

# Misericordia

WINTER 2018

# Today



## SCIENTIFIC JOURNEYS

Alumni in natural sciences  
discover rewarding career paths

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# University recognizes philanthropy, - leadership of Bill and Sandi Williams -

## Couple receives 2017 Trustee Associates Award

**I**t is easy to understand why Bill Williams' name is synonymous with automobile tires. The designation comes from owning and operating 36 Jack Williams Tire and Auto Service Centers and 12 wholesale centers in four states, making the company one of the largest independent tire dealers in the United States.

The chairman and CEO of the family business also may be recognized just as easily for having the area's longest ongoing relationship with Misericordia. A native of Dallas Twp., Williams grew up on Lake Street, in a stone Tudor-style home, about a half mile from the sprawling campus. During the school year, he walked to the former Dallas High School, utilizing campus as a short cut.

"We used to walk back and forth through the school every day," said Williams. "When I started walking through there, it was an all-girls school. My parents lived in that house forever. I had a bird's-eye view as the University grew."

Many years later, Williams accepted an invitation from friends and business associates to join the Board of Trustees. His term from 2007 to 2016 coincided with one of MU's most prosperous eras.

Bill Williams and his wife of nearly 50 years, Sandi, have long been ardent contributors to Misericordia's mission of fostering intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and respect for people in an environment where all are welcome. Since 1988, they have provided generous support for numerous capital projects, athletic programs and facilities, the Ruth Matthews Bourger Women with Children Program, and more.

Williams retired from the Board of Trustees in 2016 because he was splitting time between his family homestead and vacation homes.

The Board of Trustees proudly honored the philanthropy and leadership of Bill and Sandi Williams

by presenting them the 2017 Trustee Associates Award at the annual Trustee Associates Gala in October.

The annual award recognizes friends who have demonstrated outstanding dedication, service and generosity in support of the institution.

In 1929, Jack Williams, Sr., opened a small tire shop in Kingston. The original store had one service bay, two islands



**Bill and Sandi Williams pose for a picture with their family.**

for gasoline service, and a small retread shop. Overall, the business specialized in mounting new tires and same day service for tire recapping.

Jack Williams Tire and Auto Service Centers soon expanded into the tire warehousing and wholesale business in the 1960s under Williams' leadership. In the 1970s and 1980s, the company added dozens of retail outlets and expanded wholesale services.

In 1988, the company opened a larger warehouse and its corporate headquarters in Moosic, Pa. Modern Tire Dealer magazine named the it Tire Dealer of the Year in 2006.

Today, Jack Williams Tire and Auto Service Centers remains a family-owned and operated business. The Williams' children continue with the tradition of operating the business the "Williams Way" – by being committed to going above and beyond their customers' expectations and providing the greatest value possible. Scott is president, while his siblings, Jason and Tracey, are executive vice presidents. 

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## MEMORIES

The University conferred more than 330 degrees at the seventh annual winter commencement ceremony on Sunday, Dec. 17. Misericordia photographers captured the unforgettable moments. Please log on to [bit.ly/mugraddec17](http://bit.ly/mugraddec17) to review the photo album online.

Alumni, students, family and friends participated in the annual Homecoming games and activities on campus in October. Please log on to [bit.ly/muhomecoming2017](http://bit.ly/muhomecoming2017) to review the memorable images.

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Campus beautification projects on Lake Street make impact.



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Research Fellowship Program targets healthy effects of antioxidants.

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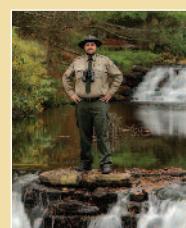
Interest in 'everything medicine' leads biology alumna to become forensic autopsy technician.



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## ON THE COVER

Misericordia University alumnus Nicholas Sulzer '12 poses near a stream in Hickory Run State Park in White Haven, Pa. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources employs the graduate of the biology program as an assistant park manager. His office is in charge of Hickory Run, Lehigh Gorge and Nescopeck state parks, the largest complex in the state system with more than 25,000 acres.





## No clouds block our vision

It's February and I trust that fellow northerners, like me, have seen just about enough snow, gray skies, and cold. And, like me, you've succeeded again with your New Year's resolution to *not* make any resolutions. I never found them useful. But, resolutions aside, all of us need to have a vision for the future that includes sunshine, warmth, and plans we can keep.

At Misericordia, we're following a vision statement that sets the tone for tomorrow: Misericordia University, the premier Mercy university in the United States, will broaden its geographic reach while strengthening its reputation for superior liberal arts and professional programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Our graduates will lead lives of consequence in their professions, communities and world.

Our geographic reach is expanding, with graduates from 18 states crossing the stage at our December commencement. Prospective students visit in greater numbers from nearby Connecticut and Maryland, and we have recently enrolled students from Texas, California and Montana. Further, our superior academic reputation has seen faculty and students traveling to Japan, France and the United Kingdom to present scholarly research papers and posters. In fact, 8 percent of our students study or perform service abroad or away from campus – up from only 2 percent five years ago.

Our strategic plan, endorsed by the trustees in 2016, highlights four key goals: optimize student enrollment and retention; foster academic transformation; broaden student, faculty and staff engagement, and strengthen the University infrastructure and image. Within that plan framework, we added or revised eight academic programs in 2017 and developed three more articulation agreements with Luzerne County Community College, enhancing opportunities for transfer students.

Faculty continue to create community engaged learning opportunities, such as service learning courses, internships, original research, and clinical experiences. More of our students come from diverse backgrounds, with each of the three most recent first year classes including more than 10 percent students of color. We have strengthened our infrastructure with the purchase and renovation of Trocaire Hall, which is scheduled for completion in spring 2018. It will serve as the main academic building for 20 new graduate students in the physician assistant program. And, renovation on the entrance arch is complete. It looks new, just like it did in 1932.

This year we will continue the *Now for Tomorrow* capital campaign as we look to break ground for the Frank and Dorothea Henry Science Center in spring 2019. We also are committed to strengthening our scholarships to support capable students, exemplified by the launch of the Sister Mary Glennon '62 full tuition scholarships. Our vision is clear and the future looks bright. Bring your sunglasses. We look forward to seeing you on campus soon and sharing our vision with you. 



President Thomas J. Botzman, Ph.D.  
#MisericordiaProud

# Generous estate gift advances future of alumna's alma mater -

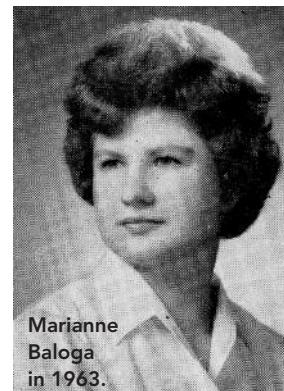
**W**ether as a parishioner and volunteer with the former Sacred Heart of Jesus Slovak Roman Catholic Church or a faculty member with the Wilkes-Barre Area School District, Marianne Baloga '63 gave of herself freely during a lifetime defined by service and benevolence toward others.

The daughter of working class parents, Baloga graduated from College Misericordia with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English after receiving a full scholarship. After a stint teaching in Boyertown, Pa., she accepted a position as an English teacher with GAR High School, which she would call home for more than 25 years. Baloga was a highly regarded and skilled educator, someone who understood that continued learning provides a gateway to opportunity in life.

"Miss Baloga was focused and detailed as a teacher. She was often assigned to work with high-performing students and always challenged them to do their best academically," said Jim Roberts, special assistant to the President at Misericordia and a GAR graduate. "I was pleasantly surprised Miss Baloga recognized me during a recent Conversation with the President Alumni Phonecast and called to reminisce about GAR and to discuss the great things happening at Misericordia."

She did much more than discuss these developments. Baloga never lost appreciation for her experiences at Misericordia, especially for how they molded her into a respected and beloved educator. Baloga displayed her affinity for her alma mater in many ways, most recently by the \$1.6 million estate gift she made in support of the Henry Science Center upon her passing in September. She also established the Marianne R. Baloga Endowed Scholarship for students from Luzerne and contiguous counties who are in the Ruth Matthews Bourger Women with Children Program and supported the Misericordia Fund. Previously, Baloga committed \$100,000 to support the acquisition of science equipment.

Members of her class will assemble in the spring to commemorate their 55th anniversary as a graduating class. They will recall fond memories and old friendships. Baloga's inspiring story of generosity to enhance Misericordia's present and advance its future also will evoke the greatest respect and deepest appreciation. 



Marianne  
Balogha  
in 1963.

# Procter & Gamble touches lives and improves life -

**L**iving up to its tag line, "Touching lives, improving life," The Procter & Gamble Company has made a practice of being a good neighbor throughout its 180-year history.

The world's largest consumer goods manufacturer has operations in more than 80 countries and had about \$65 billion in sales in 2016. The corporation, headquartered in Cincinnati, Ohio, manufactures 65 leading brands – among them are household favorites Crest toothpaste, Downy fabric softener, and Head & Shoulders shampoo.

The company's good deeds are no better represented than at their largest manufacturing site in Methoopyany, Pa., Wyoming County, which produces Bounty paper towels, Bounty napkins, Charmin toilet paper, and Pampers and Luvs diapers.

With contributions to Misericordia University nearing \$90,000 over the

past 10 years, company spokesperson Jose de los Rios says P&G has a responsibility as a good corporate citizen to improve the local community. The programs P&G supports at Misericordia are well aligned with P&G's Citizenship Agenda.

The company is a strong supporter

**SLP students Brianna Spilsbury '20, standing, and Danielle Spagnuolo '19 demonstrate how they use the P&G-funded nasometer.**



of Misericordia's Ruth Matthews Bourger Women with Children Program that provides housing to women at the poverty level and their children so the mothers can earn a bachelor's degree and break the cycle of poverty.

P&G funding also has provided innovative technology to improve clinical services in the Speech-Language Pathology Program. Equipment purchases include an electroglottography (EGG) device used to study voice frequency tracking and the vibration of vocal folds during voice production, as well as a nasometer used to measure the nasality of a voice by monitoring the modulation of the velopharyngeal opening. In addition, a spirometer allows students to measure the volume of air inspired and expired by the lungs, helping them identify different types of abnormal ventilation patterns. 

# YESTERDAY FOR TOMORROW

Merit-based, full-tuition scholarship program honors longest serving academic dean, high-achieving students

BY PAUL KRZYWICKI



Sister Mary  
Glennon '62

## Sister Mary Glennon '62 Scholarships Committee

The following members of the academic community are members of the Sister Mary Glennon '62 Scholarships Committee:

Allan W. Austin, Ph.D., professor, Department of History and Government;  
Glenn Bozinski, M.S., vice president, Enrollment Management;  
Donna Cerza, director, Office of Admissions;  
Joseph Cipriani, Ed.D., O.T.R./L., professor, Department of Occupational Therapy;  
Joseph J. Curran, Ph.D., professor and chair, Department of Religious Studies, and chair, Faculty Senate;  
David B. Rehm, Ph.D., vice president, academic affairs;  
Melissa Sgroi, Ed.D., assistant professor, chair, Department of Mass Communications and Design.

To those who know her best, Sister Mary Glennon '62, Ed.D., RSM, is simply a tireless advocate, who wants everyone around her to realize their full potential. The efforts of Misericordia University's longest serving academic dean inspired students, faculty, administrators, and just about anybody else who was fortunate to cross her path during her lengthy career at the institution of higher education.

The other descriptive and expressive words her friends and colleagues use to describe the woman, educator, mentor, friend, and Sister of Mercy are vignettes that enable others to understand the legacy of a true trailblazer in higher education.

In the fall, Misericordia University honored her legacy by unveiling the new Sister Mary Glennon '62 Scholarships. The program provides merit-based, full-tuition scholarships to six qualified full-time students annually beginning with the 2018-19 academic year.

The announcement provided fodder for many to reminisce proudly about her spiritual life and professional career. The stories about Sister Mary's fun-loving, gregarious ways and contagious laugh quickly transitioned to the relational skills and intellect that enabled the alumna to be a respected mentor, leader and visionary.

Fred Croop, Ed.D., M.B.A., professor of business, worked with Sister Mary for the first 12 years of his career at Misericordia. He credits her for the human being, educator and professor he is today. "It is difficult to describe all that I learned from Dr. Glennon," says Dr. Croop. "Most importantly, though, she taught me the worth of values, especially the ones that guide Misericordia and the Religious Sisters of Mercy."

"She could never know the impact she has had on me. Much of what is good about me today as an educator can be traced to Sister Mary. I cannot thank her enough for the careful and thoughtful guidance," he adds.

Elaine Halesey, Ed.D., R.T.(R)(QM), professor of medical imaging, arrived at Misericordia after working in hospital settings for several years.

She worked with Sister Mary during her entire tenure at Misericordia, developing a relationship built on trust, professionalism and respect.

"She always made you feel you were the professional and that your voice mattered," Dr. Halesey says, acknowledging the graciousness Sister Mary exhibited. "If she had a question, she did not make the decision in isolation. She spoke to the people she believed were experts in the field. She gathered the facts. Then the ultimate decision was hers."

In their two-story home on Lake Street, Sister Jane Kennedy '60, RSM, and Sister Cathy McGroarty '74, RSM, sit together in their living room, sharing stories about their longtime friend and colleague in the Dallas Regional Community. They each have known Sister Mary for about 50 years, and it does not take long for the sisters to nod in agreement about shared experiences.

Sister Jane and Sister Cathy visit Sister Mary frequently at the Mercy Center Nursing Unit, a skilled nursing and personal care home in Dallas, where she has been a resident for six years. On this day, though, the sisters have important news to deliver.

"She lit up when we told her about the scholarships," Sister Jane and Sister Cathy say in unison. "Her reaction was right from the heart."

### Sister Mary Glennon '62 Scholarships

"These scholarships are in the best traditions of Sister Mary's commitment to the vision and mission of Misericordia," Sisters Jane and Cathy add afterward. "She is humbled by the recognition and pleased as well."

## Merit-Based Scholarship Program

The Sister Mary Glennon '62 Scholarships awards six competitive scholarships annually to qualified incoming first-year students. Every first time, full-time student who applies for acceptance to the private, four-year, Catholic institution is eligible for the new program as long as the student meets established academic criteria.

"The establishment of the Sister Mary Glennon '62 Scholarships underscores our institution's commitment to provide access to higher education for caring, motivated students who excel academically," said Thomas J. Botzman, Ph.D., president of Misericordia University. "I commend the faculty and administrators who developed this concept at Misericordia as it speaks to the quality of our academic programs and our objective to inspire all students to achieve inside and outside the classroom."

Students applying to Misericordia University who meet or exceed eligibility criteria – (1250 SAT or 26 ACT and 3.7 GPA) or (1250 SAT or 26 ACT and top 5 percent of their graduating class) – will be invited to participate in the competitive selection process. In January, the University invited eligible applicants to campus. They participated in a tour, lunch with faculty and students in their field of study, and wrote an essay.

A five-member committee comprised of faculty and

administration reviewed completed essays and narrowed the field to about 12 students. In February, committee members will interview the finalists and make scholarship offers to students

**Sister Mary Glennon '62, below, is known for collaborating with faculty and fellow administrators to better the educational experience for the student body.**



who plan to major in academic programs available in each of the University's three colleges – College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business, and College of Health Sciences and Education. Overall, the program will award no more than three scholarships in any one college and not less than one in each college.

The awarding of the scholarship also guarantees recipients acceptance into the University's Honors Program if students choose to participate. The competitive Honors Program is an interdisciplinary learning community based upon a common sequence of enriched and intensified core curriculum courses that honors students take in place of regular core offerings.

The Sister Mary Glennon '62 Scholarships is the culmination of discussions between the Office of President, Faculty Senate and Enrollment Management about rewarding high-achieving students and providing better access to a college education for all students. Over a four-year period, the initiative will enroll 24 students and cover tuition costs for each of them.

"We wanted to make sure Misericordia could be competitive in attracting high-achieving students without taking resources away from other students," said Joseph J. Curran, Ph.D., professor, chair of religious studies and chair of Faculty Senate, who collaborated with colleague Joseph Cipriani, Ed.D., O.T.R./L., professor of occupational therapy, and others on the concept.

"We also want to build a culture of academic excellence, and we know that having high-achieving students in the classroom is good for everyone," Dr. Curran added. "From the faculty standpoint, it

**Continued on next page**

## From previous page

is a great moment of cooperation and working for the common good of the University and student body."

## Sister Mary Glennon, Ed.D., RSM

A Religious Sister of Mercy, Sister Mary earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in French and a minor in English, history, and the Greek and Roman classics from Misericordia in 1962. She earned a Master of Arts in English from the University of Scranton and a doctorate degree in higher education administration from George Washington University, Washington, D.C. Sister Mary completed additional academic work at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wis., and Pennsylvania State University, State College.

In 1957, she entered the Mercy Community and shortly thereafter enrolled as an undergraduate student at Misericordia. Sister Mary professed her final vows with the Sisters of Mercy in 1965 and continued to teach English at a Catholic high school in western Pennsylvania. In September 2017, she celebrated her 60th jubilee as a Sister of Mercy.

The daughter of a coal miner, the Freeland, Pa., native returned to Misericordia in 1975 to serve as the institution's first director of continuing education. In 1979, she became dean of continuing education. Sister Mary left Misericordia in 1982 to complete her doctoral studies. She served as dean of institutional advancement at Notre Dame College, Cleveland, Ohio, until Dr. Joseph Fink, then president of Misericordia, encouraged her to return to her alma mater in 1987. When the administrative divisions of the College reorganized in 1997, Sister Mary became vice president of academic



During her tenure at Misericordia, Sister Mary Glennon '62 developed academic programs that benefitted adult and traditional learners, alike. She was at the forefront of developing accelerated degree programs for working adults, and introducing popular programs, such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, psychology and chemistry, that remain current today.

affairs and dean of the college – supervising all services related to academics and students.

