarlet Knight among hundreds of collegiate clients.

Daley enlisted the artistic talents of student Bob Lizza '85 to create the first Cougar logo used to launch the *Paw Power is Coming*-teaser campaign. "He did a great job giving us a fierce Cougar who looked determined and whose eyes bore into you," she recalls. "We had great fun with it on billboards across the region."

Since many of Misericordia's male students played on the basketball team, Daley recruited her 16-year-old son, Michael, to don the costume for the Jan. 17 unveiling. They rehearsed an entrance routine set to music and practiced how he would high five with College President Joseph Fink, who stands more than 6-feet tall.

The standing-room-only crowd was treated to a foul-shooting contest with Father Jack "the Bomber" Bendik, popular chaplain, and music from the pep band, lead by Sister Mary Carmel McGarigle, RSM, on drums, and Sister Sharon Gallagher, RSM, on the boom-ba. A 92-90 victory at the buzzer over the Keuka College men's team capped the celebration.

Thirty years later, Pallante, director of the United States Copyright Office in the Library of Congress, says she feels the effort was transformative in the culture of the campus. "It wasn't a secret that the school was having some financial struggles, and our hope was to stir up some interest in the community and spirit among the students. The result is so much better than we ever expected. I really feel that it was a turning point for the college," she says proudly.

"The administration recognized that it was time for a change, especially with more men enrolling," Dr. Hanlon adds in reflection. "The Sisters loved McGinty but wanted to support what was best for the campus."

A Cougar Booster Club was initiated the following academic year, lead by alumnus Bill Jones '85, who in a recruitment brochure promised support and recognition to "help athletic teams climb to higher plateaus of achievement." Membership information on the



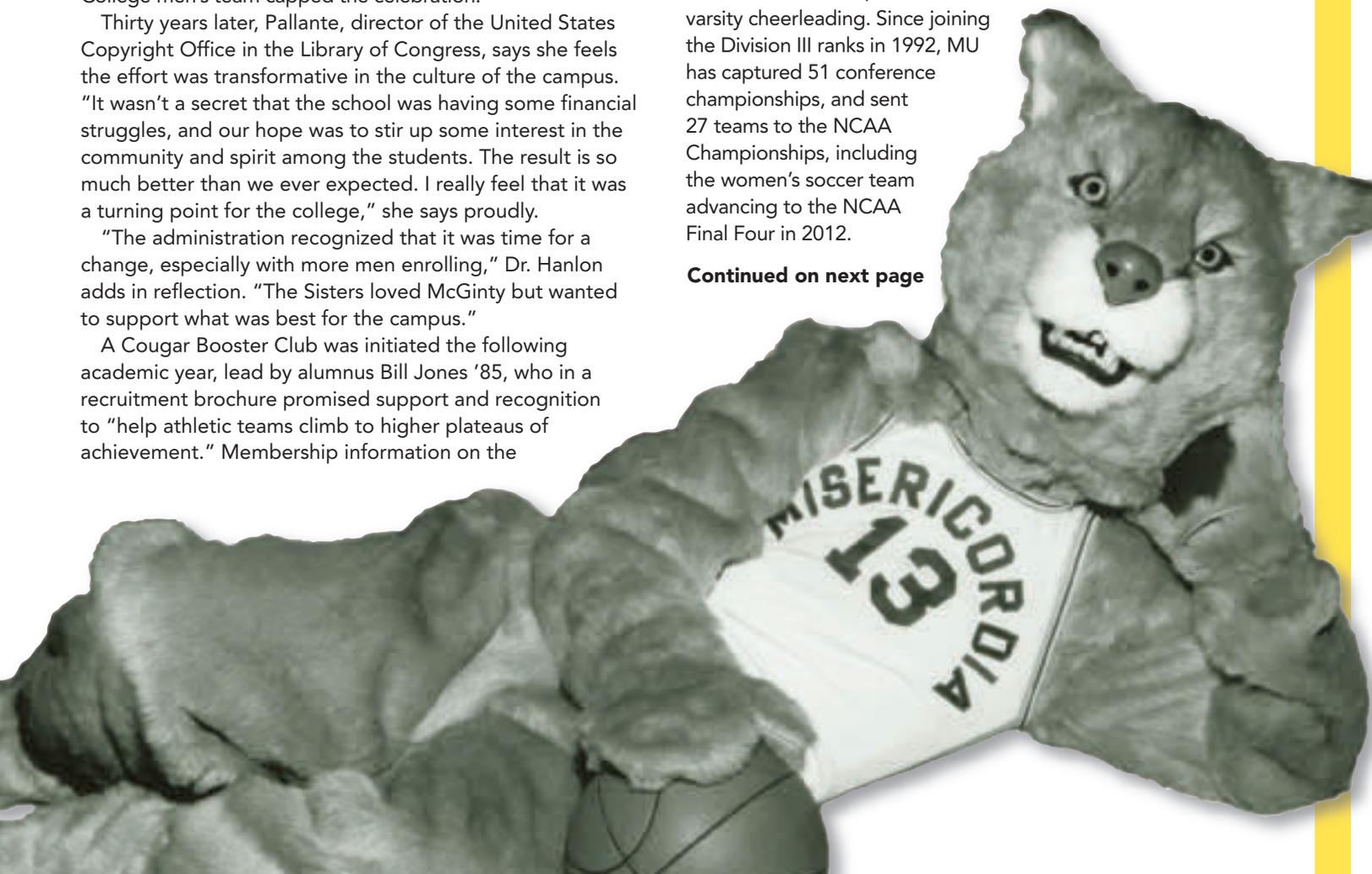
The Cougar, above, stands near Lake Street to welcome new students to campus in the fall of 1986. Sister Eloise McGinty, RSM, left, mugs for the camera with the new Cougar, portrayed by then-sophomore Walter Kierzkowski '88, during a spring 1986 basketball game. Michael Daley, below, poses for the camera as the new Cougar in January 1986. The first Cougar logo, on page 18, was designed by then-student Bob Lizza '85.

Cougar Club can be found on the MU Athletics website at athletics.misericordia.edu/cougarclub.

Sporting fewer than a dozen teams in the 80s, the Misericordia athletic program has since flourished. Today, 26 percent of

Misericordia's 1,800 undergraduate students are varsity athletes. Misericordia competes in 23 NCAA varsity men's and women's sports in the Freedom Conference of the Middle Atlantic Conference, as well as varsity cheerleading. Since joining the Division III ranks in 1992, MU has captured 51 conference championships, and sent 27 teams to the NCAA Championships, including the women's soccer team advancing to the NCAA Final Four in 2012.

Continued on next page





The Cougar, soon to be named Archibald 'Archie' McGrowl, welcomes the new football team to Manglesdorf Field during their first home game in 2012. The Cougar shows off his basketball prowess, in photo below, and gives two paws up to life as a Cougar in bottom photo.

engagement, at lgorney@misericordia.edu.

Archie's storied history at Misericordia is the focus of an illustrated children's book written and published by Daley in recognition of the University's 90th Anniversary in 2014. *Were There Always Cougars at College Misericordia University?* is an entertaining story of the evolution of the mascot as told by a cougar mom to her son. It is on sale at the bookstore for \$5, or by calling Mercy Center at (570) 675-2131. Proceeds support retired Sisters of Mercy. More on the book can be found at www.facebook.com/mercycougarbook.



Archie turns 30

from page 19

Student Erika Deckard '15 won a contest to give the Cougar a formal name in 2012, the year the football team was added. Her winning entry, Archibald "Archie" McGrowl, paid homage to Misericordia's iconic entrance arch. His new name was emblazoned on the back of his football jersey when Archie was introduced at the 2012 Homecoming talent show and football game.

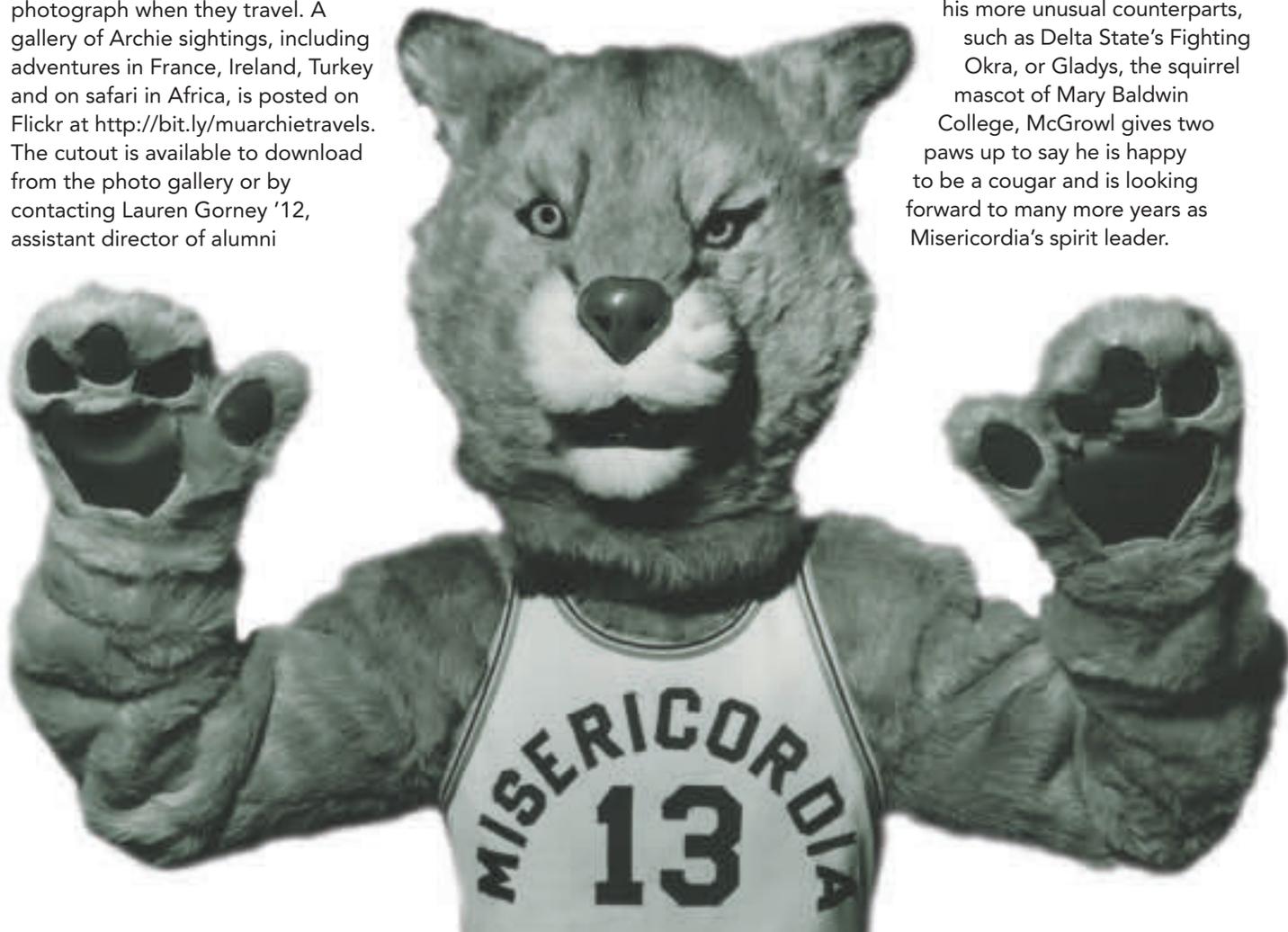
In 2013, the Misericordia Alumni Association introduced hand-sized "Where's Archie?" cutouts that students and alumni can take with them and photograph when they travel. A gallery of Archie sightings, including adventures in France, Ireland, Turkey and on safari in Africa, is posted on Flickr at <http://bit.ly/maarchietravels>. The cutout is available to download from the photo gallery or by contacting Lauren Gorney '12, assistant director of alumni

A rousing 30th birthday celebration was held on Jan. 30, 2016 during an afternoon of men's and women's basketball at the Anderson Center. Students and alumni athletes paid tribute to the caramel-colored feline with on-court games, a trivia contest, and clothing and music from the '80s.

