FOCUS

The MAGAZINE for ALUMNI & FRIENDS of WESTFIELD STATE SPRING 2015

Capturing It All

Learning on ICE
10 Grads, 10 Years
Sabbatical Projects

FOCUS

SPRING 2015

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Westfield
STATE UNIVERSITY

FROM THE EDITOR

Take Advantage of the Safe Haven for Faith

By Janice Beetle '85

I grew up in a house with lots of love but no religion of any kind. My oldest brother died at 10 years old a few years before I was born, and that experience of loss pulled my parents away from the Congregational church where they had previously been teachers and worshippers.

I was a faith seeker as a child, so curious about this God world I knew nothing about. I went to church with a Catholic friend when I could, but I knew very little about what it was all about. When I arrived at Westfield State College in 1981, I was very curious about Father John Dean and the brand-new Albert and Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center.

Father Dean was so popular on campus, and many of my friends attended the Interfaith Center regularly.

I very much wanted to accompany them, but it never occurred to me that I would be welcome. I thought you had to know something I didn't know. I thought you had to believe something I didn't believe. I somehow missed the open invitation in the Interfaith Center name.

I am reflecting on this lost opportunity because the Albert and Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center turns 35 this year, so I am taken back to its roots—and my roots. Leadership of the faith center is also in transition this year, and Father Dean, who officially retired several years ago but has been leading services and offering counsel regularly, is now joined by Father Warren Savage, the University's new Catholic chaplain.

Alaina Leary '15 has offered up stories both on Father Dean and Father Savage in this issue, on Page 18, and her story of Father Dean touched me in particular.

Originally a history teacher at Holyoke High School, Father Dean was later drawn to the priesthood and to campus ministry. He was Westfield State's first permanent chaplain.

Alaina writes that she met Father Dean in the dining hall, and I, too, have so many memories of watching him interact with students, my friends, in the Scanlon Dining Hall. He was always laughing and smiling with students, sitting with them, taking meals together.

I was particularly struck by a story Father Dean told Alaina, which she recounts in her feature about him.

He said he was crossing the campus to get his mail in Parenzo Hall one day, when he was approached by a student who wanted some counsel. The student asked him when Father Dean was available to talk.

Father Dean offered himself up at that moment, prompting the young man to confess he was Jewish. "That doesn't matter," Father Dean said.

I wish I was not too young and naïve to understand that that same openness existed back when I was a student. I wish I understood that the whole mission of an interfaith center was to serve people of all faiths—people seeking a faith along with Catholics, Episcopalians, Jews, Muslims, etc.

My faith did grow up some while I was at Westfield State. I was a dancer in the Musical Theatre Guild's production of Jesus Christ Superstar. While I have since learned what most everyone else knows about that musical—that the story is based on the Bible—it was sure a surprise to learn that back then.

I remember wishing I could take my thoughts and questions to Father Dean, but I was sure that because I wasn't a Catholic, he wouldn't want to spend his time with me. I can see clearly now how wrong I was.

So, on behalf of Fathers Dean and Savage, I offer up a welcome to the Interfaith Center. I offer to anyone with questions around faith, anyone who is seeking, anyone who is on a faith journey or looking for a faith home: Take what is on your mind to these compassionate men who are absolutely there for you.

The Interfaith Center is celebrating a landmark anniversary. It is there for faculty, staff, students. It is there for people of all faiths and no faith. Feel the invitation. ■

SPRING 2015

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ON OUR COVER

An image of the entire Westfield State campus created in a course called Discovering the Art of Mathematics. The images are created from full spherical views (think panorama, but in every viewable direction) that are then conformally projected onto a plane. "It is very interesting mathematics," says Julian F. Fleron, Ph.D., professor of mathematics.

We'd love to hear from you!

Want to get involved?

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Focus magazine is published for Westfield State University two times a year. The mission of the magazine is to highlight the work of the administration, faculty, staff, students and alumni at the University and to share with the wider community the stories of excellence on campus. *Focus* magazine welcomes story ideas and story submissions. Ideas and stories can be offered to editor Janice Beetle '85 at (413) 374-6239 or via email at janice@beetlepress.com. Stories must be of interest to the general readership and should be no longer than 600 words. Class Notes, highlighting alumni personal or vocational views, are also welcome and can be sent to kgalanis@westfield.ma.edu. Deadline for the Fall 2015 is May 29.

WE are Westfield. WE are Community.

By Elizabeth Preston, Ph.D.

STUDENTS, FACULTY, administrators and staff at Westfield State have a long tradition of engagement, both within our local communities and with communities beyond our borders. This year we have launched Westfield Engages, also known as WE, a strategic initiative to acknowledge, strengthen and expand these activities and opportunities.

Any day at the University could find:

- Students working with the Westfield River Watershed Association's twice annual river cleanups.
- Faculty actively involved in the planning and implementation of trail amenities, including the installation of interpretive signs along Westfield's Columbia Greenway Rail Trail.
- Academic department partnerships with the Westfield Athenaeum aiding in the preservation of city archives.
- Faculty, staff and students supporting the city's food system in a variety of ways, including through a long-time partnership with the Westfield Food Pantry, which offers food drives and fresh food from the Westfield State garden during the growing season.
- Students travelling to Granada, Nicaragua, in partnership with La Esperanza Granada, a nonprofit that supports children's education, to construct school buildings for local children. Since 2012, students have raised more than $15,000 to benefit the organization.

While long a part of the Westfield State campus culture, community engagement and civic learning have taken center stage in higher education. In 2012, the White House and the U.S. Department of Education called on colleges and universities to make civic learning and community engagement an explicit part of a college education. In 2014, Massachusetts became the first state to adopt a formal civic learning policy for public higher education. Vice President of Academic Affairs Marsha Marotta served on the task force that developed the policy.

Westfield Engages is an effort to build on and expand our existing relationships within the communities we serve. Further, it is an effort to assure that our students graduate with the knowledge and competencies needed to be informed and engaged citizens and to cultivate a strong sense of citizenship through meaningful participation in democratic processes, service and mutual aid. The University's initiatives have been shaped in part by our participation in the American Democracy Project of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, a multi-campus initiative focused on higher education's role in preparing the next generation of informed, engaged citizens for our democracy.

The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education has supported our efforts with more than $200,000 in Performance Incentive Fund grants over the past two years. This funding is helping the University expand and institutionalize civic literacy and community engagement through officially designated course work. To date, almost 20 courses across our academic programs have been developed or substantially revised to meet our new civic engagement standards. We have also conducted trainings on assessment in civic engagement courses, best practices for engaging communities and writing assignments for civic learning.

Led by Assistant Professor of Geography and Regional Planning Brian Conz, our director of Civic Engagement, the University conducted its first week-long retreat in June 2014. The event drew more than 50 participants, representing both the University and community partners who gathered to plan the further integration of a culture of civic learning and engagement into our academic programs and expansion of community service opportunities.

The University's service-learning courses are not restricted to local communities, or even the United States. For four years in a row, Westfield State students travelled to Nicaragua to assist an impoverished community by building a technology classroom for the elementary school, and nursing students and faculty members travelled to Guatemala to provide medical care and health education.

The Department of Higher Education consistently cites Westfield State as a leader in the state in the area of civic literacy and engagement, and we remain committed to building on that role. But we are also setting milestones to achieve, leveraging new opportunities, such as our participation in the President's Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education.

Our mission is to build on these efforts to foster cultural change, bringing the multitude of service and engagement activities, interdisciplinary collaborations and community connections to the center of our institution, consistent with our ongoing institutional commitment to elimination of barriers to higher education.

We look forward to continuing this discussion. To learn more about Westfield Engages, visit westfield.ma.edu/we. ■

Faces of the University

Student ambassadors mentor peers and community members alike

By Claudia Moore-O'Brien M.Ed. '00

FOR OVER 25 YEARS, student ambassadors have been leading University tours and completing outreach projects on campus and in the wider community with elementary school students and seniors.

Each year, dozens of students apply to become selected as one of the University's 14 ambassadors charged with promoting the positive images of the University through leadership and interpersonal relations.

"This year, we had over 70 applications for 14 positions," says Kim Morgan, program coordinator for the ambassadors. "To be selected, students must be responsible and dedicated and present themselves as student leaders willing to commit themselves to furthering the reach of the University."

The ambassadors are indeed an impressive group. Identified by their ambassador jackets, blue oxford shirts imprinted with the University's seal and ambassador name tags, they are easy to spot.

They are innovative and intelligent students who are dedicated to not only the University but the surrounding community as well. "We usually split our time equally between the campus and community projects," says Morgan.

Back row – Albert Fava, Wayne Barnaby. Front row – Ivana McGlinchey, Sara Palis, Sarah Varghese (winner of 29 Who Shine Award)

The Student Ambassadors are half-way to reaching their goal of raising $10,000 for a student scholarship. If you wish to contribute to this fund, please contact Kim Morgan, at kmorgan@westfield.ma.edu or (413) 572-5400.

Ambassadors are enthusiastic and community minded.

Ambassador Ivana McGlinchey '16, a social work major, is a mentor at the Littleville Elementary School in Huntington. "My students have hard lives, and I want to encourage and inspire them. We let them know what mentors do by sharing a picture book, *A Day with My New Friend*," McGlinchey says, noting the book was written and illustrated by University students and staff and describes what friendship is.

"I love when students from last year recognize me with happy hellos," adds McGlinchey, emphasizing the legacy that the ambassadors have created with Littleville Elementary.

Last semester, ambassadors also organized a service-learning project at Littleville to benefit Hope for Limpopo, an organization co-founded by Jo Ann Churchill, a counselor in Westfield State's Counseling Center and her late husband, Vaughn, that benefits impoverished women and children of South Africa.

"We wanted to do something more along the lines of civic engagement. We wanted them to know that, even though they're elementary school students, they can do something to help someone else and make a difference," McGlinchey says.

The students, with the help of a grant from the Kiwanis of Greater Westfield, purchased 20 pairs of TOMS shoes that were decorated with paints and markers by students in art class. Those shoes were then auctioned off, and the funds donated to the Vhutshilo Mountain School in Limpopo, South Africa, which serves severely underprivileged orphans and children ages 2 to 8.

Ambassador Sara Varghese '15 is working as a mentor at the White Oak School in Westfield, which educates students in grades four to 12 with language-based learning disabilities. Varghese and other ambassadors are conducting workshops on bystander responsibilities in bullying cases.

"We do role-playing with breakout sessions where the students

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

Female Leader in a Man's Field

Scholarship allows student to attend sought-after conference

By Alaina Leary '15

NICOLLE FOUCHER '15, of Monson, was initially an art major, but an introductory course in Computer Information Systems (CIS) captured her heart and mind and prompted a change of major.

"I knew it was what I wanted to do," she explains.

One of Foucher's professors, Karen Works, Ph.D., recognized Foucher's talent during this introductory course. Dr. Works often encourages students to pursue CIS when she notices they have a passion or skill for it.

Foucher, she says, has both. "She loves being challenged," Dr. Works says.

Dr. Works also noticed that Foucher was usually either one of very few females in her classes or the only female. This is what inspired Dr. Works to tell Foucher about the Grace Hopper Celebration, a convention designed to highlight the research and career interests of women in computer technology.

Last fall, the celebration took place in October in Phoenix, Ariz., and Foucher was there among thousands of other women. "It really opens doors to female students," says Foucher. "It really gives them a lot of opportunities."

Dr. Works believes Foucher belonged at such a conference based on her performance in the CIS courses and because Foucher is hard-working and very motivated. "Her male peers used to like to sit next to her because she knew what she was doing," she says, with a laugh.

Foucher is the first student from Westfield State University to attend the Grace Hopper Celebration, and she was able to be there because of a scholarship she was awarded by conference leadership that covered the cost. The award she received is extremely competitive; this year, according to the Grace Hopper Celebration's website, there was a 78 percent increase in the number of applicants, and the scholarship was only awarded to 26 percent of those who applied.

After receiving an email about the scholarship award, Foucher says, "It really hit me that I actually get to be a part of something big."

The conference was indeed a big deal for Foucher, who enjoyed meeting other women and learning new information.

"There were so many technical sessions to attend, and the best part about it was that I could choose the ones I wanted to see and hear," she says.

Dr. Works believes one focus of the conference is to bolster the confidence of women in the computer science field so they know they can succeed if they are motivated. She says she and Foucher plan to spread that word on campus by holding a gathering for minorities interested in CIS.

The event also served as a networking experience for Foucher, who attended the conference's career fair to tell other people in attendance her story and hand out her resume.

The results were several exciting new opportunities after graduation, such as potential jobs at General Electric or Microsoft Windows; she has already interviewed once with each company and is hoping for follow-up interviews.

Foucher is excited about her life after graduating from Westfield State. She loves the CIS field, saying, "It will always bring new challenges and keep you on your feet with learning. The ability to create games, websites, programs, etc. from code is absolutely self-fulfilling. It gives you the ability to say, 'I made that,' and I love it."

Foucher mostly enjoys creating websites and computer games using code that she learns hands-on in her CIS courses.

Foucher says, "It would be absolutely amazing to attend this conference again. I hope the next time I do attend it is because I am representing my company at the career fair or in some of the sessions offered." ■

"It really opens doors to female students…giving them a lot of opportunities."

— NICOLLE FOUCHER '15

Left: student Anthony King engages in a conversation with a peer mentor. Center: ICE Program Coordinator Lyndsey Nunes enjoys a laugh with a peer mentor. Right: ICE student Nicole Jeronimo chats with other students.

Learning on ICE

Students with intellectual disabilities gain life experience, knowledge, friendship

By Claudia Moore-O'Brien M.Ed. '00

ALEX MANICKE OF AMHERST is exploring an interest in theater history, and Skyelar Besaw of Westfield is focusing on drawing anime. Nontraditional students, the two are enrolled in the two-year-old Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment (ICE) Program.

The University's ICE Program offers classes and a campus experience to students between the ages of 18 and 22 with significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior.

ICE students tend to struggle with learning everyday social and practical skills, and the program helps give them a boost with both academic and social experiences that better prepare them for life after school. University students who serve as peer mentors round out the experience and offer friendship as well as mentoring.

"We started with five students in 2013, and this year, the program has grown to 20 students from six school districts," says Lyndsey Nunes, program coordinator.

Their inclusion in campus life and classes helps them pursue their own interests. For instance, Manicke, along with exploring theater, is also learning about biology and computer programming. "I am really liking my theater class," he says. "I have been onstage before, but now I am learning about the history of the theater."

Besaw creates unique and lively pencil drawings. She has been taking an art class and learning to use new mediums, like charcoal and paint. "I am working on a still life right now," she says, holding up an image of her impressive work on her cell phone.