"The mission of Misericordia drove Sister Mary," says Sister Jane. "The spirit of camaraderie among faculty and staff on behalf of the students

brought the mission of Misericordia alive. Her happiest moments were working collaboratively with faculty and administration, and determining what programs were needed both for students and the broader community in the future, especially in the health sciences."

Under her leadership, she worked to ensure the institution met the growing needs of adult learners through the development of innovative accelerated degree programs that offered convenient, flexible scheduling and on-line formats. Misericordia also introduced popular academic programs for traditional students during her tenure in occupational therapy and physical therapy, and reintroduced majors in psychology and chemistry, while adding biochemistry and a graduate-level nurse practitioner program.

The institution recognized Sister Mary's career and accomplishments when it awarded her the prestigious Catherine McAuley Medal in 2001. The institution's highest honor recognizes significant service to others in the spirit of Catherine McAuley, as well as a commitment to the ideals and goals of Misericordia and the values to which it aspires. In 1994, Misericordia presented her with the Mother Mary Catharine McGann Award in honor of the founder and first dean of the college. The award recognizes a graduate for distinguished and sustained career accomplishments.

For more information about the Sister Mary Glennon Scholarships at Misericordia University, please call Donna F. Cerza, director of admissions, at (570) 674-6460 or email her at [dcerza@misericordia.edu](mailto:dcerza@misericordia.edu). Additional information also is available at [www.misericordia.edu/GlennonScholarships](http://www.misericordia.edu/GlennonScholarships).

# CENTER FOR HUMAN DIGNITY TARGETS MEDICAL PRACTICES AND ETHICS

## University names bioethicist Dr. Stacy Gallin as director

To promote a deeper understanding of medical practices and their ethical ramifications, Misericordia University announced in the fall the formation of The Center for Human Dignity in Bioethics, Medicine and Health. The center will foster the study of medical ethics and the boundaries of medical research practices, and will build on the teachings offered in the university's Medical and Health Humanities Program.

Stacy Gallin, D.M.H., internationally known for her work as director of the Maimonides Institute for Medicine, Ethics, and the Holocaust (MIMEH), has been named director of the center. A 2012 graduate of Drew University with a doctorate in medical humanities, Dr. Gallin began teaching the subject at the undergraduate and graduate levels and subsequently organized the Conference on Medicine, Bioethics and the Holocaust in Madison, N.J. The 2015 conference brought together internationally renowned health care professionals, scholars, bioethicists and leaders in the field to initiate a dialogue at all educational and professional levels regarding the importance of creating enduring programs on medicine after the Holocaust. The conference's success provided the foundation for the development of MIMEH later that year.

"Misericordia's Center for Human Dignity will provide and support education on the ethics of medical practices in the past, as well as in the present and in the future," stated David B. Rehm, Ph.D., vice president of Academic Affairs. "It is a perfect vehicle for Misericordia in that it marries the liberal arts and health sciences – who we are – and will provide educational opportunities for

### The Center for Human Dignity



**The Center for Human Dignity was formed, from left, by Amanda Caleb, Ph.D., director, Medical and Health Humanities Program; President Thomas J. Botzman, Ph.D., Stacy Gallin, D.M.H., director, and David B. Rehm, Ph.D., vice president, Academic Affairs.**

our students, the public, our faculty and others in the study of bioethics and related fields. We want to be able to communicate to the world important issues at the intersection of medicine and ethics."

The Center for Human Dignity offers a natural synergy to the bachelor's degree program in Medical and Health Humanities that enrolled its first students in the fall, according to Amanda Caleb, Ph.D., director of the academic program.

"With the addition of the center, we will be able to expand our exploration of ethical issues regarding medical experimentation and health care access," Dr. Caleb added. "The center will go beyond the classroom and engage the community through its programming and outreach, which will allow for a meaningful and essential conversation about ethics in medicine. Misericordia University will take the lead in this topic by inviting scholars to give lectures, developing online resources, including webinars and databases, and hosting conferences and symposia on campus."

More than 40 percent of Misericordia's students are enrolled in health and medical sciences academic programs.

"The creation of the center shows that Misericordia shares a dedication to placing human dignity at the center of bioethics, medicine and health," said Dr. Gallin. "Issues of equity, access to care and the treatment of vulnerable populations continue to plague our society."

The center's first event, the Commitment to Preserve Human Dignity in Health Care, was held Jan. 29 in an effort to launch an international movement to preserve human dignity in health care. The highlight of the inaugural program was the first-of-its-kind interactive ceremony to Pledge to Preserve Human Dignity in Health Care.

To sign the pledge, please go to [bit.ly/dignitypledge](http://bit.ly/dignitypledge).

Participants who took the pledge to "uphold the values of dignity, equality and justice in health care" received a pin.

The program featured Tessa Chelouche, M.D., director of primary care medical practices at Tel Aviv University, as the keynote speaker.

In addition, The Center for Human Dignity will provide expanded opportunities for students of all ages to reflect upon past medical and research practices with a vision of promoting an ethical and beneficial future.

The Center for Human Dignity in Bioethics, Medicine and Health Advisory Council includes representatives of the Misericordia faculty and student body.

It will expand on and continue the efforts of the late Okla Elliott, Ph.D., an assistant professor, to compile an electronic database of educational resources for teaching the Holocaust, bioethics and topics related to medical experimentation.

For more information, contact Dr. Gallin at [sgallin@misericordia.edu](mailto:sgallin@misericordia.edu) or [www.misericordia.edu/humandignity](http://www.misericordia.edu/humandignity). 

# Student-faculty researchers collaborate to expand knowledge in Fellowship Program

Misericordia University student-faculty research teams utilized atomic force microscopy, investigated the political legacy of Queen Elizabeth I and Queen Mary, measured reaction time for people with Parkinson's disease, and studied stuttering and cluttering during the 2017 Misericordia University Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program (SURF).

The research fellows program culminates with oral presentations on the last day of the program for faculty, students and staff, and the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship Poster Presentation Program during the fall semester in which students highlight their work for the campus and academic communities. The annual program is a precursor for many of the student fellows presenting their research at state and national conferences.

"The SURF Program demonstrates the type of learning that students can do when mentored closely, one to one or two to one," said Pat Thatcher, Ph.D., associate vice president of Academic Affairs at Misericordia University. "It is an avenue to getting excellent and high-impact pedagogical processes into the curriculum."

The American Association of Colleges and Universities identified undergraduate research as one of 10 "high-impact educational practices," according to Dr. Thatcher, who oversees the SURF Program. "Over the last decade, these practices have come to define quality undergraduate learning experiences," Dr. Thatcher said, "because they are best-practice examples of active pedagogies that increase student engagement with their institution of higher education and their major, resulting in higher graduation rates."

Established in 2014 by President Thomas J. Botzman, Ph.D., the annual program engages faculty mentors with



**2017 Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship** researchers presented their research and scholarly work at the annual presentation program during the fall semester. Participating in the event, first row from left, are Brianna Spilsbury '19; Stefany Krasson '19; Jody Teel '18; Kasey Miller '18 and Cara Imbalzano '20; second row, Rebecca Zaneski '18; Tara Koskulitz '18; Andrea Nale '17; Olivia McCorkel '18; Madison Cardinale '19 and Angela Asirvatham, B.V.Sc., Ph.D.; third row, Tristan Snyder '17; Michelle Ash '19; Ashley Williams '18; Chabely Espinal '18; Karen Reilly '19; Rebecca Steinberger, Ph.D., and Larry Corpus, Ph.D.; fourth row, Brandon Dean '17; Michael Dubinski '18; Mark Seewald '18; Noah Schweiger '20; Giovanni Baiamonte '18; Alexandra Irr '18; Steven Tedford, Ph.D., and Jeff Stephens, Ph.D.

students in complex scientific and scholarly research in traditional scientific laboratories, libraries and out in the field in search of the unknown. Through the mentorship programming, student fellows gain insight into the exciting world of research, while also developing additional critical thinking and independent learning skills.

"There are many advantages to an undergraduate research program, like ours. It engages students directly in the process of learning, while enabling them to direct their own learning experiences and helping them to become young colleagues rather than passive students," Dr. Thatcher said, explaining the benefits of the Misericordia student-faculty research. "Students become actual working

scientists, philosophers and literary scholars through their participation in the program. They develop close working relationships with faculty and undertake a project that brings new knowledge into a discipline."

In 2017, 24 students and 15 faculty members collaborated on 19 unique research projects from June 3 to Aug. 4. Before participating in the 10-week program, the faculty-student research teams in the three colleges submit individual applications for their proposed research to the University's Institutional Review Board, which approves the projects and awards funding.

The student-faculty research team of Tristan Snyder '17 of Bloomsburg, Brandon Dean '17 of Monroeville, N.J., and Maureen Romanow Pascal, D.P.T.,

associate professor of physical therapy, for example, compared gait training and reaction time of 17 patients diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and a control group of 50 people.

"Undergraduate research is extremely important for students," Snyder acknowledged. "It provides us with a different set of skills that cannot be taught in the classroom. Having problem solving skills, people skills, and other skills are a major plus for future job opportunities."

"I learned just how intensive research is," added Noah Schweiger '20 of Barton, N.Y., who collaborated with Glen Tellis, Ph.D., professor and chair of the Department of Speech-Language Pathology. "It has given me an appreciation for those who do it for a living. I also learned how important credibility is, in not only research, but in every job. Without credibility, you lose trust of your colleagues, employers and clients.

"I think research is something every

undergraduate student should at least attempt. It has propelled me forward in my field by exposing me to information that I have yet to learn, or may never learn, in my classes," added the speech-language pathology major.

Undergraduate research is also a resume and application builder for students who aspire for graduate school. Andrea Nale '17, a senior biology major, credits the program with early acceptance to medical school. In the summers of 2016 and 2017, she collaborated with Charles Saladino, Ph.D., professor of chemistry and biochemistry, to explore the antioxidant properties of certain natural compounds, such as ascorbic acid, glutathione, NADPH and resveratrol.

Besides learning the importance to eat healthy foods that contain those antioxidant compounds, she discovered more about herself and her field of study. "Research involves development and utilization of a whole other skillset that is useful for so many

different careers," said Nale, a Gilbert, Pa., native. "Research also allows students to explore topics that, due to time constraints, could not be covered in any undergraduate class. I believe my research in biophysics and biochemistry helped me secure a seat in medical school early in the process."

"By connecting student work on key disciplinary topics, systematic observation, critical concepts, and hot research subjects – like those on chemical anti-oxidants at work in the body, or moral and ethical conundrums surrounding the effects of the internet on human, moral fiber – students gain by attempting to answer pressing and critical questions important to their field of study," Dr. Thatcher said. "Students who have participated in undergraduate research are notably more engaged in whatever they choose to pursue and exhibit a more active learning profile."

"Undergraduate research is a mode of true transformational education," she added. **H**

### The following students and faculty mentors collaborated on research and scholarly work during the 2017 Misericordia University Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program:

■ Jeff Stephens, Ph.D., assistant professor of physics, and student, Michelle Ash '18; *Exploring the Dimorphic Nature of C. Albicans through Atomic Force Microscopy*.

■ Charles Saladino, Ph.D., professor of chemistry and biochemistry, and student, Giovanni Baiamonte '18: *A Study of the Potential Antioxidant Properties of Antioxidants Ascorbic Acid, NADPH and Glutathione using Luminometry and UV/Vis Spectrophotometry*.

■ Dr. Saladino and student, Andrea Nale '17: *A Study of the Antioxidant Properties of Resveratrol*.

■ Rebecca Steinberger, Ph.D., professor of English, and students, Madison Cardinale '19 and Karen Reilly '19: *A Tale of Two Queens: The Literary, Historical and Political Legacy of Elizabeth I and Mary, Queen of Scots*.

■ Maureen Romanow Pascal, D.P.T., associate professor of physical therapy, and students, Brandon Dean '17 and Tristan Snyder '17: *Gait and Reaction Time in Individuals with and without Parkinson's Disease*.

■ George W. Shea, IV, Ph.D., assistant professor of philosophy, and student, Michael Dubinski, '18: *Embrace: A Postmodern Understanding of Love for Neighbor*.

■ Howard Sensbach, M.F.A., artist in residence, and student, Chabely Espinal '18: *Formation of Raku Ceramic Glaze from Recycled Bottle Glass*.

■ Steven J. Tedford, Ph.D., associate professor of mathematics, and students, Michael Gottstein '17 and Tara Koskulitz '18: *Expected Value of Birooted Trees*.

■ Glen Tellis, Ph.D., professor of speech-language pathology, and student, Cara Imbalzano '20: *Using Autonomic Nervous System Software to Measure Responses to Observed Stuttered Speech*.

■ Dr. Tellis with student, D'manda Price '19: *Using ANS Software to Measure Changes in Different Age Groups in People-Who-Stutter*.

■ Dr. Tellis with student Noah Schweiger '20: *What are Typically Fluent Speakers Stress Responses when Observing the Speech of Person Who Stutters*.

■ Kathleen Scaler Scott, Ph.D., associate professor of speech-language pathology, and students, Alexandra Irr '18 and Kasey Miller '18: *Executive Functioning vs. Language Disorder in Cluttering: A Cohort Analysis*.

■ Elisa Korb, Ph.D., J.D., assistant professor of fine arts, and student, Stefany Krasson '19: *Catalogue Raisonne of Edward Burne-Jones (1833-98)*.

■ Larry D. Corpus, Ph.D., assistant professor of biology, and students, Olivia McCorkel '18 and Jody Teel '18: *A Survey of Container-Breeding Mosquitoes from Selected Sites in Northeastern Pennsylvania*.

■ Dr. Corpus and students, McCorkel and Teel: *A Survey of Aquatic Macroinvertebrates from Freshwater Containers in Northeastern Pennsylvania*.

■ Glenn R. Willis, Ph.D., assistant professor of religious studies, and student, Mark Seewald '18: *Online Epistemology and the Divergence of Worldviews*.

■ Cari Tellis, Ph.D., associate professor, and students, Danielle Spagnuolo '19 and Brianna Spilsbury '19: *fNIRS Response to Voice Production*.

■ Angela Asirvatham, Ph.D., associate professor of biology, and student, Ashley Williams '18: *Proliferation of Schwann Cell Lines in Response to Forskolin: A Dose Response Study*.

■ Cosima Wiese, Ph.D., associate professor of biology, and student, Rebecca Zaneski '18: *A Comparison of Different Measuring Techniques for Detecting Zinc Effects on Lemna Minor*.



# FOOD FOR THOUGHT Research fellows study healthy benefits of antioxidants

BY MARIANNE TUCKER PUHALLA

It is commonly believed that foods such as tomatoes, dark chocolate, walnuts and blueberries are good for your health because they have high concentrations of antioxidants – a variety of natural chemicals that offer beneficial health effects against a range of chronic diseases. Yet, not much is known about the role antioxidants, such as beta-Carotene and resveratrol, play in making those reactions happen.

Pre-med students Giovanni Baiamonte '18 of Ashley, Pa., and Andrea Nale '17 of Kunkletown, Pa., spent the summer in Hafey McCormick Science Hall as part of Misericordia University's Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship Program (SURF) to determine how antioxidants work, their impact on cells, and what protection they offer against free radicals that cause diseases such as Alzheimer's, cancer and autism.

Under the direction of Charles F. Saladino, Jr., Ph.D., professor of chemistry and biochemistry, the team used an ultraviolet/visible spectrophotometer and luminometry to observe antioxidant reactions at work and evaluate their effectiveness under different conditions. "The more we look, the better understanding we have of what works where in the body," says Dr. Saladino. "For example, we looked at the antioxidant glutathione, which when deficient in red blood cells results in their breakage, causing hemolytic anemia. We have the window of a

**Giovanni Baiamonte '18, left, and Andrea Nale '17, right, prepare solutions for study in an ultraviolet/visible spectrophotometer under the watchful eye of SURF faculty advisor, Charles Saladino, Jr., Ph.D., associate professor of chemistry and biochemistry.**

nanosecond – one thousand millionth of a second – to capture the reaction."

Conducting more than 1,500 experiments during the 10-week research program, Dr. Saladino said Baiamonte and Nale developed an exceptional work ethic in the laboratory based on patience, dedication and intuition. "They are no longer technicians carrying out experiments – they have developed into independent investigators who have learned how to interpret their results and take their experimentation to the next level. I feel as though they are no longer just students doing research – they have grown to become colleagues of mine in the laboratory," he says.

The two began their preliminary work during classes in the spring so they could "hit the ground running" for when the SURF program started in June, according to Dr. Saladino.

Nale, a biology major with a chemistry minor, admits drawing inspiration from her mother, Sandra Nale, and father, Paul Nale, an advanced placement biology teacher at Pleasant Valley High School, who involved her in after-dinner science projects as a youngster – everything from playing with bugs to building circuits. "My dad was impressed with the biology curriculum at Misericordia and I came here because the four charisms of the Sisters of Mercy – Mercy, Service, Justice and Hospitality – fit well with my personality," she says.

As part of her research, Nale tested the antioxidant resveratrol to determine if it does inhibit chemiluminescence of free radicals in reactions. The research is the first of many long steps in determining if the compound may someday lead to improved treatments for diseases such as cancer, heart disease and Type 2 diabetes. She presented her findings at the American College of Nutrition's 58th annual conference in Virginia in November.

In the Mercy tradition, she tutored in organic chemistry and calculus, and regularly volunteered at the Geisinger Wyoming Valley and Wilkes-Barre Veterans Affairs hospitals. She also spent a spring break on a Campus Ministry service trip to aid the homeless in New York State.

As she hoped, Nale believes the one-on-one mentoring she experienced from expert faculty, in addition to her experiences serving others, had an indelible imprint on her future. She received the first of three acceptances to medical school two months before receiving her undergraduate diploma at Misericordia's winter commencement in December.

