

# WCU MAGAZINE

WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY

SPRING 2024



**A Time to Reflect**  
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**Fighting Hunger**  
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**Inspiring Young  
Athletes**  
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CONGRATULATIONS

WINTER 2023  
GRADUATES!





## ON THE COVER

### 06 President Chris Fiorentino Reflects Before Retirement

On the cover:  
President Chris Fiorentino stands in front of  
the Sciences and Engineering Center & The  
Commons, WCU's newest building.



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With the Spring 2024 issue, University Communications and Marketing has reduced the numbers of copies of the WCU Magazine that we are printing in order to be sustainable and to manage printing and postage costs. Online readers who prefer a print issue in the mail should opt-in to receive a hard-copy magazine. See the back cover to change your information or unsubscribe.

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



This winter, we watched more than 1,167 graduates don caps and gowns to receive well-earned degrees. It is hard to believe that we will soon have the pleasure of watching thousands more Golden Rams become alumni of this fine institution during 15 individual commencement ceremonies this spring. Each year I become even more inspired by the overwhelming excitement and sense of accomplishment that our newest graduates exude upon receiving their degrees. The excitement in Hollinger Fieldhouse, Asplundh Concert

Hall and the Hilton Philadelphia at Penn's Landing is palpable as families, faculty, staff, and friends eagerly look on with immense pride. Amidst a room bursting with joy and anticipation, all those in attendance understand the significance of the moment; it is indelibly marked by crossing the finish line.

I carry the magnitude of all those many moments with me. I, too, have proudly crossed the finish line having dedicated most of my career to West Chester University and following 41 rewarding years in public higher education. It has truly been the greatest honor and privilege of my professional life to have served you — our alumni, students, faculty, staff, Council of Trustees, neighbors, partners, and numerous citizens within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Working together with all of you on our shared vision of student success, we have made a significant difference in the lives of many and have opened doors to generations of new student populations. I am inspired by your extraordinary dedication to this special University. You make West Chester University golden every day.

As I have said many times before, a constant forward motion propels WCU; it is relentless as it moves with determination, purpose and direction that is fueled by our resolve to help students be successful. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity that you have provided me to help make a lasting difference toward this compelling and imperative mission that thrives. At more than 150 years young, this University holds great promise for the many dynamic chapters yet to be written.

Sincerely,

Christopher M. Fiorentino  
President

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The West Chester University Magazine is published three times a year for the alumni, families, students, and friends of West Chester University. We welcome letters concerning magazine content or issues pertaining to the University. Letters must be signed and kept to one typed page. Please include address and daytime phone number.

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In October, the University recognized dedicated alumni, parents and family members, friends, faculty, staff, and community partners who are part of the President's Circle, including recipients of the President's Award, those donors who inspire others through their philanthropy and volunteerism. Pictured (L-R) are the 2023 President's Award honorees Kathleen Hassinger Boyer '80, M'86; Dianne Peich and Michael Peich, emeritus professor of English; Chris Fiorentino, president; Sue Fiorentino, professor of management; Anita Foeman, emerita professor of communication and media; Kathleen Lackey-Painter, president, General Federation of Women's Clubs Pennsylvania (GFWC) The New Century Club of West Chester; and Marilyn Light, board member and chair of the Education Committee, GFWC The New Century Club of West Chester.







**PRESIDENT CHRIS FIORENTINO:**

STUDENT-  
CENTERED  
LISTENER,  
**PROBLEM  
SOLVER,**  
COMMUNICATOR,  
**CONNECTOR**





(L) LEED Gold event for the SECC, February 2024.  
 (center) The president with students and therapy dogs.  
 (R) Chris Fiorentino accepts his portrait from artist Katie Lickfield '23.

## I'LL MISS EVERYTHING ABOUT WCU.

Our alumni often say that, but this time, it's President Christopher Fiorentino, who will retire June 30, 2024.

Pictured on our cover outside the University's newest building, the Sciences and Engineering Center & The Commons (SECC), Fiorentino has overseen a plethora of physical plant, student-support, and curricular improvements that define the student success mission of the University. The SECC's completion and its certification as LEED Gold (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) for achieving a high level of sustainability in its construction, operations, and maintenance are accomplishments that Fiorentino considers among the highlights of his 41-year career.

That the 175,000-square-foot building was completed during the pandemic was an outstanding effort by a team who he says "dreams big. The pandemic made dealing with unforeseen problems of unexpected findings underground and soil issues more difficult, but with a combination of careful management of resources and bond funds, we persevered to complete an absolutely incredible building."

A hallmark of Fiorentino's leadership is not only his ability to gather the right team at the right time but to motivate those people. Professor Jana Nestlerode saw that from the early days of Fiorentino's tenure since they joined the University at roughly the same time, she in criminal justice and he in economics. He became her "dean, vice-president, president, and friend. He has also

been an inspirational role model for me, and for so many others.

"Chris is able to inspire others to greater achievements," she says. "He responds to adversities with patience and forbearance. When pursuing a new advancement, he will gather a team to brainstorm and plan. The tendency of so many of us is to see only the obstacles; Chris teaches his teams to see the possibilities and the many ways to succeed. That success is readily apparent in all he has done for West Chester University."

His leadership has been recognized many times, most recently, earning him induction into the Chester County Hall of Fame by the Chester County Economic Development Council (CCEDC), which will honor him May 15. He has also been named to *Philadelphia Business Journal's* Power 100 list in 2021, 2022, and 2023.



1983

**Fiorentino arrives** at WCU as a temporary economics faculty member

PASSHE established with WCU as its 2<sup>nd</sup> largest school

1993

**Spring:** Fiorentino becomes dean of the School of Business (as it was then known)

1996

WCU's 125th anniversary





A food drive held for his inauguration netted 1.5 tons of food for the WCU Resource Pantry.

**AS A PRESIDENT AND A NEGOTIATOR, HE CAN WORK ON BEHALF OF THE UNIVERSITY AND PASSHE WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THE NEEDS OF UNION MEMBERS AS LABOR PARTNERS. THE RESULT: WE HAVE A BETTER WORKPLACE WITH COLLEAGUES WHO HAVE BETTER CAREERS.**

— William Helzlsouer

**Senior Associate  
Vice President and Chief  
Human Resources Officer**

“The pandemic was a leadership challenge that put me in a position to lead through it,” says Fiorentino. “We made good decisions based on the information we had and, at heart, I’m a problem solver. I’ll actually miss those opportunities to solve problems.”

Fiorentino sometimes discussed pandemic challenges with his wife, Sue Fiorentino ’86 (see related article), who is not only a WCU professor of human resource management, but an attorney with extensive expertise in human resources as well. “She has great instincts and often contributed valuable insights,” he notes. “Sue is an incredible partner who’s been engaged with the University from the beginning.”

Completing the SECC was only one of the multiple challenges Fiorentino faced as a University president leading through the pandemic. Safeguarding the University’s community of educators was his primary concern.

“This became most clear with the pandemic beginning in February 2020,” recalls William Helzlsouer, senior associate vice president and chief human resources officer. “Chris established as a guiding principle from the beginning that all policies, work, decisions, etc., were made to protect our most precious resource: the University’s people — our colleagues, friends, students. Because of that clarity, our decisions may be hard ones but they’re made for the right reasons: Protect our people and their jobs.”

Helzlsouer says one of the major draws for him to join WCU five years ago was Fiorentino and “his thoughtful, pragmatic approach to labor issues.” Seven unions cover

the majority of employees in Pennsylvania’s State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) while some employees, including managers, are non-represented. Fiorentino’s in a unique position since he came up through the faculty and has been able to maintain those solid relationships so that faculty trust him.

“Chris sees unions as partners in the workplace so our approach to labor relations comes from the top,” Helzlsouer says. “As a president and a negotiator, he can work on behalf of the University and PASSHE while acknowledging the needs of union members as labor partners. The result: We have a better workplace with colleagues who have better careers.”

### **RELATIONSHIPS: RESPECTING, LISTENING, COMMUNICATING**

That respect carries over into all Fiorentino’s professional relationships, including “town/gown” interactions between the University and surrounding municipalities.

“I worked hard to rebuild relationships with local municipalities because they had become strained,” Fiorentino explains. “There’s value to having a university in the community. But we have to be forthright and open about our plans, foster good relationships through trust. I invited the chair of the West Goshen board of supervisors to meet me in my office and was told that that person had been there for 35 years and it was the first time he’d been invited to the president’s office.”

He’s built those connections from years of outreach and community involvement. When Fiorentino was dean of the College

2002

Fiorentino engineers purchase of Graduate Building on McDermott Drive (originally for master’s-level business programs)

2007

AACSB accreditation achieved for College of Business and Public Management

2013

**Spring:** Fiorentino named VP of external operations

Philadelphia site opens (with other PASSHE schools participating initially)

2016

**April:** Fiorentino named interim president

Resource Pantry opens



of Business and Public Management (CBPM, 1993-2013), he worked with West Chester Borough on business district revitalization and was appointed a founding member of the West Chester Business Improvement District Authority. He forged relationships while serving on numerous Chester County business and community boards including the Chester County Economic Development Council and the Chester County Keystone Innovation Zone.

Being so in touch with the municipalities early on, Fiorentino saw gaps that the University could fill and, as dean, spearheaded the development of the Center for Community Solutions, which links business and civic leaders who have research needs with University faculty and staff who can address those needs. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Cottrell Entrepreneurial Leadership Center, the Center for Social and Economic Policy Research, and the Center for Geographic Information Systems and Spatial Analysis.

### WCU GROWS BEYOND MAIN CAMPUS

Fiorentino says his predecessors contributed to his success.

Former President Madeleine Wing Adler (president from 1992 to 2008) saw the need for fundraising and a broader awareness of the University's value in the region. "She charged me with getting us known for the CBPM," he explains. "Good relationships with regional business, government, non-profits establish connections that create opportunities for our students. We can connect our faculty experts with other government agencies, and non-

profits, which loops students in." He cites examples including providing GIS support for organizations, social work and health field placements, clinicals, and internships. "It goes along with being a valued University engaged in the community.

"My focus as dean was to acquire resources. Madeleine's distributed leadership model gave deans freedom to explore options. I had the freedom to think big — and think bigger."

Fiorentino set his sights on expanding CBPM's reputation and achieving Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation. "To do that we need faculty engaged in scholarship and research. We never lost our focus because scholarship informs teaching."

With some out-of-the-box thinking, he found ways to reconfigure budgets to move summer school revenue directly to each of the deans, who could keep those tuition dollars within their schools to support students and faculty.

