

# CONNECTIONS

THE EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE MAGAZINE | FALL 2014





### Cover

Founding President James W. Hall, followed by former presidents Joseph B. Moore and Alan R. Davis and College Council member Tony Esposito, enters the inauguration ceremony for President Merodie A. Hancock.

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# CONNECTIONS

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE MAGAZINE

Volume 40 • Number 1 • Fall 2014

Produced by the  
Office of Communications

**Managing Editor**  
Mary Caroline Powers

**Editor**  
Maureen Winney

**Writers**  
Helen Susan Edelman  
Hope Ferguson  
Karen Nerney

**Designer**  
Lorraine Klembczyk

**Web Designer**  
Jill Evans

**Lead Web Developer**  
Katherine Watson

**Copy Editors**  
Mallory Burch  
Debra Park  
Kirk Starczewski

**Photographers**  
Gary Gold  
David Henahan  
John Hughes '81  
Tom Stock

**Production**  
SUNY Empire State College Print Shop

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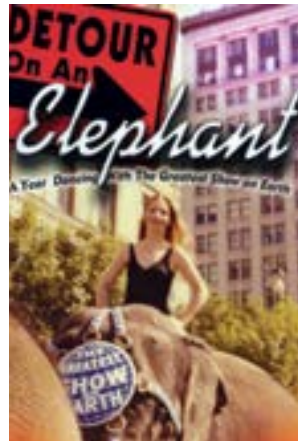


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## FEATURE STORY

### 4 ESC 2.0 Leading the Future of Higher Education

By Helen Susan Edelman



Left: Award recipient David Shakes '85, far left, is joined by Dean Jonathan Franz and other honorees, John Larish '80 and Patricia Uttaro '95, at a GVC open house.

Center: SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher, center, presents ESC students Lori Mould and Jamal Arabaty the SUNY Student Assembly award for Strongest Student Campus Government.

Right: External Affairs and Communications staff celebrate the college's first 24-hour giving challenge, which surpassed its goal by 225 percent.

## FROM THE President

When I said in my inauguration address that we will open doors, I meant it figuratively and literally. To that end, we've undertaken two big construction projects, one in Rochester and the other on Long Island, to establish permanent college locations in both areas.

After many years of planning, negotiating and lobbying for state funding, it's finally time to start breaking ground.

The shovel went into the dirt in September on a 5-acre parcel on Westfall Road in Brighton, a stone's throw from the Rochester city line. And, we'll be doing the same thing in 2015 on a similar-sized parcel near Selden, Suffolk County, within walking distance of Suffolk County Community College.

Both locations will offer students, faculty, staff and the community at large state-of-the-art connectivity, allowing for teaching and communicating across the state, nation and globe. That's exciting.

So that you can keep tabs on both construction projects, we've set up a website and invite you to visit it at [www.esc.edu/News](http://www.esc.edu/News).




  
Merodie A. Hancock  
President



PHOTO CREDIT: GARY GOLD

## PROFILE

### Rebecca Hegel

By Karen Nerney

**Hometown:** Whitesboro, N.Y.

**What she does:** Assistant professor in the nursing program, Saratoga Springs; teaches educational planning and health policy.

**Educational highlights:** First student to receive a Master of Science in Nursing Education from SUNY Institute of Technology. "In order to qualify for a grant, I had to finish the master's program in a year, and I was the only one who did." Recently earned post-master's certificate, family nurse practitioner, SUNY IT.

**Career path:** Information on a BOCES program near her hometown initially piqued her interest in nursing, but her ultimate goal was to teach.

**Why teach nursing:** "I feel we need more empathy and humility in medicine. My goal as a teacher is to transform the nursing profession, one student at a time."

**Why she loves ESC:** The school's philosophy. "It epitomizes the importance of teaching and the role teachers have in life."

**Approach to teaching:** Set boundaries up front, but be flexible with students as the term goes on. Allow students to explore a concept they're

interested in rather than preset the path to the end goal.

**Philosophy:** Failures are a step to success. "Sometimes the weakest student is the strongest student, and I believe in giving that student a chance."

**Job satisfaction:** "Even through an online environment, I get that 'ah-ha' moment. That's why I became a teacher."

**Favorite pastimes:** Baking and gardening. "I'm from an Italian and French background. Making food for people makes me happy."

