

# WINE

*Magazine*

WINTER 2022



*Golden Bears  
in the Global  
Spotlight*

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# WNE

Magazine

WNE: The Magazine is published for alumni, parents, and friends of Western New England University.

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# President's Message

As we approach the end of another year together and reflect on our accomplishments, we can see that 2022 was a banner year for the University. Instilling Powerful Preparation for the Future of Work into all that we do is garnering attention and results.

In this issue, you'll hear about the many ways WNE is using its platform as a New Traditional University to strengthen its reach and achieve new milestones.

I have often said that we need to shout about WNE from the rooftops, and we are taking those steps to make our presence known. From making our debut on Amazon Prime Video through our own episode of *The College Tour* set to premiere in spring 2023, to welcoming a new Dean of Arts and Sciences who strives to build affinity between industry and academics, and celebrating the 50th anniversary of Title IX that touched many corners of our campus, Western New England University is becoming known in wider circles.

As our students start their academic journeys with us, I tell them, "This is your time," with the hope that they seize the moment and see all the possibilities for their future. But in truth, it is also OUR time, and our record continues to show our strength, rigor, and talents. In a new study conducted by Georgetown University, WNE was ranked in the top 6% of colleges and universities by ROI, the top 3 schools in the Pioneer Valley—behind only Williams and Amherst College, and number one in Springfield.

Investing in the best interests of our students and offering leading-edge career readiness plays a prominent role in our distinction as a New Traditional University. Thanks to the generous support of Kevin '77/H'19 and Sandra Delbridge, the new Delbridge Career Center will be transformed into a hub of resources and industry collaborations that will be paramount in preparing our students for the future of work.

As always, bringing Golden Bear Nation together through Homecoming and other affinity events strengthens our network, our community pride, and our resolve to increase the University's visibility together.

With gratitude,



Robert E. Johnson, PhD  
President





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Oct 29, 2022







# CAMPUS NEWS

By Judith Curran

For the latest news from Western New England University, visit [wne.edu/news](http://wne.edu/news).

## LEGAL KIOSKS HELP TO BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE FOR AREA RESIDENTS LACKING ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY

Free Legal Kiosk stations are now strategically positioned throughout Springfield thanks to the Western New England University School of Law's Center for Social Justice and funding from the MassMutual Foundation.

Legal Kiosks are computer stations equipped with internet access and legal information available in both English and Spanish. The Kiosks allow people to easily self-navigate through an electronic interface to get information about free legal service providers and other legal resources.

Springfield Mayor Domenic J. Sarno joined with Western New England University President Robert E. Johnson; Ariel Clemmer, Director for the School of Law's Center for Social Justice; Dorothy Varon L'95, Lead Counsel—Corporate Law at MassMutual; and Dory Welch, Community Outreach and Engagement Coordinator for the Center of Social Justice, for the launch and ribbon cutting ceremony at the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Service Center and proclaimed October 17, 2022, as Legal Kiosk Day.

## JESSICA HILL '03 NAMED ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS AND DEAN OF STUDENTS

Jessica Hill '03 has been named Western New England University's Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students. In this role, Hill will provide leadership focused on assisting undergraduates to develop fully, realize their potential, and achieve personal goals.

"My hope is that all students will find their home away from home here at WNE by making meaningful connections with students, engaging with faculty and staff, and ultimately discovering their 'why'. I am committed to supporting students, faculty, and staff to create an inclusive, welcoming, and safe environment," said Hill.







## PATRICIA GOFF PROVIDES NEW LEADERSHIP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF KEVIN S. AND SANDRA E. DELBRIDGE CAREER CENTER

Vice President for Student Affairs Kristine Goodwin has announced the appointment of Patricia A. Goff as the first Associate Vice President of the Kevin S. and Sandra E. Delbridge Career Center.

Goff is a Student Affairs professional with 20 years of experience guiding college students in professional and personal development. She previously served as Assistant Vice President of Integrated Learning and Administration for the Division of Student Affairs at Providence College, where she established strategic visions and

directed comprehensive and innovative programs and services that influenced student success and career readiness.

“The new Delbridge Career Center will strengthen WNE’s position as an emerging leader in career preparation, agile mindset education, and the future of work,” says Goodwin. “Under Patricia’s confident leadership, our students and alumni will have the ability to chart their course with the agility and resilience to adapt when roads diverge.”



## MICHAEL GAINES NAMED TO WNE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Western New England University is pleased to announce the appointment of Michael T. Gaines to the Board of Trustees.

Michael is currently the Director of the Health Care Initiative at Harvard Business School, where he is responsible for creating and overseeing all aspects of the Initiative, including supporting faculty through the proactive distribution of their research in healthcare and assisting students on career exploration in healthcare by partnering with more than 8,000 healthcare alumni. He is also the Founder and Biotech Commercial Advisor at Gaines Biopharma Consulting, LLC, which specializes in pharmaceutical/biotech strategic planning, new product launches, and portfolio management.

“Michael Gaines is highly respected as a leader in the biotech industry and brings valuable expertise to our board as we seek to make inroads into sectors that enhance our appeal in the 21st century as a New Traditional University,” said President Robert E. Johnson.



## WNE NAMED AMONG BEST NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES BY *U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT*

In the most recently released rankings by *U.S. News & World Report*, Western New England University has been ranked #234 in Best National University Rankings. WNE transitioned from the Regional University classification to the National University classification in 2020, which places WNE in the company of more than 400 schools that offer a full range of undergraduate majors, plus master’s and doctoral programs.

The University ranked #209 among the best schools for Social Mobility Access. The Social Mobility ranking measures colleges and universities on their ability to graduate

economically-disadvantaged students. This places WNE in the top 10 national universities in Massachusetts in this category.

The WNE College of Engineering continues to be ranked in the top 100 Undergraduate Engineering (no doctorate) program category, having moved up five spots from 2021 to #87. This ranking is based on survey results conducted by *U.S. News* of deans and faculty members of undergraduate engineering programs at nationally ranked peer institutions accredited by ABET, the engineering accrediting body.



# A Friend, an Officer, and a Golden Bear

Honoring the Legacy of Billy Evans '02

BY KATE BURKE







**The legacy of Billy Evans '02 was commemorated at Western New England University with the special dedication of a memorial garden and bench located at the entrance to the WNE Public Safety Building.**

The memorial dedication event, held on October 22, provided an opportunity for the WNE campus community to join Billy's friends and family in honoring and celebrating his life, legacy, and the impact he had on campus, in the community, and through his service to our country.

Billy, a 2002 WNE graduate with a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice, was an 18-year veteran of the United States Capitol Police and member of the First Responders Unit, who was tragically killed in the line of duty in an attack outside the Capitol Building on April 2, 2021.