"My research in biochemistry really was a key component that sparked my interest in the biochemical processes that occur in our body – and cause diseases such as Type 2 diabetes," says Nale, who plans to become a family practice physician or an internal medicine physician with a specialization in endocrinology. "Dr. Saladino really made us

focus on the way research is supposed to be done. We needed to be in the moment and be present. He trusted us to do a good job ... and he taught us how to start from scratch, and not always follow what others have done."

A senior chemistry and biochemistry major, Baiamonte is the son of Mark and Dawn Baiamonte of Ashley, Pa., and is the third sibling in his family to attend Misericordia. Eldest sister Melissa Luksh '06 is a teacher in the Hanover Area School District and middle sister Gina Baiamonte '16 preceded Gio, as family and friends know him, as a chemistry and biochemistry standout. Valedictorian for the Class of 2016, Gina is currently a second-year medical student at the Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine in Scranton, Pa.

**"Thanks to my sisters, I knew Misericordia well before I got here and knew that smaller classes would allow me to get to know my professors and help me stand out when I applied to medical school."**

– Giovanni Baiamonte '18

"Thanks to my sisters, I knew Misericordia well before I got here and knew that smaller classes would allow me to get to know my professors," Baiamonte says, "and help me stand out when I applied to med school. Doing research since my sophomore year, I feel I have gained confidence in the research process, and in working with equipment and analyzing data.

"We have proven that our system works," adds Baiamonte, who is applying to medical school in anticipation of May commencement. "Now we can start applying it to trials with bacteria and small animals, such as mice. By having a better understanding of the biochemical systems in the body and how they impact different drugs, what we are doing here might lead to the development of new and better drugs in the future."

In addition to his research and part-time work as an emergency medical scribe at Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center, he is a member of the Dead Alchemist Society student chemistry club. In his spare time, he takes classes in sign language so he can assist others this summer at Camp Hero, a camp for deaf children in Millville, Pa.

The student's research continued through the fall semester. Dr. Saladino plans to expand upon their efforts by collaborating with Anna Fedor, Ph.D., assistant professor of chemistry and biochemistry, to have students isolate polyphenols to study the antioxidant effect of polyphenols found in green tea.

To learn more about the Summer Undergraduate Fellowship Program at Misericordia University, please contact Patricia Thatcher, Ph.D., associate vice president of Academic Affairs at (570) 674-8185. 

# CRUCIAL CHEMISTRY

BY MARIANNE TUCKER PUHALLA

## Chemistry students selected for National Science Foundation research internships strive to improve cancer treatments and energy production

By simulating cell death in a laboratory, is it possible to minimize the damage done to good cells by radiation during the treatment of pancreatic and esophageal cancers? Can copper oxalate be used as a conductor to improve thermal energy production? Is there a compound in bacteria that can be altered to reduce drug resistance and improve the effectiveness of chemotherapy?

Three Misericordia chemistry students spanned out across the country to answer these and other crucial questions as participants in the prestigious Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) project of the National Science Foundation (NSF). Selected from more than 500 applicants from colleges and universities nationwide, the three received a stipend for their work and completed 10 weeks of intense research training at leading research institutions.

Leonard Watson, Jr. '19:  
Radiation Therapy and Cancer

Leonard Watson, Jr., '19 feels he is another step closer to becoming a doctor and cancer research scientist after spending an intense NSF REU internship in the Bioinformatics Department at the University of

Pittsburgh Medical College. A junior chemistry major with a mathematics minor, Watson was part of a team of Pitt researchers working to understand more about cell death during radiation and how treatments can be improved in the battle against pancreatic and esophageal cancers.

"The long term goal of the project was to create a sort of calculator for radiation therapy," he says. "It would help doctors be able to tell how many days a week, how many weeks, for how long and how much radiation one would get in each radiation period. Since radiation kills good cells as well as diseased ones, the goal is to optimize the amount of radiation while minimizing the number of good cell deaths."

The son of Tanea and Leonard Watson, Sr., of Paoli, Pa., Watson says he felt honored to have the opportunity to work under the direction of Robert Parker, Ph.D., professor and vice chair for graduate education in the University of Pittsburgh's Department of Chemical and Petroleum Engineering.

"With the classes I've taken at Misericordia, the research I've done and the advisement of my faculty, I felt I had an upper hand on the other people in the program regarding the chemistry we conducted," Watson

says. "Given that I was 1 of the 500 applicants chosen for REU, it shows that the education I'm getting at Misericordia is important. This experience helped me understand how research works and it also helped me confirm that research is what I want to do with my life."

In addition, Watson is an award-winning offensive lineman on the Cougars football team. He plans to take his MCAT exams in the spring and apply to medical schools in the fall.

### Victoria Bednar '18: Perfecting Thermal Energy

If the ease with which she explains the operation of the Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) Spectrometer to laboratory rookies is any indication, senior Victoria Bednar '18 of Honesdale, Pa., is well on her way to fulfilling her dream of graduating and becoming a high school chemistry teacher. The senior chemistry and secondary education major gained knowledge, confidence and career-choice validation while completing her NSF REU internship in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Va.

"The focus of our research was to determine if copper oxalate is a perfect metal oxalate match as a conductor for a thermal energy system," she says. "By allowing heat to be absorbed and released in a continuous fashion with minimal problems occurring, we can recover the thermal energy that is lost in the heating processes. This will allow for the efficiency for energy process to be improved."

Having done research at Misericordia with Anna Fedor, Ph.D.,

chair of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, Bednar says she was taught how to think critically and inventively in the laboratory setting. Those experiences helped prepare her for the repetition, intensity and perseverance required in the JMU laboratory, as part of a team headed by Professor Thomas C. DeVore, Ph.D.

"One of the most memorable moments was when we finally were able to recreate the copper oxalate ammine complex that we had been searching for," the daughter of Kevin and Jennifer Bednar adds. "This was amazing because we worked for weeks, running numerous tests and procedures trying to determine the compound. Once we were finally able to replicate the complex, the rest of the research went fairly smoothly."

She came away with a more profound passion for teaching. "This experience helped me solidify how much I love learning new things and how much I love describing what I have learned to other individuals. I returned with a better knowledge of the world of chemistry that will help me teach the next generation of scientific scholars."

#### David Schnable '18: Compounds and Cancer

Junior chemistry major David Schnable '18 joined a team of researchers attempting to improve the effectiveness of cancer treatments by finding a way to block multi-drug resistance during his NSF REU internship at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, Conn.

"Dioxobacteriochlorins are modified forms of a class of compounds called porphyrins, which are perhaps the most important recurring chemical motif in nature, and are essential for nearly all living organisms," Schnable says. "Our project was concerned with the process of inserting metal ions into the dioxobacteriochlorin molecules, with the eventual goal of inhibiting the cellular pathway that contributes to chemotherapy multi-drug resistance – potentially increasing the effectiveness of many cancer treatments."

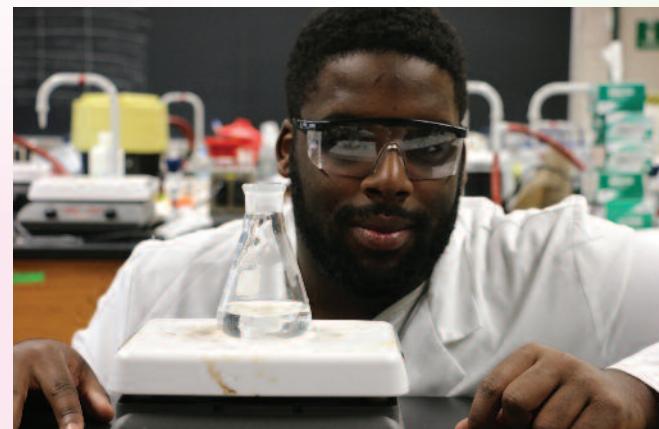
"We worked to determine whether the insertion of metal ions into a member of this family of molecules was even possible," he adds, "then went on to develop procedures to perform these insertions in more reasonable conditions for their eventual use in cancer treatment."

The son of David and Tammy Schnable of Dallas, Pa., is scheduled to earn his bachelor's degree in December 2018, with plans to go to graduate school. He says he was honored to have Christian Brückner, Ph.D., the head of the UConn Department of Chemistry, as a mentor.

"I had the opportunity to work in a graduate degree-granting institution, alongside graduate students doing what I hope to be doing in a few years.

I learned a lot about the process of conducting and presenting research in chemistry," Schnable says. "In particular, working with porphyrins allowed me to learn many new techniques, such as analytical chromatography, nuclear magnetic

for the internship. "Our research shares many similar concepts with the research I had the opportunity to complete at UConn, so I was familiar with some of



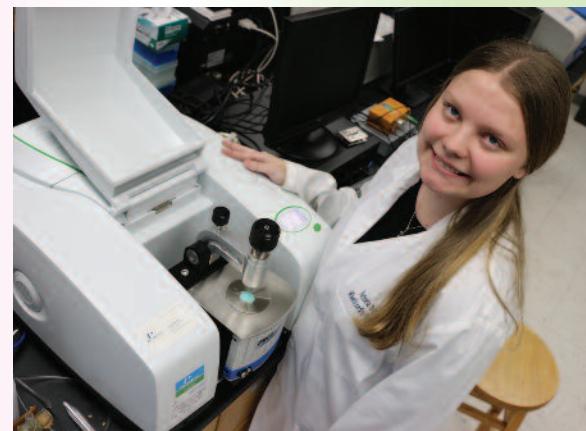
**Senior David Schnable '18, top, was a member of a research team attempting to improve the effectiveness of cancer treatments during his NSF internship at the University of Connecticut.**

**Leonard Watson, Jr., '19, middle, hopes his NSF internship at the University of Pittsburgh Medical College regarding radiation efficiency during cancer treatments will open doors for him to medical school.**

**Senior Victoria Bednar '18, bottom, used a Fourier Transform Infrared Spectrometer, similar to this one, to study the element structures of different compounds during her NSF internship on thermal energy transmission at James Madison University.**

resonance spectroscopy and mass spectrometry."

Schnable says prior research with Nicola Edwards, Ph.D., assistant professor of chemistry at Misericordia, provided the preparation he needed



the chemistry I encountered. Having completed classes such as chemical principles and a full year of organic chemistry gave me excellent background even in concepts which I had not yet encountered." H



# EVOLUTION, SPECIAL

## Research team studies evolution of biodiversity in the tropics

BY PAUL KRZYWICKI

Experience told assistant professor Grace F. Chen, Ph.D., that her window to hand pick 1,600 seeds from two tropical plant species in the jungles of Panama was short. Too many unpredictable variables could spell the difference between success and failure for her collaborative scientific research project.

After all, the Misericordia University biology professor had to trek more than 2,290 miles from campus to Pipeline Road, about 20 miles north of Panama City, to access the rainforest in Soberania National Park and travel muddy, obstacle-ridden terrain to find her targets, *Costus allenii* and *Costus villosissimus*, in the right stage of their life cycles.

*Costus allenii* and *C. villosissimus* are closely related plant species, commonly found in remote tropical rainforests in Colombia, Costa Rica, Panama and Venezuela. Dr. Chen can only harvest viable seeds from mature fruits that typically ripen in mid-October, but can vary from late September to early November.

"The only time I could go was during fall recess (Oct. 16-19)," she says about her expedition in 2016. "I did not have the luxury to stay in the area and wait for the fruits to mature. This was one of the biggest risks, as I

**GRACE F. CHEN, PH.D.**, assistant professor of biology, earned her doctorate at Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich., in plant biology and ecology, evolutionary biology, and behavior. She completed her dissertation on *Experimental Studies of Adaptation and Speciation in Two Neotropical Costus Species*. Dr. Chen also holds an M.S. in biology from the University of Missouri-St. Louis, St. Louis, Mo., and a Bachelor of Science in biology from National Cheng Kung University, Tainan, Taiwan.

was afraid I might not be able to collect any seeds for the experiment."

In this case, Dr. Chen had three days to complete her mission and acquire the main ingredient required for the 2016-17 Faculty Research Grant, *Effects of Periodic Water Availability on Delayed Seed Germination in Neotropical Costus Species*. Early arrival meant the fruits were not mature, and coming too late may

correspond to fruits being removed by animals or falling on the forest floor.

"*Costus allenii* and *C. villosissimus* are so interesting. They are closely related to each other with many similar characteristics," Dr. Chen says, explaining her fascination with these plants. "They are close enough that they can produce viable, fertile hybrids in the greenhouse. Yet, we can clearly distinguish the species from one another. There is no doubt that they are two distinct species in nature. That is what interests me: They are so similar, yet so different."

Collaborating with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama and a Panamanian undergraduate assistant, Dr. Chen collected seeds from plants deep inside the rainforest and from the edge of the jungle off Pipeline Road, an 11-mile historic access road built during World War II that dissects the rainforest. The rainy season, though, wreaked havoc on their route.

Armed with a nearly decade-old map, experience and some good fortune, Dr. Chen set out in a specially equipped Toyota Hilux pick-up truck to re-explore the same jungle she grew familiar with while working on her doctorate dissertation from 2004-10. The familiarity with the roadway and region proved beneficial when extremely muddy conditions forced them to continue by foot.

"If I did not have the knowledge of when and where the adult plants were going to set the fruits and seeds, I would not be able to do this at all," Dr.



Assistant Professor Grace F. Chen, Ph.D., photographed *Costus allenii* and *C. villosissimus* in the rainforest in Soberania National Park in Panama. *Costus allenii* features white flowers with red stripes, while flowers of *C. villosissimus* are yellow. The bees are commonly known as Euglossine bees or orchid bees, while the ants patrolling on the inflorescences serve as a biotic defense for the plants.

# EVOLUTION, ECOSYSTEMS

Chen says about the importance of her prior experiences in Panama.

"We realized it was probably not a good idea to keep driving, so we parked the truck aside and took off on foot," she recalls. "It turned out a tree fall blocked the road not too far from where we parked. That is where the luck comes in: as we walked a couple kilometers forward, we found the samples we needed."

On campus, Misericordia University student researchers Jasmine Morningstar '19, Nanticoke, Pa.; David Kunkel '19, Tamaqua, Pa., and Katie Tota '18, '21, Clinton, N.J., participated in the census of the seed germination progress twice a week for the first seven months and once a week thereafter, monitoring the seeds in the controlled environment of the growth chamber in Hafey-McCormick Science Hall.

"It really helped me see what the field of research entails," says Kunkel, who learned about plant adaptation, general research methods and much more as a research assistant. "Originally, I wanted to pursue an advanced degree in microbiology, but this research helped me realize that I enjoy evolutionary ecology more."

"Undergraduate research is very important because most graduate schools are looking for more research experience in conjunction with the courses I took," adds Kunkel, who plans to attend graduate school for plant evolution.

The ongoing study enhances scientists' understanding of how local

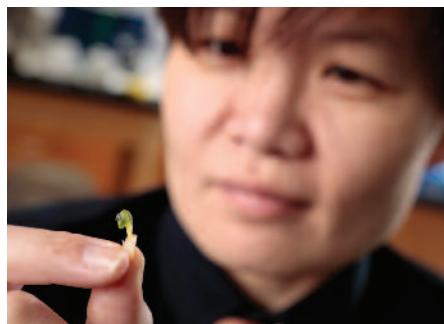
adaptation contributes to speciation – the process of one species diverging into two – leading to the high biodiversity in the tropics. It also will be the foundation for more ecological and evolutionary research in the future, according to Dr. Chen. As they try to determine how plant species

respond to rapid changes in the environment, their targeted work may have a broader implication regarding the Earth's ever-changing climate.

Dr. Chen's previous studies suggested that the seeds of *C. allenii* germinated right after sowing while those of *C. villosissimus* germinated at the beginning of the rainy season, about five months after sowing. "As our climate becomes rather unpredictable, will unexpected precipitation during the dry season induce seed germination of *Costus villosissimus*," she asks hypothetically? "Can we trick the plants to germinate earlier?"

In Misericordia's 16-month and ongoing case study, the research team controls environmental conditions, including temperature, light and day length, but varies the water availability through simulated drought with different durations. After seven months of intense census, the team is still monitoring the seeds weekly and recording their germination status today. The preliminary results suggest that it is possible to induce the early seed germination of *C. villosissimus*.

"It really taught me a lot about what is involved with research," says Tota, an undergraduate biology major who is planning to pursue her doctorate in physical therapy. "It is not just a research paper. There are months, years that go into research, so be patient when working on things because science is an ongoing process." 



**Grace F. Chen, Ph.D., assistant professor of biology, top, holds a seedling of *Costus villosissimus* that she nurtured and grew in the growth chamber.**

**Misericordia University student researchers, from left, Katie Tota '18, '21, David Kunkel '19, and assistant professor Grace F. Chen, Ph.D., examine *Costus allenii* and *Costus villosissimus* plants growing in the University's greenhouse.**



Nicholas Sulzer '12

# A natural LIFESTYLE

**Biology alumnus is an assistant park manager for largest complex of state parks in Pennsylvania**

BY PAUL KRZYWICKI

WHITE HAVEN, Pa. – Nicholas Sulzer '12 lives in a historic farmhouse on more than 15,900 prime acres of wilderness in the middle of the former Village of Hickory Run in Carbon County. This homestead, built in the late 1800s, is teeming with miles of hiking trails, waterfalls and indigenous trees, as well as native trout, black bear, and countless other creatures, big and small.

It is the perfect work environment for the burly 6-foot, 3-inch Misericordia University alumnus who has been an avid hunter, angler and environmentalist since childhood. He calls the setting a way of life – others with his skillset and interests simply see it as a rewarding career as a park manager for the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

"It's not just a career, it's a lifestyle," Sulzer says casually, while driving his DCNR-issued pickup truck along a narrow road leading to Boulder Field, a national natural landmark.