Another example is Fiorentino's creativity in purchasing the Graduate Center, inspired by Penn State's Great Valley campus. "Could we do that and make our MBA and other programs more accessible and convenient?" he asked of Adler and the administration. "Can I run this as an independent organization in order to keep the funds within the college? We floated a \$7M 20-year bond to buy the building and revenues paid faculty, helped pay for the AACSB accreditation, expand travel budgets [for conferences, etc.] — it lifted all boats." He credits Adler and institutional leaders for seeing the potential.

**AS A UNIVERSITY LEADER, HE HAS A FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITY. WE HAVE SUCCEEDED WITH LIMITED STATE SUPPORT AND CONTINUE TO OFFER OUR HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION WITH A MODEST PRICE.**

— John Vilella '76, M'82

**Former Vice President for University Affairs and Chief of Staff**



The president signs the final beam to be placed during the SECC construction amid pandemic protocols.

2017

**January:** PASSHE Board of Governors officially appoints Chris president

**Spring:** College of Business and Public Management building opens

**April:** Fiorentino's inauguration includes a hunger-relief drive for the Resource Pantry, netting 1.5 tons of food.

**May:** WCU welcomes first full-time director of the Office of Sustainability

2018

Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion expanded

**Fall:** "WCU's 1st" established for first-generation students.

**Fall:** RAM Initiative helps students on the autism spectrum toward a certificate.

## NO ONE WHO GRADUATED IN 1982 EVER ENVISIONED THAT WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY WOULD BE GRANTING DOCTORAL DEGREES AND BE AN R2 RESEARCH INSTITUTION. WE PUT STUDENTS FIRST THEN AND WE DO IT EVEN MORE SO NOW.

— Roger Ware '82

**Former Member  
WCU Foundation  
Board of Trustees**

“We empowered deans to take risks to generate additional income and channel that to support our mission and the individual schools,” he says. “It was actually fun to have the latitude to do these things and support the real educational activities for the deans and departments. Knowing this power, I wanted to support this.”

In 2013 during the presidency of Greg Weisenstein (2009 to 2016), Fiorentino was named WCU's first vice president for external operations to manage the new Philadelphia location at 7th and Market Streets and to oversee distance education and professional development studies. “Greg set the table for me to be successful especially with graduate education and international education.”

“Chris knows how the numbers work, not only because of his expertise in economics but because he was faculty, too,” says John Vilella '76, M'82, who joined the University

on the same day in 1983 as the president, both as adjunct faculty. Vilella served as executive deputy to the president beginning with Weisenstein and retired in June 2022 as vice president for university affairs and Fiorentino's chief of staff. “As a University leader, he has a fiduciary responsibility. We have succeeded with limited state support and continue to offer our high quality education with a modest price.”

Vilella recalls that Fiorentino hired the first employees to manage the Philadelphia location after meeting with the Community College of Philadelphia, stakeholders, and politicians. “He had a vision for the Philly site. He knew we were a landmark institute not serving the needs of the Philadelphia community and he recognized the opportunities for this region and the state.”

West Chester's reputation in Philadelphia and beyond continues to grow. “I don't deserve all the credit,” says Fiorentino. “Our improved image reflects the work of lots of people on campus.”

Roger Ware '82, who served on the WCU Foundation Board of Trustees, is a long-time University supporter whose admiration for Fiorentino's work is palpable.

“Chris has accomplished so much in seven years,” he says, citing record enrollment, national rankings, public image, accreditations, and improvements to campus and programs. “No one who graduated in 1982 ever envisioned that West Chester University would be granting doctoral degrees and be an R2 research institution. We put students first then and we do it even more so now.”

Ware retired in January 2022 as president and CEO of Genesee General after 40 years in commercial underwriting. He recalls

Fiorentino seeking his advice during the pandemic and says that's a tactic he admires. “Chris is a transformational leader. He put together a strong team and allowed his people autonomy. And he's always sought input, even from those outside the campus.”

But even with Fiorentino's 24-7 job, Ware noticed that he stops and talks to people across campus or uptown, “and that is rare for a university president.”

“People love to tell their stories,” says Fiorentino. “As dean, I connected with alumni, some for the first time since they graduated, and after listening to their stories, then I could tell them the University's stories. I told them stories that make them want to support us. Success breeds success, for example, the [Wells brothers' support for the] Wells School of Music. That message is, ‘We're worth supporting.’”

“I'm excited for the future of philanthropy on campus. In recent years, we've been staying more engaged with alumni right out of the gate. Look at the number of young alumni coming back for events!”

### CONTINUITY

That he spent all 41 years of his academic and administrative career at West Chester University is another accomplishment that puts Fiorentino in a league of his own. From faculty to interim dean to dean to vice president of external operations, he has a record few other current university presidents can match.

“Because he's been here his entire career, he understands what makes WCU special, the culture, what made us successful even before took the role,” says Helzlsouer.

2018

**December:**  
Fund to Finish  
established

2019

**September:** The Ram  
Shop opens to give students  
on the spectrum work  
experience

2020

**March:**  
Fiorentino leads  
the institution through COVID  
pandemic

2021

**June:**  
Successful  
Middle States  
reaccreditation

2022

**March:** WCU's Carnegie  
classification becomes  
R2 (high research  
activity doctorate-  
granting institution)

**April:** Fiorentino  
hosts all-campus  
showcase to  
close WCU's  
Sesquicentennial  
Year

2021-2022: WCU'S SESQUICENTENNIAL YEAR



“And he’s continued that success in new ways, with new ideas.”

Throughout his presidency, Fiorentino has instilled a spirit of innovation and ownership that has empowered students, faculty, and staff. Helzlsouer says Fiorentino has the “ability to connect everyone with our mission of student success. He understands and expresses to colleagues that their work has immediate impact on student success. He connects people to the mission so that our work is more than just a paycheck.” That’s resulted in such initiatives as:

- New programming for first-generation college students and support with “WCU’s 1st”;
- Placement of student success coordinators in each of the University’s six colleges and two schools to provide students with information and resources so they can make well-informed decisions about their education;
- The implementation of a mandatory, four-credit First-Year Experience course for all first-year students to make self-discoveries and expand perspectives;
- Engagement in the national Moon Shot for Equity student-success mission designed to help underserved populations of students in the Southeastern PA region graduate from college;
- The opening of a Resource Pantry to assist students who have significant need; and
- The founding of the D-CAP program, which provides supports to degree-seeking students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), including the first-

of-its-kind on-campus convenience store to provide workplace training for students with ASD to practice social and professional skills.

### THE FUND TO FINISH

Despite declining numbers of high school students nationwide, WCU admitted its largest incoming class in 2023: 3,030 first-year students up from 2,628 in fall of 2021, with enrollment topping 17,000 students. As of fall 2023, 25.1% of the University’s student body are students of color — the highest in WCU history.

Fiorentino has never wavered from the mission of student success and while he successfully leveraged the Graduate Center and the Philadelphia location to increase enrollments, he continued to see obstacles to student success, both from his time as a faculty member and dean, and as president listening to his teams.

“Students have to do the work to put themselves on a different life trajectory,” he says, “but since our mission is student success, the onus is on us. We have to identify the impediments and modify or do better to ensure our students all reach the finish line: graduation. Why did some students do well, then not schedule for their final semester? ... We found that, for one thing, fines deterred them from re-enrolling.”

This was the catalyst for establishing the Fund to Finish, which was created in partnership with a lead donor.

“In this seat, I’ve spoken with donors and others who are anxious to support students with direct student support. We’ve been able to fund micro-scholarships and mini-grants.

We’ve refocused fundraising so that we can get students those final steps to the finish line,” explains Fiorentino. Proceeds from this year’s Gala support the fund.

Beside him at the Gala and at most fundraising and major campus events, Sue has been a highly visible presidential spouse with a unique position as alumna and faculty member. The president calls her his “thought partner” as well as his life partner.

“They’ve been the best team for the University” during this time, says Roger Ware.

### MOVING FORWARD

This spring, the completion of the 150Forward Campaign, which exceeded its \$65M goal, came earlier than expected.

And since “Reimagining Student Success: Building on WCU’s Momentum” was recently announced as the University’s next strategic plan, Fiorentino has laid the groundwork for his successor, Lorraine “Laurie” Bernotsky, as the 16th president.

With all these accomplishments in only seven years as president, Ware thinks, “If there was a Mount Rushmore for WCU, Chris would be on it.”

“I didn’t do this for the accolades,” Fiorentino emphasizes. The dean’s suite in the College of Business and Public Management was named for him a few years ago and, although he was surprised, he said it’s an honor to be recognized. “It’s not why I have this job, nor something I expect. West Chester University — we change lives and it’s an honor to have spent my career in this profession. We thrive on challenge.” **WCU**

**WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY — WE CHANGE LIVES AND IT’S AN HONOR TO HAVE SPENT MY CAREER IN THIS PROFESSION.**

— Christopher Fiorentino

President, West Chester University

**September:** Fiorentino cuts the ribbon on the Sciences and Engineering Center & The Commons (SECC)

2023

**July:** Fiorentino announces retirement and goals to complete

2024

**February:** SECC earns LEED Gold certification

**February:** 150Forward: The Campaign for WCU surpasses its goal of \$65M

**March:** The Presidential Gala benefits the Fund to Finish



## SUSAN FIORENTINO '86 CONTINUES HER WCU JOURNEY

**When her husband, President Chris Fiorentino, retires on June 30, Susan Fiorentino '86 will continue her life-long association with the University in what she calls her “dream job,” as professor in the Master of Science in Human Resource Management program, which she helped to found. She also is co-investigator on a research grant to develop a sexual harassment training program for young workers.**



Fiorentino worked full-time during her husband's presidency, carrying a full course load while juggling the demanding schedule of events and travel required of a university president and spouse. "No special treatment, which is just the way I like it," she says.

Fiorentino notes that it's not surprising that her husband chose to move from the classroom to leadership roles. "He's just a natural leader," she says. "I'm so proud of my husband. ... This is a hard job and it's a complex job. He just has a good temperament for it. ... He's shepherded the University through some tough times and it's thriving. I think it's because he genuinely loves the people and the mission. He loves everything about it."

It's clear that she also loves West Chester. As a child, she and her six siblings visited campus frequently, where her father, the late Alfred Roberts, was the first chair of the Foreign Language Department. She attended the campus Demonstration School, and later earned a bachelor's degree in political science from West Chester. A master's degree in political science and law degree from Villanova University came later.