The job of a mascot is defined as one who helps determine the public persona of a college or university and offers a window within. As such, Archie has successfully answered the challenge. He has earned his place on a list of more than 590 recognized collegiate mascots. Not to be outdone by any of

his more unusual counterparts, such as Delta State's Fighting Okra, or Gladys, the squirrel mascot of Mary Baldwin College, McGrowl gives two paws up to say he is happy to be a cougar and is looking forward to many more years as Misericordia's spirit leader.

McGrowl gives two paws up to say he is happy to be a cougar and is looking forward to many more years as Misericordia's spirit leader.



SMILING HAPPY

Biology major uses crown to educate children about bullying and proper dental hygiene

BY MARIANNE TUCKER PUHALLA

Rebecca Zaneski '18

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BIOLOGY

Hanging around in a sweat shirt and jeans, Misericordia University sophomore Rebecca Zaneski '18 appears to be a typical, hardworking biology major as she precariously balances a packed academic schedule and the responsibilities of being a member of the nationally-recognized Cougars cheerleading team. Her 18-hour days in the middle of the week, include classes, study sessions, labs, cheer practices, athletic conditioning, and game-day performances. Yet, for the soft-spoken 20-year-old with stunning blue eyes and a million dollar smile, it is on the weekends when things really get busy.

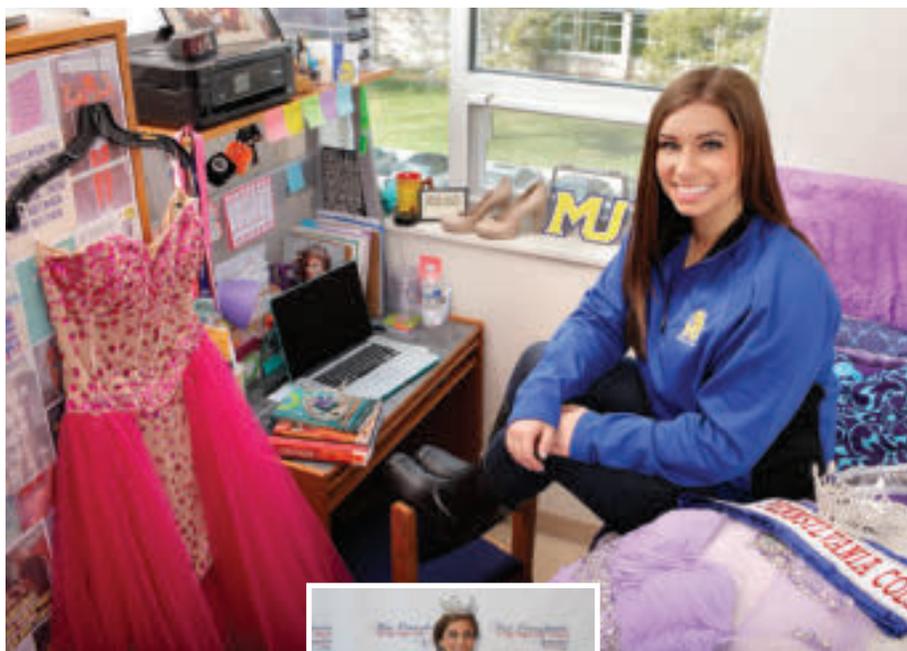
B.R.A.V.E. anti-bullying platform, *Building Respect and Values for Everyone*. She also speaks on her personal platform, *Smile Happy*, in which she encourages children to have good dental health by eating right and using proper techniques to brush and floss their teeth. She tallied more than 200 appearances from July through October by herself and with fellow titleholders.

Her platform is close to her heart and to her goals of earning a degree in biology in the pre-dental track at Misericordia. Her plan is to go to dental school and eventually become an orthodontist. "I needed braces twice as a child and spent so much time in and out of the orthodontist's office, that I became fascinated with the dental profession. It is a great way of helping people," she says.

A pageant competitor since the age of three, Zaneski has a few hundred titles – including the coveted crown of Miss Pennsylvania National Teenager – leading to her finish as first runner up to the national winner in Nashville, Tenn. She was also first runner up in the Miss Pennsylvania Outstanding Teen Pageant, a precursor to the Miss Pennsylvania and Miss America pageants.

With her current title, she will compete for Miss Collegiate America in Texas in July. "There are a number of substantial scholarships available if I am able to win Miss Collegiate America, as there are at the Miss America pageant. I love to compete, but I am also motivated knowing that I will be able to offset some of the cost of my education. That is really important to me," she says.

Zaneski hopes to follow in the footsteps of her mother, Linda Zaneski, R.N., who was Miss Pennsylvania 1991 and competed in the 1992 Miss America pageant.



Rebecca Zaneski '18, at right, was crowned Miss Collegiate Pennsylvania in June 2015. She juggles life as a pageant competitor and a pre-dentistry major from her room in MacDowell Hall, shown above.



Crowned Miss Pennsylvania Collegiate America in July, Zaneski dons her sash and crown for as many as six personal appearances every weekend. They take her to the four corners of the state promoting the pageant's



'DISABILITY DOES NOT MEAN INABILITY'

Nonprofit continues Sister Beltran's work on behalf of the handicapped in Liberia

Sister M. Sponsa Beltran 64, OSF, founded Our Lady of Fatima Rehabilitation Center for abandoned and handicapped children in the Ivory Coast and Paynesville, Liberia in West Africa.

BY PAUL KRZYWICKI

KINGSTON TWP., Pa. – By happenstance, Eileen R. Rockensies '64 was a classmate of Sister M. Sponsa Beltran '64, OSF, in nursing classes at then-College Misericordia in the early 1960s. It could be argued that fate or a higher calling reunited them nearly 30 years later at St. Therese's Church in Shavertown to continue a mission of Mercy.

The women attended classes together and became acquaintances as they each pursued their Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees. Sister Beltran, a Bernardine Franciscan nun, already had taken her final vows before befriending the native New Yorker on campus. Even before they graduated together, it was apparent that Sister Beltran – the oldest of eight children – had an innate desire for missionary work and helping those most in need. At Misericordia, the Wilkes-Barre native befriended a family that had a terminally ill child named Andie who required around-the-clock care.

Together, Sister Beltran and Andie would talk about angels, God and Heaven, including sister's dream of performing missionary work abroad, according to Mrs. Rockensies.

Before the pair received their degrees at Misericordia, Andie passed away.

Sad and returning from Andie's Mass of Resurrection, Sister Beltran retreated to her room. Countless letters in need of response were strewn upon her desk. Among them lay one that caught her eye, as it contained the seal of the Franciscan Order. Inside, it contained her appointment to Liberia in West Africa. "I sat down and I prayed, and I talked to Andie and I talked to God, and said, 'we have such difficulty understanding your ways, but here is a perfect example,'" says Mrs. Rockensies, recalling a conversation she had with Sister Beltran about her dream being fulfilled. "Andie, thank you for talking to God on my behalf."

Sister M. Sponsa Beltran '64

Eileen R. Rockensies '64

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NURSING

Mission work is God's work

In 1970, Sister Beltran began her work for those less fortunate in Liberia. On and off for the next 35 years, she eased their pain, and educated, fed, healed and loved them while also raising money for other necessities. Overall, she made life better for tens of thousands by working first at a small, mission-run clinic in Cape Palmas, Liberia, and then by establishing Our Lady of Fatima Rehabilitation Center for abandoned and handicapped children in the Ivory Coast and in Paynesville, Liberia, West Africa. That accidental reunion in 1996 enabled the Rockensies and Beltran families to unite and continue sister's decades-worth of work in Liberia through the creation of the Jerry Cebulski African Disability Foundation (JCADF), a 501(c)(3) organization that was founded in 2013 and named in honor of sister's nephew, who died in a car accident. For more information about the nonprofit, please log onto www.africandisabilityfoundation.org.

"I love that JCADF was formed to carry on my vision for the handicapped in Liberia," says Sister Beltran, retired and living today in St. Joseph's Villa in Reading, the retirement home for the order, at the age of 90. "Without our donors, they would never be able to save all the lives of so many starving people. Won't you join our Misericordia Family for the Year of Mercy through prayer, sacrifice and a donation for His Least? Thank you for caring and sharing in Jesus and Mary's name. Love you all. God bless."

Sister Beltran did more than unselfishly tend to the needs of many, as she is credited with saving the lives of numerous innocents during Liberia's two civil wars from 1989 to 2003 that killed about 250,000 Liberians and displaced countless others, according to HeritageLiberia.net. Mrs. Rockensies and Angie Cebulski of Conyers, Ga., (Sister Beltran's biological sister), JCADF's co-founders and co-presidents, operate the nonprofit with the assistance of a six-member board of directors, Kevin Rockensies '93, an independent contractor, and a three-person staff in Liberia.

Together, they share Sister Beltran's stories of altruism, heroism, humility, and miracles of faith so the work she began in Cape Palmas, Liberia, can continue at Our Lady of Fatima Rehabilitation Center in Monrovia, Liberia, for other abandoned and handicapped children.

A family of faith

The legacy of Sister Beltran begins in Wilkes-Barre during the height of anthracite mining in the Wyoming Valley of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Described by Mrs. Rockensies as "brilliant, kind, prayerful and funny with a tremendous sense of humor," Rosarie Marie Beltran – sister's real name – also cared for her siblings in many ways. The Beltran family was extremely poor, as Joseph Beltran, Sr., an immigrant from Spain, worked in the coal mines to support his family, but oftentimes was too sick to work as he had developed black lung.

For Christmastime, Sister Beltran would search for discarded cardboard in the neighborhood. After bringing it home, she would draw a Christmas tree and crèche for the Nativity scene on it for her siblings. One by one, the family's children decorated the cardboard tree by drawing ornaments and coloring them with crayon.

A family of faith, sister befriended the nuns at Maternity of the BVM Church (now Our Lady of Hope) on Park Avenue, Wilkes-Barre, where she typed and did odds and ends for them. By 7 p.m., Mrs. Helen Kozlowski Beltran, of Polish descent, rang a bell marking the time for the family's daily rosary.

"She came from those roots and knew what it was like to have nothing," Mrs. Rockensies, 73, says, commenting on why sister worked tirelessly during her lifetime for the impoverished.

Continued on next page

JCADF BOARD

Angie Cebulski, Conyers, Ga.,
co-president

Eileen Rockensies, '64,
Shavertown, Pa., co-president

Joann Cebulski, Decatur, Ga.

Rosie Cebulski Morris,
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Timothy Sullivan, P.A.-C.,
Westwood, Mass.

Amy Zbikowski '05,
Crofton, Md.



Sister M. Sponsa Beltran '64, OSF, holds a Liberian child on her lap during a return visit to the country. Sister is credited with saving countless lives during the country's two civil wars.

LIBERIA'S FOUNDATION OF HOPE
from page 23

Liberian challenges

Shortly after receiving her assignment in Cape Palmas, where she was operating a health care clinic for the poor and teaching typing, biology and other classes in the school, an epidemic broke out. Soon she was caring for 200-300 patients a day at the clinic and was being flown by the government into the bush to treat cholera and typhoid, and also assist in leper colonies where she delivered babies and provided diagnoses and treatments.

For about 20 years, Sister Beltran treated the sick and educated the minds of young and old, alike. The work was challenging, she has acknowledged, and was done in what she thought were the harshest of conditions – until she made another harrowing discovery. Many Liberians were invisible to society, as they were abandoned or hidden by their families and the rest of the country because they were handicapped or considered worthless or “witched,” as the native myths had taught them.

“Most Liberians believed you are ‘witched’ if you have a handicap and if you touched them you would also get it,” says Kevin, who earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in liberal studies with concentrations in computer

“If you are blessed, regardless of how many hardships you may have, we all have something to give. Misericordia taught me to give back. This is payback time for me.”

— Eileen R. Rockensies '64

science and business administration from Misericordia. “Soon after word got out about sister, the disabled began arriving.”

Sister Beltran began treating Liberians who had polio, clubfoot, cerebral palsy and other diseases and disabilities. She provided some with forearm crutches, others with physical therapy, and then surgical options in Ghana.

A year later civil war erupted in Liberia, while she was at Sacred Heart School in 1989. The missionaries and nuns were fleeing the war-torn country, but Sister Beltran vowed to

remain. “Every time she opens the door, she is finding more and more disabled from the bush villages, four to five of them lying on the ground abandoned,” Mrs. Rockensies says, describing the dire circumstances and sister’s reaction to the crisis, “I can’t leave. God sent me these children.”