**Favorite movie:** "When Harry Met Sally"

**Favorite music:** "I love, love, love '70s music and country music. Weird combination, I know."

**Bucket list:** Travel to Europe

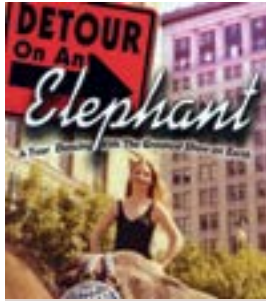
**Best advice:** "You own your knowledge, don't let someone talk you out of what you believe, and don't look back."

**On the homefront:** Husband, Michael, and daughter, Selah, 2.

**On being a mom:** "She loves me and she looks to me for everything. It's amazing that somebody needs you like that."

# PORTFOLIO

By Hope Ferguson



BOOK

## Under the Big Top

Barbara File Marangon '11  
Center for Distance Learning

In 1977, Barbara File Marangon, a classically trained ballerina, decided to join "The Greatest Show on Earth," Barnum & Bailey's three-ring circus. She was recruited to ride Peggy, a female elephant. Marangon's book, "Detour On An Elephant," describes circus hierarchy, love affairs, squalid living quarters, kindnesses and scary surprises (like a

lion in her shower) that made her year with the circus an adventure. Marangon has performed with the Stuttgart Ballet and in the musicals "Can Can" and "Hair." The writer, teacher and choreographer lives in Florida and Italy.



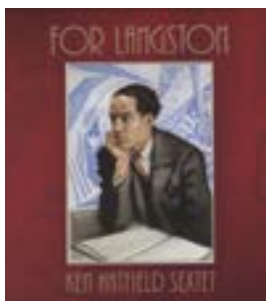
BOOK

## Soldiers As Reporters

John Robortella '01 and Mickey Schlosser  
Genesee Valley Center

John Robortella '01 and Mickey Schlosser co-authored the beautifully rendered "Writing Home: Civil War Letters from the Hinckley Family Archive" (Gates Historical Society). Prior to mass communications, letters were the preferred means of news from the front, and soldiers served as de facto reporters

on the battlefield. With creamy paper, photographs and unabridged letters, "Readers will be taken back to ... the pioneer kitchen table or parlor as the envelope was opened and every word cherished."



MUSIC

## Langston's Storybook

Ken Hatfield '93  
Metropolitan Center

Langston Hughes is known for his poetry and for being a luminary of the Harlem Renaissance. Musician Ken Hatfield '93 launched a Kickstarter campaign to raise money to do a CD of songs, "For Langston," with six renowned musicians, including vocalist Hilary Gardner, based on Hughes' poetry. Composed as a jazz

song cycle and arranged for an ensemble, the songs on "For Langston" fit together like chapters of a book, according to Hatfield, who is an accomplished guitarist.



BOOK

## A Cheese What?

Michelle Buffardi '06  
Northeast Center

Michelle Buffardi '06, a writer and editor for the Food Network and the Cooking Channel, has published a cookbook for everyone who loves cheese. "Great Balls of Cheese" is an update of traditional cheeseball recipes. Readers will find 50 cheeseball recipes for every season and occasion that can be made using untraditional flavor

combinations such as cheddar, blue cheese and Buffalo wing sauce or Bing cherry, rum and pecans. The book features a whimsical variety of suggested cheese-ball shapes ranging from Easter eggs to owls.



BOOK

## Story Cycle Complete

Eric Darton '90  
Metropolitan Center

The final two volumes of Eric Darton's "Notes of a New York Son," an ongoing journal of observation about New York City, have been released. Darton is the author of The New York Times bestseller "Divided We Stand," a biography of the World Trade Center, which was published shortly before the destruction of the towers.

His new books, "Brave New York" and "Book of Manitou," culminate an 18-year process of writing. The series encompasses elements of history, urbanism and cultural criticism.



BOOK

## Multi-genre Memories

Willa Schneberg '73  
Metropolitan Center

In ancient Israel, when people were distressed, they would "rend" their clothing. Willa Schneberg '73, an award-winning poet, photographer and sculptor, uses this metaphor in her fifth collection, "Rending the Garment." Schneberg visits the intersection of family, history and memory that uses poetry, flash fiction, imagined

meetings with historical figures, letters, journal entries and other literary techniques to tell her story "from the inside, where grief and love live side by side," according to reviewer and author Philip Schultz.