When her husband became president, Fiorentino's mother, Mary, told her that when she and her twin sister were born, the wife of then-university President Earl Francis Sykes brought their family pies she had baked to welcome the babies. "The job of the first lady is a little different now," Fiorentino says with a chuckle.

During the last seven years, that role included being an ambassador representing the University at events around the country. Fiorentino says it gave her a new appreciation for West Chester alumni and their success stories.

"When you're a student or when you're a daughter of a faculty member, you don't really interact much with alumni. But in this seat, you really get to see the lasting impact that West Chester makes on people's lives," she says. "It was so cool for us to travel all over the country and see a room full of Golden Rams who are so passionate and so proud of their roots at West Chester."

Fiorentino says it's been a privilege to live in Tanglewood, the president's historic campus residence. "We rode out the pandemic there," she says. Other highlights included interacting with students, meeting luminaries like Erin Brockovich at the President's Speakers Series, and the marching band's New Year's Day 2024 performance in the 135<sup>th</sup> Rose Parade.

Fiorentino's future focus also will be on the research grant awarded to her and co-investigator Vipanchi Mishra, professor of psychology, by the State System of Higher Education. Under the grant, they will develop a sexual harassment training program for young workers. Because such training is left up to employers, it's often neglected. "Generally, this hits minimum-wage service-job workers the hardest and typically that's younger workers," she explains. The researchers plan to pilot it at West Chester before rolling it out in school districts that have partnerships with the University.

After her commitments as presidential spouse end, Fiorentino plans to spend more time with her three adult children and four grandchildren, who range in age from 10 to 4. "It's just going to be nice to be able to go to see more of their games and their activities, concerts and events." **WCU**





Tahany Naggar

## PROFESSOR EMERITA TAHANY NAGGAR

# INVESTS IN THE UNIVERSITY'S FUTURE

**P**rofessor Emerita Tahany Naggar retired from teaching economics in 2012 but her unwavering support for West Chester continues. After her retirement, she served from 2015 to 2022 on the Board of Trustees of the West Chester University Foundation. Her belief in the importance of fundraising for the University predated the establishment of the foundation in 2000.

“I remember back then there was only one person working in development,” recalls Naggar, who joined the faculty in 1977 with her husband, the late Ali Naggar, professor emeritus of accounting. “Some of the faculty went to the president and said, ‘We really need to expand.’”

Naggar and her husband came to West Chester because it offered them both tenure track faculty positions. They had met before earning their doctorates at the University of Oklahoma. Several years later, when the WCU Foundation

**I’m very proud to see improvements to the facilities we’ve been able to support. It’s a great advantage to the students. It’s a must.**

was established, Naggar became the faculty representative to the Foundation from what was then the School of Business. In that role, she provided input about needs in the business programs. A priority was raising funds for the Graduate Center on McDermott Drive that would house graduate business programs. Later she lent her support to a new building for the

College of Business and Public Management.

A member of the foundation’s Carillon and Heritage giving societies, she says the importance of supporting the University has increased over the years. “It’s very valuable. Tuition is insufficient to cover the University budget,” Naggar says.

“Maybe in the 1970s, when I first came here, it was sufficient, but as years went by, that changed. That’s a reason I became involved. I’m very proud to see improvements to the facilities we’ve been able to support. It’s a great advantage to the students. It’s a must.” She adds that scholarship help also is increasingly important, noting that she established the Ali Naggar Excellence in Managerial Accounting Scholarship in her late husband’s name.

She’s proud that she hired University President Chris Fiorentino as an economics faculty member when she was chair of the

economics department. She praises initiatives he led when he later became dean of the School of Business and Public Management. They included a new building and successfully achieving AACSB accreditation. His accomplishments have grown since becoming president, Naggar says. She notes that he continues to ensure that students and faculty have first-rate facilities, such as the new Sciences and Engineering Center & The Commons.

“As president, he’s continued to focus on the needs of the students,” she says. “He’s a very patient person, he’s fair handed and quite an engaging leader. He’s a good listener and, when there’s an issue, open to hearing different opinions.”

Under his leadership, she’s seen a continuation of West Chester’s upward trajectory. Over more than three decades, the many positive changes include an emphasis on faculty research, campus expansion, the addition of more undergraduate majors, the growth of graduate programs, and an increasingly capable student body. Recalling that when she joined West Chester, many described it as “a well-kept secret” among state universities, she now says, “Instead of being the best-kept secret, it’s now the jewel of the State System. The accomplishments came from the whole team working on it. Our reputation gleams and it improves.” **WCU**



WCU's Resource Pantry is located in Commonwealth Hall.

## WCU Awarded \$60,000 Through the 2023-2024 PA Hunger-Free Campus Grant

As part of Governor Josh Shapiro's PA Hunger-Free Campus program, the Governor's Office and the Pennsylvania Department of Education selected West Chester University to receive \$60,000 in state grant funding from the 2023-2024 PA Hunger-Free Campus grant.

Funds from the grant will be used to expand the WCU Resource Pantry's capacity to serve WCU students experiencing food insecurity — especially those who are at the highest risk — on the University's main campus as well as at the WCU Philadelphia location. Part of the Center for Civic Engagement & Social Impact (CCESI), the pantry offers non-perishable food, fresh produce from the campus gardens, personal care items, school supplies, and more.

Expressing gratitude to Governor Shapiro and the PA Department of Education, CCESI Director Rita Patel Eng said, "In fall 2023, the Resource Pantry served the highest number of students it has ever served. The need is unprecedented as we operate on the generosity of donors from our community of faculty, staff, students, alumni, countless community partners, and grants like the PA Hunger-Free Campus Grant."

The grant enables CCESI to expand pantry services through online ordering; increase options for students to access food during evening and weekend hours through online order pickup via locker access; increase access to healthy and allergy-friendly food; support the expansion of the Resource Pantry at the Philadelphia location; build upon resources to support students in applying for benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); and increase students' access to off-campus resources.

As a member of the PA Hunger-Free Campus grant's first cohort of awardees in January of 2023, the University was initially awarded \$54,399.

University President Chris Fiorentino, for whom eliminating obstacles to all students' successful completion of their degrees is paramount, thanked Governor Shapiro and the PA Department of Education "for providing the necessary funding to help West Chester University reach out to an increasing number of students, so they are not in the position of choosing between buying a textbook, a meal, or even basic essentials if they do not have the means to do so."

Since its inception in 2016, the Resource Pantry has actively supported student success by minimizing food and basic needs insecurity. Open to all undergraduate and graduate students registered at the University regardless of need level, the pantry provides fresh food from the University's South Campus and Tanglewood gardens, toiletries and school supplies, a welcoming intake space for students, and an area where students can enroll in government benefits called the Benefits Hub. It is supported by the Office of Financial Aid, civics- focused student organizations, and generous donors through the WCU Foundation. **WCU**

## CONGRATULATIONS, WINTER GRADS!

The University awarded degrees to **1,167** students at five separate winter commencement ceremonies in December: **894** undergraduate students and **273** graduate-level students from all of the University's colleges and sites. The numbers include **21** undergraduates and **4** graduate-level students who completed their coursework at the Philadelphia location.



President Christopher Fiorentino also recognized four alumni who are strong supporters of the University with President's Medallions for Service, which recognize those whose impact on WCU has had a lasting impression: John H. Baker '74; Eileen Reider Glenn '69, M'99; Joseph F. Kienle, III '72, M'74; and Roger B. Ware, Jr. '82.



**John H. Baker '74**

Professor Emeritus of Art John H. Baker '74 has delivered more than 40 years of dedication to teaching, service in the arts and community, and fundraising for the University. A distinguished artist recognized internationally, he taught art at WCU from 1974 to 2015 and was department chair from 1996 until his retirement. As both professor and chair, he had a profound impact on the personal and professional lives of students and colleagues. His impact on the University endures. A member of the WCU Foundation Board of Trustees since 2015, he has served as the board's president since 2018. He continues active support of the WCU gallery in E.O. Bull Center that bears his name.

Baker challenged students while exposing them to the arts of ceramics, papermaking, and museum curating. For 20 years, he served as primary advisor for all majors in studio art; was tireless in fundraising to secure scholarships for art students; played major roles in organizing and installing gallery exhibitions; and helped establish regular study abroad opportunities.

Baker's extensive and extraordinary contributions to the University have been recognized many times, including with the Faculty Merit Award (2007), the Civility Award (2008-09), the President's Award for Outstanding Leadership (2008), and the Ram Pride Award (2018). In 2019, his achievements in the world of art and the classroom were further recognized when the University awarded him an honorary doctoral degree.

Baker earned a B.A. from West Chester University in 1974 and an MFA from the University of Delaware in 1991. His work has been in dozens of international, national, and regional exhibitions and is included in several permanent collections, including at ATT Corporation, the Delaware Art Museum, and Capital Normal University in Beijing, China.

**Eileen Reider Glenn '69, M'99**

Eileen Reider Glenn '69, M'99 majored in health and physical education, played basketball, and ran track at what was then West Chester State College at the height of the growing conflict over the Vietnam War. She has been close to a number of people with military backgrounds, from her late husband, Terry, who served in the U.S. Army Reserve and later became a Merrill Lynch executive; to her brother-in-law, a former Marine; her nephew-in-law, who retired from the Navy SEALs as a lieutenant commander; and her mentor, the late Dick Yoder '59, who

served in the Marine Corps. She and Terry have been among the University's most generous supporters of WCU students and graduates who are U.S. military veterans.

In 2012, the family's Terry and Eileen Glenn Foundation donated \$32,000 to fund graduate assistants to staff WCU's Greg and Sandra Weisenstein Veterans Center. Her pledge of \$1 million in 2018 endowed a new, ongoing position for a licensed professional counselor dedicated to the specialized needs of the University's nearly 300 student veterans. This has helped cement the Veterans Center as an indispensable resource for WCU military veterans.

Glenn's remarkable journey, highlighted by earning a master's degree three decades after graduating with her bachelor's degree, includes teaching elementary physical education for four years before becoming a stay-at-home mother for 16 years, then re-entering the world of athletics as the athletic director at the Academy of the New Church (ANC) in Bryn Athyn, PA, serving 20 years before retiring in 2000. She has also served on the ANC Board of Trustees and its finance committee; on the board of trustees for Cairnwood Village in Bryn Athyn; and chaired the Board of Trustees of the Glencairn Museum.

She earned a WCU master's in athletic administration in 1999. She continues to support the WCU Veterans Center and programs for students who have aged out of the foster system.