The memorial garden and bench were made possible by the efforts of Billy's friends Matt Derry '02 and Chris Wystepek '02/G'09, who together spearheaded a fundraising campaign to establish the memorial site on campus. Through their efforts and the generous support of donors, the campaign exceeded the \$5,000 fundraising goal. To ensure current Golden Bear students can have the same opportunities Billy enjoyed during his time on campus, the additional funds were donated to the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership.

As a Golden Bear, Billy was actively involved on campus. He was a member of the bowling club and Campus Activities Board throughout his college career and played on the varsity baseball

*“The WNE Public Safety building is a perfect spot for the bench to be located because, in many ways, our campus Public Safety started Billy down his path toward doing what he loved most.”*

—Matt Derry '02

team during his freshman year. He also participated in an array of intramural sports, the Criminal Justice Association, and the University's Student Patrol Program, which started him on his career path as a police officer.

“The WNE Public Safety building is a perfect spot for the bench to be located because, in many ways, our campus Public Safety started Billy down his path to doing what he loved most.” said Matt Derry. “Hopefully, future Golden Bears will use the

bench as a place to sit and think about their journey and what their dreams are. I hope that the bench serves as a reminder for those who come across it to follow their dreams and strive to achieve them the way Billy did.”

As a member of the Student Patrol Unit, Billy contributed to a team of 15 Student Patrollers who worked in conjunction with uniformed Campus Police staff to routinely support campus security, acting as “eyes and ears,” conducting foot and bicycle patrols, and providing security at campus venues for University-sponsored activities and special events.

“I'm honored to share the experience of the Student Patrol Unit with Billy and follow in the footsteps of someone who truly emphasized what it meant to be a Golden Bear by giving back to the community, impacting people every day, and going on to do something so great after college,” said senior Brendan Cassidy, a Student Patrol Unit co-leader. “In the Student Patrol Unit, we are always looking to do the right thing, and Billy is a great example for students to emulate, not only for the Patrollers, but for all students on campus. Having his memorial in front of the Public Safety Building will always be a reminder of that.”

Never one to be the center of attention, but known for his sense of humor, welcoming personality, and willingness to help others, Billy made a lasting impact on others during his time on campus and in the years following graduation.

“Billy had such strong leadership qualities,” said Chris Wystepek. “He showed many of us you can be involved and have an active role on campus, but you do not need to be a president of a club, vice president, etc., to be a leader. He made more of an impact on others than he probably even realized.”

Billy truly reflected what it means to be a Golden Bear, and his campus memorial will pay tribute to his selfless service and dedication for years to come.

Learn more about Billy and the Billy Evans Memorial Fund campaign at [alumni.wne.edu/billyevansmemorial](http://alumni.wne.edu/billyevansmemorial).



# THE ANATOMY OF A COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

DEAN MARCUS DAVIS SEEKS  
TO BUILD STRUCTURE  
OF EMPOWERMENT AND  
CURIOSITY

BY ALEX LYMAN '12/G'16





## Coming to Western New England University from James Madison University in Virginia, where he served as the Associate Dean of the College of Science and Mathematics and Interim Department Head for Mathematics and Statistics, new Dean of the WNE College of Arts and Sciences Marcus Davis was in search of a place of growth and possibility.

When asked what he wanted the University community to know about him, Dean Davis was certain of his answer and how it will define his role at WNE.

"I naturally identify as a builder—I like building things that may have a long-standing impact and can be a resource for others. I want what we do to empower people and solve problems."

That said, Dean Davis' desire to build doesn't require the demolition of the long-standing values of the College of Arts and Sciences, but rather a respect for what has been and a curiosity for what will be. In fact, his attraction to WNE largely centered on our identity as a New Traditional University.

"I saw a University that was bold to recognize that we are one-fifth of the way into the 21st century—we have to move with flexibility and creativity while bringing with us all the excellence that we already have," he said about his first impressions of WNE. "For me, it's about a similar mindset—this is a University that has a lot of great traditions, but is bold enough and brave enough, to think about new things."

Dean Davis hopes to encourage faculty, students and families, alumni, and industry partners to share conversations about how to best connect students with career paths—especially when it comes to families who may not yet be aware of the diversity of fulfilling career options unlocked by a given academic major. In doing so, he wants to help them think outside the box and understand that while paths forward may not be initially obvious, they very much exist.

"I love having conversations with families about what their student can do with a particular degree," he noted. "Companies need diverse groups of people with the professional expertise to problem-solve. That's how we solve

grand and wicked problems in society. I think we have an opportunity to work in partnership to decipher what newly emerging career paths look like and to translate what students learn on campus into opportunities to be leaders in our communities and the world beyond."

*"I naturally identify as a builder—I like building things that may have a longstanding impact and can be a resource for others. I want what we do to empower people and solve problems."*

Dean Davis explains that one of the best ways to help students understand and explore their options is through building new types of programs that are at the intersection of already-existing programs and are relevant to students. In order to best benefit our students, these pro-

grams should ideally be informed by the job market, involve industry players, and encourage their interest in what we do.

"Careers are always evolving, so our approach to preparing students for their careers must evolve, too. We also have an opportunity to redefine what unites the College of Arts and Sciences, despite the perception that our programs exist at opposite ends of the academic spectrum," he added.

"We are all in the novelty business. The origin of the word novel is the generation of something new. As a biologist, I study novelty—the origin of novel structures and functions in nature. Where does newness come from in the world?"

Novelty is a collective attribute of the College of Arts and Sciences scholarship mission, regardless of discipline. Historians seek to unravel the origins of human history. Literature and the performing arts generate novelty through the exploration of the human experience in their craft. Science seeks to generate novel models that have predictive power to explain how our world works, solve practical problems, and to heal our bodies.

"We are in the business of generating newness, and I think that's something that binds us," said Dean Davis. "If there's something that's important for me to recognize, it's the intrinsic value we share as vanguards for understanding our world and the human condition, something we can each define through the lens of our chosen disciplines. We may take what we learn and know and apply it to expression, or theory, or application, but we're still united in a shared mission of discovery."

**To learn more about Dean Marcus Davis and his background, visit [magazine.wne.edu](http://magazine.wne.edu).**





# BEHIND THE SCENES OF

The College Tour ▶

## WNE to Make its Amazon Prime Video Debut in Streaming Series

By Alex Lyman '12/G'16





**WNE is going big in sharing its value with the world—and is headed to Amazon Prime Video through a featured episode of *The College Tour*, a series that allows high school students to “visit” college campuses across the country and learn about them through the lens of current students.**



But how did WNE, out of the thousands of colleges and universities across the country, get this incredible platform to share who we are and what we do? Members of the administration discovered an episode of *The College Tour* featuring a public university in a neighboring state and knew WNE had to get in on the action. They pitched the idea to President Robert E. Johnson, who told the team to run with it.