# ESC 2.0

Leading the Future of Higher Education

*By Helen Susan Edelman*

*Photography by [www.stockstudiosphotography.com](http://www.stockstudiosphotography.com)*



Schenectady Pipe Band Ensemble leads the procession for the inauguration of President Merodie A. Hancock down Broadway in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

March 27, 2014, was a momentous day in the history of Empire State College. In its 43rd year, the college formally welcomed its fourth president, Merodie A. Hancock, who was fervent in her address to the hundreds assembled at her inaugural ceremony about the future of the college and her keen excitement about spearheading initiatives to further align ESC with the State University of New York's goal to make higher education more accessible and relevant.

The crowd gathered to honor Hancock featured dignitaries on the podium including State University of New York Chancellor Nancy Zimpher, Chairman of the SUNY Board of Trustees H. Carl

McCall, College Council Chairman James Lytle, Foundation Board President Ann Turner '86, College Council member G. Angela Henry, President of the Faculty Senate Thomas McElroy '96, who served as mace bearer, Mentor Cynthia Bates, alumna and current graduate student and editor of *The Student Connection* Sandra Barkevich '13 and Rabbi Anna Sugarman. Also in attendance were the college's deans, its faculty, staff, students and alumni, Hancock's family and friends, public officials such as Saratoga Springs Mayor Joanne Yepsen, presidents of other SUNY and area colleges, Empire State College's three former presidents and members of the press.



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Our ‘re-emerging’ college will be responsive and relevant in the next decade. We will open doors.”

– PRESIDENT MERODIE A. HANCOCK

Days later, Hancock took the time to reflect and expand on her inaugural remarks. She touched on a wide range of subjects, such as innovative educational technology, the economy and globalization as they affect students, social trends and morphing attitudes toward online education and nontraditional adult students. She also spoke of shifting demographics, politics, employment needs and opportunities that, in part, drive academic

program development and her determination that Empire State College will emerge as the leader among U.S. public colleges in response to new demands and approaches.

Hancock inherits a college that has been flexible and responsive in the execution of its philosophy, able to bend without breaking to accommodate continually shifting trends, while maintaining a steadfast focus on its commitment to uphold the vision of its founders.

Even the name of the college reflects

its singularity. While other SUNY campuses assume the identities of their locations, Empire State College explicitly represents the entire state – from Long Island to Buffalo, and far beyond, as the Center for Distance Learning reaches every state in the union, international partners, Americans living abroad, and veterans and deployed service members around the world.

The stability and prestige of the institution is rooted in its relationship to the State University of New York, which is the largest public university system in the U.S. But its success, measured in the success of its students and nearly 73,000 alumni, abides in the college itself, in the interactions of mentors and students on a daily basis and over time and in the deep well of services offered to ensure that learning is rich, rewarding and sparks lifelong curiosity and discovery.

The unique experience that is Empire State College originated in 1971 as an education experiment conceived by then-chancellor of the SUNY system Ernest L. Boyer, who was passionate about serving those New Yorkers not accommodated by the state’s higher education system as it then was construed.

Now, in 2014, under Hancock’s leadership, the college is set to “re-emerge,” in her words, “stronger, more agile, more creative and poised” to both withstand and embrace the inevitable intellectual and practical evolution inherent in an increasingly fluid and unpredictable world.

With respect for the founders’ vision, Hancock pledged to safeguard and extend their intentions by continually promulgating the college’s “relevance,” not merely as a good idea, but as a fertile working model that connects programs and services to productive, meaningful outcomes for the diverse population served by the pioneering institution.

“I think about Boyer’s statement that education is meant ‘to transform you,’” says Hancock. “I don’t want to give up what we’ve been, but I want to take on today’s learners, responding to them with alternatives such as credit by examination, prior-learning and competency-based assessments as they advance toward a degree. I want the college to be proactive about a learning-centered approach. It’s a matter of looking at where we are in our world – the strengths and weaknesses – and re-emerging as the best, the most we can be. We will continue to lead by never sitting still.”



“SUNY Empire State College’s dedicated faculty and staff use innovative, alternative and flexible approaches to higher education that transform people and communities by providing rigorous programs that connect individuals’ unique and diverse lives to their personal learning goals.”

*President Merodie A. Hancock*



Hancock also wants the college to be responsive to the changing economy of the state of New York and the evolving goals of workforce development.

“We will continue to relate our learners to their programs, both structured and unstructured, to connect students and their mentors on their academic journey and connect personal and professional components of an education,” Hancock says. “There are hundreds of thousands of nontraditional students who have not gone back to college and we will open the doors for them.”

