

Summer 2022

WorcesterState

MAGAZINE

Together Again

As audiences flock back to in-person theater, music and art events, Worcester State's Visual and Performing Arts enjoy a renaissance

MUSICIAN ANNIE MACHADO '19



Commencement 2022

Celebrated author, producer and educator Ilyasah Shabazz, the daughter of Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz, delivered the 2022 Commencement address at Worcester State University May 14. She was awarded a Worcester State University Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree in recognition of her contributions to public service, the arts, social justice, and education.



“**Malcolm X was ready for the moment.** He spent years preparing, morally and intellectually, to become an advocate for the underserved. And my hope for you, Class of 2022, is that you leverage your formative years at Worcester State University to become advocates for the voiceless, and stand for those who cannot stand for themselves. You never know what the future will hold, but you must be ready for your moment. Because, when that moment arrives, and it will, you must stay focused on who you’re fighting for – and not what you’re fighting against.”

—Ilyasah Shabazz

Photo by Wright Photo Studios

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Photo by Matt Wright '10

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Dressed for Success

First-gen college graduate Johnny Chavez '13 is mentoring young men on how to create a professional image. Here he models a few ties from his growing collection.

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As audiences flock back to in-person theater, music and art events, Worcester State's Visual and Performing Arts Department is flourishing with new majors, growing enrollment and synergy with the city's arts scene.

Cover Photo by Matt Wright '10

RIGHT: Annie Machado '19 on the cover is among VPA's growing roster of accomplished performers and artists.



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President's Note



Dear Alumni and Friends,

The first several months of the pandemic were extremely difficult for the arts and for the creative economy. Yet in the depths of the winter of 2021, the creativity that is ever-present in the arts emerged, spawning virtual presentations and performances that sustained so many. Worcester State students performed *Oedipus the King* with a bit of outdoor shooting and via Zoom, for example.

As lockdowns eased and more were vaccinated that spring, attending live performances or exhibits helped our spirits thaw – for those lucky few who were able to get a ticket! Ultimately, as venues opened

more fully, we experienced the joy of in-person art in its many forms. If we ever wondered whether the arts are an essential part of life, we wonder no longer.

When I arrived at Worcester State in 2011 from the sleepier environs of Westfield, I was excited about leveraging this city's cultural assets for the benefit of our students. Our unique Visual and Performing Arts Department and outstanding on-campus venues like the Mary Cosgrove Dolphin Gallery and the Fuller Theater provided opportunities for students and for the community. Worcester's cultural institutions offer students experiential learning, internships, service hours, and job opportunities. That's why we set about deepening our arts partnerships, among them the Worcester Center for Crafts and the Worcester Art Museum (WAM).

In May, we held a book launch for *Beyond the Frame: Celebrating a Partnership in Public Education and the Arts*, a joint initiative of WSU and WAM, and edited by Worcester State English Professor Heather Treseler, Ph.D., our Presidential Fellow for Art, Education, and Community – a position I initiated in 2012. The book – the only one published by Worcester State in nearly 50 years – was envisioned as a way to keep our close partnership thriving during the pandemic.

What emerged is a testament to the many ways art impacts life and vice versa. The Worcester Art Museum pieces the essayists reflected upon – which each chose for themselves – link different parts of the world to ours, prior centuries to the current one, and timeless human experiences to current events. The essays were penned by eight well-known writers and WSU former and current faculty members from four very different fields: Computer Science (Karl Wurst), English (Treseler), Philosophy (Kristin Waters), and History (Erika Briesacher).

Since Worcester State's founding as a Normal School nearly 150 years ago, we have always been deeply engaged with our community. It's part of our mission, a core value of our strategic plan. Our partnership with WAM is a prime example of what it means to be engaged with the city of Worcester, and I expect it, and our other city partnerships, to continue to grow and develop in the coming years and decades.

Sincerely,

Barry M. Maloney
PRESIDENT



Photo courtesy Olivia Stone, Worcester Art Museum

English Professor Heather Treseler celebrates the publication of "Beyond the Frame" with Matthias Waschek, James Donnelly, and Marnie Weir of the Worcester Art Museum.



Worcester State Magazine, which debuted in 1980 as the Worcester Statement, is published by University Advancement and the Office of Communications and Marketing twice a year for alumni and friends of the university.

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Woo News

HAPPENINGS IN AND AROUND WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY

Inaugural Brotherhood Conference Uplifts and Motivates Young Men

The inaugural Brotherhood Conference in March offered a day of inspiration, affirmation and connection for nearly 100 first-generation, economically diverse, ALANA/BIPOC students from across the state universities and local public schools.

The conference's mission was to uplift and empower young men by affirming their experiences, engaging them in team-building workshops, helping them build upon their identity through self-knowledge, and enhancing their connection to a network of successful and supportive men in the greater community who identify as first-generation, ALANA/BIPOC (African American, Latine, Asian, Native American and/or Black, Indigenous, People of Color).

"Success for our young men starts with access, inclusivity, visibility, and community," said Eriberto Mora-Carrera, staff associate in the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA), who helped organize the event. "That's why we decided to hold this conference – to uplift and motivate our brothers."



Photo by Nancy Sheehan

Music Professor Carlos Odria led students at the Brotherhood Conference in a workshop, "Drumming for health and healing: How music helps us to build the best community."



Coach Tessmer Marks 350th Career Win

» WORCESTER STATE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL HEAD coach Karen Tessmer collected her 350th career victory in February. Tessmer has been with the program since 1994, and is now in her 28th year on the Worcester State bench. The career accomplishment came as the Lancers led an 83-47 victory over Fitchburg State in Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference (MASCAC) play.



Presidential Student Ambassadors Marc-Kendy Paul, Maggie Gurney, Chris Heintz and Charles Bray pack Blessing Bags that included blankets donated by Terry Town.

Presidential Student Ambassadors Donate 'Blessing Bags' to Local Homeless Shelters

» THIS WINTER, THE PRESIDENTIAL STUDENT AMBASSADORS completed a community service project to donate hygiene products and blankets to local homeless shelters. The students fundraised for the project at last year's Chandler's Challenge and took first place. This winter, the students used all of the money to purchase supplies that could be helpful for individuals facing homelessness.

They assembled mounds and boxes of soap, toothpaste, tissues, chapstick, menstrual products, shampoo, socks, pens, notebooks and more than 200 blankets donated by Terry Town – all the ingredients for what this team had dubbed "Blessing Bags." They delivered the bags to Veteran's Inc. and the Queen Street Shelter in late February.

Presidential Student Ambassador Marc-Kendy Paul '22 said he hopes the project will inspire more campus-wide community and international engagement. "This project means a lot to me," said Paul. "I want to see Worcester State establish a culture on campus of helping out."

Belonging

Common Ground at Worcester State

» THIS SPRING, THE UNIVERSITY inaugurated the new Common Ground, a space outside the Student Center dedicated to showing the University's support for the LGBTQ+ community with a new pride flag and a rotating unity flag. The event drew more than 200 students, faculty and staff and featured readings by students enrolled in LGBTQ+ Narratives course taught by Assistant Professor of English Riley McGuire, one of the co-chairs of the University's LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee.

RIGHT: The University's new Common Ground will feature two flags on the unity flagpole at all times. The Pride flag will always fly, and it will be accompanied by a rotating unity flag sponsored by different University groups.



Photo by Matt Wright '10

Chandler's Challenge Sets Fundraising Record

» WORCESTER STATE STUDENTS raised a record \$51,000 over two days at this spring's Chandler's Challenge, the university's annual bracket-style fundraising competition. Women's athletics teams dominated in the Athletics bracket, with first place going to Women's Ice Hockey. The Dance Team won first place in the Campus bracket of Chandler's Challenge. The Office of Multicultural Affairs raised the most dollars in its first-ever participation in the challenge. Every dollar raised goes directly to the athletic teams, student clubs and campus organizations.

Reading

Maria W. Stewart and the Roots of Black Political Thought

By Professor Emerita Kristin Waters
University Press of Mississippi, Nov. 2021



As an undergraduate and graduate student, Worcester State Professor Emerita Kristin Waters landed three academic degrees having learned almost nothing about women or people of color in history, the arts, or philosophy. Inspired by what was then known as the Women's Studies Movement, she became interested in learning about the lives and accomplishments of those whose stories had been hidden.

"This brought me to a book, *Maria W. Stewart: The First Black Woman Political Theorist*, by Marilyn Richardson, a book about an African-American woman who wrote important essays on black civil rights and women's rights in the 1830s," she said. "I devoured that book and have been writing about Stewart ever since. She appears in all three of my published books."

Coincidentally, in the course of her research, Waters learned that Richardson's mother Rheubie Jeanette Brisbane graduated from Worcester State in 1939.

For her most recent book, Waters decided to focus exclusively on Maria W. Stewart – her remarkable life, political writing and its impact on black political thought. The book was named one of the 50 Recommended Reads on Black Feminism.

"She was one of the very first writers to express what we would now call feminism," Waters said. "She advocated for women, for women's participation in public discourse, in business, in preaching, and for their safety from the predatory behaviors to which they were (and are) often subjected. Simply put, she was a brilliant theorist and activist, one who deserves widespread recognition."

This spring, *Maria W. Stewart and the Roots of Black Political Thought* was also named a finalist by the African American Intellectual History Society for the Pauli Murray Book Prize for the best book on Black intellectual history. In making the announcement, AAIHS noted Maria Stewart's importance to



Professor Emerita Kristin Waters, Ph.D.

Black intellectual history: "Not only one of the early Black Americans, but one of the early women regardless of race, to push American society as a political and intellectual force, Stewart's work in the early 19th century remains important for intellectuals and activists alike reckoning with the violent anti-Black and anti-women traditions in American society."

Stewart, who was born in 1803 in Connecticut and lived in Boston, New York and Washington D.C. before her death in 1879, was the most important advocate of a theory Waters calls Black radical or revolutionary liberalism, the classic theory that fueled the American Revolution.

"African Americans may have been denied an education, but they understood that the colonists were fighting for liberty and rights and wanted the same for themselves," Waters said. "They fully understood the hypocrisy of the so-called founding fathers."

Despite Maria Stewart's significant contributions, she remains a largely unknown historical figure. Waters said her book is just one small part of reclaiming the important history of African Americans.

"You know about Washington, Jefferson, Madison, maybe even Patrick Henry or John Hancock," Waters said. "Yet, when Maria Miller arrived in Boston, there was already a long line of accomplished African Americans: Prince Hall, a formerly enslaved man who with his comrades agitated fiercely for Black rights and formed the first Black Masonic Order. Paul Cuffe, a wealthy shipping magnate; Phillis Wheatley, an internationally revered poet; and Elizabeth Freeman who had successfully fought for her freedom in the courts."

Waters continued, "Note that the erasure of these important historical figures is nearly complete. And now over 100 bills have been either introduced or passed in state legislatures banning teachers from teaching about racism. Are we moving in the wrong direction?" —Deborah Alvarez O'Neil

“African Americans may have been denied an education, but they understood that the colonists were fighting for liberty and rights and wanted the same for themselves.”

— Professor Kristin Waters

Awards Lancer Academic Achievers

QCC + WSU Transfer Success Story

► **AFTER COMING FROM THE GAMBIA** as an international student, Diminga Boley earned an associate's degree in liberal arts at Quinsigamond Community College and transferred to Worcester State University. The married mother to 4-year-old Ariel, worked full-time at Bank of America while finishing her bachelor's degree in Business Administration. A first-generation student in her family, she earned this year's Worcester State Foundation Academic Achievement Award in Business Administration, given to the graduating senior with the highest GPA in the major. She is continuing on at Worcester State to earn her master's degree in the leadership track of Business Administration through the 4+1 program. "This journey has been long in the making but totally worth it," Diminga said. "It goes to show that with dedication, hard work and determination there is nothing unattainable."



Photo by Matt Wright '10

Business Professor Lagnajita Chatterjee (right) presents Diminga Boley '22 with the Worcester State Foundation Academic Achievement Award in Business Administration at this spring's Academic Achievement Awards.

Honoring Teachers as Role Models

► **KAYLIE SENECAL '22**, an elementary education major, received two academic awards this year, the Dr. Richard Bisk Teaching Mathematics Award and the new Donald Cousineau '57, M.Ed. '60 and Elaine (Curran) Cousineau '57, M.Ed. '60 Elementary Education Award. The new award was created in honor of Donald and Elaine Cousineau and established with love by Miss Curran's first grade student, dear friend and fellow alumna Diane M. Aramony, to honor their dedication to the innumerable young students whose lives they have enriched. Kaylie, an Honors Program student, completed her student teaching experience at Tatnuck Magnet Elementary School. Kaylie also completed 300 hours of preschool teaching with Jumpstart, a national early education organization that provides language, literacy, and social-emotional programming for preschool children from under-resourced communities. "After graduation, I hope to be a classroom teacher, as that has been my dream since I was little," she said. "I had so many great teachers that were role models for me. These teachers changed my life and I want to be able to change the lives of my students. The most important thing I learned during my student teaching was that building relationships with students helps support their learning and growth throughout the school year, and I am so excited to have my own classroom and to impact the lives of more students."

Photo by Matt Wright '10

Donald Cousineau, Kaylie Senecal, Elaine (Curran) Cousineau, and Diane Aramony celebrate Kaylie's accomplishments at the Academic Achievement Awards.

City Recognizes Latino Education Institute's Health Ambassadors For Outreach to Underserved Populations

Community

Worcester State's Latino Education Institute was recently honored by the Worcester City Council for its extensive outreach efforts that have benefited thousands of residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Council gave special recognition to LEI's Health Ambassadors, a group of eight Worcester State University students from the community who have worked to promote health through outreach to and advocating for underserved and underrepresented populations. The LEI Health Ambassadors group was formed at the beginning of the COVID pandemic in collaboration with UMass Memorial Health.

Later, LEI received a \$312,513 federal REACH grant (Racial & Ethnic

Approaches to Community Health), administered through the City of Worcester Department of Public Health. The grant aims to promote awareness around health issues including nutrition, physical fitness, and breastfeeding to address the elevated incidence of conditions like diabetes, and heart diseases among Latinos, and the Black community.

An official proclamation gratefully recognizing LEI's contribution was presented by Mayor Joe Petty at the April 5 City Council meeting. The Council voted to issue the proclamation because they had been impressed with LEI's efforts when the Health Ambassadors gave a presentation about their work at a Council meeting a week earlier at City Hall.

