

# connections







## Graduation Procession

Robert Altobello, faculty chair of the Hudson Valley Center, leads excited graduates into the Hudson Valley Center commencement ceremony, held at the Performing Arts Center of Purchase College.



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On the cover: Empire State College's fourth president, Merodie A. Hancock, in front of the State University of New York headquarters in downtown Albany, N.Y.

COVER PHOTO CREDIT: GARY GOLD

## Connections

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## Police Chief Honored

PHOTO CREDIT: PATRICK CASTANIA/CANAL TOWN PHOTO



**James M. Sheppard '99**

James M. Sheppard, chief of the city of Rochester Police Department, received special recognition as an alumnus of SUNY Empire State College's Genesee Valley Center for his outstanding leadership and service to the community.

The citation given to Sheppard states: "In honor of your significant contributions, dedicated service and exemplary leadership as chief of police for the city of Rochester."

Sheppard is quick to credit the college for preparing him for the challenges of his leadership role. "In the process of earning my bachelor's degree at Empire State College, my research and writing skills were strengthened considerably, which made me a better police officer," Sheppard says. "Learning is a lifelong process and I would not be leading the Rochester Police Department without my bachelor's degree from Empire State College."

Sheppard also was recognized for the instrumental role he played in the creation of the college's Leadership Development Program for police officers at the Genesee Valley Center.

Sheppard earned his B.A. in Community and Human Services with a concentration in criminal justice from the college in 1999, rose through the ranks of the police department, and, after 27 years of service, was named chief in December 2010.

## Sustainability Efforts Lauded

Kimie Romeo is the recipient of this year's college award for Excellence in Environmental Sustainability.

Romeo has worked in multiple capacities in the Rochester area to promote environmental sustainability. She volunteers as the local coordinator of Recyclemania, a nonprofit organization that brings together representatives from Rochester-area colleges and higher education institutions from across the county to exchange best practices. She serves on the steering committee for the Rochester-area environmental sustainability annual event known as Greentopia, which attracted more than 18,000 participants this year. Also, she coordinates a monthly meeting for the Upstate Green Business Network, a division of the Center for Environmental Information, in a voluntary capacity.

She has worked at the Cornell Cooperative Extension in Rochester as the Monroe County environmental educator, and taught courses in environmental sustainability as an adjunct at



PHOTO CREDIT: PATRICK CASTANIA/CANAL TOWN PHOTO

**Kimie Romeo '08 accepts award from Genesee Valley Center Dean Jonathan Franz**

Empire State College and the Rochester Institute of Technology.

Romeo earned her bachelor's degree with a concentration in public administration and the environment from the college's Genesee Valley Center.



## Field Study in Turkey

The college partnered with SUNY Cortland and Anadolu University in Turkey to offer a unique business field study tour in March that focused on fostering understanding of international business and commerce practices in Turkey, particularly in Istanbul and Eskisehir. Both SUNY schools operate dual diploma partnerships with Anadolu, a prominent public university located in Eskisehir, in central Turkey.

Ten students from Anadolu and 10 from SUNY met face to face in Istanbul and then traveled to Eskisehir together, after interacting through a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) platform for several weeks. The field experience and course highlighted Turkey's role as an emerging world power, providing a firsthand view of this emerging market powerhouse. Empire State College's Center for International Programs managed arrangements for the field study.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Field study students gathered outside the entrance of the Blue Mosque in Istanbul.

## Winney Elected to Leadership Role



PHOTO PROVIDED

Maureen Winney

Director of Alumni and Student Relations Maureen Winney was elected president of the SUNY Council for University Advancement (SUNYCUAD) at its annual conference on Long Island in June.

Winney has served on the SUNYCUAD board in the role of secretary, as well as vice president, where she oversaw the annual awards for excellence program. In addition, she was inducted into

the SUNYCUAD Hall of Fame in 2009 and has been the alumni observer to the SUNY Board of Trustees.

The SUNYCUAD board comprises 22 members from the comprehensive colleges, community colleges and university centers. These professionals represent the areas of alumni relations, public relations, publications, electronic communications, development, government relations, marketing, new media and Web design.

Winney has set as her leadership goals further strengthening the organization's relationship with SUNY and the chancellor's office, and examining some critical SUNYwide issues, including sustainability and Start-Up NY.

## New Expertise for Enrollment Management



PHOTO PROVIDED

Anna Miarka-Grzelak

Anna Miarka-Grzelak has joined SUNY Empire State College as assistant vice president of enrollment management and student services.

Miarka-Grzelak is responsible for directing marketing and recruitment systems, contributing to the college's overall enrollment management and marketing strategy, as well as the ongoing development of the college's recruitment and retention policies and procedures.

Previously, Miarka-Grzelak was marketing director for the division of continuing studies at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne. Her responsibilities included guiding the strategic planning for recruitment and managing marketing, communications and outreach initiatives, to promote diversity and quality of offerings to adult students.

Miarka-Grzelak has an M.S. in adult education from Indiana University and an M.A. in English philology from the University of Warsaw, Poland.



## Student Excellence Recognized

Six Empire State College students were recognized with the 2013 Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence presented by SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher. The honor goes to students with records of achievement as leaders, scholar-athletes, aspiring artists and community volunteers.

**Sean Coffman**, of Fargo, N.D., is a graduate of the college's Center for Distance Learning with a B.A. in Social Theory, Social Structure and Change. Coffman enjoyed a successful corporate marketing and advertising career as vice president of creative services but, in 2010, decided to pursue his passion for humanitarian aid. While completing his studies, he was hired as an emergency services director by the American Red Cross. He volunteers as chairman of the Cass Clay Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters and the North Dakota Human Rights Coalition and, also as a volunteer, served as communication coordinator for the Minnesota North Star Disaster Training Institute. He also is an independent filmmaker.

**Michele Cooper**, of Liverpool, graduated from the college's Central New York Center in the spring of 2012 with a B.A. in Cultural Studies, with a concentration in communication and writing. She is currently working toward her M.A. in Liberal Studies, with a concentration in communications. Cooper is a nationally published newspaper and magazine journalist, as well as a corporate writer and editor. She has served as a presenter at state and national conferences about the education and transportation rights of homeless students and wrote two comprehensive training manuals and curricula on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. A competitive ice skater in international arenas who launched her skating career at 40, she won a gold medal at the U.S. Adult National Figure Skating Championships. She spearheaded the building of a \$2.5 million community ice skating facility in Lysander. She also teaches skating for Special Olympics participants.

**Travis Kuhns**, of Kennedy in Chautauqua County, graduated from the Center for Distance Learning with a B.A. in Cultural Studies with a concentration in creative writing and foundational knowledge in computer-assisted design. From 2005 - 2011, Kuhns was a member of the National Association of Rocketry and worked with children to explore rocketry; he organized a special launch that promoted creative recycling of household objects in viable rocket designs. He has used his carpentry skills to construct a series of bat houses to help check the local mosquito population and quell concerns about Lyme Disease (which he has had since birth), and has built equipment for the Kennedy Free Library, where he volunteers as a weekend assistant to the librarian every summer. He also volunteers at a cat sanctuary for stray, abandoned and feral cats.

**Jeannie Lockwood**, of Woodside, an apprentice with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 3, graduated with a B.A. in Labor Studies from The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies in the spring of 2013. She has been chosen five consecutive times by her student peers as class representative and was the first IBEW apprentice selected to attend a one-month, on-the-job exchange program in London with the Joint Industry Board for the Electrical Contracting Industry in the U.K. The Association of Electrical Contractors named her 2011 Apprentice



Chancellor's award winners, from left: Michele Cooper, Jason Torreano, Lisa Michaels and Jeannie Lockwood.

of the Year. She is a graduate of and has been an instructor at Nontraditional Employment for Women, a nonprofit group that works to bring women into higher-paying jobs in construction trades. She is a member of the Local 3 Executive Board of the Apprentice Advisory Committee and the Empire State College Alumni Student Federation Board of Governors and served as student editor of "Labor Writes," the annual literary magazine of the Center for Labor Studies.

**Lisa Michaels**, of Albany, graduated from the School for Graduate Studies in the spring of 2013 with a Master of Arts in Teaching, having earned her undergraduate degree with the college in 2008. After working as a photojournalist, in 2001, Michaels discovered her passion for teaching when she joined a team at an Albany-area middle school that provided reading support for students in need. She is now a teaching assistant there, working with non-native English-speaking children and their parents who are struggling with language skills. She won the School for Graduate Studies' Dean's Medal in 2012 for her research and was instrumental in developing a track for the college's teaching assistants within the MAT residency program. The college now employs this model for its teaching assistants across the state. The New York State Reading Association selected her to edit its quarterly newsletter, and she's written columns for its peer-reviewed journal.

**Jason Torreano**, of Syracuse, graduated from the college's School for Graduate Studies with an M.A. in Liberal Studies focusing on nonprofit management and international development. He is the fundraising and development coordinator for Syracuse Behavioral Healthcare, which offers programs for families struggling with alcohol and other substance-use disorders and is a two-time winner of the Spirit of Syracuse Behavioral Healthcare Award. Torreano also is the founder of Inkululeko, a nonprofit organization based in Grahamstown, South Africa, that provides youth with support to finish school and attend university there, where he spent two years volunteering at schools for street children. Torreano worked as an anchor and reporter in newsrooms across the country, then, in 2009, left journalism for the nonprofit sector. In 2010, he collaborated with Syracuse University to send a group of students to Grahamstown, where he continues his work to help advance the mission of Inkululeko.



# Profile of a New President

by Helen Susan Edelman

**M**erodie A. Hancock, Ph.D., has taken the reins as president of Empire State College at a time when higher education is at a crossroads.

The fourth president in the 42-year history of the college, Hancock is uniquely prepared to understand and respond to complex challenges within academe that will revolutionize the delivery of knowledge and skills to a student population which increasingly comprises adult learners.

Aligned in critical ways at a critical time with the mission and approach of the college, in both her professional experience and personal philosophy, Hancock assumed the role in July with the unanimous support of the State University of New York Board of Trustees and Chancellor Nancy Zimpher.



The chancellor cited Hancock's leadership experience in higher learning – especially the delivery of online programs across campuses and international borders – as key in her appointment to a position that will secure Empire State College in the burgeoning and highly competitive nontraditional education marketplace. This also will ensure that the college's successes in innovation, particularly in online education, is leveraged within Open SUNY – an initiative to offer students enrolled at SUNY's 64 campuses opportunities for online study across the system.

Hancock already has an impressive track record in the nontraditional and adult education sectors. She came to Empire State College from her position as vice president for Central Michigan University Global Campus, where she was responsible for the delivery of academic programs for CMU's remote campuses, military and community college locations and online programs. Previously, she held both teaching and administrative positions at the University of Maryland University College, which serves more than 90,000 students through online and face-to-face programs. Her dedication to expanding access to higher education for adults and extensive experience with the expanding population of service members and veterans returning to school will be essential in progressive, full-steam-ahead strategies for steering the college through the first decade of the 21st century.