Empire State College students, Hancock notes, “are both challenged and encouraged to push themselves in an environment for individuals who are not just looking for a job and a promotion, but for a broad, liberal education.”

To facilitate it, Hancock says, “We’re looking at technology in a number of areas that can bring us together in communities of common interest

across the state and around the globe. Technology offers tools that promote collaboration and interaction and support Open SUNY Complete,” which is an initiative to help learners who have taken a break from their college degree programs and now want to return to school. Empire State College is well positioned to be at the forefront of the movement because of the college’s long experience delivering education to nontraditional students online, in small groups, through independent study, or at short residencies, enabling more students to participate in more educational opportunities.

“We are already doing well, but we can do better,” Hancock says. “We have to be agile. One course may be very traditional in a classroom,



**Candace Vancko, president of SUNY Delhi, Cliff Wood, president of Rockland Community College, SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher and Andrew Matonak, president of Hudson Valley Community College, preparing for the inauguration ceremony of ESC President Merodie A. Hancock.**

and another may be an independent study with a mentor, or the student may already know the material and want competency-based credit. The point is, our students can be online or face to face, they can mix and mingle approaches. We should always be looking at how we distribute education and asking ourselves, ‘What are the student touch points?’”

Additionally, Hancock underlines the need for faculty and students to develop “an international Rolodex.”



“With its world-class degree offerings and flexible class schedule, Empire State College has become a top choice for nontraditional and adult students. As the college continues to build upon its excellent reputation and service, we are fortunate to have Merodie at the helm. Congratulations to Merodie and the entire campus community.”

*SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher*



“On behalf of my colleagues on the SUNY Board of Trustees, I offer Merodie and the entire campus community our appreciation and full support as Empire State College continues its impeccable service to students, faculty and staff in every region of the state.”

*Chairman H. Carl McCall, SUNY Board of Trustees*



“We are re-emerging to take on new and exciting challenges, new jobs, careers, new businesses ... the possibilities are endless and Empire State College has shown us that we can tackle new things without fear, without reservation.”

*Sandra Barkevich '13, current graduate student in the Master of Arts in Learning and Emerging Technologies; editor of the student-run newsletter; and student speaker at President Hancock's inauguration*



“While I don’t think ESC has lost sight of its original goals, I think that we need to always be cognizant of what it means to move these goals forward for our current and future populations, especially considering advancements in technology. As a college, we need to re-emerge as the best choice for students to earn their college degree, but we can only do this by moving forward.”

*Assistant Professor and Unit Coordinator Cynthia Bates, Schenectady Unit, Northeast Center; Susan H. Turben Chair in Mentoring ’14; recipient of the Empire State College Foundation Excellence in Mentoring Award ’13; SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching ’13; faculty speaker at President Hancock’s inauguration*

“It is clear that she has invested time and energy in meeting the college’s various constituencies, that she values her students highly and that she will energize the institution to advance its mission in 21st-century education. I look forward to getting to know her as a new member of the Saratoga Springs community.”

*President Philip Glotzbach, Skidmore College*

“President Hancock’s inaugural address – and discussion of ‘re-emergence’ – is a handy antidote for any attacks of nostalgia, something that, as ‘new’ as the college is, has a way of creeping into any conversation about the future of this place. ‘Gosh, once we were ...’ Well no, we were never that, because we are still coming out of the box and growing into the fullness of the college’s original vision. That work, however handsomely begun, has a large horizon toward which it must continue to move.”

*Mentor of Historical Studies and Unit Coordinator Robert B. Carey, Brooklyn Unit, Metropolitan Center, since 1973*

“I watched her grow as a professional, as a person and as a leader. There are times in our lives that we are meant to take that next step, Merodie has taken that next step as she assumes the presidency of Empire State College. She is the right leader to take Empire State College to a bright and successful future.”

*President George Ross, Central Michigan University, where Hancock served as vice president of the global campus before coming to Empire State College*

“She has a tremendous understanding of Empire State’s mission, higher education and the needs of adult students in the culturally diverse world in which we live. She’s also open to new ideas and not afraid to challenge the status quo. Those skills will serve her well in guiding the re-emergence of Empire State College.”