Students in the program receive support from their home school districts, which provide both the transportation to Westfield State and education coaches, or ed coaches, who assist them with tasks and activities on campus.

"The coaches are very tuned in to the student they are assisting, with the goal of supporting the student's independence," Nunes says.

"Some students are on campus every day, and some only when they have class," says Nunes, adding, "The program has developed a plan of classes and activities based on our students' interests and career plans. For instance, we have a student interested in engineering, so he is auditing a math class. Another student, interested in a criminal

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Expanding Community Radio

WSKB is reaching more listeners with new, innovative local programming

By Claudia Moore-O'Brien M.Ed. '00

TUNE IN TO WSKB 89.5 FM in the early morning, and you're apt to hear "Community Connections" with Diana McLean, who spotlights the good works of community-based organizations, or "WOW! It's Tuesday!" with hosts Bob Plasse and Jay Pagluica. The two feature interviews, timely topic discussions and snappy banter.

Thursday mornings begin with "The Westfield News Radio Show" with Patrick Berry, owner of the Westfield News Group, reviewing the recent news items and current events with spirited conversations and opinions.

These are just a sampling of the new programs that blend local community broadcasting with regional and national performers on the collegiate music scene and allow WSKB to serve as a creative bridge between the University and local community. They are made possible thanks to a gift from Noble Hospital that funded the purchase of an antenna that provides increased frequency and an expanded listening base. WSKB now broadcasts from Otis to Wilbraham on the turnpike to just south of Northampton and down to Windsor, Conn.

Jake Lehan '15, General Manager at WSKB

"It's exciting to see Westfield State adding community radio programming to its radio lineup of music and talk radio shows," says Michael Filas, Ph.D., faculty advisor for WSKB. "It is great to see the upgraded station become a locus for interaction and shared interests between students and Westfield community members."

Later in the day, WSKB broadcasts "Owl Sports Weekly" with host Deven Bates '18. Bates, a sports enthusiast, talks all things sports with players and fans. Music also hits the waves with "Making the List," where a fun panel of students and community members debates great music across the decades. This unique take on the "Top Forty" features songs and artists worthy of the list.

Come nightfall, University students hit the 89.5 airwaves with contemporary music that you can't hear on commercial radio. Working in partnership with the Radio Club, WSKB blends local community broadcasting with regional and national performers on the collegiate music scene.

Signs that the community appreciates the programming are evident in the financial support the station has received.

"Noble Hospital, Westfield Gas & Electric and United Bank are a few key local underwriters that have provided strong support to WSKB," says Michael Knapik, executive director for University Advancement. "It's great to have such strong community backing."

Knapik says future plans for WSKB include adding sports, news, and traffic and construction updates to the programming, in addition to broadcasts of Owl athletic events, the Westfield High School Bombers Thanksgiving football game and other community events.

"We have commercial radio in Springfield, but it doesn't provide small-town, local content," says Knapik. "We are pleased that our partnership with the city of Westfield has ushered in a new era of communication for the greater community."

WSKB has a long history at the University—typically, it's the largest student club on campus. Operated by an executive board elected by the students, the board members design the programming, schedule the shows for student disc jockeys, run all the promotions, comply with the FCC regulations for broadcasting, maintain an active operations handbook and put on live musical performances and events both on and off campus.

"I've been a DJ/host since fall 2012," says Sam Doe '16. "A friend, who has since graduated, had a late-night show called Monkey's Banana Patch, and I saw how much fun he had running it, so I decided to do a show with a couple of friends last year."

Doe, a business management, marketing concentration student from Northampton, says, "All three of us are now on the WSKB executive board." ■

Green Ambulance a Life-saving Learning Tool

Gift to University also serves as legacy

By Dan Haggerty '15

This ambulance was a gift from Roberta Green and her husband, Ralph Genella, center, and it serves as a teaching tool for the Nursing Program.

ALMOST A YEAR AGO, the University received a rather unusual gift. Dedicated to education around saving lives, Roberta Green and her husband, Ralph Genella, gave a green ambulance to the Nursing Program as a teaching tool. Complete with equipment that includes two simulation patients—an adult male and an infant—the vehicle will now serve as a teaching tool for students.

Called the "Green Ambulance," the name was a little more appropriate when the gift was received—before the ambulance's green color was covered in University blue paint—but it still works, because the gift honors Green's first husband, David Green, who died of a heart attack at the age of 44.

In addition to honoring her late husband, the gift also honors work that Green and Genella did together for many years. The Granby residents founded a company called Green Ambulance Simulator Inc. in 2009 with an ambulance they purchased from the Granville Fire Department and outfitted with new technology and simulators.

In it, they travelled around the Pioneer Valley, educating first responders, paramedics, emergency medical technicians and hospitals that might not otherwise have access to such expensive technology on life-saving measures specifically related to cardiac arrest.

Genella is a former medic who enjoyed using his experience in the military as a jumping-off point for teaching people about the importance of proper emergency medical procedure. So, when he and Green gradually brought their business to a close over the past few years, they wanted to be sure their ambulance would continue to be used for educational purposes, hence the gift to the University.

The ambulance will continue to serve the purpose of education, as Westfield State University students will be able to learn how to handle real-life crisis situations in a controlled environment.

Connie Blake, an assistant professor of nursing who, along with Marcia Scanlon, assistant nursing professor, helped to facilitate the reception of Genella and Green's donation, said the couples' "whole passion was about educating the public."

According to Blake, the ambulance will be used to develop assessment and medical-surgical skills. "We will use it for community demonstrations, including summer programs for high school students interested in health care fields such as nursing, medicine and emergency medical training," she says.

Next spring, the ambulance will also serve a purpose that involves public health—but not in an emergency sense. Black and Scanlon hope to organize a food drive, in which the ambulance will be used to collect, and then deliver, the food.

The hope is that the spring food and toiletries drive will allow the Westfield schools to stockpile food that they can distribute to students during the summer months, when many families and children don't have access to school lunches. ■

Winning at the Numbers Game

Staff member, alumna earns unprecedented marks on state CPA exam

By Claudia Moore O'Brien M.Ed. '00

OLIVIA BISCHOFF '09, M'10 EXCELS at working with numbers, and where her performance is concerned, those numbers are off the charts.

Bischoff took the four-part uniform Certified Public Accountant (CPA) exam between February and November 2014. She was working at Westfield State as a staff assistant in the business office at the time, but since earning her CPA designation, she was promoted to payroll manager.

Bischoff's high scores on the very difficult examination qualified her for the Elijah Watt Sells Award, bestowed by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and considered the most sought-after and respected award given in the accounting profession.

Only about half those who take the four-part CPA exam pass. And only five ten-thousandths—or .05 percent—of those who pass earn the Elijah Watt Sells Award. In 2013, only 55 out of 94,000 exam takers won the award.

To be award eligible, exam takers must complete all four sections within a calendar year and pass each section on their first attempt. Bischoff did just that. Her results were so impressive, in fact, that she also was acknowledged as the highest scorer in Massachusetts and was recognized with first honors by the Massachusetts Society of Certified Public Accounts.

"I knew that the exam was incredibly difficult, so I put all of my energy into studying for it," says Bischoff, who earned a bachelor's degree in accounting at the University in 2009 and a master's in accountancy in 2010.

The Monson native studied at Westfield State because "I wanted a quality education that I could afford," she says.

She began as a social work major but quickly changed direction once she took her first accounting course. "I've always enjoyed working with numbers, so I thought I'd try an accounting course," she recalls. "After my first accounting class with Professor Christine Irujo, I knew it was the field in which I belonged."

Irujo, associate professor of economics and management, says she was pleased to hear that Bischoff won the award, but it did not surprise her.

"I always knew she had it in her," she says.

"Olivia had the maturity to know how important a good education would be in helping her succeed in her chosen career," Irujo adds. "She took advantage of everything we had to offer her at Westfield State so that she would be well prepared when it was time for her to take the CPA exam."

While a student at the University, Bischoff was a tutor and a graduate assistant in the Disability Services Department. In addition to being the president of the accounting club during her master's program, Bischoff also provided tutoring to other accounting students.

"I also participated in the accounting mentoring program for two years, and it was a great resource," says Bischoff. The program pairs students with accounting professionals, which provides students with an opportunity to ask questions and make networking connections. Bischoff has come full circle—she has recently been asked to be an accounting mentor herself.

"While many of my friends opted for private colleges, I am a big supporter of public education. I think success is all about what you put into your education, no matter where you receive it," Bischoff says. "I had great professors and a lot of resources, support and opportunities. I want future students to know that you can get a top-notch education at a public university. I know I did."

Bischoff's love of accounting may someday lead her to teaching.

"I love accounting. In any sector of accounting, you're going to become specialized, but I enjoy all aspects of accounting," she says. "If I were to teach, I'd be able to stay connected to a variety of accounting subjects. I also love working with students. Tutoring was very rewarding when students' eyes would light up, and they understood what they had been struggling with."

Bischoff says professors Michelle Maggio and Erin Moore, Ph.D., were also key in her ability to achieve.

"Their classes gave me the knowledge and skills I needed to be successful on the CPA exam and in my career," she says. "They provided me with guidance over the years when I needed direction. I am fortunate to call these women my teachers, mentors and friends." ■

Limitless, Carvalho Crosses the Finish Line

Athlete completes 418-mile hand cycle ride, sights set on Boston Marathon

By Laura Phelon '11

LIKE MANY ATHLETES, Philip Carvalho '08 enjoys participating in marathons and cycle rides. He recently completed a 418-mile, week-long ride in Iowa with a hand cycle.

Diagnosed with a rare arteriovenous malformation (AVM) in his spinal cord at age 17, Carvalho went from walking to being in a wheelchair in just 10 years, but that hasn't slowed him down. He graduated from Westfield State in 2008 and Florida A&M University College of Law in 2013. Carvalho currently works for the Social Security Administration in Birmingham, Alabama.

Joining a support group through the Greater Orlando Spinal Cord Injury Network helped Carvalho develop a positive attitude about his life transformation.

"I stopped thinking about what I couldn't do and thought about what I could do and what I want to do," Carvalho says.

Though he was not outdoorsy or athletically inclined before his diagnosis, Carvalho began to search for a physical activity to try once he was no longer able to walk. He was introduced to hand cycling though a clinic held by Achilles International, an organization that enables peoples with all types of disabilities to participate in mainstream athletics. He was instantly hooked.

"Being in a wheelchair, society sees you as confined, but hand cycling is an activity I can do 100 percent on my own," Carvalho says. "It gives me freedom."

Carvalho tackled his first ride in 2013 and quickly moved on to other races, completing several marathons and half marathons over the course of a year. Looking to further challenge himself, Carvalho signed up for The Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa, a 418-mile ride across Iowa in July 2014.

Clocking 100 miles a week for four months leading up to the ride, Carvalho trained vigorously for the six-day ride, which he completed with the Adaptive Sports Team of Iowa, which is composed of 30 athletes with various disabilities.

"It was a pretty awesome feeling to finish with our whole team," Carvalho says. "We were strangers at the beginning of the week. It was a good feeling to go in and make friends."

Carvalho continues to race and hopes to qualify for the Boston Marathon within the next few years. He uses his success stories to mentor others with spinal cord injuries. His main piece of advice is to keep on pushing. ■

The Power of History

Statue in Westfield inspires alum to publish a book

By Elizabeth LaFond Coppez '03, M'07

FOUR YEARS AGO, as he was admiring a statue in the center of Westfield, John Leary '62, M'67 wondered, "Who was Major-General William Shepard, and what did he do?"

This curiosity led him inside the Westfield Athenaeum Library, and much to his dismay, information about the war hero was scarce. "I only found one chapter relative to the general in a book about the history of Westfield," Leary says.

Leary launched a rigorous quest for information about General Shepard, and now, after four years of research and writing, he has released General William Shepard: An American Patriot, published by AuthorHouse, LCC.

The best part of his research and writing journey was simple: "I was so happy to be done!" Leary exclaims.

Saying he is neither a historian nor a writer, Leary takes great pride in his book because of the meticulous research he conducted. Perhaps this strength came from his desire to find answers as he spent over 30 years teaching biology and earth science to students at Smith Academy in Deerfield and Holyoke High and Dean Technical High School in Holyoke.

The author's background

Born and raised in Westfield, Leary attended St. Mary's High School and traveled through Europe for three of his four years in the United States Air Force. When he came out of the service in June 1958, he was 21 years old and entering his freshman year at Westfield State College.

Leary studied education and was a member of the Student Government Association. "It was a small campus, and I knew everyone," Leary recalls. "My fondest memories are serving on the Student Council and serving as the president of the Alumni Association for three or four years."

After graduation, Leary began his teaching career, and he earned a master's degree in education from Westfield in 1967 and a master's of science in teaching from American International College in 1970.

Two of Leary's four children also attended Westfield State.

Apart from teaching, Leary was also involved in politics, having served on a local school committee; he was a police commissioner and also served as president for the Council on Aging.

"Politics were my hobby," he says.

When Leary became determined to write a book, he admits it was not easy to find a publisher. "The best part was completion," he says. "It was tough, but I got into it. I felt good about the project."

Discovering General Shepard

Some of the most interesting facts that Leary uncovered bring life to the monument that stands proud and tall at Elm and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Books Draw on Life Experiences

By Dan Haggerty '15

Katherine Mary Kraver '12 published her first children's book, *It Was Just a House*, in 2014. The story focuses on a young girl, a refugee in Jordan, who manages to stay optimistic throughout her ordeal.

Kraver is a frequent traveler, and she uses many of her trips as the basis of her stories. *It Was Just a House* was inspired by the people she met and the stories she heard while she was participating in a semester abroad while visiting Jordan during her senior year at the University.

Kraver's second book, *The Boy in the Red Shoes*, is due out in 2015; it offers a day in the life of a young Haitian boy whose family was displaced by a natural disaster. Kraver based the story on an experience she had while visiting a Haitian marketplace.

An elementary school teacher in West Springfield, Kraver earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education at Westfield State and is now working towards a master's degree in reading at the University.

For more information on Kraver's life, travels and works, visit www.katherinemarykraver.com, where copies of Kraver's books can also be purchased.

By Elizabeth LaFond Coppez '03, M'07

Shannon Broderick' 04

Major: General Science

CURRENT ROLE: Coordinator of Student Conduct, Assistant Director Student Affairs, Westfield State University

I am the discipline officer for Westfield State University, and I work with students who find themselves in a position where they have allegedly violated one or more of the University's policies. My role is to work with them through a process, educate them and hold them accountable, if necessary, for their decisions.

I do what I do because I enjoy seeing students learn and grow, and I love to see the passion they have for what they believe in. On a daily basis, I do not always get to see the best in our students or deliver the best news. However, I do get to have great conversations with our students, and I listen to them. It's rewarding for me to see students feeling appreciated for voicing their opinions.