Hancock holds a Ph.D. in urban services and education administration from Old Dominion University, an MBA from Claremont Graduate University and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Scripps College.

**Q: What brought you to this point in your life?**

A: My parents enjoyed travel and exploring new areas. As a result, I lived in numerous states growing up, eventually graduating from high school in Arizona. That sense of discovery has stayed with me as I still love to explore and travel. I am fortunate that my career continues to make that possible. Now, I look forward

to making Saratoga Springs and New York my home.

I came from a very large blended family, with 10 siblings, in a household that welcomed open conversation and communication. As one of the youngest in the family, I had to learn negotiation and respect for alternate positions very early. Again, this is something my career continues to support.

My own family is much smaller. I have three children, a son serving in the U.S. Marines, a son at the University of Montana and a daughter in high school. While I am more comfortable living in one place, my children have inherited that shared passion for travel and discovery. We enjoy traveling and family reunions whenever and wherever possible.

**Q: Why are you specifically interested in Empire State College – is it because your personal work history is so well aligned with the college's current and imminent needs, or is it more philosophical than that?**

A: Both. I'm incredibly fortunate, because my passion and professional experience are aligned with the work being done at the college. What we have in common is dedication to the marriage of access and quality, which are not mutually exclusive. The commitment is to meeting the challenge to make sure there is no trade-off, no compromise.

**Q: You talk about programmatic responsiveness/workforce development vis-à-vis the actual job market. Does this mean the end of the liberal arts education?**

A: Beyond its mission to educate adults, one of the factors that attracted me to Empire State College is that it clearly embodies the nexus of professional and liberal arts education. Yes, we want our graduates to succeed and be effective with on-the-job professional training, but a liberal arts graduate has the potential to be the decision maker with critical-thinking skills, who has the ability to be analytical and perform research, to collaborate, plan, organize and lead teams, as well as knowledge of specific content. I am a huge proponent of preparing students

with technical skills for the workplace, but I also believe it will be the liberal arts graduates who will approach and appreciate the world as responsible citizens who can accommodate diverse views and perspectives as they move into leadership positions. So, it is our responsibility as educators to ensure all of our graduates develop the skills needed not only for their immediate profession, but also those needed to be strong critical thinkers and contributing members of their local, state and global communities.

**Q: There is a strain between the provision of high-quality education and budgetary limitations. How do you see this being reconciled?**

A: This is an ongoing challenge, and we will be continually addressing it. The world is changing quickly and constantly. We must be willing to go back and re-evaluate, to go back to decisions that have been made when there is new data on the table and see if resources have been best allocated to enrich the environment, or if something needs to be reassigned. Students' needs have to be at the table, faculty needs have to be at the table, and state and workforce development needs have to be at the table. We'll have to put our brains together and look at what is in place right now. Data won't tell us everything, but it will provide a resource to make us wiser. There certainly will be active discussions and tough choices. But, we have a lot of great resources and we will continue to grow.

**Q: On one hand, Obama is very focused on the completion of college degrees and new pathways for degree attainment; on the other, regulations and diminishing budgets for state systems can strangle efficiencies. Is the government our friend?**

A: There is a disconnect between government and education, and there shouldn't be. Education should be treated like a public good; it should be funded with an emphasis on degree completion and productivity. We need to maintain quality, but we also need to help students manage debt – they're getting into bad straits, because artificial

barriers to education such as residencies, class availability and impractical policies and procedures are driving up costs and time to degree. This is one reason that the nontraditional approach is so timely, because it helps break down those barriers. We need to be careful not to create diploma mills where students are just pushed through, but the government needs to do something more purposeful than we're doing now that will advantage, and not disadvantage, our students – of all ages.

**Q: How do we move forward on the adult education front in terms of “ensuring potential supporters fully grasp the value of adult education and the impact their support has on access and quality,” as you have suggested?**

A: There are numerous stakeholders who need to both tell and understand the story: individuals, corporate, workforce, students, faculty, donors. The college must get the story of our success out there. We impact lives every day by driving regional economic development across the state, breaking down higher-educational barriers for first generation undergraduate and graduate students, building educated citizens, and much more. In our story, we must pull out and spotlight the facts that create a case. Then we must “come alive,” so what we do is well known and understood and will open doors. Our students and faculty can speak for themselves. The more we can get people to focus on our impacts, the more they will see the relationship between theory and practice, the more our approach and our graduates will have credibility.

**Q: How do you see prior learning assessment in the context of the degree program? Why is it so important?**

A: Prior learning assessment is critical. It's a way of getting our arms around learning that has occurred throughout someone's life. The learner's life is not just about academic outcomes, it is an enriched, significant process. Prior learning assessments allow the student to pull together the facts and documents that make a compelling story about

the value of that process, beyond face-to-face or online or hybrid learning. It makes learners responsible for assessing themselves. It's not always efficient and easy, but our mission is to recognize legitimate learning, even when it is not neatly packaged into 3 credit hours.

**Q: You have been deeply involved in the development of nontraditional and adult education. As this trend grows, is there a chance it will be considered an option and not “alternative”?**

A: I would say that we are largely already there. The boundary between traditional and nontraditional is blurring within the range from face-to-face to online education. Increasingly, we are leveraging technology to create a hybrid for use both in the classroom, K through 12, and in the workplace, for ongoing training.

Online education is becoming a standard in the industry; it's being perfected and embraced as people recognize that what's important is not that it's nontraditional, but that it's flexible, with comparable, if not enhanced, learning outcomes. The long-term vision is for traditional face-to-face and nontraditional online education to be seamless, as learners move within the spectrum to meet their needs.

**Q: How fast is online education growing? Who is benefiting from this approach to delivery? Do you think this will continue, or will the market be saturated?**

A: The existence and growth of nontraditional education is underreported. Acceptance is increasing, especially as we understand how effective online education is, but nontraditional education needs to be understood as a three-way explosion: tools, theories and technologies – not just technology. It's more effective teaching and more effective learning. It's not just not sitting in a classroom, it's going on a virtual field trip. It's a modern learning model responsive to modern learners, who are no longer just 18 to 24-year olds, but learners of all ages, with other commitments, who want an array of high-quality educational options.

**Q: How do we address the problem of online degrees being viewed as the stepsister to traditional in-classroom experiences?**

A: There is still some perception that online education is not “as good as” traditional education, but that is changing, especially with employers, as learners who studied online become leaders in their fields, and as effective workplace training moves to an online model. Success speaks for itself.

Nontraditional online education is not the answer to everything and should not be the only option for students or faculty, but its value is getting stronger as it is better understood and more effectively implemented.

**Q: What's the role of the college in New York state's economic future?**

A: We need to be nimble enough to respond to employment needs – from western New York state to across Long Island, stay close to our community college partners and continue to provide master's programs that both fit current job needs and, through the liberal arts, impart the skills that make students eligible to advance in their careers and be strong, contributing citizens.

**Q: How does ESC fit into SUNY? What do you think of systemness? What should our role be in Open SUNY? How is the college going to get at the table and stay at the table with SUNY?**

A: We are part of a unique model. We need to make absolutely sure we add value to – and do not waste – the resources of the State University of New York. We can use systemness to our advantage, but we have our own attributes. We're not part of a SUNY system oatmeal; we bring strong, specific assets. Empire State College is not for everybody, but we are available as a solution for certain people. We are part of a value proposition and should not be diluted by competition. That said, we should fully leverage the benefits of the SUNY system, particularly where we can gain efficiencies and free up resources to invest in more student-focused programming.



**Q: How will we differentiate ourselves in a crowded and increasingly competitive nontraditional marketplace? There's a branding effort going on at ESC. What do you see as our top messages?**

A: The message needs to be true to where we are: What is the experience of our students' success in the long and short term? We need to talk about the individual and mentoring relationships that define Empire State College, and about the common thread that runs through both the undergraduate and graduate experience: innovative critical thinking. We have to be sure we are marketing ourselves as the right place for learners, faculty and staff at all stages who are dedicated to the process. Empire State College is not the easy way out. Our cadre of successful alumni speaks for our results.

**Q: Do you think expanding either undergraduate or graduate offerings is realistic, probable or even a good idea? More areas of study? More graduate programs?**

A: We have to be realistic. We have to assess which academic offerings will respond to changing employer demands. We can't offer all programs to all people. Some decisions may be painful and others exciting, but we are Empire State College and we are able to modify and change.

**Q: What role do you think International Programs will play in the growth of the college?**

A: I hope to pair the college with strong international leaders in education and come up with significant partnerships. I would love to see the college involved in virtual study abroad. I want to be careful to partner only with those who share our commitment to quality, access and innovation. I have not had a chance to fully explore our international programs, but look forward to doing so in the coming months.

**Q: How can we serve our veterans?**

A: I have a soft spot for service members, both active-duty military personnel and veterans. I want to make sure the college stays informed about relevant



PHOTO CREDIT: STOCKSTUDIOSPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

President Merodie Hancock, right, meets Margaret Sithole, left, a mentor at the Central New York Center, as Katherine Jelly, director of the Center for Mentoring and Learning, enjoys the moment.

opportunities to make our degrees fit their needs, providing both practical and liberal arts foundations. At the same time, I want to make sure that we are able to value what knowledge our service members have, and that's where prior learning assessment and respect for formal military training come in. We also need to make sure we have the learner support systems in place to work with the realities of a military student.

We need to be available to mentor this strong, respected, disciplined group of learners during and after they serve our country. This is part of the responsibility of being a public institution.

**Q: What do you see as the college's role in community service?**

A: I would hope we play a big role, in more than one way. For some learners, this is a first exposure to community service; some people need a structure for a first experience with it, and others already have a full life of volunteerism and community support. Community service also may present opportunities for alumni to interact with students and faculty in cooperative internships.

As part of a public institution, Empire State College has a responsibility to the community and to help create opportunity

for students to find ways to make a difference. In fact, it's a big part of our story.

**Q: How will you stay in touch with college constituencies, from faculty and staff to students, alumni, donors, employers and others?**

A: I am not a newsletter person, I am a face-to-face, interactive person. I am going to want small meetings that delve deeply into substance – not just at the beginning, but throughout my tenure with Empire State College. I plan to visit the regional centers, to be accessible and to work hard at getting back to people in a timely way. I prefer formats that engender dialogue. Empire State College is an active team of people, with a wonderful blend of individuals with a rich history with the college and others with equally rich experiences elsewhere. Going forward, I anticipate developing dialogues with our communities – alumni, board members, College Council, full- and part-time students, faculty, staff – to leverage these knowledgeable advocates and resources. I know these stakeholders want the college to succeed and I want to keep them informed and to benefit from their thoughts, ideas and concerns. There are only so many hours in the day, but

there are many, many people who can brainstorm solutions to the challenges and opportunities we face.