*President Candace S. Vancko, SUNY Delhi*

“As a nontraditional student with a 27-year gap period, I can tell you firsthand that my own personal ‘re-emergence’ back into academia was quite daunting. I found that my research into universities and colleges always seemed to draw me back to SUNY Empire State College. Our faculty, staff and administrators have made this process of re-emerging into this part of my life seamless. SUNY Empire State College has been blazing the trail for the nontraditional student for over 42 years.”

*Lori Mould ’14, president of the SUNY Student Assembly and voting member of the SUNY Board of Trustees; graduation speaker at 2014 ceremony for the Genesee Valley Center; college representative in 2014 at the annual public hearing on higher education convened by the New York State Legislature*

“I love the president’s choice of ‘re-emergence’ as our guiding theme. It is a simple affirmation: What does each student want to accomplish and how can mentors and ESC help bring that goal into reality? This signature affirmation powers our work and sustains our existence.”

*Mentor of Cultural Studies Robert Congemi, Northeast Center, since 1973*



College Council Chairman James Lytle, SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher, President Merodie A. Hancock and SUNY Board of Trustees Chairman H. Carl McCall



Empire State College faculty and staff during robing at the Saratoga Springs City Hall prior to inauguration procession.

# Three Voices That Shape Our Vision

## An Inauguration Celebration

WEBINAR SERIES

As industry becomes more global and more international travel is required, ESC students will need to prepare to work both abroad and on U.S. soil with colleagues drawn from a worldwide arena. Hancock speaks of the potential of the college's Center for International Programs to expand, continuing to serve foreign students in ESC's overseas programs, but also hosting foreign students on U.S. soil, as well as encouraging USA-based students to study abroad. Many alumni already work for international corporations, or want to, the president points out, adding that current and potential overseas partners, as well as experts among ESC's faculty and staff in international business areas of study are being consulted about student residencies – both in the U.S. and abroad – that would promote “a cohesive community.”

Hancock wants to “break down the silos,” so that students, faculty and staff, and the general public think of ESC as one college and not as separate divisions, thereby leveraging the college's expertise across regions and programs – even spanning oceans.

“We have a lot of pieces to deal with, but we are so fortunate because we actually have fewer boundaries to break down than traditional colleges do,” says Hancock. “We have so much to accomplish that we have to take advantage of every resource in the college, regardless of where it is.”

She says there also will be a stronger emphasis on relationships, such as links with research partners and social services, increasing access as an inroad to relevancy in their education for students. Hancock wants to support SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher's “aggressive agenda” by finding ways to “realign” with SUNY's mission to match New York state's needs with students' abilities.

“The chancellor is raising the bar for colleges and students and ESC is stepping up and doing it better, dedicating staff and faculty to make it the strongest place it can be,” Hancock says, while acknowledging that “the process will sometimes be uphill – but still fun.”

The president predicts she might “lose sleep sometimes,” but she is committed to listening to naysayers' legitimate concerns as she leads the college through these changes.

“Concerns add value – that's why I tend to put something out there and let people respond,” she says. “We are in a challenging time for the budget and social change, so we have to figure out how to build creatively. We have a great team, passionate about doing what we do in a way that has meaning and purpose.”

The president calls her plans for the college “innovative, optimistic and bold.” But, she says she won't be alone in meeting the challenges, concluding, “People want to put in the effort and I am honored to lead them.”

The idea for the webinar series was presented by Patrice DeCoster, former chief of staff in the Office of the President and chairwoman of the Inauguration Planning Committee, in September 2013. Center for Mentoring and Learning Senior Staff Assistant for Faculty Development Karen LaBarge was a member of the committee, and was asked whether she and College Professor of Adult Learning Alan Mandell would be willing to coordinate such an event. The webinars would derive their focus from three quotes President Merodie A. Hancock had chosen to represent the inauguration theme, “re-emergence.” The quotes were taken from the written works of Nelson Mandela, Ernest Boyer and Aristotle. After some brainstorming, the webinar planning committee – Director of the Center for Mentoring and Learning Katherine Jelly, LaBarge, Center for Distance Learning Dean Tom Mackey, Mandell, Metropolitan Center Mentor Gina Torino and Chairwoman of Teacher Education Tina Wagle – agreed on a plan in early November 2013.