I started my career at Westfield State as a first-year student in 2000, becoming involved with Residential Life and working as an orientation leader and resident assistant. These student leadership roles inspired me to pursue a career in higher education. I have been in my current role since fall 2012. Many individuals at the University have believed in my abilities and have supported me through my undergraduate work and now in my professional role.

Ashley Zolenski '05

Major: Communication

CURRENT ROLE: Strategic Development Officer, Suffolk University, Boston

My role is to fundraise for the Sawyer Business School at Suffolk University, which involves meeting alumni and building relationships with them to garner their feedback, partnership and support. I wanted a career that allowed me to help others have a great college experience, so I love that my job bolsters students.

My involvement with fundraising actually started at Westfield State, where I participated in Class Council and Student Government and raised money for our class and area nonprofits. I started my career at Boston Medical Center as a development associate and worked with corporations such as Zipcar, Citibank and the Hershey Company to raise money and build partnerships for the hospital. My hope is to one day run my own fundraising department at a college or university and become a part-time professor teaching nonprofit management.

My time at Westfield State helped me become a more confident person. The Communication program helped to prepare me because I took public speaking, writing and public relations courses, the skills that help me in my job today. I also do fundraising as part of the Boston Marathon. For the past seven years, I have run the marathon for the Cancer Fund at Boston Medical Center, raising more than $75,000 for cancer patients who need treatment and support.

Matthew Curren '06

Major/Minor: Movement Science/Sports Medicine

CURRENT ROLE: Vice President, Falcon Consulting Group, Chicago, Ill.

Specifically focused on the revenue and financial throughput of health care provider organizations, I focus on technology-enabled transformation to assist my clients in the development of more efficient business operating models. I find the business of health care incredibly interesting. It is awesome to help hospitals and provider organizations balance the ever-shrinking financial margins of business with the pressure and desire to provide a higher level of clinical care. I feel as though by improving the performance of the organizations I work with, I also have a hand in improving the delivery of care they are able to provide—the ultimate win-win!

After graduating from Westfield State, I had a very different path in mind. I was accepted to many post-graduate programs to become a physician, but instead I earned a master's degree in health policy and management at New York University's Wagner School of Public Service. Inspired by Michael Filas, who told us during senior convocation to continuously advance ourselves cognitively and push ourselves to remain fulfilled in our work, I joined Deloitte Consulting to expose myself to high-level issues and decision making, and this is where my career took flight.

I learned how to learn at Westfield State, and I can never repay faculty and staff enough for teaching me how to question, analyze, react to and learn from any situation I come across.

Ryan O'Connell '07

Major/Minor: Regional Planning/Spanish and Geographic Information Systems

CURRENT ROLE: Assistant Director of Student Life, and the International and Exchange Student Advisor at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

I assist our international students in navigating the immigration process to secure a visa to attend our institution. I'm also currently building institutional policy on faculty-led, short-term courses with a travel component, as well as seeking application to become a program sponsor for exchange visitors with the U.S. Department of State.

I do what I do almost entirely because of the support and dedication shown to me by the Geography and Regional Planning faculty and many of the administrators on Westfield State's campus. I came up through the ranks of Student Affairs at the University in Residential Life and New Student Orientation, as well as through Student Government, leading to my first professional position in residential life at a State University of New York institution. I jumped at the chance a year and a half later to return to Westfield State to work again for Residential Life and Orientation in a professional capacity.

In 10 years, I hope to be at the top of my game in the field of international student and scholar service advising, or changing careers altogether and opening a retail specialty food store, showcasing my other passion—crafting amazing food.

Jessica (Torone) Kennedy '08, M'10

Major/Minor:Bachelor's in English Literature and Secondary Education/ Minor in Music; and a Master's in English Literature

CURRENT ROLE: Assistant Principal, South Middle School, Westfield

I work with students on significant or repetitive disciplinary issues as well as academics. I also serve as an instructional leader, and I also work with teachers planning lessons, giving feedback and sometimes even co-teaching.

My inspiration is to make a difference. I loved having my own classroom and team, and working with students. However, I wanted to be able to take more time to observe teachers, give feedback, help other teachers plan, and work on specific "tough" student cases to really move them forward, and I couldn't do that within my classroom. In 10 years, I hope to be a principal of a middle school.

Some of my favorite moments are when a teacher or guidance counselor lets me know that a failing student is now passing, or a student notorious for getting in trouble had an awesome week.

Westfield State gave me the skills to follow my career and the freedom to truly explore anything. I was challenged to become a stronger thinker and writer. I would come back to Westfield State in a heartbeat.

Ali Rheaume '09

Major: Movement Science and Physical Education

CURRENT ROLE: K through 3 Physical Educator at Armstrong Elementary School in Westborough

In addition to teaching, I also coach field hockey and track and field at Westborough High School. I'm also a Zumba instructor and snowshoe guide for Eastern Mountain Sports.

My inspiration is to see children excited about doing physical activity and interested in living a healthy lifestyle. Recognizing how much of an impact I have on the development and drive of young students motivates me to not just have them run around a gym but to teach them how and why they should be active, healthy, fair, fun and safe. My job is about molding students into the best children they can be, so they grow up confident, happy, healthy and motivated.

In 10 more years, I plan to be right where I am—teaching elementary physical education—in bigger and better ways.

I co-teach at my school with Molly Brogan '11. We both also serve on our state's Physical Education Professional Organization board along with two additional alumni and professors. I appreciate the hard work that the Movement Science Department at Westfield State pushed me through because it prepared me to walk confidently along my career path.

I found a place that I love that loved me back. The college experience that I got at Westfield State is unprecedented.

— MONET CRUDUP '10

Monet Crudup '10

Major: English

CURRENT ROLE: Owner, The Hot Chocolate Store in New Orleans, La.

I own an adult retail store in the French corner of New Orleans and also make cakes and chocolates. I give people a taste of debauchery in the freedom of New Orleans, and the items I sell in my shop work very well for bachelor/bachelorette parties or for adults looking for a night of fun or pure laughter.

In 10 years, I hope to expand my store and website brand, and I realize it's all coming from my English degree; I'm educating people and giving them new energy, and I hope to start a magazine.

I wouldn't be where I am if it wasn't for the people of Westfield State. I found a place that I love that loved me back. The college experience that I got at Westfield State is unprecedented.

Jessica Goheen '11

Majors: Social Work, Spanish, and Minor in Psychology.

CURRENT ROLE: In December 2014, I graduated from the Master's in Clinical Social Work program at Smith College and now work as an Outpatient Clinician at the Carson Center for Human Services in Westfield

As an outpatient clinician, I provide psychotherapy and counseling to children and youth in need in an office-based setting.

I became interested in social work because I grew up in a small town in Massachusetts, where a high number of people were abusing and/or dependent on drugs and alcohol, particularly prescription pain killers and heroin. I wanted to become a substance abuse counselor, but upon entering the field, I realized I needed to do my own work around my relationship to those struggling with addiction and my own relationship with substances. I also thought that with my BSW, I would be all set to do the kind of work I wanted to do, and shortly into my work as a case manager at a nonprofit agency in Springfield, New North Citizens' Council, Inc., I realized that I would need to go back to school to become a therapist if I wanted to be able to help people on a deeper, long-term level.

The professors at Westfield State, especially Enrique Morales-Diaz in the Spanish Department, and Rose Sullivan and Nora Padykula in the Social Work Department, really helped to support me in building a foundation for my career as a social worker, and helped me to grow as a person.

In 10 years, I hope to have obtained Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker status and have opened my own private practice.

Joshua A. Garcia '08, M'12

Major/Minor: Psychology/Regional Planning; Master's in Public Administration with a concentration in Public Management

CURRENT ROLE: Municipal Services Coordinator for the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission in Springfield

My role is to develop and maintain shared municipal service opportunities that focus on activities that can save public funds and/or enhance operational efficiency by utilizing collaborative partnerships among our 43 member communities. This includes conducting project management and providing technical assistance for communities that look to maximize their resources by sharing specific municipal functions across city/town borders. I do what I do to contribute to our community and region to ensure that my generation leaves behind a healthy and stable economy for our next generations.

In addition to my professional work, I am growing a nonprofit community development corporation called Nueva Esperanza, Inc. in Holyoke. Nueva Esperanza, Inc. was established in 1982 and has been responsible for many community development initiatives in the city. It is my hope that in 10 years, we can put the organization back on its feet and do housing and economic development work in Holyoke.

Westfield State gave me the tools that allow me to accomplish my career goals.

Amanda Putnam '13

Major/Minor: Art with a concentration in Art Education

CURRENT ROLE: Student, Academy of Art in San Francisco, Calif., earning a Master's in Fine Arts (MFA) in Traditional Children's Book Illustration

My mother Lori and my best friend, Emilee Gagnon, both encouraged me to pursue an MFA. I am halfway through my degree, and I am now applying the principles I have learned to my work, which make it much better and more professional.

In 10 years, I hope to teach at a prestigious college and be a well-known children's book illustrator. I hope to work with many authors while making a name for myself, and to publish my own stories someday. Who knows, with the connections I have established thus far, maybe my skills will be used with big moviemakers like Disney and Pixar.

I am happy to be pursuing my MFA right out of Westfield State. Being able to focus on the thing I want to do for the rest of my life is amazing. I am growing as an individual and an artist, and I'm happy I'm doing this now rather than starting a job right away. Westfield State helped me to see what I truly wanted to pursue. You can visit me at amandaputnam.blogspot.com. ■

LEARNING ON ICE Continued from page 5

justice career, has taken an intro to criminal justice class and now a political science course," adds Nunes.

When one student expressed an interest in cosmetology, which isn't offered at Westfield State, Nunes suggested studying sociology, psychology and art as related disciplines.

The integration of the students is benefiting the entire campus in mutually positive ways.

In addition to taking classes, some ICE students volunteer in a variety of campus departments. "We have someone in the library, the Wellness Center, Student Affairs and the basketball team," says Nunes. There are also weekly socials, when ICE students, peer mentors and ed coaches get together in the Ely Campus Center and catch up with each other.

Students in the ICE program receive tremendous support from their peer mentors—Westfield State student volunteers, many of whom are education majors. "We have a large group of over 70 in our email chain, with 10 to 20 Westfield State students who are solid active mentors," says Nunes.

"I encourage our peer mentors to have meaningful relationships with the ICE students," says Nunes, noting that she advises mentors to treat the students as they would any friend.

"I want the mentors to make real friendships, not feel like they are showing up for a job," says Nunes. "It is through these authentic relationships that the ICE students acquire career and life skills while participating in college life like their peers and siblings." In fact, Nunes is pursuing official Westfield State University club status for the peer mentors.

Peer mentor Colleen White '16 of Canton heard about the ICE program through a friend, who said, "You need to meet these kids. You need to be involved." White joined her friend, met two ICE students, and her interest was piqued. "I was immediately impressed and signed up for Lyndsey's class, Introduction to Learners with Exceptional Needs. Now, being a peer mentor is the best part of my education," says White.

Sabryna Nastari '16 of Andover found her way to peer mentoring by needing observation hours for another class. "I really enjoyed working with the students on the academic side. Once my hours were up, I didn't want to stop," she says. "This year, I am mentoring three days a week, yet spend most of my spare time with these students." As a result of her experiences, Nastari, an English major, is going on to graduate school to study special education.

Looking forward, Nunes is aligning the ICE program with draft recommendations for eventual accreditation. "This model is being implemented widely on college campuses, and I am excited to take our program to the next level," says Nunes.

Nunes recalls the end of her first hectic day implementing the ICE program. She had just concluded giving an ICE student a suggestion about his behavior when a traditional student asked her, "Is he a student here?"

When Nunes responded that he was, the student smiled broadly and said, "That's amazing. Awesome!"

Not long afterward, that student became a peer mentor, along with several of his friends. ■

STATUE Continued from page 10

Broad streets in Westfield. It was assembled during the city's 250th anniversary during a special dedication on Sept. 3, 1919.

According to his book, General Shepard began his adventures at age 17, when he joined Massachusetts' militia to battle in the French and Indian War. When he came home, he married Sarah Dewey, farmed and started a family. They eventually had nine children.

General Shepard participated in many battles during the Revolutionary War, made treaties with American Indians and even served as a United States Congressman.

One of the most interesting stories that Leary uncovered was that of Deborah Sampson, a woman who disguised herself as a man, used the name Robert Shurtleff and fought in the Revolutionary War.

"Deborah Sampson was assigned to Shepard's regime, and she was 5 feet, 7 inches, and back in those days, that was tall," Leary adds. "Deborah Sampson was quick and clever in disguising her gender. Even when she was wounded, no one knew that Robert Shurtleff was really a woman."

Leary says researching was not easy. "I did a lot of crisscrossing research because I saw many contradictions," he says.

His many footnotes show the amount of research conducted that helped to create this factual biography.

Leary's research also revealed that after General Shepard served in Congress, he came back to Westfield, served at his congregational church and passed away at the age of 80.

To find the book

Leary's book is available for purchase on Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com. It is also available at a number of locations to borrow, including the Westfield Athenaeum, the First Congregational Church in Westfield, the Springfield Armory, Westfield State University and the Society of Cincinnati.

"The Society of Cincinnati is a brotherhood of Revolutionary War officers," Leary says. "Shepard was one of them, and when I saw it still existed, I sent them a copy of my book, and it's in their research department in Washington, D.C."

Leary spoke about his book at the Westfield Athenaeum in the fall of 2014, and he's eager to share it with others. On the cover, Leary says of General William Shepard, "A true Federalist who placed duty above personal interests." ■

Student Leaders Receive President's Award

From left to right: Nicole Godard, Victoria Landry, Sarah Varghese, Elizabeth Cauley, President Elizabeth Preston, Rebecca DiVico, Michael Brett, Angelo Burgos Jr. Not pictured: Beth Teague and Miguel Maria.

THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR Excellence in Leadership is awarded to students who exhibit a spirit of leadership and service to the university and to the community. This year's recipients are:

Angelo Burgos Jr. '15
Criminal Justice

- Member of the Emergency Medical Service Club (EMS) and the Boxing Club
- Chief of the Student Security Unit and a recruitment mentor for the Urban Education Program
- Volunteer for the Connecticut Police Cadet Program
- A start ambassador at the Boston Marathon

Michael Brett '15
Communication and Ethnic and Gender Studies

- Secretary of the Class of 2015 who works as a resident assistant and peer advisor
- Volunteer at the Westfield Samaritan Inn, the Boston Marathon and The Arbors Assisted Living

Elizabeth Cauley '15
Elementary Education and Liberal Studies

- Co-president of the Dance Company
- Staff development assistant on campus who volunteers during New Student and Parent Orientation
- Relay for Life and Rays of Hope charity walk participant
- Volunteer at the American Red Cross Blood Drive

Rebecca DiVico '15
Psychology

- President of Student Government Association and a member of the Student Advisory Council
- Volunteer at the American Red Cross Blood Drive, the Out of the Darkness Suicide Prevention Walk and "From Tween to Teen: Girls' Group," an art therapy group for adolescent girls

Nicole Godard '15
English and Secondary Education

- President of Sigma Tau Delta honor society and a member of the Westfield State University Honors Program
- Member of the Academic Pursuits Club
- Volunteer at Rays of Hope, for the National Day on Writing at Westfield State and through a literacy project at South Middle School

Victoria Landry '15
Communication

- President of Lamba Pi Eta honor society and a member of Student Government Association, 2015 Class Council and the Neighborhood Advisory Board
- Volunteer at Special Olympics Massachusetts, the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership organization and HOOT Day

Miguel Maria '15
Political science and Economics

- Urban Education student representative and participant in the Washington Center Program internship in Washington, D.C.
- Volunteering for Carlos Gonzalez during the 2014 Massachusetts State Representative Race, Ed Markey during the 2013 U.S. Senate Race and at Reading Partners

Beth Teague '15
English and Psychology

- Vice president of Musical Theatre Guild
- Founder of the Westfield State Relay for Life Club and a Relay team captain
- Volunteer for the John Carson Road Race and Bark for Life

Sarah Varghese '15
Elementary Education

- A resident assistant and president of Student Ambassadors (See story Page 3)
- Volunteer at the Samaritan Inn and through the Compass Mentor Program

Tony-Award Winner Comes to Campus

"Avenue Q" based on book by Jeff Whitty

By Claudia Moore-O'Brien M.Ed. '00

WESTFIELD STATE'S DEPARTMENT of Music will bring the modern Tony-award-winning musical "Avenue Q" to Dever Stage from April 15-18. With a cast of student actors and the support of the Music Department and Theatre Arts Division of the English Department, the show features professional puppeteering and musical direction by an internationally respected conductor. It promises to be spectacular.

Winner of the Tony "Triple Crown" for Best Musical, Best Score and Best Book, "Avenue Q" is packed with heart. We had a chance to talk with the director and Westfield State Music Professor Mary Brown Bonacci, D.M.A., about the show, how it was selected and the ironic humor that arises from its contrasts with Sesame Street.

How would you describe "Avenue Q"?

Through the playful medium of puppets, "Avenue Q" is the adult comedy that takes a whimsical and irreverent look at the realities of responsible adult life and how they contrast with the carefree freedom of youth. This musical comedy revels in adult themes, language and humor. It is intended to be great fun for adults, young and old, but is not appropriate for younger audiences.

Can you comment on the challenges of working with puppets?

Students will have a unique opportunity to work as puppeteers in this musical. They have done workshops with a professional puppeteer and have practiced special skills, such as lip-synching and special bodywork specific to puppetry and special puppets. Our student actors will bring their 15" furry characters to life with their hands and voices. In this way, student actors are in full view of the audience, but support the character while remaining out of the audience's direct attention. Some actors have equated the experience to

that of watching a film with subtitles. After a few moments, the experience of seeing a human actor holding a puppet loses its novelty, and attention resides with the story rather than its means of expression.

Are the puppets exact replicas from the Broadway show?

The puppets we will be using are licensed from a company that owns sets of puppets designed and built for "Avenue Q" to loan out. The original Broadway puppets, by Rick Lyons, are similar to costumes; specifically designed for their production, and are copyrighted artistic work.

What's the show selection process?

In order to select shows, we assemble a number of faculty and staff and solicit ideas from students. We usually start by asking for titles from the students and considering them for feasibility, asking questions such as: Can we build the set? How big is the orchestra? How does this show compare with our seasons so far? Is it relevant to students? From there, we assemble a list of five or six shows, read and discuss them further and come to a consensus among future production staff and other attendees.

What do you hope audience members get from watching this show?

I hope audience members get a good laugh from watching the show, of course, and that they have a great time seeing the talented Westfield State students in action.

Beyond that, this award-winning book has much to say about maturity and being the person you choose to be, although it is often a struggle. Adult audiences should relate to these furry, foam characters,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

Professor Wows in Wildlife World

By Laura Phelon '11

JOHN MCDONALD, PH.D., teaches in the Environmental Science Department, and he has attained prestige in the wildlife field. As the 2014 recipient of the John Pearce Memorial Award from the Northeast Section of the Wildlife Society, Dr. McDonald was recognized for exhibiting outstanding professional accomplishments in wildlife conservation in the Northeast.

"I was surprised and really honored," Dr. McDonald says, noting the award is only given out in years that the Wildlife Society feels there is a deserving nominee. "I've served on award committees before and nominated people for awards and appreciate the time it takes to put together a nomination. I was really gratified to imagine someone thought that highly of me."

Established in 1951, the Award is named in honor of Pearce, former regional director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The criteria for judging the professional accomplishments of nominees is a contribution of knowledge and leadership over a period of several years in any areas of wildlife work, including research, management, administration or education.

According to Department Chair Michael Vorwerk, Ph.D., the award is well deserved.

"John McDonald is one of the preeminent wildlife biologists in the Northeast," Dr. Vorwerk says. "He is a gifted educator who infuses his classes with his passion for wildlife, and we are very fortunate to have him in the Environmental Science Department, sharing his experience and knowledge. Several students have told me that John is their favorite faculty member at Westfield State."

Since joining the faculty in 2012, Dr. McDonald has created three new field-based classes: Natural History and Field Techniques, Natural Resources Conservation and Management, and Wildlife Conservation and Management.

He says after working in the field for two decades, he wanted to pass his knowledge along to students, and Westfield State offered the ideal opportunity to do so.

"I wanted to be in a position to influence students and share what I have learned in the course of working with practicing natural resource managers over the past 20 years," Dr. McDonald says. "Our location and ability to access a wide variety of field sites in just a short drive or walk from campus allow me to do a lot of hands-on, or boots-on, labs with my courses."

Previously, Dr. McDonald worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for nine years, where he worked in the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program, administering over $30 million in grants each year to state fish and wildlife agencies and serving as acting division chief. He was a Bullard Fellow in forest conservation at Harvard Forest, worked for the Massachusetts Department of Environment Protection, was a wildlife ecologist and adjunct professor at Southern Illinois University and worked as the deer and moose project leader

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A Campus Legacy

Long retired, Father Dean continues to dispense faith, laughs

By Alaina Leary '15

WHEN I FIRST MET Father John Dean, I was a freshman eating at the dining commons with a group of friends. Father Dean approached our table to tell us jokes. His caring attitude warmed my heart, and as I was emptying my tray, I noticed that a plaque bearing his likeness hung on one of the walls. He wore a goofy grin and a baseball cap.

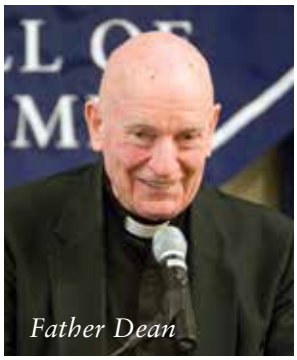
It wasn't long before I recognized Father Dean as a staple at the dining commons, frequently visiting the tables and talking to students. He was so actively involved in the students' lives that I didn't even realize he had been retired for five years until this year, when Father Warren Savage was appointed the University's new chaplain.

Start in the priesthood

Originally a history teacher, Father Dean became interested in the priesthood in his 20s. For over 30 years, Father Dean was Westfield State's Catholic chaplain and the leader of the Albert and Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center, a privately owned property.

Father Dean was the head of the history department at Holyoke High School when he was drawn to studying at the Blessed John XXIII National Seminary. When he told his coworkers he was leaving his teaching position to become a priest, they said, " 'You're crazy! You make more than we do.' "

But Father Dean says, "It wasn't about the money."



Father Dean

Early in his priesthood, Father Dean frequently visited Western New England College to bring pizza to students. The students were so moved that they visited him at his diocese one evening to return the favor and take him for pizza. This marked the beginning of a long-term passion for campus faith.

When Father Dean began his work at Westfield State, the school did not have a permanent chaplain. At the time, Father Dean visited campus to hold mass several times a week and for faith counseling.

Once, when Father Dean was crossing the campus, he was approached by a student who wanted some counsel. The student asked him when Father Dean was available to talk.

Father Dean retells the story with a smile on his face. "I said, 'Sure,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

Taking the Faith Reins

By Alaina Leary '15

Father Warren Savage was appointed the University's Catholic chaplain last September and has been warmly greeted by staff and students.

In addition to his work on campus, Father Savage also lectures at the College of Our Lady of the Elms in Chicopee, where he teaches Contemporary Christian Ethics, the Ethics and Spirituality of Compassion, the Letters of St. Paul and Foundational Theology.

He works with the spiritual advisor and the Newman Club at Amherst College and leads retreats through the Diocese of Springfield. He spends much of his time volunteering, between his work for Hands Together, Inc., a Catholic mission that helps raise money for the poor in Haiti, and his work for Take and Eat, a nonprofit organization that provides meals for the homebound elderly free of charge.

Father Savage's main goal for the Interfaith Center is to foster an environment of "respect, compassion and dialogue."

Studying the Numbers

Math Department program readies students for grad school

By Laura Phelon '11

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS for Westfield State math majors, as the department has just launched a new Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program.

Created by Brian Jennings, Ph.D., and Maureen Bardwell, Ph.D., with assistance from Karin Vorwerk, Ph.D., and John Judge, Ph.D., the REU program is a yearlong experience designed to prepare students for complex mathematical work and graduate programs. Each faculty member involved in the program was assigned a specific student to mentor.

"We wanted to develop more programs for our stronger students," Dr. Bardwell says. "Most graduate schools are interested in students with research experience."

The REU program is organized in three phases. Phase one involves an independent study in the spring semester, which allows students to familiarize themselves with their area of study and meet weekly with a faculty member who serves as their project director. In phase two, students live on campus for seven weeks during the summer, where they complete the majority of their research. The program concludes in the fall semester, when students find a point of resolution in their investigation, type up their research and present their work at the fall meeting of the Northeast Section of the Mathematical Association of America (MAA).

Typically, undergraduate research programs are held throughout the summer over a period of about 10 weeks, but Dr. Jennings says there are many benefits to expanding the REU to a yearlong model.

"This model allows for more variety in the research topics," Dr. Jennings says. "The spring semester is an opportunity to do the background research, and the fall allows the students to follow up and finish their research. Their research doesn't come to a standstill at the end of the summer, which allows them to do more with it."

The four students who were selected for the program, Rachael Fountain '15, Jacob Goodreau '16, Zachery Lancto '15, and Jessica Young '15, were handpicked by Dr. Jennings and the other faculty members who organized the program.

"It's the first year, so we wanted it to be successful and set a good precedent," Dr. Jennings says. "We are all faculty members so we are familiar with the students in the department, and we had students in mind who would be the right fit, not only in terms of mathematical skills, but also in terms of maturity and how they approach solving questions."

Research topics ranged from abstract algebra and Fibonacci matrices to experimental data analysis and phase space properties of quantum states.

While students completed the majority of their research during the summer, they also worked with Urban Education students 10 hours per week, both in class, assisting instructors, and outside of class, offering tutoring services and study sessions. With the goal of modeling graduate programs, many of which require students to serve as teaching assistants, the REU students worked with freshmen to help the freshmen better understand the material.

Urban Education student Estevan DeLacruz '18 had Fountain as a student teacher for his Math Explorations class and felt she helped him, and others in the class, comprehend the work.

"She was a great asset because she made us discover different ways to tackle problems without holding our hands," Delacruz says. "This different perspective that she provided us was essential to my success."

The Math Department hopes to obtain funding to possibly expand the program in the future, according to Dr. Jennings. Students were selected to present at the Joint Mathematics Meeting of the MAA and the American Mathematical Society (AMS) in San Antonio, a highly competitive conference.

"It's a high vindication that all of our students were selected to present," Dr. Jennings says. "We feel that our program, and the exact model we envisioned, worked out very well." ■

Reflecting On Tenure

By Laura Phelon '11

TENURE IS THE HIGHEST HONOR bestowed upon educators. Three University professors who were granted tenure in 2014 reflect on their careers, what drew them to Westfield State and what's kept them here.

Joseph Camilleri, Ph.D.

Joseph Camilleri, Ph.D.

Joseph Camilleri, Ph.D., associate professor, has only been teaching at Westfield State since 2008, but he's left quite the impression on the University so far, particularly the Psychology Department.

After earning his doctoral degree from Queens University in Canada, Dr. Camilleri was offered two options: pursuing a post-doctoral research position or a faculty position at Westfield State.

He chose the faculty position, a decision with which he is content.

"This job also allows me a perfect balance of teaching and scholarship, and so I consider myself quite lucky," Dr. Camilleri says.

Dr. Camilleri says his favorite aspect of teaching is watching students develop confidence and interest in science.

"Scientific literacy is so incredibly important for people to be critical consumers of information, and so, when students tell me they have a better appreciation and understanding of research or feel inspired to pursue research questions, I feel a great sense of accomplishment," Dr. Camilleri says.

In addition to teaching, Dr. Camilleri serves as advisor for the Psychology Club, which organizes graduate school information sessions, guest speaker lectures and tours of psychological institutions.

"What I enjoy most about the club is helping students organize events that build community and enhance their educational experience," Dr. Camilleri says.

Dr. Camilleri also helped develop a new master's concentration in forensic psychology.

"Criminal populations pose unique issues when it comes to clinical assessment and treatment, and being a big believer in evidence-based practice, I designed the forensic concentration to give students a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical explanations of criminal behavior and best practices in forensic counseling assessment and treatment," Dr. Camilleri says.

While Dr. Camilleri enjoys the current atmosphere at Westfield State, he is looking forward to watching the University evolve.

"I am excited to see how Westfield State evolves as a public institution," he says. "There are fascinating developments across campus and stronger ties between Westfield State and the local community. It is a great time to be here."

Nicholas Aieta, Ph.D.

Nicholas Aieta, Ph.D., associate professor of history, was honored in 2012 with the American Historical Association's Eugene Asher Distinguished Teaching Award. This honor recognizes outstanding teaching and advocacy for history teaching at two-year, four-year and graduate colleges and universities.

"When I received the notice that I had been nominated, I was pleased that my work had been noted by colleagues but also that external reviewers felt that I was doing something that contributed to the growth of young historians at the collegiate level," Dr. Aieta says. "I was pleased to win the award, certainly for myself, but also for Westfield State and my department."

Dr. Aieta says teaching isn't his only responsibility in the classroom.