**Q: How would you describe your leadership style? I've heard you use the term "extroverted thinker." What does this mean?**

A: If you want someone to start a conversation, to get something out there, I can do that. But, an extroverted thinker needs a lot of looping. The beauty is that after we've given each other feedback in a healthy way, everyone feels some ownership for the idea as it gets reshaped. After a while, you can't remember whose idea it was, it has morphed so much. It has been beaten up, evaluated and there's been so much input that everyone can say, "That was my idea." I have benefited tremendously from working with sharp folks because of just this process. A leader needs to make the tough decisions. However, you inform those decisions by freely sharing your thinking and openly accepting challenges and additional inputs.

**Q: Can you be both data-driven and flexible?**

A: I would say it is best to be data-informed, not data-driven, otherwise you can get one-dimensional. I never have enough data. I suspect that will always be the case because data and statistics are not perfect. However, they do shine a headlight on the situation and help us make initial decisions and then evaluate the outcomes. However, you always need knowledgeable folks in the room who can add context to the data and help interpret the findings.

**Q: You have a strong business background, so how do you plan to recruit and retain "customers?" Besides students, would you say faculty, staff, alumni, donors, regulators and the community-at-large also are customers?**

A: The word I prefer is "stakeholders" or "investors." Students invest their time, energy and trust. Alumni continue to invest their trust as advocates and employers, and often their money for endowments and scholarships. Donors



PHOTO CREDIT: GARY GOLD

**James Lytle, left, chairman of the College Council who also chaired the presidential search, meets with President Merodie Hancock, in Albany, N.Y. The search, begun in August 2012, concluded in March 2013 after which Hancock was confirmed as the new president of Empire State College by the SUNY Board of Trustees on May 7, 2013.**

from all areas invest their resources. Faculty and staff invest their careers, and the citizens of New York invest their taxes. We keep answering the same fundamental question for all of them: "How do we work together to do this right?" If we keep answering the question in a way that makes sense and shows strong stewardship of all those resources that have been entrusted unto us, the business part works out in the end.

**Q: Will a business model work? Service model? Government model? Combination?**

A: Yes, to all. We have limited resources and unlimited wants, just as there are in other sectors. We are working to leverage existing resources to meet stakeholders' needs. We have to respond to multiple voices engaged in lively discussion, and the hard part is, everybody needs to understand, "we will all win some and lose some." This is about building Empire State College and serving the state of New York. Keeping our eye on the whole is what will drive us to success.

**Q: What is your first priority as president?**

A: In addition to continuing to get to know everyone and learn the ins and outs of this unique and dynamic organization, I plan to focus on understanding what we

do well and where we feel the strain. If nothing is going wrong, we're not trying hard enough. People need to feel free to take chances, to try out new things, but they also are responsible for having done the initial research, so the idea is sound, and having a timely evaluation plan. We want to make sure Empire State College is an environment that embraces overall organizational growth and success, and to do this, we have to ensure we have a team in place that trusts each other and is willing to move forward together. I want to begin to understand the environment from this perspective.

**Q: What accomplishment would you like to see as the hallmark of your presidency?**

My goal is for people to look at my career and to be able to say, "She made a difference in improving access to higher education for nontraditional learners, but never at the expense of quality." That would be a hallmark of success. But, I want to emphasize that this takes a whole team, with lots of brains, respect and energy.

**Q: Is there a single phrase that sums you up?**

A: At the core of what I believe is positive thinking along with hard work.



# WAR RESIDENCIES:

## Bringing History to Life



By Hope Ferguson



PHOTO CREDIT: PAULA BARBER

Residency participant and graduate student Edward Herbert, right, talks with Mentor Gregory Edwards, creator of the war residencies.

For Edward Herbert, now a graduate student at the college, the most fascinating thing about taking the Revolutionary War Residency was how it changed his views on Benedict Arnold, the turncoat infamous to schoolchildren everywhere. Herbert chose to do a report on Arnold for the residency.

“This allowed me to research someone who is often recognized as a traitor to our country. However, the residency allowed me to discuss, argue and identify the important roles that he played during the Battle of Saratoga and his early commitment to the nation and the war itself,” he says. “My point of view on who he was and what he did turned 180 degrees. It was because of the Revolutionary War Residency that I had this chance of researching someone who from earlier days of learning was identified only as a traitor.”

Empire State College offers these seminars, known as residencies, both to students who are concentrating in Historical Studies as an area of study, and those who are fleshing out academic programs in other academic areas.

### The Beginning

The “war residencies” were created by Gregory Edwards, Ph.D., a mentor at the college’s Jamestown Unit. Edwards started the Civil War residency nine years ago, somewhat serendipitously.

He wanted to take a few students to major battle grounds of the Civil War “as a way of introducing students who watch the History Channel to the joy of scholarly history; the detective work, the examination, the critical thought and underlying issues related to the Civil War, and what historians are interested in and why,” Edwards explains.

He intended to take a group of students on a trip in a minivan. However, for reasons having to do with liability and insurance, the college thought that was a bad idea, so then-Vice President of Administration Bill Ferrero advised Edwards to charter a bus instead.

“So I signed my name on a contract for the bus and all the hotel rooms, then went out and started to recruit students,” says Edwards, amused at the memory.

The residency was a resounding success, so much so that five years later, with the help of Paul Miller, Ph.D., a mentor at the Ithaca Unit, and Karen Garner, Ph.D., a mentor at the Saratoga Unit, Edwards started a second residency on the Revolutionary War.

That first group drew 22 students, and groups since then have ranged from 18 and 20 students, but have attracted as many as 45. It is not unusual to find alumni joining these residencies, who, after graduation want to continue their quest for lifelong learning.

“In addition to the ‘boots on the ground’ approach, the residency allows for engaging interaction between students and Dr. Edwards.”

– Edward Herbert

## Eye-Opening Experiences

In addition to taking the Revolutionary War Residency, Herbert has taken the Civil War Residency twice.

“As a history major, the residency provided me an opportunity to see, firsthand, the battlefields of Manassas, Antietam and Gettysburg,” he says. “In addition to the ‘boots on the ground’ approach, the residency allows for engaging interaction between students and Dr. Edwards.

“It was through these discussions in historical perspectives that I gained critical knowledge and understanding of the war itself. This experience is a must for any undergraduate student who is pursuing a degree in American history, with or without a focus on Civil War history; the visual aspect alone of the battlefields will deepen one’s understanding of the Civil War and the history of our nation.”

He also took part as a graduate student. “This second or follow-up visit allowed me to critically examine specific details regarding Manassas, Antietam and Gettysburg. Though there were many similarities to my first experience, my second was different in the way that I had an opportunity to expand my knowledge of the Civil War by applying graduate-level applications and theories,” says Herbert. “And, I must add that the experience

during both was made possible only by Dr. Edwards’ ability to teach, debate and push each of us to dig deeper into the Civil War experience.”

Alumna Anne Hyndman also took the Civil War Residency twice. “I have long been fascinated by the cultural, emotional and spiritual aspects of history in general, but in particular the American Civil War. When the opportunity arose to attend the first tour as a student, I jumped at it. I chose to do it again this year because I very much enjoyed the first one and I very much enjoy the teaching of Dr. Edwards. Also, this time, I could simply absorb the information and atmosphere without having to present a report.”

### America’s Iliad

“The Civil War is America’s ‘Iliad,’” Edwards says. “It gets to the root of who we are as a nation.”

Edwards traces his interest in the Civil War to an encounter he had with a congregant when he was a pastor at a small rural church in western New York. Over a meal at the man’s home, the congregant told Edwards that he was descended from an officer in the Civil War who served in the Westfield Regiment, showing him a card with the muster roll. Edwards told the man, “I know one of my relatives fought in the Civil War, but I

don’t know where or what year he fought.” He then flipped over the card and was startled to see the name William Edwards, Ripley, N.Y., 1861. He immediately knew he was looking at his forebear, since his family had settled in Ripley in 1820.

After that unusual experience, he found he had a hunger to discover everything about this relative and the Civil War. He decided to pursue his master’s degree, and later his Ph.D., and now he shares his love of history with his students by studying tomes such as William W. Freehling’s two-volume “Road to Disunion,” and “Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction,” by James McPherson and James Hogue.

“I had a passion to teach about the Civil War,” he remembers.

“Students are exposed to the truth that scholars don’t always agree. This opens them up to thinking about history in an academic way.”

For Hyndman, learning about the battles and the strategic and tactical aspects of how war is waged was fascinating.

“It’s our history, it’s part of our foundation as a nation. It defines us as a people ... it helps us to grasp who we are, what we value, what we’ll fight for. For me, it’s important to understand where we came from, what has brought us to where we are.”



PHOTO PROVIDED

A group picture of the members of the 2013 Civil War Residency at the Antietam National Battlefield’s Burnside Bridge in Maryland.





A staff member at the Jamestown Unit of the college, Paula Barber, center, poses with Civil War re-enactors at Gettysburg.

### Another Residency is Born

Because of the popularity of the Civil War Residency, Edwards invited Paul Miller to help teach a Revolutionary War Residency. Miller has a background in museum education at the JFK library in Boston and he currently serves as director of secondary and advanced education at the History Center in Ithaca, N.Y., in addition to his work as a mentor at

the Ithaca Unit. He teaches about the Constitution, religion and biography. The group is rounded out by Karen Garner who teaches women's history, and Paula Barber, secretary at the Jamestown Unit, who makes sure everything runs smoothly.

The two residencies offer a variety of seminar topics for discussion, including workshops on religious history; slavery and the founding fathers; and on the political parties of the day, the Federalists and Jeffersonians.

"What I've witnessed from students is the interaction with each other, the sharing of ideas," says Miller. "They have the opportunity to learn and critique everyone; in the same way, they model for each other how to present and prepare a paper. These are some of the really valuable experiences."

With the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation occurring this year, there still is controversy over why

the war was really fought. Was it about the south's "backward" agronomy hindering the rest of the union's economic prowess? Or, was it about the moral issue of slavery that the abolitionists championed? Or, was it fought to prevent the expansion of slavery into the territories?

Edwards says Lincoln's immediate goal was to preserve the union. "The Emancipation Proclamation is a way to protect the Union." But, he adds, "as the war goes on he comes to believe that the root cause of disunion was slavery."

The Spanish-born American philosopher, poet and humanist George Santayana said, "Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it." But Empire State College, continuing to prove that you can learn great things outside a classroom's four walls, has created an educational residency exploration of history that students and alumni want to repeat.