 "You live in the park, you are on call 24-7 – it is a lifestyle," he repeats.

Driving along the access road, white oak, hickory, tulip poplar and other trees mask the forest floor from the overcast sky above in late fall. The son of John and Marilyn Sulzer of Lehighton, Pa., is quick to provide a colorful history lesson of Hickory Run State Park from its days as a leader in the timbering and tanning industries to resurrecting the name and significance of General Clay Trexler, who purchased the majority of the land for the park in the early 1900s.

Sulzer, though, is no historian as he earned his Bachelor of Science degree in biology with a minor in chemistry from Misericordia University. And while he knows the history of Hickory Run, Lehigh Gorge and Nescopeck state parks well, he acknowledges that he still has work to do in memorizing the maze of trails, roads, camping sites, and lodges that he

has been overseeing in the three-park complex since October 2016.

"I chose Misericordia because I knew I wanted to be in the science field and Misericordia had a well-rounded biology program," he says. "It is very

well versed in medical sciences, cellular biology and gross anatomy, but it also had the opportunities in the environmental sciences. In high school, I was drawn to those environmental science classes. I took everyone Misericordia offered."

"A lot of the science curriculum also teaches very good teamwork skills," adds Sulzer, who oftentimes would study in Hafey-McCormick Science Hall until 3-4 a.m. with his lab partners. "We had small teams for our labs and we were encouraged to work together. The science building was very dear to us, as we spent a lot of time studying together and working together there."

An Honors Program student, Sulzer collaborated with fellow students and faculty mentors to take full advantage of the community-based engagement at Misericordia. In one research project, he initiated a field study with Associate Professor Barbara McCraith, Ph.D., to examine how water withdrawal from Bowmans Creek by the natural gas industry affected the health of the stream and macroinvertebrates. With Associate Professor Anthony Serino, Ph.D., he participated in the University's forest fragmentation monitoring study to determine the impact select Marcellus Shale development had on small mammals in Tunkhannock Township.

Overall, Sulzer is responsible for maintenance and clerical operations at the largest complex in the state park system. It has an annual budget of about \$2.7 million and includes more than 25,000 acres and 43 staff. The 27-year-old supervises a staff of nine salaried and 14 seasonal employees, while managing and planning work for everyday operations. His duties include overseeing lodging, road and beach maintenance to participating on committees that oversee long-range capital improvement projects, including construction of a new \$8 million office and visitor center, road improvements to the Day Use Area and Boulder Field, and an access point for hiking, biking and whitewater boating.

**"One of the best things Misericordia taught me was a strong work ethic."**

Nicholas Sulzer '12



Sulzer's journey with DCNR began in 2012 as a ranger trainee at Tobyhanna State Park. After six months at the Monroe County facility, he started to climb the ranks and gain additional experience in the system. A brief two-month assignment

at Hickory Run State Park preceded his move to western Pennsylvania's Region 2 Office in Prospect, Pa., that oversees operations for more than 20 state parks from Presque Isle State Park in Erie to Ryerson Station State Park in Richhill Township, Greene County. During his 2½ years in the region, he worked in every park in the region and was an interim manager in eight of them.

In addition to his operations, maintenance, visitor services and recreational activities training, Sulzer also earned certification in water rescue, search and rescue, traffic control, conflict management, wildlands firefighting, and as a law enforcement officer.

Sulzer's road to Hickory Run State Park and his long-term career began among the same cascading waterfalls, meandering streams and beautiful forests that he manages today. A mere 30 minutes from his childhood home, the Lehighton High School graduate fished, hunted and hiked there regularly with his family for years. It is a tradition that continues to this day.

"I grew up utilizing state parks and state forests," he says. "Our family vacations were to state parks. So knowing that my work is preserving this land for future generations is something that really hits home and is special to me."

Sulzer remains engaged with the campus community, particularly the Department of Biology. He was a guest speaker for the inaugural Biology Day during the fall semester that enabled high school students to examine careers in biology and participate in experiential learning opportunities. "It's definitely a big part of my life," Sulzer says about his alma mater. "One of the best things Misericordia taught me was a strong work ethic. The degree was very challenging and difficult, but it taught me the hard work I needed to succeed. I chose Misericordia because of the size of the school and the one-on-one attention with the professors." 

## Then & Now

Nicholas Sulzer '12, an assistant park manager for the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, collaborated with Lawrence Paddock '12 and Jonathan Weiss '12, '14 on the 2012 study, *Impacts of Surface Water Removal on Bowmans Creek in Wyoming County, Pa.* Today, Paddock is a staff pharmacist in Horseheads, N.Y., and Weiss is a lead physician assistant for critical care and pulmonary medicine at Orange Regional Medical Center in Middletown, N.Y.

Alumni, from left, Lawrence Paddock '12, Nicholas Sulzer '12 and Jonathan Weiss '12, '14 collect data from Bowmans Creek for their study in 2012.



BY GEOFF RUSHTON

# BODY of EVIDENCE



Sara Sabatino '14

Biology graduate turns interest in medicine into a career with the Montgomery County Coroner's Office

**G**rowing up with parents who were both nurses, Sara Sabatino '14 was, for as long as she can remember, interested in the medical aspects of nearly everything. However, around the time she started thinking about what kind of career she might like to pursue, television saw a boom in forensic crime shows.

"I started watching some, but I also knew they were fake," she says. "There was a lot more going on, so I wanted to learn what went in to doing forensic work and doing autopsies."

That interest turned into a career aspiration and Sabatino, a graduate of the biology program, is now head forensic autopsy technician for the Montgomery County Coroner's Office in Pennsylvania.

In her position, she is often responsible for doing dissections for autopsies and collecting specimens. Sabatino is also the morgue manager, where she makes sure everything is running smoothly.

When her interest first piqued in a forensic science career, she had the

opportunity to shadow pathologists and observe autopsies. "When I didn't go running from the room, I thought it was a good fit for me," she says.

Knowing she wanted to pursue a biology degree, she decided to attend Misericordia University because of the biology program—one of the few she found that had a gross anatomy lab and small class sizes. She remembers being particularly impressed with the personal touch in her acceptance letter, which incorporated part of her essay from her application.

When she found the biology program to be difficult at first, the personal relationships she was able to develop with faculty members encouraged her. "My freshman year, I thought about leaving the program because it was hard and it was challenging," Sabatino admits. "But I was able to talk to my professors because we were all so close and it was a small school. They were able to calm me down and it helped me realize this is what I want to do, that I should be doing something biology related."

During her senior year, she was one of three students to begin working with Professor Frank DiPino, Jr., Ph.D., on molecular biology research to develop a potential treatment for breast cancer. Sabatino only had one year on the project, but the experience was invaluable.

"Just from that one year though, we got to go to a conference in New Orleans and present there," she says. "We presented at Misericordia for new students. We got to pair with The Commonwealth Medical College (now Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine), so that was great to have a collaboration with a medical school."

It was also at Misericordia that Sabatino met her future husband, William Cooney '12, a graduate in computer science. They married in September 2017.

After graduating, Sabatino went on to the Pennsylvania College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM), where she earned a master's in forensic medicine in 2016. She found herself well prepared, and ahead of the curve.

Along with her undergraduate degree work and research experiences, Sabatino says she learned how to study and manage time at Misericordia and the University's cadaver lab boosted her background.

"Being able to actually get into it before I was in grad school was great because that really cemented that that was what I wanted to do," she says. "It really helped. In grad school, we did not really get to do autopsies. Having that background actually put me ahead in my class. That was amazing to have in my background."

In addition to her work in the coroner's office, Sabatino is also manager of the gross anatomy lab at PCOM. Her responsibilities there include tracking the cadavers that are donated to the school and working closely with the Humanity Gifts

family life, and of course younger individuals, it is terrible to think about," Sabatino says.

Challenges aside, Sabatino has a career she loves—one she has long dreamed of pursuing. "I've always wanted to be in this field," she explains. "Actually getting to be here and do what I have wanted to do for forever makes me happy. I love biology and anatomy, and I love seeing how something minor happening in the body can affect the entire body."

While she is happy with what she is doing now, one day she would like to become a medicolegal death investigator, a position that investigates the scene of death, medical history and other background to help determine the cause of suspicious, unexplained or violent deaths.

## Undergraduate research

Type the shortcut, [bit.ly/cancerresearchmu](http://bit.ly/cancerresearchmu), into your web browser or use your QR-code enabled smartphone to watch a 2014 video about student researchers, Rachel Bohn '16, Donna Castelblanco '14 and Sara Sabatino '14, examining the PAK-2 gene and its possible connection to cancer.



Registry, which coordinates the donation of bodies to science. She also meets with families to return remains once the lab work is completed.

Meanwhile, she loves her work as an autopsy technician in the county coroner's office but it is not without its challenges. It is not how crime shows might lead you to believe—homicide cases that come into the coroner's office are not as frequent. The office deals with five categories of death: undetermined, accidental, suicide, homicide and natural. Most of what Sabatino sees are drug related deaths.

"That's about 70 percent of my intake," she says, adding that nearly all of those are opioid related.

The most difficult parts of the job are autopsies on young people, suicides and homicides. "Under the circumstances, it is hard to think of the

While a graduate student, Sabatino had an internship with the Philadelphia Medical Examiner's Office that made her realize that could be a career path. "I found out from that I'm really nosy and I want to know what is going on in people's lives and what leads to things," she says. "I think eventually that would be a good fit for me to become a death investigator."

In the meantime, Sabatino wants to help anyone who is interested in pursuing a similar career path, and she encourages students to reach out to her at [sarasa@pcom.edu](mailto:sarasa@pcom.edu). She would be glad to help others learn about her dream career—one in which Misericordia helped shape an early interest and propel her forward.

"It was probably the best experience I ever could have gotten," she says. 

# Finding her way

BY GEOFF RUSHTON

*Specially tailored professional studies degree leads alumna to career in social justice*

A conversation with a Misericordia University chemistry professor changed everything for Donna Castelblanco '14. Actually, many conversations with many faculty and staff did. Nevertheless, it all began with that first one as a first-year student.

The New Jersey native and first-generation college student came to Misericordia as an undergraduate planning to pursue a bachelor's degree in psychology and a doctorate of physical therapy. "My first chemistry course was with (Professor Charles) Saladino," Castelblanco explains. "I met with him pretty frequently and he asked me if I ever considered medical school. From there a whole snowball effect of academic changes happened for me, with the support of my mentors, faculty and staff and administration. A lot of my decisions were with the strong support of Misericordia professors and my family."

Castelblanco, though, did not go to medical school. Her interests and pursuits drove her to designing her degree – with faculty and staff support – in professional studies, with minors in ethics and chemistry. That led to a master's degree in bioethics from the University of Pennsylvania and her position today as an associate research coordinator on a National Institutes of Health/National Institute on Drug Abuse-funded study at New York University Langone Health.

"Because of that beginning conversation, I started looking into medical school and eventually medical

school turned into other potentials," she says.

She had taken pre-med requirements, but considered becoming a physician assistant, nurse or social worker. She thought about philosophy and developed a strong interest in ethics, eventually helping design that minor. Ultimately, she worked with advisors to shape her interests in sciences and philosophy into a degree and a path for her future

*"Those charisms I hopefully still live and breathe, but when I was on campus I was so passionate about them and wanted to live them on a day-to-day basis."*

—Donna Castelblanco '14

"I had many academic interests, so the best way for me to be able to take those classes and graduate in four years was to do the student-developed curriculum," she says. "So that's how I graduated with a professional studies degree."

Her Misericordia experiences enabled her to understand where she wanted to go. During her senior year, she was one of three students to begin working with Professor Frank DiPino, Jr. on molecular biology research that

examined an enzyme associated with breast cancer. While she said working with Dr. DiPino and her student peers, Rachel Bohn '16 and Sara Sabatino '14, was a great experience, the work also helped her discover she was not interested in bench research.

Driven to explore, Castelblanco undertook some key efforts outside the classroom as well that guided her and left a mark at Misericordia.

Interested in a career in medicine but not a biology major, Castelblanco started looking for an organization that could help guide her. She discovered the American Medical Student Association (AMSA) and talked with associate professor of biology Anthony Serino, Ph.D., about contacting students who might be interested in starting a Misericordia chapter with her. He told her it would be a lot of work, but encouraged her to try.

She was joined by biology majors Matt Essington '14 and Anna Konstas '14 in founding the AMSA chapter and Castelblanco says they were fortunate to receive a great deal of support from student activities staff, administrators, faculty and President Thomas J. Botzman, Ph.D.

"The reason I really wanted to do it was not only to help me, but also to help other students," she says. "I wanted to go into medicine, but I wasn't sure about medical school and becoming a physician. It was still a possibility. But I knew there were students at Misericordia who wanted to go to medical school and this was one way I could leave something at Misericordia for students to find support, not just through the biology department but through other avenues, too."

Her work as the co-founder and president also led her to establishing an annual pre-medical conference at Misericordia for high school students interested in careers in health and medicine.

Service has been a major part of Castelblanco's life. When she struggled to find her place during her freshman year, she learned more about what resident assistants do.

It was what she was looking for, an opportunity to support others. She

credits becoming an RA as part of what kept her at Misericordia, a decision she was glad she made. Also playing major roles in that was the support she received from her professors, and the University's mission of Mercy, Service, Justice and Hospitality.

"Those charisms I hopefully still live and breathe, but when I was on campus I was so passionate about them and wanted to live them on a day-to-day basis," she says. "I wouldn't have learned any of this if it wasn't for the Sisters of Mercy, the professors who supported me and residence life."

Upon graduating, Castelblanco had given herself two options. In addition to being the AMSA chapter president, she was also a national officer charged

with coordinating webinars for members. One of those was with a bioethicist, who spoke directly to Castelblanco's dual interests in medicine and philosophy

So she applied to one graduate school, Penn, and she applied to Mercy Volunteer Corps to do a year of service. She was accepted to both.

"Who knows where I'd be if I did Mercy Volunteer, but I hope I would be in just as an amazing position as I am now," she says. "But I decided to do the master's."

Castelblanco did not forego the service, however. For her first year in Philadelphia, she did a year of service through AmeriCorps at the American Red Cross while taking classes part time.

After two years at Penn, she accepted an offer in 2016 to be associate research coordinator at NYU Langone Health's Department of Emergency Medicine for a clinical research study at Bellevue Hospital led by Dr. Kelly Doran. The research, a National Institutes of Health and National Institute on Drug Abuse K23-funded study, focuses on addressing homelessness, substance abuse and social determinants to health among adult emergency department patients.

Castelblanco has been coordinating three cohorts of volunteer and paid research assistants that conduct quantitative surveys in the emergency department, asking about issues such as housing and other social needs. She also is primarily responsible for conducting qualitative interviews with patients who recently became homeless within the past six months.

The study intends to develop a screening tool or some type of intervention to help emergency department health providers identify people who are at risk for homelessness.

It is Castelblanco's first real clinical research experience and the project appealed to her because of her interest in social justice issues and its relevance to policy. While she was initially going to be doing most of the data collection, Dr. Doran recognized her skills for managing a team. Over the past year, the 25-year-old has managed between four and 15 people at a time.

Castelblanco cannot say with certainty where she wants her career to end up. She would like to pursue another master's or a doctorate, possibly in the social sciences. She knows that her specific interests are in maternal and infant health and reproductive health – and service will always be a key component of whatever she does.

"My interest in service is not something that's a hobby for me, but is a lifestyle and something I can't live without," she says. "I know whatever my end goal is I want to serve my community, whether that's locally or abroad." 



**Donna Castelblanco '14**  
is an associate research  
coordinator at  
New York University  
Langone Health.

U.S. Navy Lt.  
Megan (Yetter)  
Challacombe '09,  
PA-C, MSC, USN,  
poses for a  
picture in the  
Hanger Bay of  
the USS Harry S.  
Truman (CVN75).

BY PAUL KRZYWICKI

# CALL OF DUTY

Biology alumna continues her family's legacy of service  
to country by commissioning in the U.S. Navy  
as a physician assistant



U.S. Navy Lt. Megan (Yetter) Challacombe '09, PA-C, MSC, USN, participates in a mass casualty drill while on the USS Harry S. Truman while on deployment. The ship has more than 6,000 people on board.

**R**etired U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Rodney Yetter has always been proud of his family's record of service to God and country. His own father engaged the enemy during World War II and his brother was aboard the USS Boston during the historic Cuban Missile Crisis as members of the U.S. Navy.

This particular day, though, was different for the Parachute Rigging School graduate. Some 45 years after he initially put his boots on the ground at Fort Jackson, S.C., to prepare to ship off to DaNang, Vietnam, as a member of the 1st Marine Airwing Division, he returned to the U.S. Army installation near Columbia, S.C. Unlike last time, though, he was not the one deploying to war – it was his daughter, Lt. Megan (Yetter) Challacombe '09, PA-C, MSC, USN.

"He is always very open and proud about his service," says Lt. Challacombe, whose maternal great grandfather and paternal uncle also fought in World War II and Vietnam as members of the U.S. Army. "That really stuck with me that my dad and I trained at the same area prior to deploying to a combat zone."

Service is a prominent characteristic of the Yetter and Snyder families. For the better part of the last 70 years, their family members have been involved in historic conflicts and wars from the European theatre to the mountains of Afghanistan. It is also the main reason the Misericordia University graduate chose to commission in the U.S. Navy shortly after completing graduate school and becoming a physician assistant in 2012.

"While I was growing up, it was always fascinating to me knowing that my family members served," says Lt. Challacombe, who received her Bachelor of Science degree in biology with minors in chemistry and English. "That sacrifice always remained really close to my heart. I knew someday I would want to serve my country."