"What's more challenging and more enjoyable is framing classes in a way that leads the students to self-discovery—not only about the history that they are pursuing but about themselves in terms of developing analytical and writing skills," Dr. Aieta says.

Dr. Aieta, who began teaching at the University in 2008, is a very

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Professors Extend Learning During Sabbaticals

By Laura Phelon '11

FACULTY MEMBERS WHO TAKE sabbaticals are given an opportunity to broaden their knowledge and dig deep into an area of study that interests them. These faculty members chose to use their off-time to conduct research on topics from the history of education in Nicaragua to rumination in adolescents.

Christin Cleaton-Ruiz, Ph.D.
Educating Nicaragua

Christin Cleaton-Ruiz, Ph.D., associate professor of history, has always been drawn to Nicaraguan history.

"Nicaragua is a nation that has experienced such tremendous challenges in the 20th century," Dr. Cleaton-Ruiz says. "It is a place where people are highly politically engaged and pay attention to their local and national governments."

To combine her passions of education and Nicaraguan history, Dr. Cleaton-Ruiz began working on a project that details the history of education in Nicaragua from the 1890s to the present.

To advance her research, Dr. Cleaton-Ruiz spent three months during her spring 2014 sabbatical in Nicaragua, meeting with a dozen different teachers, including two administrators from the normal school in Estelí. Her goal was to understand what textbooks Nicaraguan social studies teachers were using and how they used them. She also explored how Nicaraguan teachers planned their lessons in relation to the national frameworks coming from Managua.

Dr. Cleaton-Ruiz was most surprised by the chronic shortage of materials in Nicaraguan classrooms.

"Officially, all textbooks are supposed to be free and available, but in practice, this is rarely the case," Dr. Cleaton-Ruiz says. "What I found most surprising was how many classrooms, even in urban areas, have no textbooks available at all."

In addition to the shortage of textbooks, Dr. Cleaton-Ruiz noted the continuing use of outdated teaching methods in the classrooms, in spite of national-level curriculum standards that incorporate reflective and analytical content.

"The emphasis is still too often on rote memorization dictated by the teacher and little development of critical-thinking skills," Dr. Cleaton-Ruiz says. "This is changing, as newer textbooks include reflection questions attached to the chapters, but slowly."

On a positive note, Dr. Cleaton-Ruiz discovered that Nicaraguan teachers in urban schools meet monthly with other colleagues in their disciplines to collaborate and discuss lesson plans and teaching methods. This professional development helps to emphasize the importance of students' analytical skills in social studies classes.

Dr. Cleaton-Ruiz hopes to publish an article on her findings and believes her research would not have been possible without the opportunity to take a sabbatical.

"Tracking down individuals willing to share their materials takes time and persistence and must be done in person, which can only happen with a sabbatical," Dr. Cleaton-Ruiz says.

Shoba Sharad Rajgopal, Ph.D.
Retracing Roots

Shoba Sharad Rajgopal, Ph.D., tenured associate professor of ethnic and gender studies, spent her fall 2013 sabbatical retracing her roots by returning to her home country of India to research human rights efforts.

After the Supreme Court in India decided to overturn a Delhi High Court ruling that decriminalized same-sex acts, Dr. Rajgopal decided to travel to India and the Colombo area of Sri Lanka to investigate

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Growing the Athletics Hall of Fame

By Mickey Curtis,
Sports Information Director

FIVE ALL-TIME GREATS WERE INDUCTED into the University Athletics Hall of Fame in the 19th annual inductions last fall. Roughly 150 were on hand to see their friends, family and classmates enshrined.

The Class of 2014 included: Kathy Jekanowski ’96, basketball; Nora Lynch ’00, track and field; Chris Whalley ’03, soccer; Paul Whalley ’75, soccer/baseball/coach; and Matt Yvon ’04, football/basketball.

Paul and Chris Whalley are the first father-and-son pair to be enshrined into the Hall of Fame. Paul Whalley has made a significant impact as a player, coach and contributor for more than 40 years, while his son Chris was a two-time All-New England and four-time all-conference honoree.

Jekanowski was a key member of Westfield State’s highly successful women’s basketball teams in the mid-1990s, and Lynch was a big-meet performer for the Owls’ championship track and field squads. Yvon was a record-setting wide receiver for the outstanding football teams of the early 2000s.

PAUL WHALLEY ’75
Soccer/Baseball/Coach

Paul Whalley ’75 has made a significant impact on Westfield State as a player, coach and contributor.

Whalley was a standout defender/midfielder and a two-year captain for the Westfield State championship soccer teams of the early 1970s, including the 1974 squad that placed third in the nation in the NCAA Division III championships his senior

season. During his four years at Westfield State, he posted a brilliant record of 56-14-7, participated in two NCAA tournaments and one ECAC tournament, and captured three Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference (MASCAC) championships.

Whalley also played two years of intercollegiate baseball and volleyball and was the Owls' second leading hitter with a .333 batting average as a freshman starting second baseman. During his senior year at Chicopee Comprehensive High School, Whalley was an All-Western Massachusetts first team second baseman and the soccer squad's most valuable player.

Whalley returned to Westfield State in 1997 as the men's soccer head coach and quickly resurrected the program that had posted only one winning season in the previous eight years. He was named the 1997 conference coach of the year in leading the Owls to a 13-4-1 record and their first MASCAC championship in 17 years.

Whalley also guided Westfield State to the MASCAC title in 2000, along with its first NCAA Tournament berth in 16 years, when his team posted a 15-5 record and advanced to the NCAA second round with a 3-2 opening-round victory over Roger Williams in Bristol, R.I.

Under Whalley's watch, the Owls also participated in two Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) Tournaments, including a runner-up finish in 2001. During his six-year coaching tenure, Westfield State compiled a 63-40-6 record against a demanding schedule of nationally ranked opponents; the Owls were ranked in the top 10 in New England four of those years.

Whalley was a physical education teacher for eight years and a fifth- and sixth-grade math and science teacher for three years before becoming sales manager at Whalley Computer Associates in Southwick. Since 1987, he has been their vice president.

Whalley honed his entrepreneurial skills when he started Whalley's Studio of Photography to pay for his college education. The part-time business prospered for 12 years and included taking photographs of Westfield State varsity sports teams.

Whalley has also been a strong supporter of Westfield State throughout the years and is a corporate sponsor of the Owl varsity athletics program. He was honored as the Westfield State Alumnus of the Year in 2000.

Whalley and his wife, Bonnie '75, live in Southwick and have three children and five grandchildren.

CHRIS WHALLEY '03 Soccer

Chris Whalley '03, Paul's son, was a two-time All-New England and four-time all-conference selection for Westfield State's men's soccer program.

Whalley earned All-New England honors during his junior and senior seasons when he also finished second in MASCAC player of the year voting. The standout midfielder was a three-time first-team all-conference selection and a second-team pick and conference rookie of the year in 1999.

A team captain and MVP in 2001 and 2002, Whalley ranks fourth on Westfield's all-time list with 39 assists. He ranks 17th in scoring with 75 career points. During his sophomore season in 2000, he helped lead the Owls to the MASCAC championship and an opening round victory over Roger Williams in the NCAA Tournament. During his junior year, the Owls advanced to the ECAC Tournament championship game.

Following his stellar four-year career, Whalley participated in the New England Intercollegiate Soccer League All-Star game at Gillette Stadium and scored the Division III team's only goal in a 4-1 setback to the Division I-II all-star squad.

Whalley was highly recruited out of nearby Southwick High School, where he was a three-time All-Western Massachusetts selection and participated in state tournaments during his freshman, sophomore and senior seasons. He was the Massachusetts Division II player of the year and an All-New England selection during his senior year in 1998, when he led Southwick to the Western Massachusetts championship. Whalley also played for the Massachusetts youth soccer Olympic Development Program (ODP) team for six years and was a three-time captain.

Whalley remains highly active in soccer today. He was president of the Southwick Soccer Association from 2008-13 and coached the Southwick under-11 team for four years. He directed the Berkshire Youth Academy Football Club for the past five years and, this year, started his own academy in the Westfield/Southwick area to help local players learn the game he loves.

Whalley is the business development manager at Whalley Computer Associates, and this year, he received the Enterasys Networks Award for best marketing group in the United States. He and his wife, Jessica, live in Westfield with their three children.

KATHY JEKANOWSKI '96 Basketball

Kathy Jekanowski '96 was an integral member of the highly successful Westfield State women's basketball teams of the mid-1990s.

A three-time all-conference selection, Jekanowski scored 1,044 career points in helping to lead Westfield State to the best four-year stretch in school history. The Owls posted a brilliant 88-27 record with four straight 20-win seasons, captured two MASCAC championships and participated

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Excelling All Around

Three athletes receive academic honors

By Dave Caspole, Associate Athletics Director for External Affairs and Media Relations

THREE STUDENT ATHLETES have earned academic honors from Capital One and the College Sports Information Directors of America.

Women's soccer standout Sarah Sypek '15 was named to the Capital One Academic All-America® second team as selected by the College Sports Information Directors of America.

Football players Troy Cutter '15 and Greg Sheridan '16 were named to the Capital One Academic All-District® first team.

Sypek had a record-breaking season for the Owls while helping lead the team to 13 wins and the semi-finals of the Eastern College Athletic Conference New England playoffs. She finished the season with 21 goals and eight assists for 50 points, setting school records for goals and points in a season. She was a first-team All-Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference (All-MASCAC) pick as a midfielder.

In the classroom, the Westhampton native has maintained a 3.77 grade point average in business administration while playing soccer and working nearly full-time hours between two jobs.

Sypek was selected to the national squad alongside student athletes from Johns Hopkins, Trinity College and Rose-Hulman Institute.

Cutter and Sheridan each earned Academic All-District® honors for the second straight year. A team captain, Cutter led the Owls with 94 tackles from his middle linebacker spot, including 10 tackles for losses. He was a second team All-MASCAC pick.

A native of Lunenburg, Cutter maintains a 3.55 grade point average as a criminal justice major at Westfield State.

Sheridan, a junior free safety from Burlington, Mass., led the Owls with four interceptions and twice was named the MASCAC's defensive player of the week. He finished the year with 47 tackles and three passes broken up. He was also a second-team All-MASCAC selection.

Sheridan has a 3.93 grade point average as a history major. The Owls football team completed the 2014 campaign with a 5-5 record and a 4-4 mark in the MASCAC.

Sheridan and Cutter joined student athletes from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Middlebury, Tufts and Worcester Polytechnic Institute on the highly selective squad.

The 2014 Capital One Academic All-District® Teams, selected by the College Sports Information Directors of America, have been released to recognize the nation's top student athletes for their combined performances athletically and in the classroom.

First-team Academic All-District® selections advance to the Capital One Academic All-America® Team ballot, where first-, second- and third-team All-America honorees are selected.

The Academic All-District® teams are divided into eight geographic districts across the U.S. and Canada.

To be eligible for Academic All-America® consideration, a student-athlete must be a varsity starter or key reserve, maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.30 on a scale of 4.00, have reached sophomore athletic and academic standings at his/her current institution and be nominated by his/her sports information director. Since the program's inception in 1952, CoSIDA has bestowed Academic All-America honors on more than 20,000 student athletes in Divisions I, II, III and the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, covering all NCAA championship sports. ■

Team Leader, Team Mentor

By Riley O'Brien '15, Sports Information Intern

WHEN YOU FIRST MEET Michael Mercadante '15, the stellar running back for the University's football team, his size and stature are intimidating. But once he starts speaking, it's easy to realize Mercadante is more than the leader in rushing yards per game in the Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference (MSCAC).

He's also a guy who understands perseverance and what it means to be a mentor and a team player.

"I definitely want to be remembered as the guy who really cared about the team and not just himself," says Mercadante, the captain who has been a critical player for four years for the Owls as well as a mentor to younger players.

"I just want to be known as the person who wanted to help the other kids on the team and be a positive influence on them," he adds.

Personal bests

Personally, Mercadante started the season with personal goals of 1,000 rushing yards for the season and 3,000 for his career, marks that may have been considered lofty considering the difficulty he had staying on the field as a sophomore and a junior due to injury.

"Merc," as he's known, broke his first personal goal of 1,000 yards in mid-November in a game against Fitchburg and finished his collegiate career with 2,993 career rushing yards.

His freshman year, he rushed 637 yards and scored eight touchdowns while playing in all 10 games, leading the team in rushing while largely splitting carries with Brian Beauchemin '14.

In his sophomore year at Westfield State, Mercadante's season ended too soon after a high ankle sprain a little more than halfway through the season. Although he only played in seven games that fall, again his potential was evident, as in two of the games he rushed for more than 150 yards.

Time on the sidelines

Mercadante overcame a number of injuries, large and small, in putting together a tremendous senior season, which had him on the verge of reaching his full potential and meeting a number of individual and team goals.

In November 2013, he had surgery to repair his shoulder, which had been an issue since he was a senior in high school. Although this cut his season short after playing in only six games, he still managed to run for 519 yards in his junior year and helped the Owls win four of those six games.

While he missed a few games at the end of the 2013 season, he did not allow himself to miss any of the winter workouts or spring ball. He admitted he was a little behind physically due to weight loss from the surgery. He knew he had to rebuild muscle, and he trained harder than ever before. "I probably had the best off-season of my life; training-wise, everything came together," says Mercadante.

Owls head coach Pete Kowalski has been thrilled with Mercadante's efforts for the team. "He's emblematic of our team," says Kowalski. "He has a blue-collar work ethic, and he'd be the first to tell you that everything he's able to accomplish is because of his offensive line, his fullback and the opportunities that the passing game opens up for him."

What teammates say

Mercadante, a native of Wilbraham and a graduate of Minnechaug Regional High School, studies liberal arts with concentrations in movement science, psychology and sociology, and a minor in wilderness studies. He plans to move to Martha's Vineyard after graduation.

Interestingly, two of Mercadante's blockers, guard Kyle Seidnitzer '15 and tackle Eddie Fallon '15, have been teammates of his since the fifth grade. "He's a great leader for us, he leads by example, he always brings his best effort and, by doing so, inspires the rest of us to do the same," says Fallon. "He is kind to everyone."

The Owls closed out the 2014 season with an overall record of 5-5 and a record of 4-4 in the MASCAC. ■

in NCAA Tournaments in 1995 and 1996. In addition, Westfield State was the ECAC Tournament runner-up in 1993 and ECAC tournament semifinalist in 1994.

In addition to scoring 1,000 career points, Jekanowski totaled 503 career rebounds and ranks in the top 10 in school history in free throw shooting (71 percent, 286 for 402). Her team-first efforts did not go unnoticed, as she was a first team all-conference selection in 1993 and 1996 and a second team selection in 1994.