“I don’t know how to whisper,” jokes Assistant Vice President for Marketing and Communication Mercedes Maskalik about her promotional style. “President Johnson gave us the green light to spread our story and reach the masses. If the goal is to reach people who haven’t heard of us, *The College Tour* was an obvious choice. We wanted to go big.”

And WNE did go big—by landing a slot in the seventh season of the series. Not only will the University’s episode be the first of the season, but WNE is also the first college in Massachusetts to be featured.

## THE MAKING OF OUR EPISODE

Once WNE was chosen to be on *The College Tour*, it was full steam ahead with casting students, scriptwriting, location scouting, and making a game plan. The entire pre-production process took about four weeks and included meetings with *The College Tour* and WNE’s Marketing team, parsing out our story into 10 individual segments, soliciting and reviewing auditions, and mapping out the overall feel of our tour.

*The College Tour*’s production team descended on WNE’s campus with cameras, microphones, lighting, and even a drone to capture our community

from all angles. The weeklong shoot in July required the University Marketing team, three production carts, and plenty of help to keep the process running smoothly. The Golden Bear community really came together to make it all happen. From volunteering as extras in various scenes, to unlocking classrooms and keeping the production crew fed, our community did anything and everything they could to help make the shoot a success. And we mean anything—shoot director Daren Woolsey even donned the Golden Bear mascot costume for filming and entertained a large group of campers from the University’s summer soccer clinic.

Before we knew it, the film crew was off to its next shoot, and WNE was in the post-production process, where we received drafts of our episode and collaborated with the editing team to craft the final iteration.

Set to premiere on Amazon Prime Video in March 2023, WNE and *The College Tour* will soon be coming to a screen near you!

## MAKING TV MAGIC ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

“Welcome to Western New England University! This is *The College Tour*.”

Host Alex Boylan, a Massachusetts native, welcomes the audience with the promise of an exciting adventure, as upbeat music synchronizes with drone footage and sweeping shots of WNE’s 215-acre campus. As the episode kicks off, Alex mentions how special our New Traditional University is, and the contagious Golden Bear Spirit that is evident everywhere you go.

He sets the tone for the entire episode with enthusiasm, charm, and excitement—a must when your job is to help high school students consider their options.

Alex, who won the second season of *The Amazing Race*, came up with the idea of *The College Tour* as his niece was looking at colleges herself. He realized the challenges that many families face in terms of having the time and resources to visit a variety of schools that their children are considering, and that there might be a way to ease that burden.

“Seeing my niece struggle to afford to tour colleges in person ignited something in me,” says Alex. “It made me realize that there can be a better way to give access to people. *The College Tour* is truly special because it levels the playing field, and there is so much love that goes into making each episode, because we really understand how important this show is for so many students.”

As fate would have it, the COVID-19 pandemic occurred during *The College Tour*’s infancy, creating even more of a critical need.

Having visited dozens of colleges and universities, Alex says that visiting WNE in his home state was a special experience for him.

“I’ve traveled the world, filmed in over 60 countries, but Massachusetts will always be my home,” he says. “The architecture and scenery of WNE just brings me back to my roots. I was blown away by the sense of community on campus. WNE has such an amazing energy and the resources that it affords its students were just incredible to see.”



# MEET OUR STUDENT AMBASSADORS FOR *THE COLLEGE TOUR*

We couldn't have *The College Tour* without the unique perspective and stories of our students—who are the reason for everything we do at WNE. Here are the stars of our show!



**Richard Amoako**  
**Doctor of Occupational Therapy**  
**Second-year**  
**Springfield, MA**

"Pursuing a doctorate in Occupational Therapy at Western New England University has been the perfect choice for me because I feel connected to campus through both academics and social life, and am growing as a professional and healthcare leader each day. I have learned to work hard in the classroom and enjoy the journey while pursuing my dream."



**Sam Blau**  
**Junior**  
**Marketing Communication/Advertising**  
**Pittsfield, MA**

"WNE is a place where creativity and learning agility is valued. I am able to customize my academic experience and indulge in my creativity while learning about entertainment and business from behind the curtain. Because WNE empowers me to pursue my passions and customize my education, I know I will have many more of these opportunities!"



**Dominick Buccitti '22**  
**Graduate Student**  
**MS in Pharmaceutical Sciences**  
**Milford, CT**

"I started out with aspirations of being a hospital pharmacist. But I discovered that pharmaceutical research was much more aligned with my goals and interests. WNE gave me the flexibility and support to easily change my major from Pharmacy to Health Sciences with a minor in Chemistry, so that I could build the academic foundation to confidently enter a master's program."



**MaryKate Caron**  
**Senior**  
**Marketing Communication/Advertising**  
**Wilbraham, MA**

"WNE encourages us to embrace change and discover new opportunities in our field of study. I recently completed a successful internship at a digital marketing agency. It went so well that they created an entirely new position just for me, based on the unique skills I learned at WNE. I'll now be working at the agency full-time as a Content Strategy Specialist—before I even graduate!"



**Adell Gadzey**  
**Senior**  
**Information Technology**  
**Colchester, VT**

"I knew Western New England was the right place for me because, besides the academics, they had the organizations and events that helped me feel like I belong. This community recognizes the complexities of our identities and makes space for everyone to show up as their full selves. WNE will definitely make you feel like you belong, too."



**Miranda Holhut**  
**Junior**  
**Biology**  
**Hatfield, MA**

"One of my favorite parts of the college experience is WNE's amazing campus life that makes everyone feel part of the action. I was inspired to become a resident advisor to help create an inclusive and safe space for residents that encourages them to make the most of their life at WNE!"





**Emily Kowal**  
**Junior**  
**Biomedical Engineering**  
**East Granby, CT**

"The philosophy of the College of Engineering is 'Innovation and Entrepreneurship from Day One.' That fundamental mindset has helped me excel in engineering and at WNE. This summer, I am interning with a local medical device company. I can truly say that my education has made me fully prepared for this opportunity."



**Patrick Riley**  
**Sophomore**  
**Political Science**  
**Thomaston, CT**

"Western New England's support system and engagement has laid the foundation for my success on campus and beyond. Our open and welcoming community has allowed me to break out of my comfort zone; discover my talents; help students grow academically, socially, and personally; and create memorable experiences and friendships."