Deciding upon what branch of the military was easy for Lt. Challacombe, as "Navy Medicine takes care of Sailors and Marines," she says. Commissioning also provides for a well-rounded experience, as she has the opportunity to practice medicine in clinic, combat, rural, military hospital, and ship settings.

"It is an absolute honor to be able to serve my country and keep servicemembers

healthy to be able to do the same," she adds. "Each day going to work, it is a reminder of the sacrifices servicemembers make to keep our country free. I feel proud serving this great nation."

Her military missions have taken Lt. Challacombe to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii in peacetime, to the ongoing battlefields of Afghanistan, and on board the USS Harry S. Truman (CVN75) aircraft carrier in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. During her service, she has cared for active duty members, military retirees, and military dependents at a family practice military clinic, as well as active duty members in a combat zone and stationed aboard the ship.

"When I was deployed in Afghanistan, I was part of a Role II Forward Surgical Team that was the first echelon of surgical care from the battlefield," says Lt. Challacombe, who was deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. "My team saw traumatic patients with multiple injuries. It is truly a privilege to have the opportunity to save lives. As a medical provider, each and every day servicemembers trust their health care to me, and it is a constant reminder of how much I love my job and the patient population I take care of."

Family deserves most of the credit for instilling a sense of service in Lt. Challacombe, but it did not hurt that their ideals complemented the mission of her alma mater. "When I think of Misericordia, I think of love of education and love of people, both of which are needed working in medicine," says Lt. Challacombe, who married William Challacombe '09 in 2011. "Medicine is always changing so constant education is key and, of course, you have to have a love for people to work in medicine. The values from Misericordia I still utilize."

She credits a lot of the success she has enjoyed as a health care professional and military officer to the personalized attention she received from faculty members who are experts in their field of study. "I loved my time in college and am so happy that I chose to get my degree from Misericordia," says the Saylorsburg, Pa., native. "The small class sizes provided a more one-on-one class atmosphere, which allowed for more learning opportunities. The professors cared about your success and the biology department was like a family."

"The classroom environment elicited critical thinking and problem solving, which

are great attributes in succeeding in graduate school, life, and the military. The openness to ask questions to professors and opportunities for research projects created a great learning environment."

In December, Lt. Challacombe received a new assignment to Naval Branch Health Clinic in Everett, Wash. With her military contract running through November 2019, she is excited for every new adventure and opportunity that presents itself.

"My Misericordia education was the foundation to my educational career and propelled me to wanting to go to physician assistant school to work in medicine and overall make a difference," she says. "My professors loved what they were teaching and I think that was the best part of my Misericordia education because it made learning interesting and unforgettable." 

Misericordia University alumna Lt. Megan (Yetter) Challacombe '09, PA-C, MSC, USN, holds Christmas cards from her family as she poses for a picture in front of the Role II Forward Surgical Facility in Afghanistan.



## DEPLOYMENTS

**Lt. Megan (Yetter) Challacombe '09, PA-C, MSC, USN, has been stationed and a part of the following deployments during her career in the U.S. Navy:**

**2012-15:** Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

**2013-14:** Afghanistan

**2015-17:** Stationed on USS Harry S. Truman (CVN75), Norfolk, Va.

**2015-16:** Deployment with CVN75

**2017-present:** Naval Branch Health Clinic Everett, Everett, Wash.

# Property acquisition, demolition mark start of beautification project on Lake Street

Misericordia University began a beautification project in downtown Dallas Borough on Sept. 28 that resulted in the demolition of blighted properties and the creation of green space and parking near the entrance of Lake Street.

The University purchased 24, 30 and 32 Lake Street and ancillary structures in August 2016. The structures formally housed a beer distributor, a commercial property, and a private family house. Misericordia also purchased the former Himmler Theater, 48 Lake St., and a small vacant lot in July 2016.

The University opened sealed bids for the demolition of the structures on Sept. 1 and awarded the contract to Stell Enterprises. The demolition project and site cleanup was completed Oct. 5. Prior to demolition, a university



**Top:** Demolition crews remove foundations and clear debris at the entrance to Lake Street.

**Right:** The former Himmler Theater's walls are torn down.

contractor completed asbestos removal in some structures.

The beautification project begins at the end of Lake Street where it meets the construction of the roundabout

on Route 415. It will feature a pocket park with matching downtown pathway lighting, sidewalks and green space. The added amenities will give way to a parking lot and additional parking behind the Old House Café at 34 Lake St., and the Misericordia University-owned Arts Studio at 50 Lake St., until it reaches the existing parking surface at John J. Passan Hall at 100 Lake St., home of the College of Health Sciences and Education.

The project will create about 70 parking spaces for the campus community and offer a welcoming and attractive streetscape to campus and the downtown business district. It also will safely tie Machell Avenue, where Misericordia owns a student residence hall at 10 Machell Ave., to Lake Street with additional lighting and a pedestrian crosswalk. 

## University purchases house and Olde House Café on Lake Street

The University purchased the Olde House Café at 34 Lake St., Dallas Borough, in November after the owners approached the institution to gauge their interest in the transaction.

Adam and Sara Wise were renting to own the coffee house for more than two years. Misericordia bought the contents of the building from the couple and purchased the structure from David and Elaine Weaver. Overall, the popular downtown restaurant offered breakfast, brunch and lunch for about 17 years. The last day of business for the Olde House Café was Nov. 10.

In recent years, the University has acquired several parcels of real estate along Lake Street that became available due to varying circumstances. The University negotiated a sale price for the restaurant after securing a market appraisal for the property.

Unlike the properties around lower Lake Street, the University will preserve the structure in its present state until it makes a final determination on how best to utilize it for the campus and borough communities. A former residence, the repurposed restaurant is more than 100 years old and offers two stories of space, including a basement. It sits on one-quarter acre of land.

"The town-and-gown relationship we enjoy with Dallas Borough officials and the surrounding business community is important to Misericordia University," said Mark Van Etten, vice president of finance and administration. "We will consult with them and the various constituencies on campus to determine how to best use structure. I am confident the outcome will please everyone."



Misericordia closed on the property at 33 Lake Street in December.

The University purchased the Olde House Café in November.



In mid-December, the University also closed on a more than 100-year-old residence at 33 Lake Street, next to the popular restaurant, Pizza Bella. Misericordia purchased the home from the estate of Harry Gallagher, M.D., and his wife, Eileen Gallagher '39. It has not been determined how the University will utilize the 2,612-square-foot structure. 

# Archway's splendor restored; regular traffic patterns return

With restoration of the historic archway complete, traditional traffic patterns resumed on campus following the Thanksgiving holiday recess.

In June, Masonry Preservation Services, Inc., of Bloomsburg, Pa., began the delicate process of examining the Tudor Gothic-styled



structure for damage and designing a preservation plan to restore it to its original grandeur. Designed by noted architect F. Ferdinand Durang of New York, N.Y., in the 1930s, years of weather took its toll on the specially designed terra cotta, masonry, brick, bluestone and structural elements.

Surrounded by scaffolding for nearly six months, the restoration process for the arch required the removal of backup and decorative bricks, cupolas, arch sections, terra cotta, the symbolic Mercy cross, and more before using original and newly manufactured materials to retain the historic fabric of the University's icon. Baut Studios in Swoyersville, Pa., also refurbished the historic copper lanterns that illuminate the entranceway of the arch.

The restoration project required motorists to utilize new traffic patterns along Townhouse Road, Misericordia Way and Baggot Street.

University Advancement (UA) rallied alumni and friends around the project in order to fund the effort. The arch was the beneficiary of Misericordia's annual Day of Giving on Sept. 24.

"The successful restoration project

enables the archway to welcome many more students, friends and visitors to campus," President Thomas J. Botzman, Ph.D., said. "The University is grateful for the attention to detail that Masonry Preservation Services exhibited while undertaking this important project and to the many generous people who contributed in support of the arch's capital campaign."

Anyone interested in supporting the fund to finance the project can log on to [www.misericordia.edu/arch](http://www.misericordia.edu/arch) or call (570) 674-8027 to make a gift.

"The restored arch looks more beautiful than ever," said Susan Helwig, M.S., vice president of UA. "Donor support has ensured that Misericordia's iconic structure continues to be the welcoming entry for another century. Thank you to every person who made a gift." 

Type the shortcut,  
[bit.ly/muarchrestoration17](http://bit.ly/muarchrestoration17)  
into your web browser or  
use your QR-code enabled  
smartphone to watch a  
video about the  
restoration of the historic arch.



## Construction timeline on schedule for newest academic building

The \$3.5 million project to repurpose and rehabilitate a building formerly belonging to Mercy Center and the Sisters of Mercy into a state-of-the art academic building remains on schedule for a spring completion date.

Misericordia is adding the building to the campus footprint in order to add faculty offices and expand academic classroom, laboratory and conference space. The University purchased the two-story, 14,000-square-foot building in June 2016.

By adding the 34th building to the campus community, immediately behind and to the left of Hafey-McCormick Science Hall, Misericordia is gaining 23 offices for

faculty, administration and staff, a lecture hall with seating for 36 students, a conference room for 10, student lounges, and a kitchenette. In addition, the facility features four examination rooms and a more than 1,800-square-foot patient assessment clinical skills laboratory for students majoring in the health and medical sciences fields.

Work began on the vacant building in late fall 2016, as contractors disconnected electrical service from the Mercy Center complex and added it to the University's power grid. Interior demolition began in May and general construction started in June.



A lecture hall and skills laboratory occupy the 3,000-square-foot addition to the south side of the existing structure. The repurposing project also required the University to add a new entryway and elevator to the former office building for the Sisters of Mercy.

The overall design of the newest building ensures it complements other structures on campus. 

# ROAD LESS TRAVELED

Alumna becomes U.S. Naval physician to realize lifelong dream of becoming an anesthesiologist

BY PAUL KRZYWICKI

**Krista Koch '08,  
D.O.**

BIOLOGY

Japan.  
Jamaica.  
Guyana.  
And Australia.

Those countries simply are not dots on a globe to U.S. Navy Lt. Krista Koch '08, D.O. Rather, they are reminders that serve her well as the Baldwinsville, N.Y., native remembers where she has been and where hard work and perseverance can take her in life.

Today, Dr. Koch is an anesthesia resident at the Naval Medical Center in Portsmouth, Va., the U.S. Navy's oldest, continuously-operating

hospital. In between Misericordia University and Portsmouth, though, Koch has seen and experienced more than most as she strives to fulfill a nearly lifelong goal of becoming an anesthesiologist.

The road to realizing a childhood dream began at Misericordia University in the biology program, thanks largely to an annual \$14,500 scholarship award from the institution. Those four years of undergraduate study enabled her to get another step closer to her ultimate career goal, while also enabling her to experience serving others in Jamaica and Guyana with Campus Ministry.

"If I had not received support from Misericordia, I would have had to consider other options for my undergraduate career," says Dr. Koch, a summa cum laude graduate who received the Robert Anderson and Board of Trustees awards at Misericordia in recognition of her academic accomplishments in pre-medicine and best exemplifying the institution's ideals. "I would have had to give up my hope for attending a small liberal arts college in exchange for a larger public school."

In 2012, she completed medical school at the New York College of Osteopathic Medicine in Glen Head, N.Y., and soon began another adventure. Dr. Koch joined the U.S. Navy as a physician in Portsmouth as a transitional intern through the Health Professions Scholarship Program. The internship provided her with a well-rounded experience in practicing medicine throughout the fleet, while also lessening the financial burden of medical school.

Flight surgery training took the daughter of William and Janice Koch to Iwakuni, Japan, in 2013 where she was stationed with the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 12 Marauders (MALS-12). As the squadron flight surgeon, Dr. Koch was responsible for the medical needs of more than 450 Marines and sailors.

"I received medical training to help understand the physiological process of flying to allow me to better serve those working in or around aircraft," she says, explaining the specialty field. "After



attending medical school and my internship, this was definitely a nice break from the rigorous lifestyle of studying and hospital life. It also allowed me to gain confidence in myself as an independent practitioner with my own patient load."

It also offered additional opportunity for Dr. Koch, who accompanied the Marine All Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 242 (VMFA(AW)-242) to the Royal Australian Air Force Base Tindal, Australia, for a flying exercise aboard an F/A-18 Hornet supersonic combat jet. "It allowed me to work very closely with the pilots," says Dr. Koch, who completed her tour with MALS-12 in May 2015.

Since June 2015, Dr. Koch has been working to complete her anesthesia residency at Portsmouth. She graduates in June 2018. With graduation comes a promotion and a new duty station that will be determined later.

"2018 is going to be a big year," she says. "Graduation from residency, moving to a new duty station, and promotion to lieutenant commander."

Somehow, that whirlwind tour seemingly around the world and places in between began in grade school with an interest in medicine. "I had surgery when I was in high school," Dr. Koch reflects, "and the anesthesiologist made an impact on me. Since then, I knew that is the field to pursue."

Moreover, Misericordia and its scholarship award played a big role in her being four short months away from realizing her dream. "Misericordia was perfect for my learning style," she acknowledges. "The small class sizes and personal attention from all the science faculty was what helped me to grow and develop as a student as well as a person. I learned not only what



**U.S. Navy Lt. Krista Koch '08, D.O.,** an anesthesia resident at the Naval Medical Center in Portsmouth, Va., participated in a flying exercise aboard an F/A 18 Hornet supersonic combat jet with VMFA(AW) 242.

kind of learner I was, but also how to be a leader – two aspects of life that have proven fruitful in the past 10 years.

"The best aspect of my Misericordia experience was the relationships to include faculty, friends and staff, alike," adds Dr. Koch, who also received a Leadership Award from her alma mater for exhibiting that quality on campus. "The fact that you were not just a number was something that I truly appreciated. When I think back to my four years in Dallas, I was never alone and always had the opportunity to meet new people and stay involved." **H**

If I had not received (financial) support from Misericordia, I would have had to consider other options for my undergraduate career. I would have had to give up my hope for attending a small liberal arts college in exchange for a larger public school. **]]**

— U.S. Navy Lt. Krista Koch, '08

# PLAYBOOK FOR SUCCESS

## Communications alumnus turns campus opportunity into nationwide business

BY PAUL KRZYWICKI

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### John Peruso '10

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#### COMMUNICATIONS

at the right time, and second, doing something about it."

Misericordia University alumnus John Peruso '10 knows a thing or two about happenstance and acting on it accordingly. A fortuitous encounter while on a class assignment off campus set in motion a series of events that ultimately launched his career as an entrepreneur, videographer and dealmaker.

As part of the curriculum for the Department of Mass Communications and Design, students are required to work with a real client in the Back Mountain business community. In this case, Peruso and his production team chose to develop and produce a video for the popular Chinese restaurant, Peking Chef. The assignment involved on-site preparations, videography, editing and other technical aspects required to produce a professional video for the client, including an itemized mock bill.

A customer at Peking Chef, impressed with the student production team, passed his business card along to Peruso, seeking a professionally produced video for his business venture. "Next Level Video was founded right there on campus in Dallas, Pennsylvania," Peruso announces proudly. "The first time I needed to submit an invoice is when I realized, 'shoot,' I need a name. I remember vividly sitting in the mezzanine computer lab with my roommate editing and trying to think of a name. I eventually gave up and as a joke my roommate said, 'just call it Next Level Video – take your game to the Next Level.'

"I didn't love it – and I still don't – but I had a deadline and used it, but hey it worked out. I logged into legalzoom.com, formed an LLC, and Next Level Video was born."

Peruso earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in communications while also establishing himself in the field. Next Level Video quickly grew from that happenstance encounter in the Back Mountain to a nationwide business model that produces collegiate recruiting videos for elite high school athletes and employs hundreds of camera operators, six full-time employees, multiple interns and seasonal full-time associates.

"We film elite high school recruiting events. We put a camera on every field and film every single game," says

Ray Kroc, the American businessperson who built McDonald's into a nationwide empire, had a simple motto – "The two most important requirements for major success are: first, being in the right place

Peruso, the president of Next Level Video. "We build elevated filming towers on the fields and courts, so whether you are on Field 1 in the stadium or Field 14 in the middle of a sod farm, you have a professional, elevated perspective."

His talent, expertise and drive has enabled the business to continue to flourish, but he acknowledges his success is rooted at Misericordia. That first job led to him producing his initial recruiting video, albeit for his younger brother,



John Peruso '10

who landed a partial scholarship for a Division I lacrosse program without the coach ever seeing him play in person. Shortly thereafter, the requests continued at a breakneck pace while he still was a communications student.

"Individualized attention," he says, matter-of-factly, about the key to his collegiate experience. "I am one of four children in my family, all with completely different college experiences. This allowed me to see firsthand how beneficial small class sizes are, compared to larger schools. When I showed up to plan classes, my advisors had a pre-set list of classes they thought I would really enjoy. Everything I went to, I was greeted by name – even things so minor as being greeted in the dining hall makes you feel important."

"It also allowed us to receive a more personalized education," adds the Warwick, N.Y., native, who uses a lot of sport analogies. "It was like having a personal trainer for

private lessons, all the time. We learned more in-depth than just the general coursework."

Recruiting videos are big business, and newcomers come and go every year. In order to remain ahead of the competition, Peruso is constantly improving the product and increasing the company's products, services and technology. "We have always been two steps ahead of everyone," he says. "Everything from the custom e-commerce platform and video file delivery system we developed and built, to the cutting edge isolation graphics used on the recruiting reels."

Customers can purchase video of the complete game, unedited copies or an edited package, complete with isolation graphics and effects that point out the targeted athletes on each play. For more information about Next Level Video, please log on to [www.Next-Level-Video.com](http://www.Next-Level-Video.com).

"I just had a great time (at Misericordia)," says Peruso, who also was a member of the men's lacrosse and cross country teams. "Cool environment, great experiences with athletics, excellent curriculum and guidance.