Jekanowski also scored 1,000 career points in high school at Hopkins Academy in Hadley, where she was an All-Western Massachusetts selection in both basketball and softball. She has been a certified athletic trainer for 18 years and earned a master's of education in strength and conditioning from Springfield College in 2002.

Jekanowski has been an athletic trainer at Amherst College since the fall of 2005 and was voted honorary class member by the Amherst College Class of 2011. She was the athletic trainer for two national championship teams with the women's ice hockey program in 2009 and 2010.

NORA LYNCH '00 Track and Field

Nora Lynch '00 was a big-meet performer for the Westfield State women's track and field team.

A two-time All-New England honoree and a four-time conference champion, Lynch helped lead the Owls to three consecutive MASCAC track and field championships.

Lynch's discus throw in the final event of the 1998 MASCAC championships gave Westfield State its first conference crown in women's track and field, as the Owls edged Bridgewater State for the team title. Moreover, the Norwood native's discus throw of 127 feet, 11 inches in the 2000 MASCAC finals remains the conference record after 14 years.

Lynch earned All-New England honors in 1998 and 2000 and All-ECAC honors in 2000. She was both the MASCAC and New England Alliance champion in the discus (1998, 1999, 2000) and hammer throw (1999), and the Alliance indoor champion in the 20-pound weight throw in 2000. She placed second in the shot put and hammer throw at the 2000 MASCAC championships.

Lynch was named Westfield State's most valuable field performer in 1999 and 2000. A stellar student in the classroom with a 3.7 grade point average, she was a member of the MASCAC All-Academic team for four consecutive years.

Lynch has been the throws coach at Fitchburg State for the past 14 years. She has coached two All-Americans and five national championship qualifiers.

Lynch has been employed full-time as a kindergarten teacher in the Dedham school district since graduating from Westfield State. She and her husband, Steven Armstrong, were married on Sept. 27, 2014.

MATT YVON '04 Football/Basketball

Matt Yvon '04 was a record-setting wide receiver for Westfield State's championship football teams in the early 2000s.

Yvon holds the New England Division III record for career receiving yards (3,413) and ranks second on New England's all-time charts with 217 catches. At the time of his graduation, the big-play receiver held 13 school records and still holds school career records for catches per game (5.6), touchdown catches (34), receiving yards per game (87.5), and points scored (241).

The talented Yvon achieved national acclaim and legendary status in a 30-27 victory over Fitchburg State in 2003 as he kicked the game-winning 31-yard field goal with 13 seconds remaining and caught 11 passes for a school record 257 yards to earn New England's prestigious Gold Helmet Award. Yvon also scored 18 points and totaled 304 all-purpose yards versus Fitchburg as he returned three punts for 47 yards.

And in the biggest victory in school history, Yvon set a then single-game school record with 13 pass receptions and caught the game-winning touchdown with 59 seconds remaining in Westfield's thrilling 35-31 over Worcester State in a battle of unbeaten teams in the 2001 regular season finale.

Yvon was a first-team all-conference selection in 2001, 2002 and 2003 in the 14-team New England Football Conference (NEFC) when the Owls posted an aggregate record of 25-7, captured three NEFC Bogan Division and MASCAC championships, and won the 2001 NEFC championship to qualify for the NCAA Tournament. He was an All-East Region second team selection and ECAC All-New England honoree in 2002 and 2003.

The East Longmeadow resident, who was inducted into the Springfield Cathedral High School Hall of Fame three years ago, capped his outstanding collegiate career by playing for the NCAA Division III All-Stars against Mexico in the Aztec Bowl in Cancun, Mexico, in December 2003.

Yvon also displayed his talents on the basketball court for Westfield State. He played during his junior year and helped to lead the Owls to a school-record 13 consecutive victories.

Yvon is a regional sales manager for Essilor of America (Perferx Optical), a leader in the optical industry. Currently in his eighth year at Perferx, he was a President's Club Award recipient in 2011.

Yvon and his wife, Katy, live in East Longmeadow with their newborn son. ■

Role Model Takes Helm of Football Team

By Mickey Curtis, Sports Information Director

A FAMILIAR FACE has been hired as Westfield State's new head football coach.

"I am pleased to announce Pete Kowalski as the first full-time football coach in program history," said Westfield State University Athletics Director Richard Lenfest last May when he made the official announcement to hire the Owls' longtime assistant coach.

"Pete has the respect of our student athletes, and he has distinguished himself as a top defensive coordinator in the region. He has been extremely loyal to Westfield State, and I know he's excited to take over the program. I'm looking forward to his leading our program," he said.

Kowalski, a Westfield State assistant coach for the past 18 years, had been named the interim head coach last December, when Steve Marino retired after coaching the Owls for 24 seasons. Once the position was elevated from part-time to full-time status, Lenfest and the search committee did not have to look very far to find its head coach.

"I am eager and excited to begin this new era in Westfield State football," said Kowalski, the first full-time head coach in the 33-year history of the Westfield State varsity football program. "The selection process allowed me the opportunity to crystalize in my mind what I wanted this program to be. Coach Marino made being a head coach look easy; I know there is going to be a learning curve, but I think that being here for 18 seasons has shortened that process. In addition, I have a mature, experienced staff with head coaching experience that can make this transition successful."

Kowalski was elevated to associate head coach nine years ago and served as Westfield State's defensive coordinator with an emphasis on linebackers. He was the architect of the Owls' outstanding defense that led the nation in total defenses in 2001 and 2002, and in 2009, they led the nation in turnover margin and pass efficiency defense.

Prior to his arrival at Westfield State in 1996, Kowalski coached for 14 years at Bulkeley High School in Hartford, Conn. Bulkeley was a state finalist in 1991 and featured one of the top defenses in the state, allowing 5.4 points per game. In 1992, the Hartford school was ranked second in the state.

Kowalski has a wealth of coaching experience. He served as a track and field coach at Bulkeley from 1985-2013, including 19 years as head coach. He also coached the girls' basketball team at Minnechaug High School in his hometown of Wilbraham.

"My heart is a teacher's heart, and I will continue to emphasize the importance of the educational experience at Westfield State," Kowalski said. "I am looking forward to be working with student athletes—there is a reason the student comes first. My philosophy will not change whether I am the associate head coach or the head coach—full-time or part-time. I believe that coaching is teaching, and that will remain a constant."

Kowalski graduated from West Springfield High School in 1972 and participated in football, basketball, and track and field. He played a year of football and lacrosse at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and graduated in 1977 with a health and physical education degree. He taught health and physical education in the Hartford, Conn., schools for the past 34 years. ■

AVENUE Q Continued from page 16

realizing, "I've been there, too," that real life isn't always easy, taking responsibility isn't easy, but we can't take ourselves too seriously, and when we care about each other, we'll get through the difficult, uncomfortable moments in life and still feel pretty good.

You have an impressive music director for the show. What can you tell us about him?

Dr. Steven Gross has impressive international credentials as a conductor for opera and music theater and as an educator and scholar. He is strongly committed to developing artistic talent through the rehearsal process. His artistic vision for the music and its process is right for our academic environment. Dr. Gross has a passion for American musical theater, and we are honored to have him on board.

For more information, see deverstage.com or call for tickets at (413) 572-8492.

AMBASSADORS Continued from page 3

get the opportunity to discuss experiences and strategies surrounding bullying," says Varghese.

Ambassadors also have a presence at The Arbors, an assisted living residential community in Westfield. Ambassador Mike Brett '15, a communication and ethnic and gender studies major, says, "We do a Yankee swap in early December. We bring presents and snacks; the residents enjoy the fun. The happiness is infectious!"

Ambassadors are busy on campus, as well. Wayne Barnaby '17, a biology major, says, "I welcomed people to Family Day. It was an important role as the first person a visitor meets on campus," he says, noting, "Your encounter has a powerful impact on how the University is perceived."

Morgan, who has advised the ambassadors for 10 years, says each group has a different personality. While the faces may change and new projects join existing ones, Morgan reflects, "Working with the student ambassadors is the highlight of my year." ■

MCDONALD Continued from page 17

for the state Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

Dr. McDonald is currently the Northeast section representative to The Wildlife Society's governing council. He founded and coordinates the Northeast Section's two-week field course, conducted in cooperation with the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife and Castleton State College in Vermont.

When asked who his role models in the field were, Dr. McDonald says he admires William "Bill" Healy, Ph.D., a retired biologist from the U.S. Forest Service, whom he worked with at the University of Massachusetts, for his teaching methods.

"Bill's approach to working with students and his dedication to our profession is a model I try to use," Dr. McDonald says.

Dr. McDonald says he's most proud of the field work on deer management that he conducted in Massachusetts, where he developed a research program to answer questions to make changes to the deer management system. He also developed and worked within the agency and with its regulatory board to implement the regulations. ■

INTERFAITH Continued from page 18

we can go back to the Interfaith Center right now.' And he said, 'You know, I'm Jewish,' and I said, 'You're Jewish? That doesn't matter.' "

In this way, Father Dean brought meaning to the center's interfaith mission. His focus wasn't on students' particular faith but on making sure they felt safe and supported.

Students have loved Father Dean so much over the years that they rallied to have the dining commons named after him when it was being built. Over 1,500 students signed a petition to have the commons named in his honor. The entire building is named Tim and Jeanne's after Tim Murphy and Jeanne Julian, retired university employees, but the commons itself is dedicated to Father Dean. Hence, the plaque with his likeness.

Father Dean had a gift for connecting with students. He retired five years ago. Although he does spend time visiting family on Cape Cod, he still returns to hold mass and get meals in the Dean Dining Hall. ■

TENURE Continued from page 20

active presence on campus. He serves as the secondary education coordinator and as vice president of the Westfield State chapter of the Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA).

"As a historian who has taught and researched about labor for a number of years, I believed it was important to take leadership in aspects of union responsibilities," Dr. Aieta says.

A highlight of Dr. Aieta's career is seeing his students evolve from their first year to graduating and accepting teaching positions.

"I believe, entering my seventh academic year at Westfield State, that I am seeing an impact of my work in local and regional area secondary schools, as more of my students begin to pursue their professions," Dr. Aieta says. "It becomes a nice cycle of training young teachers and then finding homes for pre-service teachers with your own students in future years."

Jennifer Hanselman, Ph.D.

Jennifer Hanselman, Ph.D., associate professor of biology, has been teaching on campus since 2008. She also serves as the faculty athletic representative and partners with Residential Life to participate in residential assistant programming, in which faculty members pair up with residential advisors to host events in the residence halls.

"No matter the campus activity, it is always a rewarding experience to interact with the students outside the classroom," Dr. Hanselman says.

Dr. Hanselman also worked with local high schools to educate students about biology and science. She coordinated with Mass BioEd to bring the BioTeach program to Westfield State. Two high school groups visited campus and participated in biological inquiry-based lab activities facilitated by biology faculty and students.

Dr. Hanselman said the goal of the program, which she hopes to

continue, is to introduce students to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields in an effort to demystify STEM and to promote scientific literacy," Dr. Hanselman says.

Working in the biology field, she is excited for the campus construction to finish on the new four-level science center. "I am looking forward to all that it has to offer our students," Dr. Hanselman says.

Off campus, Dr. Hanselman's research is noteworthy. As paleoecologist, Dr. Hanselman investigates how past climates influenced ecosystems. She traveled to South America around Lake Titicaca, and using data such as fossil pollen, spores and charcoal fragments from a 370,000-year-old core from the lake, she identified four full glacial cycles evident in the data.

She compared that data with data collected from 40 other lakes in South America to identify how plant communities respond to changes in temperature.

As much as she enjoys conducting her research, she appreciates the opportunity to share that research with her students.

"Teaching is so dynamic," Dr. Hanselman says. "It is rewarding to work with new students every semester and think of new ways to incorporate exciting new information. The field of biology is rapidly changing. I enjoy sharing current research with my students and hope that I have a small part in inspiring each one of them." ■

SABBATICAL Continued from page 21

gender issues and the role grassroots and non-government organizations were playing in response to the legislations.

Dr. Rajgopal met with activists and journalists in both countries and discussed what was being done. She found that the organizations were holding protests in the streets and using social media to get their messages across.

> **"It was heartening to see that many of the Indian media support the LGBTQ activists through their articles and news coverage."**
>
> — DR. RAJGOPAL

What struck Dr. Rajgopal was the level of support she saw for LGBTQ rights.

"It was heartening to see that many of the Indian media support the LGBTQ activists through their articles and news coverage, and criticized the Indian Supreme Court decision," Dr. Rajgopal says. "It was interesting to see that a sizeable percentage of the general public appears to support them as well."

Dr. Rajgopal applied her research into a civic engagement class she taught in spring 2014 and is planning to write an article about her findings and submit it to an academic journal. She also discussed her findings at the 2014 National Women's Studies Association Conference in November.

"This was an amazing learning experience, and I am humbled by the courage and integrity of many of the activists that I met, working in this field under very difficult conditions," Dr. Rajgopal says.

Rebecca Burwell, Ph.D.
Rumination Research

Dr. Rebecca Burwell, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology, spent her fall 2013 sabbatical researching the topic "Self and Emotion Processes Linked with Brooding Rumination among Adolescents."

As Dr. Burwell explains, rumination is defined as "focusing on depressive symptoms and the possible causes and consequences of those symptoms" (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1991). Rumination is a topic she researched throughout college, and she even conducted rumination research as part of her dissertation.

"I conducted that research because I strongly believed it was important to demonstrate that self-focus is not universally problematic; rather, it is the dwelling focus that is deleterious, and the data I gathered supported that claim," Dr. Burwell says.

Intrigued by the increase in depression rates during adolescence, Dr. Burwell once again focused on that age group because of its ability to adapt.

"Adolescents are sufficiently developed, cognitively, to engage in self-reflection, but are still young enough to easily make changes in coping and cognition that can shift maladaptive patterns as well as self-concept," Dr. Burwell says.

Working with her research mentor, Stephen Shirk, Ph.D., a faculty member at the University of Denver, Colo., Dr. Burwell recruited participants through different high schools.

Participants came to the labs twice and completed the third questionnaire via mail or the Internet.

Dr. Burwell hypothesized that individuals who believed negative emotions were dangerous would suppress negative emotions, resulting in brooding about their negative feelings. Her findings revealed a slightly different conclusion.

"The best-fitting model was one in which emotional beliefs directly predicted the development of brooding rumination over time," Dr. Burwell says. "Thus, it's not whether or not one suppresses negative emotions that's linked with brooding rumination; rather, it's the fear about emotions being dangerous that stirs up the tendency to dwell."

In addition, Dr. Burwell discovered other pieces of her hypothesis to be correct.

"I found, as hypothesized, that self-worth contingencies—that is, the tendency to yoke one's self-esteem to positive external feedback—predicted these negative beliefs about emotion and brooding rumination and appear to be an important target for intervention and prevention," Dr. Burwell says.