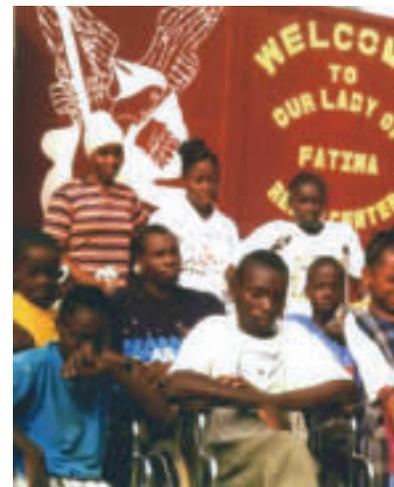
“She prayed about leaving and took a vow of obedience to God Almighty,” says Mrs. Rockensies, whose daughter, Regina Rockensies '97, also graduated from Misericordia with a Bachelor of Arts in English, summa cum laude. “She said, ‘He sent me these children and I cannot go and turn my back on them. It’s not something God wants me to do.’”

The children under Sister Beltran’s care survived the first encounter with the civil war, but circumstances changed dramatically in 1994. Gathered in Sacred Heart Convent’s chapel, child soldiers and rebel leaders dragged more than 500 out of the place of worship – including handicapped children, elderly, expectant mothers and Sister Beltran – and began to douse them in gasoline outside the convent.

Sister Beltran could see billowing smoke and smell burning flesh from a neighboring village orphanage that was operated by Missionaries of Charity nuns, an order that was founded by Mother Teresa. One by one, though, every match the rebels struck did not light. The rebel leaders then ordered the child soldiers to shoot everyone in sister’s care – but the guns misfired – and the voices of children praying the rosary continued, according to Mrs. Rockensies.

Soon thereafter, some child soldiers recognized Sister Beltran, and called her “Ole Ma,” as she had taught them years ago before war erupted in the country. “I did teach you,” Mrs. Rockensies says relating how sister responded to the young soldiers. “I taught you how to study, learn and pray. I didn’t teach you how to shoot a gun or kill.”

Sympathetic soldiers secured transportation and drove some of them 17 hours to a safe haven in the Ivory Coast, where a local bishop



Sister M. Sponsa Beltran '64, OSF, spent years tending to the needs of those most in need in the Ivory Coast and Liberia – countries deeply affected by civil war, unrest and poverty for many years. The Jerry Cebulski African Disability Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization established in 2013, continues Sister Beltran’s mission by helping the children and handicapped individuals in these West African nations.



allowed sister to start caring and educating the handicapped again in a makeshift center using old chicken coops as a one-room classroom. Sister Beltran continued her work in Ivory Coast for five years before repatriation to Paynesville, on the outskirts of Monrovia, the nation's capital city, where she built the current Our Lady of Fatima Rehabilitation Center campus with the help of donors.

Civil war returns

In 2003, the internal strife that had rocked this African nation off-and-on for 14 years erupted again. As Sister Beltran was talking to Mrs. Rockensies on the telephone, bombs exploded nearby and gunfire could be heard in the distance. As it grew louder, Mrs. Rockensies could sense the alarming tone in sister's voice and message. She asked her classmate to thank anyone who had supported their mission work in Liberia and wanted to assure everyone that she would pray for them. Then – the phone went dead. More than an hour later, they reconnected and sister acknowledged that rebel troops had surrounded the compound and they were about to die. Inside,

Sister Beltran had more than 300 disabled and about 6,000 refugees who sought asylum.

Just two weeks prior, the Rockensies family buried the patriarch of the family as Kenneth (Misericordia faculty from 1993-03) died at the age of 65, a week after suffering a sudden heart attack. Coincidental or not, it was the feast of the Holy Rosary. Frantic, the family informed the United Nations and later the White House to let them know that thousands of disabled and young children were surrounded by deadly rebels. Guns and ammunition also had been hidden in three cemeteries surrounding the property.

"We were so connected we knew every one of these residents," says Mrs. Rockensies, a noticeable strain in her voice showing how this episode 12-years ago still frightens her to this day. "It was like getting a

call from your family, praying and asking God, 'what do we do now?'"

The United Nations sent peacekeeping troops in to restore order. About eight hours later, the phone rang again. It was Sister Beltran. She had survived the ordeal, but others had been shot and killed – many of them in the back as they ran to sister for protection.

Mission alive and well

Today, the acres of land sister purchased to rebuild Our Lady of Fatima Rehabilitation Center contains a chapel, dormitories, vocational-technical school, health clinic and additional structures. JCADF continues the mission at the center and has expanded sister's work to neighboring communities and villages. The nonprofit provides the disabled of Liberia with education, food, clothing, toiletries, medical care, mosquito nets, and other basic necessities because, "Disability does not mean inability," according to Sister Beltran.

"It was a continuation of the life I had been living and the way we had raised our children," says Mrs. Rockensies, explaining why she works with JCADF. "If you are blessed, regardless of how many hardships you may have, we all have something to give. Misericordia taught me to give back. This is payback time for me."

Although the mission continues, it has not been without tribulations as the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa has slowed the shipment of supplies to the facility and prevented volunteers from returning to the country, which the Rockensies visit about three times a year.

"When you go over and see the people you're touching and they are so full of gratitude, it's not something you can put into words," says Kevin, who was active in Campus Ministry and service-learning trips while enrolled at Misericordia. "Something just happens and you get pulled in that direction to help. There is no running water, no electricity, little food, and no medical or surgical care. We fight every hour to keep them alive. Prayer, action and devoted donors are the weapons God has provided."



CONTACT

For more information about the Jerry Cebulski African Disability Foundation, please log on to www.africandisabilityfoundation.org or contact Kevin Rockensies '93 at krock@epix.net, (570) 406-4533, (570) 675-3397 or at 47 Harford Ave., Shavertown, PA 18708.

Tackling environmental concerns along the shore

Biology major's research shows best method for restoring coastal shorelines and repopulating them with native species

BY PAUL KRZYWICKI

Hunter D. Pates '16 knows how to tackle.

He ably brings down running backs from his linebacker position on the football field, and addresses myriad issues that are important to the student body on campus as vice president of the Student Government Association at Misericordia University.

The Columbus, N.J., native, though, is most proud of his ability to undertake important academic and environmental issues as an undergraduate research scientist and burgeoning coastal ecologist. Pates was one of 28 undergraduate students and 14 faculty members who participated in the 2015 Misericordia University Summer Research Fellowship Program from May 26 to July 31.

"The big thing is over my first three years at Misericordia I really established a strong base on the overall scientific process," Pates says about his undergraduate education. "With that kind of training, it allowed me to go out and put all of those skills to work. It helped make the process feel much easier and go much

smoother. What I liked about the fellowship program is I pretty much had the freedom to develop my own research project.

"I felt like I had the freedom to reach out to other scientists in the field and establish that line of communication while getting their feedback and help. That's something I wouldn't have had if I went to a larger research fellowship program or larger school," he adds.

The University-sponsored opportunity took him from the on-campus laboratories in Hafey-McCormick Science Hall, where his interdisciplinary research with fiddler crabs began with Barbara McCraith, Ph.D., associate professor of biology, to the endangered coastal salt marshes, salt marsh islands and shorelines of Ocean and Cumberland counties in New Jersey. His summer work also enabled him to appreciate the roles biologists and engineers play in fully understanding the coastal system, including the geology, chemistry and biology of this fragile environment, and how best to protect it.



Biology major Hunter D. Pates '16 conducted research on the endangered coastal salt marshes, salt marsh islands and shorelines of Ocean and Cumberland counties in New Jersey in the summer.

says, reflecting on his formative years around the ocean that included building elaborate sand castles and seemingly nonstop boogie boarding. "And now being able to advocate for environmental causes helps to ensure people will always be able to utilize nature and all it has to offer."

An estuary life

A soft-spoken senior, Pates plans on attending graduate school for coastal ecology so he can continue conducting research that has a positive impact on the environment – and even one day working for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The undergraduate scientist in him reveals his practice of meticulous preparation, as he reviews notes, pictures and his already completed research poster while reviewing the collaborative work.

His research topic, "A Living Shoreline Approach to Erosion Prevention and its Effect on Fiddler Crab Burrow Densities on Mordecai Island, Barnegat Bay and Money Island," required periodic kayak trips by himself since the locations were inaccessible by other means. On Mordecai Island, he established experimental and control sites to quantify the abundance and quality of fiddler crab burrows. He did the same at Money Island, which is technically considered a cape. In each quadrat, Pates counted the burrows and measured their diameters every two weeks at each site in an effort to determine how healthy the environment was for the crabs and other native species of plants, birds and fish.

"Salt marshes, in general, are important as they serve as a filtering system for pollutants," says Pates, a Northern Burlington County Regional High School graduate and biology major at Misericordia University. "If they are healthy, it will take away wave energy from hurricanes and storms.

"The work he did was outstanding," says Dr. McCraith. "He really gets science. I saw it happen his sophomore year. He was turned on by science. He got bit by the research bug."

The goal of Pates' investigation was twofold, as he sought to compare the effectiveness of two different shoreline erosion prevention-restoration projects on Mordecai and Money Islands, and the impact erosion has on the fiddler crab population.

The shore is somewhat of a second home for Pates, as he grew up an hour's drive from the beach on Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, a military facility about 18 miles outside of Trenton, N.J., with his parents, MSgt. Timothy and Judith Pates. His exploration of beaches in Sea Girt, N.J., during his childhood, and now Beach Haven, Long Beach Island, N.J.,

shaped a lot of his beliefs on conservation efforts in his home state and elsewhere.

"Just growing up and going down to the shore has helped me to appreciate all that nature has to offer to us," he



Misericordia University linebacker Hunter D. Pates '16 (54) combines to make a tackle in a Cougar football game.

Continued on next page

Estuaries: protecting the delicate balance
 from page 27

They also act as a nursery for juvenile fish, fiddler crabs and other organisms.”

His research was enhanced by ReClam the Bay, a regional educational and environmental nonprofit in Toms River, N.J., that reintroduces clams and oysters to the Barnegat Bay estuary to improve water quality; Barnegat Bay

Partnership, a national estuary program in Seaside Park, N.J., that works to protect and enhance the Barnegat Bay ecosystem, and the Wilmington, Del.-based Partnership

for the Delaware Estuary, one of 28 National Estuary Programs that work to improve the health of estuaries. Representatives of the organizations granted him access to Mordecai Island in the Barnegat Bay complex, and Money Island in Downe Township, that

were critical to his research, and also offered him feedback.

Mordecai and Money islands are very similar in size, composition and importance in this complex ecosystem. Mordecai is an uninhabited 45-acre coastal marsh island that is a haven to migrating and indigenous birds and fish. Since the 1930s, about 26 acres of the island’s western shore have been lost to storm and manmade erosion, according to New Jersey Audubon.

Undergraduate research scientist Hunter Pates 16 logs the data he collected while studying two different shoreline erosion prevention restoration projects and the impact erosion has on the fiddler crab population at Mordecai and Money Islands in the summer.



Money is bordered by the Delaware Bay and Gandy's Beach Preserve.

Their importance to this fragile ecosystem, though, also cannot be underestimated as they are a refuge for endangered bird species, such as the Black Skimmer, American Oystercatchers and Yellow-crowned Night-Herons, according to the New Jersey Audubon.

This is where their similarities end, though, as different methods are being employed on these coastal shorelines to protect them from erosion, and to rebuild their shorelines and natural habitats.

Erosion prevention

Along the Money Island coast, scientists constructed living shorelines in the spring of 2014. Living shorelines is a relatively new concept along the Northeast Coast, but it has been used off the coasts of the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida and Louisiana to manage vanishing shorelines due to natural erosion and destructive hurricanes. Natural shorelines utilize organic materials to protect the shore from the energy of waves and to rebuild and, in turn, repopulate the shores with native species. A healthy and stable shoreline, for example, will have an ample supply of ribbed muscles in the sand, while also stimulating the proliferation of tall grasses that attract nesting birds, like the Piping Plover.

By utilizing coconut or coir fiber logs situated between wooden posts, and positioning oyster bags – mesh bags filled with oyster shells – in front of the fiber logs at Money Island, erosion slowed and fresh sediment was retained that enabled fresh vegetation growth and a healthy environment for native species.