"Dr. (Melissa) Sgroi had a huge impact on me. She drove into us the value of hard work and focused more on the prep work for success in the real world. Everything from her forcing us to learn the proper way to write a resume and interview, to her high standards on all work, she was just full of life and in the end really cared that we succeeded." **H**



**LL** This (personalized attention) allowed me to see firsthand how beneficial small class sizes are, compared to larger schools. **RR**

— John Peruso '10,



Next Level Video personnel, pictured here and above, shoot game action for recruiting videos.

# ALUMNI NEWS

For more information about alumni events and news, visit [misericordia.edu/alumni](http://misericordia.edu/alumni)

## Connecting MU to you via modern technology

It is an exciting time to be Alumni at Misericordia University.

Imagine being able to re connect with the Misericordia campus while sitting in bed on a snowy February morning in your pajamas. The Alumni Board and the Alumni Office are now working together to bring the campus to you through the use of modern technology. This fall, the Alumni Office partnered with Athletics to invest in new hardware that will significantly increase our ability to livestream and archive sporting and other events at the University and make them available online for our Alumni.

Whether it is a game, lecture, concert or a specialty program, you will soon be able to watch Misericordia campus events in your own home on your computer, smart TV, or mobile phone. The programming will phase in over time, so keep an eye out on social media and elsewhere to learn when and how you can get connected.

It is also a particularly exciting time to be on the Alumni Board of Directors. In September, the Executive Board unanimously decided to transform the Board of Directors into a "working" board, which means that our committees used their time at our October meeting to set measurable goals and the steps needed to accomplish them. Taking advantage of technology, the Committees plan to meet between our on campus work sessions to move their plans forward.

Our Athletics Committee, for example, has set a goal of inviting back sports teams that achieved major milestones to honor them on campus in front of the home crowd one more time. It will be very special to welcome back our championship teams such as the 2012 Women's Final Four soccer team or any one of the six women's softball teams that hall of fame coach Charlotte Slocum guided to Pennsylvania Athletic Conference championships and see them and their families back on the same campus that gave them so many memories.

As we move forward together, we envision our working committees designing alumni specific content for our streaming service. Programs such as lectures intended for alumni in a specific field, workshops on changing careers or getting back into the workforce, or even virtual tours of the art gallery, are all possible if we combine the "old school" Mercy charism of Service with the new world of technology.

We welcome all motivated Alumni who want to join this dynamic group to reach out to the Alumni Office and let us know your interest. If you are driven to serve our alma mater in new and exciting ways, we would love to hear from you.

Misericordia Proud,

Mark Oberstaedt '89  
Alumni Board President



Mark Oberstaedt '89

# CLASS NOTES

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

## 1960

**Betty Tomolaitis DiAndriole '60** and her husband, Frank, of Naples, Fla., celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary with a 40-day cross-country road trip that covered 11,300 miles. The couple visited 24 states, with overnight stays in 18 different states with family and friends, and at national parks, monuments, historic sites and tourist attractions. Only one more state is needed to complete seeing all 50 – Alaska!

## 1968

**Virginia McDermott Corcoran '68** and her husband, John, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Married Nov. 17, 1967 at the former St. Therese Church in South Wilkes-Barre, Pa., by the late Rev. William Wheeler, the couple has two sons, attorney John P. Corcoran Jr., Pittsburgh, Pa., and Michael J. Corcoran, Broomall, Pa., and three grandchildren, Sofia, Gabrielle and Dominic Corcoran. Dr. Virginia Corcoran, the daughter of the late Neil and Virginia McDermott, was born and raised in South Wilkes-Barre. A graduate of College Misericordia, she holds advanced degrees from Marywood College and a doctorate from Temple University. Dr. Corcoran is a registered dietitian, and served on faculties at Penn State, Scranton, and is retired from the University of Scranton.



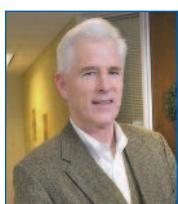


Relive winter commencement by looking through the special photo album at [bit.ly/mugraddec17](http://bit.ly/mugraddec17)

To celebrate the occasion, the couple and their family had a Mass at St. Elizabeth Church, Bear Creek, Pa., celebrated by their former pastor and friend, the Rev. James Alco, followed by a reception for family and friends at the Holiday Inn, East Mountain. They also participated in the Jubilee Mass at the Scranton Diocese, where they renewed their nuptial vows in the spring. An additional celebration was a fall foliage cruise in October in New England and Canada.

## 2002

**Elwood (Woody) Hungarter '02,** R.N., B.S.N., M.S., has been named the Chief Operating Officer for VNA Philadelphia. Most recently, Hungarter was the administrator of HCR Manor



Care/ Heartland Home Care and Hospice in Blue Bell, Pa., where he was responsible for the success of the agency by every measure.

## 2004

**Katie Barnett '04** made a presentation in July about co-teaching elementary students in the virtual model at BbWorld17 National Conference in New Orleans, La., with colleague, Christy Kotwica. The educational session focused on a circular teaching model the teachers use in their online classroom for first-grade students. She has been a cyber-school teacher at PA Virtual Charter School in King of Prussia, Pa., for 11 years.

## 2008

**Carol McIntyre Fahnestock '08, '14** accepted a new position as the Paralegal/Board of Trustees Governance Liaison at the Lehigh Valley Health Network at corporate headquarters in center-city Allentown, Pa. Carol will be responsible for supporting the chief legal officer as well as the LVHN Board of Trustees.

**Alicia Magda '08** and Ryan Pringle were married Sept. 17, 2016. Alicia is

the senior director of online marketing at Web.com in Drums, Pa., and Jacksonville, Fla. The couple traveled to the Eastern Caribbean for their honeymoon. They reside in Kingston, Pa., with their dog, Lily, and cat, Sam.

**Alison Odell Hudzinski '08** and her husband, Don, welcomed their first baby boy, Michael Edward, on March 19, 2017.



**Leah Steele Holmberg '08** and her husband, Joseph, welcomed their daughter, Kinsley Rose Holmberg, Dec. 1, 2016.

## 2009

**Heather McAndrew '09** and Robert Webb were married during an outdoor ceremony on July 1, 2017. Heather is a special education teacher at the Pittston Area School District, Pittston, Pa. The couple honeymooned in Aruba, and currently reside in Pittston Township.

**Lesley Warren Banks '09** and her husband welcomed a baby girl, Lola Banks, on July 9, 2017.

**Megan Yetter '09** and **William Challacombe '09**

were married Dec. 2011 in Naples, Fla. She earned her undergraduate degree in biology with minors in chemistry and English before completing graduate school to be a physician assistant.



## Misericordia Proud!

Misericordia Proud! is an alumni referral program that affords the applicant a waiver of the standard \$25 application fee and a one-time \$1,000 alumni grant that will be applied to first-semester tuition. For more information, please log on to [misericordia.edu/MUProud](http://misericordia.edu/MUProud).

William graduated with a degree in sport management. The couple resides in Everett, Wash.

## 2010

**Lurae Brophy '10** and his wife, Melissa, welcomed their daughter, Abigail Grace, on July 26, 2017.



**Joshua Wascura '10** and Mia Collarini were married Oct. 15, 2016. Joshua is employed by Lackawanna County Department of Elections. A reception was held at Montdale Country Club, Jermyn, Pa.

## 2011

**Anthony Calvello '11** and Ann Marie O'Holla were married Oct. 15, 2016. Anthony is a physical therapist and center manager at Select Physical Therapy in Lebanon, Pa. Following a honeymoon in St. Lucia, the couple resides in Palmyra, Pa.

**Monica Winshel DePaolo '11** and Joseph DePaolo '10 and proud big brother, Joey, welcomed their second child, Michael Stephen DePaolo, on Nov. 17, 2017.



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Misericordia Proud | Referral Program



**Continued from previous page**

## 2012

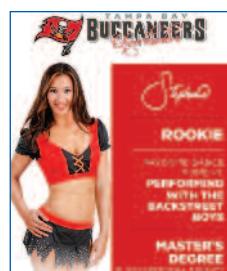
**Rachel Richards '12, '15** and Johnny Glowaniak were married Sept. 3, 2016. Rachel is a physical therapist at Genesis Rehabilitation. The couple resides in Nanticoke, Pa.

**Nicole Flaherty '12, '15** and Kyle Emerick were married June 25, 2016. Nicole is employed by the Hanover Area School District as a second and third grade learning support teacher. The couple resides in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., with their dog, Kolby.

**Chelsea Wilson '12, '17** and Nicholas DeFebo were married Aug. 20, 2016. Chelsea is employed as a registered nurse by Geisinger Community Medical Center, Scranton, Pa. The couple resides in West Pittston, Pa.

**Krystal Burford '12** and **Brett Ford '11** were married in a double-ring ceremony on June 3. Krystal is a registered nurse in labor and delivery at Strong Memorial Hospital, Rochester, N.Y. Kurt is the assistant director of athletic communications and media relations at SUNY Genesco. After a honeymoon to Italy, the couple resides in Genesco, N.Y.

**Stephanie May '12**, a graduate of the Occupational Therapy program and former captain of the cheerleading team, made the cheerleading team for the NFL's Tampa Bay Buccaneers for the 2017-2018 NFL season.



**Callie Whitesell '12** and Albert Gensel III were married Oct. 15, 2016. The couple led their own ceremony with a self-uniting service. Callie is employed by the Canton Area School District. The couple resides in Canton, Pa.

**Sara Sabatino '14** and **William Cooney '12** were married Sept. 2 at East Mountain Holiday Inn, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., and honeymooned in Hawaii. Sara earned her Bachelor of Science degree in biology and William received his Bachelor of Science in computer science. She is the head

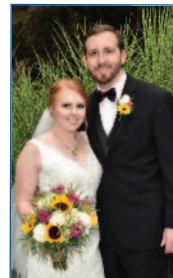


Look for your friends and family in this special homecoming photo album at [bit.ly/muhomecoming2017](http://bit.ly/muhomecoming2017)



Winter commencement marshals, first row from left, are Heather Fritz '97, Marilyn DeHaven '06; Maureen Rinehimer, Colleen Newhart '75, '09; Tiffany Wiernusz '04, and Amy Caruso '05, '12; second row, Bridget Guarnieri '15; Jessica Randall; Adam Grzech '13, '17; Matthew Hinton; and Thomas Sweetz '10, grand marshall.

forensic autopsy technician for the Montgomery County Coroner's Office and manager of the gross anatomy laboratory at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. He is a software developer for Aramark. The couple met while running cross-country for Misericordia. They live in Philadelphia, Pa.



## 2013

**Michael Butry '13** and Loren Gorgol were married June 17, 2017. The couple resides at their home in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., with their cat, Dora.

**Jenna Georgia '13** and Matthew Silverman were married Sept. 9, 2017. The ceremony and reception were held at the Delaware Water Gap Country Club in Pennsylvania, where the couple celebrated with family and friends. Misericordia alumna, Krystal Ford '12 was one of the matrons of honor.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

## ALUMNI WEEKEND 2018 JUNE 1-2

Register online: [cougarconnect.misericordia.edu/aw18](http://cougarconnect.misericordia.edu/aw18)



<b>1939</b> Eileen M. Kane Gallagher June 16, 2017	<b>1952</b> Margaret Thomas Holland July 31, 2017	<b>1959</b> Marianne Kase April 6, 2017	<b>1969</b> Roberta Reilly Norton Nov. 10, 2017	<b>1984</b> Donald Kemmerer Nov. 26, 2017
<b>Mary E. Marlowe</b> Oct. 12, 2017	<b>Sister Mary Magdalena Parker, RSM</b> Sept. 8, 2017	<b>Patricia McGuire Gill</b> Oct. 29, 2017	<b>Diane Papp Bank</b> June 12, 2017	<b>1987</b> Cynthia Donlan July 4, 2017
<b>1942</b> Catherine Sawicki McGavin Sept. 10, 2017	<b>1953</b> Mary Dougherty Kane Feb. 14, 2016	<b>1960</b> Maryanne Murphy Prentice June 22, 2017	<b>Kathleen Whitaker Daniels</b> June 12, 2017	<b>Claire Fielder Karpov</b> July 20, 2017
<b>Lois Siegfried McEnrue</b> Sept. 17, 2017	<b>Norma Moses Steck</b> Nov. 19, 2017	<b>Doris V. Tuman</b> Aug. 7, 2017	<b>Dorothy P. Sheraski</b> July 22, 2017	<b>1989</b> Amy Staskiewicz Aungst Oct. 30, 2017
<b>1944</b> Irene Savage Davison Sept. 28, 2017	<b>1954</b> Rosemary A. Gimble Gorman Sept. 8, 2017	<b>Anne E. King</b> Nov. 6, 2017	<b>Elissa Gubitosa Warner</b> Oct. 16, 2017	<b>1990</b> Kevin Walker Nov. 16, 2017
<b>1946</b> Eleanor Ann Fahey Bryant Aug. 16, 2017	<b>M. Claire McGarry Alpaugh</b> July 1, 2017	<b>1961</b> Margaret Ann McAneny McGraw July 20, 2017	<b>Kathleen M. VanderHeijden</b> Sept. 2, 2017	<b>1991</b> Stanley Mark Charnick Oct. 12, 2017
<b>1948</b> Catherine Butler Mould Oct. 17, 2017	<b>1955</b> Virginia Tracey '55 Aug. 23, 2017	<b>Sister Mary Angelica Bove, DM</b> Nov. 11, 2017	<b>1975</b> Elaine Kutza Czarnecki Feb. 18, 2016	<b>1999</b> JoAnn Linker Metzger Aug. 30, 2017
<b>1950</b> Mary Jane McGonegal Aug. 20, 2017	<b>1956</b> Alice Sieczkowski Kennedy Aug. 28, 2016	<b>1962</b> Felicia Miller Tabor Nov. 13, 2017	<b>1976</b> Deborah DeBonis Dec. 3, 2017	<b>2001</b> Bonnie Wydick Oldham Sept. 8, 2017
<b>Catherine Dougherty Gillen</b> Aug. 20, 2017	<b>1957</b> Jean Janowski Novak Nov. 18, 2017	<b>1963</b> Marianne R. Baloga Sept. 6, 2017	<b>1979</b> Mariann M. Housewear Sept. 27, 2017	<b>2004</b> Janet Ann Zelna Nov. 2, 2017
<b>Florence J. Uhlinger Emory</b> Sept. 9, 2017	<b>Anna E. Yurkoski</b> Nov. 20, 2017	<b>1964</b> B. Carol Brin Shupp Aug. 22, 2017	<b>1980</b> Karen Wills Dormio Oct. 8, 2017	
<b>1951</b> Jeanne M. Tully Purcell June 8, 2017			<b>1983</b> Sheila Blockus Marusak Nov. 6, 2017	

## Rankings highlight academic quality, service and affordability

Misericordia University's ascent in the national collegiate rankings continued during the 2017-18 academic year, as U.S. News & World Report, Princeton Magazine and Money Magazine recognized the institution.

MU is ranked 41st out of 145 colleges and universities in the top tier of the *Best Regional Universities North* category of U.S. News & World Report's 2018 edition of Best Colleges.

The annual report also named Misericordia a *Best Value*, ranking it 24th among the Regional Universities North Schools. The added ranking takes into account a university's academic quality, net cost of attendance and ranking in the top tier. In addition, MU is in 23rd place in the ranking for *Best Colleges for Veterans*.

In U.S. News & World Report's report, Misericordia is the second



highest ranked institution in the region. MU has climbed 26 places in the rankings since 2007.

"The Misericordia community is grateful for the national recognition that comes with these annual collegiate rankings," said President Thomas J. Botzman, Ph.D. "More importantly, we are excited about the possibilities that higher education affords everyone. Through our volunteer efforts, study abroad programs and rigorous academic programs, Misericordia fosters intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and respect

for people in an environment where all are welcome."

In addition, Misericordia is on MONEY Magazine's 2017-18 Best Colleges list, the second highest ranked college in Luzerne and Lackawanna counties. Misericordia earned a ranking of 261 out of the 711 schools listed, climbing 222 places in the national ranking since 2015.

The Princeton Review also recognized MU as one of the top colleges in the northeastern United States, based on excellent academics and the results of student surveys about their collegiate experiences.

"As a campus where all are welcome, we are happy to have our students applaud our friendly and supportive atmosphere and recognize the dedication, academic expertise and nurturing nature of our faculty and staff," said Dr. Botzman."

# TIMELESS MEMORIES

## Classmates to honor memory of Bettsi Jaeger '68 with 50th Anniversary Clock on campus

The Misericordia Class of 1968 is turning the sadness of losing one of its most stalwart alumnae into a project that will benefit the campus for years to come. In memory of Eileen "Bettsi" Jaeger '68, her classmates and friends are raising funds to place a Class of 1968 50th Anniversary Clock in the heart of campus, in the area between Mercy Hall and the Mary Kintz Bevevino Library.

Organizers believe the clock will be a great way to assure the Class of 1968 will always have a timeless landmark on campus. Volunteers are working to raise the \$25,000 needed to make the 12-foot-tall project a reality.

Considered by many to be Misericordia's most dedicated alumna, Jaeger passed away at her home in Norwalk, Conn., on Nov. 15, 2016. The Long Island native turned down an offer from Cornell University to major in nutrition at Misericordia and made the most of her collegiate experience. In a 2014 interview, she credited Misericordia with the opportunity to develop life-long friendships that molded her character.

Jaeger was a long-time member of the Alumni Association Board of Directors and an active Class Agent, using her out-going personality to rally classmates to attend alumni activities and support philanthropy projects. Her Class of 1968 historically has had the largest participation rate at class-specific functions.

When Maria Grilli Gatta '68, class president, took ill in 2005, Jaeger was among those who sprang to action. "A group of us came together at the funeral and decided to start a scholarship in Maria's name," she said. "Before we left, we were on our way to endowing a scholarship for a student in the Women With Children program, a mission close to Maria's heart."