**Joseph F. Kienle, III '72, M'74**

Joseph F. Kienle stepped onto WCU's campus in 1968 and over the next 50 years he, his wife Denise, and their daughters Jessica and Stephanie would create a family legacy. After completing his B.S. in kinesiology and his master's in education, he and Denise followed their passion for higher education. This took them to various universities including Iowa State University, Arizona State University, and the University of Maryland before returning to West Chester in 1988. Denise began her 25-year career at West Chester University and Joe followed his next passion, finance, working for two large investment banks, Morgan Stanley and Wells Fargo, helping clients plan successful financial futures until his retirement in 2010.

Kienle's mantra throughout his life has been "when asked, I serve."

Kienle was elected to the board of directors of the Alumni Association in 1990 to serve two terms. During his board tenure, he served as treasurer for four years, vice president for two

years, president for two years, and continues to serve as a past president. In 2016, Joe was awarded the designation of president emeritus of the Alumni Association and received the WCU Alumni Association Service Award.

The Kienle family has established the Denise Howe Kienle memorial scholarship and the Kienle family scholarship to continue the tradition of supporting student success.

**Roger Ware, Jr. '82**

The generosity of Roger Ware, Jr. '82 and Agnes Ware transformed the South High Street gateway to the University's campus with the Roger and Agnes Ware Plaza, located on the northwest corner of High Street and Rosedale Avenue, featuring a president's walk and an illuminated fountain. The plaza is a favorite spot for graduation photos, meeting friends and colleagues, and relaxing on pleasant days.

Ware's commitment and generosity to WCU include serving on the West Chester University Foundation Board of Trustees.

As president and CEO of Genesee General, a full-service managing general agency (MGA) and wholesale company, Ware grew the firm from a small MGA with \$3.5 million in annual premiums to a national firm licensed in all 50 states with \$400 million in premiums. Insurance Business America rated Genesee General "5 Stars" for business excellence for six straight years, making the firm one of 22 companies in the country out of more than 3,000 to receive that distinction. In 2018, he sold Genesee General to the Carlyle Group, one of the largest private equity groups in the country.

Ware began his career in the property and casualty industry as a commercial underwriter with Fireman's Fund Insurance Company in 1982. He became vice president of Allianz Insurance Company in 1988 before becoming regional vice president for Crum & Forester Insurance Company. He served as president of the Wholesale Specialty Insurance Association, a non-profit association of insurance professionals and specialty market leaders and one of the insurance industry's largest associations. He was elected to the Business Insurance America: Property & Casualty Hall of Fame in 2018.

Ware earned a WCU bachelor's degree in criminal justice, an Associate in Risk Management from the Insurance Institute of America (1987), and an MBA from the University of Colorado (1997). He retired on his 40th anniversary in the insurance industry in January 2022. **WCU**



# Marching ONTO THE World's Stage

On January 1, 2024, the Incomparable Golden Rams Marching Band literally marched onto the world's stage by proudly representing West Chester University and Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), as the first marching band within the PASSHE system to march in the iconic Rose Parade presented by Honda.

Donning new uniforms adorned with a purple and gold rose, the Incomparable Golden Rams left a lasting impression and made Rose Parade history by becoming the first band to use more than 20,000 live flowers as part of their performance.

Highlighting the entire Philadelphia region, the band played "Theme from Rocky," "Philadelphia Freedom," and "The Liberty Bell March," while displaying four Philly-themed rolling panels made with all-natural materials that depicted the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, and the Love Statue. They also carried a 30-flag marching mural that displayed historic and iconic images from throughout Chester County and the Philadelphia region. An all-floral leading banner with West Chester University's name and the University seal was the crowning touch.



"The band's students, who represent more than 60 majors, are a constant source of WCU pride as they simultaneously juggle their courseloads with a demanding practice schedule," said President Christopher Fiorentino. "We are thrilled that they earned a coveted opportunity and brought worldwide recognition to West Chester University, Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania."

In support of the band's efforts, the West Chester University Foundation launched the "RamBand Road to the Roses '24" initiative, raising more than \$1 million to fund travel expenses for the 336-member band, their instruments, and more than 30 University faculty and staff members. The fundraising initiative was anchored by a \$100,000 matching gift challenge from Dr. James Wells '54 and Richard G. Wells '58, namesakes for West Chester's School of Music.

More than 1,400 donors, including alumni, faculty, staff, friends, and family contributed to the effort. Students rallied the support of friends and family through crowdfunding to "fund a mile" of their trip.

Dean of WCU's Wells School of Music Christopher Hanning said, "Throughout the trip, our engagement with our alumni and band parents let us know how committed they are to our success, and to the University. From all of us in the Wells School of Music, a huge thanks to our donors, our administration, and the WCU Foundation for their incomparable support!"

As part of the festivities, the band was invited to perform a field show at the Tournament of Roses' 43rd Annual BandFest at Pasadena City College and marched down Main Street, U.S.A., at Disneyland in a smaller celebratory parade. The Rose Parade has a television viewership of more than 25 million people and a live attendance of about 700,000. [WCU](#)





# MARC DUEY ENGAGES AND ENTERTAINS WITH REAL-WORLD LESSONS

**Employers want to know that WCU students matriculate ready to contribute to the organization, which is possible when the University exposes the learner to current and exciting technological solutions while on campus.**



Marc Duey

**D**rop in on Marc Duey's Principles of Marketing class, and the first thing you'll see are the coffee and donuts he provides every Tuesday at 8 a.m. The free food isn't the only draw for the 200 students taking the course. They also come for his lively teaching style and content that emphasizes engagement.

"I've had students tell me it's the best class they've ever taken," he says. "I teach in a very different way, where I use real-life examples for any of the principles I'm sharing with students. I make sure each class proceeds in a fashion that entertains, engages with student involvement, captures attention, and is tactile."

Class opens with a music video chosen to illustrate marketing concepts. In one, singer Michael Bublé crooning "I Just Haven't Met You Yet" led to a discussion of finding, identifying, and keeping customers. A second gambit is a daily challenge offering students an automatic "A" grade if they can suggest a story from current events that Duey is unable to link to a marketing concept. So far no one has stumped him.

One of the hands-on components of the class involves mastering the Strategic Marketing Steps (SMS) template. The one-page document guides them through an analysis to facilitate a market plan, including using the 5 Cs of marketing: company, customers, competitors, collaborators, and context. Numerous students have told Duey that being able to reference this content helped them succeed in important job interviews.

The class examples that Duey leverages often come from his own experience. He's been an adjunct professor at West Chester for 14 years, first teaching in the pharmaceutical product development program, and later leading more than 50 classes across a half dozen courses in business, biomedical engineering, and the MBA program. Teaching is his passion, leading him to earn a doctorate after his first career as a successful entrepreneur who founded 27 companies. He also is the benefactor whose name graces the Duey Biomedical Engineering Center and the Duey Immersive Learning Center. He worked with President Chris Fiorentino to develop the centers, which emphasize hands-on learning and technology.

"Technology is central to the modern delivery of business and healthcare solutions. Employers want to know that WCU students matriculate ready to contribute to the organization, which is possible when the University exposes the learner to current and exciting technological solutions while on campus," he says.

In addition to emphasizing practical skills, Duey shares life lessons in class. "I tell them you need to do certain things to be successful.

Number one, you need to be capable. Number two, you have to be motivated. And number three, you have to be disciplined. And that's where most of us fail, on the discipline side."

A desire to test his self-discipline was part of what drove him to climb Africa's Mt. Kilimanjaro – not once, but twice. He made a preliminary climb part way up the peak in 2018 and made an eight-day trek to the summit in January 2024.

"Kilimanjaro has to do with part of the philosophy of my teaching, which is that it's important to pick your challenges with the thought of the benefit they will have for you, irrespective of the probability of success." In a culture that stresses using shortcuts, from AI to computer programs, Duey says, "We don't teach in schools the importance of doing it the hard way." WCU

## Marc Duey at WCU

- Founder and former CEO, ProMetrics (now part of Concert AI, a leading analytics firm for the pharmaceutical industry)
- Adjunct faculty member in marketing and pharmaceutical product development
- Entrepreneur in Residence, Cottrell Entrepreneurial Leadership Center
- Member, Cottrell Entrepreneurial Leadership Center Advisory Board
- Chair of Marketing Leadership Council
- Co-chair of 150Forward Campaign



## UNIVERSITY CELEBRATES 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., BRUNCH

**THE UNIVERSITY HOSTED FOUR DAYS OF EVENTS IN JANUARY TO HIGHLIGHT THE 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE WCU MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., BRUNCH, ORGANIZED BY THE SOCIETY OF WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY. THE MLK BRUNCH IS ONE WAY THE SOCIETY RAISES MONEY FOR SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS.**

In addition to honoring this year's Drum Majors for Justice, the traditional brunch program was expanded to include an historical look at the event by one of the founders and the presentation of two new awards. Nelson Mandela's grandson, humanitarian Ndaba Mandela, made a virtual keynote to conclude the multi-day celebration.

Service has been part of the University's commemoration of Dr. King's legacy from the beginning. Two community service projects brought the campus community together this year: a Bayard Rustin Park clean-up; and a session of cleaning toys from the St. Agnes Day Room.

### New Awards

The Society established two new annual awards: the Larry Dowdy Community Service Award and the Student Service Leadership Award.

In recognition of his extensive service to the University, Lawrence A. "Larry" Dowdy '73 was named the inaugural recipient of the Larry Dowdy Community Service Award.

Following his graduation from what was then West Chester State College in 1973, Dowdy became a residence hall director and

assistant director of the Act 101 Program, then obtained his master's degree in counselor education while working for Cheyney University in roles that included dean of men, dean for student services, and Affirmative Action officer. He returned to WCU in 1983 as Affirmative Action officer, later becoming special assistant to the president, executive assistant to the president, and government relations officer. He was named executive deputy to the president and governmental relations officer in 1999, the position he held until his retirement in 2014.

Dowdy was chair of the Campus Climate Intervention Team, the Board of Governors Scholarship Committee, and the Martin Luther King, Jr., Celebration Committee. He earned multiple accolades and awards including the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Humanitarian Award, the Mary Baltimore Award from the Pennsylvania Black Conference on Higher Education, the President's Award for Philanthropy, and the WCU Presidential Medallion for Service. The Dowdy Multicultural Center is named in his honor.

The first annual Student Service Leadership Award was presented to Empower Communities Around You (ECAV). ECAV is

a multicultural student community service organization whose mission is to uplift, impact, and empower those within the campus community through meaningful service opportunities in the tri-state area, special programs, and collaborative events.