**Allie Provost**  
**Junior**  
**Marketing**  
**Dudley, MA**

"Finding your place in the world is a major component of the WNE experience. Our Study Abroad program is WAY more than an excursion...it's a transformative experience that crosses disciplines, cultures, and borders. You'll expand your worldview and increase your understanding of our global society—it is truly life-changing!"



**Aditya Shah**  
**Junior**  
**Finance and Business Analytics and**  
**Information Management**  
**Gujarat, India**

"Joining an American university from India was definitely out of my comfort zone. But WNE prepares graduates to adapt and thrive, and has positioned me well to achieve my personal and professional goals—which include being an analyst at a hedge fund or investment bank, and someday running my own hedge fund."







# *Creatively Impacting Cultural Change And Youth Educational Enrichment*

**Keeana Saxon L'03 created Kidogo Productions LLC and kidogo.tv to provide culturally engaging and enriching content for the youth of today and into the future**

*By Kate Burke*

**In 2018, with a young daughter who loved nursery rhymes, cartoons, youth television programs, and online games for children, Keeana Saxon L'03 recognized that the content her daughter was engaging with on various media platforms wasn't representative of cultural differences, and instead reinforced cultural stereotypes. Rather than focus on her frustration, she did something about it.**

What started as an idea to create a culturally inclusive educational environment for her daughter, evolved into a growing platform impacting youth of all ages. In 2019, Keeana founded Kidogo Productions LLC, a Boston-based educational media company with the goal "to connect with and have a positive impact on children from across the world through Black-centered curated videos, interactive activities, and live events."

## **A LEADER IN FAITH, CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND LEGAL COMMUNITIES**

Originally from Washington D.C., Keeana and her family moved to Newton, Massachusetts, when she was a child. Following the lead of her parents—with her mother working in ministry after earning a master's degree in Divinity and a doctoral degree in Theology, and her father serving as a Deacon in his wife's church while teaching middle school math—Keeana began making an impact on the community and her church at a young age. Through music enrichment and education, including serving as a church pianist for several years and trips abroad spreading ministry and music with her chorus and orchestra, Keeana developed a passion not only for music, but for different cultures and community involvement.

With a plan to earn a graduate degree

in Ethnomusicology, she advanced her music and educational career as a Music major (Classical Piano Performance) and French minor at Spelman College, a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) in Atlanta. Throughout her undergraduate career, she continued to combine her passion for music and culture through involvement in recitals, performances, student organizations, and spending time abroad studying at a private conservatory in Paris. After completing her studies at Spelman, Keeana swayed from her plan to go to graduate school, ultimately deciding to chart a new path to pursue a degree in Law, which led her to the Western New England University School of Law.

"I loved Western New England University," said Keeana. "WNE was one of only two schools at the time that had rolling admission. I decided in July of 2000 that I was submitting my application, moved from Boston to Springfield,



and was in my seat in the classroom in August," she said of her quick decision to pivot to law school.

Keeana reflected on the positive experience she had at the School of Law and the influences of her professors, including Bruce Miller, William Baker, Anne Goldstein, and Nancy Sykes L'89, and others. "Whether they used the Socratic method of requiring participation, formally or informally, I really gained a sense of the ability to speak. And we had so many cultural opportunities," said Keeana, who served as President of the Multicultural Law Student Association; participated in after school seminars and conferences; and was part of the Frederick Douglass Moot Court Competition team that beat Harvard's team in the first round, winning the Best Respondent's Brief award.

"At WNE the professors gave students opportunities to develop the confidence building blocks that you may need to call on when you don't feel so confident, individually or on teams, throughout your career," she said. "I could call on those days when I stood taller, and that helped build my confidence."

After earning her Juris Doctor, Keeana briefly dipped her toes into corporate law, but eventually found her footing working in the public sector, first with a Massachusetts state senator, then as Counsel at the Department of Housing and Community Development, and finally as Deputy General Counsel with the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development.

Due to the diversity of her educational and professional background, combined with her passions for music, education, law, and public service, Keeana has been able to apply her experience and passions to every aspect of developing, launching, and continually advancing Kidogo Productions LLC and kidogo.tv.

## AN ENTREPRENEUR MAKING HER IMPACT

Equipped with her wealth of educational and legal experience, Keeana fully embraced the process of taking her ideas for her youth media company from concept to reality. Her journey took her into the unfamiliar world of business



For parents, educators, community organizations, and professional caregivers, Kidogo offers a community, which nurtures children mentally and emotionally with culturally rich content.

**Kidogo.tv by the Numbers  
(and counting!):**

**581** site members  
**34** channels  
**4,500** curated videos  
**28** activities  
**4** live events

startups, and she ultimately watched herself evolve into a respected business owner and entrepreneur.

By drawing on her personal and professional experiences, as well as the support of her family, church, and entrepreneurial peers, Keeana sought out mentors in the business and media community while using her experience in education and law to propel her ideas forward. She recognized that starting a business was no easy feat and she would need to continue to learn and lean on her community and resources.

As an emerging entrepreneur, she was introduced to business accelerator programs, incubators, pitch nights, fellowships, and leadership institutes. Keeana immersed herself in Boston's EforAll program, a free one-year community program that offers a unique combination of immersive business training, mentorship, and access to an extended professional network; the Innovation Studio, a four-week program that helps entrepreneurs create compelling stories for their businesses; and MassChallenge, a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting innovation and entrepreneurship through collaboration and development. Through her participation in these programs, Keeana enhanced her vision for kidogo.tv, launched a second version of her website, interviewed and started featuring more content creators, and further developed her business team to

include a producer, an animator, a music supervisor, voice talent, and activity designers.

After earning recognition for her pitches and placing in various entrepreneurial competitions, Keeana's business plan was in position and continuing to evolve. Keeana is working toward developing a pipeline of capital by consistently applying for grants, connecting with angel investors, and even considering crowdfunding, live events, and brand sponsorships. She hopes to eventually create monthly or yearly subscriptions for parents, educators, and creators to utilize, share, and enhance the kidogo.tv platform and experience.

## AN ADVOCATE FOR YOUTH EDUCATION

Reflecting on her experiences from her law education and career to now leading the charge and direction of kidogo.tv, Keeana draws on each experience and the lessons learned.

"I'm a server, I'm a servant, I'm of service to people," she said. "That's just what I do. I'm constantly fighting for the little person, the person whose voice is not as prominent."

Drawing from African roots, kidogo means "a little" in Swahili, and emphasizes the intended audience for the cultural phenomenon and impact of kidogo.tv. "With Kidogo, I'm literally fighting for the little person," she said. "I'm fighting for the children who don't even know what to ask for when they're kids."