## Residencies at Empire State College

The residency programs examining the Civil War and the Revolutionary War are only two of these types of study opportunities the college offers students, who can earn credit for the experience. Others explore such topics as aging, emergency management, the environment and gender issues. Each offers relevant and insightful seminars about topics that impact the lives of the college's students and alumni. Certain residencies are opened for participation by alumni as part of the college's mission to foster lifelong learning. To learn more about residencies of interest, contact the office of Alumni and Student Relations online through the Alumni and Student Community: <http://alumni.esc.edu/>.

### Aging and Longevity Residency

Aging affects everyone, raising questions like what lies ahead for an aging parent? According to the residency description, "We are all in one way or another touched by issues associated with aging, whether we aspire to work with the aging population or we want to increase our own longevity and maintain a good quality of life as we age. The 'older' population – individuals age 65 years and older – [are about] 12 percent of the population, and that number will double by 2020." Students taking this residency will read and discuss the best-selling book, "The Longevity Project: Surprising Discoveries for Health and Long Life from the Landmark Eight-Decade Study."

### Emergency Management Residency

Since Sept. 11, 2011, emergency preparedness has taken on a special urgency that's intensified with recent and unprecedented hurricanes, tornados, floods, fires and sinkholes and the rash of shootings in schools, colleges and malls. The residency focusing

on emergency management provides studies that prepare professionals to be competent decision makers and leaders in the field of emergency management. It exposes them to best practices, challenges and critical issues in the field from a theoretical perspective to enhance participants' understanding of the essential principles of effective emergency planning.

### Environmental/ Adirondack Studies Residency

This residency is one of the college's earliest and most popular seminars during which participants spend three or four days at Raquette Lake in the Adirondack mountains to learn about environmental issues from an interdisciplinary perspective. Lodging is in rustic cabins at the lake. Students learn about the important challenges impacting the planet today and enjoy such residency elements as performances by local musicians and storytellers.

### Women's Studies Residency

Women's Studies students generally explore the impact on gender across a broad range of topics, including economics, historical studies, literature, math, psychology, science and sociology. The college has hosted the Women's Studies Residency since the mid-1970s, and the residency has continued to evolve as the field itself changes, being both challenged and reinvigorated by gender studies, LGBTQ studies and men's studies, all of which seek to expand the discipline to include a broader analysis of all gender norms.

For a full list of current residencies, go to: <http://residencies.esc.edu/>.

# Alumni

# By the Num

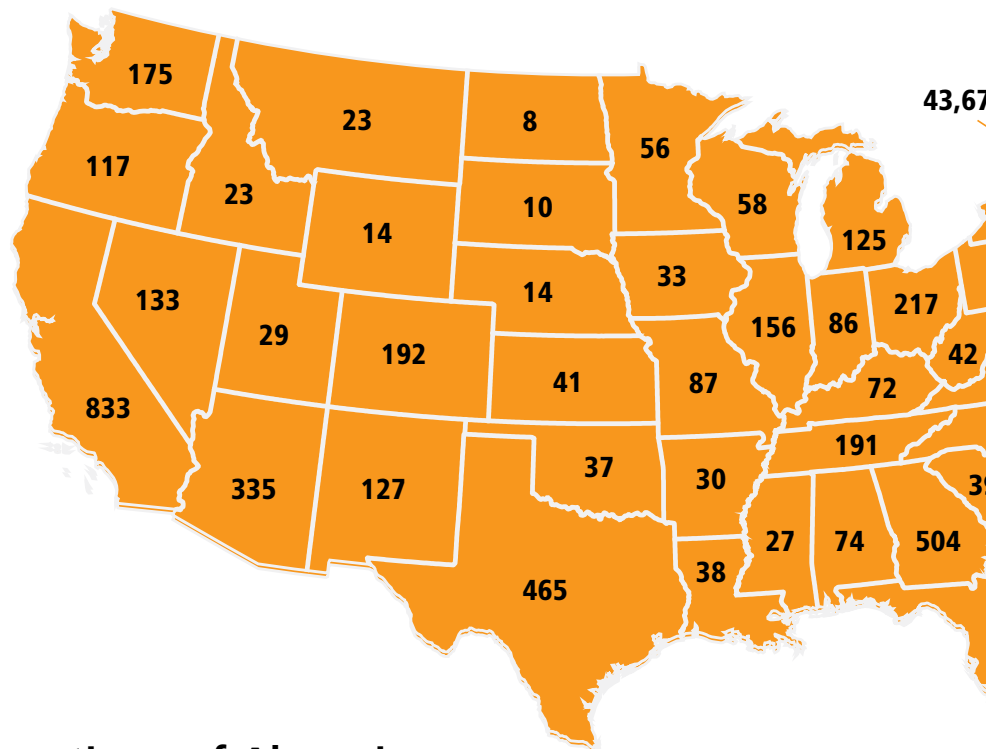
## Did you know ...

the college has alumni living in each of these countries:

- |                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Albania                | Japan                |
| Antigua                | Jordan               |
| Argentina              | Kazakhstan           |
| Armenia                | Kuwait               |
| Australia              | Latvia               |
| Austria                | Lebanon              |
| Azerbaijan             | Macedonia            |
| Bahamas                | Malaysia             |
| Bahrain                | Martinique           |
| Bangladesh             | Mexico               |
| Barbuda                | Moldova              |
| Belarus                | Monaco               |
| Belgium                | Netherlands          |
| Bermuda                | Nicaragua            |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | Nigeria              |
| Brazil                 | Pakistan             |
| Bulgaria               | Panama               |
| Canada                 | Peru                 |
| China                  | Phillipines          |
| Taiwan                 | Qatar                |
| Colombia               | Romania              |
| Costa Rica             | Russia               |
| Croatia                | Saudi Arabia         |
| Cyprus                 | Scotland             |
| Czech Republic         | Serbia               |
| Dominican Republic     | Singapore            |
| Egypt                  | Slovakia             |
| England                | Slovenia             |
| Finland                | South Korea          |
| France                 | Spain                |
| Georgia                | Sri Lanka            |
| Germany                | Sweden               |
| Greece                 | Switzerland          |
| Grenada                | Syria                |
| Guyana                 | Thailand             |
| Hong Kong              | Trinidad and Tobago  |
| Hungary                | Turkey               |
| India                  | Ukraine              |
| Indonesia              | United Arab Emirates |
| Ireland                | United States        |
| Israel                 | Venezuela            |
| Italy                  | Wales                |

Empire State College will achieve a milestone by the end of 2013 when the alumni count reaches 70,000. They've studied at college locations around the state of New York and through the Center for Distance Learning and now they live across the nation and around the world.

Our alumni also are part of a larger group of 3 million who have graduated from a State University of New York college or university. All SUNY alumni are eligible for a wide variety of perks, which are detailed on the alumni website at [www.esc.edu/Alumni](http://www.esc.edu/Alumni).

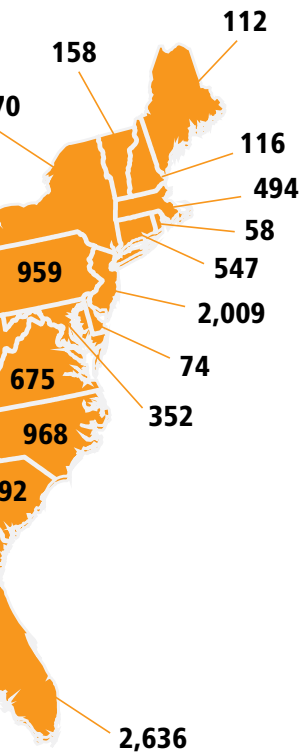
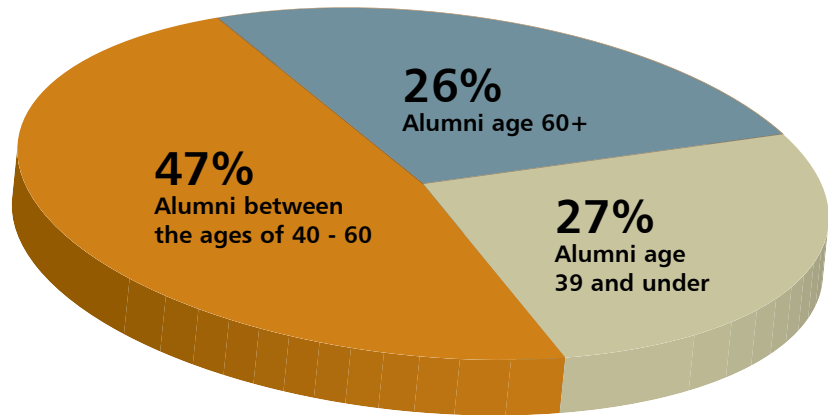