Erosion has devoured most of Mordecai Island's lower marsh through the years. Conservation efforts here are being enhanced by manmade geotubes – long, high-strength woven geotextile tubes filled with sand – that are placed offshore to absorb wave energy. The first phase of the project was completed in 2009. It has yet to be determined when the project will be completed.



Misericordia University biology major Hunter D. Pates '16 examines coastal salt marshes for fiddler crab burrows on Mordecai Island.

A healthy environment

Fiddler crabs are a good tool to measure a healthy shore environment. An abundance of the small crustaceans, for example, indicates a healthy salt marsh, while plentiful, but smaller burrow sizes indicate an increased recruitment of the crabs into the environment. An abundant fiddler crab population also aerates the soil, which encourages native grasses, like cord grass *Spartina alterniflora*, to take root. Conversely, fewer burrows exist on shorelines with active erosion.

Pates' research data show the living shoreline is more effective in "enhancing fiddler crab recruitment and in reestablishing marsh habitat" compared to the geotubes. Money Island's density for burrows was 118 per meter square, while Mordecai's was only 23 per meter square. Therefore, his research suggest that the use of organic material is more effective than geotubes in "enhancing

fiddler crab recruitment and in reestablishing marsh habitat."

"His research is important for a couple of reasons," Dr. McCraith adds, while reviewing a copy of his poster presentation. "It's important for Hunter himself, as he made connections and started networking with people in research in New Jersey and Delaware. From that, he has really started to develop an understanding of the interconnectedness of everything in the marine system there – not just the science, but the economy and the social impacts as we start losing the shoreline.

"As the students in our internship program develop a better understanding of their research and the impact of shoreline erosion, they are hopefully going to be leaders in their communities, and they can educate people and influence policy based on that level of understanding. The education we are giving our students is going to carry on through their whole life."

Log on to [YouTube.com/MisericordiaU](https://www.youtube.com/MisericordiaU) or use your QR-code enabled smartphone to watch the behind-the-scenes video of the research conducted by Hunter D. Pates '16 along the shores of New Jersey.



ALUMNI NEWS



Mary Ellen Gulotti '87

For more information about alumni events and news, visit the MU website: misericordia.edu/alumni

The most wonderful time of year

The recent holiday season reminded me of the wonderful Christmas traditions we had at Misericordia as students. Beautiful Christmas trees were displayed all over campus, new fallen snow enhanced the beauty of the season, and everyone dressed in their holiday best for midnight Mass led by Father B (Bendik), now Monsignor B.

The campus also was brimming with excitement, yet nervous anticipation because of finals. Everyone wanted to do well so they could enjoy the winter break with no worries. That was Christmas at Misericordia in the 1980s.

The holiday season has evolved over the last 25 to 30 years at Misericordia. Today's students are more aware of living the charisms of Mercy, Service, Justice and Hospitality. Almost every club on campus has a service project dedicated to helping those in need. For example, the campus has a couponing club where members utilize extreme couponing tactics to purchase food and personal items for neighborhood food pantries. Other groups on campus accept monetary donations, perform service projects and provide mentoring services. The students of today are reaching out to the less fortunate more than ever, and by doing so are living the Misericordia way.

As you reflect on your own personal traditions, please reflect on the joys of the season and how Misericordia shaped your life, hopefully for the better. Please consider Misericordia in your New Year's resolution. It can be a financial resolution, a resolution to volunteer or just a resolution to return to campus.

I wish everyone and their loved ones a happy and healthy New Year!

Misericordia Proud,

CLASS NOTES

Stay in touch with friends and classmates by posting updates about your career, family and other noteworthy accomplishments on cougarconnect.misericordia.edu or [facebook.com/MisericordiaAlumni](https://www.facebook.com/MisericordiaAlumni). Please submit Class Notes to alumni@misericordia.edu.

1949

Jane Carroll Rymer '49 is very active in the Ridgewood, N.J., community and serves on the July 4th Parade Committee.



1965

Anne Marie Marfisi Yeager '65 and her husband, Joseph, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 12, 2015. Anne Marie had the desire to work with children prior to raising her own and earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from College Misericordia. The couple has four children, three grandchildren and one great-grandchild. A brunch was hosted by their children in their honor in Cherry Hill, N.J.

1967

Classmates, from left, **Sharon Cullather Schafer '67**, Schuylkill Haven, Pa.; **Patricia Walters Ohlemiller '67**, Erdenheim, Pa.; **Sandra Postupack Luongo '67**, Stroudsburg, Pa.; **Paula Charnoski Moroz '67**, Waldorf, Md., and **Martha Durkin '67**, Philadelphia, Pa., recently met at Bravo restaurant, Allentown, Pa., for



their bi-annual reunion. These former English and French majors meet regularly to share memories of their days at Misericordia in the 1960s and to share stories about their lives.

1976

Deborah Pegrim Konnick '76 and her husband, Michael, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on Aug. 2, 2015. Deborah has been employed at WVIA Public Media for 23 years in the membership and education departments. The couple has two children, Michael Matthew Konnick and his wife, Brianna, and Katrina Grace Konnick. To celebrate their milestone, Michael and Debby enjoyed a cruise to Bermuda and the Caribbean.



1988

Gerald F. Strubinger, Jr., Esquire '88 was elected president of the NCMIC Foundation in January 2014. He has served on its board of directors since 2008. The NCMIC Foundation is a multi-million dollar nonprofit organization that funds research and education for health care. Jerry remains the managing shareholder of Strubinger & Gazo, P.C., where he

SAVE THE DATE!



ALUMNI WEEKEND 2016
JUNE 3-5

To register: <http://cougarconnect.misericordia.edu/aw16>

law practice. Jerry and his wife, Carolyn, live in Mahoning Twp., Pa., with their two children, Catrina and Matthew.

1998

Carolyn Machonis Catalano '98 and her husband, David, welcomed their son, Benjamin, on March 27, 2014. He joins brother, Tyler, and sisters, Holly and Bethany.

2000

Justin Catino '00 joined the PHOENIX Rehabilitation and Health Services, Inc., team in September 2014. He presently serves as facility director and lead physical therapist for PHOENIX's outpatient physical therapy facility in Montoursville, Pa.

2001

Tara Coletti Sinclair '01 and her husband, Jonathan, welcomed a son on April 13, 2015.

2002

Ronald Badman '02 and his wife, Helen, welcomed their daughter on May 2, 2015.

Megan Mulderig '02 and Michael McAndrew were married on July 11, 2014. Megan is a physical therapist on the brain-injury unit at Moss Rehabilitation Hospital, Elkins Park, Pa. Following a wedding trip to Aruba, the couple will reside in Glenside.

2003

Rebecca Keefe '03 and Luke Ronczka welcomed a baby girl on Nov. 2, 2015.

Lauren Scott Richichi '03 and her husband, Dominick, welcomed their son, Joseph, on May 6, 2014.



A Misericordia University faculty-student research project in occupational therapy has been accepted for presentation at the 6th Annual National Association of Neonatal Therapists Conference in Orlando, Fla., in April. Members of the research team, from left, are Brittany Bly '15, M.S.O.T., O.T.R./L.; Katherine Murphy Sassani '15, M.S.O.T., O.T.R./L.; Kim Kubistek, O.T.D., O.T.R./L., adjunct faculty, and Christina Tucci '15, M.S.O.T., O.T.R./L.

The collaborative study, *An Investigation of the Methods and Products Used to Thicken Infant Formula in U.S. Children's Hospitals: A Survey Study*, reviewed current trends in the methods and products used to thicken formula for infants with swallowing difficulties or dysphagia at children's hospitals across the United States. The study showed the use of a variety of products, including rice and oat cereals, and gel thickeners, and the use of a broad range of methods to thicken infant formula. Participants expressed interest in the development of a standardized protocol for thickening infant formula in order to prevent medical complications.

2004

Meghan Ambosie Skrypski '04 and her husband, Christopher, welcomed a son on Oct. 12, 2014.

Mike Trudnak '04 was named general manager for Bucknell Sports Properties by Learfield Sports. Trudnak comes to Bucknell having most recently served 12 seasons in senior-level positions with the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Railriders, the Triple-A affiliate of MLB's New York Yankees.

2005

Leann Ickes '05 and her husband, Randy Womelsdorf, were married Oct. 24, 2015.

Launi Smith '05 and her husband, Eugene Klinges, were married May 3, 2014. Launi is a registered nurse in the operating room at Moses Taylor Hospital, Scranton, Pa. The couple honeymooned at Excellence Playa Mujeres, Mexico. They reside in their new home in Swoyersville, Pa., with their dog, Murphy.

2006

Marc Cefalo '06 and Nicole Cooper were married Sept. 19, 2015. Marc is the owner of Planet-Miata. They have a mini-schnauzer, APEX.

Edward Hamm '06 and his wife, **Mallory Bieber Hamm '07**, welcomed their son, Henry LaRue, on Nov. 20, 2014.



Misericordia Proud!

Misericordia Proud! is an alumni referral program that affords the applicant a waiver of the standard \$25 application fee and a one-time \$500 alumni grant that will be applied to first-semester tuition. For more information and a referral card, please log on to misericordia.edu/MUProud.

Continued on next page



Continued from page 31

Elizabeth Zawatski Kaszowicz '06 and husband, Justin, welcomed their twin sons, Chase and Darren, on Aug. 15, 2015.

Jason Tempesta '06 and Katherine Harvey were married July 19, 2014. Jason is a senior manager of community relations for the Philadelphia Flyers, Philadelphia, Pa. They had a wedding trip to Antigua and reside in Jeffersonville, Pa.

2007

Michael Joseph Castanaro '07 and Danielle Marie Kishbaugh were united in marriage in an outdoor, lakeside ceremony at Ehrhardt's Waterfront Resort. Michael is employed as a manager by Verizon Wireless, Hazleton, Pa. The couple honeymooned in Montego Bay, Jamaica. They reside in Mountain Top, Pa.

Carrie Race Edwards '07 and her husband, Matthew, welcomed their daughter on April 10, 2015.

Michele Stibgen Koziel '07 and her husband, Kenny, welcomed a son on Oct. 16, 2014.

Nichole Marie Oliveri '07 and James Joseph Norris were married Aug. 4, 2014. Nichole is employed by TMG Health, Jessup, Pa. After football season, the couple

honeymooned in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. They reside in Jenkins Twp., Pa.

2008

Alyssa Bierbach Ambosie '08 and **Dale Ambosie '09** welcomed their daughter on April 7, 2015.

Amy Ruda '08 and Anthony Joseph Balent were married Aug. 1, 2015. Amy is employed by Good Shepherd Rehabilitation, Allentown, as a pediatric speech-language pathologist.

Jacqueline Zabresky '08 and David Reichard were married May 23, 2015. Jacqueline is an attorney at Zabresky Law Offices, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., and is employed by Trinity Healthcare, Philadelphia. After returning to the area, a lakeside evening reception was hosted by Kathie Daskalakes, sister-in-law of the bride, at her dock at Harveys Lake, Pa. The couple resides in Dallas, Pa.

2009

Allison Strickler '09 and **Ralph Capristo '10** were married July 12, 2014.

William Gagliardi '09 and his wife, Beth Ann, welcomed a son on Oct. 25, 2014.

Nichole Garinger '09 and her husband, Conrad, welcomed a son on April 25, 2015.



At Winter Commencement, Misericordia recognized the graduating students who studied abroad by presenting them with colorful stoles that represented the countries where they studied. Posing for a picture, first row from left, are Danica Kuti '15, Ghana; Erica Moore '15, Ghana, and Amy Koch '15, Guyana; second row, Sean Vitale '15, Costa Rica and Jamaica, and Ryan Hassick '15, Guyana.

Tanya Earley Goodman '09 and her husband, Michael, welcomed their daughter, Gabriella, on Oct. 26, 2014. She joins big sister, Mckenzie.

Jillian Ann Yacovelli '09 and Brian Joseph Lyons were married May 31, 2014. The couple honeymooned in St. Lucia.