At the earlier meeting, the REACH program and LEI were acknowledged in a video specially recorded for the occasion by Dr. Terry O'Toole, Chief of the Program Development & Evaluation branch in the Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity at the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, which oversees the national REACH program.

"The secret sauce with the REACH program is that the solutions for effectively addressing gaps in health by race and ethnicity are locally driven and culturally tailored and Worcester has done this well," O'Toole said. "Despite the incredible challenges of COVID, your REACH program has risen above the challenges to make a real difference for those who need it the most."



Photo by Matthew Moore, City of Worcester

LEFT TO RIGHT: Former Worcester City Manager Edward Augustus, left, and City Councilor Sarai Rivera '90, far right, recognize Worcester State's LEI Health Ambassadors, from left, Claudia Paiva '23, Greisy Cepeda '24, Ziray DeJesus '25, Madison Price '24, Angelica Pizarro '21, and Anabelle Santiago '23.

Leaders Call for Action to End Student Hunger

► **UNIVERSITY LEADERS**, students, legislators and the Hunger Free Campus Coalition came together in April to highlight efforts on college campuses across the state toward ending student hunger.

The event featured a panel discussion and also honored State Sen. Harriette Chandler for her leadership to advance hunger-free campuses statewide. She is sponsoring the Hunger Free Campus bill in the Massachusetts Legislature. Under the bill the higher education commissioner would administer grants to schools that have been designated as a "Hunger-Free Campus."

Speakers at the event included President Barry M. Maloney, U.S. Rep. Jim McGovern, Dr. Luis

Pedraja, president of Quinsigamond Community College, and a student panel. It was moderated by Gina Plato-Nina of the Hunger Free Campus Coalition.

"Today's event is about trying to make sure that we recognize that food insecurity is a barrier to student success," President Maloney said. "It is a barrier to students' graduation and then their longterm career ladder."

Maloney said Sen. Chandler is one of the champions in the fight against student hunger, and he presented her with a proclamation from the University recognizing her many efforts at solving the issue, including emergency funding for food for impacted students during the pandemic.

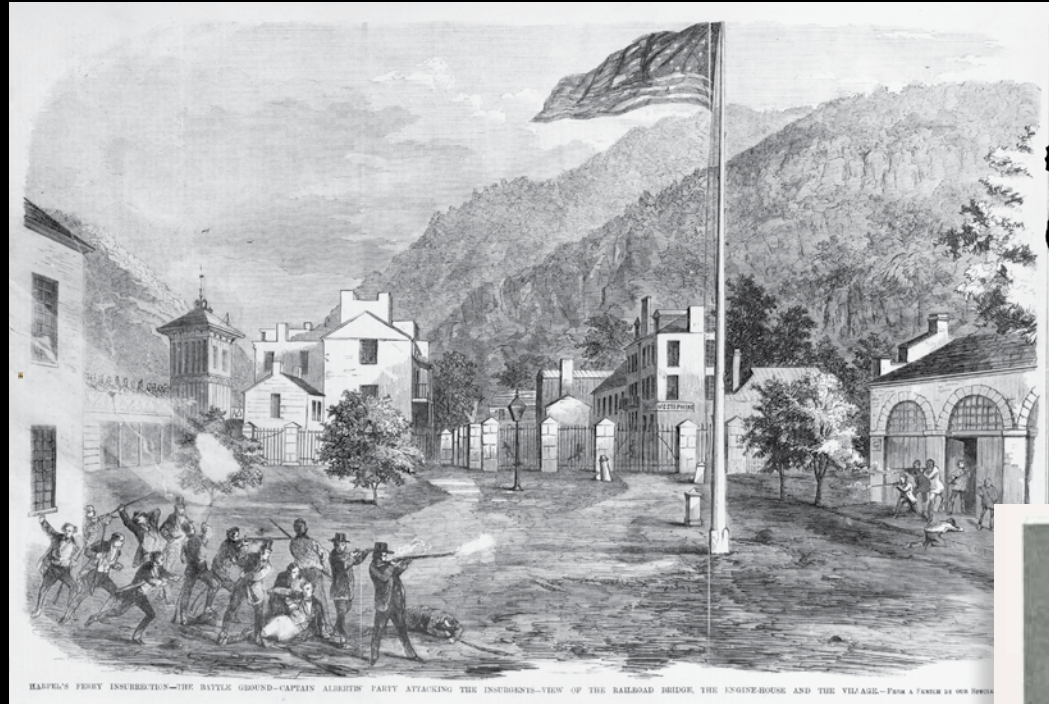
The added stresses of the pandemic years exacerbated what had been an already pervasive problem of hunger on campus. Sen. Chandler said. "I don't think most of us realize that hunger is a problem," she said. "We think of college students as self-sufficient or having wealthy parents, but that isn't really true."

In Massachusetts, she said, pre-pandemic studies showed that 37 percent of students at public colleges and universities experience food insecurity and struggle to afford nutritious meals, she said. Food insecurity at some schools reaches rates greater than 50 percent among students of color, including Latino, immigrant and Black and LGBTQ students, she said.



Photo by Matt Wright '10

“I don't think most of us realize that hunger is a problem. We think of college students as self-sufficient or having wealthy parents.”
— Senator Harriette Chandler



Community Archive

Lesser Known Stories from Worcester's History

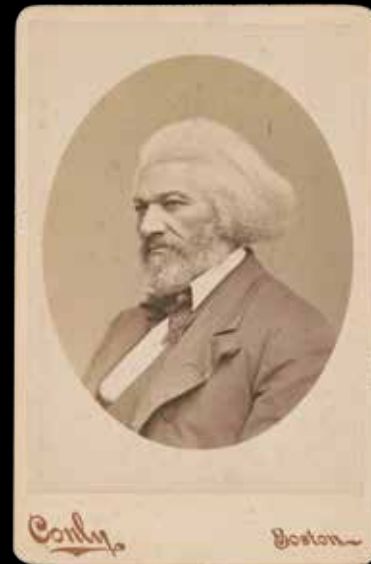
This year, as the city of Worcester has marked the 300th anniversary of its incorporation as a town, the city's rich and complex history has been center stage. Worcester State Urban Studies Professor Thomas Conroy, an American urban historian and local historian born and raised in Worcester, says such moments are also opportunities to reflect on the lesser known people, places and events that shaped the community.

As a scholar who looks at urban exclusion historically and contemporarily, his research focuses on people and groups who are overlooked, marginalized, or disadvantaged in history and modern society. Worcester often serves as a lab for his students' field work.

With Professor Conroy's help, we are sharing online a handful of (strangely connected) stories of people and historical moments you may not know about: the story of Central Mass's Indigenous People and English colonizers, a Worcester minister who was tied to the historic anti-slavery raid on Harper's Ferry, Worcester's involvement in key events from the Suffrage Movement to early efforts to provide public mental healthcare ... and more.

» Read the stories at: news.worcester.edu/community-archive/

Some of the most important historical figures of the time gathered in Worcester for the first National Women's Rights Convention on October 23-24, 1850. They included suffragist Lucretia Mott (top right) circa 1870-1880, photo by F. Gutekunst; Sojourner Truth (middle); and Frederick Douglass (bottom left), photo by George Kendall Warren taken in 1876, printed by C.F. Conly. BOTTOM RIGHT: Worcester minister Thomas Wentworth Higginson, circa 1903, was among the Secret Six, a group of northern abolitionists who supported John Brown's 1859 raid on the federal armory in Harpers Ferry, VA. TOP LEFT: Sketch of the Harpers Ferry insurrection, Nov. 5, 1859.



Photos from the Library of Congress

New Pathways

When a local college closed, Worcester State was part of the solution for students

By Deborah Alvarez O'Neil | PHOTOS BY MATT WRIGHT '10 AND DEBORAH ALVAREZ O'NEIL



START

When Becker College closed in 2020, students Kristen Beidleman, Mike Wilson and Kayla Alvarez were among 140 students who transferred to Worcester State University.

Adjust your goals



Move ahead 1 space

On a Wednesday in late April, senior nursing major Kayla Alvarez '22 was running between classes in the final weeks of school, sporting a blue tie-dyed Worcester State sweatshirt. Even with final exams and the state nursing board looming, the aspiring pediatric trauma nurse was smiling. "I'm just so glad to be graduating," she said.

When her junior year ended, Alvarez was not so sure about graduation, even though she had finished three years of nursing school, arguably one of the toughest undergraduate degrees out there. Alvarez was among 1,700 undergraduates enrolled at Becker College when it announced in March 2020 that it would be closing its doors.

Across the country, small, mostly private four-year schools are shutting down permanently – nine in Massachusetts alone since 2016 – often leaving visible voids in their communities. A college closure is always messy, upsetting and difficult – even when students, families, alumni, faculty and staff have time to prepare for the loss of their academic home.

Communities, too, feel the loss – academically, economically and culturally – and that was the case in Worcester with Becker College, one of the oldest colleges in the country, with deep roots in Central Massachusetts. The college was home to unique

programs in video gaming and veterinary science and graduated a new class of much-needed bachelor's degree nurses each year into the local workforce. Faculty, coaches and administrators across schools knew one another and worked together on various initiatives. Many of its 1,700 students were from the area and went to the same high schools as Worcester State students.

In the close-knit higher education community of Worcester with its then 11 colleges and universities, the sad news of Becker's closing quickly turned to high-level conversations about solutions. Many local universities partnered with Becker to ensure the continuation of the college's signature programs and create academic pathways for students to complete their education with minimal disruption.

(Continued on next page)

Worcester State helped lead the way, taking on some of the biggest academic and administrative challenges resulting from the closure: how to support students like Alvarez trying to earn baccalaureate nursing degrees that are tightly regulated by the state and how to ensure future access to Becker College academic records for all of its former students and alumni. Alongside those efforts, the University was able to create academic pathways for many of Becker's majors and offer guaranteed admission to Becker students in good academic standing. The University set up a resource center for Becker students and for months fielded phone calls and provided counsel to distressed students. It offered housing for students who needed it, made space for dozens of student athletes on Lancer teams and welcomed Becker students into its many student life programs.

"My first thoughts when I learned about the closing went to the Becker community and how those students and families are being uprooted. Being a dad of college age kids, I know how difficult a college search process is," said WSU President Barry Maloney. "Knowing the student demographics at Becker were very regional, and being a public university, we could help."

Throughout the process, the University was in uncharted territory, trying to keep students, faculty and staff safe in the midst of a global pandemic. Maloney gathered a team led by Worcester State's Vice President for Enrollment Management Dr. Ryan Forsythe to oversee efforts for Becker College students.

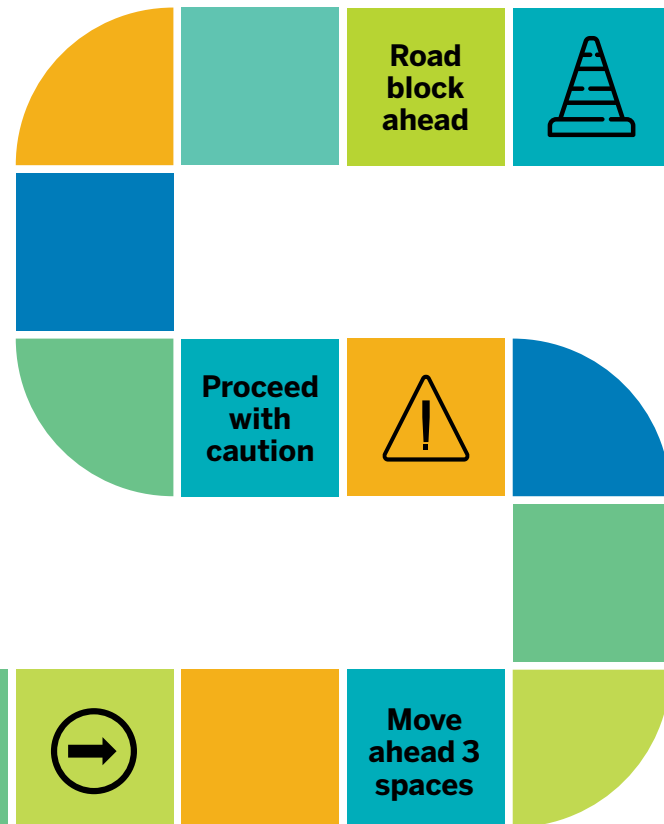
"We were losing a historic institution that has filled the workforce with successful graduates. Who is going to pick up the pieces?" Forsythe said. "We decided it was time to dig in and make sure Worcester State University served the Becker College community well."

For Massachusetts legislators who have overseen a series of com-

were going. It was a lot on top of the pandemic. I had previously looked into Worcester State's nursing program and I knew it was very good."

Behind the scenes, a team of nursing faculty and administrators at Worcester State was working around the clock to give Becker nursing students an onramp to degree completion. For most majors, building that pathway to ensure students could meet all of Worcester State's degree requirements was relatively clear and, because the pandemic had pushed enrollment down, Worcester State had seats for students.

Neither was true in nursing.



plicated college closures, the priority was ensuring Becker students could finish their degrees. Given the state's nursing shortage, placing all of Becker's nursing students on a pathway to graduation was critical, said State Sen. Anne Gobi '96, chair of the Joint Committee on Higher Education, whose district includes parts of Worcester, Hampden, Hampshire and Middlesex counties.

"I was very thankful that Worcester State and President Maloney didn't hesitate and came forward immediately," said Gobi, who is a Worcester state alumna. "Worcester State recognizes their role, not just in the city but in the Commonwealth. Worcester State and Quinsigamond Community College are the only public schools in the city, and it stands out. When this happened, while other schools stepped up, for nursing there was really only one place to look and that was Worcester State."

One Nursing Family

In March of her junior year of nursing at Becker – in the midst of the pandemic – Thalia Brenes heard the news that her college would not be around for her senior year. She went back and forth trying to figure out where she might finish her degree. "Senior year in nursing school is extremely hard," she said. "It was the stress of not even knowing where we

When the news reached Worcester State, Professor Michelle Paik Page was in training to become chair of the Nursing Department. No one was sure how the University would accommodate an influx of new nursing students. Nursing lab sizes and student-faculty ratios are regulated by the state. The University would need more faculty and more space to add students – as well as individual academic plans for every student to bring them into a program that boasts a nearly 100 percent passing rate on the nursing licensure exam, the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX).

The University was able to provide a solution for nursing students, Maloney said, because of support from the local legislative delegation, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito, Sec. of Education James Peyser and Higher Education Commissioner Carlos Santiago. As resources fell into place, faculty doubled down to make it happen, said Paik Page.

"Our hearts were sinking for those students and we thought, 'We can't say no.'"