The committee was excited to have an opportunity to think about important ideas and values as part of the larger inaugural celebration. They considered finding three people who could best use the quotes to help colleagues think more deeply about President Hancock's vision for Empire State College. Thus, a three-part webinar series was

developed called, “Three Voices That Shape Our Vision.” The committee and other college faculty suggested a variety of speakers; the following were selected:

**Saleem Badat**, vice chancellor of Rhodes University in South Africa. Badat has been at the forefront of access and fairness issues in higher education in South Africa and around the world. He spoke on the Nelson Mandela quote, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

**James W. Hall**, founding president of SUNY Empire State College. Hall worked closely with State University of New York Chancellor Ernest L. Boyer Sr. in the establishment of ESC. He, thus, was uniquely qualified to address Boyer's quote, “Education is a seamless web: one level of learning relates to every other.”

**Elizabeth Minnich**, senior scholar with the Association of American Colleges and Universities. As a philosopher, she has written extensively about the very nature of knowledge and its “transformation.” Minnich's talk centered on the Aristotle quote, “All men by nature desire to know.”

Each of these free sessions was open to the public and drew between 75 and 90 participants, including Empire State College faculty, staff and administrators and colleagues from outside the college.



The Blackboard Collaborate webinar recordings and accompanying PowerPoint slides are available at <http://cml.esc.edu/resources/materials/presentations>.



## Center for Distance Learning

**Warren Abriel '83**, a fourth-generation firefighter, was sworn in as the chief of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services in Albany, N.Y., on Feb. 25. The 42-year fire department veteran has served the Albany Fire Department since 1972. Abriel earned a Master of Science in Public Administration from Russell Sage College and a Bachelor of Professional Studies in Business, Management and Economics with a concentration in fire service administration from Empire State College.

**Lisa Morahan '01** founded Floydwarriors.com, whose motto is "Helping Families Cope with Cancer, One Household at a Time." The organization announced its fifth annual Project Easter Bunny. Morahan started the project after being too ill from chemotherapy treatment in 2009 to fill an Easter basket for her son. The project's goal is to collect small toys and candy for 250 baskets each year. Several area cancer organizations and hospitals in the Saratoga Springs, N.Y., area received baskets to hand out.

**Miguel Rodrigues** has been appointed director of security, safety and emergency management for the Greater Hudson Valley Health System. Rodrigues has more than 16 years of experience in security, including HAZMAT and FEMA training. Rodrigues was recently honored as an Orange County Rising Star. He is earning his bachelor's degree in emergency management.

**Samuel Whitmore '11** was interviewed for the monthly news feature, Leadership Reflections, in the Sunday Post Journal of Jamestown, N.Y.

He is the owner of Bag and String Wine Merchants, a boutique rare wine and liquor store in Lakewood, N.Y.

## Center for International Programs

Three recent graduates of the University of New York Program in Prague, **Andrea Sandorova '13**, **Jakup Bermak '13** and **Jiri Sykora '13**, won the prestigious BCG Strategy Cup, a student competition held by the Boston Consulting Group in the Czech Republic. Sykora also is a graduate of Empire State College's International Programs partnership with UNYP.

## Central New York Center

**Andrew D. Bennett '77** is an alcohol and drug counselor instructor at Mueller College in San Diego, Calif. Since he entered the chemical dependency treatment field in 1977, he has provided professional training for the California Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors. He is a published author and a frequent presenter at state and national conferences.

**Lynn Mallaro '96** is a licensed real estate agent with Hunt Real Estate. After 18 years as an area human resources manager with BJ's Wholesale Food Club, she made a midlife career change. She was awarded the Hunt Real Estate of Central and Northern New York 2013 Million Dollar Rookie of the Year honor.

**Mary K. Murphy '00** was named interim vice president for finance and management for SUNY Cortland. She oversees the offices in the Division of Finance and Management, including the physical plant

and the business, facilities and human resources offices. She is responsible for the college's budget and capital projects, and serves as liaison to the Auxiliary Services Corp. and the SUNY Cortland Child Care Center.

**Dawn Myers '08** has been named director of the Lowville, N.Y., public library after nine years as assistant librarian there.

## Genesee Valley Center

**Liz Baradi '87** was one of the artists in a show at the Patterson Library Octagon Gallery last spring, which featured her piece, "Out of the Box." Baradi studied art at the University at Buffalo and at Empire State College, where she earned her degree in art and natural science.

**Adam Gayhart '06** took second place in the Allegany Arts Association Poetry Contest/Slam, as voted on by the entire membership.

**Lynn Lubecki '05** was profiled in the Woman to Watch section of the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle last spring. She is the executive director and CEO of the Rochester Childfirst Network and was cited for her passion for educating children. She earned her degree in early childhood education.