Stephanie Marie Yunko '09 and **Andrew Michael Smith '09** were married Dec. 6, 2014. Stephanie is a radiation therapist at University of Rochester Medical Center, Wilmot Cancer Center, Rochester, N.Y. Michael is head golf professional at Ridgemont Country Club, Greece, N.Y. The couple took a wedding trip to Antigua. They reside in Penfield, N.Y.



Dr. Ashley M. Wolanski '09 and Dr. Joseph M. Wagner were married Dec. 13, 2014. Ashley practices optometry for



Biernacki Eye Associates in Wilkes-Barre and Mountain Top, Pa. The couple resides in Dallas, Pa., with their furry friends, Izzy and Nala.

2010

Courtney Moran '10 and **Brian Simko '10** were married Nov. 8, 2014. Courtney is a special education teacher in the Scranton School District, Scranton, Pa. Brian is a curriculum coordinator for The Commonwealth



Alumni returned to campus to act as marshals for the 5th annual Winter Commencement ceremony on Sunday, Dec. 20. Participating in the event, seated from left, are Maureen Rinehimer, Sandra Najaka '89, '90, '02, Marilyn DeHaven '06, Carol Williams '67 and Marcella Morgan '96; standing, Kristi Empett '03, Heather Fritz '97, Johnna Miller '15, Thomas Sweetz '01, Adam Grzech '13, Joseph Steber '04, Harold Empett '01 and Carol Fahnstock '14.

PT program celebrating 20 years with special luncheon at Alumni Weekend
To register: <http://cougarconnect.misericordia.edu/aw16>

1949

Betty Roberts Fitelson

August 5, 2015

Sister Mary Juliana Hazuda, RSM

September 24, 2015

1952

Jeanne Guckavan Garside

May 26, 2015

1953

Marie Kownacki Hopkins

October 17, 2015

1954

Gladys Bell Stark

August 1, 2015

1957

Dorothea Perry Lieberman

February 11, 2015

1958

Jean Ann Michak Stock

December 12, 2015

1959

Gertrude Ankner Avila

August 19, 2015

1960

Sister Catherine Mary Winters

October 20, 2015

Mary Terese McHugh Duffy

November 12, 2015

Rita Milligan Yaroshinsky

December 10, 2015

1961

Sister M. Concepta Abbott, DM

August 18, 2015

Corann Pretti Myers

formerly, **Sister Nadine Pretti, RSM**

August 21, 2015

1963

Joyce Jendrzewski Thompson

July 13, 2015

Dorothy Cibula

August 30, 2015

1964

Marian Francis Tallo

August 15, 2015

1965

Judith Wierbowski

September 18, 2015

Sister Sandra Constance Galazin, MMS

September 26, 2015

1968

Sister Julia Yucas, CJC

June 10, 2015

Stefanie Borick Kenowski

October 26, 2015

1986

Anna Cervenak

July 24, 2015

1971

Barbara Parbel Gates Kriete

August 8, 2015

1976

Joan Scialo Rubin

March 20, 2015

1995

Joann Littler Dawley

August 12, 2015

1996

John Kachurick

October 17, 2015

1997

Nancy Morris

August 18, 2015

2001

Joseph Mengeringhausen

August 16, 2015

Medical College, Scranton. The couple took a wedding trip to Washington, D.C. They reside in Dunmore, Pa.

2011

Matthew G. Schnell, Esquire '11

graduated from Albany Law School in 2014. He accepted a position with Strubinger Law, P.C., Palmerton, Pa. Joining him in the practice of law



is 1988 Misericordia graduate **Gerald F. Strubinger, Jr., Esquire '88**. Strubinger Law, P.C. is a four attorney litigation firm.

2012

Chelsea Mixon Vossler '12 and **Greg Vossler '11** welcomed their son, Gregory Vossler, Jr., on Jan. 24, 2015.

2013

Kristin Eden '13 and her husband, Jeremy, welcomed twin girls, Paxton and Piper, on Feb. 25, 2015.

Dayna Richter '13 and Theodore Ehlers were married Jan. 10, 2015.

Megan Kryger '13 and Nicholas Morrissey welcomed their daughter on Jan. 20, 2015.

Michelle Williams '13 and John McGloin were married June 27, 2015. Michelle is the annual fund director at Lackawanna



Several members of the Class of 1961 gathered together recently to show their school spirit by posing with a College Misericordia banner and Archie the Cougar, who is celebrating his 30th birthday this year.

College, Scranton, Pa. The couple took a wedding trip to Orlando, Fla. They reside in Scranton.

James Sapak Jr. '13 and his wife, Paula, welcomed their son, Nolan, on Nov. 16, 2014. He joins big brother, Warren.

2014

Jesse Rakowski '14 and his wife, Amanda, welcomed a daughter on May 1, 2015.

Meagan Donaldson '14 and Ryan Vogt were married Aug. 31, 2013. Meagan is a Ph.D. candidate in the field of oncology. The couple honeymooned in Seattle, Wash. They live in Bronx, N.Y.

Krista Randall '14

and Adam Letke were married Nov. 23, 2014 in Towson, Md. The couple honeymooned on a 10-day cruise to the Eastern Caribbean. They currently reside in Bel Air, Md.



Amanda Shingler '14 and Jeffrey Crambo were married Aug. 12, 2014 in Montego Bay, Jamaica. Amanda is a nurse practitioner at Pocono Medical Center, East Stroudsburg, Pa.

2015

Bethany Empfield '15 and Padraic Kenney were married Dec. 21, 2014.

2015 WINTER COMMENCEMENT

December 20

More Winter Commencement
memories can be found at
<http://bit.ly/mudec15>



**Maintain your Misericordia
friendships for a lifetime by
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For more information, contact the Office of Alumni Relations at:
alumni@misericordia.edu or visit: cougarconnect.misericordia.edu

Alumni Volunteer Program: Contact Alumni Relations at (570) 674-6764
to be an admissions, alumni/development or career services volunteer.





2015 HOMECOMING

October 2-4



More MU Homecoming Memories can be found at <http://bit.ly/muhomecoming15>

FINDING HIS VOICE

SLP graduate earns Ph.D., joins higher education to continue instruction, research

BY GEOFF RUSHTON

Nicholas Barone’s ‘11 professional life has taken a variety of unexpected turns since he first earned his bachelor’s degree from the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pa., in 2001. But on his way to his first faculty appointment this fall as a researcher and assistant professor in the communication disorders program at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., it was his time as a graduate student in Misericordia

University’s Speech-Language Pathology Program that provided the direction for Barone to pursue his calling.

“I think if I had gone to a different program I wouldn’t be sitting here,” Barone says. “I really attribute my success as a student and hopefully as a professor to, first and foremost, that education and foundation that was built at Misericordia. Misericordia made me very well prepared.”

Barone earned his M.S. in

speech-language pathology at Misericordia in 2011 and went on to receive a Ph.D. in communication sciences and disorders from James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Va., last spring. But before finding Misericordia, Barone tried out a number of careers – working odd jobs while playing in a band, time in retail and later a job in marketing for which he was hired right before the economic downturn in 2008. After losing that position, he decided to go back to school and initially looked to Misericordia for its MBA program.

When he was introduced to the speech-language pathology master’s program, he knew he had found the right fit – and program faculty knew he could be successful.

“To be frank, I wasn’t a very good student at Pitt but I was a very different person eight years before,” Barone says. “(Department chair) Dr. Glen Tellis gave me a chance to come into the program and told me he felt I’d be an asset to the program. I took that to heart.”

Tellis was right, and Barone indeed took that faith as an important motivator. The Doylestown, Pa., native finished his master’s with a 4.0 GPA and was honored with Misericordia’s Academic Excellence Award and Master’s Thesis Award. He also won the Von Drach Memorial Scholarship from the Pennsylvania Speech-Language-Hearing Association as the outstanding student in the field, and became the first Misericordia student to receive the national ASH Foundation Graduate Scholarship.

For all his success as a student, Misericordia’s focus on not only teaching but also research opportunities for speech-

language pathology students helped him succeed as a doctoral student and professional.

“You don’t get those opportunities at most small, teaching-focused schools,” he says. “Misericordia is truly unique in that it does give you that, especially in this program. Dr. Tellis has really built up a program that encourages students to go out and disseminate research, which I’m hoping to continue here at UVA.”

Barone sees Misericordia’s program as a model for training speech-language pathologists. “I was calling it the ‘Misericordia Model’ of preparing SLPs, which is giving them a good foundation of research and clinical,” Barone says. “That way they become good evidence-based practitioners in their field, regardless of whether they go into research. They know they can go and feel comfortable with the research and literature to find the best treatments. That’s what Misericordia instilled in me. There are multiple graduates along with me who went on to Ph.D.s because they were given access to that research.”

Though the Misericordia program’s SLP faculty members are highly regarded as experts in their own right, Barone said it is their commitment to educating and training

Nicholas Barone ‘11

SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY



Nicholas Barone ‘11 earned his Ph.D. in communication sciences and disorders from James Madison University, and recently was hired as a researcher and assistant professor in the communication disorders program at the University of Virginia.

students that makes the program exceptional. “Their interest is in their students, not their own status in the field. I carry that with me. Misericordia gave me the foundation to be successful in a Ph.D. program and finish in three years. I don’t know that a lot of small schools can do that, and that Misericordia puts out students who are that prepared is a testament to the faculty,” he says.

UNDERSTANDING THE KEYS TO COMMUNICATION

Graduate of SLP program earns Ph.D., accepts assistant professor position

BY GEOFF RUSHTON

Erik Raj '08

SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

This fall, Erik X. Raj '08 embarked upon a new journey by accepting a tenure-track assistant professor and clinic supervisor position at Monmouth University, West Long Branch, N.J., after earning his Ph.D. from Wayne State University, Detroit, Mich., at spring commencement. His road to becoming a speech-language pathologist (SLP) did

not commence at Stockton University, Galloway Twp., N.J. – where he earned his B.S. – or Misericordia – where he received his M.S. in SLP – it began in elementary school.

Raj knows firsthand the frustration of being unable to communicate clearly and understands the impact an SLP can have, as both a client and a therapist.

As an elementary school student in New Jersey, Raj faced challenges with his speech, unable to pronounce his first name. He encountered puzzling looks from peers and adults as he struggled to communicate. Raj remembers the pivotal moment he was finally able to accurately pronounce “Erik.”

“Even though I was very young, I was able to appreciate that this moment was the result of hard work and determination,” he says. “I was able to pronounce my name because a speech-language pathologist helped me learn specific tips and tricks. I attribute that success to that professional. After this, it was clear to me that I wanted to do the same thing. I wanted to help children become effective communicators – to be able to express themselves. There is nothing better than being able to share your hopes, wants and dreams.”

From years spent treating school-age students to receiving his doctorate and now serving as a professor and researcher, Raj attributes much of his success to the SLP program in Misericordia University’s College of Health Sciences.

“I wouldn’t be here today if it weren’t for the program at Misericordia, (department chair and professor) Dr. Glen Tellis and (assistant professor) Dr. Cari Tellis,” Raj says. “It was clear to me Misericordia had a forward-thinking way of looking at what this field was and could be. It was obvious Misericordia was thinking about technology in a way that made them stand out from other programs. That was something that very much resonated with me. Dr.

Glen Tellis and the faculty were all in with implementing as much technology, where appropriate and possible, to help our clients increase their communication abilities.”

Understanding how technology can benefit individuals with communication challenges has been a through line in Raj’s career as a student and professional. When Apple introduced the first iPad in 2010, he immediately seized on its potential as a tool to motivate clients with speech disorders. He also has published work regarding apps for speech therapy. His current research is exploring how people who stutter are connecting with each other through social networking websites and creating digital support groups.

Upon graduating from MU, Raj worked three years with school-age children as an SLP in the Hamilton Twp. School District in New Jersey. During that time, he was named Wilson Elementary School’s Teacher of the Year, received a Governor’s Certificate of Recognition for outstanding public school teachers, and was selected by Therapy Times as one of eight national recipients of the publication’s “Most Influential” Award. He subsequently was an SLP at a Detroit charter school and the Edison Township School District in New Jersey.



Erik X. Raj '08, Ph.D., C.C.C. S.L.P., is an assistant professor of SLP at Monmouth University.