### Drum Major for Justice Nicole Barkley-Jones '99

Nicole Barkley-Jones '99 has more than 20 years of legal and higher education administration experience. She is the inaugural associate director of Title IX Operations in the Office of the Provost at Princeton University. She was previously assistant dean for student affairs in Princeton University's Graduate School. Prior to Princeton, she was assistant dean and multicultural affairs officer at Widener University Delaware Law School.

A licensed attorney, Barkley-Jones began her legal career as an assistant district attorney in the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, where she prosecuted cases in the Family Violence Sexual Assault Unit. Her work on behalf of women and children affected by both physical and sexual violence was critical to her growth and development as a fierce advocate.

Barkley-Jones earned her WCU undergraduate degree in communication studies. She was a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., served as president of the WCU chapter (Rho Alpha), and remains an active member in the Philadelphia Alumnae Chapter. She was also vice president for the Student Government Association, president of the Black Student Union, and a member of the



**OPPOSITE PAGE LEFT PICTURED (L to R)** Journey Washington, student co-host of the MLK Brunch, with ECAY members Mya Hill, Perez Abhuilmen, and Kyanna Randolph (president).

**OPPOSITE PAGE RIGHT PICTURED (L to R)** MLK Brunch student co-host Josef Sanders, Drum Major for Justice Milena Oberti Lanz M'13, Drum Major for Justice Nicole Barkley-Jones '99, and MLK Brunch student co-host Journey Washington.

Abbé Society. She served as resident assistant, orientation leader, and student director in Sykes Student Union. Barkley-Jones is a 2011 Legacy of Leadership Award recipient.

She earned her law degree from Delaware Law School, where she was president for the Black Law Students Association and the research editor of the *Widener Law Review*.

### **Drum Major for Justice Milena Oberti Lanz M'13**

Milena Oberti Lanz M'13, who has served as executive director of the Maternal and Child Health Consortium of Chester County (MCHC) since 2016, has more than 25 years of experience in leading non-profit efforts in the Philadelphia area. Under her leadership, MCHC has consistently received the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO) Seal of Excellence, an accreditation that demonstrates excellence in openness, accountability, and efficient management and governing board practices.

Lanz's passion for supporting underserved children and families led her to spearhead a Chester County-wide effort to research best practices and evidence-based strategies in trauma-informed care by the study of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) at Home of the Sparrow while also serving as a board member for MCHC. Between 2004 and 2012, she managed MCHC's flagship Healthy Start program and became senior director of Healthy Start and family benefits. Before joining MCHC, she worked at Congreso in Philadelphia for four years in the Women's Wellness Division, overseeing the education component of domestic violence and parental education programs.

A 2013 graduate of the WCU master's in public health (MPH) healthcare management program, Lanz has collaborated with WCU's bachelor of science in public health internship program on a research project to understand parenting and the well-being of young mothers in Chester County. She and MCHC are also dedicated to mentoring the next generation of non-profit professionals and, each academic year, have hired at least three WCU student interns in each fall and spring semester. **WCU**

## **NCAA WOMAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS BRING INSPIRATION TO YOUNGER ATHLETES**

For the third time in the last four years, WCU has had a student-athlete among the Top 30 candidates for the NCAA Woman of the Year honor — an honor no other school at any level has achieved since the NCAA adopted its Top 30 award system in 2006. Swimmer Ann Carozza '23 was selected from a record 619 nominees submitted by member schools. She is a two-time NCAA Division II national champion, earning victories in the 200-yard butterfly in 2022 and 2023.

In February, Carozza was one of four of the Golden Rams' most decorated former female student-athletes to speak to up-and-coming female athletes about their experiences in athletics and how a life of sports competitions helped mold them into the women they are today. She joined fellow NCAA Top 30 Woman of the Year finalists Kaitlin Hatch '19 (field hockey), Juah Toe '20 (women's rugby), and Jessica Meakim '21 (gymnastics) to deliver messages of perseverance and stories on building character and confidence. Along with mini-clinics in several sports put on by current WCU female student-athletes, their appearance was part of National Women in Sports Day, sponsored by the Women's Sports Foundation.

**"WCU athletics is what landed me where I am today," Meakim says.**

**"I am very grateful for the networking opportunities and have fully embraced the Division II experience."**

Meakim works for the non-profit Unite for Her. Hatch is an associate director for search engine optimization and a consultant for Fortune 500 companies. Toe is a mental performance coach for IMG Academy in Florida. Carozza is a special education teacher in the West Chester Area School District. **WCU**



(L-R) Ann Carozza, Juah Toe, Kaitlin Hatch, Jessica Meakim



Julie Ward

## TRUSTEE ROLE IS TRANSFORMATIVE FOR SENIOR JULIE WARD

**W**CU senior Julie Ward completed her first-year classes remotely because of pandemic restrictions. When she moved on campus as a sophomore, the accounting and marketing major from Millersville, PA, says she struggled making connections. The turning point came in spring 2022 after becoming the student representative on the University's Council of Trustees.

"Being student trustee completely shaped and transformed my whole college experience," Ward says.

As a voting member of the Council, Ward represents fellow students. The position also earns her a place on the Student Government Association executive board. Both roles have given her insights about campus decision-making and policies. "As a student trustee, I see many perspectives. I understand where students are coming from, but I also understand the logistics and background about why decisions are made," she says.

Another benefit is getting to know members of senior administration, especially President Chris Fiorentino. "He comes across as very business-like but he's actually easy to talk to," Ward says. "He's incredibly kind."

At monthly trustee meetings, she reports noteworthy student events and milestones and is frequently the student representative at campus events. She spoke at the Diversity Walk dedication in 2023 and at the President's Speakers Series that year. "I was able to

introduce Erin Brockovich and meet her."

On her trustee application, Ward wrote about her biggest accomplishment: a summer internship in the finance office at the Dutch Wonderland Family Amusement Park in Lancaster, PA. When her supervisor resigned unexpectedly, Ward, then just 18, took over his duties. They included preparing daily revenue reports for the park's corporate headquarters in California and Spain. "President Fiorentino read that part of my application when he recommended the Board of Governors approve me as student trustee," Ward says. "He thought it showed I took initiative."

Ward, who also held a leadership position as vice president of operations in Delta Phi Epsilon sorority, completed two other accounting internships: one at Amazon's headquarters in Arlington, VA, and a second at Trout CPA in Lancaster. They led to job offers and Ward will join PwC (Pricewaterhouse Coopers) as a tax associate in its Raleigh, NC, office after graduation in May. **WCU**

**T**he newly established local non-profit If Not For Music (INFM) is working with WCU's Wells School of Music (WSOM) to bring music lessons, instruments, and experiences to aspiring students in need, both on and off WCU's campus.

"Music can't be only for those who can afford it," says founder Jae Winter, whose son, Gannon, fell in love with music when he was handed a French horn in the fourth grade in the Unionville-Chadds Ford School District. "Gannon suffered from anxiety and depression. He went through a dark time in middle school. He often says he might not be here today 'if not for music.' Thus, the idea for the non-profit was born."

Working with WSOM Dean Christopher Hanning, who sits on the non-profit's advisory council, INFM funded trips for WCU marching band students to attend the 2024 Rose Parade in California and plans to fund students to attend WSOM summer music camps.

## Music's "Food for the Soul" Should Feed Everyone

Roger Mustalish, WCU professor emeritus of health, is the chair of the non-profit's board of directors. Edward Lordan, communications and media professor, is on the advisory council and placed two WCU interns at INFM this spring.

Plans to expand INFM include underwriting concert and performance costs on campus and at local senior centers and other community venues, as well as deepening relationships with area school districts to identify aspiring students in need who want musical experiences and instruments.

For more information, visit [www.ifnotformusic.org](http://www.ifnotformusic.org). **WCU**





Bill Zwaan

## THANK YOU, **COACH ZWAAN**

### Zwaan has one of the most impressive coaching resumes in all of Division II:

- A record of 162 wins, 76 losses
- Six Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference Eastern Division titles
- 2018 PSAC Championship
- Coach of the Year five times
- Guided the Golden Rams to the NCAA II playoffs 10 times — a school record.
- Steered the team to the national semifinals twice

# 162

162 WINS | 76 LOSSES

# 6

PA STATE ATHLETIC CONFERENCE  
EASTERN DIVISION TITLES

# 10

NCAA II PLAYOFFS

Coach Bill Zwaan, the NCAA Division II all-time winningest active head football coach for the Golden Rams, retired at the end of the 2023 season following 21 years and 20 seasons of football. He is keenly aware that not many professions afford a person the opportunity to influence 4,000 lives while coaching a game they love.

"I cannot say enough about the incredible student-athletes who have played for me," said Zwaan. "I think they all know that I care for them very much, and that I will always remember what they did for me."

Overall, Zwaan is 216-90, including his six seasons at Division III Widener University. He still owns the highest winning percentage in school history at Widener and led that institution to the Division III national semifinals.

In the fall of 2021, Zwaan surpassed two coaching milestones for victories when he earned his 200th career win at home against Edinboro and then became WCU's all-time winningest head coach when he topped College Football Hall of Famer, W. Glenn Killinger, with his 148th win at the school against Bloomsburg on Homecoming Weekend.

"Bill Zwaan's impact on our University community has been nothing less than outstanding — on the field as well as off," said President Chris Fiorentino, acknowledging Zwaan's support of students "as teacher, mentor and friend. Throughout his career at this University, Bill has helped numerous students find jobs, counseling, shelter, food, and assistance with medical insurance. He has gone above and beyond for all of our Golden Rams. Thanks to Bill Zwaan,

countless West Chester University students have crossed the finish line to graduate and they credit him with their success. Our entire community of educators is grateful to Bill and the years that he has spent fueling student success on our campus."

For the past six years, Zwaan and his family have run a Christmas holiday program to help WCU's homeless students. It started in 2017 with 12 students and has now grown to more than 50 students in 2023. Each holiday season, the Zwaans inspire the University and the local community to give students who are homeless close to \$100,000 worth of gifts,

gift cards, and holiday dinners. His family has also established a fund to help those students throughout the year: the Promise Program.