**Corinna McKnight '02, '03** recently introduced the new class of Allegany ARC's Leadership Program. As chief operating officer, McKnight works with an executive committee to identify employees who demonstrate the interest and capability to emerge as future leaders.

**Christopher Moss '11**, the Chemung County sheriff, has been selected by the Republican nominee for New York state

governor, Rob Astorino, to be the GOP lieutenant governor candidate.

**Stephen Tarbell '87** has been named to the Genesee Community College Hall of Fame. After earning his criminal justice degree at GCC in 1978, Tarbell went on to work for the Wyoming County Sheriff's Department. During a 23-year-career, he served as deputy sheriff, scientific evidence technician, technical sergeant and investigator specializing in crime scene and fire investigations. He's also served on the Warsaw Central School Board, on the Village Board as deputy mayor of Silver Springs, and Wyoming County Youth Court coordinator. He was town councilman for the town of Castile and is town supervisor. He's a member of the Wyoming County Board of Supervisors and the Wyoming County Community Hospital Board of Managers. He earned his bachelor's degree in criminal justice, public administration and accounting from Empire State College and a master's degree in criminal justice from the University at Albany.

**Mary Woodhull '79**, who earned a degree in business, management and economics, passed away last spring. Woodhull was a very active alumna, participating in many events with the college. She loved to interact and inspire current students and the Genesee Valley Center Annual Alumni Student Art Show. She was fond of making sketches of costume photography that she would get from the George Eastman House. Her cartoon drawings were very much in the style of the New Yorker magazine.

## Hudson Valley Center

**Obed Figueroa '97, '00** has completed an M.A. in higher education from Stony Brook University, and has been accepted in Northeastern University's doctorate program in education.

**Peter Graham '85** recently retired and launched GNP Printing, a custom t-shirt and embroidery business in Binghamton, N.Y., with his wife, AnnMarie.

## Long Island Center

**Jerry Astree**, a student, has penned "Loss of Grandma." The story is designed for parents and grandparents to share with children who have suffered a loss. It explains, in terms children can understand, how sad things happen in families, and provides a sense of comfort.

**Terry Fokas '93**, a member of the Empire State College Foundation Board, was named to PAID, Inc., board of directors, bringing his knowledge of patent licensing and managing intellectual property. He is the president and chief executive officer of Parallel Networks.

**Karl Grossman '76**, a professor of journalism in the media and communications program at SUNY's College at Old Westbury, has been named a member of the inaugural class of inductees to the Long Island Journalism Hall of Fame. He received a Bachelor of Science with a social science concentration from the college. He's been an active journalist for more than 50 years.

Grossman's wife, **Janet Grossman '78**, also is an alumna, as is her mother, **Jeannette Kopp '78**.

**Juanita Torrence-Thompson '83** has launched her eighth book of poetry, "The Secret Life of Scrambled Eggs." She is editor-in-chief of Mobius, The Poetry Magazine.

**Sonia Usatch-Kuhn '97** recently published a chapbook, "Regarding My Son." She believes her most important work has been as an advocate and voyager on her son's path to recovery from schizophrenia. She also has been an instructor at SUNY Stony Brook School of Medicine, teaching Healing and Madness, a nonclinical course she created dealing with issues of mental illness not found in textbooks. Usatch-Kuhn's poetry and an article about her course were published in The Journal of Poetry Therapy. She was a contributing writer for "Poetic Medicine: The Healing Art of Poem-Making" by John Fox. Other poems appeared in several anthologies, including "In the West of Ireland, and love ..." and forthcoming in Poetica Magazine.

## Metropolitan Center

**Nancy Azara '74**, who presented two new workshops last summer, will be part of a panel at the upcoming encaustic conference in Provincetown. She is beginning some new wall sculptures. Last winter, she also was in several group shows: Sideshow Gallery in Williamsburg, Brooklyn,

at the Garibaldi-Meucci Museum in Staten Island, the Friesen Gallery in Sun Valley, Idaho, and at Greene County Council on the Arts, Catskill, N.Y.

**Eric Darton '90** launched a blog, Book of the World Courant, at [www.bookoftheworldcourant.net](http://www.bookoftheworldcourant.net). It is an ongoing meditation on change and transformation as it is processed through language. In addition, a fable, "Certain Amazing Adventures of Mr. Hoel," originally published in New England Review in spring, 2001, has been selected as an NER Classic. It may be read online at [www.nereview.com/category/ner-classics](http://www.nereview.com/category/ner-classics).