SPORT MANAGEMENT TEAMMATES

Alumni work in demanding Southeastern Conference for University of Missouri Athletic Department

BY GEOFF RUSHTON

Karen Sickler '12 and Ron Guido '13 were just a year apart in Misericordia University's Sport Management Program. Unlikely as it seems, they never knew each other as undergraduates, and yet in the spring of 2015 they learned they would be working together in Columbia, Mo.

From among hundreds of candidates, the University of Missouri Athletic Department selected Sickler and Guido for its two one-year positions as event management associates.

Though they may not have known each other, Sickler and Guido have been following similar paths as they build professional success in the sport management field. For both, the positions at Missouri – where they work with Division I athletic programs in the Southeastern Conference – are a significant marker as they look to the next phases of their careers.

Karen Sickler '12

Ron Guido '13

.....

SPORT
MANAGEMENT

After graduating from Misericordia, Sickler took on an athletic department internship at Texas A&M International University in Laredo, Texas. From there, she moved on to Quincy University in Quincy, Ill., where she earned her M.S.E. in educational leadership.

Guido, meanwhile, headed to Springfield College in Springfield, Mass., following his graduation. There he also earned a master's degree in athletic administration while working as a graduate assistant for the athletic department. During his two years at Springfield, Guido gained experience with all aspects of game management and worked on marketing and promotion for more than two dozen teams.

Both pursued positions at Missouri due to the challenges and experience that come from working with an NCAA Division I athletic department.

"The reason I took this position was to get the Division I experience," Sickler acknowledges. "It really rounds out my resume and adds a final piece. I'm looking forward to continuing in a position in college athletics."

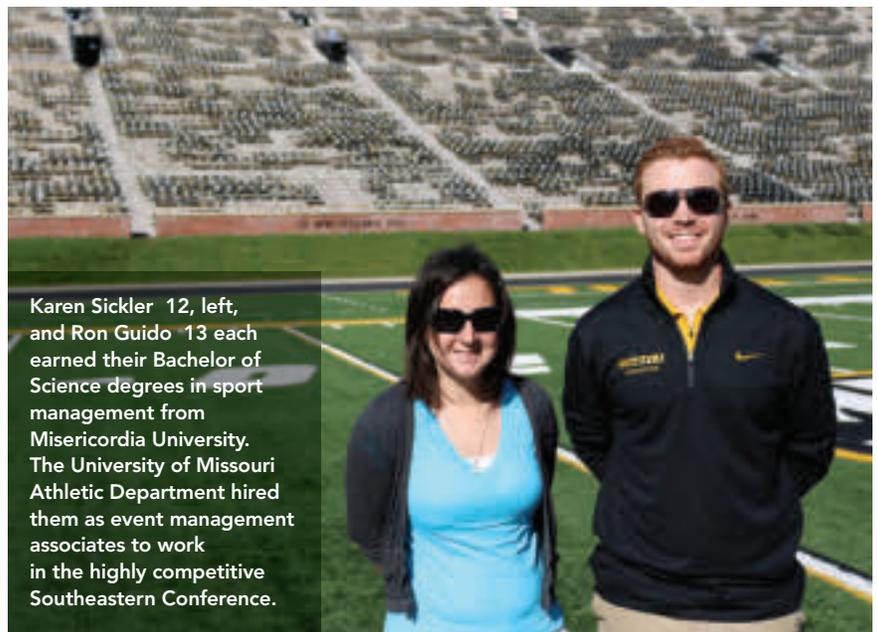
"It's been a great experience here and it's helping me grow professionally," adds Guido, a baseball player during his time at Misericordia.

In their current positions, Sickler and Guido both have roles at Missouri's 71,000-seat Memorial Stadium for Tiger football home games. Sickler oversees gate operations and she's responsible for ensuring ticket scanners are operating before gates open. She monitors entrances and coordinates staff for efficient crowd flow into and out of the game, and uploads ticket scans to a server for an accurate attendance count.

Guido is responsible for game day parking operations, with responsibilities including customer service prior to game weekends, coordinating parking staff (including in lots that accommodate overnight RV parking) and working with traffic patrols to establish inbound and outbound traffic. He finds out caterers who will be servicing tailgates, compiles lists of other sports practicing nearby the night before games and arranges parking passes, then delivers that information to parking staff.

In addition to football responsibilities, both Sickler and Guido have significant roles with other Missouri athletics teams. Sickler is a game manager for women's soccer, and she will be working with the men's and women's basketball teams in the winter and track and field, tennis and softball in the spring.

Guido is a game manager for women's golf. He also will work with swimming and diving, gymnastics and baseball, and is implementing a job shadowing program for Missouri undergrads in sport management.



Karen Sickler '12, left, and Ron Guido '13 each earned their Bachelor of Science degrees in sport management from Misericordia University. The University of Missouri Athletic Department hired them as event management associates to work in the highly competitive Southeastern Conference.

Misericordia names Edkins director of athletics

Chuck Edkins, a 25-year employee and associate director of the Department of Athletics for the past 11 years, has been named director.

“Chuck’s efforts to provide the best possible experience to our student-athletes are laudable, and I am confident that he is prepared to take the lead role of a very successful athletics program,” said Thomas J. Botzman, Ph.D., president. “Our students, families and the entire Misericordia University community will benefit from his commitment and leadership.”



Edkins

Edkins stepped down as head men’s soccer coach after the 2015 season with a career record of 283-159-35. He led the Cougars to nine conference championships, two Eastern College Athletics Conference (ECAC) South title and six NCAA

tournament berths.

In their first seven seasons in the Middle Atlantic Conference (MAC) Freedom Conference, the Cougars captured four men’s soccer titles (2008, 2009, 2011 and 2012).

Previously, Misericordia won three

Pennsylvania Athletic Conference championships under Edkins and made 10 trips to the PAC finals – more than any other school. The 2000 Pennsylvania Athletic Conference (PAC) championship squad became the first team in Misericordia history to earn an NCAA championship bid.

Edkins also guided the Cougars to seven appearances in the ECAC championships. Misericordia won the ECAC South title in 2002 and 2014 and finished second twice.

A four-time PAC Coach of the Year recipient, Edkins was the MAC Freedom Coach of the Year in 2008.

Planning underway for annual golf tournament

The third annual Misericordia University Athletics Golf Tournament was held Sept. 21 at Huntsville Golf Club. More than 90 players and 40 sponsors made for a fun-filled day on the links.

The event was organized by tournament committee member Al Santasiere ’01. It included a silent auction, highlighted by an autographed jersey of New York Yankee great Mariano Rivera.

The 2016 golf tournament is scheduled for Sept. 26 at Huntsville Golf Club. For more information, please contact the athletics department at (570) 674-6374.

Chandler named head coach for men’s basketball

Willie Chandler ’03 is in his first season as head men’s basketball coach.

A member of the Misericordia University Athletics Hall of Fame, Chandler has served as an assistant coach at his alma mater for the last six years. He was a four-time Pennsylvania Athletic Conference (PAC) Player of the Year and ended his career as the second-leading scorer in NCAA D-III history with 2,898 points. Chandler was a three-time All-American and led the nation in scoring twice. He spent five seasons playing professionally in the United States Basketball League.

Chandler led the Cougars to four consecutive postseason appearances, including one trip to the PAC championship game.

Chandler, who earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration, holds nine school career records and five school single-game records. He also was a four-time Misericordia/Wendy’s Athlete of the Year.

Women claim 2nd straight MAC cross country title

Led by senior Bianca Bolton ’16, the women’s cross country team claimed its second consecutive Middle Atlantic Conference championship in 2015.

Bolton used a late surge to win the individual title, as she came from behind over the final half-mile. Teammates Bethany Killmon ’17, ’18 (6th) and Amy Viti ’15, ’16 (7th) joined Bolton on the All-MAC first team.

Bolton went on to earn all-region status and compete at the NCAA Championships for the second consecutive year.

Kenzie Jones ’19, Alexandria Miller ’15, ’18 Alyssa Schwarz ’18 earned second-team All-MAC status. Misericordia’s Chris Wadas was named MAC Coach of the Year for the second straight year.

Field hockey wins first MAC title

The field hockey team won its first-ever Middle Atlantic Conference (MAC) Freedom championship with a 4-3 double overtime victory over FDU-Florham.

Jennifer O’Neill ’16 was named MAC Freedom Championship MVP after scoring two goals, including the game-winner. Lindsay Hischak ’16 and Colby Eldridge ’18, ’19 were named first-team All-MAC Freedom, while Samantha Partington ’15, ’18 and Angela Pasquini ’16 made second-team.

Hischak finished fourth in career points (139) and was named to the National Field Hockey Coach’s Association All-South Region team. She joined Pasquini in the Division III All-Star game, where Misericordia’s Robyn Fedor Stahovic, served as a coach.

Members of the Misericordia University field hockey team pose for a photo after capturing the Middle Atlantic Conference Freedom championship with a double overtime victory.



Gaining a JAMAICAN perspective



Clifton



Ivy



Lincoln

Stroke Camp patient Busha, center, receives gait training from Misericordia University DPT student Becka Bisset '13, '16, right, and another volunteer.



Doctor of PT graduate students gain an appreciation for the little things in life while offering clinical services at Friends of Ridge United's Stroke Camp

BY PAUL KRZYWICKI

Becka Bisset '13, '16 of Bloomsburg, Pa., adjusts her seat, looks up at the ceiling and glances around the room where her fellow Doctor of Physical Therapy majors also are taking time to reflect on the service trip they recently completed at Friends of Ridge United's (FOR U) Stroke Camp in St. Elizabeth Parish, Jamaica. In that instant, the fifth-year student is at a loss for meaningful words.

The daughter of Robert and Vicki Bisset was not being shy, but rather introspective as she struggled to identify the right way to describe the impact the experience had on her personally and professionally. Those few seconds of silence also allowed D.J. Kelleher '13, '16 of Sayre, Pa., to break the ice with his classmate.

"What would Daniel say?" he asks.

"Ya, mon!" they reply almost in unison, as their heads nod in

agreement and smiles overcome everyone's faces at the mere mention of the Jamaican patient's first name.

Bisset, Kelleher and five other Misericordia University Doctor of Physical Therapy students volunteered at Stroke Camp from Sept. 5-13 under the supervision of Heather Fritz, P.T., D.P.T., assistant professor of physical therapy. They provided intensive physical therapy treatments for eight hours a day over five days to seven patients who were post-stroke and one client with cervical myelopathy. In a country where clinical services for people with handicaps are limited, many Jamaicans rely upon volunteers at nonprofit organizations for clinical services.

"We gained a sense of humility (from the Jamaicans)," says Bisset, who also has volunteered in the past for Big Brothers Big Sisters and at regional soup kitchens. "Patients learned from



Daniel



Corinne



Busha

Chelsea Matukaitis '12, '14, P.T., M.S.P.T., D.P.T., and Caitlin Day '11, '14, P.T., D.P.T., resulted in significant improvements in their physical well-being and also in their ability to live life to the fullest extent possible.

us as therapists, but we learned just as much, if not more, from our patients' stories, personalities and determination. You are able to apply your own skillset in a new environment; you bring a therapeutic purpose to patients, and you learn to bring your own sense of community to each therapy session. The focus is on the patient's goals rather than the therapist's goals for the patient."

Ten days after returning from Jamaica, the Misericordia University volunteers took time to reflect on their service and what they discovered in the island nation. Each spoke about the joy they experienced utilizing their skills for the betterment of the underserved. The main theme, however, centered on how each graduate student gleaned a sense of community, camaraderie and appreciation from the patients they now call friend.

"The most remarkable thing was the bond the students developed with each other and their patients," Dr. Fritz says. "I am very proud of their willingness to learn, their ability to communicate, and their empathy and compassion. They had very little clinical experience before the trip and they all implemented the hands-on skills they needed to effectively treat patients with neurological conditions with confidence."

Busha, Clifton, Corinne, Daniel, Ivy, Leitland, Lincoln and Veronica (or Miss V, as they oftentimes referred to her) each faced their own physical challenges and limitations due to debilitating conditions and the lack of available physical therapy services in Jamaica. The intensive therapy they received from the Misericordia contingent, that also included alumnae Sarah Ashford '11, '14, P.T., D.P.T.;

Corinne, for example, lost the use of her right hand because of the stroke she suffered some time ago. She wanted to regain the use of that hand so she could return to an activity she enjoyed. Lindsey Machemer '13, '16 of Robesonia, Pa., observed the incorporation of a lot of extremity and fine motor motions into her therapy.