Dr. Burwell organized her findings and wrote an article that was submitted to the *Journal of Adolescence*. After receiving positive feedback, she is revising the article and will resubmit it after finishing her revisions. ■

Reunion 2015: Classes 1985, 1990 and 1995

Are you returning to campus? Registration for Reunion 2015, which will be held June 27 and 28, can be found at westfieldalumni.org/reunions. Whether you are returning to celebrate a milestone (classes ending in 0 and 5) or to reconnect with friends (Musical Theatre Guild or Urban Education) or just want to spend a night back on campus, we would love to see you. The Class of 1990 will celebrate its 25th anniversary with friends from 1989 and 1991, along with alums from 1995 and 1985. All are invited to join the celebration.

The full reunion program includes meals, entertainment and accommodations. New Hall is a gorgeous, air-conditioned building with apartment-style living for you and your friends. Questions? Please contact Kathi Bradford, director of Alumni Relations, at kbradford@westfield.ma.edu. Hope we see you.

Boston Alumni Holiday Reception Raises Scholarship Funds

Over 70 alums from the Boston area gathered on Dec. 12, 2014, at the University of Massachusetts Club for a holiday reception that raised over $12,000 for student scholarships and internships. Entertaining student musicians, specialty cocktails and delicious appetizers gave alumni a chance to meet new friends and reconnect with old ones while learning news about the campus. Mark your calendar now to join us for a similar event on Dec. 10.

Alumni Council Elections Fast Approaching

If you are interested in serving as a member-at-large for the Westfield State Alumni Association, please contact our office right away. Nominations, either for yourself or for others, are due by Aug. 1. You will find an online nomination form at www.westfieldalumni.org/elections. Please email Kathi Bradford, director of Alumni Relations, at kbradford@westfield.ma.edu with any questions about the process or your involvement. The timeline for the 2015 elections is as follows: Nominations due Aug. 1; voting from Aug. 15 to 31; tiebreaker voting, if needed, from Sept. 1 to 10; and announcement of election results in September.

Alumni Travel

Join Westfield State's Alumni and Friends Travel Program in the fall, when, on Sept. 18, we will head to Lake Como, Italy, and Switzerland. Great fun, incredible memories, new friends and so much more. Check out the website for more details at westfieldalumni.org/travel.

Commencement 2015 and the Class of 1964 Golden Owls Celebration

Westfield State University will celebrate Commencement 2015 at the MassMutual Center in Springfield on May 17. Joining in the celebration with the Class of 2015 will be our Golden Owls, including our newest inductees from the Class of 1964. For the first time, Parent Lifetime Owls of graduating seniors will receive reserved seating for our commencement activities. If you are not yet a Parent Lifetime Owl, please sign up today at westfield.ma.edu/lifetime in time for the biggest celebration of the year.

Attention Criminal Justice Alumni

The Westfield State University Criminal Justice Department is seeking nominations for the Criminal Justice Alumni Hall of Fame. The Criminal Justice Alumni Board will recognize criminal justice graduates who have distinguished themselves in the fields of law enforcement, corrections or working in the court system. Please include a short summary on why you are nominating your candidate, and include your contact information. Please send your nomination to Vic Ascolillo, J.D., Ph.D., at vascolillo@westfield.ma.edu or Alice Elizabeth Perry, J.D., Ph.D., at aperry@westfield.ma.edu.

Westfield State Alumni Store Offers New Vintage Items

Be sure to stop by westfieldalumni.org and check out all the offerings in our online store. We offer stylish hoodies and crewnecks, camping chairs and diploma frames. New items include our vintage

University gear and our alumni candles. Items can be picked up at the Alumni Relations office free, or we will gladly ship to you, adding a reasonable shipping fee. Place your order today.

Stay Connected

Be sure to keep in touch so you're in the know about all things Westfield State. Visit our website at www.westfieldalumni.org for news, events, happenings and more. While you're there, why not log in and update your information? For first-time logins, your username and password is the same: your first initial, last name and four-digit graduation year (e.g., Joe Smith, Class of 1999 would be "jsmith1999"). If you need assistance logging in or have questions about the site, please contact Kelly Galanis at kgalanis@westfield.ma.edu or (413) 572-5228.

2015 Upcoming Events

May 9
Celebration of Science and Innovation Gala
Scanlon Banquet Hall/Campus

May 17
Commencement/Celebration of the Golden Owl Class of 1965
MassMutual Center

June 2
#GiveAHoot Day of Giving

June 27-28
Reunion Weekend 2015
Classes ending in 0 and 5 plus all friends

August 1
Sixth Annual Alumni Retreat
Westfield State

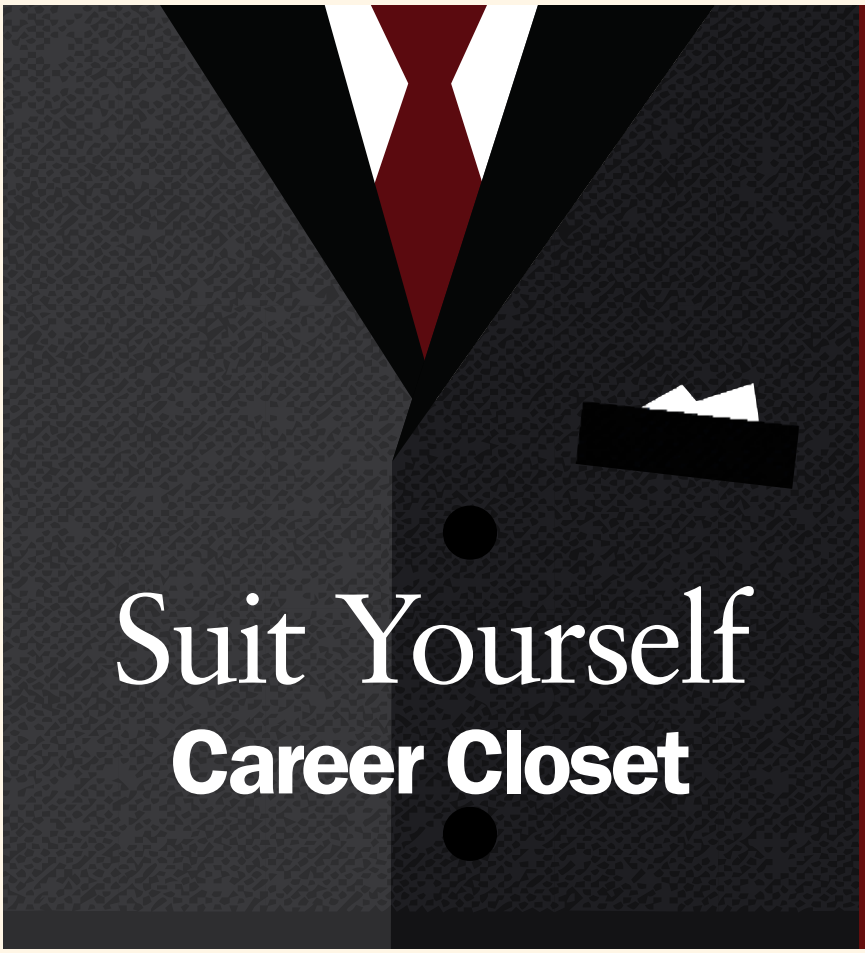
September 17
Annual Foundation Board and Corporators Meeting
Garden Room, Horace Mann Center

Fall 2015
Alumni and Friends
Trip to Italy/Switzerland

September 28
Foundation Golf Classic
Springfield Country Club

October 17
Homecoming and Distinguished Alumnus Award Ceeremony
Open to all alumni and friends

For more details about any of the events listed, please visit westfieldalumni.org/calendar. Hope you can join us.



Suit Yourself
Career Closet

Help our students put their best foot forward for job interviews and new employment.

Donate your professional men's and women's suits, sport coats, blazers, pants, skirts or ties.

Dry cleaned donations may be dropped off between 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday – Friday at the Career Center, or mailed to:

Career Center
Westfield State University, Lammers Hall Annex
577 Western Avenue · Westfield MA 01085

Questions? Contact Junior Delgado in the Career Center at jdelgado@westfield.ma.edu.

Westfield
STATE UNIVERSITY

For more detailed information on these stories, please visit our *Focus* magazine online at westfield.ma.edu/focus.

News

1982

Colleen (Webb) Robillard was named system-wide director of health and physical education for students in kindergarten through eighth grade in the Swansea Public School district. She has been a physical education teacher at Joseph Case Junior High School for 27 years. Colleen and her husband, Brian, recently celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. They have two daughters: Kristen, a graduate of Bridgewater State University with a degree in athletic training, and Danielle, a student at Eastern Connecticut State University, studying mathematics and secondary education.

1990

Kathy Keefe was named director of operations for College Hype, a Dorchester-based company that produces quality custom apparel. In this newly created position, Kathy will complement the existing management team, working with founder and CEO Jack Doherty '90 to help guide and shape the direction and strategy of the growing company. Previously, Kathy spent 24 years in a variety of management and leadership roles with her family business, Holovack & Coughlin Sporting Goods, located in Arlington.

Tina Stevens has joined Greenfield Community College as an adjunct faculty member for the academic year. She is the principal and creative director of the Stevens 470 in Westfield, a multichannel marketing consultancy. Stevens attended Greenfield Community College and earned an associate's degree in graphic design. She received her bachelor of arts from Westfield State. Tina also has a master's degree in advertising design from Syracuse University.

1991

Christopher Tibbetts married Sharon Dias on Sept. 6, 2014, on the beach in Westerly, R.I. Chris is a home improvement loan officer for Home Loan Investment Bank in Warwick, R.I.

1992

Terrell M. Hill is pleased to rejoin the Windsor, Conn., public schools as assistant superintendent for Human Resources. Terrell previously served as a vice principal at Windsor High School, and most recently was employed at High School, Inc. in Hartford, Conn., where he served as founder and principal. Terrell completed his baccalaureate studies in business management at Westfield State and later earned his master's in higher education administration and educational leadership and policy at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He also currently serves on the Board of Trustees and Alumni Association Executive Council for Westfield State.

Windsor Marketing Group, an innovative in-store marketing company based in Suffield, Conn., announced that **Donna Murphy** has been named the company's executive director of Group Advancement. In her new role, Donna will be responsible for ensuring that Windsor Marketing Group actively participates in all relevant government grant and economic development programs; leading all aspects of the company's community-focused initiatives; and serving as company representative on the board of the Connecticut Food Association trade group.

1993

Attorney **Jennifer Rymarski** has been elected partner with the firm Morrison Mahoney, LLP. Jennifer serves a wide base of clients in the arenas of medical malpractice litigation as well as employment, business and corporate law. Headquartered in Boston, Morrison Mahoney, LLP is one of the 15 largest firms in Massachusetts. Jennifer has more than 10 years of experience as an attorney and more than 15 years of experience in the legal field.

1995

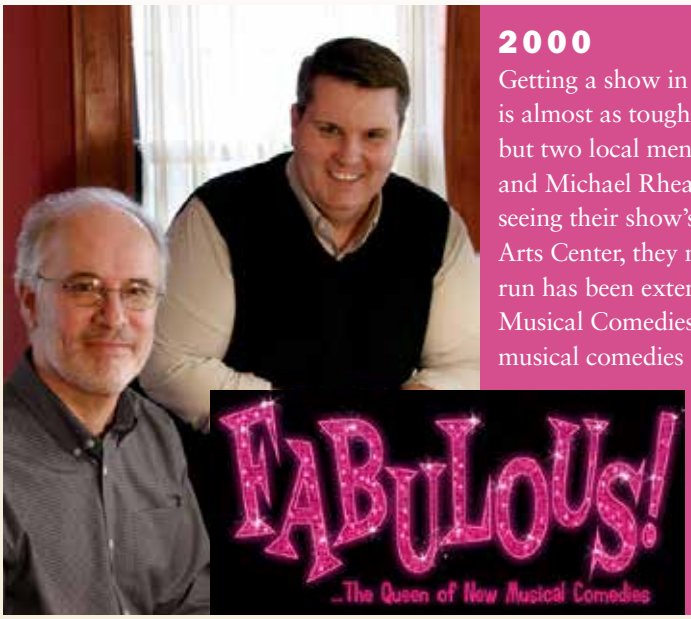
Jason M. Bachand of Easthampton has been chosen as the new town planner of Hampton, N.H. Jason previously served as the head of planning services for the civil engineering firm Doucet and Associates in Northampton. Prior to that, he spent several years as the assistant town planner in Windsor, Conn. He has a bachelor's degree in regional planning from Westfield State and a master's degree in regional planning from the University of Massachusetts. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners and the American Planning Association.

Kami Falcione was named as a relationship manager for MassMutual's New England district, serving retirement plans that rely on third-party administrators (TPAs). Kami was a client relationship manager for 401(k) plans at Great-West Retirement Services. She also held previous relationship management positions at DST Retirement Solutions and Bank of America, and has a total of 16 years of experience in the financial services industry. A graduate of Westfield State, she holds professional licenses.

Sharon Apotheker Pomeroy has been promoted to marketing director for Caldwell & Walsh Building Construction, Inc.'s Connecticut and New York City business units. As marketing director, Apotheker Pomeroy defines opportunities and then strategizes, develops and executes campaigns that support and promote the company's services. She is a 19-year veteran of the company and currently lives in Woodbury, Conn., where she is an active participant in community and industry organizations.

1999

Martha (Mcleod) Gendron M'04 recently joined the Gateway Regional School District as a special education teacher at Littleville Elementary. She was previously a long-term substitute teacher for Gateway Schools and also taught for Springfield Public Schools.



2000

Getting a show in an off-Broadway theater performance is almost as tough as getting a production on Broadway, but two local men have beaten those odds. Dan Derby and Michael Rheault not only have the satisfaction of seeing their show's name up in lights at the Times Square Arts Center, they now have learned the production's run has been extended. "Fabulous! The Queen of Musical Comedies" is an affectionate throwback to the musical comedies of the 1950s and 1960s. The show had its first staged reading in 2009 at Westfield State University. The production started in September 2014 and was extended until the end of 2014. For more information visit fabulousthemusicalcomedy.com.

Amy (Beaulieu) Glavin, a 16-year educator in the Dracut Public Schools, who teaches third grade at Campbell Elementary School, was honored by the Red Sox before the Aug. 16, 2014, game as one of two Most Valuable Educators in New England in 2014. Anastasia Panas, one of her third-grade students last year, submitted Amy's name for nomination to the Red Sox. In her essay, the 9-year-old wrote, in part: "Mrs. Glavin is a great educator. She believes in her students and their abilities. There were 29 students in the class with no teacher's aide. She taught me multiplication and division. I learned all the states and their capitals. She gave me a passion for reading. I am now a much better reader." Anastasia also informed the Red Sox judging panel about her favorite teacher's generosity and kindness and said, "She makes learning fun."