U.S. Locations of Alumni

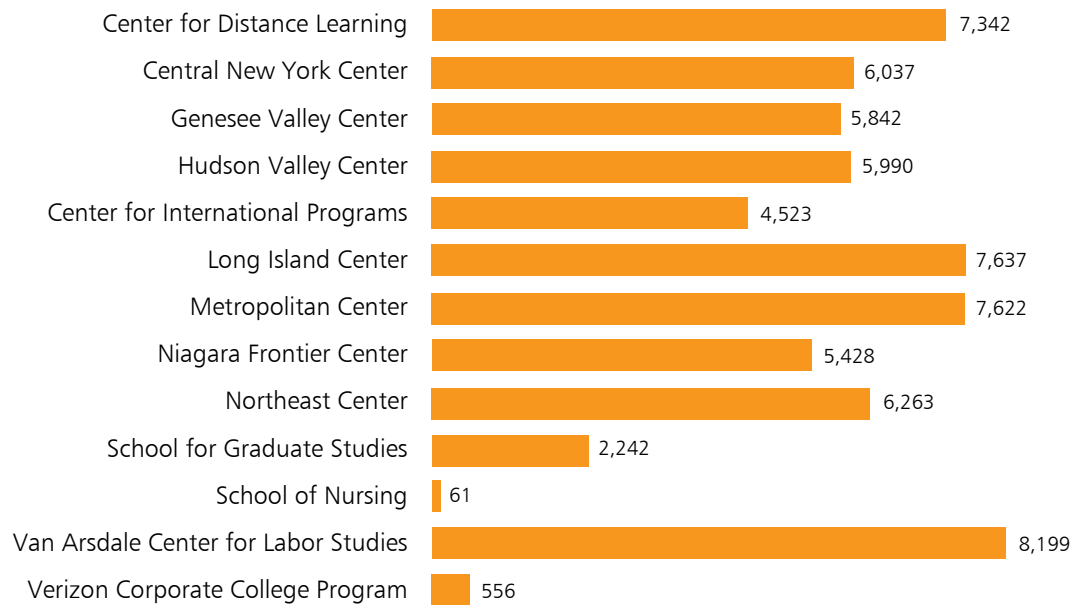


# Numbers

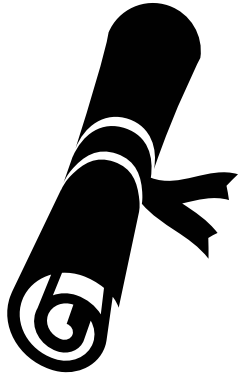
## Alumni By Age Group



## Center by Center: Where Alumni Studied



# By the Numbers



73,381  
Degrees earned

2,242  
Associate

52,931  
Bachelor's

18,208 Master's

\$6,274,798

Total giving to Empire State College from alumni

292

Alumni employed by the college

Alumni by gender

44%



56%



1,604

Alumni who are military or veterans

17,405

Alumni who have made a gift to Empire State College



# Portfolio

## ART

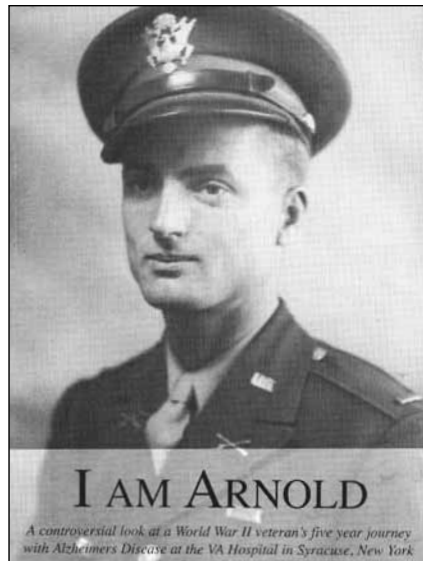


### From Words to Art to Biography

**Marilyn Rosenberg '78**  
**Metropolitan Center**

Marilyn Rosenberg's conceptual art can be described as collage, as books, as paper sculpture, or as "bookwork." She uses words, sometimes poems, sometimes asemic writing (words that are unintelligible) to create objects of beauty. *Numero Cinq* magazine says Rosenberg's art, "explodes the concept of book into a phantasmagoria of cutting, folding, sculpting, drawing, image layering, colorizing [and] painting." According to Rosenberg, "While I work, the words turn into image, and the image is the word heard. Each theme develops at its own required speed: pensive or chaotic, or restful or at a face pace." She builds her books "from the ground up. Working back and forth, a page here and then there again, word and image, as one, grow ..." The art reflects what's been going on in her life, whether as a young mother, or now as an older woman, she says.

## BOOK



### A Guide for Caretakers From Personal Experience

**Diane Bradshaw '89**  
**Central New York Center**

When the Rev. Diane Bradshaw's husband, World War II veteran Arnold, succumbed to Alzheimer's disease in the last five years of his life, Bradshaw began to keep a journal to track his behaviors and his treatment. She eventually moved him home for the last two and a half years of his life.

After his death, she reviewed a video interview he'd done with his son about how he lost his kidney in the war. She decided to pull the pieces together into a book, "I Am Arnold," both as a tribute to her late husband and as a guide for other caretakers. Although her husband was a military veteran, she was largely unaware of the services he was entitled to until she found a social worker, a topic she explores in her public presentations. More about her book can be found at [www.dianebradshaw.com](http://www.dianebradshaw.com).

## ART



### Multi-Sourced Designs Popular With Magazines

**Andy Gilmore '02**  
**Genesee Valley Center**

Digital artist and designer Andy Gilmore counts among his clients *Wired Magazine*, *Fast Company*, *The New York Times* and many others. His art has been described as "kaleidoscopic and hypnotic, and visually acoustic," since his multicolored creations often reference musical notes, according to *The Ghostly Store*, where he sells his work ([www.ghostlystore.com](http://www.ghostlystore.com)). Gilmore's work has "musicality" because he also is a musician who is deeply interested in the physics of sound and acoustics ([artistaday.com](http://artistaday.com)). Like many other Empire State College students, his educational path was eclectic; he worked in bookstores, bakeries and theaters before, and while, earning his B.A. from the college. He's also honed his craft in the ad business, resizing print ads and learning about computer design.

# Portfolio

## ART

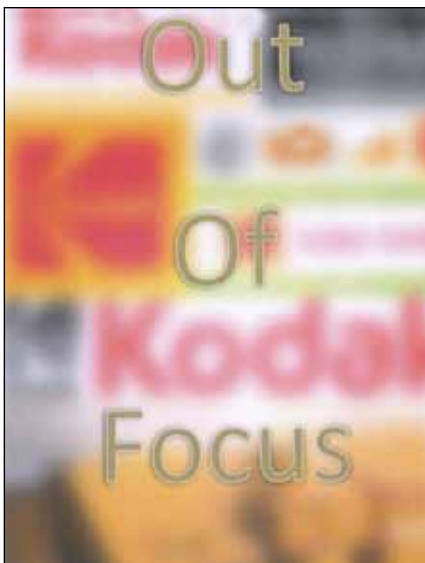


### Witness to the Storm Via the Viewfinder

**Donna Simons '12**  
**Hudson Valley Center**

When Hurricane Sandy hit the small community of Pound Ridge last year, visual artist Donna Simons grabbed her camera before volunteering to help check on people stranded by the storm. The entire community had been cut off from the world at large – no cell or landline phone coverage, no electricity and limited mobility. Many residents, especially the elderly, did not want to leave home. A townhouse became Ground Zero for the 80 volunteers. Though Simons does not consider herself primarily a photographer, she knew she was about to witness something historic. The resulting collage and three stand-alone photographs were featured in "Arts Westchester: Hurricane Sandy: Through the Lens of Local Photographers." Simon's photographs use frames of found wood and debris from the storm, created with local artisan Tony Everett. The pieces "represent a town that transformed a devastating event into an opportunity for wholeness," says Simons.

## BOOK



### Tracing the Decline of Eastman Kodak Co.

**John Larish '80**  
**Genesee Valley Center**

John Larish has penned "Out of Focus" an insider's view of the decline of the once-great Kodak brand. Larish's book details the fall of the photo giant because of its slowness in responding to digital competitors like Sony and Microsoft and its failure to adapt to the digital landscape that overtook its analog past. He interviewed countless sources, and studied the seven executives in the last 35 years who tried to steer and later rescue Kodak. The book explores the economic impact of the plunge in the number of Kodak employees (from 60,000 to 5,000) and the declining influence of the 100-year-old company on the industry today. Larish's career in photography has spanned nearly 30 years, including management of a photographic library, working for both Ansco and Kodak, and writing numerous articles about Kodak and the photo industry.

## ART



### Other Worldly Photos From No-Lens Camera

**Steven Phillip Harris '12**  
**School for Graduate Studies**

Steven Phillip Harris uses a lensless camera and Polaroid film to create ethereal, somberly toned photographs that suggest a gentler time. Working in photography for more than 25 years, Harris has studied in the Ansel Adams Workshop, and counts Adams, as well as fine art photographers Alfred Steiglitz and Edward Steichen, as influences. "I create visual translations of landscapes and cityscapes that are evocative of time passing, of history and of memory, that convey a pathos for the natural world," he says. He digitizes his film and then makes changes to hue and enhances the images "to make a distinctive character." He likes the "chance and serendipitous" outcomes that arise from this process. Harris had a show, curated by Mentor Betty Wilde-Biasiny, at the Metropolitan Center earlier this year.



# PROFILE



## Angela Titi Amayah

by Karen Nerney

**Where she grew up:** Douala, Cameroon

**Education:** Bachelor of Arts (business law/labor law) at the University of Bordeaux, France; MBA and Ph.D. (human resources), Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Carbondale, Ill.

**What she does:** Genesee Valley assistant professor and mentor in the Business, Management and Economics area of study, with a specialty area in human resources.

**Inspiration:** Her mom was a teacher, and her dad considered the profession. "It's something I always said I would do."

**Why human resources:** Previous jobs as a manager provided insight on how some businesses function. "I was involved in recruiting and hiring, as well as personnel issues. Nobody in HR ever briefed me on what you can or cannot do that could have legal implications, such as questions not to ask in an interview. It made me think this could be done differently." The experience influenced the decision to pursue a Ph.D. in human resources.

**On teaching:** "Education opens doors."

**Why she likes ESC:** A collaborative environment that encourages co-teaching. "We are developing business seminars at GVC that support the college's learning goals and give students the opportunity to interact in a more engaging way." Also, she likes the support of research pursuits and the opportunity to be involved in ESC governance through college committees.

**Current research:** Working with several colleagues in other countries that involves study of cultural differences in leadership, general differences in the workplace and factors that influence employees' willingness to share knowledge.

**On travel:** "I like to learn about different cultural backgrounds."

**On her "bucket list:":** Publish more, remain current in my field, visit North Africa and Southeast Asia.

**A favorite hobby:** Rock climbing. "I find it relaxing and challenging to try and figure out how to make your way to the top. It's not a straight route."

**How it relates to teaching:** "It's gratifying to help students discover their path, guiding them through the Educational Planning course as they design their degree programs and begin to articulate their professional goals. Some come knowing exactly what they want. For others, it is a process."

**Best advice she received:** "Go out and explore different ways of doing things and seeing different things. It doesn't mean you have to go across the world, but go out and explore, be willing to learn."



# Alumni and Student COMMUNITY

## Center for Distance Learning

**Thereas Asmus '05**, an area supervisor for Rape Crisis Service of Planned Parenthood in Batavia, was profiled in the Batavia Daily News earlier this year in a story called, "A Helping Hand in a Time of Crisis."

**Allison Cooper '13** has rejoined the Messenger Post Media as managing editor. Cooper, who served as an editor and reporter at Messenger Post for a decade, oversees news coverage of the Daily Messenger and 10 Post weeklies in suburban Rochester as well as the group's website.

The Town of North Greenbush named **Robert Durivage '12**, who had been its acting chief, as its new police chief. Durivage had been in the acting chief role since the retirement of the former chief. Durivage has worked for the town for nearly 30 years. He spent most of his career with the town's police department. He holds his bachelor's degree in Community and Human Services with a concentration in public safety from the college.

**Helen Martin '12**, a 3rd Ward councilwoman, announced that she would seek the Republican Party's nomination for mayor of Johnstown. She holds a bachelor's degree with a concentration in public history.

**Amy Quinn '12** has been hired by The Bonandio Group as assistant for the tax/small business advisory team. She holds a bachelor's degree from the college.

**Brooklynn Welden '06** just received her doctorate in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from Nova Southeastern University. Her dissertation is titled, "Unprepared ... the Queer Conflict of Straight Parents: Coming Out and Closeting Strategies and Decision Making." She also is the founder and first president, Gender and Conflict Student Working Group, Nova Southeastern University.