From spring until the first day of school in August 2021, faculty in the School of Nursing met with close to 200 nursing students. In all, 73 nursing students transferred to Worcester State. With assistance from the state and from the Worcester State Foundation, the University leased additional building space for labs and brought on nursing faculty from Becker.

"We had to really study everything, talk with every student individually, find out how they were doing. There was so much to do," Paik Page said. "We really cared about them landing in a place where they felt safe and comfortable and could continue their education."

Because of the pandemic, most of Becker's former students had been unable to fulfill their clinical requirements. Worcester State was able to bridge that gap and place them in clinical settings across the region.

"Being able to have in-person clinicals has been awesome," Brenes said. "It's been a great experience – all the clinical instructors have been amazing, supportive and understanding."

In May, fourteen of the nursing students who transferred graduated – Alvarez and Brenes among them.

"The transition to Worcester State was so easy," said Alvarez, who became a resident assistant at Worcester State. "The Worcester State community has been so good to me. I felt so welcomed. I feel like I have been going here for four years and I have only been going here since last semester.... Our biggest fear was we would be outcasts because we were seniors and all the nursing students have been together for four years. That didn't happen at all. We are all one nursing family."

Joining the Team

Since his arrival to Worcester State eight years ago, Director of Athletics Michael Mudd had hoped to add a varsity women's ice hockey team to the University's athletics program. In order to make the program equitable with the varsity men's ice hockey team, it required both permanent ice time and a women's locker room – which are in short supply in the city. By inviting a majority of Becker's ice hockey program to Worcester State, the University was able to preserve an already strong program, hire a respected coach and add to an already strong group of female student-athletes. Coach Eliza Kelley joined Worcester State, 14 women's ice hockey players transferred and the team has continued to play at the Worcester Ice Center. (See story page 26.)

"During my time at Worcester State, it's one of the projects I'm most proud of," Mudd said. "It's amazing how quickly that event came together. It took immediate collaboration from a

lot of folks on campus to make it happen. We caught lightning in a bottle. We tried to make the transition as seamless as possible for the players and Coach Kelley. They had a terrific year representing our school on the ice and in the classroom."

In all, 25 student athletes joined various teams at Worcester State, including women and men's soccer, football and women's lacrosse. Soccer player Kristen Beidleman already knew soccer coach Kevin Cumberbatch – he had coached her high school soccer club – so she gave him a call when she learned Becker was closing.

"You don't have the rest of your life to play soccer so that was really important to me," said Beidleman, a junior biology major who said she has been playing soccer "ever since I could walk."

"The soccer season was really good," she said. "We were in the semifinals. It was great to be part of that experience."


Men's ice hockey player Mike Wilson, a junior business administration major, said his coach at Becker helped him and other players select new schools and make a smooth transition. Now that he's a Lancer, he said, "I love it. Everyone is very friendly with us and accepting. We all became very close. We honestly became a family."

A Forever Commitment

In higher education, academic records are nothing glamorous – but they are important. Former students and graduates need official and unofficial copies of transcripts and degrees for applications to other colleges, graduate and professional school, job applications, the military, promotions and, sometimes, just to replace one they lost. A college might close, but its records cannot.

Worcester State made a commitment to inherit, safeguard, manage and issue all of Becker's 30,000 academic transcripts and numerous degrees for alumni and former Becker students – a complex records management undertaking involving the Registrar's offices and IT departments at both schools. Worcester State's Registrar Julie Chaffee worked closely with Becker's Registrar Cheryl Haskins to make it happen.

More than a year later, the records have been transferred and are digitally accessible at worcester.edu/transcript-request. Worcester State is also setting up a template of the Becker College baccalaureate degree so that it can reissue copies of degrees. "As a fellow Worcester institution we want to be able to be helpful, make sure Becker students have a place to come to have their needs fulfilled," Chaffee said.

For Maloney, the ultimate measure of Worcester State's collective effort will be the success of the students, and that will take time to evaluate as the students finish their education. "I'm optimistic," Maloney said. "I will look back with no regrets, period. We had to help out." 

Helping Local Businesses Thrive

New upskilling program provides real-world training to area food entrepreneurs

By Nancy Sheehan



Jean-Luc Wittner prepares authentic French crêpes.



Jean-Luc Wittner, Owner, Suzette Crêperie & Cafe

JEAN-LUC WITTNER can still remember the irresistible aroma of the crêpes his mother used to make for him when he was a child growing up in France. “I still can see my mother preparing

the batter and feel my disappointment when she said it had to rest for two hours. Those were the longest two hours of my early life,” he says.

Obsessed with the memory of the smells and flavors of his childhood, Wittner dreamed of opening a crêperie after arriving in Massachusetts in 2011. Two years ago, he and his wife, Evelyn, opened Suzette Crêperie & Café in Worcester’s trendy Canal District, offering authentic French crêpes with a variety of fillings.

There are sweet selections, including “Strawberry Fields,” with strawberries, white chocolate, and toasted almonds, as well as savory options, including the Weintraub, a cheese, pastrami,

bechamel sauce and tomato creation named after the iconic former Worcester delicatessen that now is home to the crêperie.

Wittner, a culinary-school trained chef, realized his long-held American dream was coming true with the opening of the crêperie, but he also wanted to explore selling another of his specialties, macarons, on a wholesale basis. To help with that business expansion, he turned to the Food Entrepreneurship Program at Worcester State University, which teaches the real-world, step-by-step skills needed for a successful food business.

Offered in collaboration with the Worcester Regional Food Hub, program courses are six-week deep dives into very specific skills led by an industry expert. Courses are held on campus at WSU, and Chartwells, the company that

provides food services to Worcester State, offers scholarships to those for whom the cost would otherwise be a burden.

The program aims to benefit not only entrepreneurs, but the larger community as well. “It’s a way to help small businesses in Worcester be more resilient and more financially viable,” says Elaine Vescio, director of entrepreneurship at Worcester State. “The entire region benefits when the small-business environment is healthy and vibrant.”

Program courses are hyper-focused on the technical, management and business knowledge that entrepreneurs need to establish and grow their businesses. “These are deep dives into the

really specific expertise that food entrepreneurs want and need,” Vescio says. “It’s things like everything you need to do to prepare for and get your wholesaling permit. We

had several people who took that class the first time it was offered who now have their wholesaling permits.”

Preparing for Your Wholesale Permit was the class Wittner took last fall, with an eye toward wholesaling his macarons. The course teaches participants how to obtain a permit from the state and helps

them clarify their ideas to ensure their wholesale business is a success. Wittner discovered that large quantities of hard-to-make macarons might prove a bit beyond the scope of his small shop.

“The class was really helpful and we learned so much,” he said. “I discovered that you need to find a product you can produce on a mass scale, which is not the case with macarons. So now we are working on a few different things that will lead to a wholesaling business when the time is right.”

For those who have completed the permitting course, the Food Entrepreneurship Program offers a next-steps blueprint through a course titled Wholesalers, Set Up Your Distribution Channels. “After they completed the permitting class, people were like ‘Okay. I’m going to have my permit soon. How do I get my food out there?’” Vescio says. “We wanted to give them the opportunity to focus on how to build their distribution network out.”

“The entire region benefits when the small-business environment is healthy and vibrant.”

— Elaine Vescio, Director of Entrepreneurship

Briana Azier, Owner, Bri’s Sweet Treats

AMONG OTHER POPULAR food entrepreneurship program offerings are Food Business Strategy and Planning and Leverage Digital Media to Build Your Food Business, which helps food entrepreneurs connect with a wider range of customers. “We have people who went through that six-week program and they’re super excited because they are using digital media now for their business in ways that they would not have done without it,” Vescio says.

One of those people is Briana Azier, owner of Bri’s Sweet Treats. The former corporate recruiter began selling chocolate treats on the side after friends who had received them as holiday gifts encouraged her to start her own business. She began setting up a booth at farmers markets and fairs and soon her cookies, triple-chocolate brownies and Oreos covered in chocolate – milk,

white and dark – were selling out. “My peanut butter cups developed a cult following and became by far my biggest seller,” she says.

Azier’s success prompted her to consider leaving the corporate world behind to become a full-time chocolatier. To help make the leap, she turned to the Food Entrepreneurship Program, starting with the digital media course.

“This was an amazing class. Well taught, class notes and lectures were clear and precise and relevant,” she says. “The networking alone was awesome, let alone the knowledge. Those six weeks helped me to rebrand, build my website (shopbrissweettreats.com), hire a professional strategist, streamline and refocus. Every food entrepreneur should take this course.”

Azier also took the wholesale-permit preparation course and is remodeling her kitchen, top to bottom, at her home in the Rochdale

section of Leicester getting ready for the busy summer vendor season.

“I am booked literally every Saturday at a food truck festival, a fair, a craft show – some type of big event,” she says. She also was accepted to sell her treats at the Worcester Tercentennial Celebration in June and at stART on the Street, Worcester’s largest arts, music and cultural festival, in September.

Briana Azier rebranded her candy business after taking a course through Worcester State’s Food Entrepreneurship Program.



Photo by Matt Wright '10

“My peanut butter cups developed a cult following.”

— Bri Azier

Gerardo Figueroa Jr., Owner, Taino Roots food truck

GERARDO FIGUEROA JR. of Southbridge also signed up for the digital media course in hopes of launching a food-truck business.

“I graduated with a marketing degree, then went into corporate,” he says. “Great money, didn’t love it. Then went into teaching, loved the teaching, loved the kids, didn’t love the politics behind the teaching.”

As he worked his way through those jobs, he always remembered how he and his father had often talked about food and how much they both enjoyed cooking. “Every time we had a family event, it was always surrounded by food,” he says. “We could be in our darkest days but when my father went into the kitchen, it was like a sunrise. It would put a smile on our faces. Even as a grown man and once I had my own children, it was still the same thing. When we would cook, there was just that enjoyment, that happiness.”

So, Figueroa bought a large trailer and began outfitting it with a kitchen, hoping to start a business and share the food he loves with the larger community. He was especially eager to in-



Gerardo Figueroa Jr., owner of Taino Roots food truck, and his wife, Yeichi Figueroa, prepare a tripeleta sandwich, with pork, ham, and steak.

Photo courtesy of Gerardo Figueroa

roduce people to the flavors of his Taino roots, the food of the Indigenous people of Puerto Rico. Eventually, however, the busyness of life got in the way and the food project languished.

Then, he heard about Worcester State’s digital marketing course and thought he would give it a try. “Wow, it really changed my life.”

“I had been in kind of a funk. It seemed like it was just too hard to start a business with everything else going on in life, but this course motivated me,” he says. “It inspired me to continue doing what I wanted to do and helped me pull my ideas together because I was all over the place. Every week, more questions would arise like, ‘What is my image? I sell food like anybody else, but why am I different?’ That helped me put my brand together and understand how to create my message, so it was great. It really made all the difference in the world.”

“It seemed like it was just too hard to start a business with everything else going on in life, but this course motivated me.”

— Gerardo Figueroa, Jr.



Theatre Major Brighid Campbell '22, VPA's second Theatre major graduate, playing the role of "The Player" in Worcester State Theatre's Spring 2022 production of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* by Tom Stoppard.

the Arts are back and stronger than ever!

As audiences flock to in-person theater, music and art events, Worcester State's Visual and Performing Arts flourishes. **By Andrea Binnick**

» **The buzz was undeniable – live Latin jazz** rhythms mixed with the celebratory laughter and chatter of people gathered after too long separated. And the artwork! Colorful masks, a striking 6-foot floor lamp with a luminous shade like a hornet's nest. Vivid geometric paintings. And a skull made of teeth. The crowd couldn't get enough.

This vibrant scene in the Mary Cosgrove Dolphin Gallery for the Spring Student Art Exhibition – bringing together student artists from the Visual and Performing Arts Department, the University's student and faculty Latin American Music Ensemble, *Musica!*, friends and family, and com-

munity arts leaders – had not been possible since spring 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic halted in-person visual and performing arts gatherings across the world.

"It was electric in there, to be honest," said Gallery Director Stacey Parker, professor of Fine Art and Interdisciplinary Studies. "You could literally feel the excitement. Everybody was really loving the music and the art."

A renewed sense of urgency to gather in creative expression in classrooms, performing arts spaces and studios is sweeping the campus as Worcester State theatre, music and visual art students have

(Continued on next page)

Photo by Wright Photo Studios

Together Again

reunited this year with live and in-person audiences. This thirst for the arts is unfolding as the University's Visual and Performing Arts Department experiences its own renaissance with two new bachelor degree offerings, new faculty, growing enrollment and a thriving synergy with the wider Worcester arts community.

"The arts are one of the central ways that we communicate our ideas about ourselves to ourselves and to others, and that's how we make meaning within community and that's how we express value across communities," said Professor and Department Chair Sam O'Connell. "One of the things the pandemic showed us is the true value of that. At times, entertainment can provide distraction and some sort of escape, and it's how we connect with each other."

In Worcester, a city with one of the most dynamic arts communities in New England, Executive Director Elaine McKenna-Yeaw of the Worcester Center for Crafts, one of the nation's oldest educational craft institutions, said she is noticing this phenomenon, too. At the start of the pandemic, courses turned virtual at the Center. Recently, the Center, which has served generations of families over the years and shares its building on Sagamore Street with Worcester State visual art and music composition studios, returned to offering in-person courses.

"Once we were able to go back to full capacity, oh my gosh, I compare it to when hard-to-get concert tickets go on sale and they sell out immediately," McKenna-Yeaw said. "That's how fast our classes are filling up. People are just really excited."

SINCE OFFERING ITS FIRST MAJOR, an interdisciplinary B.A. in visual and performing arts, to two students in 2009, the VPA department has grown steadily over the years. In 2021, it added two new majors, a B.A. in theatre and a B.A. in visual art, while continuing to offer the interdisciplinary major and minors in music, music composition and technology, art, and theatre.

Today, some 700 Worcester State students take courses across the arts curriculum, including more than 80 students who are presently earning visual and performing arts majors and minors. Contributing to that growth is student participa-



Detail from *Abstract Subway* by Casey Mullaly from Professor Michael Hachey's course, AR130 Painting.

tion in music lessons and ensembles, with more than 30 Worcester State students taking music lessons and approximately 60 students participating in music ensembles in the spring.

It's that passion that drew Caroline Ford '23, one of VPA's first new visual art majors, to the program as a transfer student from Bridgewater State. "Coming here, I was super excited that Worcester State had a new art major, and I could just focus on that and do what I love," Ford said.