Keeana is hopeful that by 2023 she will be able to achieve the capital funding to build a customizable site that will allow children to navigate the site themselves, without the immediate assistance of an adult.

## A RESOURCE FOR CULTURAL EDUCATION

As an entrepreneur, Keeana started Kidogo Productions LLC and launched kidogo.tv as self-funded ventures. Now that she's beginning to secure grants and sponsored funding support, she will continue to apply all financial benefits to the enhancement of kidogo.tv for youth now and into the future.

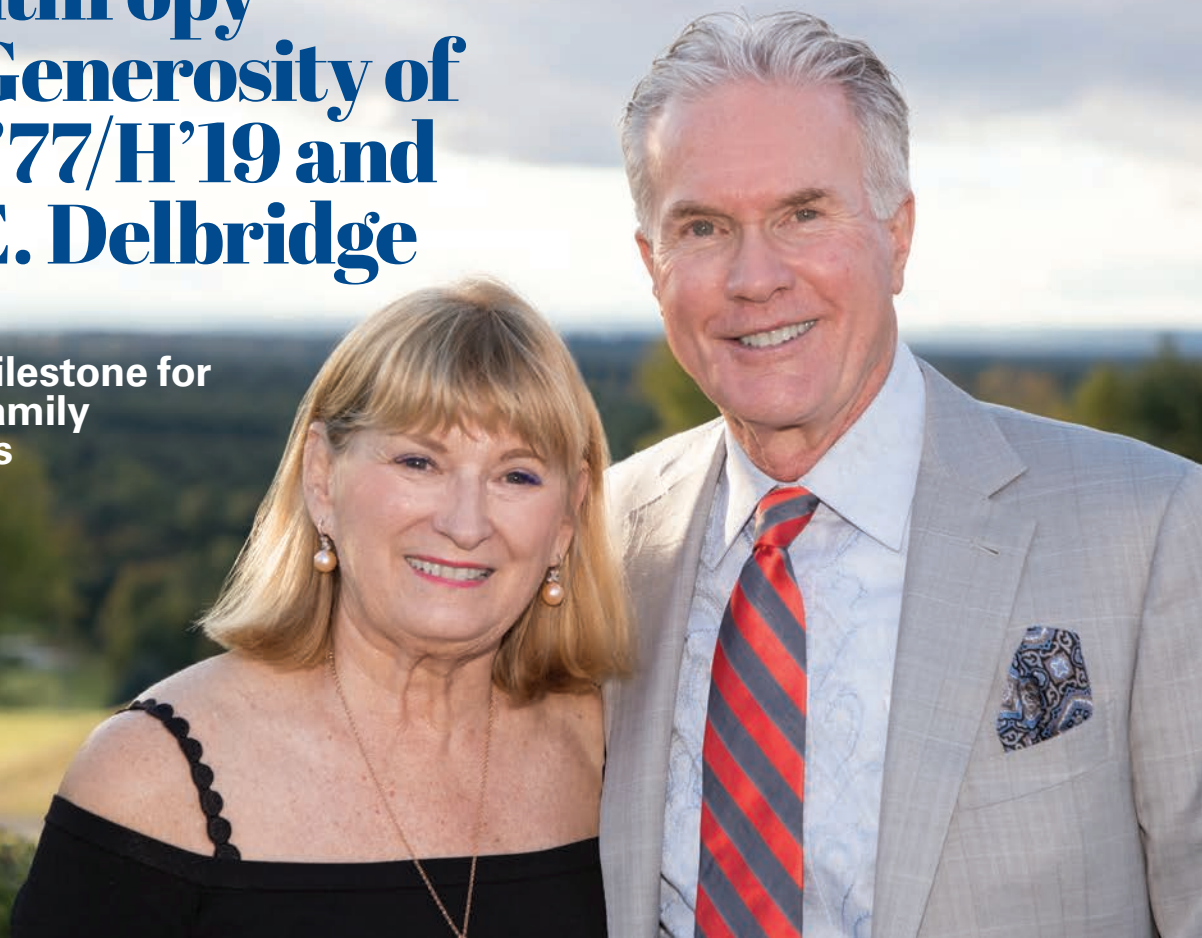
To learn more about Keeana's startup journey, visit [magazine.wne.edu](http://magazine.wne.edu).



# Celebrating the Spirit of Philanthropy and the Generosity of Kevin S. '77/H'19 and Sandra E. Delbridge

## A Momentous Milestone for a Monumental Family of Philanthropists

By Kate Burke



The importance of education and giving back to the community were family values instilled in both Kevin '77/H'19 and Sandra Delbridge from an early age, values that they consistently reinforce through their commitment to enhancing the Western New England University student experience. In December 2021, culminating more than three decades of leadership in philanthropy, these values were never more evident as Kevin and Sandra achieved the remarkable milestone of more than \$10 million in gifts to WNE, becoming the most generous benefactors in University history.

"It's important that if people can help, they should," said Sandra. "My dad's philosophy was you get back what you give. By giving, you won't get back necessarily monetarily; you'll get back those things that count the most."

### The Value of Education

With the sentiment from his grandfather that "you can lose everything, but you can never lose your education," forever resonating with him, Kevin, a native of the Sixteen Acres neighborhood in Springfield, embarked on his own WNE student experience more than 45 years ago after serving six years in the United States Navy Reserves. Thanks to a generous financial aid package, the unmatched proximity to home and work, and the educational and hands-on opportunities available through the College of Business, Kevin became a full-time commuter student pursuing his degree in Business Administration while also working 25 to 30 hours each week at Stop & Shop.

"Expectations were high to attend school," said Kevin, who couldn't afford

to go to a college where he would have to live on campus. "And especially, go for a reason and do as well as you can."

Kevin shared that he had initially aspired to be an engineer; aspirations he quickly redirected to accounting after reading a list of starting salaries for college graduates in the 1970s. "It was a list of the 25 top-earning careers," he said. "At the bottom was engineering, and at the top was accounting. I looked up accounting, saw it was all about numbers, and I love numbers. That's how I got into the profession."

With the positive reputation and stature of the WNE Business and Accounting programs, the guidance of professors, and the relationships the school had with companies in Springfield, Kevin thrived in classes, projects, and summer work with local accounting firms. He also



served as Class President his freshman year and as a member of the Accounting Club.

"Dr. Louis Raverta, the Chair of the Department of Accounting, had a very interesting teaching style," said Kevin, fondly remembering his time on campus. "If you had a question, he would say, 'that's a very good question. Are there other good questions?' It taught you that you had to figure out the answer on your own, and that's what it's like in real life."