## Central New York Center

**Christine M. Bookman '11** has opened her first piano studio in Odensburg. At Ms. B's Piano Keys, she offers private piano lessons to children and adults interested in learning to play classical, jazz, pop, or a combination of the three. She graduated with a degree in Human Development from the college, and specializes in teaching autistic and developmentally challenged children.

Empire State College student **Dennis Brogan**, a 55-year-old native of Syracuse who has been attending Syracuse sporting events since he was a boy, talked to The New York Times about how to whip up a fan frenzy. Read more at [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/09/sports/one-way-to-cheer-up-cheer-harder.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/09/sports/one-way-to-cheer-up-cheer-harder.html?_r=0).

The Utica School of Commerce has appointed **Robert Doss '05**, who earned his Bachelor of Science with a concentration in business administration from the college, as an adjunct faculty member. He holds his M.S. in education from SUNY Oswego, as well as a state public school teacher certificate in business and distributive education. Doss also is a weekend



PHOTO CREDIT: MARTY HEITNER '92

Red, white and blue cords identify veterans and active members of the military graduating from the college. Seen here are, from left: Joseph Gutierrez, U.S. Navy; Catherine Liljequist, U.S.A.F.; commencement speaker Robert Castelli '95, a U.S. Army veteran who served in Vietnam; Nicholas Bronner, U.S.A.F.; and Karl Roman, U.S. Navy, at the Hudson Valley Center graduation.



morning announcer and building and grounds chief staff engineer for Mars Hill Broadcasting in Syracuse.

**Lyndsey M. Hodkinson**, a student at the Fort Drum Unit, ran unopposed for the Carthage school board. She is a family readiness support assistant at Fort Drum.

**Gabrielle Liddy '06**, chief deputy of the Oneida County Sheriff's Office, won the Carl Draxler Award from the New York State Sheriff's Association. The award is given to an employee of a sheriff's office whose exceptional career achievements and conscientious devotion to duty demonstrate a spirit of public service. Among Liddy's accomplishments are being one of the first women to successfully complete the agency's two-week Specialized Emergency Response Training (SERT). She later became the team's commander. In 1998 she was promoted to sergeant and then to lieutenant in 1999. In 2011, she became the first female chief deputy in the office's history. She holds a master's degree in criminal justice, and earned a bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with a concentration in public administration from Empire State College.

**George Markwardt '95** has been appointed by the New York State Nurse Practitioner Association as the Region 3 director for its board of directors. Markwardt acts as a liaison and provides leadership support for the nurse practitioners in Herkimer, Oneida, Onondaga, Madison, Lewis, Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties. He earned his degree with a concentration in human services administration from the college, and also holds a Master of Science in Nursing Education from Stony Brook University and a Doctor of Nursing Practice from Chatham University.

**Maria Iacovitti**, a student and a pastry chef instructor at Erie Community College, competed against two other chefs for the title of American Culinary Federation Northeast Region Pastry Chef of the Year, sponsored by Plugra European-Style Butter, earlier this year. (Another chef actually won.) The ACF Pastry Chef of the Year award recognizes a pastry chef who displays a passion for the craft, has an accomplished reputation in the pastry field and has helped others by sharing skills and knowledge. Each chef prepared four servings of a warm or hot dessert.



PHOTO PROVIDED

**Alumni and students from the Central New York Center and the Center for Distance Learning cruised the Erie Canal on a beautiful summer evening in June.**

DiMarco, Abiusi & Pascarella, CPAs, PC, promoted **David Turan '99** to principal. Turan joined the firm in 1999 and holds a bachelor's degree from the college.

## Genesee Valley Center

**Carol Acquilano '97** is on staff at the Genesee Valley Center in Rochester and also is an alumna, graduating with a bachelor's degree in The Arts. As an art instructor with the college, Acquilano has been tutoring students in painting, drawing, bookbinding and printmaking since 1994. She meets them in her art studio, in the Anderson Alley Arts building, where they have a chance to see tools of the trade and experience how an artist works. Her formal education is in the fine arts; she graduated from the four-year diploma program of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

Acquilano's book, "A Sketchbook of Cortona," a souvenir book of her artwork that features sketches and watercolor paintings that were made in the small medieval hill town of Cortona, Italy was recently released. Of Cortona, Acquilano says, "I have been going there on painting trips, and originally as a college student, since 1981. The book features reproductions of 53 watercolors and drawings and has passages of text in English and Italian languages."

In conjunction with the book release, Acquilano had an exhibition of a selection of the original work, and a book signing on Aug. 2 at the Lumiere Photo, Spectrum Gallery, in Rochester. For more information on Acquilano's art, go to [www.carolacquilano.com](http://www.carolacquilano.com)

**Diane Stratton-Smith '10** is a new affiliate of Arbor Expressive Art Therapy Center in Rochester. She is a registered, board-certified and licensed creative arts therapist in New York state. Her undergraduate degree is in The Arts and psychology from the college and her master's is in creative arts therapy from Nazareth College. Her psychotherapeutic experience encompasses individual and group work, with expertise in transitions (child, adolescent and adult), stress management, loss and grief, trauma, LGBTQ issues, substance recovery, women's wellness, chronic illness and end of life. Her art experience includes drawing, painting, fiber arts and weaving, wood block carving and printing, clay work, leather work, sculpting and carving, and collage.

## Hudson Valley Center

When **Joseph Gutierrez**, a current student, penned "Jidge: A Closer More Personal Look at Babe Ruth," he wasn't just out to show the Babe's softer side and his special generosity to children. The book also was written to raise



**Mentor Suzanne Benno, right, with graduate Christine Aponte and her family at the Center for Distance Learning graduation mixer in Saratoga Springs.**

money for the clean water effort in Haiti, where cholera has been a problem post earthquake. In addition, he wants to “inspire and encourage disenfranchised (often inner-city) youth, who often feel like the world’s odds are stacked against them, to persevere and strive for better lives.” The scrapbook-style book illustrates how Babe Ruth overcame hardships in his personal and professional life to become the “Bambino.” The book was written with co-author Tom Kirkpatrick, a graduate student in journalism, who also overcame great odds after an accident left him in a wheelchair at 11, and who, at age 22, “typed the story with his knuckles from a wheelchair.” The book is available on Amazon.

**Chris Leo '08** has been a lobbyist for the Public Employees Federation for two years. The union is the largest public employees union. Leo has overseen more than 30 laws since 1999. His daily presence inside the Capitol has helped the legislative and executive branches of government better address public employee and law enforcement issues. He earned a Labor Studies Certificate in 2012 from Cornell University, as well as his degree in Social Theory, Social Structure and Change from the college.

**Janice R. Sutts '89** announced her candidacy for the Line Mountain School Board in Jordan Township. She has earned a number of degrees

over the years, including one in medical technology from Franklin School of Science and Arts; an associate degree in math and sciences from Westchester Community College, and a bachelor’s degree with a concentration in public health and safety administration from the college.

## Long Island Center

**Gary Allen '00** has penned “How to Serve Man,” a Kindle book “that answers many of the questions one would have about cannibals, but were afraid to ask.” The book draws upon a wide range of sources – history, religion, literature, mythology, popular culture and humor, as well as from the sciences, to gain an understanding of the concept of cannibalism. Allen believes that notions about cannibalism permeate everything in our lives from children’s games to people’s most sacred rituals, from street slang to epic poetry, from boardrooms to bedrooms. He calls cannibals, “the ultimate bogeymen; the monsters that hide under the bed; the strange and frightening beings who inhabit the world’s dark places – whether geographical or psychological.” Allen is a prolific food writer who has written and/or edited a number of food-related books and articles, both online and in print.

**Mary Aversano '09** recently published her autobiography, “Mary’s Journey: A Life in the Arts,” and was featured in a Newsday article in June. She is a member of The Archstone Players, a group of radio drama performers, in which she serves as the group’s producer and director. Her website is <http://archstoneplayers.com/>.

**Daniel Cabrera '11**, who graduated from the Hauppauge Unit, scored a number of honors at New York University this past year. The Empire State College alumnus has been nominated for a NYU Silver School of Social Work Spirit Award for his work as moderator, mentor, graduate student association public relations representative, Student Leadership Council rep., orientation leader and social work champion. He also appears in the commencement tribute video 2013 with graduating students from every college at NYU. The Silver School of Social Work selected Cabrera to represent the school. The video is described as short, fun and celebratory. He was selected as a student speaker for the community during the school’s commencement exercises. He was a student speaker for his Empire State College graduation as well, which was attended by his mother, who is blind. “This was very special to me because my mother was able to hear me speak at the ceremony,” he writes. “The experience of hearing my voice at these milestone occasions holds a very powerful meaning to her and our family.”

**Kevin Corbett '97** was named vice president of quality assurance by B&W Y-12. Corbett has 32 years of experience managing quality programs on projects and installations for the U.S. Department of Energy and National Nuclear Security Administration, Department of Defense and State, as well as commercial nuclear power facilities and large-scale infrastructure programs. Corbett earned his bachelor’s degree in Community and Human Services, and went on to earn an MBA from Dowling College. According to its website, B&W is a premier manufacturing facility dedicated to making the nation and the world a safer place. It plays a vital role in the Department of Energy’s Nuclear Security Enterprise. The company helps ensure a safe and effective U.S. nuclear weapons deterrent. It also retrieves and stores nuclear materials, fuels the nation’s naval reactors and performs complementary work for other government and private-sector entities.



**Concetta Robinson '98** was named as the Lindenhurst School District's assistant business administrator. She formerly worked for the North Babylon School District, where she served as the executive director for human resources.

**Joseph Neumayer '13** presented his photography at the Hewlett/Woodmere Library in the show, "Spotlight on the Ordinary" this past spring.

Long Island student **Robert Torbert** recently published a novel, "The Face of Fear." This murder mystery takes place in Port Jefferson, Long Island. He mentioned that Empire State College's Betty Thompson's History of Math helped him research the book.

Student **Nacola Wilson** was among the photographers showing in The East End Photographers Group to celebrate its 25th anniversary as a community-based photographic organization with a nine-day photographic exhibition at Ashawagh Hall. The show featured traditional, digital and alternative photographic processes.

## Metropolitan Center

**Richard Gareth '07** was selected to exhibit his work at MoMa in August. Gareth teaches Digital Atelier at the Metropolitan Center, and Photoshop at the Brooklyn Unit. He has been described as one of "16 of the most innovative contemporary artists working with sound. While these artists approach sound from a variety of disciplinary angles – the visual arts, architecture, performance, computer programming and music – they share an interest in working with, rather than against or independent of, material realities and environments."

**Caroline (Flaxman) Hirasawa '90** earned a Ph.D. at Stanford and is now teaching at Sophia University in Tokyo. Her first book was published in March. "Hell-Bent for Heaven in Tateyama Mandara: Painting and Religious Practice at a Japanese Mountain" (Brill). In addition, she has just been named co-editor of "Monumenta Nipponica," the most prestigious scholarly journal in Japanese studies.