Alongside the increasing numbers, the department has established itself in the fabric of the University and the greater Worcester community. One of the most powerful examples of this involves an initiative called CitySpeak, an innovative, eight-year-old partnership between VPA and the Urban Studies Department that provides Worcester's diverse populations with a channel of expression through arts- and

research-based urban planning and community development. Through its productions, CitySpeak tackles complex and controversial issues in the community.

During the pandemic, CitySpeak produced a virtual spring 2021 performance, "Dancing with Demons," an interdisciplinary play devised by Worcester State students and faculty through use of real-life interviews and oral histories gathered by the Urban Studies Department. The presentation went on to earn high honors from the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival Region 1.

Additional transformative partnerships over the years have included those with ArtsWorcester and The Sprinkler Factory. The Mary Cosgrove Dolphin Gallery has created conversation with groups such as the Worcester Art Museum and the Worcester Center for Crafts, among others.

AS WORCESTER STATE'S ARTS programs grow, so too does its roster of accomplished local artists and performers. In pre-pandemic times, the Worcester State Chorale with Professor Christie Nigro toured internationally and newly hired Assistant Professor Carlos Odria performs across Central Massachusetts and has just released a new album. (See story page 18)

Musician **Annie Machado '19** graduated from Worcester State with a major in Visual and Performing Arts and a concentration in music. Today, she is the drummer in local blues band "No Shoes," a group that plays at the legendary Bull Run venue in Shirley, the Midway Cafe in Boston, the Paddock in Fitchburg, and several others in Worcester with bandmates Julian Wagner '22 and Zac Loureiro '20. Machado's YouTube Channel draws more than 10,000 followers to enjoy her vocal and acoustic guitar performances, and she even recently released her first single, "Damage Is Done," under her artist name, Annie Wallflower.

"All of the courses I took and performances I was in exposed me to genres of music I otherwise would not have learned about," Machado said. "Having that ear training of learning about music from different time periods and cultures throughout history has helped me become a well-rounded composer and performer. Being able to perform multiple times every semester, whether it was solo on a stage or with the jazz band in a common lounge on campus, has really helped shape a performer in me."

Local arts executive McKenna-Yeaw also highlighted the importance of arts studies when it comes to students' future directions.

"Having an artistic background is so important," said McKenna-Yeaw. "I think it's hugely important to innovation, and to any kind of growth in terms of – even business. I think the one thing that a lot of businesses are looking for is the creative mind. Those are the students who will be important for our future, because I really do believe that without creativity, you're just not going to create anything new."

A passion for costume design brought **Bellalorraine Carey-Hicks '21** to Worcester State, where she recently became the first graduate of the new B.A. in Theatre program. She spent three years working as an assistant in the department's impressive costume shop and also starred in several theatre productions during her time at Worcester State. Among her favorite roles was Tiresias in *Oedipus the King*.

In addition to being the new major's first graduate, Carey-Hicks swiftly landed a full-time

Founding Faculty Set the Stage for Success



Hood



Wilcox-Titus

» **MORE THAN A DECADE AGO**, a small and visionary group of faculty members – with the support of passionate arts philanthropists – began building a visual and performing arts program at Worcester State.

Two of them, founding faculty members Catherine Wilcox-Titus, a professor of art since 2004, and John Howell Hood, a professor of scenic design since 2003, retired this year. The professors were instrumental in the creation of the department's new majors and led extensive renovation projects for two essential visual and performing arts spaces on campus – the Mary Cosgrove Dolphin Gallery and Fuller Theater, projects made possible with the support of arts philanthropists. Among the donors who were instrumental in establishing the arts at Worcester State with their time and philanthropic investments

include Nina Fletcher, Tuck Amory, Bruce Cohen, and Marlyn Pula.

The legacies from Wilcox-Titus and Howell Hood are "enormous contributions that will be felt by the department for years to come," said Theatre Professor and former Department Chair Adam Zahler.

As VPA's theatre program began to flourish, students needed a beautiful theater space to realize the full potential of the program. Hood spearheaded a 2009 renovation effort, supported by the George F. & Sybil H. Fuller Foundation, for what is now known as Fuller Theater, adding an entire lighting package, installing catwalks, extending the stage, and adding a new grid system for hanging lights and curtains, controls, sound instruments, dimmers, and more.


"We started being able to do larger shows, greater repertoire, and just different kinds of productions with larger casts, which was really pretty great," Zahler said. "And along with the larger casts, we saw a growth in students taking acting classes. When I first came here, acting was offered once a year, maybe, and now, we run two to three sections per semester of acting."

Next door in the Ghosh Science and Technology Center, during the same year, Wilcox-Titus was working tirelessly at leading renovations in what is now known as the Mary Cosgrove Dolphin Gallery. The project came about with the support of Professor and artist Michael Hachey, then chair of the department, and a \$25,000 donation from the Fletcher Foundation with supplemental support from the Worcester State Foundation. The space gives off a larger-than-reality feel with the track lighting, black ceiling and mechanicals, and glass wall; making it one of the best college galleries in the state system.

"And right from the beginning, we wanted to be sure that we served the larger community as well," said Wilcox-Titus. "We've held invitational shows and open calls based on themes, and we have really been extremely pleased with the community's response, attendance, and feedback. We've brought the wonderful talents of the area to campus so our students could have a firsthand experience with them."

teaching position at YouthBuild Worcester, a non-profit organization committed to providing youth with a community base and support network, all while continuing her studies at Worcester State as she pursues a Master of Arts in English.

The competitive edge that helped her land the position was her performance experience. "I teach four core subjects in addition to leadership training, but I was actually hired because of my theatre degree," Carey-Hicks said. "For

most of these kids, they are individuals with whom public school and traditional academics didn't work out, so a standard classroom setting wasn't something that was going to be productive for them. The new director wanted someone who was a bit more hands on and would take the kids outside. And we do learning-based activities and things which are really hands on and have them up and moving. Today, we did a cleanup out in the community." 

“Coming here, I was super excited that Worcester State had a new art major, and I could just focus on that and do what I love.” — Caroline Ford '23, Visual Arts Major



Professor Carlos Odria: “Music creates this glue between people, this nexus”

» **AWARD-WINNING GUITARIST** and ethnomusicology scholar Carlos Odria has been inspiring Worcester State students as a visiting professor and adjunct for four years. In March, Odria joined the Visual and Performing Arts Department as the department’s newest full-time faculty member.

The Peruvian-born musician, who earned a Ph.D. at Florida State University, founded and directs *Música!*, WSU’s Latin American ensemble, performs frequently in Central Massachusetts, and recently released his first solo album *Montuno Negro*. VPA’s Andrea Binnick talked with him recently.

At the start of the school year, you were the featured performer for Worcester State’s inaugural Unity Walk and rally, a student-driven initiative to celebrate diversity and inclusion. How did that performance feel?

Both aspects made the performance very meaningful for me. First, the concept of the Unity Walk itself, the presence of faculty, employees, and students gathering for the sole cause of fostering this sense of collectivity and connection between all the people who work here, who study here; it was beautiful.

These are things that as an ethnomusicologist I’ve been researching for years, the idea that music creates this glue between people, this nexus. I saw myself as part of that at that very moment. I felt deep responsibility, and I wanted to be very aware of every note that I played in

the instrument because I knew that people were really listening to the music. And so, I picked one of my songs, “La Nana,” a song that is cheerful, energetic, fun, with some melancholic moments here and there. It felt great to be listened to at that level where a message was being sent to everyone. I felt really proud of being part of the Unity Walk, the WSU community and being able to communicate my experience, my ideas, at that level through music.

VPA Chair Sam O’Connell described the department as being “beyond lucky to have Carlos as a faculty member, an artist and a performer,” and said that you give the department an “opportunity to build applied music, and in particular, serve as a regional guitar destination for students who want to study and practice.” What are some of the things you can look forward to in your new role at Worcester State?


One of the things that I think is very important for musicians and for people who want to make a living out of playing music is to have the sort of training that prepares you to play gigs at a professional level. What I want to do is to bring my experience in the field - playing gigs and professional engagements connecting to audiences in real situations - which is something that has been a journey for me. Really, no one taught me how to do this. It has been years of finding ways to be able to connect with audiences, to navigate and balance the idea of being an artist

and at the same time an entertainer. That’s what I want to bring to the students here at WSU, and demonstrate that if you want to play music, you really need to be flexible and to adapt to different situations and audiences.

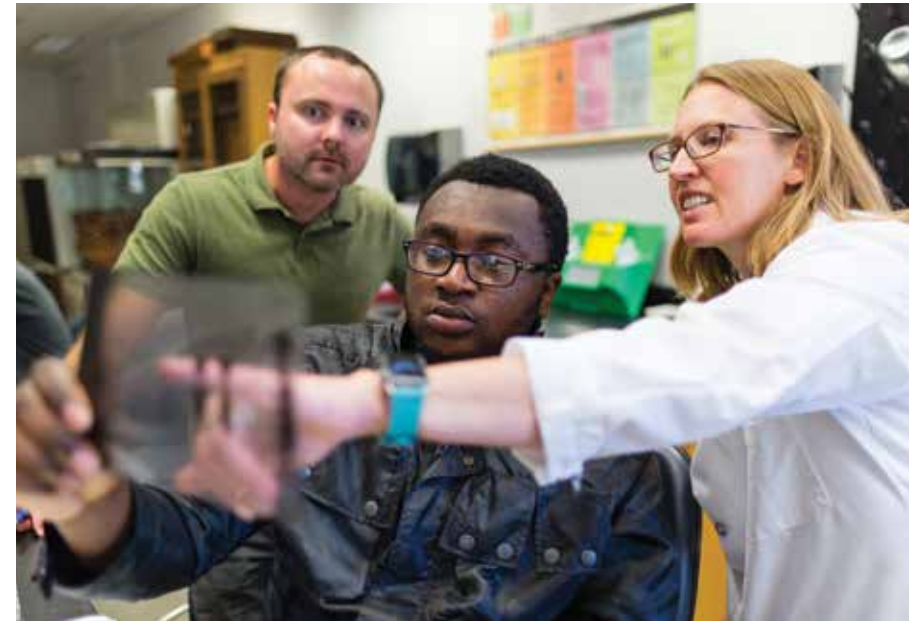
You recently partnered with the Office of Multicultural Affairs for its Brotherhood Conference at Worcester State. What stood out from that event?

It was a great event and the success was beyond what we expected. We thought we were going to get mostly students, but we got professionals, teachers from the public school systems, and alumni. So it was an event that I felt was needed and filled a gap in the area. I gave this fun workshop involving drumming on buckets. The main idea was not only to play music, but to show the participants how to work as a team, an essential tool for creating a healthy society, a healthy community, and making good friends. And for me, as a musician, playing in an ensemble is a creative and fun way to demonstrate the importance and effectiveness of teamwork. People were smiling and happy.

You’ve put out two albums with the Carlos Odria Trio and in March, released your first solo guitar album, *Montuno Negro*, work that you describe as a “fictional, all-too-real character.” Can you tell us more about this character and the inspiration for the album?

At some level, with all music and all art in general - you start from your experiences, from important events in your life. These songs in the album work like that. I tried to imagine this fictional character traversing through different situations in life, different emotions. And I could not disconnect from that fictional character in a way, because he was being fed from my own experiences. But I didn’t want to make the album biographical, to say, “Oh, all this music is about my life,” because there are also some magic elements created when you craft a fictional narrative. And you are able to detach a little bit from your own experiences and it stops being all about you. That’s why I play with that idea in this solo album. 

Odria’s album is available on all digital platforms, including Spotify, YouTube, and Amazon Music. To follow Odria’s upcoming performances and music, visit www.carlosodria.com



LEFT: Biology Professor Jennifer Hood-DeGrenier and former WSU students Eian Gaw '18 and Kennedy Ofri-Mensa '18 look at the results of a western blotting experiment to detect several variants of the tumor suppressor protein p53 expressed in yeast cells. This is part of a multi-week series in Hood-DeGrenier’s lab investigating the p53 protein – which is crucial as a cancer defense and is mutated in about 50 percent of human cancers.


be training students in what it is to do research so they can do research in other contexts in the future,” said Professor Jennifer Hood-DeGrenier, chair of the Biology Department. “Having this targeted at cancer is a nice way to show that the campus is making this a priority. Students know this is really important.”

With the Rosen Fund, student organizations such as the Pre-Health Club and Student Nursing Association will create cancer awareness programs with guest speakers, cancer awareness events and integration of DetecTogether, an early cancer detection educational model, into campus events.

“The Rosen Cancer Awareness Fund provides many of our student leaders a unique opportunity to provide peer-led programs that promote cancer awareness around campus and throughout the greater Worcester community,” said Sarah Potrikus, assistant director of the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership Development. “As a cancer survivor myself, I feel one of the most important impacts these programs can have on our students is the importance of knowing your body, knowing what’s normal and knowing when to seek out a healthcare professional.”

Today, Rosen is nearing his first year of a two-year clinical trial at Mass General Hospital. More than 200,000 people per year are diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin’s Follicular Lymphoma, and medical advances are uncovering treatments and hope for a cure.

“I know I have a long road ahead, but my doctors say the treatment is showing good results,” he said. “Finding out you have cancer is an emotional roller-coaster but the more I have learned has helped me understand how to cope and stay positive. I am blessed to have the greatest support system a person could ask for. My wife Pam of 35

years is my rock, and it sits on a mountain of support from my entire family and friends. They give me the love, laughter and support I need to stay focused on my journey. I hope and pray that we find a cure for all of us dealing with cancer directly or with a family member or friend.” 

Raising Hope

Cancer diagnosis moves alumni couple to establish cancer programs for students
By Deborah Alvarez O’Neil

At first, the new lump Gregg Rosen ’86 found under his arm didn’t seem like anything to be concerned about, so the then 56-year-old businessman took his time getting it checked by a doctor. Eventually, though, he did. And then the call came.

“On July 17, 2020, my primary care doctor let me know that my biopsy came back positive for Non-Hodgkin’s Follicular Lymphoma,” he recalls. “In that moment my life changed forever – uncertainty about my future, why me and where do I go from here. But I also knew it was time to be proactive.”

As with many forms of cancer, early detection of Non-Hodgkin’s Follicular Lymphoma is key to successful treatment. Following his diagnosis, Rosen, a member of the Worcester State Foundation Board, decided to take action for countless other individuals who have been and may someday be touched by cancer.