Jaeger was among the classmates who started the Class of '68 Scholarship in 2008. "A committee of classmates makes the decision as to who the recipient is each year," Jaeger proudly explained. In 2013, classmates turned the tables and surprised their honorary leader with the formation of the Bettsi E. Jaeger'68 Scholarship during their 45th Reunion. "I've never been more surprised," she stated with a smile. A member of the Heart of Mercy Society, Jaeger was a vocal advocate and encouraged fellow alumni to include Misericordia in their estate planning.

"Our class is the University's best class because of Bettsi. Her drive and sense of humor helped us all to stay in touch," commented Louise Peele '68, committee member and friend. "By helping the University Advancement staff with their projects, she felt she was making a difference."

The Alumni Office is planning to hold a dedication of the clock during the Class of 1968's 50th Reunion during Alumni



**Eileen 'Bettsi' E. Jaeger**  
Sept. 25, 1946 –  
Nov. 15, 2016

Weekend on June 1-2. Jaeger is survived by several cousins and countless friends.

Donations in her name may be made out to Misericordia University, with Bettsi's Clock in the memo line, and sent to Development Office, 301 Lake St., Dallas, Pa., 18612. Any money raised beyond what is needed for the clock will go to the Class of '68 Scholarship. **H**



### DONATIONS

The Class of 1968 welcomes donations to the 50th Anniversary Clock Fund, which will place a clock, similar to the one pictured, near the center of the upper campus.



## Doctor of Physical Therapy students gain new perspectives and clinical skills while volunteering at FOR U Stroke Camp in Jamaica

BY PAUL KRZYWICKI

For graduate students in the 6½-year Doctor of Physical Therapy Program at Misericordia University, the Friends of the Redeemer United's (FOR U) Stroke Camp in Top Hill, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica offers a little something for everyone at the beginning of the fall semester: Personal growth, clinical experience and camaraderie probably are near the top of every volunteer's wish list.

Misericordia University student Trever Reed '15, '18 signed up for the service opportunity after participating in an informational session on campus, believing it would provide a unique experience. "I thought it was a chance to get out of my comfort zone and experience some type of personal

growth and have a different outlook on life," says Reed, who had never before participated in a service trip. "I felt like this was a once in a lifetime opportunity."

It turns out the Gaithersburg, Md., native was correct, as the Sept. 2-7 service mission revealed a new side of himself in addition to testing his skills as a promising physical therapist. "I became more spiritual after the trip," Reed acknowledges. "Every morning we would start with praise and devotion."

Those moments of reflection with the collegian volunteers, faculty, patients and FOR U staff members oftentimes resembled a nondenominational sermon during a church service. In these instances, they reflected on the moment ahead of them, and what they wanted

Misericordia University volunteers, first row from left, Lauren Malick '15, '18, Ringtown, Pa.; Kelly Keener '15, '18, Pittston, Pa., and Kayla Hope '15, '18, Tamaqua, Pa.; second row, Kelsey Frasier '15, '18, Clementon, N.J., and Kelcey Langan '15, '18, Scranton, Pa.; third row, Gabrielle Van Mater '15, '18, Wrightstown, N.J.; Shelley Black '15, '18, Hanover Twp., Pa.; Samantha Partington '15, '18, Fogelsville, Pa.; Heather Fritz, P.T., D.P.T., assistant professor of physical therapy; Adam Wasiakowski '15, '18, Mountain Top, Pa., and Trever Reed '15, '18, Gaithersburg, Md., pose for a picture at the Friends of the Redeemer United's Stroke Camp in Top Hill, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica in late summer.

to get out of that particular day – before eventually breaking out into song, complete with a Jamaican-reggae beat.

"Every day of my life, I am blessed, I am blessed," the 10 Misericordia students sang, harmonizing the chorus of their favorite praise-and-devotion song on campus while recounting their individual experiences in Jamaica. "When I wake up in the morning, till I lay my head to rest, I am blessed, I am blessed ..."

**Continued on next page**

**'I am blessed...'**

**Continued from previous page**

Hurricane Irma might have cut short their service trip in the Caribbean Sea by a number of days, but it did little to dampen their enthusiasm for the experience abroad. Misericordia's students provided intense physical therapy to seven Jamaican stroke patients with myriad conditions at FOR U Stroke Camp. The nonprofit organization relies on volunteers, especially collegians, to provide therapeutic services to the underserved populations in remote areas of Jamaica.

The students formed two-person teams to examine their assigned patients and develop individualized treatment plans to reduce pain, promote free movement and restore function by utilizing various workstations addressing balance, gait, upper and lower extremities, and more in 45-minute intervals.

"I think one of the big things we did there was make everything functional," says Samantha Partington '15, '18, who collaborated with student colleague Gabrielle Van Mater '15, '18 to ease Pamela's balance, gait and coordination issues. "In our sessions, we wanted to make sure we geared our interventions toward something that would help them increase their independence."

Under the guidance of Heather Fritz, P.T., D.P.T., assistant professor of physical therapy, the students admit they measured their clients' quality-of-life improvements in baby steps, as some of them have been attending therapy sessions at FOR U Stroke Camp for some time.

Take LeRoy, for example. He was high functioning compared to some of the other clients, as he needed additional therapy to improve his balance and regain strength in his left arm. In Pamela's case, the Misericordia student therapists worked on her ataxia diagnosis by not using an assistive device and challenging her with obstacles.

"It was nice to see the different type of culture and the different way of life there," Shelley Black '15, '18, says, while reflecting on her clinical work with LeRoy that focused on

strengthening his left arm and fine tuning his balance. "One of the main things we focused on when treating our patients was their goals and what they wanted to do. We adjusted our therapy treatment to meet their goals."

A truck driver, Frank's stroke affected the left side of his body, leaving him with poor balance and weakness in his limbs. It took two years of therapy before he was able to climb into his truck independently. Sally's limitations resulted in trouble performing routine activities and daily living chores because of an impinged nerve in her shoulder. She had a simple, albeit important, goal: To be able to iron her grandchild's school clothes.

"I had a hard time not crying that day," says Lauren Malick '15, '18, who provided the clinical expertise that helped Frank climb back into his truck. "Even though we did not get as much time with the patients as we expected, we were still able to see significant changes and goals met."

"You are humbled and grateful to go on that service trip, just to see a different place and have those meaningful experiences," adds Malick, who previously participated in a service trip to Jamaica with Campus Ministry.

These snapshots offer a glimpse into how service for specialty clinicians can make a world of difference for underserved populations, but they also do not tell the entire story. The Jamaican people and students also gained in other ways – many of which are immeasurable.

"You need a trip like this every once in a while to reset your perspectives and reset your priorities," Dr. Fritz says she likes to tell students who are considering service opportunities.

Looking at the calendar, MU's mission of Mercy measured five days, but Pamela surely does not see it that way. "I do not know your parents, but send them my love," Partington says, recalling a pleasant exchange between patient and clinician. "She was just grateful for everything."

By the end of their shortened mission trip, Pamela had adopted





**(Top to bottom, left to right)**

**Student therapist Gabrielle Van Mater '15, '18** works on balance training with Pamela.

**Doctor of Physical Therapy student clinicians,** from left, Trever Reed '15, '18 and Lauren Malick '15, '18 test the balance of their patient, Sally, at FOR U Stroke Camp in Jamaica.

**Student clinician Adam Wasiakowski '15, '18** works on scapula mobility with Joe at FOR U Stroke Camp.

**Doctor of Physical Therapy student Lauren Malick '15, '18** assesses the balance of Frank at the Friends of the Redeemer United's Stroke Camp in Top Hill, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica.

**Student clinicians,** from left, Samantha Partington '15, '18 and Gabrielle Van Mater '15, '18 complete a hip stretching exercise with their Jamaican patient, Pamela, at FOR U Stroke Camp.

**Pamela** completes gait training with a Theraband resistance band alongside student clinician Samantha Partington '15, '18.

Partington and Van Mater unofficially, and had forged a lasting bond. "She called us her daughters," Van Mater says. "She is an amazing person, who is so full of life and shows everyone around her nothing but love. I am so grateful and blessed for the time I was able to spend with her."

The collaborative efforts of student clinicians Kelsey Frasier '15, '18 and Kayla Hope '15, '18 enabled their client – Beverly – to get another step closer to overcoming the side effects of her medical condition by working on the strength and coordination of her left arm.

Frasier says she signed on for her first service trip to "help others," but it also "gave me a reality check for what my problems actually are," she says, acknowledging her Type-A personality. "They (Jamaicans) are so grateful for the smallest things and we do not even appreciate the bigger things we have. I realize now I have to take a breath and realize not everything is as big of a deal as it seems."

In Hope's case, she knew she would not have another opportunity to share her talents on a university-sponsored service trip. It also served as an occasion to grow personally and professionally. "It was nice working with the staff at FOR U because everyone brought different skills to the table that we may not have seen before," says Hope, a Tamaqua, Pa., native. "I learned a lot from watching other people and thinking outside the box due to limited resources."

Adam Wasiakowski '15, '18 is chatty and sometimes humorous during this time of reflection, but becomes introspective suddenly when asked to reflect on his recent experience. He quickly paraphrases and agrees with a common saying by his mentor, Dr. Fritz, that "when you get back (to campus), you are going to be different from your classmates," he says, sharing the powerful impact service has on those who freely give of themselves.

He said the volunteer work was everything he imagined it to be – and more. "I never worked with the stroke

population before, and a different culture," explains Wasiakowski, who partnered with classmate Kelly Keener '15, '18. "It was a service trip in every sense of the word. It was humbling and just an eye-opening experience. They have little. They do not own much. Their houses are four walls and a roof, but they thank God every day."

"It was definitely a great experience," adds Keener, who traveled internationally for the first time and participated in her first service trip. "It was nice to see how people live. The Jamaican culture is very different from ours because it is laid back and at a slower pace. It was very rewarding to see how appreciative everyone was and knowing you can make a difference by giving someone your time," she adds.

Volunteer work at Oak Leaf Therapeutic Horsemanship Center in Nicholson, Pa., and two trips abroad to Guyana left Kelcey Langan '15, '18 wanting to give more during her collegiate years. "I personally get more out of it (service) than I give," says Langan, who provided clinical services to Macool. "I get more. I would like to give more."

The Jamaican experience touched the student clinicians in similar and different ways. During reflection, they each touched upon the cultural experience, added clinical skills, and new world exploration that service opportunities like this offer. Moreover, though, everyone wished for one thing – more time.

"You really learn a lot about other people. It was an interesting setting because in this case we were with the same patient all day, which is interesting," says Langan. "It touches me to see that I can make a difference."

In the end, Dr. Fritz was not surprised how well her students represented Misericordia. "I think they all came into this practicing the charisms," she says. "They had a good foundation already, so it did not surprise me that they carried their values and intentions with them. I had the privilege of seeing this already in class and at their clinical experiences, so the trip to Jamaica only built on what I knew about them." 

# 15th HOF induction class features five student-athlete standouts

BY SCOTT CRISPELL

The Athletics Department inducted Matt Carey '06 (lacrosse), Jen (Gehman) Detweiler '07 '08 (softball), Harold Knebel '05 (baseball), Suzanne (Sharp) Williamson '88 (basketball) and Chris Wadas '05 (cross-country and track & field) into the Hall of Fame (HOF) during the 15th induction ceremony in October.

Carey, the first men's lacrosse player inducted into the HOF, holds the school record for career goals (150) and ranks third in career points (188). His 46 goals in 2004 are the second-highest, single-season total in school history. A two-time team MVP, he was the first all-conference and All-Eastern College Athletics Conference (ECAC) player. He was a four-time All-Pennsylvania Athletic Conference (PAC) honoree.

Detweiler, a catcher, is the career leader in triples (22) and total bases

(394), and is tied for first with 32 home runs. She is second in career hits (219) and slugging percentage (.718), and is third with 161 runs scored. She was a four-time All-PAC selection, including a three-time, first-team honoree, and was the PAC Player of the Year. Detweiler was a two-time All-Region selection.

Knebel, a shortstop, ranks second in career triples (11), batting average (.389) and slugging percentage (.654), and is third in homers (21) and total bases (318). He is fifth in RBI (119) and sixth in career hits (189). Knebel was the PAC Player of the Year as a junior.

Williamson was a two-time women's basketball MVP and a two-time team captain. A three-time, first-team National Association of Intercollege Athletics District 19 all-star, she led the



**Members of the induction class included, from left, Suzanne (Sharp) Williamson '88, Jen (Gehman) Detweiler '07 '08, Matt Carey '06 and Chris Wadas '05.**

Cougars to the 1988 Keystone Athletic Conference title. She was the second women's player in school history to reach 1,000-career points and ended her career with more than 1,200 points.

Wadas was a four-time MVP of the cross-country team where he was a three-time PAC champion. He was a four-time, first-team All-PAC honoree while leading the Cougars to three team titles. He earned all-region status as a sophomore. Wadas was the track & field team MVP as a senior, and holds the school record at 3000m and owns the indoor record at 1500m. 

## Field hockey wins MAC Freedom title

The field hockey team won its second Middle Atlantic Conference (MAC) Freedom championship in three years and second NCAA Tournament berth.

Colby Eldridge '18, '19 was named first-team All-MAC Freedom for the fourth consecutive season and was named MAC Freedom Offensive Player of the Year. Megan Meckling '18 and Haley Gruber '18, '20 earned second-team honors and Katley Campbell '20 earned honorable mention. Jenna Whitman '21 was the MAC Freedom Rookie of the Year.

## Two straight MAC titles for women's soccer team

The women's soccer team won its second straight MAC Freedom championship with a thrilling 1-0 win in double overtime at Wilkes

University. The Cougars defeated Hamilton in the opening round of the NCAA Tournament before ending the season with a double-OT loss.



**The Athletics Department is holding its sixth annual Golf Tournament on Saturday, Sept. 24. Please call (570) 674-6374 to make your reservations. Participating in last year's tournament at the Huntsville Golf Club, from left are, Paul Zaangle, '97, Chuck Edkins, director of athletics; Dennis Connell, and Scott Hein '95.**

Emily Szelinski '18 was named the MAC Freedom Defensive Player of the Year, and was joined on the All-MAC Freedom first team by Jackie Stevens

'18, Alex Gallagher '18, Hannah Larkin '18, '20 and Alyssa Pojero '18. Amber Hartranft '18 and McKenzie Ruffing '17, '19 both made second-team, and Jordyn Martini '20 earned honorable mention.

## Women's XC team gets 3rd straight title

Led by runner-up Clare Schoen '19, '20 the women's cross-country team won its third MAC title in three years.

Emily Madigan '20 placed eighth, while and Meredith Hartz '18, '20 and Jordyn Donnelly '19, '20 were 10th and 11th, respectively. Rowan Pepe '19, '21 finished 20th.

Schoen earned all-region and qualified for the NCAA Championships. 



## STUDENT ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT



### Joseph Grzech '17, '20

As senior Joseph Grzech '17, '20 finishes his swimming career, it will mark the end of an era in the Anderson Center natatorium.

The son of John and Linda Grzech of Mountain Top, Pa., is the third and final Grzech sibling to compete for the Cougars. The Crestwood High School graduate and computer science/physical therapy major followed the footsteps of his sister, Breanna '14, and brother, Adam '13, '17 on the Misericordia record board.

Breanna, a graduate of the health care management program, still holds school records in the 100 backstroke and 200 backstroke, while Adam, a business administration graduate, owns the 100 backstroke and is part of three school relay records.

Entering his senior season, Joseph has school marks in the 200 freestyle, 200 backstroke and is part of two relay records. In each of his first three seasons, he has claimed three Middle Atlantic Conference titles, including one in each season. **h**

# MUSIC MAKER

## Misericordia moment inspiration behind Pennsylvania Youth Chorale

BY MARIANNE  
TUCKER PUHALLA

**Eileen Finley, '69**

MUSIC  
EDUCATION

There are definitive moments in life that in an instant clarify our thoughts and help determine the directions our lives take. Moving out on your own. Deciding to get married. Choosing to start a family.

For alumna Eileen Finley '69, her "aha!" moment came while as a Misericordia student she was attending a concert in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., featuring a German children's choir. As the young children began filing on stage, there was an audible "aw" from the audience as first the tallest ones and then the smallest ones took their place on the risers. As the conductor raised her baton and the first notes sounded, Finley's life changed forever.

"It was as if heaven opened up ... the children's voices took my breath away," says the lifelong music educator. "I never heard such a sound before and my whole life's direction was set in that one moment."

In June, Finley retired after more than four decades as founder and artistic director of the



Eileen  
Finley '69

acclaimed Pennsylvania Youth Chorale (PYC), during which she lead more than a 1,000 children in song at prestigious concert venues across the United States, Canada, the British Isles and Germany. Talking about her career with the exuberance of a 20-year-old, it is easy to tell that Finley exhibits an extraordinary passion for teaching music that was born at Misericordia and continues to this day.

"That children's choir concert was most definitely a pivotal moment in my life and I have the Misericordia faculty to thank," the music education major recalls. "As a student in the music program, I was required to attend a series of cultural events each year. Believe me, I would have preferred being in my dorm with my friends. The wisdom of the institution far exceeded my teenage mind and for that I am thankful."

Upon graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in music education in 1969, Finley was hired to teach music by the Neshaminy School District in Bucks County, located a

Members of the junior, senior and alumni chorales pose for a picture with Eileen Finley '69.





Eileen Finley '69 leads students in the junior and senior choirs of the PA Youth Chorale.

short distance from her hometown near Glenside, Pa.

"Teaching children to sing was as natural to me as breathing ... apparently I had inherited the teaching gene from my mother," she says with a smile.