"It was rewarding," Machemer says about her first service trip. "I went into it not knowing what to expect and I

with our patients and tried to let their personalities flourish. It was more like working on a person as a whole, rather than just muscles and the mechanics of an activity."

Miss V had trouble with her left hand and was unable to grasp anything with it. By the end of her therapy, she could facilitate household activities, like hanging clothes on a clothesline, and washing and scrubbing them, according to Kelleher.

Overall, Misericordia's volunteer student clinicians performed outcome measures for each Jamaican client on the first and last day of Stroke Camp. It yielded improvements in upper extremity function, gait, and balance after one week of intensive rehabilitation. The physical improvements were a direct

byproduct of the graduate students taking their patients through structured routines, including a mat program, and gait, balance, upper extremity and free stations that oftentimes included meaningful, functional activities.

"I was here 2½ years ago," says Kelleher, who volunteered in Jamaica in 2013 and for Habitat for Humanity in 2014. "I was there to help people, but I was more amazed at how much the people



DPT student Becka Bisset '13, '16, above, works on upper extremity stretching with Busha, a Jamaican client, at FOR U's Stroke Camp in St. Elizabeth Parish.

At Stroke Camp in Jamaica, DPT student Joe Layman '13, '16, right, helps Clifton transfer his weight to the floor for mat exercises.



definitely came out of it with an open mind. I would encourage others to do service work so you can experience a different culture, a different way of life, and different approaches to therapy."

"It wasn't just about providing physical therapy services," Emily Barnable '13, '16 of East Rockaway, N.Y., adds. "We truly tried to connect

Continued on next page

DPT program's mission of service

from page 41

helped me grow. They made me realize how simple things in life matter, such as family and friends, and taking care of others as opposed to focusing on your own problems.

"I wanted to take that kind of attitude back to Jamaica and provide a new set of physical therapy skills that I learned," he adds.

The collaboration with FOR U also enabled Cheyne Kulesa '13, '16 of Toms River, N.J., to work closely with Lincoln, "a patient who never stopped smiling" even though his cervical myelopathy had led to arm and leg dysfunction because of his compressed spinal cord blocking signals from the brain to other parts of his body.

"He was the happiest guy I have ever met," says Kulesa, whose mother is a physical therapist. "The sense of community there – everyone helps each other; the vibe there is different. They appreciate what they have because they do not have the opportunities we have. Traveling from the United States, where health care is readily available, to Jamaica, where health services are seen as a privilege and even a blessing to some, changed my perspective on what it means to be a clinician.

"I also learned that disability isn't just a medical term; it's not being able to do something you love," he adds.

FOR U runs a series of Stroke Camps annually by collaborating with collegiate physical therapy programs and other agencies based in the United States. The unique program provides Jamaicans who have suffered strokes with a "larger bulk of therapy in a short amount of time," according to FOR U. Patients receive pre-testing, neurologic rehabilitation and post-testing during their time at the camp.

"I've always felt a sense of giving back and helping those who are not as well

off as we are in the United States," says Joe Layman '13, '16 of Binghamton, N.Y., explaining why he chose to share his time and talent with those less fortunate. "From my experiences in doing service internationally (Jamaica in 2012 and Guyana in 2013), the people are very appreciative. They may not say it to you, but you can see it on their faces. To me, that is very rewarding."

Dr. Fritz and Maureen Romanow Pascal, P.T., D.P.T., N.C.S., associate professor of physical therapy at

helping people," acknowledges Rachel Brooks '13, '16 of Shillington, Pa., who has completed spring break service trips to Mercy Neighborhoods in North Philadelphia, Pa., and at New Dawn Earth Center in Cumberland, R.I. "I also enjoy learning from people I wouldn't ordinarily encounter that are from different walks of life."

The Stroke Camp partners with physical therapy programs at Arcadia University, Glenside, Pa.; Duke University, Durham, N.C.; Emory University, Atlanta, Ga., and Misericordia University to provide services to a large number of stroke patients. The relationship provides participating student clinicians with hands-on experience while also being mentored by seasoned neurologic therapists, according to FOR U.

"We as students, who are somewhat foreign to the Jamaican culture, start out the week feeling vulnerable," Kelleher adds. "Likewise, the patients feel vulnerable about talking about their disabilities and daily challenges. That allowed both of us to be more open to learning about each other and forming a stronger bond."

PHOTO GALLERY

Share more of the Doctor of Physical Therapy students' experiences in Jamaica by logging on to <http://bit.ly/dptmujamaica> to see a photo album that chronicles their service work during the fall semester.

Misericordia University, developed the working relationship with FOR U during an exploratory trip to Stroke Camp in October 2014. Another group of volunteers from Misericordia University will return to Stroke Camp in September to treat additional post-stroke patients. "There's a sense of reward you get



Students, faculty and alumni of the DPT Program volunteered at Stroke Camp in September. Participating in the service trip, first row from left, are Sarah Ashford '14, P.T., D.P.T.; Heather Fritz, P.T., D.P.T., assistant professor, and Chelsea Matukaitis '12, '14, P.T., M.S.P.T., D.P.T.; second row, Caitlin Day '14, P.T., D.P.T.; D.J. Kelleher '13, '16; Lindsey Machemer '13, '16; Joe Layman '13, '16; Becca Bisset '13, '16; Rachel Brooks '13, '16; Emily Barnable '13, '16, and Cheyne Kulesa '13, '16.

FULL THROTTLE

Internship in nation's No. 1 television market helps launch valedictorian's career as a news producer at WPMT-Fox 43

BY MARIANNE TUCKER PUHALLA



Taryn Talacka '15 perfected her reporting skills as an intern at News 12 New Jersey.

Setting her alarm clock for 2 a.m., and being dressed and on the road by 3 a.m. to drive an hour and report to work by 4 a.m., the summer of 2015 was anything but typical for Misericordia University communications major Taryn Talacka '15. While most college internships are scheduled 9 to 5, Talacka's willingness to go the extra mile, literally and figuratively, in the middle of the night for an internship at News 12 New Jersey – the state's largest television network – so impressed her colleagues that the 21-year-old was offered a job as a freelance associate producer as soon as her internship finished.

Department of Communications

The only caveat was that Talacka needed to return to campus to complete her communications degree. While doing so, she made the 2½-hour drive from Dallas to the station's headquarters in Edison, N.J., monthly throughout the fall semester to

maintain a presence in the News 12 newsroom. The extra effort paid off. Prior to being named valedictorian and giving the student address at winter commencement, she secured a full-time position as a news producer at WPMT Fox 43 in York, Pa. – a coveted job in the 41st ranked Harrisburg-Lebanon-York television market.

Talacka says the combination of a Misericordia education and two successful internships provided the perfect launching pad for her career. "Because I had great teachers, such as Dr. Melissa Sgroi and Dan Kimbrough, and the opportunity at Misericordia to work at the campus television studio, I landed my first internship at WBRE-TV, the NBC affiliate in Wilkes-Barre, in 2014. What I learned there added to what I learned in the classroom, and helped me dig right in at my second internship at News 12 – a 24-hour television network in the No. 1 news market in the country covering New Jersey," Talacka says.

The personable Talacka was one of about 20 summer interns at the News 12 station and one of five in the newsroom. Working with Reporter Tony Caputo on the 4 a.m. to noon shift required a special kind of dedication, yet wielded the opportunity to get plenty of real-world experience.

"Tony was great in that he was willing to throw me into it – he'd send me out to get sound (do interviews) and write copy for voice overs and sound bites. I also got experience on camera, shooting and editing video, and working with the

assignment desk and in master control. They also let me do stand-ups in front of the camera and practice putting packages together so I could build a demo reel," she adds.

Talacka said she quickly learned the importance of keeping her emotions in check and being respectful to people after being part of them that covered the story of a reportedly unstable police officer who allegedly shot his wife in front of their daughter.

"Often when I was out on assignment, people thought I was a professional reporter and that was a huge compliment to me and to the faculty and amazing students we have at Misericordia. I had the chance to be involved in so many great projects at MU and the experience paid off," Talacka says.

As an associate producer for News 12, she has had the opportunity to line produce, write dozens of news stories for broadcast and assist with general election planning. The experience was crucial in helping her land the full-time position at Fox 43.

The daughter of Mary Ann and Steve Talacka grew up in Dallas just minutes from campus. As a student, she made the most of her undergraduate education, serving as station manager at the student-run MCN 87 television station, and was the producer of *Hey You, MU!*, a show that MCN 87 creates. She was a member of the Misericordia chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America and served as president when it became the student club, *Service By Design*, which allows members to hone their skills by providing marketing services for nonprofit organizations in the community.

In addition to being named valedictorian of her class and earning Summa Cum Laude honors, Talacka earned back-to-back awards in The Videographer Awards national competition. As a junior, she produced Season 6, Episode 3 of *Hey You, MU!*, which received a 2015 Award of Excellence in the student production category. The Award of Excellence is the highest rank in the merit-based competition. The episode can be viewed online at <https://vimeo.com/123246674>.

Talacka and Ryan Osadchy '16 also received an honorable mention from The Videographer Awards in 2014 for the student production, *Blue Chip Farms Promo Video*, a project designed to help promote the no-kill animal shelter.

Shepherd University's Jason Best, Ph.D., spent the fall semester at Misericordia University for the ACE Fellowship Program.



ACE FELLOW EXPLORES FUTURE OF HIGHER ED

BY PAUL KRZYWICKI

The opening phrase, "Space, the final frontier ...," is recognized immediately by Trekkies and popular culture fanatics alike. Most conjure up images of Mr. Spock, James T. Kirk or even the starship Enterprise when they hear the familiar opening lines of the long-running television and movie series that began in the late 1960s. While Star Trek and its spin-offs are truly science fiction, the study of the Milky Way Galaxy,

alien planets and distant galaxies is a reality for astrophysicists.

Jason Best, Ph.D., a 2015-16 American Council on Education (ACE) Fellow and professor of astrophysics at Shepherd University, Shepherdstown, W.V., selected Misericordia University as his host institution for the fall semester to complete his ACE fellowship.

The ACE Fellowship Program is designed to strengthen institutional

ACE Fellowship Program

capacity and build leadership in American higher education by identifying and preparing promising senior faculty and administrators for responsible positions in college and university administration. Forty-one fellows were selected in a national competition for this academic year's program after being nominated by presidents or chancellors of their institutions.

"Selection as a host institution is a sign of the outstanding reputation and commitment to excellence at Misericordia University," said Margarita Benitez, interim assistant vice president of ACE's Emerging Leaders Group and the ACE Fellows Program. "An ACE Fellow chooses an institution for its rigorous academic environment, high-quality efforts to educate students, and willingness to invest in the future of higher education senior leadership."

He earned his baccalaureate degree in astronomy and astrophysics from Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind., and his doctoral degree in astronomy and astrophysics from The Pennsylvania State University, State College, Pa. Dr. Best has been at Shepherd University since 1997, where he has held a number of leadership roles.

In this question-and-answer segment, Dr. Best addresses the future of higher education, the importance of STEM academic programs, what he learned during his ACE Fellowship and much more.

Q&A

Can you outline some of the differences and similarities of Misericordia and Shepherd?

Misericordia and Shepherd are both small, primarily undergraduate liberal arts institutions with a significant number of professional programs, although the specific mix of programs differs between the two universities. Both institutions transformed from college to university within a few years of each other. Shepherd is public, older (having been established in 1871), and slightly larger than Misericordia.

What attracted you to a career as an astrophysicist?

When I was a child, my favorite television station was WGBH, Boston's PBS station. The shows on that station emphasized the simultaneous concepts of education and exploration. However, my favorite TV show was the original Star Trek. When I was four years old, what struck me most about Trek was that some of the people on the Enterprise looked like me, and most didn't, but they all got along and they were studying outer space. Studying outer space seemed to me like the most interesting thing someone could do for a living. When I told my mother this, she not only encouraged me, she actively found ways to expose me to opportunities to learn more about space. The more I learned, the more I wanted to learn, and so I have been able to achieve my childhood goal.

How does the ACE Fellows Program prepare Fellows for leadership roles in higher education?