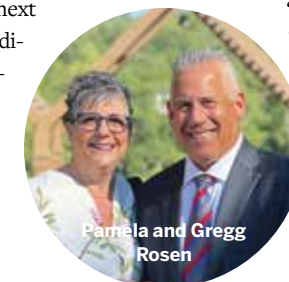
In 2020, he and his wife Pamela Rosen ’87 established the new Rosen Cancer Awareness Fund at Worcester State, and recently expanded it to build a comprehensive program for cancer

awareness, research, education and support. The fund will bring several firsts to Worcester State: a Cancer Research Summer Program for student-faculty collaboration, a Resource Support Fund to assist students who have received a cancer diagnosis or have a family member with cancer and a Wellness Center internship to implement cancer awareness programs.

“There is so much we can do as a public university in the fight against cancer – from raising awareness to training the next generation of researchers and medical professionals,” said Vice President of University Advancement Thomas McNamara ’94. “Gregg and Pam’s generosity will make it possible for Worcester State to make an impact for the better.”

In Worcester State’s science labs, undergraduates are being educated in foundational science that enables graduates to pursue careers in medicine and scientific research. In addition, various faculty members do cancer-related research.

“Our goal as faculty doing research is not only to continue our own disciplines but also to



Dressed for Success

First-gen college graduate Johnny Chavez mentors young men on how to create positive professional images.

By Nancy Sheehan | PHOTO BY MATT WRIGHT '10

Johnny K. Chavez '13 says support and encouragement from faculty and staff made all the difference when he was a struggling first-generation student at Worcester State University. Now, he gives back as a member of the Office of Multicultural Affairs Young Men's Group, where he mentors students, helping them adjust to campus life.

He also was a presenter last March at the inaugural Brotherhood Conference which offered a day of inspiration, affirmation, and connection for nearly 100 first generation, economically diverse, ALANA/BI-POC (African American, Latine, Asian, Native American and/ or Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students from across the state universities and local public schools.

In a talk titled "From Sweats to Suits," Chavez spoke about the importance of creating a positive professional image, how to develop an awareness of unspoken dress-code norms within different work environments, and how to acquire affordable formal and business attire. Chavez, the proud owner of 17 suits, is always impeccably dressed these days, but a sense of style was something he had to develop

upon graduation from WSU.


"I knew it would be important for my future success, so I devoted myself to studying, observing and learning about it and it became sort of a passion of mine," he says.

That same sense of devotion helped him overcome the many challenges he faced when he decided to go to college after high school.

"I was the first generation in my family to go to college," he says. "I didn't have any idea how to do it. I just knew I needed to do it. But I was fully broke, so I had to work three part-time jobs. I had no car, just my two legs and that's how I got from point A to B."

The Alternatives for Individual Development (AID) Program at Worcester State University proved to be the lifeline he needed. AID is an alternative admissions program that helps students who require support services to succeed in college.

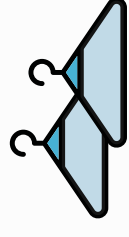
With that support and encouragement, Chavez earned a B.S. degree in psychology and Spanish from Worcester State. He now serves people with intellectual and physical disabilities as a care manager. He also is co-owner with his wife, Geovanna Diaz-Chavez, '12, MA '14, of Style and Comfort Corp., a construction company that provides home renovation services. He also recently launched a business as a professional and formal attire consultant.

Chavez reminds the students he mentors that they can achieve their dreams. "I have a career, I have a wife and a son, and I am college-debt free. It is possible," he told students at the Brotherhood Conference. "I know some of you are wondering how you're going to do it. Just remember, as long as you're looking into how you'll do it, you already are doing it." 

Worcester State's Best Dressed Man steps out during the summer in a three-piece tan suit, a cotton/wool blend that will hold its shape in a formal environment. The suit is appropriate for a variety of business settings, including a meeting or job interview. Chavez even wore this very suit for his wedding to fellow alum Geovanna Diaz-Chavez. The shirt is a French cuff style with a wide spread collar. The tie is a Christian Dior with red dots and navy background, which Chavez bought second hand for \$15.



JOHNNY'S TIPS FOR LOOKING SMART



2 Suits are better than one.

Why a suit? Why not? Why not make an impression? The three reasons you need a suit are because you have a job interview, you have a wedding, and you have a funeral - not necessarily in that order. But it is always good to have two suits. Some job interviews ask for a second interview.



The total package.

You are not just presenting your résumé or your portfolio; you are presenting your image.



Make them remember you.

If you are going to walk into a place, make them remember you. You want to stand out. You don't want to be just a name next to a number.



Three T's of wearing a suit: tailored, tapered and tamed.

Tailored, because the suit fits you, and you only. Tapered, because there's no extra material. You don't have a slim fit up at the top and then a '90s wide look on the bottom. Everything is uniform. Tamed, meaning it drapes well on you. It doesn't look like you're wearing a '90s power suit. You're not wearing a curtain.



Attention to detail.

When you take care with your look and you stand out from the rest, people take extra interest. Details are key. A good friend of mine had an interview for a management position at Verizon. We got him in a midnight blue suit, which is really dark, almost black. For the tie, we got one in the Verizon color red. He went in there with confidence, did the interview, and at the end of the interview, his now employer said, "I really like your tie."



As an alumna and a Trustee, Maryanne Hammond helps the University celebrate its milestones and academic achievements.

She Is Worcester State

Through service and support, alumna Maryanne Hammond has helped shape her alma mater. **By Deborah Alvarez O’Neil** | PHOTO BY MATT WRIGHT ’10

“**S**uzie!” Even through a mask, you could hear the smile in Maryanne Hammond’s voice as she greeted Worcester State University staff member Susan Vigeant: “I’m so happy to see you!” Hammond began making introductions: “Suzie was one of my first graders.” Spend a little time with Maryanne Hammond ’69, M.Ed. ’72, M.Ed. ’77 and you’re likely to meet someone new, too – maybe one of her former students from her career as an educator in Spencer,

Mass., or one of the countless members of the Lancer community she has befriended, mentored and worked with through decades of service and volunteerism at her alma mater. This year, she is finishing a two-term, ten-year tenure as the Alumni Association’s Advisory Board appointee to the Board of Trustees. Vigeant, who is earning her degree at Worcester State, later smiled about the encoun-

ter with Hammond. “She still calls me Suzie. No one else does,” Vigeant said. “All of her students are like her family.”

Hammond is among Worcester State’s most beloved ambassadors, donors and volunteers. Her family ties to the University go back to 1937 when her mother, Mary Ballantine, also a teacher, graduated from Worcester State Teachers College. Maryanne has had a front seat to Worcester State’s evolution from a teacher’s college to a respected liberal arts university.

“When I went here it was the local college where everyone goes to be a teacher,” she said. “If you wanted to be the best teacher you went to Worcester State. It’s always had a wonderful reputation. There are people here who do more than just educate your child; we take care of your child.”

Long after she graduated, Hammond continued to find mentors at her alma mater, including her friend, the late George Albro ’65, M.Ed. ’68, a fellow educator and Board of Trustees member. She recalls telling Albro that she was nervous about joining the Board. “I said, I don’t think I’m capable. He said, ‘You will be. Stick with me.’”

Hammond went on to take part in a decade of Board decisions that have shaped the University – from major campus expansion, to new policies and strategic objectives. Her contributions have been innumerable, from helping to establish a Student Emergency Fund for students to integrating a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion into all the Board’s committees and bylaws, and leading the University through a pandemic.

Through it all, Hammond remained ever the teacher, with a clear-eyed focus on what’s best for students.

“At meetings of the Board, Trustee Hammond is often framing issues or deliberations by asking, ‘What is in the best interests for our students?’ or ‘How could this program better serve our students?’” said Stephen Madaus, Chair of the Board. “Maryanne has a true affection for her alma mater and is very happy to contribute and serve. Personally, I have appreciated her friendship and teamwork.”

Says Trustee Dina Nichols, “Maryanne is the consummate educator and her passion for enriching the lives of others is evident in every aspect of her work as a Board member. She motivates myself and those around her with her enthusiasm for their success. She is also one of the most practical people I have ever had the pleasure of working with, always embracing new ideas while ensuring all boxes have been checked along the way.”

“At meetings of the Board, Trustee Hammond is often framing issues by asking, ‘What is in the best interests for our students?’”

— Stephen Madaus, Chair of the Board of Trustees



At Worcester State, alumna Maryanne Hammond became close friends with the late Thea Aschkenase, a Holocaust survivor who attended Worcester State when she was in her 80s and wrote about her experiences in the book, *Remembering A Holocaust Survivor Shares Her Life*. In 2015, Hammond joined Thea for a book signing event on campus.

For many years, Hammond has immersed herself in the life of the University – celebrating milestones and achievements from alumni events and academic awards to commencement. She says this involvement has filled her life with friendships – like her friendship with the late Thea Aschkenase, a 2007 alumna in whose name the University dedicated Thea’s Pantry for her commitment to ending hunger. Thea was a Holocaust survivor who earned a college degree while in her 80s. In 2016, Hammond was able to give Thea a University award recognizing her contributions.

“I thought this woman was absolutely above and beyond,” said Hammond. “It was very important that she be honored.”

Through the years, Hammond has donated to virtually every kind of program at Worcester

State – academics, scholarships, service awards, student life, athletics, wellness and the Worcester State Fund. She says she has particularly enjoyed staying in touch with the students who have been awarded the Mary and John V. Ballantine Scholarship, which she established in her parents’ name. “I have a whole new group of people in my life, and by the same token, I hope I’m adding to their lives,” she said. “I hope I make the world a better place.”

Says her colleague Karen LaFond, “Trustee Hammond is a shining example of Worcester State – a successful alum and a dedicated Trustee who has been invaluable in her service to the WSU Board of Trustees over the past decade. Most importantly, Trustee Hammond is a fierce supporter of our students and of higher education. She is Worcester State University!”

Mapping “The Bones” of the Galaxy

Professor Ian Stephens makes a breakthrough discovery about the magnetic fields of stars. By Nancy Sheehan

Seeking to understand the processes that lead to star formation, Worcester State Assistant Professor and astrophysicist Ian Stephens has spent years using highly specialized telescopes to peer into distant cosmic cradles where stars are born.

His recent discovery revealed that the Milky Way’s magnetic fields are far more complex than previously thought. His findings – published in *The Astrophysical Journal Letters* – have been making headlines across the scientific world.

Stephens used a unique telescope constructed by NASA and the German Aerospace Center (DLR) called SOFIA. The telescope is on a specially outfitted Boeing 747 airplane that flies above much of the atmosphere and so can make clearer observations in the infrared



Image by NASA/JPL-Caltech/S. Carey (SSC). Photo by Matt Wright '10 (Stephens)

Recent discoveries by Worcester State Astrophysicist Ian Stephens have been making headlines in the scientific community.

spectrum, which can reveal important aspects of astronomy beyond the scope of visible light.

Scientists know that most stars form within a galaxy’s spiral arms. Building the spinal “skeletons” of spiral galaxies are galactic “bones,” long filaments that outline the densest parts of the galaxy’s arms.

But what exactly is a galactic bone?

Our bones indicate the densest parts of the human body. As such, a galactic bone indicates the densest part of the Milky Way Galaxy. These are long, filamentary structures of molecular gas that are typically over 50 light years in length but are only about three light years in diameter. They are currently collapsing and becoming denser to form thousands if not tens of thousands of stars.

Magnetic fields are an important aspect of astronomy. Magnetic fields produce forces on charged particles. As such, magnetic fields can guide flows of matter, and they can actually help provide support against collapse due to gravity.

“By mapping the orientation of the fields in the bones, we can estimate the relative importance of the magnetic field to that of gravity.” — Professor Ian Stephens

Previously, it had been assumed that the magnetic fields surrounding the galactic bones aligned with the swirls of the galaxy’s spiral arms that the bones are part of, but Stephens’ observations revealed them to have a complex structure when observed in finer detail.

“I was surprised by how complex the magnetic fields were,” Stephens says. “I expected the fields to be primarily perpendicular or parallel to the longest axis of the bone as predicted by most of the theoretical models. However, they were oriented in almost every way possible while still maintaining significant structure.”

It will take a lot more analysis to fully understand exactly what role the fields play, but Stephens says his current calculations indicate that the fields are quite strong and significantly slow down the formation of stars in these bones.

“Magnetic fields can slow the collapse of stars, and thus can potentially set the rate at which stars form in a cloud,” he says. “They can also guide the flow of gas, shape the bones, and affect the quantity and size of the densest pockets of gas that will eventually collapse to form stars.”

SOFIA, or the Strategic Observatory for Infrared Astronomy, is currently the only telescope in the world that can make observations in the far-infrared. This is important, Stephens says, because some astronomical sources are better studied at different wave-

lengths. Star-forming regions, for example, are the brightest in the far-infrared, so it is easiest to observe them at these wavelengths.

Unfortunately, for astronomers wanting to peer into these star-forming regions, our atmosphere blocks almost all light in the far-infrared. “So, we need to either fly above the atmosphere on an airplane or launch something in space,” Stephens says.

Stephens’ project, called FIELDMAPS, or the filaments Extremely Long and Dark: a Magnetic Polarization Survey, is the first project to map any galactic bone in its entirety. Of the ten studies of bones planned, the first one analyzed was that of G47, a giant filamentary bone within the Milky Way that is 200 light years in length and five light years in width. It is located approximately 20,000 light years from Earth.

“By mapping the orientation of the fields in the bones, we can estimate the relative importance of the magnetic field to that of gravity to quantify how much magnetic fields affect the star formation process.”

Stephens did not fly on SOFIA for his project but sent a detailed ‘script’ to the airplane’s astronomy crew stating which observations to make. Extensive research helped Stephens write the script pinpointing exactly where to look within the vastness of space.

In the field of astrophysics, Stephens is a star. He has published several research papers and he studies the formation of stars and planets using premier telescopes such as SOFIA and ALMA, or Atacama Large Millimeter Array, a high-altitude observatory in the Atacama Desert of Northern Chile.

Stephens came to Worcester State three years ago from the Center for Astrophysics | Harvard & Smithsonian in Cambridge, where he was a postdoctoral fellow. A native of Wichita Falls, Texas, he received an undergraduate degree in electrical engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology and a Ph.D. in astronomy from the University of Illinois.

As the FIELDMAPS project continues, it will unlock more secrets of star formation. “Gas collects in the spiral arms in galaxies before stars form,” Stephens says. “FIELDMAPS will give us a statistical look at how magnetic fields affect the collection of gas, which can in turn be compared to simulations we have done on galaxy formation. Together, they will help us understand what governs the rate of star formation within our galaxy.”