## From Campus to Career

After completing his degree and graduating summa cum laude, Kevin passed the CPA exam in 1977 and launched his career as an Auditor at Coopers & Lybrand, one of the local accounting firms that WNE had a great relationship with at the time. "It was a big eight accounting firm back then, and I got an offer from them," he said. "I was able to get offers from seven of the big eight firms. Half of them offered more money, but I liked the people at Coopers & Lybrand, and some of my classmates worked there too."

While making his way through the early years of his career, Kevin earned his MBA from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and soon migrated from accounting into the investment arena. Though he was on the partner track at Coopers & Lybrand, after four years, he decided to move in a different direction and joined the insurance company CIGNA to work in their investment group as an accountant. Initially a career move he questioned, he transitioned to their venture capital division, and the career decision he first thought could have been his worst, suddenly set him on the path to his successful career in investments.

"Everything that happens to you, it does happen for a reason, whether it's good or bad, and it's up to you to take it forward," said Kevin, reflecting on his career decisions and how he felt after leaving Coopers & Lybrand. "No matter how bad things may seem to be, there's a reason you're going through it, and you're going to come out the other side of it."



By 1988, Kevin joined John Hancock Venture Capital, a subsidiary of John Hancock Insurance. A short 10 years later, he and fellow senior partners bought the company to form HarbourVest Partners, now one of the largest private equity investment companies in the world. He served as Senior Managing Director until 2010, and over the past decade has slowly taken steps back from day-to-day management, now holding the role of Senior Advisor.

## Remembering Their Roots

Never forgetting their family values and emphasis on the importance of education and giving back to the community, Kevin and Sandra have always remembered where they started and the many helping hands that helped lift them up along the way.

After Kevin graduated in 1977, he and Sandra welcomed two daughters, and though focused on family and career, they would still make a point of sending small gifts every year in support of WNE. In the mid-1990s, Sandra—who was involved in a local education fund, their church, garden club, women's club, and cultural arts association—suggested Kevin should get involved outside the family with something other than work.

"She was the east coast distributor for our volunteer time," said Kevin with a laugh, sharing that it was at about this

time that Dr. Anthony Caprio, then-President of WNE, reached out to him to get involved. "I thought it was a really good idea; I have an affinity for the University, it's something close to my heart, and the campus wasn't that far away," he said. "It was Sandra giving me the nudge, saying it's your turn to step up to the plate."

Now more than 25 years later, Kevin is still connected to his alma mater, serving as a member of the WNE Board of Trustees since 1998, including as Chair from 2009-2015 and Vice Chair from 2006-2009. Widely recognized for his passion for advancing the WNE student experience, Kevin was honored with the Alumnus of the Year Award in 2001, the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters in 2019, and served as Commencement Speaker in 2019. He and Sandra have also been steadfast supporters of campus fundraising campaigns and initiatives, and Kevin also served as the Honorary Cochair for the Campaign for Our Second Century from 2016-2020 and Cochair of the Transformations Campaign from 2003-2008.

## Paying It Forward

With a strong affinity for education and the arts, Kevin and Sandra have always stayed connected to the University through annual giving and supporting students. After making their first gift over 35 years ago to support capital





projects in Churchill Hall, the Delbridge family has made an undeniable impact on the WNE student experience.

With the Delbridges' transformational gift to the Career Center in 2020, the Kevin S. and Sandra E. Delbridge Career Center now provides students with dynamic tools and resources to enhance educational and experiential learning opportunities while cultivating career strategies now and into the future.

"Having our name attached to the Career Center means a lot," said Kevin. "Many years ago, Sandra and I decided where we would put our philanthropic dollars over the years, and there were two areas that were very important to us. One was in the arts, for the soul. The other was in education, for the mind."

Further augmenting their commitment to student success, the Delbridge family has impacted hundreds of Golden Bears from Springfield and surrounding communities through the development of the Kevin S. Delbridge Endowed Scholarship and the Delbridge Family Endowed Scholarship. Additionally, through the years, the Delbridge Family Atrium in 2011 and the Kevin S. Delbridge Welcome Center in 2006 have been named in their honor; as well as academic spaces and programs including the conference room in Sleith

Hall, the Neuroscience Lab, and the College of Business Honors Program.

"We didn't necessarily give to create a legacy, but we did it more as an example for others who are thinking of doing it to actually do it," said Kevin. "Many educational and art organizations can't

***"This is helping young people as they are in their formative years, as they are acquiring knowledge and thinking about what they want to do. They need support, they need guidance, they need resources. To us, the most important thing is helping these students get what they need."***

just operate on their revenue; they need additional help and additional funds. We're more than happy to provide some of those funds. In the case of the University, this is helping young people as they are in their formative years, as

they are acquiring knowledge and thinking about what they want to do. They need support, they need guidance, they need resources. To us, the most important thing is helping these students get what they need."

Since 2011, the Delbridges have also hosted a scholar's dinner for the recipients of their scholarships, an event they've enjoyed for the opportunity to meet and share advice with Golden Bear students embarking on their next steps beyond campus. "Your career is not always up and to the right," said Kevin. "There are peaks and valleys, and when you're in a valley, you can be concerned about it, but you're going to get out of it. Your next peak will be higher than your last peak. The chance to convey to students that we came from relatively humble beginnings to get to where we are, and that they can do the same thing, is very compelling."

### **Inspiring the Next Generation of Philanthropists**

"Writing a check is one thing, but we wanted to do more than that," said Kevin. "We wanted to be involved. Serving on the Board of Trustees fulfilled me. Having a role in helping the University continue its upward trajectory, that alone makes me feel good."





Kevin and Sandra hope to serve as an example of the impact giving can make, and they encourage alumni to give back with their time, talent, and treasure. "It's both monetary and lending of your expertise," said Kevin. "Consider being a mentor to a few students and really having an impact. Share the practical experience you've gained over 10, 20, or 30 years to help students navigate today's world."

The Delbridges have truly embodied the saying "actions speak louder than words" in the past 35 years of their

remarkable philanthropy and leadership at WNE. Through their active engagement, focused vision, generosity, and steadfast support, they have set the stage for alumni to follow in their footsteps and continue to impact the WNE student experience today and into the future.

Kevin and Sandra challenge alumni and donors to be inspired by their story, to get involved, and to exceed the impact they've had the opportunity to make. "We talked about doing things by example," said Kevin. "We're not

going to be around forever, and hopefully there are others coming up who will view this and think, 'maybe I should follow that path or spend some time giving my expertise to help them out,' and with dollars too, of course."

Learn more about the Kevin S. and Sandra E. Delbridge Career Center at [wne.edu/career-development-center](http://wne.edu/career-development-center).