**Marcia Kirk**, a student, curated an exhibit, along with the Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs, New York City Department of Records and Information Services and Citywide

## Patricia Polak's Poetry Prolifically Published

Before turning 40, Patricia Polak had married; traveled to the Middle East, Soviet Union and North Africa with her husband, a professor of ancient and medieval history; and been charge d'affairs in a high-stakes financial company, which helped launch Gianni Versace's American debut, and whose clients included Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, George Hamilton and Diana Vreeland. Her boss, Boston Brahman John Train, had written "The Midas Touch," an early exploration of the careers of Bill Gates and Warren Buffett.

Whenever she had taken off to far-flung ports, Train would let her know, sometimes through telegram, that she could, "Come home; all is forgiven." But it wasn't until she took one trip too many with her husband and was replaced at Train Cabot (later Train Smith) Counsel, that Polak, then in her mid-30s, realized she needed a change. So, she returned to school, and almost stumbled upon her new vocation: poetry.

"I didn't realize how awkward it would be to go into traditional education. About that time, I saw and heard of Empire State College, and thought, this is going to be a perfect match."

Graduating with a B.A. in history in 1987 from the college's Metropolitan Center, Polak went on to study with Sharon Dolan at the 92nd St. Y, who put a bug in Polak's ear. Upon reading one of her poems, she told Polak, "This is publishable." Polak says, "Before you knew it, I began to take my poetry seriously, and I now have 50 published poems."

She has since published in journals such as "Poet Lore," "The Meridian Anthology of Poetry," "The Southern Humanities Review" and "The South Carolina Review." One poem won international recognition when it was chosen from submissions by poets from 55 countries, and was read and broadcast at the peace festival, Spring Poetry Rain, in Nicosia, Cyprus. She's also been in an anthology, "Rabbit Ears – Poems About TV." Polak whose maiden name is Leuzzi, is currently shopping around her poetry memoir, "Sugar Almonds," about her "highly colorful" Italian immigrant family, and another work, "Sonneting the Apple," poetry about New York.

After earning her B.A., Polak went on for her M.A. in writing from Manhattanville College in 2012, and earned her MFA this year.



**Patricia Polak '87 and her husband, Emil.**

She is a member of the Italian American Writers Association and the Italian American Studies Association and delivered a paper at its recent national meeting at Hofstra University on Elizabeth Spencer's novella, "The Light in the Piazza: A Tricky Game in a Foreign Country."

"I couldn't have predicted how well my life would turn out," Polak says. "These years have been so good."

Administrative Services in New York City, "African-Americans in the Military," which ran earlier this year and was part of the city's black history recognition. Items from the collections of the Municipal Archives and the City Hall Library (both departments within the Department of Records relating to African-

Americans in the military were available for public viewing, in many instances, for the first time). There were artifacts from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Project, a telegram from A. Philip Randolph regarding the first march on Washington, photographs of servicemen, and letters to the mayors. In addition, items

of original artwork from the U.S. Coast Guard and the Tuskegee Airmen were displayed, as well as personal items on loan from individual servicemen and women.

**Kenneth Moore '10** graduated with a master's degree in exercise science and sports nutrition from Long Island University. He was selected to serve as the graduate symbolic recipient for the School of Health Professions 2013 commencement, representing all the graduate students in each graduate program at the Brooklyn campus. Also, Moore was the recipient of the School of Health Professions Dean's Scholar Award for clinical excellence and dedication to the program of study in exercise physiology. "Upon graduation, I plan to design and implement innovative, individualized comprehensive fitness programs in commercial, revenue-driven environments to promote, preserve and improve physical health and well-being and a healthy lifestyle," Moore writes.

**Doug Schulkind '12** was able to keep broadcasting through Hurricane Sandy on Oct. 20, despite the fact that the station's studio was powerless. Instead, the DJ hosted his show, "Give the Drummer Some," on what is called, "the well-loved, independent free-form radio station WFUM-FM" where he's worked 23 years, prior to relocating, with his wife, to Pittsfield, Mass. After their move, he began to stream the show from his home over the Web. He hosts two installments of "Give the Drummer Some" each week, and the stream – "Give the Drummer Radio," currently features seven other programs, as well as Schulkind's curated music throughout the day, according to a feature in the Pittsburgh City Paper.

**Richard Shaw '08, '10** is a native New Yorker and is the author of "Teachers Matter" and "Smart Like Shakespeare." Two new books he has authored have just come out as Kindle versions and are titled "Writing as Consolation" and "Wendy Sayvetz, Judy Collins and Joan Baez: The beauty of folk music." His interests include writing, reading, traveling, biking, music and attending cultural events.

**Monica Ortiz-Suloway '10** recently graduated from Hunter College with an M.S. in education in rehabilitation counseling with a concentration in the deaf population.

## Niagara Frontier Center

**Tara Eastman '08** has embarked on a one-year pastoral internship at First Lutheran Church of Jamestown. She is currently a student in the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries program at Wartburg Theological Seminary. Eastman holds a certificate in Youth and Theology from the Institute for Youth Ministry at Princeton Theological Seminary and a Bachelor of Arts from Empire State College.

**Ann M. Jordan '06** received a Partnership in Education Award from Erie Community College. The award recognizes her work not only as a NYS licensed optician practicing since 1987, but also her "tireless work with the college's Ophthalmic Dispensing Advisory Council." She has been employed with the optometric offices of Dr. Charles J. Hornberger at Schutz Optical Co. Inc. for the past 25 years and is the practice manager. Jordan received her bachelor's in Business, Management and Economics from SUNY Empire State College, FORUM Management (2006), an A.A.S. in Ophthalmic Dispensing (1987) and A.A.S. Medical Laboratory (1976) from Erie Community College.

Committed to the profession of opticianry, Jordan is a member of both the New York State Society of Opticians and the Opticians Society of Western New York. In the past, she has held multiple positions within NYSSO with her service extended over a seven-year period culminating in the position of Western N.Y. chapter president. In addition, Jordan is a member of the State Board of Examiners and a long-standing member of the Advisory Board for the Ophthalmic Dispensing Department at ECC North. In January of 2010, she joined the faculty of Erie Community College as a part-time assistant professor in the Ophthalmic Dispensing Department.

## Northeast Center

**Joyce Chupka '80** has a new job as intake coordinator at The Altamont House (Peter Young Housing Industries/Treatment).

**Patricia Riley Perrella '08** spoke about Edmond Charles Genet, the first ambassador from France to the U.S. in 1793. He later determined to stay in the U.S., with the permission of George Washington, after being recalled by France, "perhaps to face execution for failing in his mission." Her talk was



Kenneth Moore, a 2010 alumnus of the Metropolitan Center, with awards from Long Island University.

PHOTO PROVIDED





PHOTO PROVIDED

## Jeff Olson Blazes Trails Across America

Jeff Olson was just in the fifth grade when he first took a stand to protect the environment. He joined Residents Opposed to Wetlands Development (ROWD), in New Jersey, to help protect a 90-acre parcel of wetlands where he and his friends rode bikes and built tree forts. He went door to door with other residents raising money to save the parcel from development, and in the 1990s, was gratified to hear that the land was acquired by the state, under Gov. Christine Whitman.

Olson saw the effects of development run amok during his childhood in the 1960s and 1970s. He watched the pumpkin and celery farms get overtaken by office parks and malls; agriculture

### Jeff Olson '94

squeezed out by suburban sprawl. Thus, he has always been interested in how cities and towns may be developed in an integrated way that leaves room for foot trails and bike paths as well as economic development.

"I was born in a suburban community that had working farmland, but there wasn't one farm left by the time I had grown up," he says.

Olson has just published a book, "The Third Mode: Towards a Green Society" ([www.thethirdmode.com](http://www.thethirdmode.com)) that details how walking and biking constitute a third and compatible mode of transportation along with highways and mass transit.

He moved upstate to attend Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, where he received a degree in architecture, and later joined Alta Planning and Design and Alta Bicycle Share. Olson's group consults with municipalities, foundations and corporations to plan for "green" or sustainable development around the globe.

Through Alta Bicycle Share, his company has been behind the largest bike-share programs in the country, in Washington, D.C.; Boston; Chicago and Chattanooga, and the program that was launched in New York City this year.

His master's degree at Empire State College came out of a desire to do even more with sustainable development.

"I was mid-career, and I wanted to get involved in things I wasn't doing in my current practice, but was interested in. The ESC master's program was very new at that point, and was open to creating a program I couldn't find elsewhere," he says. In fact, his master's program provided the foundation for Saratoga Open Space, a city-based advocacy group that worked to develop Saratoga Springs's downtown in a logical way that left room for green space, agriculture and recreation, and discouraged urban sprawl. The group was able to help pass a \$5 million Open Space Bond Act to acquire several parcels of land. That group and a land trust later merged into Saratoga P.L.A.N., which Olson co-founded.

In 1993, as a result of the work Olson had done with Saratoga Open Space, he was tapped to be the director of a new Department of Transportation initiative for the state of New York to build and restore bike, pedestrian and boat trails and paths to co-exist with highways. After a two-year stint there, he led the award-winning White House Millennium Trails Program, developing and sustaining trails of all types across the U.S. from foot and bike paths to canoe and kayak waterways to thematic trails, including the Erie Canal Trail, East Coast Greenway, the American Discovery Trail that wends from Maryland to San Francisco and the Mississippi River Trail.

sponsored by the Greenbush Historical Society. She earned her bachelor's degree from the college in 2008 after raising four children. Her love of history was sparked by her internship at the Albany Institute of History and Art. "I rediscovered Citizen Genet through family papers and objects donated in the early 20th century by Genet's youngest son, George, and his wife, Augusta," she says.

**Irv West**, a student, is author of "Breaking the Rules: A Fresh Approach to Building on the Strength and Courage of Our Struggling Youth." A youth advocate who says he grew up in a dysfunctional home and had to support himself early on, he is now completing his undergraduate degree at the age of 73. In May, he was the featured speaker at a program, "We Are Destroying Our Youth: Protect Your Child" at Crandall Library in Glens Falls.

## School for Graduate Studies

**Rona Casciola '93** (B.A.), '03 (M.A.L.S.), who completed her undergraduate work at the college's Long Island Center, is a professor at Nassau Community College in the marketing, retailing, fashion buying, fashion design and interior design department.

**Beth Coco '09** (B.S.), Northeast Center, '13 (M.A.L.S.), the founder of MicroKnowledge Inc., left the 27-year-old company in July for a new job as an entrepreneur in residence for the University at Albany's Small Business Development Center. At this no-cost counseling service for startups and existing businesses, she will work with clients at the earlier stages of development. Coco has worked with startup companies and devoted significant time to nonprofits, including as a founding director of Circles of Mercy, an organization that serves the needs of women in Rensselaer County. She will develop workshops and seminars, and create relationships that will broaden early-stage entrepreneurial opportunities for the rest of the campus. Coco's departure from Latham-based MicroKnowledge had been part of her plan since she sold the company to employees in 2005.