THIS PAGE: Team Captains Kylian Kelly '22, Clare Conway '22, and Julia Ravenelle '22 led Women's Ice Hockey to a perfect 6-0 season in regular play. OPPOSITE: The team won their first ECHA Championship in February.

Photo by Frank Poulin

No Ordinary Expansion Team

First-year women's ice hockey team dominated on the ice. **By Craig Kaufman**

There are no expectations on a team in its inaugural season at a university. Simply taking the ice for the first time is a momentous occasion. So is the first goal, the first win, the first home game - even the first time you pull on the Worcester State jersey.

Just the process of getting dressed is to be celebrated. When there are no expectations for a team, it's up to the players in that locker room to decide what they expect of themselves. Worcester

State women's ice hockey set that bar high.

This was no typical first-year program being built from scratch. When Worcester State opened its arms to welcome those students displaced with the closing of Becker College, it also recruited 13 members of its first ever women's hockey team. Those student-athletes followed Head Coach Eliza Kelley, who had been at Becker for seven seasons.



“We are more so a family than a team. We always have each other's backs and we also love and support each other outside the rink.” — Captain Kylian Kelly

“I think no one knew what to expect going into the season at first, considering it was the first year with a whole new school,” said junior goalie Amber Lee, who appeared in all 23 games, earning 14 victories, including 4 shutouts. “We set the bar pretty high right off the bat and kept going from there. Once we knew what type of standard we wanted, it became extremely important to keep it up.”

Right away, this team showed that it could dominate on the ice, and that it never gave up.

They opened the season in Colmar, Pennsylvania with a two-game set against Arcadia University. The Knights were also dropping the puck on their inaugural season and making history as Arcadia Head Coach Kelsey Koelzer became the first African-American coach to lead an NCAA women's ice hockey program. It was an honor for Worcester State to be part of the proceedings.

After the formalities, the Lancers went out and began the history of their program with an emphatic 5-0 victory that included the first goal and the first hat trick, both scored by junior Cassidhe Wozniak.

The next night, the Lancers trailed with under four minutes remaining in the third period, but scored twice in the span of 2:24 to force overtime, where Clare Conway scored the game-winner.

For Lee, the road trip to Pennsylvania to start the year would remain her favorite moment of the season. For Conway, it was the first of many nights on the scoresheet. The senior two-sport athlete who excelled in both ice hockey and lacrosse at Becker would go on to lead the team with 19 goals and 34 points. She finished the year 10th in the country in goals per

game (0.83) and 14th in the country in points per game (1.48). She and Wozniak were tied for ninth in the nation with seven power play goals on the year.

“It was important for us to set the bar high for this program,” said Conway. “I believe that coming into our first season as a group we wanted to hold ourselves to a high standard because we knew how much potential we had to be a great hockey team.”

Worcester State continued to reach and exceed their own expectations throughout the season. At the end of the year, they were among the top 15 teams in the country in penalty kill, scoring offense and power-play percentage.

Without a MASCAC affiliation, the Lancers competed as part of the four-team Eastern Collegiate Hockey Alliance (ECHA), consisting of Worcester State, Rivier University, Anna Maria College, and Assumption University. Worcester State dominated the ECHA competition. They went a perfect 6-0 in regular season play, outscoring their opponents 37-6. Conway, Lee and Kelley were named Player, Goaltender and Coach of the Year, respectively.


On Feb. 27, 2022, the Lancers won the first ever ECHA Championship with a 2-1 victory over Anna Maria at their home arena, the Fidelity Bank Worcester Ice Center. It is the same

building that the Becker Hawks used to play in. It remains the home arena for many of the same players, but they are now members of a new team with a new identity.

“We talked about legacy and building not just a team, but a program,” said Kelley. “We talked about what mark we wanted to leave, the standard we wanted to set and the impact we could make within the Worcester State community.”

Throughout the season, the Lancers would do an exercise called “What's our Why?” They would express to each other why they showed up to the rink every day, not just for themselves, but for each other.

“It was an amazing team to be a part of. I could not have asked for better teammates,” said senior captain Kylian Kelly. “We are more so a family than a team. We always have each other's backs and we also love and support each other outside the rink.”

The players on this team described themselves as tough, hardworking and relentless. They competed not only for themselves but for each other, and for the legacy that they were beginning to write for Worcester State University. They expected a lot of themselves and were committed to being more than just a first-year program. They wanted to be champions. 



The Comeback Coach

A turnaround for Worcester State Football? New Head Coach Adam Peloquin '12, MA '14 has done it before. **By Craig Kaufmann** | PHOTOS BY MATT WRIGHT '10

Number 20 was staring them in the face—and on Homecoming weekend no less. The Worcester State football team jogged to the locker room at halftime on September 18, 2021, trailing Fitchburg State 35-13 and facing down the potential of extending their winless streak to 20 games. Add in a 2020 season canceled by the COVID-19 pandemic, and it had been exactly three years and three days since the last Lancer gridiron victory.

“The mood was not good at halftime,” said Adam Peloquin '12, MA '14 who on that day was Interim Head Coach. “Our players knew they were better than how we played in the first half, and as coaches we just challenged them to play to their capabilities. All I asked of them was to have confidence in themselves and to take the game one play at a time.”

What followed that halftime speech was

thirty minutes of possibly the best football ever played by a team wearing the royal blue and gold. The Lancers scored touchdowns on five straight possessions and forced the Falcons to punt five straight times. They outscored Fitchburg State 25-0 in the second half for a 38-35 victory, the first collegiate win for the majority of players on the field that day.

For Peloquin, that day was just the beginning.

“2021 was Year Zero,” he said. “Not many players knew what it took to win a college football game. Now we have a strong foundation and are preparing for 2022 with higher standards and loftier goals.”

The 2022 team will have something else it has been lacking for several years – a head coach. After two years leading the Lancers, with the Interim tag, Peloquin was officially given the reins on Dec. 6, 2021. It’s a role that has enabled him to be more involved with every aspect and more available to each of his players. He hopes to rebuild this program one win at a time, and is using his own experience to fuel that process.

Peloquin was a three-year starter on the offensive line for the Lancers and he helped turn a one-win team into a post-season bowl participant in 2011. The circumstances parallel those of the current state of the program, and he hopes that so, too, will the results.

“The COVID pandemic has allowed us to start from scratch and create a very young team that is hungry to improve and compete with the top teams in New England. I hope my experiences helping to rebuild the team as a player will translate to the current players and will create sustainable success for Worcester State Football.”

He already sees some of the same resiliency and commitment that were key to his team’s turnaround a decade ago. Peloquin was named Interim Head Coach in November 2019 with the team already mired in a 17-game losing streak and morale waning. Then the pandemic struck and significantly reduced the program’s development. Players did not put on pads for nearly two years. Off the field, students were trying to navigate remote and hybrid learning and living through a pandemic.

“Yet these challenges did not diminish our players’ love for the game,” said Peloquin. “The team approached each day excited to be able to play football and to help rebuild this program into a champion. The resiliency and determination they have developed through the pandemic will serve the program well as we continue to improve.”

“The COVID pandemic has allowed us to start from scratch and create a very young team that is hungry to compete with the top teams in New England.”

— Head coach Adam Peloquin



The Worcester State football team took to the field for spring practice this year ready to rebuild under the leadership of new coach Adam Peloquin.

In 2021, the Lancers rostered 75 percent freshmen and sophomores and, as such, will return 19 starters to this year’s team. With an off-season of strength and conditioning under their belts, the Lancers enter 2022 more physically prepared to handle a college football schedule. An explosive offense and an overhauled defense should lead to more consistent and positive results.

Peloquin knows there are no easy games on their schedule, which kicks off on Friday

night, Sept. 2 under the lights at Coughlin Field against WPI. The Lancers will travel to nationally ranked Union College for the first time in program history, and will host UMass Dartmouth for Homecoming on Sept. 24. The season finale is Nov. 12 at Framingham State. The Rams are the reigning MASCAC champions, but Peloquin hopes that on that day, the trophy will be on the bus with them, heading back to Worcester. [W](#)



Upcoming Alumni Association Events

- Jul** 20 Rhode Island Regional Alumni Event
- Aug** *tbd* Cape Cod Regional Alumni Event
- Sept** 23 George H. Albro '65 Memorial Golf Tournament
- 23 Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony
- 24 Homecoming Festivities
- 24 Office of Multicultural Affairs 50th Anniversary Celebration
- Oct** 13 Worcester Regional Alumni Event: *Mean Girls* at Hanover Theater
- 26-27 Fall Days of Giving
- Nov** 6 Scholarship Donor & Recipient Luncheon
- 15 National Philanthropy Day/ PHIL Day

Reunion Weekend 2022

Celebrating friendship, connection and academic achievement

Hundreds of alumni came back to campus during commencement weekend in May for Worcester State University's return to in-person alumni gatherings. Reunions included the 70s Decade Reunion, the Golden Graduate Luncheon for those who graduated 50 years ago or more, Psychology Department Reunion, and the Class of 2002 20-year reunion. The Alumni Association's Party on the Eve was the biggest in years. This special celebration brings together alumni with the Class of 2022 and their family members to welcome the graduates into the alumni community.

» View our Reunion Weekend album online: [alumni/worcester/photos](https://alumni.worcester.edu/photos)

» **PARTY ON THE EVE**
The Alumni Association welcomed the Class of 2022 to the alumni family at this year's Party on the Eve at the Wasylean Hall Patio with food stations, lawn games, a cash bar, a DJ, and giveaways. The Classes of 2020 and 2021 also were invited since their graduation activities were halted because of the pandemic. At the same time, psychology graduates and the class of 2002 also gathered for reunions.

Photos by Julian Valardes

Photos by Matt Wright (this page)



a

👉 **GOLDEN GRADUATES LUNCHEON: A.** Members of the Class of 1969: Jane (Pelletier) McTigue M.Ed. '72, Margaret (Murray) Madaus M.Ed. '73, Rosemary (Power) Tarasiak, Donna Kanarcus M.Ed. '74, Marilyn (Balukonis) Willand M.Ed. '81, Kathleen McCarthy M.Ed. '77, Joan Didzbalis, Jackie Trotta M.Ed. '74, Janice (Moossa) Sullivan, Beth Sanella M.Ed. '73, Maryanne (Ballantine) Hammond M.Ed. '72, M.Ed. '77, Kathleen (Zaterka) Napoli M.Ed. '74, Paula (Protano) Police M.Ed. '73, Deb (Ledoux) Foster M.Ed. '74, Phyllis Wendorff, and Joanne (Parella) Haddad. **B.** Paul Lirange '71, M.Ed. '99, Jack Giarusso '72, Stan Mikolosi '72, and Jim Mansour '71. **C.** Charles "Nunnie" George, Jr. '60, '66 greets Richard Juneau '57, M.Ed. '60



b



c

👈 **70s DECADE REUNION: D.** Michael Ethier '71, M.Ed. '79, Patricia (Ethier) Marois '77, and Timothy Ethier '73, M.Ed. '78. **E.** Debra (Henze) Cashman '78, Patricia Haddad '78, M.S. '86 and Kris (Flink) Conley '79 reminisce through Worcester State yearbooks. **F.** Kevin Campbell '73, Kathy (Ash) Campbell '73, Debra (DiPadua) Tambeau '74, Terry Dorsey-Potts '73, Dave Meyers '76, and Richard Riley, Jr. '76, M.Ed. '00



d



e



f

Class Notes

THE LATEST NEWS ABOUT WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI

Photos by Wright Studios



👉 Mortarboard Messages from the Class of 2022

'52

Class Agent: Ruth R. (Sadick) Rubin

William H. Hebert Sr., M.Ed., '56 just retired after 18 years at Physicians Regional Medical Center.

'57

Class Agent: Elaine F. (Curran) Cousineau, M.Ed. '60

Adele M. (Abood) Millette lives in an active community and teaches centering prayer.

'59

Class Agents: Helen M. Fitzgerald, Joan L. (Lavin) Trainor, M.Ed. '62

Raymond L. Renaud, M.Ed. '63 and wife, Jeanne, celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary on October 10, 2021.

'60

Class Agents: Mary C. O'Connell, M.Ed. '63, Ann M. (Holohan) O'Leary, M.Ed. '62, Elizabeth A. (Looney) Ouellette, M.Ed. '62

Joan A. (Dunford) Banks became a great-grandmother in June 2021.

'61

Class Agents: Nancy M. (Fletcher) Bourgeois, M.Ed. '79 and Bernardine C. (Rourke) Strom

Gordon P. Hargrove is retiring after serving as director of Worcester's Friendly House for nearly 60 years and positively impacting the lives of thousands of families in the community. Friendly House serves more than 14,000 people per year with a food pantry and daily meals for children, 3 homeless shelters, programming for young people and seniors, summer camps, outreach information and referrals, holiday meals and

toy drives. Hargrove began at Friendly House as youth leader in 1957 and during his years of leadership, led its growth, strong connections in the community and numerous efforts to strengthen social services and support families across Worcester. Known as someone who can relate to anyone, Hargrove has been a leader, resource and support for clients, the city, and other social service agencies. His wife **Sona A. (Aslanian) Hargrove, M.S. '88, RN**, helped to coordinate the effort to develop Worcester's senior center.

Submit Your Class Note Today!

We love to share the good news of our alumni. Please send your latest milestones and accomplishments to:

alumni@worchester.edu
[alumni/worcester.edu/classnote](https://alumni.worcester.edu/classnote)

Please include your full name, including your pre-married name, class year, home address, email address, preferred phone number and a photo of yourself.

ClassNotes

'62

Class Agents: Veto F. Filipkowski, M.Ed. '66, Patricia A. (Fell) Pennucci, M.Ed. '67

Margaret C. (Faron) Boldrighini, M.Ed., '67 is a great-great-grandmother of four.

'64

Class Agents: Jo-Anne L. Cronin, M.Ed. '68, John F. Monfredo, M.Ed. '67, Donald W. Packard, M.Ed. '69

Nancy J. (SanClemente) Bremer is enjoying retirement after 40 years, especially spending time with her 7-year-old grandchild.

Anne-Marie (Bernier) Monfredo, M.Ed. '74 met her husband **John '64, M.Ed. '67** at WSU, and they have two children. She has taught at elementary schools and colleges. Along with John, she has been involved in many community service projects in Worcester, including collecting over 970,000 books for the community through the organization they started over 17 years ago, Worcester: The City that Reads; helping with the penny drive to save Mechanics Hall; and co-chairing the 250th anniversary of Worcester and the bicentennial celebration for Worcester Public Schools.