In addition, he has donated his time to the Autism Awareness Programs in the

Philadelphia area; helped spearhead the "Be The Match" bone marrow program headlined by former Villanova head coach Andy Talley; gotten involved with the Thanksgiving Dinner Project through WCU's Neuman Center; partnered with the Intellectually Disabled Students Internship Program supported through WCU's Ram Initiative Program; and worked with the Travis Manion Foundation Heroes Run. **WCU**

**Bill Zwaan's impact  
on our University  
community has been  
nothing less than  
outstanding — on the  
field as well as off.**

## WCU EVENTS

FOR A FULL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS  
VISIT [WCUPA.EDU/ARTS](https://wcupa.edu/arts)

### APRIL

25

Wells School of Music: 7<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Concert on the Quad FREE

5–27

Theatre & Dance presents:  
Spring Dance Concert



### MAY

3

Wells School of Music:  
Faculty Criterions Jazz Ensemble FREE



4 – 5

WCU Opera Theatre presents:  
*Candide* by Leonard Bernstein

### JUNE

24 – 28

Wells School of Music's  
Elementary & Middle School  
Summer Music Camp



### JULY

18

Wells School of Music:  
Criterions Alumni Reunion Concert

8 – 13

Wells School of Music's  
High School Summer Music Institute

14 – 19

Wells School of Music's Summer Jazz Camp

CRITERIONS ALUMNI REUNION CONCERT  
JULY 18



MORE THAN **\$69.5 Million** RAISED

## 150Forward: *The Campaign for West Chester University Surpasses Fundraising Goal Four Months Ahead of Schedule*

West Chester University has raised more than \$69.5 million to surpass the \$65-million-dollar goal as part of 150Forward: The Campaign for WCU. The goal was exceeded earlier than anticipated!

**But we're not stopping there.**

150Forward provides access to a WCU education through scholarship aid like the Fund to Finish, because crossing the stage isn't always easy. Sometimes the cost of a single course is all that separates a student from their degree.

As a community of educators developing graduates to succeed personally and professionally, helping students reach commencement is key. The Fund to Finish is flexible emergency funding available when the Office of Financial Aid confirms a student has exhausted all other avenues of support: the "last-dollar" amount a student needs to complete their degree.

Between the fund's inception in December 2018 and September 2023, 144 scholarships were awarded, with a total of \$141,586 in aid. Backing the Fund to Finish creates emergency aid that provides support to Golden Rams when it matters most.



Visit

<https://go.wcufoundation.org/donate/fund-to-finish>  
to make an impact.







## A MESSAGE FROM THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

**T**his winter, I was privileged to attend a few West Chester University commencement ceremonies — it was an honor to welcome these new graduates into our Alumni Association (WCUAA).

As the number of WCU graduates continues to increase (now more than 127,000), so too does the reputation of WCU as an academic institution. I was struck by how many degrees were being awarded in majors that did not exist when I was a student. Clearly, our beloved University is not standing still and continues to adapt to meet the constantly changing requirements of the modern world.

Congratulations are also in order for the Incomparable Golden Rams Marching Band! Our 336-member band made the trip to Pasadena, CA, to march in the 135<sup>th</sup> Rose Parade on New Year's Day. The band was able to make this trip in large part due to the generous donations of more than 1,400 donors, many of these whom are Alumni Association members. On behalf of the Association, I'd like to thank all those who donated. It was an event the marching band and those who watched them will never forget!

Looking forward, we're continuing to plan a wide variety of events for this spring, summer, and next fall, so I encourage you to go to [www.wcualumni.org](http://www.wcualumni.org) and learn more.

On behalf of the Alumni Association, I would also like to thank President Chris Fiorentino and Sue Fiorentino for their decades of support to the WCUAA. As I stated earlier, many things have evolved over the years, but one thing that has not changed is their support of this University, its students, faculty, alumni, and the wider West Chester community. I wish President Fiorentino good luck over the next few months as he transitions into the next phase of his life.

Rams Up!  
Patrick O'Connor M'93  
President, WCU Alumni Association

## ALICE'S CIRCLE CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF MENTORSHIP

**T**he idea of networking with strangers once intimidated Holly Liebenberg, a fourth-year WCU marketing major. Now she can reach out to strangers confidently, thanks to a mentorship through Alice's Circle, a subgroup of the Women in Leadership and Service (WILS) chapter of the WCU Alumni Association.

"People are way more willing to help you than you might think they would be," she said.

As Alice's Circle enters its 10th year, its impact on young women like Liebenberg highlights the group's dedication to empowering Golden Rams. The group's founder, Linda Hoffman Casotti '86, believes in the transformative power of mentorship, which inspired her to start the program.

"I thought, 'Can we create a small, impactful mentoring program matching high-achieving college women leaders at WCU with women in the real world?' Academia is one aspect of the real world. I wanted to match them with women who can focus on growing their leadership and empowering them to feel more confident."

So, Alice's Circle pairs students with experienced professionals to work on resume writing, interviewing, and effective communication, while also building confidence and a sense of community. The program has

mentored 86 students, including several who participated for two consecutive years.

"We don't focus on their majors," Casotti said. "We focus on 'How do we grow these women, professionally, for their future careers?'"

At a recent group workshop, several mentees said their mentorships have helped them become

**People are way more willing to help you than you might think they would be.**

more confident and connected to resources both on and off campus. They encourage those considering mentoring to go for it.

"You can change lives for the better," Liebenberg said. **WCU**



(Top L to R) Mentors Amanda Tingle Oline '09, Linda Casotti '86, Courtney Lloyd '10, M'18, Kristen Loughlin '21, Alicia Long '15, M'16, Edwena Lanier '23, with (Bottom, L to R) students Corey Lane, Holly Liebenberg, Damaris Silva, Sophia Shaloka, Jessica Aniloff.

## Lisa '88 and Paul Emrick '88 CONTINUE THEIR WCU CONNECTION

**L**isa '88 and Paul Emrick '88 at first had not planned to attend West Chester, but their eventual decision to become Golden Rams set them on the path to a successful marriage and careers. The couple lives in the Allentown, PA, suburbs, where Paul is executive director of the Emrick Group for Morgan Stanley Private Wealth Management and Lisa is a nurse for Penn State Health St. Joseph Urgent Care.

"I planned to go to a two-year nursing program," Lisa explains. "But my father wanted me to go to college and get a four-year nursing degree." With his encouragement, she enrolled at West Chester. Paul started his college career at Penn State, but it wasn't the right fit. After taking community college classes, he decided to study economics at West Chester.

Although the couple grew up in small towns just 25 miles apart – Lisa in Catasauqua, PA, and Paul in Bangor, PA – they first met at the University. They were married on August 27, 1988, just two months after their graduation. Paul had participated in Army ROTC and in November, the couple moved to Fort Sill, OK, where Paul began his tour of duty.

Paul later was stationed for three years in Schweinfurt, Germany. The couple lived in an apartment in the home of a German family and Lisa was the nurse on the small Army base. While there, they unexpectedly

witnessed an historic event when the Berlin Wall came down in November 1989, reuniting then-Communist East Germany with West Germany. The event signaled the eventual dissolution of the former Soviet Union. "We were there during the whole unification of the country," Paul says. "It was a pretty cool time in history to be in Germany."

After his discharge, Paul began a financial planning career. He remembers being asked to list 100 people who could become clients. As a first-generation college student who grew up in a small town, he recalls, "I had exactly zero of these people." Undaunted, he persevered, building a successful career that has included leadership positions as a managing partner at an investment consulting group and executive director at J.P. Morgan Private Bank before joining Morgan Stanley.

President Chris Fiorentino had been a favorite economics and finance professor when Paul was a student. The Emricks renewed their ties to West Chester when Fiorentino invited



Lisa '88 and Paul Emrick '88

### President Fiorentino had been a favorite professor of Paul's.

Paul to speak at a ROTC commissioning ceremony. The president asked him to serve on the board of trustees of the West Chester University Foundation – a position he held from 2017-2023. He had earlier served on the advisory board of the College of Business and Public Management.

The Emricks' relationship with West Chester continues. They supported construction of the Business and Public Management Center and more recently pledged support for veterans programs. Although they note that none of their three children attended the University, West Chester is represented in their family by their son Nate's girlfriend, Lauren Edelman '21, who works for University Student Housing, LLC, a subsidiary of the WCU Foundation. "It's another link for us back to the school," they say. **WCU**

## ALUMNI NETWORKS

Thank you to all our alumni networks that participated in Day of Giving and for your continued efforts to support student success! Our spring semester was filled with events, alumni and student programming, and loads of opportunities to get engaged.

We're here to support Rams for Life and look forward to welcoming our newest Golden Rams from the Class of 2024 to our global Ram Fam! We hope you enjoy the many alumni engagement opportunities wherever you are. As we continue to enhance our alumni network and grow, we hope to provide resources to all Golden Rams to keep you connected to WCU.

Be sure to check out our new opportunities available through alumni networks. For more information on specific networks and how you can get involved, visit our website: [www.wcualumni.org/alumninetworks](http://www.wcualumni.org/alumninetworks).





Health and Physical Education Majors '54



Meisner '07



Haley '14, M '22



Valkyrie Sisters '59



Nye M'05



Walker '06



Maholmes '16



Bonnette '75



Fiorentino '86



Mazza '97



Allan '92



Richardson '04, M'06

## 1950s

**Class of 1954 health and physical education majors** met for a weekend. (L-R): Doris Whitelock Woerth, Barbara Cressman, Joan Gentzler Jones, Hazel Hendren Rectanus, and Karlene F. Attick. A class letter has been sent to every female member (originally 25) annually since graduation.

**Valkyrie Sisters from the Class of 1959** got together in September 2023 in Sea Isle City, N.J. Top (L-R): Carolyn Helbig Hatt, Gail Y. Brown; Middle (L-R): Betty Papale Fitzgerald, Sally Hollinger Dunkle; Bottom (L-R): Ellie Crowley Pileggi, Betty Haws Slaveski, Audrey Berger Smoyer. The Valkyrie banner was made by Rachael Trimpey Tracey.

## 1960s

**Eileen Reider Glenn '69, M'99** was honored with the President's Medallion for Service at WCU's 2023 winter commencement ceremony.

## 1970s

**Joseph F. Kienle, III '72, M'74** was honored with the President's Medallion for Service at WCU's 2023 winter commencement ceremony.

**John H. Baker '74** was honored with the President's Medallion for Service at WCU's 2023 winter commencement ceremony.

**Richard Bonnette '75**, founder of Bonnette Wealth Management Group, and his team were named Forbes 2024 Best-In-State Wealth Management Teams.

**Thomas R. McCabe '76** has had an article published in *SeaPower* in October 2023.

**Kathleen Brewer-Smyth '79** wrote the book *Adverse Childhood Experiences: The Neuroscience of Trauma, Resilience, and Healing throughout the Life Course*, which won four American Journal of Nursing (AJN) Book of the Year Awards. It was awarded first place in three categories (Community/ Home Health, Creative Works & Psych/ Mental Health) and third place in the Consumer Health category. No book has ever won this many AJN awards since AJN first began acknowledging high-quality publications on nursing and healthcare topics in 1969. Any publisher may submit books for this recognition; authors are not required to be nurses, making it very competitive.