**Deborah Dunbar '95, '03**, assistant professor of business administration and computing at Corning Community College, was awarded the Woman of Achievement Award for 2012. The award, presented by the Chemung County Council of Women, recognizes Dunbar for making a significant contribution to the



achievement of women and to her community. Dunbar has been with CCC since 2000 and earned her master's degree in business policy and her Bachelor of Science from Empire State College with a concentration in business management.

**Jason Russell '02**, coordinator of the M.A. in labor and policy studies, presented a paper at the Critical Labor Studies Conference at Ruskin College in Oxford, England in March. Russell's paper is titled, "Endgame? Right-Wing Politics and Attacks on Public Sector Unions in the U.S. and Canada." Conference details can be found at <http://criticallabourstudies.org.uk/site/>.

**Sara Rofofsky**, a M.A.L.S. student, had a chapter she authored, published in "Using Theatrical/Acting Training to Improve One's Interaction with the Public; or, Role Playing to Expect the Unexpected." The piece discusses using theater in librarianship. Rofofsky is studying public history.

## In Memoriam

**Arthur "Clark" Everling**, mentor emeritus, died April 20, 2013, at the age of 70. He began his teaching career in 1967 at Virginia State University where he was an assistant professor of history. He went on to Ramapo College of New Jersey as assistant professor of labor studies and also taught at Indiana University Northwest in the same capacity. He began teaching at Empire State College as an associate professor of labor studies. He was appointed full professor in 1995 and professor emeritus in 2008. Everling authored two books on social and political economy and was working on his third when he became ill. He also was the author of numerous articles and publications. Born in Indianapolis, Everling held a bachelor's degree from Butler University, a master's degree in history from the University of Cincinnati, and a Ph.D. in history from Pennsylvania State University.



Clark Everling



PHOTO CREDIT: MILLER PHOTOGRAPHY

**Robert Roach Jr. '96**

Robert Roach Jr. '96, a labor leader with a national profile, spoke at The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies graduation in June. He strongly encouraged the new graduates to use their education to protect the rights of workers and for the betterment of their families and communities.

Roach began his career in 1975 as a TWA ramp serviceman affiliated with New York City-based Local Lodge 1056, of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), one of the largest industrial trade unions in North America. After transferring to Local Lodge 1445 in Newark, N.J., he worked his way up to shop steward, trustee, vice president and president. By 1999, he had become general vice president of the union's transportation department, where he served for more than 12 years, regularly testifying before Congress on aviation matters including aircraft maintenance oversight, aviation safety and security, bankruptcy reform, employee pensions, industry consolidation and the state of the airline industry.

In January 2012, he was appointed general secretary-treasurer of IAM, responsible for directing IAM finances and ensuring the union stays financially strong. Roach is the 11th general secretary-treasurer to serve the IAM since the union's founding in 1888. He serves as co-chairman of the IAM National Pension Fund and the IAM Health and Benefit Trust Fund, as well as being a board member of the union label and service trades department and a labor advisory board member of American Income Life.

Roach urged the graduating class to make the most of its education and opportunities. He acknowledged how tough it is to get a college education while working and raising a family, particularly for single parents. But he said that graduates owed it to themselves, their communities and union to fully develop their skills and talents.

Taking a swipe at former Republican candidate for president Mitt Romney's much vilified "47 percent" remarks indicating nearly half of the U.S. population is looking for government handouts, Roach said, "It's been my experience that people don't want government stuff, they want jobs!" He further told the grads that there were courses being taught at that very moment in some of the most prestigious universities on how to restructure industries to the detriment of workers, and he said it was up to them to defend the rights of those workers in a changing environment. Several news outlets have reported on the proliferation of the part-time worker, whom companies are hiring in lieu of full-time workers, in some cases, to avoid paying health and other benefits.

Roach graduated from The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies with a B.A. in Labor Studies. He told the graduates that his college degree opened countless doors for him.

## Alumnus Roach Defends Unions in Commencement Speech

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# A Family Affair

## Ortiz Family Scholarship



PHOTO PROVIDED

Oscar and Margaret '86, '93 Ortiz

For Margaret and Oscar Ortiz, family ties to Empire State College run deep. Margaret received associate and bachelor's degrees from the college. Daughter Christine Ortiz Cortes is an adjunct instructor who received her Master of Arts in Teaching, while Christine's husband, Jorge Cortes, is completing his MBA, all at Empire State College. In addition, their son, Phillip Ortiz, Ph.D., is a mentor at the Center for Distance Learning with a long record of service to the college.

Margaret and Oscar place tremendous value on higher learning, describing themselves as "pro-education." So when Phillip suggested to his parents that they start an endowed scholarship for students in the education program, they immediately embraced the idea. The Ortiz Family Scholarship is awarded to students in the Master of Arts in Teaching program. The scholarship aims to promote diversity among K-12 educators, and is awarded to students from traditionally underserved backgrounds.



PHOTO CREDIT: DIANE THOMPSON

Heidi Rivera Robles '09

Margaret's undergraduate degrees opened the door to fulfilling her lifelong dream of working with children, and she was determined to help others in the same pursuit. Prior to establishing the scholarship, Margaret and Oscar hadn't ever considered making such a significant foray into

philanthropy. Highlighting their desire to "pay it forward," the scholarship turned out to be the perfect fit, just as Empire State College had been the perfect fit for them. Christine walked away from a successful career on Wall Street to follow her passion to teach. Jorge, who works full time while completing his degree, found that Empire State College's flexible MBA program was the best option for him. For the Ortiz family, Margaret says, "The opportunity simply wasn't there without a nontraditional classroom."

The Ortiz Scholarship is awarded to one student per year, but the fund continues to grow. "We have asked family members to forego giving us material gifts for birthdays and holidays, and instead give to the endowment," Margaret said. "We take great satisfaction in knowing that our family agrees with what we are doing."

Recipients of the Ortiz Scholarship are dedicated to the field of education, and each year they write eloquent notes of gratitude. Margaret and Oscar cherish these sentiments, and have kept all of the letters they have received. "We feel strongly about supporting teachers. The recipients have been more than wonderful."

One such recipient is Carmen "Heidi" Rivera Robles, a triple graduate of the college with associate, bachelor's and master's degrees. A teacher in the Buffalo City School District, she is extremely grateful for the Ortiz family's assistance. "The scholarship helped me to focus on my education rather than worry about securing funding to complete my studies," she said. "I not only received an education, I was given the world ... a world to discover and experience in a new light, ready to take on the challenges placed before me."

From their modest investment in a scholarship, the Ortiz family is reaping tremendous personal rewards and continuing to pay it forward.



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For information about how you can change the lives of our students by creating your own scholarship, contact Toby Tobrocke, director of development, at [Toby.Tobrocke@esc.edu](mailto:Toby.Tobrocke@esc.edu) or by phone at 800-847-3000, ext. 2793.

# The Last Word

## Susan Law Dake, as president of the Stewart's Foundation,

*oversees the allocation of millions of dollars to hundreds of nonprofit organizations in communities where Stewart's Shops are located. The foundation's philanthropy has included funding scholarships for community college students to transfer to Empire State College. Dake was the keynote speaker at the Northeast Center graduation in June, at which time she was presented with the Presidential Medal, the highest honor awarded by the college. This essay is taken from her remarks to the graduates.*



How does the Stewart's Foundation determine who to give to? To use a business term, we try to determine the ROI, or the return on investment. A contribution is an investment. It is not about making ourselves feel good but rather about making a positive impact on people and communities. We try to give the money where it will do the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

Giving to Empire State College for scholarships has a tremendous ROI because it doesn't just impact one person by helping them reach their educational goals, it often impacts a whole family, because so many students are fathers and mothers and many are taking care of parents as well as children. When we help you, we help your families, as well as your ability to positively impact your communities.

As adult learners, you have a more concrete idea of what you want to do with your degree. You are learning in the context of working at home, or in the workplace, or both. You also have shown the ability to change direction and goals by the very act of deciding to continue your education. Empire State College recognizes that many students just are not ready for the college experience at 18 or that their education has gotten interrupted by life. Later on, people realize that although they can get work, their

opportunities are limited without a degree. That realization and ability to change direction makes Empire State students different, stronger and more flexible.

The whole model of Empire State College speaks to ROI – the recognition of a student's prior learning, the use of online learning including MOOCs (massive open online courses), allowing students to choose how and when to study is a terrifically efficient model and the tuition is so much more affordable. Of the June 2013 (Northeast Center) graduating class, 99 of you applied 1,351 prior learning credits to your degrees ranging from one to 68 credits per student. Over all, this meant a savings of approximately \$400,000 in tuition. Some of these credits were for mastery of a broad range of topics such as brain neuroscience, criminal investigation law and forensics, contemporary Chinese culture, field experience in hydroponics, Hindi language and wilderness survival.

Your college has broken down so many of the barriers to higher education creating access to busy students no matter their age or life circumstances and I believe you should be especially proud of it.

The amount of student debt in this country is astonishing – trillions of dollars. And the rate of that debt has doubled in the last 15 years. The introduction of the

Scorecard and the Net Price Calculator, as well as the numerous articles on the cost of college versus future salary potential, will focus everyone's attention on the ROI. The headline for a recent Wall Street Journal article, "A Degree Drawn in Red Ink," says it all.

Check out the scorecard on Empire State College – low on cost, a low loan-default rate, as well as the typical amount borrowed for undergraduate study. Your college is affordable in an increasingly unaffordable market. Did you know the average cost of private and public colleges jumped 92 percent between 2001 and 2011 versus 27 percent for the consumer price index?

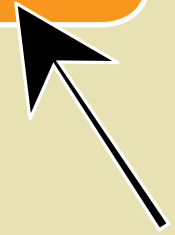
An ad for Empire State College says "mentors help you design the degree that's right for you. They respect your knowledge, value your experience and help you realize your goals." Your college's mission speaks to rigor, flexibility, quality, affordability and credibility, and using those guiding principles the college is creating a better educated workforce, sooner. You are part of a truly game-changing institution.

Congratulations to you and all the people who helped you. I wish you all the best. I know your perseverance and hard work will pay off and you will make us all proud. That is return on investment.



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Vice President for External Affairs Hugh B. Hammett, right, presents Kenny Barron '78 with his honorary doctoral hood at "Made in America," the black history event held in Brooklyn in June. Barron, an internationally known jazz pianist, composer and educator, was awarded an honorary doctorate of music by the college and SUNY.