Explore ways to make your impact on the Golden Bear experience at [alumni.wne.edu/ways-to-give](http://alumni.wne.edu/ways-to-give) or make a gift today at [alumni.wne.edu/make-a-gift](http://alumni.wne.edu/make-a-gift).







# THE GOLDEN IMPACT OF GOLDEN BEAR PHILANTHROPY

President Johnson hosts donor reception honoring the generosity and loyalty of Golden Bear supporters.

By Kate Burke

On September 28, with fall colors abundant on the horizon and a magical backdrop of the rolling hills and the Connecticut River Valley, WNE donors were treated to a special evening at GreatHorse, full of celebration, honors, and sincere appreciation.

In recognition of milestone giving achievements and encouragement for philanthropic support in years to come, the President's Donor Reception—attended by more than 100 supporters—featured remarks from University President Dr. Robert E. Johnson, Vice President for Advancement Beverly Dwight, student scholarship recipient Timothy Doyle, and the University's most generous benefactors Kevin '77/H'19 and Sandra Delbridge.

"From annual donors and loyal donors to donors who have included the University in their estate plans, and our most generous donors—every single gift counts," said Beverly Dwight.

Among those honored included 25 new members of the Benefac-

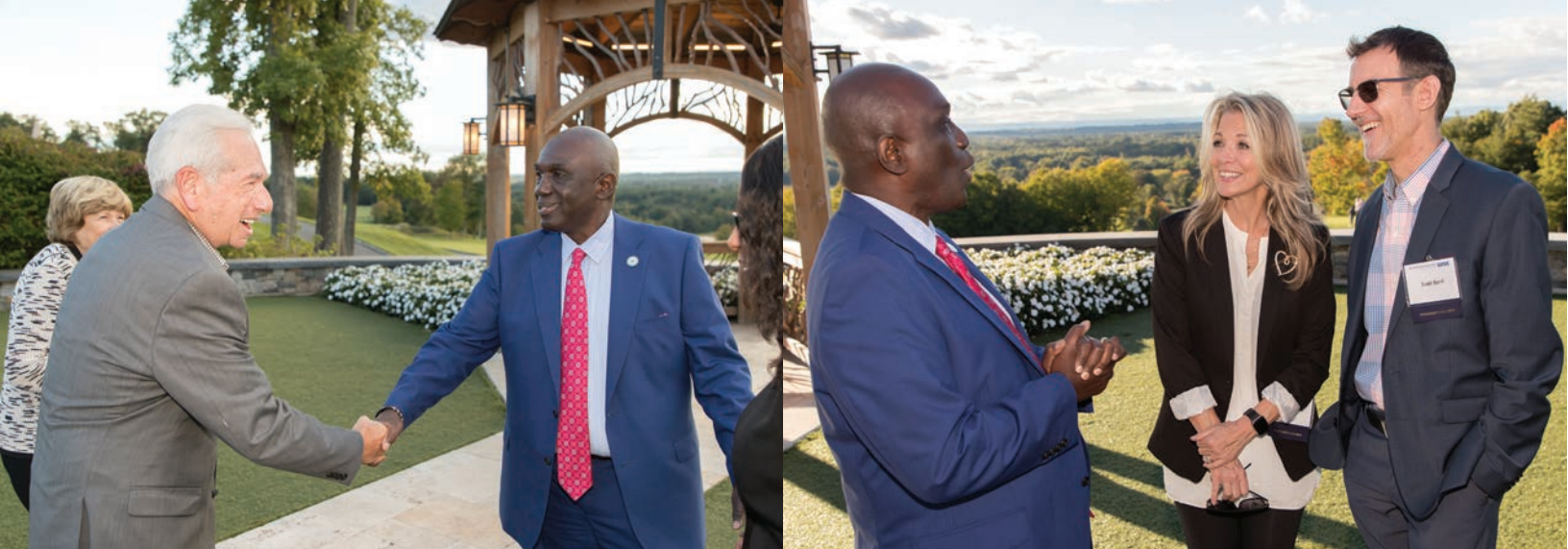
tors' Society, the University's top giving society recognizing those who have made cumulative gifts of \$100,000 or more. Achieving this remarkable giving status, the new Society members join an impressive club of more than 120 individuals, corporations, and foundations.

The Benefactors' Society Class of 2022, many of whom made gifts that contributed to the historic success of the University's Second Century Campaign—which concluded in June 2020 after raising more than \$36 million—includes Lisa M. '83/G'90 and Bruce D. '83/G'90 Bachmann, Eli B. Basch L'76, Janet Johnson Bullard '69, Carmel A. Caramagna L'84, Richard M. Cassata '80, Robert W. Clarke, Alexander M. Corl '84, Rocco J. Falcone, II '84/G'87, The Estate of Thomas Fitzgerald '65, Denis G. Gagnon G'76, The Henry P. Kendall Foundation, Stanley Kowalski, III '92, Robert E. Kubicek '52/L'57/H'01, The June E. Lester Trust, Dennis M. Lind

'80, The MassMutual Foundation, Inc., The Honorable Michael B. Powers L'82, The Honorable Hugo L. Ricci, Jr. L'74, Kenneth M. Rickson '75, Jeffrey B. Sagalyn L'76, Patricia J. Serafino '77 in memory of Michael A. Serafino '77, Gary F. Thomas L'76, Steven J. Tremblay '87/G'91, Kathleen A. White '78, and R. Lyman and Leslie Wood.

Reflecting on the impact that WNE donor generosity has on the Golden Bear student experience, senior Timothy Doyle—a Mechanical Engineering major, Student Ambassador, and recipient of the John J. Brown Endowed Memorial Scholarship and the Mark L. Berthiaume and Betsy Thompson Endowed Scholarship—shared how donor support helped make his educational aspirations a reality. "While I look forward to my career as an engineer, working with some of the most advanced technologies in the world, I also look back to what got me here, and that's all of you," said Timothy. "Your gracious gifts allow





so many other students, just like me, to succeed academically and grow as young professionals by alleviating some of the financial stress. The opportunity that WNE has provided me is once in a lifetime. Thank you for helping me become an engineer and for helping many others on the path through college and onto brighter futures.”

In appreciation of their intentions to further the student experience and enhance the reputation of the University, the event concluded with a special recognition of the unprecedented generosity of Kevin and Sandra Delbridge.

“Their gift, which enables dramatic physical and programmatic enhancements to the existing Career Center, boosts the University’s ability to deliver on its promise to ensure that our graduates are prepared to be successful in an increasingly competitive and rapidly changing global society,” said President Johnson.