# 1980s

**Robert C. McDowell '80** retired on December 31, 2023, after a 43-year full-time professional career with the YMCA. His YMCA career began with the YMCA of Philadelphia & Vicinity in Hatboro, PA. In 2006, he moved to Wilton, CT, to become the CEO of the Riverbrook Regional YMCA, where he completed his career. He and his wife Karen relocated to Doylestown, PA.

**Annmarie Kelly Davis '81** appeared as the midwife, ensemble, and Madame Morrible in the second national tour of *Wicked* in 2023.

**Roger B. Ware '82** was honored with the President's Medallion for Service at WCU's 2023 winter commencement ceremony.

**Dennis Kays '82, M'85** recently celebrated Marketplace Chaplains 40th Anniversary at the Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas, TX, with an acoustic performance by Chris Tomlin. Kays is now retired after 35 years in education.

**Susan M. (Roberts) Fiorentino '86** received the Gladys Black Woman of Distinction Award from the Fund for Women and Girls.

**Janet Winkler '88** has retired after 33 years in public education. She taught elementary and middle school students for 17 years in Ridley School District, Wissahickon School District, and Upper Merion Area School District. Winkler moved into administration as a supervisor of special education in Upper Merion Area School District and then became the director of student services in Quakertown Community School District, finishing out 16 years as an administrator.



**GERTIE DUNN  
SHORTSTOP**

The Sports Legends of Delaware County Museum has commissioned sculptor Jennifer Frudakis Petry to create a 24-inch bronze sculpture of **Gertrude A. "Gertie" Dunn '60** (deceased, 2004), playing for the South Bend Blue Sox of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, made famous by the 1992 film *A League of Their Own*. The photo shows a work-in-progress clay model. Once completed, it will be sent to the foundry, where a bronze statue will be constructed. One of Delaware County's greatest athletes of all time, Gertie graduated from Sharon Hill High School in 1952. Later, she attended West Chester State College and graduated with the class of 1960. At the conclusion of her first season with the Blue Sox in 1952, Gertie was named Rookie of the Year after leading her team to the championship. She went on to play and coach field hockey and lacrosse and was eventually named to the U.S. Field Hockey Hall of Fame in 1988 and posthumously inducted into the National Lacrosse Hall of Fame in 2007. For more information on her athletic achievements, visit [www.delcosportsmuseum.org](http://www.delcosportsmuseum.org) and click on the Gertie Dunn page in the upper right-hand corner.

# 1990s

**Cynthia Freed Mailahn '90** retired in June after 31 years as a physical education and health teacher for the Haddon Heights School District.

**Patricia K. Allan '92** with her two children: Edward G. Dodson '24 and Julia A. Dodson '19.

**Christina M. Christie '93** recently finished serving ten years on the board of directors for the Lewy Body Dementia Association, including serving as president of the board for the last five years. She now serves as president emeritus. In addition, she oversees the Lewy Body Dementia Walk, held annually in Jamison, PA, which has raised over \$200,000 to support patients and their caregivers.

**Angela D. Mazza '97** attended medical school and became an endocrinologist. She founded and currently runs the Metabolic Center for Wellness, a thriving endocrinology practice in Oviedo, FL, just outside Orlando. She has had the opportunity to teach and lecture all over the world and has a regularly streamed podcast. Her new book *Thyroid Talk: An Integrative Guide to Optimal Thyroid Health*, was listed as Number 1 New Release.

**Christina Boyce Cortese '99** spoke at the New Jersey State Bar Association annual convention in Atlantic City regarding New Jersey inheritance tax, estate administration, real estate, and estate planning. Cortese works at KingBarnes Law Offices in Atlantic and Cape May Counties, NJ.

## DEATH NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

Contact the Office of Alumni Engagement with a copy of the decedent's obituary from a newspaper or the internet, or a copy of a letter or email from a family member of the deceased. Please note: Death notifications will not be accepted via telephone.



# 2000s

**Barbara A. Beaucar M'01** published the essay "Education and Empowerment: Albert C. Barnes and His Visionary Scholarship Program for African Americans," which was included in the 2023 publication *The Barnes Then and Now*. She retired as the Barnes Foundation archivist and historian in 2020, and currently resides in Cape May, NJ.

**Katherine Gilmore Richardson '04, M'06** was sworn in to a second term as a member of Philadelphia City Council. She was elected by her colleagues to serve as majority leader.

**Kristin D. (Akers) Nye M'05** was named one of five national finalists for School Counselor of the Year. It was announced on November 28, 2023, that Dr. Diana Virgil from Alabama was selected as the 2024 School Counselor of the Year. For Nye, it was an honor and privilege to make it to the finalist stage. As one of the five finalists, she was part of the celebration event held in Washington, D.C., in February 2024, representing Anna P. Mote Elementary School, the Red Clay Consolidated School District, and West Chester University on this national stage.

**David M. Walker '06** was unanimously elected as partner of Stock and Leader, LLP. Walker's decade-long experience representing public school entities, intermediate units, and career and technology centers has been a tremendous asset in serving the firm's education clients in central Pennsylvania. His significant experience handling complex school business and labor matters adds to the firm's unparalleled breadth and depth of services supporting their public education clients. With a degree in special education and previous teaching experience, Walker has a unique understanding of student issues, labor and employment obstacles, and the day-to-day challenges facing administrators and boards of school directors. An integral part of the school group, Walker advises clients on labor and employment issues, school business, construction, contracts, and pupil services matters. He shares the firm's commitment to community service by serving on the board of directors of Leadership Lancaster and Court Appointed Special Advocates of Lancaster and Lebanon counties. He earned his

undergraduate degree from West Chester University and J.D. from Widener University School of Law.

**Eric H. Meisner '07** was awarded Volunteer of the Year from Union Township, NJ, after serving as the township's recreation chairman, introducing a series of new events benefiting local youth and adults and running numerous large community events.

**Tiera Kerr Reinert '10** is now a fifth-grade math teacher at Milton Hershey School. She was named the 2023 Catherine Hershey Educator of the Year by the Coalition for Residential Excellence (CORE). She also coaches the middle school cheer squad and mentors high school students.

**Erin Haley M'14, M'22** recently obtained a book deal with Clarion Books, a division of HarperCollins. Publication for her middle grade novel *Miss Liberty* is planned for summer of 2025.

**Keegan Maguigan, CPA '15** is a senior auditor with the Financial Management and Assurance (FMA) team of the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), the audit, evaluation, and investigative arm of Congress. GAO's FMA team is responsible for the financial statement audit of the U.S. government and leads work to maintain and improve federal auditing and internal control standards.

**Erica Maholmes '16** is making her debut on Broadway. She completed her MFA in lighting at Illinois State University after graduating with a bachelor of arts degree in theatre from WCU.

**Marissa Berry '17** was crowned the 2023 Philadelphia Rose of Tralee and represented Philadelphia in the Rose of Tralee International Festival in Ireland in August 2023.

**JulieAnn Hatala '19, M'23** made the *ABC Nightly News* on January 26, 2024, with a viral video showing one of Hatala's students supporting another. It gained more than 3.7 million views. She earned early grades preparation and special education dual major and minors in autism education and youth empowerment and urban studies; she then earned an M.Ed. in literacy and Reading Specialist Certification. During her M.Ed. program, she served as a graduate assistant, collaborating with Professor Claire Verden and receiving

a grant from the 1619 Project Education Network in conjunction with the Pulitzer Center. The grant monies were used at Mastery Mann Elementary School, where Hatala is a second-grade teacher, to purchase curricula materials and to develop units of instruction to work with second graders utilizing age-appropriate picture books from the 1619 Project. The second cohort of second graders are now receiving these units of instruction at Mann, including the children from the recent national news story segment.

**Sophya Alamudun M'23** was chosen by the Knowles Teacher Initiative as a member of its 2023 cohort of Teaching Fellows. She is one of 37 promising high school mathematics and science teachers just beginning their careers who were awarded Knowles Teaching Fellowships for 2023. She teaches chemistry at Olney High School in Philadelphia.

**Amelia J. Reilly M'23** was also chosen by the Knowles Teacher Initiative as a member of its 2023 cohort of Teaching Fellows. She teaches mathematics at Olney High School in Philadelphia.

## FIRST ANNUAL MATHER SCHOLAR LECTURE



A new lecture series at WCU is named for long-time supporter of the University and its students **Sandra "Sandie" F. Pritchard Mather '64, M'68**. The inaugural speaker on February 29 was Dorothy Merritts, professor of geosciences at Franklin & Marshall College and an elected National Academy of Sciences Member. Merritts spoke on "Unearthing Earth's past, envisioning its future: Rewilding landscapes to improve ecosystems and waterways."

## ALUMNI

### PHOTO SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Photos should be no less than 300 DPI and in JPG format.

If you are scanning a printed photo, please set the scanning resolution to at least 300 dpi.

Digital camera and/or cell phone shots should be taken on the highest resolution setting available.

Photos should be emailed as an attachment, not pasted into the email or document.

*We reserve the right to not publish a photo of low quality, and not all photos can be published.*

Please send your photos as email attachments to the attention of the Office of Alumni Engagement at [alumni@wcufoundation.org](mailto:alumni@wcufoundation.org).

**SUBMIT** your class notes to the Office of Alumni Engagement at [alumni@wcufoundation.org](mailto:alumni@wcufoundation.org).



**CONNECT WITH US**  
[www.wcualumni.org](http://www.wcualumni.org)  
610-436-2813

## In Memoriam

1949 Anna "Carol" Mensch  
1952 Louis J. Di Massa  
1964 Robert Brubaker  
1964 Richard H. Schnaars  
1965 Charles R. Cattell  
1970 David R. Heller  
1983 Tammy Jo Donnelly

## Engagements

**Ryan Zarzatian '19 to Rachel Peters '16, M'19** on December 12, 2023.

**Michael D'Angelo '18 to Lindsay Lick '19** on December 29, 2023.

## Marriages

**1. Thomas Hamilton '15 to Erin Price '14** on July 1, 2023.

Alex Wilfong to **Mary Meyer '17** in July 2023.