**Deborah Gregory '86**, an award-winning author and writer of the Cheetah Girls series, is penning a new column on style for Ebony.com, showcasing black designers, artists and other creatives who are not yet well known. The historic black magazine and website are undergoing a transformation to appeal to a younger demographic, and Gregory's column is part of the new look. Find her new column at [www.ebony.com/style/antonio-browns-shoe-game-is-crazy-interview-402](http://www.ebony.com/style/antonio-browns-shoe-game-is-crazy-interview-402).

**George A. Manger**, a Staten Island Unit student, former stockbroker and sales trader who was completing his undergraduate studies in social work, died in West Brighton, N.Y., earlier this year. He was a well-liked

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Gareth Williams '07  
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student at the college, according to his mentor Amanda Sisselman.

**Janice Novello '83** has been awarded The University of Phoenix School of Advanced Studies Research Presentation Award. She says she owes it all to Empire State College, which gave her the opportunity to earn an undergraduate degree. She is the faculty supervisor for the School of Advanced Studies (Florida location) for the University of Phoenix.

**Richard Shaw '08, '10** just released the audio version of his 2013 book, "Teachers Matter," an essay about the role of the teacher in our society and the partnership between parent, child and teacher.

### Niagara Frontier Center

**Padraic Walsh '13**, was named to the "40 under 40" list in the Irish Echo. A University at Buffalo law student, he graduated from Erie County Community College in 2012. Walsh emigrated to the U.S. from Kiltimaugh, Co. Mayo, Ireland, in 1994. He is noted for his scholastic achievements, in addition to his work with the Irish Network Buffalo and his public relations work with the Buffalo Fenians Gaelic Football Club. His humanitarian work in Vietnam with DDS4Kids.org, a dental outreach program for the country's underserved communities, also was cited. Walsh hopes to practice construction law, pursue urban property development

work in Buffalo and continue his work with the Fenians.

### Northeast Center

**Patricia M. Gioia '75**, a tireless advocate for homicide victims and their families, was named a Schenectady (N.Y.) Patroon, the highest honor the city can bestow on a resident. Gioia's daughter, Mary Regina Gioia, was killed in California 29 years ago. Gioia has been a part of the support group Parents of Murdered Children since shortly after her daughter's death.

**Brenda Stubblefield '97** has joined Affinity Health Plan as director of Medicare operations. A leading managed-care organization, Affinity serves more than 267,000 members in the New York metropolitan area. She was director of pharmacy and government programs at Independent Health. After receiving her bachelor's degree from the college, she earned her master's in health care administration/management from SUNY Buffalo.

### School for Graduate Studies

**Bruce Burdock '08**, who earned an M.A. in liberal studies, is a practicing fine artist who earned his B.F.A. from the Maryland Institute College of Art. He recently had a solo show at the James Palmer Gallery of Vassar College titled "Faces of Vassar: An Appreciation" honoring selected individuals who work in the trades

on the Hudson Valley campus.

**Michael Burhans '13**, a student, has been named publisher and regional general manager for the Gatehouse Media properties in Saugerties and Liberty, N.Y.

**Erin Sullivan '13, M.A.** in labor and policy studies, recently initiated the implementation of a new member mentoring program within the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 3. The program, which she developed as part of her M.A. final project, has been such a success that it is being considered for use across the entire IBEW.

**Pamela Witter**, a student, presented Five Strategies to Increase Your Annual Fund Revenue last spring at the 51st International Conference on Fundraising in San Antonio, Texas. She is completing her master's degree in business administration from the college. She has served as the agency relations coordinator and development manager for HomeCare & Hospice, and the event management coordinator for St. Bonaventure University.

### In Memoriam

**Lorraine Peeler '88**, Ph.D., a mentor at the college's Niagara Frontier Center, died July 5, 2014. Peeler was well-known in the Buffalo area as a pastor, teacher, counselor, researcher, HIV/AIDS advocate, workshop leader and author. Peeler held an M.Ed. and a Ph.D. from SUNY Buffalo.



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Proudly displaying her 2014 Distinguished Alumni Award, noted author Deborah Gregory '86 of the Cheetah Girls book series, is joined by Metropolitan Center Dean Cynthia Ward, left, and President Merodie A. Hancock, following presentation of the honor.