Finley developed a chorus at her elementary school, which under her direction became highly recognized throughout the district. In the late 1970's, Finley was asked to prepare a select group from her school chorus to participate in Neshaminy High School's annual musical production. The musical, Hans Christian Anderson, included a significant role for a children's chorus. After the final performance, a student came to her and asked, "So, what do we do next?" – and with that impetus, the PYC was born.

Finley established PYC as an independent community organization for boys and girls in grades 2-8, providing an opportunity for them to learn to sing in different languages, study a range of choral styles, learn stage presence and choreography, and perform choral masterpieces with orchestras under renowned guest conductors.

Finley says she grew as a musician, person and teacher during the 40 years she worked with the choir. She also found herself juggling the roles of director, conductor, business manager, fundraiser and travel coordinator, all while teaching full time. In 2005, after serving for 36 years in the public school system, Finley retired from her Neshaminy teaching post to focus her attention on the chorale.

The original choir began with a few dozen students and continued to grow over the next decade. Eventually, the group was divided into two levels, a junior program for

children in grades 2 through 4, and a senior program for students in grades 5 through 8. As the chorale progressed, so did its reputation, with students taking the stage at venues in six Canadian provinces, four European countries and 26 states, including New York's iconic Carnegie Hall.

Although she handed the reins over to the new director, Kelly Wyszomierski, in June, Finley is never far from a baton. She continues to teach music at Cairn University in Langhorne, Pa., and guest lectures around the region. She will serve as a guest conductor this year for the annual PYC Bux-Mont Festival, a one-day program for public and private school music students in grades 4-6.

"As I look back at what I have accomplished, I have the sisters at Misericordia to thank. Because it was an all-girls school at that time, the officers of every club and organization were female students, and the sisters were the heads and chairs of every department. I was educated to believe that, as a woman, I could do anything that I was willing to work for. I was one of the first in the country to develop a community children's choir and it never occurred to me that I couldn't do it," she adds, proudly.

A unique part of her experience on campus was the opportunity to be close to her aunt, Sister Siena Finley, RSM, a professor of religious studies and recognized medical ethicist, who founded the Ethics Institute of Northeastern Pennsylvania at Misericordia University in 1987. Eileen visited Sister Sienna in Dallas frequently over the years until her passing in 2014. 

 I was educated to believe that, as a woman, I could do anything that I was willing to work for. 

— Eileen Finley '69

# STAR POWER

Alumna enjoys Emmy-nominated career as a casting director in NYC

BY MARIANNE TUCKER PUHALLA

In every television series, there are the leading characters that return week after week and supporting characters that appear some weeks but not others. Then there are a host of episodic characters, ranging from store clerks to taxi drivers, whose actions you might not even notice, but whose dialogue is crucial to the development of each scene.

Alumna Rosalie Joseph '71 is an Emmy-nominated casting director in New York City who has cast actors and actresses in major films and theater productions as well as across the spectrum of roles in television during a career that has spanned 40 years.

Currently serving as the episodic casting director for the ABC hit drama *Quantico*, Joseph is responsible for placing up to 25 actors in non-recurring roles for each of the third season's 13 episodes. A day in her life involves holding auditions, casting each role, getting producer and studio approval, drawing up contracts, and making sure the communication is in place so the talent is prepared and knows where they need to be.

"When I do episodic casting, I am responsible for casting the people you see who have a speaking part, but are not in lead roles. Some may just say, 'hello.' Others have detailed dialogue. In my career, I've been called upon more than once to cast a dead body when they are in need of a certain look," Joseph says, laughing at the mere thought.

Having done both pilot casting for those in starring roles and episodic casting, her credits include NBC's *Blacklist*: *Redemption*, and the NBC police drama, *The Mysteries of Laura*,

working alongside Debra Messing, who has since resurrected her starring role in the megahit, *Will and Grace*.

Joseph earned an Emmy nomination and a Casting Society of America Award for casting the film, "Annie," in 1999 starring Audra McDowell, Kathy Bates, Kristen Chenoweth and Alan Cumming. She has had such a prolific career that there are two pages of casting credits listed on her biography on the Internet Movie Database (IMDb.com) – a who's who list of those involved in the television and movie industries.

She was the New York casting director for the feature films *Hook*, *The Godfather Part III*, *Jack*, starring the late Robin Williams, the 1994 mystery, *Radioland Murders*, and the 1988 crime drama, *Kansas*. Her television credits include the ABC medical drama, *Body of Proof*, which starred Dana



Rosalie Joseph '71

Delaney; the CBS crime drama, *Golden Boy*, and the Sherri Shepherd sitcom, *Sherri*, which aired on the Lifetime Network. Her work on made-for-television movies includes *Guilty*, *Murder in Manhattan*, and *Almost Golden: The Jessica Savitch Story*.

Joseph gives credit for her career to Misericordia University Professor Walter "Rusty" C.J. Anderson, who served as director of theater arts from 1965 to 1994. Joseph enrolled at Misericordia planning to major in education, but was introduced to Anderson within the first week, and days later switched her major to drama.

"Rusty Anderson changed my life," she says sincerely. "There are so many reasons I am who I am because of him and the Misericordia drama department. It was a loving and supportive group and many of us are still in touch. I stayed in contact with Rusty after I graduated and I have always tried to honor him – he is one of the greats of Misericordia."

Earning her bachelor's degree along with a teaching certificate in 1971, Joseph began teaching at Riverside Junior-Senior High School, just a few miles from her home in Moosic, Pa. She started a drama program at the school and directed student productions for six years before deciding to move to New York City to pursue her own dreams of acting. She was working on some off-Broadway shows and as a waitress in the city when fate intervened and a family friend alerted her to a job with casting director Vic Ramos. He immediately put her to work while he was casting a Francis Ford Coppola movie.

After what she calls a rocky start, with some rookie blunders, she soon made an impact in the industry – moving quickly through the ranks and developing an impressive

## Rosalie Joseph '71

### DRAMA

working alongside Debra Messing, who has since resurrected her starring role in the megahit, *Will and Grace*.

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resume. As the casting associate with Vic Ramos, she worked on numerous films such as *The Blue Lagoon*, *My Bodyguard* and *American Gigolo*. After spending four years working with Ramos, Joseph became director of daytime casting for CBS and subsequently served six years as the network's director of prime-time casting. She left CBS to serve as an independent casting director for 10 years, before being lured to Los Angeles for a job with MTM Enterprises, the production company established by Mary Tyler Moore and her husband, Grant Tinker.

In another move that demonstrated her prestige in the field, she returned to New York as vice president of casting for ABC in 1996. She left in 2009 to work again as an independent casting director, founding her current company, Rosalie Joseph Casting.

Growing up, she remembers how entertainer Danny Thomas' visit to Northeastern Pennsylvania in support of the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital inspired her. At 14, she became the youth chair for the hospital's fundraising organization in Lackawanna County. "I grew up in a family that believed in giving back to the community. My dad collected coats for children as a member of the Elks Club. It was something that was imbedded in us as children," she says.

Joseph's high-profile position has helped her carry on that spirit of giving. "Years ago, I went to a gifting project and watched as the presents were given to the children – making them happy, yet leaving a sad look on the faces of the parents confronted with not being able to provide for their children," Joseph says. "I felt it would be better to give the parents the gifts to give to the children, making a happier holiday for everyone."

With that concept in mind, she and a friend founded Stockings With Care in 1992, an organization that provides

holiday gifts to children in need across the New York Metropolitan area. This year, the charity provided presents to more than 1,700 children through a network of volunteers. Actor Tom Cruise is among the list of famous supporters.

"It is gratifying to know these children will have presents to open on Christmas morning given to them by their parents. For the ones who believe, they will know Santa remembered them on Christmas Day," Joseph says. A second pet project of hers, First Day New York, provides children with clothes and supplies for their first day of school.

A resident of the Battery Park section of Manhattan, Joseph lived just a few blocks from the World Trade Centers during the terror attack of Sept. 11, 2001. Her neighborhood was decimated and the building she lived in was closed for two months. In response to the outpouring of support shown to their city by people around the world, she and some neighbors started Battery Park Cares, an organization that helps other communities in times of disaster. They most recently sent aid to areas of Texas and Florida impacted by Hurricane Irma and the Caribbean islands ravaged by Hurricane Maria. They also developed a FEMA-trained Battery Park Community Emergency Response Team of about 300 members, ready to help their city respond to any disaster.

Sharing her expertise by offering educational and acting classes for those trying to break into the business, she encourages young actors and actresses to follow their dreams, surround themselves with friends who are creative, and be conscious of the world around them.

Her advice: "Be aware and observe what is going on so to best be able to understand and portray the human condition. The more aware and observant you are, the better actor you will be." 



SEPTEMBER 24, 2017

# MU Roar9.24

Annual Giving Day supports the restoration of the historic arch entranceway

## GOING SOCIAL

Follow the progress of Misericordia University's annual Giving Day on Twitter and social media by using the hashtag #MURoar924 or #GivingDay. In September, the University also utilized the hashtags #SupportTheArch and #HomeIsWhereTheArchIs in support of the archway's restoration project.



## FAST FACTS

Misericordia University's annual Giving Day on Sept. 24, 2017 benefitted the restoration of the historic arch that greets people coming to campus. The University secured a gift of \$19,240 from a group of generous donors when the campaign received 924 gifts by 11:50 p.m. on Sept. 24. Here is some additional information about the successful campaign:

**Donors: 1,001**

**Total: \$62,000** and counting

**Demographic:** Parents, friends, alumni, faculty, staff and students

**Main theme:** Home is where the arch is

**Main hashtag:** #supportthearch

**Profiles:** Log on to muroar924.com/meet the donors to meet some donors

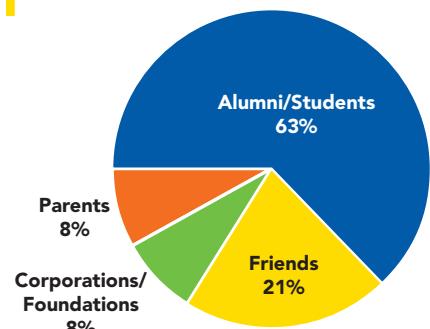
**Bricks:** **148 donors** received bricks from the arch for donating \$250 or more

**Generous:** **25 individual donors** gave \$1,000 or more

**Students:** More than **100 students** purchased T shirts in support of the campaign

## SUPPORT SOURCE

Giving Day donors supported the project to restore the arch to its original grandeur. The following are the funding sources to the annual event:



Rose Marie Zaher Mazer '52 of Shavertown, Pa., made what she considers may be her final gift, a special one for 2017's Giving Day. She donated to the capital campaign in support of the arch restoration project. Thanks to generous alumni, like Rose, the restoration project is complete and the University is another step closer to raising the funding for it.

Director of Alumni Relations Lailani Augustine '16, left, and Students Today, Alumni Forever student volunteers, Morgan Karas '21 and Cassy Silveri '19 visited Rose to thank her for her generosity.



## SAVE THE DATE ...

- |  |                                     |  |   |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>MARCH 3-11</b>  | <b>Spring Break</b>                 | <b>MAY 12</b>  | <b>Spring Commencement</b>                  |
| <b>MARCH 22</b>  | <b>50 Nights to Commencement</b>    | <a href="http://misericordia.edu/commencement">misericordia.edu/commencement</a>                 |   |
| <a href="http://cougarconnect.misericordia.edu">cougarconnect.misericordia.edu</a>               |                                     | <b>JUNE 1-2</b>  | <b>Alumni Weekend 2018</b>                  |
| <b>MARCH 22-24</b> Misericordia Players Theater  |                                     | <a href="http://Cougarconnect.misericordia.edu/aw18">Cougarconnect.misericordia.edu/aw18</a>     |   |
| Arsenic and Old Lace   |                                     | <b>AUG. 18</b>   | <b>Open House</b>                           |
| <a href="http://misericordia.edu/theartsandmore">misericordia.edu/theartsandmore</a>             |                                     | <a href="http://admissions.misericordia.edu/openhouse">admissions.misericordia.edu/openhouse</a> |   |
| <b>APRIL 13-14</b>   | <b>Relay for Life</b>               | <b>SEPT. 24</b>  | <b>Athletics Department Golf Tournament</b> |
| <a href="http://RelayforLife.org/pamisericordia">RelayforLife.org/pamisericordia</a>             |                                     | Reservations: (570) 674-6374   |   |
| <b>APRIL 28</b>  | <b>Open House</b>                   | <b>SEPT. 29</b>  | <b>Open House</b>                           |
| <a href="http://admissions.misericordia.edu/openhouse">admissions.misericordia.edu/openhouse</a> |                                     | <a href="http://admissions.misericordia.edu/openhouse">admissions.misericordia.edu/openhouse</a> |   |
| <b>MAY 11</b>  | <b>Distinguished Speaker Series</b> | <b>NOV. 10</b>   | <b>Open House</b>                           |
| <a href="http://misericordia.edu/dss">misericordia.edu/dss</a>                                   |                                     | <a href="http://admissions.misericordia.edu/openhouse">admissions.misericordia.edu/openhouse</a> |   |

For more information, please log on to [Misericordia.edu](http://Misericordia.edu) or call (570) 674-6400

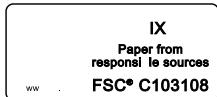


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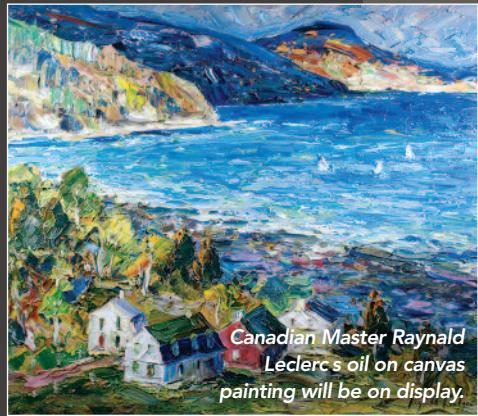
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[www.misericordia.edu/theartsandmore](http://www.misericordia.edu/theartsandmore)



**Canadian Master Raynald Leclerc's oil on canvas painting will be on display.**

### Feb. 3 March 31

#### *Canadian Masters of the Carmen and Sarah Latona Collection*

The collection features water colors and oil paintings by some of the most important Canadian artists of the last 50 years. Pauly Friedman Art Gallery. Information: [Misericordia.edu/art](http://Misericordia.edu/art).

### March 22 24

#### *Misericordia Players Theater*

Please log on to [Misericordia.edu/theartsandmore](http://Misericordia.edu/theartsandmore) for more information.

### March 24

#### *Easter Egg Hunt and Brunch with the Easter Bunny*

Continuous seating for brunch from 10 a.m. 12:30 p.m., Sandy and Marlene Insalaco Hall. Easter Egg Hunt begins at 10:00 a.m. at the Banks Student Life

### April 13 14

#### *Eighth annual Relay for Life*

Join the Misericordia Colleges Against Cancer Chapter, and campus and regional communities in raising money to benefit the American Cancer Society. Information: (570) 674 8055

### June 1 3

#### *Alumni Weekend 2018*

Enjoy a cookout, campus tours, alumni Mass, workshops, games and so much more. Information: (570) 674 6768 or register at [cougarconnect.misericordia.edu/alumniweekend18](http://cougarconnect.misericordia.edu/alumniweekend18).

### June 24 27

#### *Career Exploration Camps*

High school students experience

Center. \$15 adults, \$8, 5 12 years; no charge under age five. Reservations required. Please call (570) 674 1225. Sponsored by Center for Adult and Continuing Education.

### April 7 June 2

#### *Verve Virtu Art Studio exhibit*

Artists from the Deutsch Institute apprenticeship program display work. Pauly Friedman Art Gallery. Information: [Misericordia.edu/art](http://Misericordia.edu/art).

residential academic summer camps in biology, chemistry, biochemistry, communications and media, literature, occupational therapy, and speech language pathology. Information: (570) 674 8023.

### July 23 27

#### *Health Sciences Interprofessional Middle School Career Camp*

Students entering sixth eighth grades explore the health and medical sciences fields. Talk to students and faculty, while exploring new technologies, specialized equipment and careers in exciting fields of study. Information: (570) 674 6494.



*Middle school students will explore technology at annual camp, such as the Anatomage Table.*

### Sept. 1

#### *Contemplating Character exhibition*

152 rare portrait drawings and oil sketches from artists Jacques Louis David, Lucian Freud, Auguste Hilaire Leveille, Louis Joseph Cesar Ducomet and more. Pauly Friedman Art Gallery. Information: [Misericordia.edu/art](http://Misericordia.edu/art).

SEE NEW PLACES! MEET NEW PEOPLE!

### **Tours with a Difference**

**Dr. Marie Noël Keller, RSM, host, veteran of more than 100 overseas trips**  
[Misericordia.edu/tourswithadifference](http://Misericordia.edu/tourswithadifference)

### March 9 19

#### *Sicily's Best, Sorrento, Amalfi Coast and Rome*

Featuring Sicily, Naples, Pompeii, Sorrento, Positano, Capri, Rome and the Vatican, plus a Florence option, \$2,855

### Sept. 14 23

#### *Portugal and its Stunning Azores*

Featuring Lisbon, Obidos, Fatima, Sintra, Carcias, Nazarre, Sao Miguel Islands, Ponta Delgado, Madeira Island and Funchai, \$2,895

### Oct. 9 20

#### *Greece and her Islands*

Featuring Athens, Epidaurus, Delphi, Corinth, Meteora, Thessalonica, Philippi, Santorini and Mykonos, \$3,285

### Nov. 29 Dec. 9

#### *Christmas Magic at the Markets*

Featuring Rothenberg, Salzburg, Linderhof Palace, Oberammergau, Innsbruck and Munich \$2,945.

(All rates are based on double occupancy)

**Contact: Dr. Noël Keller, RSM**  
(570) 674-6776 or 674-6924

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