**2. John Lavoie '18 to Leah Reed '17** on August 25, 2023.

**3. Andrew Berger '12 to Elizabeth Bishop '15** on December 1, 2023.

**4. William Parra '13 to Ann Kelsey** on December 9, 2023.

## Future Alumni

**5. Luke Winter '12** and Olivia Winter welcomed Cameron Theodore Winter in January 2023.

**6. Erik Hackman '12 and Jaclyn (Hiester) Hackman '15** welcomed Zoey Lynn Hackman in September 2023.

**7. William Scanlan, Jr. '13 and Brittany (Watts) Scanlan '15** welcomed Cameron Maeve Scanlan on October 11, 2023 along with **Patrick Durning '13 and Mary Kate (Nolan) Durning '13, M'20** who welcomed Maisie Lou Durning on October 10, 2023 at the same hospital. William and Patrick were roommates all four years while they attended WCU.

**Nicholas Klein '13 and Vienna (Kester) Klein '12** welcomed Nico Klein a year ago.

**8. Evan Marabella '17 and Lauren (McDade) Marabella '17, M'22** welcomed Colin Marabella in January 2024.



1.



6.



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7.



3.



5.



8.



## ALUMNI BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

The Nominating Committee of the West Chester University Alumni Association (WCUAA) is pleased to announce the 2024 WCUAA Board of Directors ballot. Six members will be elected to serve a three-year term of office beginning on July 1, 2024. The results of the election will be posted online at [wcualumni.org](http://wcualumni.org) before July 1, 2024.

The background information on each nominee for the 2024-2027 term appears on the following pages. Please note that nominees are listed in the same order that they appear on the ballot. Questions regarding the election should be directed to the Office of Alumni Engagement at 610-436-2813 or [alumni@wcufoundation.org](mailto:alumni@wcufoundation.org).

## Glenn Sarsale

**Education:** WCU, M.B.A., 2021

As an accomplished architect with more than 25 years of experience, I am excited about the opportunity to serve on the WCU Alumni Association Board of Directors. Throughout my career, I have successfully completed more than two million square feet of architectural projects across North America, showcasing my expertise and dedication to the field. In addition to my professional accomplishments, I am actively involved in giving back to the community through volunteering at Philadelphia's Habitat for Humanity and serving as a post-disaster safety evaluator for Cal OES. Being a member of the American Institute of Architects and an MBA graduate from West Chester University's class of 2021, I am enthusiastic about contributing to my alma mater and making a positive impact on the community that has shaped me.

ing the grounds and buildings for handicap accessibility, I learned that a small act can make a huge difference. As an educator, I learned that WCU is a highly respected institution and that graduates are sought after. I owe my career in counseling to professors who recommended me and mentored me. My desire now is to give back, and I am now in a position to do so. I am hopeful that I will be given the opportunity.

## Thomas W. Fillippo

**Education:** WCU, B.A., History, 2015; Villanova University, Six Sigma Green Belt, 2006; United States Army BNCO School, 2011

West Chester University has been a part of my life ever since I was born. My father was a graduate, served on many boards, and has always instilled in me the importance of giving back to the community and the University. When I received the email about looking for candidates to serve on the WCUAA Board of Directors, I recognized that this would be a great opportunity to start giving back to the University that I not only graduated from but that has been a part of my family tradition. Go Rams!

## Joyce Woodson\*\*

**Education:** WCU, B.S., Education, 1975; WCU, M.S., Counseling, 1979; Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Master of Theological Studies, 2005

West Chester University played a major role in my socio-emotional and professional development. As an undergrad, while serving on the Student Council, I learned that sometimes only a few voices can shape the direction of a major institution and that lending my voice was important to do. As a graduate assistant assess-

## Roy Blumenthal

**Education:** WCU, B.S., Kinesiology, 1983; Temple University, M.S., Sports Administration

It is time for me to give back to West Chester University, which gave me an unbelievable opportunity to meet and work with amazing

*\*\*Running for a second term*

## ALUMNI

people. I am a strong believer in tradition, and being a member of the board would offer a platform to be able to keep and support some of the great traditions of WCU.

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### ALICIA LONG

**Education:** WCU, B.S., Criminal Justice, 2015; WCU, M.S., Criminal Justice, 2016; Bryn Mawr College, Nonprofit Executive Leadership Institute, 2019; Shaw Academy, 2020

Having attended West Chester University for both my undergraduate and graduate degrees, being involved in numerous clubs and boards on campus, and subsequently hosting and training current WCU interns in my career, I feel that I would make a dedicated and worthwhile asset to serve on the WCUAA Board of Directors. Not only has WCU been crucial to my education, but it has proven to be a turning point in my life to lead me in service to others. My work with at-risk foster and juvenile probation youth and as a foster-to-adopt mother has been so rewarding; serving on this board would be dually fulfilling and would allow for an even greater impact on myself and others.

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### WILLIAM SCOTTLINE

**Education:** WCU, B.S., Secondary Education-Biology, 1974

Since I joined the WCUAA Board in 2015, I continue to be motivated by seeking to be more involved with the success of current students, increasing the engagement of alumni, and enhancing the success of the University. I have been able to meet alumni, students, and their families at a number of commencements while speaking on behalf of the WCU Alumni Association at Homecoming and Alumni Weekend, at student Move-In Day, and at graduating senior t-shirt giveaways. These events continue to lift me and give me confidence that WCU is accomplishing its mission very well. I hope to be able to continue my service to the WCUAA for a third term.

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### PARIS WEBB

**Education:** WCU, B.S., Criminal Justice, 1988; University of Phoenix, M.S., Administration of Justice and Security, 2012

Serving as a member of the WCUAA was indeed a privilege and honor for me during the 2022-2023 term. I was involved and updated on current and future plans for the University and was also able to interact with former and current students on campus. I look forward to hopefully rejoining.

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### KYLA ERYKA DE GUILA

**Education:** WCU, B.M., Music, 2021

I am interested in serving on the Board of Directors as I want to contribute to the mission of WCU. As an alumna, I've tried to remain active with activities as well as keep in contact with other fellow alumni by collaborating on various projects. During my time in WCU, it's been a place where I can freely express my ideas, and if elected I would help advocate for overall better mental health with students.

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### JOSEPH CASSEL \*\*

**Education:** WCU, B.A., Communication Studies, 1979; Army War College, M.A., Security Studies, 2001; Naval War College, M.A., National Security and Strategic Studies, 1993; Naval Postgraduate School, M.S., Material Logistics Support, 1987

It has been wonderful to serve on the WCUAA Board; witness the vibrancy and excellence of WCU leaders, professors, and students; and see the future promise. WCU stands proud among Pennsylvania state universities in these tough times. So many students — and parents — see the value in a WCU education and experience. Much work remains; the effort must continue and adapt. My WCU student time was vital: to mature, to grow my critical thinking and communication skills, and to clarify values. It provided a basis for a 27-year military career and 15 more years in the Defense Department, exposure to 40+ foreign countries, and a broad perspective as an American and a citizen. I simply want to serve. It's an honor to assist the impressive WCU faculty and administrators to navigate forward so tomorrow's WCU students can achieve their goals and dreams.

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### MICHAEL HARTMAN

**Education:** WCU, B.S., Education, 2002

I want to give back to a campus community that gave me so much. Planning large-scale, special events and cultivating opportunities for alumni to reconnect are skills I plan to bring to WCUAA. I hope my creative perspective and multidimensional college and career experience are assets in welcoming all alums back to their purple and gold roots. But at the end of the day, it's all about investing in the next generation of Golden Rams.

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### LATOYA FOWLER

**Education:** WCU, B.S., Criminal Justice, 2009; Wilmington University, M.Ed., 2012; The Real Estate School, 2015; Omega School of Real Estate, 2021

Receiving an invitation to join the WCUAA Board of Directors would fulfill my goal of giving back to my alma mater. WCU promotes leadership, inclusivity, diversity, and hard work, all of which mirror my strengths. My contributions upon election would include: respecting the opinions of others, suggesting new and innovative ideas, instilling its mission, and promoting its success.

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### JOHANNA TROELSCH

**Education:** WCU, B.S.W., Social Work, 2010; WCU, M.S.W., Social Work, 2012

My optimistic and creative approach to life will aid the WCUAA Board in ways that support community involvement. I am proud to be a double WCU alumna and feel the experiences I have had since graduating have equipped me to connect with people, families, and communities. My passions combined with my skillset will bring a new energy to alumni outreach and involvement. I look forward to serving on the board with the goal of inclusion, accessibility, creativity, and community service.

*\*\*Running for a second term*



# WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024 BALLOT

Candidates for Board of Directors	Voter 1	Voter 2
Glenn Sarsale M'21	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joyce Woodson '75, M'79**	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thomas W. Fillippo '15	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roy Blumenthal '83	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alicia Long '15, M'16	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
William Scottoline '74	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paris Webb '88	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kyla Eryka de Guia '21	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joseph Cassel '79**	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michael Hartman '02	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LaToya Fowler '09	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Johanna Troelsch '10, M'12	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signature of Voter 1

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Print Voter 1 Name/Year

---

Signature of Voter 2

---

Print Voter 2 Name/Year

---

Street

---

City/State/Zip

---

Telephone (with area code)

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Email

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Please seal the ballot in an envelope, one ballot per envelope. Clearly write your name(s), class year(s) and address on the outside, and mail to: WCUAA Nominating Committee, Office of Alumni Engagement, 202 Carter Drive, West Chester, PA 19382.

**The ballot must be received by mail no later than 12 p.m. on Friday, May 10, 2024.**

*\*\*Running for a second term*

## VOTING GUIDELINES

The following alumni have been nominated for election to serve on the Board of Directors upon the recommendation of the WCUAA Nominating Committee. Each has agreed to serve if elected.

All WCU graduates are eligible to vote for a maximum of six (6) candidates.

**There are two ways to cast your ballot: online or this original written ballot.**

1. Alumni who choose to vote online can go to [www.wcualumni.org](http://www.wcualumni.org) and select 2024 Board of Directors Election. Follow the voting instructions.
2. If you do not wish to vote online, please check the box next to the name of the candidate(s) of your choice as listed here. Couples who are both WCU graduates may use one ballot, indicating Voter 1 and Voter 2. The Office of Alumni Engagement will verify the name(s), class year(s), and address on each mailing envelope as requested by the Nominating Committee. The order of names on the ballot is random.
3. For this ballot to be considered valid: Only this magazine ballot with the alumnus' mailing address on the reverse will be accepted. No copies or scans will be permitted. Each voter must sign and complete the name, class year, and address section of the ballot. Please print or type.
4. The ballot must be received by mail no later than **12 p.m. on Friday, May 10, 2024.**

**West Chester University**  
**West Chester, PA 19383-7401**

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