'65

Class Agents: Rosanne (Sullivan) Matulaitis, Margaret T. (Trainor) Sullivan, M.Ed. '68

John H. Degnan works with Hagerty Consulting on COVID-19 projects, conducting emergency management training for cities and towns.

'66

Class Agents: Janice E. (Hokanson) Baronoski, M.Ed. '75, Vincent J. Matulaitis Jr., Roberta I. (Chicoine) Stencil, M.Ed. '73

Donald F. Cushing, M.Ed. '71 has retired from the field of education after 53 years, most recently as headmaster of Putnam Science Academy. He is now focused on following his nine grandchildren who participate in eight different sports throughout the year.

'71

Frank J. Biscardi Jr. taught for 10 years in Hingham, then started Boston Fence and Vinyl in 1989. He has two children and three

grandchildren and lives in Gloucester with wife Cynthia, who is a poet and writer.

Cynthia L. (Barrett) Dunham was an elementary principal and assistant superintendent of schools in Wayland, Mass. She retired in 2007.

'73

Class Agent: Theresa M. Dorsey-Potts joined the Board of Directors for Abby's House.

Raymond V. Mariano served as mayor of Worcester for four terms and was the executive director of the Worcester Housing Authority for more than 13 years.

'77

Robert Anastas, M.Ed. '77 & '91, is the founder of SADD and the Check into a Winning Life program and the creator of the Contract for Life, working to save teenage lives from drinking and driving.

William E. Purcell was elected unanimously onto the Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County Board of Directors.

'78

Michael S. Broomfield is recently retired and living in Florida and Boston.

'79

Class Agent: Jane C. Luxton-Boggs

Patricia M. (Karbowski) Eagan Eidinger moved back to Westminster, Mass. in 2020, after 18 years in the Phoenix area. Patricia says, "So happy to be home even if my first glimpse of Worcester State was a COVID line around the building. Love getting back in touch with my old buddies."

'81

Class Agent: William S. Hayden

Arthur G. Vigeant began his sixth consecutive term as mayor in Marlborough. He is the city's longest-standing mayor, a lifelong resident, and certified public accountant. Under his leadership, thousands of jobs have returned to Marlborough, and the city has become a sought-after destination for advanced manufacturers, as well as high-tech and life-science industries.

'84

Beth L. (Lipson) Morrill's son has joined the Lancer community as part of the Class of 2025.

'86

Class Agent: Lisa A. (Fazio) Leger

Dorothy A. (Aaron) Febbi, Hanscom Air Force Base's operational contracting division chief, retired after 35 years of civil service.

Noreen E. (Doherty) Litchfield retired in July 2020 and is enjoying camping with her husband, **Keith W. Litchfield '79**, and their two dogs.

Donna (LeBlanc) Walker has two children, Austin, 26, and Madison, 19. She loves traveling and being with family.

'87

Class Agent: Kenneth J. Brissette

Lisa M. Colombo, D.N.P., M.H.A, R.N., was named one of Worcester Business Journal's 2021 Outstanding Women in Business.

Joyce M. Derenas is a retired technical writer, now a historical fiction author with four published books. Joyce will publish the fifth and final book of her A Klondike Gold Miner's Life series this year and has started work on a five novella series called The New Americans, about her French-Canadian family.

'89

Class Agent: Ann Marie Bartlett

Lori M. Paglia has been married for 22 years and has two teenage boys and a goldendoodle named Wrigley. Lori works for an accelerator program for startup companies.

'91

Class Agents: William J. Cahillane II, Paul E. Cahill, Lou E. DiMuzio, Daniel M. Harrington, Catherine R. (Foppiano) McGrath, Jeffrey T. Turgeon

Joseph J. "Rocco" Astrella opened a third location of his business, Rocco's Doughnut Company, on West Boylston Street in Worcester in February.

Russell G. Haddad started a position on January 1 with the North Carolina Craft Brewers Guild, which advocates, educates, and promotes the craft brewing industry in the state.

'92

Donna J. (St. Denis) Gomes received a doctoral degree in educational leadership from Cambridge College in 2015.

'93

Class Agents: David C. Frederici, John F. Seymour

Sheila M. Harrity, M.Ed. '93, Ed.D., has been appointed to serve as Coordinator of the Extended Campus Program run by the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators

William B. Murphy made headlines in October as he fulfilled a commitment to the Make-A-Wish Foundation by completing the Boston Marathon on crutches at the Worcester State University track. Murphy ruptured his quad and, following surgery, was unable to run the marathon. Instead, he opted to compete in the virtual marathon using the track at his alma mater. Murphy finished the 26.2 miles by making 105 laps around the Worcester State track to complete his fifth marathon. He raised more than \$14,000 for the Foundation.

'94

Class Agent: Thomas M. McNamara

Robert G. Francis has been teaching and coaching for 23 years.

'96

Class Agents: Pamela A. (Anderson) Walls, N. Wolf Winset '01

Kelly F. Fournier, M.Ed. '00 has been a Spanish teacher in Natick Public Schools for over 20 years.

'97

Malee Ngimruksa, M.S. is working with a new project, TUI Academy, in Phang Nga under Plan International Thailand. The project focuses on protection and economic empowerment of youth in tourism in Thailand.

'99

Class Agents: Brandon E. Frencic, Greg V. Nikiforow

Derek S. Brindisi is the town manager in Plymouth.

'00

Class Agent: Chrissy Remian-Sullivan

Laurence C. Rettig Jr. is enjoying life as his two teenage children go through high school.

'01

Class Agent: Shawn Gersbach

Gregory E. Lamothe has been named principal at the Plymouth River School.

Michael J. Tomaiolo's restaurant, Atlantic Poke, is launching a franchise in order to expand.

'04

Class Agents: David D. Cairns, Michael P. McCarthy

Jason M. Gosselin was promoted to regional sales manager at MP, a human capital management company.

Michael A. LaRosa is married to **Karie LaRosa '04** and has two boys, aged 9 and 5.

'06

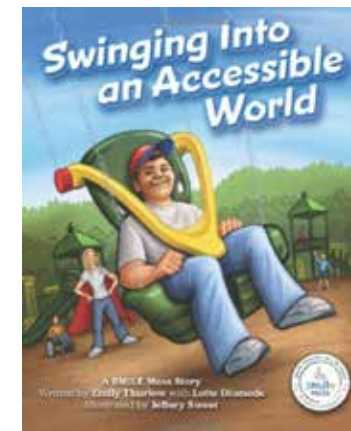
Class Agent: Joseph M. Corazzini, M.S. '11

Amanda R. Hendrickson is a co-founder of New England VegFest and works in social media and communications.

'08

Class Agents: Brandon Huggon, Dana S. Lyford

Emily R. Thurlow published her first book, *Swinging into an Accessible World*.



'10

Brian A. Burdick has investigated organized retail crime and fraud waste and abuse for 10 years.

Nick A. Lombardi was awarded the PGA Assistant Professional of the Year for the Southwest Florida Chapter.

'11

Class Agents: Giselle M. Ortiz-Reyes

Jennifer A. Schwarzenberg closed on a tiny house in Oviedo, Fla., in August of 2021 and has a career as a professional scholar.

'12

Class Agents: Elizabeth A. Chapman, Sean P. Dugan, Ian E. Fields, Patrick D. Hare, M.S. '14

Renee A. (King) Diaz, owner of Queen's Cup, gave birth to her first daughter.

Jessica (Dempsey) Sahagian, owner of J.Sahagian Company, showcased her custom design artwork at the Neiman Marcus Holiday Event at Copley Square on December 9 and 11.



Anthony B. Tokarz is Framingham State University's new quarterback coach.

'13

Class Agents: Mary E. Laycox, Jose C. Lewis, Joseph D. Nawn, Colleen M. (McKenna) Sansoucy, Trevor J. Sansoucy

Gina M. (Sicuso) Francis got married to Peter Francis in July of 2021.

Carol T. (Thompson) Manning, M.Ed., taught in Worcester Public Schools for 35 years, where she was the curriculum specialist and liaison for the entire Health and Physical Education Department. She retired in January.

Eugene Suiven Bah '13, who majored in chemistry at Worcester State, earned an M.D. and a Ph.D. from the Mayo Clinic Alix School of Medicine in Rochester, Minn. this spring. He will complete his residency in neurological surgery at the Mayo Clinic. His doctoral degree is in molecular pharmacology and experimental therapeutics and his dissertation focused on retargeted and modified measles for systemic cancer therapy in measles immune patients.



Dr. Bah with Worcester State Chemistry Professor Margaret Kerr

'14

Class Agent: Tim J. White

James L. Campbell was appointed assistant professor at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.

Sarah R. Leviton got an M.B.A., moved west, got a job, made some new friends, worked hard, got promoted, adopted a dog, got engaged, and bought a house.

'15

Class Agent: Brittany King

Derek E. Canton's company, Paerpay, was awarded a \$50,000 equity-free grant from Arch Grants.

Tyler Jordan was hired as an associate agency advisor for CATIC Massachusetts.

Kelsey A. McCarthy got married on November 20 at Hamilton Hall in Salem.

'18

Julie C. Lefebvre was recognized as Clinical Supervisor of the Year for Youth Villages.

Stephanie F. Rinaldi is working on engineering/prototyping an artificial pancreas to potentially cure type 1 diabetes.

Julia M. Snow joined the Railers as the first female athletic trainer in Worcester pro-hockey history.

'19

Emmanuel Francois emigrated from Haiti to the U.S. at 16 and graduated from West Roxbury High School. He graduated magna cum laude with a B.S. in criminal justice. He is a detective with the New Hampshire State Police, investigating cyber and digital crimes, and is pursuing an MBA from Fitchburg State University. In his off time, Emmanuel loves spending time with his

wife Jessica, daughter Emmaline, son Nathan, and the family dog Otis.

'20

Colin Robinson is an MMA fighter that represented Team USA in Worlds in February and received the key to the City of Worcester.

'22

John P. Shields is currently enrolled at the University of Massachusetts School of Law, where he is a Public Interest Law Fellow and among the first Worcester State students to take advantage of the accelerated "3+3" law program. John hopes that upon completion of his juris doctorate program he will work as an advocate for criminal justice reform, a passion which was sparked by his coursework in Worcester.



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Professor Nancy Harris

DR. NANCY HARRIS, 84, ED.D. passed away on Friday, February 25, after being stricken at home. She was born in Gardner, Mass. on April 9, 1937 to Vernon Harris and Mary (Quinn) Harris. She graduated from Templeton High School and went to Clark University for her undergraduate studies in history. She went on to get a master's degree at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst and her doctorate from Boston University. Nancy started at Worcester State University as an associate professor in 1969 and later became a full professor and department chair for the Elementary Education Program. Nancy leaves behind two sisters, Mary Harris and Elizabeth Mullins, and long-time friend Bonnie Stewart as well as her four-legged pest named Buddy. She also leaves five nieces and nephews, Nancy Doty (Robert), Patricia McDavitt (Paul), Sean Mullins (Pamela), Beth Devine (Lawrence) and Jay Mullins (Jennifer). Great nieces and nephews include Michael and Marissa Doty, Sam and Erin McDavitt, Avery and Patrick Devine, and Meg and Sally Mullins.

Alumnus and Professor Augustus "Gus" Nicholas Luparelli

AUGUSTUS "GUS" NICHOLAS LUPARELLI, M.ED. '63, PH.D. 86, professor emeritus of business at Worcester State University, died Tuesday, January 4 in UMass Memorial Medical Center – University Campus. His wife of 57 years, Marguerite L. "Peggy" (Millette) Luparelli, died in 2015. He leaves his three daughters, Jean Stone, Julie and her husband, Russell Kinell, and Ann and her husband, Rafael Ortiz; eight grandchildren, Nicole Luparelli and her husband, Lee Duerdin, Jason Hintlian and his wife, Kristin, Kim Hintlian, Anjuli Richard and her husband, Adam, Joseph O'Leary and his wife, Katie, Carolyn Marengo and her husband, Dylan, Kelli O'Leary and Cynthia Hernandez and her husband, Jose; great grandchildren, Olivia Hintlian, Nicholas Hintlian, Dylan Marengo, Jackson Blanchard, Jose Hernandez and Alexis Hernandez and his brother's Edward Luparelli and wife Judith and Theodore Luparelli and wife Betty. He also leaves many nieces and nephews.

Alumnus and Professor Emeritus John (Jack) Francis McLaughlin Jr.