The ACE Fellows Program exposes Fellows to numerous opportunities for leadership growth including: residency at a host institution, where Fellows are mentored by one or more senior leaders on campus; numerous multiday meetings in which all Fellows gather to interact with experts in areas across the spectrum of higher education; collaborative projects in which Fellows work with higher education institutions on real problems and issues, as opposed to merely hypothetical situations; additional mentorship from an ACE Sage, a current or former president who works one-on-one and with small groups to help Fellows develop deeper skills; access to the ACE Council of Fellows – past ACE Fellows who act as a distributed network housing tremendous collective insight into higher education, and smaller, targeted campus and institution visits throughout the year in which Fellows can drill down on areas of interest.

What attracted you to Misericordia University as an ACE Fellow?

I knew that I would wish to visit a private campus, as my experience has

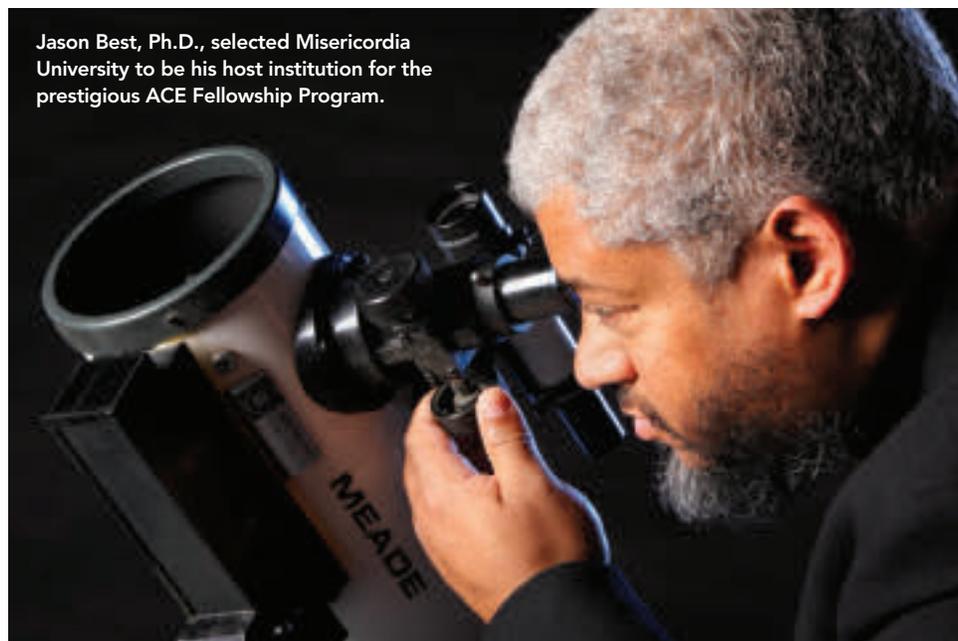
all been at public universities. Also, since undergraduate research is a focus of my fellowship, I wanted to be in residence at an institution that was at a similar juncture to my home institution: ahead enough of Shepherd for me to be able to gain new insights that I could take back home, but not so far ahead that the recollections of the challenges were lost to the mists of time. Based on the conversations I had with current and past Fellows, it is critical to be on a campus at which you will be able to learn as much as possible, and at as high a level as possible. President Botzman was specifically recommended to me by a number of past Fellows as a person who would be able to provide unrivaled mentorship in higher education leadership. After speaking with him and his senior staff, I knew that my professional development would be accelerated beyond even my initial expectations. I have found this to be true throughout my residency.

You are working on a project for Misericordia that will expand MU's

believe that it is critical to have as many enthusiastic and engaged people working on these initiatives as possible, and to reduce barriers that might prevent those people from contributing. At Misericordia, I have been working alongside a dedicated group of science and mathematics faculty to help them realize their vision for broadening student engagement in these fields. My purpose has been to act as a catalyst for them; I can bring an outside perspective to their current initiatives, and perhaps help them see how to leverage their current success into future opportunities for students. These faculty are demonstrating that "All are Welcome" must continue to be a guiding ethos in STEM.

What must higher education do to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of future generations of students?

Higher education must continue to challenge students to go beyond what they believe to be possible for them. Higher education also must



Jason Best, Ph.D., selected Misericordia University to be his host institution for the prestigious ACE Fellowship Program.

capabilities to help students excel in the sciences. Can you outline some aspects of the program?

I believe that science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) initiatives are critical to the future of this nation and the world. I also

continue to be a place where the largest, most polarizing, most difficult ideas are discussed, debated and evaluated. If we continue to set the highest expectations for students, they will in turn set the highest expectations for themselves.

Students Today, Alumni Forever

Class of 2018

launched a

scholarship

for the Ruth

BY MARIANNE TUCKER PUHALLA

In an effort to cultivate a spirit of giving among their fellow students, the Misericordia University Class of 2018 has launched a student philanthropy project to establish a new scholarship fund as their class gift to the University. It is the first scholarship fund generated by a currently enrolled class, and it is the first time current students have dedicated their class gift specifically to the Ruth Matthews Bourger Women with Children Program at Misericordia University.

The project is part of a new initiative on campus, *Students Today, Alumni Forever*, which is dedicated to raising awareness of and overseeing student philanthropy on campus.

The idea to establish a scholarship for the Bourger Women with Children Program as a class gift came out of talks among class leaders last spring, said Class President Michael Dubinski '18. The group believes that raising the \$25,000 needed to endow a scholarship before their December 2018 graduation is a daunting, but doable endeavor given the culture of Misericordia and the spirit of service and giving that draws most students to the campus.

"Students at Misericordia are different – we are not the typical members of the 'Me Generation,'" Dubinski says. "Most of us realize that the campus would not exist if someone, such as the Sisters of Mercy, had not made a concerted effort to help someone else. We wanted to make our class gift one that would benefit the campus well into the future."

There are currently 473 traditional and non-traditional students enrolled and expected to graduate as part of the Class of 2018. "If each of our classmates put away \$2 a month, we would easily make our goal," Dubinski says. The committee hopes to expand their outreach and invites alumni and the campus community to make a donation.

"We are hoping to build on the extraordinary culture of student service that already exists on campus and create an equally impressive culture of student philanthropy," he adds. "Nearly 99 percent of students on campus receive some sort



Discussing plans for the Class of 2018 Endowed Scholarship Fund for the Ruth Matthews Bourger Women with Children Program are, from left, Michael Dubinski '18, Class of 2018 president; Katherine Pohlidal, program director, and Michael Gombita '18, president and COO of Students Today, Alumni Forever.

of financial aid. This is our first major opportunity to pay it forward to future students with need. We chose the Bourger Women with Children Program because the women in the program are so amazing, and what they do to juggle academics and working, along with raising a child (or two), is nothing short of amazing."

The Bourger Women with Children Program is one of only eight programs of its kind in the country. It provides free housing to as many as 10 single mothers and their children while they earn their bachelor's degree. To date, 55 women have participated in the program – one coming from as far away as Utah to enroll. Efforts are underway to expand the program and add a third house this fall.

"We have a group of 12 volunteers who have activities planned to promote student philanthropy – and showcase the ways in which philanthropy helps," says Michael Gombita '18, president and chief operating officer of Students Today, Alumni Forever. Gombita is making use of his expertise as a communications major to work with Class Advisor Matthew Hinton, M.F.A., to develop social media accounts to best involve all students and alumni.

The Class Gift tradition dates back more than 20 years, and has included a variety of projects and designations. If funded, the inaugural scholarship will be awarded in 2019, and will likely benefit a student in the class of 2024 – the year the University celebrates its 100th anniversary. It is a coincidence that is helping energize the organizing committee.

For information or to donate, please go to <http://cougarconnect.misericordia.edu/classof2018> or

MISERICORDIA WELCOMES NEW BOT MEMBERS

The Board of Trustees approved three new members at the annual meeting. The group also selected new officers and acknowledged retiring members with emeriti status.

Joining the board are Cornelio (Cor) Catena, chief executive officer (CEO), Commonwealth Health and Wilkes-Barre General Hospital; Alfred S. Casale, M.D., associate chief medical officer, Geisinger Health System, and Carol Gallagher, RSM '66, life and ministry facilitator, Sisters of Mercy, Mid-Atlantic Community.

Gallagher is a member of the Sisters of Mercy, Mid-Atlantic Community. She earned a bachelor's degree from Misericordia and a master's from the University of Maryland, College Park, Md. Since 2007, she has served as life and ministry facilitator for her Community. Previously, Gallagher served as chair of the Misericordia Alumni Association and as a trustee of Mount Aloysius College, Cresson, Pa. A former regional vice president for mission for the Mercy Health System, Northeast Region, Gallagher was also vice chair of the Hospital Trustee Association of Pennsylvania board.

Casale joined Geisinger in 2001 from Atlantic Health System in New Jersey, and has held faculty positions at Johns Hopkins Medical Center, Baltimore, Md.; the former University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Newark, N.J.; Misericordia University, King's College, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., and Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Philadelphia, Pa. He is an advisor to the health care engineering program at Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pa. He earned a bachelor's degree in human biology from Johns Hopkins University and a Doctor of Medicine from the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

Catena earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Vermont, Burlington, Vt., and a master's degree in hospital administration from The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. He joined Wilkes-Barre General Hospital and Commonwealth Health in 2009 as CEO. He previously served as CEO of Easton Hospital, Easton, Pa.; Amsterdam Memorial Health System, Amsterdam, N.Y., and Hospital



Casale



Catena



Gallagher

Corporation of America International's Rome American Hospital, Rome, Italy.

The University also acknowledged the retirement of several board members and the changing of officers at the annual meeting. Mary Ann Dillon, RSM, Ph.D., '68, Rosemary Sigmond, and Murray Ufberg, Esq., retired and were granted emeriti status. Chris Borton was appointed as the new chairperson, succeeding John Metz, who will remain on the Board of Trustees. Dr. Debbie Smith-Mileski '75 is the new vice chair.

"In these past 30 years, I have witnessed what I can only describe as magic ... a remarkable transformation," Ufberg said about his three decades on the board. "... the many remarkable leaps forward which have transformed College Misericordia into Misericordia University, an educational institution of regional and national stature bringing pride to each of us in our association with it."

University Advancement announces new posts and hirings

University Advancement announced the following appointments:

Nora Blessner serves in a new role as director of advancement services. In concert with UA directors, Blessner directs the execution of UA's fundraising and friend-raising efforts. Blessner obtained her bachelor's and master's degrees from Pennsylvania State University.

Mark DiPippa joins the Development Office as leadership gift officer. He obtained his undergraduate degree from Lock Haven University and his Masters in Educational Administration from the University of Scranton.

Lauren Gorney '12 joins the division as the assistant director of alumni engagement. The Misericordia

communications alumna previously worked at Lauren Emilie, LLC, where she served as a consultant in the fundraising, social media and marketing arena.

Jeffrey Kelly '12, '14 is the manager of cultural and special events, as well as theater director. The alumnus holds a bachelor's degree in professional studies and a master's degree in organizational management. In his new dual role, he will oversee University and cultural events and serve as stage director.

Marie Stolarick is the manager of donor relations. She will support the UA Division in a new role in advancement services acknowledging and stewarding donors. She holds a B.A. in fine arts from Wilkes University.

Phillip Swank serves UA as manager of foundation relations. With more than 18 years of grant writing experience, he brings considerable knowledge of foundation, state and federal funding programs. Swank holds a bachelor's degree from King's College and his Masters in Public Administration from Marywood University.

Katherine M. Totino serves in the new position of government relations manager. She holds a bachelor's degree in political science from King's College.

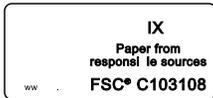
Desiree Voitek joins UA as the assistant director of development. She is a 2009 graduate of Penn State University where she majored in English.



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\$

April 2
Performing Arts Training Academy: Spring Performing Arts

Gala

April 4
Ron Smith, American poet

April 9
Bodies of Art: Music, Literature and Disability

April 22
Food for Thought Forum



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Ansel Adams took this picture, *Mount Williams, The Sierra Nevada, from Manzanar, California*, in 1945.

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Dr. Marie Noël Keller, RSM, Th.D., is a veteran of more than 100 overseas trips. Center for Adult and Continuing Education (570) 674-6776, (570) 674-6924 or srnoel@misericordia.edu.