Karen Chauvin Katsanos has been promoted to vice president of Human Resources at Freedom Credit Union. Karen joined the credit union in 2012 and has 20 years of HR experience in several industries, including health care and manufacturing. She has held a number of senior management positions throughout her career. Karen earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and has earned two master's degrees—one in psychology from Westfield State and the other in business administration from Western New England University.

2001

Jennifer Lafleur is the creator, producer and one of the stars in a new comedy series, *Wedlock*, alongside comedy actors Mark Duplass, Rob Corddry, Ed Begley, Jr., and more. It was picked up by Filmbuff for distribution and has an exclusive run as Vimeo On Demand's very first digital series, with expansion to iTunes, Amazon, Playstation, XBox, Vudu and more. She also recently appeared on the FX show *Married* and Comedy Central's *Review*, as well as several films slated for release this year. View *Wedlock* by visiting vimeo.com/ondemand/wedlock.

2006

Charly Oliva, an Army veteran who served in both Afghanistan and Iraq, was the recipient of a special one-day home makeover as part of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts' fourth annual company-wide Service Day. Participants helped remodel Oliva's home in conjunction with Rebuilding Together Springfield, complete with painting, landscaping and the addition of a special flagpole and American flag on the front lawn.

Patrick Padgett, with help from lots of friends, has faced his battle with cancer head-on. The cross-fit athlete is a picture of fitness, standing at 6 feet, 1 inch and weighing 215 pounds. Pat lost 40 pounds after his fifth surgery in an 11-week span to remove a cancerous growth from his mouth. The fight for life is on, and those in his inner circle are figuring out it's not happening alone. A

2008

Jessica Kennedy '08, M'10, assistant principal at the Westfield South Middle School, was among eight educators to receive the Massachusetts State Universities Alumni Recognition Award for 2014. The State Universities of Massachusetts honored educators who graduated from the system's teacher preparation programs in a ceremony held in Boston. Jessica Kennedy was selected by Westfield State University in recognition of her accomplishments as a teacher and as a role model for students for service to the community. She received both her bachelor's and master's degrees at Westfield State. *Pictured left to right: Board of Trustees members Robert Martin and* ***Robert Johnson '70****, Susan Dargie,* ***Jessica Kennedy '08, M'10,*** *Interim President Elizabeth Preston and* ***State Senator Donald Humason '89.***

community is growing around Pat right before their very eyes, and Pat is growing stronger and overcoming every day.

2008

Gregory Boyce recently completed the doctor of education in educational psychology program at American International College. Gregory earned his master's in psychology from Westfield State. Congratulations, Dr. Boyce.

Zach Farley and **Stephen Gibbons** have teamed up once again to write the official "Madden" game guide by Prima Games, a division of Penguin Random House. This highly detailed book helps individuals play and win "Madden NFL 15," a best-selling football video game by Electronic Arts Inc. This is the fourth book written by Zach and Stephen, known to their fans as "ZFarls" and "SGibs," and they have sold over 200,000 copies of the three previous editions.

2009

Kayla (Smelcer) Brady has joined the Gateway Regional School District as a third-grade teacher at Chester Elementary. She recently earned a master's degree at Westfield State and worked previously as a third-grade reading teacher in the Springfield Public Schools.

2012

Annmarie Hurley has been named an accounting officer for People's Bank. She has more than 20 years of banking and financial experience, joining the bank in 1993. She is a resident of Russell.

Alex Keefe was sworn in as a police officer by the town of Ashland. He will now undergo several weeks of field training before hitting the streets on his own. Keefe, of Framingham, was laterally transferred from the Framingham Police Department, where he worked for a short time. He has also been a call firefighter for the Ashland Fire Department since 2010. Prior to being a call firefighter, he was a member of the Ashland Explorer's Program through the fire department. Alex holds a bachelor of science in criminal justice degree from Westfield State.

The Miami (Ohio) University Intercollegiate Athletics department has added **Justin Roethlingshoefer** as an assistant strength and conditioning coach, working with the Miami hockey program. His primary duties include managing all aspects of the RedHawks' strength and conditioning, nutrition and supplementation programs. Justin Roethlingshoefer is no stranger to the ice, as he spent four years as a goal tender at Westfield State and played four years of Canadian junior hockey before that. He also spent time with the Springfield Falcons as a practice goalie. He earned a master of science degree in exercise physiology from Louisville in December 2014.

2013

Alex Chin is one of the brains behind a new mobile app that is gaining popularity in the Boston area. BarUp is a social app that helps bring people together to connect after work in the city. The app was recently featured in *Boston* magazine and *Boston Business Journal*. Learn more about BarUp at barupapp.com.

Haley Kirchner has been named director of community relations for the Charlston, S.C., RiverDogs. Haley has been with the RiverDogs since graduating from Westfield State in 2013. She will represent the RiverDogs at local events and will coordinate appearances for Charlie T. RiverDog, the club's loveable mascot. She is a native of Pittsfield.

Katherine Kraver has published a children's book called *It Was Just a House*. The book is inspired by a Westfield State course and trip she took to Jordan while a student in the Communication Department. The trip, led by Professor John Paulmann, led the students to many places, and it was the conversations with refugees that led Katherine to write the story. For more information or to order *It Was Just a House,* visit Katherine's website at katherinemarykraver.com.

2014

Mary Ahern has joined the Starline Academy for the Performing Arts in Stoughton as a hip hop and lyrical instructor. While at Westfield State, Mary competed and co-coached nationally with the competitive hip hop team. She has additional training from Dean College.

News from Former Students

Witalisz & Associates Inc., one of the leading boutique real estate firms in Western Massachusetts, announces the addition of **Cheryl Koval** to its team of real estate professionals. Cheryl was inducted by the Realtor Association of the Pioneer Valley and has joined the National Association of Realtors and Massachusetts Association of Realtors. Cheryl lives in Westfield with her family.

Friends

Jay W. Jacobs has released a new book, *The Widow Wave*, in e-book, softcover and hardback editions through Quid Pro Books. The nonfiction story focuses on the worst recreational fishing boat accident ever to happen in San Francisco's long maritime history. The central character in this true story was Westfield graduate **Janet Sullivan Dowd.** Janet's husband, Francis Dowd, and four other men left San Francisco Bay on Dowd's 34-foot boat, the Aloha, for a day of salmon fishing out on the Pacific Ocean. The boat vanished under mysterious

circumstances. There were no survivors or witnesses. The story continues along with the legal and emotional battle that Janet faced. Learn more or order at thewidowwave.com.

Weddings

1996

Maura (Collins) Boyle married Owen Boyle on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, 2014, in Andover. Maura, a business management and communications graduate, was known as a disc jockey for the Westfield State radio station WSKB and a team member on the women's track and field team. The couple has three sons: Christopher, Ryan and Michael. The family lives in North Andover. Maura works for a software company, Mzinga, in Burlington, and is looking forward to helping plan the Class of 1996 reunion next year.

2004

Jeffrey LaBell married Sydney Bender in a ceremony on Saturday, June 14, 2014, in West Tisbury. Jeffrey has been a full-time police officer on Martha's Vineyard since 2005 and currently serves as a detective for the Oak Bluffs Police Department. The couple honeymooned in Paris before returning to their home on Martha's Vineyard.

2005

Meg McDevitt married **Mike Berman '03** at the State Room in Boston on June 28, 2014. Both Meg and Mike were communication majors and met working at WSKB 89.5 in 2002. Several alumni attended the ceremony. Pictured are: First row, left to right:

Mike Boyd '03, Tim Jones '05, Mike Berman '03, Meg (McDevitt) Berman '05, Becky Jacobson '10, Leanne Loth Wilson '06, Emily Higgins '03; Second row: **Nicky (Britton) Manning '05, Meg Connerney '05, Lindsay (Berman) Dee '06, Katie Loth '05;** Third row: **Bob Musto '05, Kevin Lessard '05, Dan Surette; Fourth row: Scott Toomey '03, Ryan Rowe '04** and **Jess Morse '05.**

Births

Ryan Crossman and **Katie (Quist) Crossman** are pleased to announce the birth of their twin daughters, born Aug. 15, 2014. Savannah Josephine was born at 9:26 p.m., weighing 5 pounds and 1 ounce at 18 inches long, and Madilynn Patricia was born at 10:11 p.m., weighing 5 pounds and 2 ounces at 20 inches long. The family is doing well.

In Memoriam

1938
Wanda H. (Boratis) Ziemba

1943
Manning S. Case

1949
Anita J. (Ollari) Powell

1951
Irene May (Nitkowski) Best

1952
Carl N. Tripp

1953
Marion E. (Tebo) Snyder

1955
Faith J. (Curran) Watson

1957
Dolores A. Vivenzio

1958
Sandra E. (Menard) Parent

1961
Brien W. Anderson

1963
Alan G. Hurlburt
Joseph F. Ross

1964
Antoinette (Campofredano) Coffin

1965
Carole (Oschwald) Ball M'71

1966
Homer R. Angers, Jr.
Robert P. Thivierge

1968
Barbara W. Spear

1969
Thomas George
Dolores (Bill) Roderick

1973
Ronald O. Caplette
Raymond S. Starsiak

1976
James H. Anderson
Thomas M. "TK" Kelliher

1980
James Jackowski

1981
Gretchen (Hussey) Dazelle

1983
Craig Greenberg

1988
Edward D. Harrington, III

1989
Albert J. Fabbre

1992
Rosa A. Dell'Aera-Smith

1996
Olga V. Berezenko
Joseph J. Komendecki

1999
Lisa G. Bozenhard-Froncek

2005
Andrew T. Wagner

2014
Cory J. Garwacki

Supporting the Next Generations

By Peter Miller '84

LISA MCMAHON, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR of Advancement and University Relations, says the need for scholarship funds for students has never been greater—and the difference those dollars make has never been more powerful.

This is one of many reasons that donors step up in support.

McMahon explains that the Westfield State Foundation, Inc., holds an overall portfolio of scholarships that are held, invested and dispersed. Within that portfolio are funds raised and distributed by particular campus groups.

Organizations such as the Musical Theatre Guild (MTG), for instance, and the Westfield State Alumni Association (WSAA)—and others as well—each have their own scholarship committee that reviews the applicants and votes on the student recipient based on the specific criteria around their particular scholarship, McMahon says.

On the 35th anniversary of MTG, in 2011, a group of MTG alums decided they wanted to solidify their legacy by creating a memorial scholarship through the foundation. They contacted Kathi Bradford, director of Alumni Relations, and, together, set up the memorial scholarship.

Peg Drisko '88, who represents MTG, says, "We are a group that gave much to the University while we were here and received even more. We received the support of talented faculty and staff and an educational experience that was second to none and launched us into the world."

Drisko says her fellow alums want to ensure that other students have a similar experience. "The friendships that we built while creating exceptional college community theater have lasted a lifetime," she says. "The scholarship is a way for us to give those coming up behind us a boost and the message that we are with them in their pursuit of a well-rounded education, which includes student-run theater."

Nancy Daly '90, president of the Alumni Association's Executive Council, says WSAA gives scholarships that range from $500 to $2,000 each year. The number given depends on the funds available for that year, she says.

Recipients of the WSAA funds must be current Westfield State students with a familial relationship to an alum, Daly says, and the student must also show strong community service both on and off campus and have a minimum grade point average of 2.8.

Daly, who attended the reception, says she was inspired to hear students' stories of how receiving the scholarship funds helped them achieve their goals.

Steve Dailey '95, a former member of the Alumni Association's Executive Council, says he enjoys giving back "to a campus that gave me more than I ever imagined."

"My happy college memories and experiences have helped form who I am today, and I want to work hard to keep Westfield State as the best Massachusetts state university there is," Dailey adds. "As they say, the more you give, the more you get back in return."

You, too, have an opportunity to make a difference in a student's life. Maybe you played sports, wrote for the paper or worked at the radio station. Perhaps you'd like to support a current athlete, journalist or DJ. Maybe you just enjoyed your time at Westfield State and want to give back in a general sense.

To learn how to help a current student by donating to an existing scholarship or setting up a new scholarship, please contact Lisa McMahon at the Westfield State Foundation, Inc., office at 413-485-7360 or via email at lmcmahon@westfield.ma.edu. ■

Left to right: Matt Carlin '17 with Glen Brewster, Honors Program Director and Joshua Clark '15 at the Foundation's scholarship event.

Inspiring Students

Students grateful for scholarship gifts

By Dan Haggerty '15

THE POWER OF A GIFT is almost unquantifiable. It can brighten a mind, a hope, a future. Ask Vanessa Pesa '15, who was presented with a scholarship at the Sweet Success Donor/Student Scholarship Reception.

Pesa was not only thankful for the donation that was awarded to her in October 2014 at the first such event to take place in many years, but she also spoke of the example that the donors were setting and how she wants to follow in the footsteps they've left.

"Your contribution inspires me to set my goals high and achieve all that I can," she told an audience of over 125 donors, students and members of various scholarship committees, including ones focused on academics, private donors and the Foundation Scholarship Committee. "I hope one day I can give back to students and inspire their futures, just as this scholarship has done for me."

Scholarship recipients Tessa Newell '15 and Beth Teague '15 thank Celia Gagnon, after receiving the scholarship in memory of her daughter, Emilee Dawn Gagnon'13.

Lisa McMahon, assistant director of Advancement and University Relations, says that the event was a "great opportunity for people to come together and celebrate the students' successes."

McMahon says that the event more than served its purpose in that it "gave students an opportunity to thank donors and likewise gave donors a chance to see the impact of their donation."

The event also let students realize that "when the time comes, they too will be giving back," she says.

McMahon says over 300 scholarships were given to deserving students with a record amount, over $225,000, given in total.

"The evening was a resounding triumph," she adds. "We celebrated all the successes of the students and showed donors just how much their generosity meant to the recipients. It was a positive and upbeat evening."

The role in the gathering for Beth Teague '15 was two-fold. She not only received a scholarship but also helped to plan and organize the evening's festivities. "It was amazing to see how the small, personalized details of the event made a distinct difference for all in attendance," she says.

Teague was also thrilled with how many donors and students made the effort to attend. "I am honored to have been able to meet committee members and thank them in person for their incredible generosity," she says.

Thomas Madden '17 was another scholarship recipient who says he would like to donate in the future to help ease the financial burden of future Westfield State University students.

"Your award has taught me a valuable lesson in the importance of giving back," Madden says. "As I continue my education, I hope to help others achieve their goals and inspire them to chase their dreams as you have helped me." ■

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