JOHN (JACK) FRANCIS MCLAUGHLIN JR. M.ED. '62 died on December 31, 2021, in

Esther London December 28, 2021	Richard D. Gow, M.Ed. '61 February 12, 2022	Margaret J. (Kittredge) Durkin, M.Ed. '69 February 2, 2022	Ruth I. Lindberg '81 December 4, 2021
Karen V. Potter December 23, 2021	John P. Yurkinas, M.Ed. '62 January 27, 2022	Madeline F. Kaskan '70 February 15, 2022	James F. Wilman, M.Ed. '83 and '85 March 7, 2022
Richard C. Gallant December 13, 2021	William F. Grady '63, M.Ed. '67 March 19, 2022	George A. LeBlanc, '71, M.Ed. '76 February 9, 2022	Steven D. Gray '85 February 17, 2022
Rosalie Grenon January 14, 2022	Vincent P. Fratantonio January 3, 2022	Barbara A. (Mahan) Weeks '64, M.Ed. '70 January 11, 2022	William F. Gibbs II '85 February 2, 2022
Sylvia G. (Hawley) Humphrey-Spann '49 February 20, 2022	Mary Lou (Cheney) Gearin '52 February 8, 2022	Kathleen A. (Haven) Leto '65, M.Ed. '68 January 27, 2022	Anne F. Curley '87 December 4, 2021
Gerald E. McGrain, M.Ed. '53 March 24, 2022	John P. Cirelli '53, M.Ed. '58 December 26, 2021	Bruce C. Banks '66 December 11, 2021	Daniel J. Blanchard '87 February 7, 2022
John P. Cirelli '53, M.Ed. '58 December 26, 2021	Peggyann T. Scanlon '54 February 1, 2022	Donald E. Gosselin '66, M.Ed. '74 February 5, 2022	Jo-Ann M. (Noone) Nelson '88 January 28, 2022
Athena Sapkas, M.Ed. '55 March 7, 2022	Louise T. (Agurkis) Wild '55 December 9, 2021	Richard A. Coleman '66 March 24, 2022	Shirley J. Stockwell '89 March 15, 2022
Robert H. Witt '57, M.Ed. '62 December 20, 2021	Richard J. Mulhern '67, M.Ed. '71 January 7, 2022	Neil F. O'Donoghue '67 March 21, 2022	Patricia A. Gibbons '90 March 18, 2022
Eugenie (Pepi) Cummings '58, M.Ed. '61 January 14, 2022	Richard D. Sanderson '67, M.Ed. '73 March 25, 2022	Frank R. Lenti '72 March 13, 2022	Joyce A. Snyder '91 February 1, 2022
Daniel G. Hassett, M.Ed. '60 December 28, 2021	Stephen J. McCann, M.Ed. '67 January 26, 2022	Dennis J. Armillotti '75 February 28, 2022	Richard M. Vail Jr. '92 January 2, 2022
Robert J. Haran, M.Ed. '60 January 23, 2022	Michael J. Lane '68, M.Ed. '73 March 27, 2022	Raymond Hurley Jr. '75, M.Ed. '79 January 31, 2022	Betty J. Dupree '93 January 11, 2022
Donald Burgwinkle, M.Ed. '61 March 20, 2022	Stephanie M. (Hill) Rich '68 February 10, 2022	John E. DeBassio, M.Ed. '76 March 3, 2022	Kathleen M. (McFarlin) Frechette '99 December 10, 2021
James N. Devries, M.Ed. '61 February 3, 2022	Diane (Pietro) Witt '68 December 20, 2021	Dwight M. Goodale '76 December 29, 2021	Eugene J. Brady '00 February 23, 2022
	Jack Haroian, M.Ed. '69 February 19, 2022	John E. DeBassio, M.Ed. '76 March 3, 2022	Eileen E. Kane '03 January 28, 2022
	Wayne R. Sentence, M.Ed. '69 January 30, 2022	Paul J. Bresnihan '76 February 16, 2022	Jill Lessard M.S. '07 March 2, 2022
	Paula L. (Corbett) Lapomardo '69 March 18, 2022	Lorraine M. Langevin, M.Ed. '77 December 27, 2021	Joshua S. Fickett '08, M.S. '14 December 11, 2021
		Debra A. (Dyera) Duguay '78 February 28, 2022	Raymond A. Magner '12 January 8, 2022
		Patricia V. Doherty '79, M.Ed. '91 March 19, 2022	Ross A. Reynolds '17 March 18, 2022
		Steven W. Buttrick '80 December 11, 2021	

Northborough after a long battle with cancer. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Mary Lou (Thomas) McLaughlin; children Sharon McLaughlin, Susan Cantwell and her husband Michael, Kevin McLaughlin, and Eileen McLaughlin; grandchildren Megan Khaddar and her husband Alex, Paige McLaughlin, and Sarah Cantwell, and Emily Cantwell; great-grandchild Harry Khaddar; sisters Judith Ryan and Dorothy

Salmon and her husband Daniel; and many nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends. After serving in the U.S. Army, he earned a Master of Education degree from Worcester State Teacher's College and, in 1968, joined the faculty of Worcester State College, where he helped establish the Communication Disorders Department. After nearly 30 years of teaching, he retired and was granted the title of Professor Emeritus.



Photo by Edd Cole

Service, Leadership and Friendship

Worcester State remembers Capt. Ross Reynolds '17

On the day of his graduation from Worcester State University, Ross Reynolds took the stage to accept his degree wearing his U.S. Marine Corps uniform. He had been sworn into service that very morning. “It was a proud moment for him,” said Dr. Stephen Morreale, a professor and chair of the Criminal Justice Department at Worcester State, who was

his advisor for two years. “It was a proud moment for me to see him as a military officer.”

A veteran himself, Morreale has a soft spot for students like Reynolds who were in the ROTC. Morreale, who served in the U.S. Army, often shared friendly banter with

Reynolds, who was working to be a Marine. Busy with both a full class load and his ROTC duties, Reynolds sometimes had to attend class in his uniform, which Morreale would tease him about.

Morreale became Reynolds’ academic advisor in his junior year, so he got to know him well. “He was always willing to step forward, always willing to pitch in, always willing to help,” said Morreale. “He was a combination of being a leader, having leadership qualities, and being able to be a follower and pitch in. He epitomized the concept of service.”

This devotion to service started at an early age. He joined the Boy Scouts of America, obtaining the status of Eagle Scout, scouting’s highest honor, in 2011. He was active in the Order of the Arrow, serving on its Gischachsummen team and attending the National Order of the Arrow Conference in 2012, and worked at Camp Wanocksett for eight years.

Reynolds was always driven. As a student at Leominster High School, he was a member of the National Honor Society and competed on the wrestling and soccer teams and the LHS Devil Dogs Robotics Club. He was selected by LHS faculty to attend the American Legion Boys’ State Civic Leadership Program in his junior year. He graduated in 2013 with honors.

“The military matures you quickly,” said Morreale, “but I think he walked in there with a higher sense of order, a higher sense of service, and a higher sense of dedication, at a much younger age than most people.”

Reynolds was an active student during his time at Worcester State. He served as a Presidential Student Ambassador, one of a group of student leaders who represent the University at events on and off campus. Reynolds represented Worcester State abroad in Ireland and England as part of a new partnership with Letterkenny Institute of Technology. He also represented the University at a national conference in Washington, D.C. He split his time with ROTC duties through Worcester State’s partnership with the College of the Holy Cross and was active with Advancement’s Days of Giving events held on campus. In 2017, he graduated magna cum laude with a B.S. in criminal justice.

Worcester State President Barry M.

Maloney got to know Reynolds through all his many activities on campus. “He was an inspiration to me, wonderfully adventurous and ambitious,” Maloney said.

Maloney described Reynolds as “extremely ambitious, civically minded, congenial and always sought opportunities to serve his community.”

Alumna Emily Walker '17, Reynolds’ close friend and fellow PSA, said, “You couldn’t ask for a better leader or role model. He was so genuine and responsible and respectful.”

Walker, an elementary education major, transferred to Worcester State in her sophomore year and joined the PSAs in

and paid the ultimate sacrifice. Lancer Nation has lost a shining star,” said President Maloney. “Ross worked with virtually every department within the University – a trait of his leadership. Many here at the University including his former PSAs, classmates, faculty, students, friends and others that knew or worked with him can attest that we have lost a tremendous individual with the death of U.S. Marine Captain Ross Reynolds.”

“We lost somebody very special,” said Morreale. “I think there are so many good things that he demonstrates that can be a learning opportunity for other students, to look toward him as a shining example of what service is about.”

“You couldn’t ask for a better leader or role model. He was so genuine and respectful and responsible.” — Emily Walker '17

her junior year. Reynolds immediately took her under his wing. “I knew he would be a forever friend,” she said.

At the University’s Day of Giving, Walker watched Reynolds solicit donation after donation. “He was always really passionate about Worcester State and everything it had to offer,” Walker said. It was this passion, as well as Reynolds’ respectfulness and professionalism, she said, that appealed to donors.

Reynolds participated in so many activities, but no matter what he was doing, Walker said, he gave it his full attention. “He was somebody that I really admired.”

Five years after graduating from Worcester State, Reynolds, then a U.S. Marine Captain, was one of four Marines killed when their Osprey aircraft went down in the Arctic Circle in Norway on March 19, 2022, while participating in NATO training exercises. He was 27 and is survived by his parents Scott A. and Catherine H. (Biron) Reynolds, sister Nicole A. (Reynolds) Bilotta, and wife Lana. The couple had just married in February.

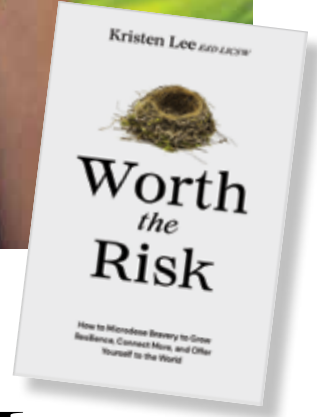
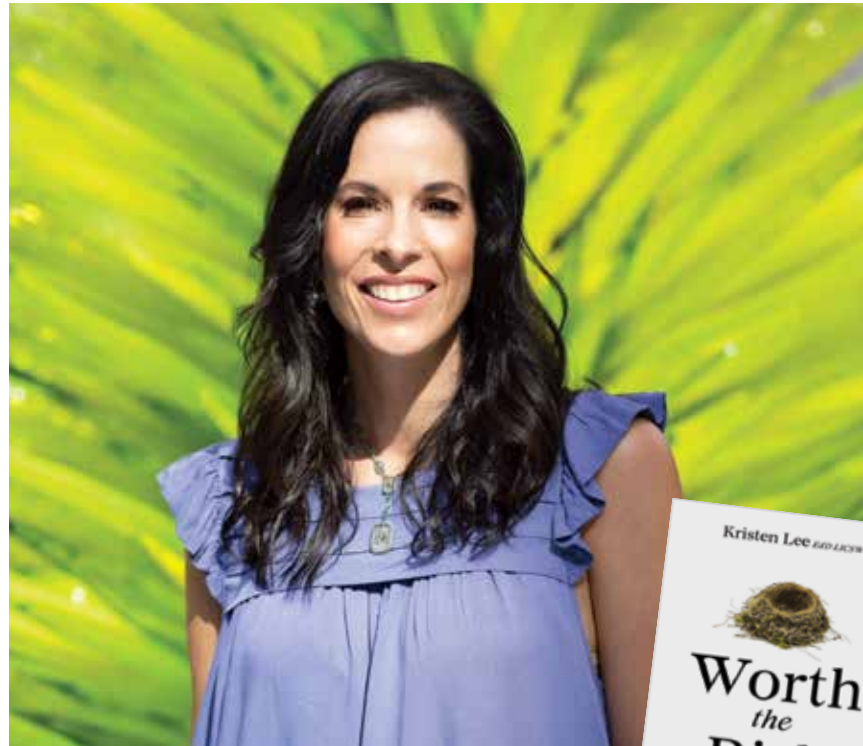
“Ross believed in serving our country

“He made such an impact on Worcester State and in my life,” said Walker. “You couldn’t have asked for a better, more honest, more hardworking, more dedicated, passionate person than Ross. He definitely will leave a legacy.”



Ross A. Reynolds '17 Memorial Presidential Student Leadership Fund

The University has created a memorial fund in Ross's name to support Worcester State students who best embody the qualities Ross exemplified. You can donate by visiting worcester.edu/rossreynolds or calling University Advancement at 508-929-8033.



5 Questions with Kristen Lee



DR. KRISTEN LEE '96, ED.D., LICSW, is a behavioral science clinician, author, activist, comedian, and professor leading the Behavior Science program

at Northeastern University. Her latest book, *Worth the Risk: How to Microdose Bravery to Grow Resilience, Connect More and Offer Yourself to the World*, was published in June. We talked with her about her book and the benefits of small acts of courage.

What inspired your latest book?

Lee: The needs of the world are dire, calling for courage that we sometimes aren't sure we even have. We've all endured so much trauma, and it can be a feat trying to stay and do well. As a behavioral scientist, I worry about TikTok Culture, where there's so much fast information, and even toxic positivity on how to feel good and be happy in three easy steps. *Worth the Risk* was written to help us discover ways we can take

small steps towards resilience, connection, and courage based solidly on the latest discoveries of modern brain science, while accounting for the significant disparities in the world that beg our collective attention. I wrote *Worth the Risk* with a deep desire to help contribute something beyond traditional psychology literature, that would give practical, evidence-based strategies that take a chip-away approach to big questions and problems that are haunting us. Behavior science clearly points to small, strategic steps as the way to sustain progress and change. Just like stress is cumulative, so are the microdoses of courage we take each day to nourish ourselves to be able to grow resilience and offer ourselves more fully to the world.

What would you like readers to take away from your book?

Lee: That courage isn't found in jaw dropping feats, or major overhaul of our lives. Microdoses matter. Every day, we can find small ways to move to a better place. I want readers to know

that they are not their trauma, labels, fears, or raw emotions. That they are wired for resilience, and by engaging with risk strategically, can overcome obstacles that first seem insurmountable. This process can lead to growth not just for the sake of self, but for collective impact.

What is the most satisfying aspect of your work?

Lee: Even during heartbreaking times, I am heartened by the amazing acts of courage, resilience, and kindness we are capable of. The power of community, and working towards a process of positive behavioral change to help advance others, not just for the sake of self, is something within all of our reach. I am continually impacted by the indomitable spirit we all have as humans, that even during extreme conditions, we have the capacity to heal, grow, and bring impact in this world. I have the opportunity to teach amazing students, and to consult with leaders and employees around the world on what it takes to build healthy mental health cultures.

How would you describe the relationship between risk, bravery, and resilience?

Lee: Risk often brings up thoughts of skydiving from a plane, or betting it all at the Bellagio. What my research, clinical work, and life experience has taught me is that certain risks are worth taking: that when we strategically align our values to behavior, it gives us just the stretch we need to become increasingly brave and resilient. We are hardwired for risk-taking, and the more comfortable we become with the uncomfortable, our nervous system changes to support us in experiencing a bold, adventurous, colorful life: one that inspires liberation for ourselves and one another.

What was a risk you took that paid off?


Lee: Coming out with my own mental health story. Even though I knew it was the right thing, given my life's work in eradicating stigma, it still bore risks. I wondered if my colleagues would think differently of me. Instead, it brought on a deeper sense of safety and community in my life. I felt more integrated in my own identity—that on one hand, I could be doing well, and on the other struggle, and that it was okay not to be okay, but I didn't have to suffer alone. In *Worth the Risk*, one of the through lines is that we are here to liberate ourselves and one another from the things that get in the way of human flourishing—I believe that when we engage with risk, it has a contagion effect, and can inspire those that witness us to do the same. 



Photo by Julian Valardes

Dancing On The Eve

More than 300 students, alumni and their families celebrated the Classes of 2022, 2021 and 2020 at the Alumni Association's Party on the Eve – with lawn games, food and even the Cupid shuffle – on the lawn of Wasylean Hall May 13. The event brings together alumni with seniors on the eve of their graduation to welcome them into the Worcester State alumni family.



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Friday, Sept. 23
Saturday, Sept. 24

2 **Save the date!
It's gonna
be great!** 22



Our weekend is going to be fun-filled with:

- » George H. Albro '65
Memorial Golf Tournament
- » Athletic Hall of Fame
Induction Ceremony
- » Homecoming Football Game
WSU vs. UMASS Dartmouth
- » Office of Multicultural Affairs
50th Anniversary Celebration
and more!



Watch for details

Go to worcester.edu/homecoming



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