Celebrating the legacy and impact of the Delbridge Family as the University’s most generous benefactors and their longstanding hope that their philanthropy might serve as a role model for others, the WNE Alumni Association has established the Delbridge Family Spirit of Philanthropy Award to annually recognize the sustained and significant philanthropic impact of a WNE graduate over their lifetime. The inaugural award recipient will be announced in the spring of 2023.

“Together, we have so much to celebrate,” said President Johnson. “Every day, I think about how we can honor our traditions and build on those so we can move this dynamic University into the future. Moving forward means we must embrace a culture of innovation and accept our role in shaping the lives of the students who trust us to prepare them for a future that is unimaginable. As a New Traditional

University, we endeavor to harness the possibilities of the future and empower our students to be agile and adaptive learners. We promise to prepare our graduates to be able to reinvent themselves throughout their professional careers and to be able to measure that success in all they do as they go out into the world and become global citizens.”

Explore ways to make your impact on the Golden Bear experience at **[alumni.wne.edu/ways-to-give](https://alumni.wne.edu/ways-to-give)** or make a gift today at **[alumni.wne.edu/make-a-gift](https://alumni.wne.edu/make-a-gift)**.

Learn more about the WNE Donor Recognition Societies and the Benefactors’ Society Class of 2022 at **[alumni.wne.edu/donor-recognition](https://alumni.wne.edu/donor-recognition)**.

View the President’s Donor Reception event photo gallery at **[alumni.wne.edu/photogalleries](https://alumni.wne.edu/photogalleries)**.







# In Celebration of Diversity

Assistant Dean Yvonne Bogle '83/G'91  
Leaves Lasting Impact

By Patricia Gagnon







There is a memory that Yvonne Bogle '83/G'91 has taken with her over her three decades of diversity work for Western New England University, and it is one that she says will stay with her long after her retirement this past June as Assistant Dean for Inclusive Excellence. Yvonne had just started working for WNE and was attending an awards ceremony for one of her students who was being honored. "His grandmother walked up to me and said, 'I prayed there would be someone here for my grandson. I know it was you who I prayed for. You saved him,'" Yvonne recalls. "Her prayer has kept me here. I fell in love with the students and couldn't see myself leaving. I feel like it was my assignment in life to be here."

It was a bit of serendipity that brought Yvonne to her impactful work in diversity and inclusion at WNE. Born in Kingston, Jamaica, she moved with her family to the United States in 1970. As she began her professional life, she looked toward work in manufacturing. While working for Digital Equipment Corporation, she earned her undergraduate degree in Accounting from Western New England University and, after attending class at night, her master's in Business in 1991. It was then that a connection in the Career Office at WNE told her about a diversity job opening and encouraged her to apply for it. "I was working in manufacturing at the time, and I wasn't sure I should," said

Yvonne. "But I thought I could use the practice in my interviewing skills." She got the job and started in 1991 as Director of Diversity Programs and Services. "I often think it must have been a 'divine' appointment," she said.

"Whenever I hear the Maya Angelou poem 'Phenomenal Woman' there are so many women in my life that I can think about, but Dean Bogle is at the top of my list," said Lashavna Edmond '12. "This phenomenal woman inspired me, an immigrant and first-generation college student, to see the bigger picture in every aspect of life."





Her strong words of encouragement, wisdom, and genuine love for students made WNE feel like home. Dean Bogle has been a pillar at WNE for many years, and she has had a lasting impact on my life. She has opened doors for me that a young Black girl from Hartford could only dream of. She has poured into me as any mother would do for her daughter, and she continues to show up for me even as an adult."

Over her 30 years in WNE's diversity programs (now the Office of Cultural Education and Inclusion), Yvonne has been a diversity champion who has enriched the educational experiences of students. Her work has helped to prepare students to live and work in a global society and taught them to celebrate people's differences and similarities as a means of self-awareness and development.

"It's hard to put into words how much 'Dean B' truly impacted my life," expressed Brandon Moore '21. "She truly helped me grow in three different parts of my life. The first is in my professional experience. She gave me a leadership position to help incoming students, and that experience gave me the confidence to communicate with

*"Most of the programs  
that I have helped to  
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planted by students.  
I give them the credit.  
My part was just to  
make them happen."*

—Assistant Dean Yvonne Bogle  
'83/G'91

other people and showed me the joy of working with others. The second is the social aspect. Through the leadership program, I was able to make lifelong friendships with people I thought I would never talk to, and it also showed

me that expressing myself is the best way to experience life. The third would be my mindset. I learned from her to always plan ahead and focus on what you can do, not what others are not doing. She was always there if you needed advice about anything. I am truly grateful for being able to meet her and I plan on spreading the wealth the way she did for me."

Throughout her time at WNE, Yvonne has helped lead several programs including United & Mutually Equal (U&ME), a multicultural student organization that is open to all students who have a desire to learn about people from different cultural backgrounds and ethnicities. The primary purpose of U&ME is to celebrate differences and embrace diversity, as well as promote ideals of mutual equality, respect, and social justice. She also worked with students in offering resources for LGBTQ+ students and for the student-formed Connections Mentoring Program, which helps students connect with and build lasting relationships among the incoming underrepresented students and upperclass students who are members of U&ME. The program has



created personal relationships which have fostered a sense of belonging and community, allowing incoming freshmen to create a bond with someone who can help them integrate into college life and who may have had a shared or similar life experience.

"Most of the programs that I have helped to support have come out of seeds of ideas planted by students. I give them the credit. My part was just to make them happen," said Yvonne. "It has been fulfilling to work with our international students. I could relate to them coming to this country for the first time and feeling like everything was different and that sense of not belonging. To counteract that, the Office of Cultural Education and Inclusion is guided by social justice principles and upholds and works towards pluralism through a commitment to empower, advocate, and educate members of our community."

"Life at WNE would not have been half the experience it was without Ms. Bogle's guidance, mentorship, and presence in my life," said Michele Sebastiano '07. "She was the matriarch for all students involved in U&ME. She made sure students far from home had

food to eat on holidays, were taking care of their studies, and were actively involved in bettering their community. I can say I am a better, kinder, and more empathetic person due to Ms. Bogle's presence in my college experience."

As for retirement, Yvonne says she has no immediate plans. She's looking forward to spending time with her family; she has been married to her husband, Trustee Neville Bogle '75/G'81, for 43 years, and they have a son, a daughter, and three grandchildren. "What brings me joy is my family and close friends. I look forward to spending more time with them," she said.

She also loves to travel and looks forward to traveling abroad and seeing new places and experiencing different cultures. "In my travels, I plan to visit with my former domestic and international students. I have several standing invitations that I have to honor—some of them have been open for years—so now is the time," said Yvonne.

"Dean Bogle continuously encouraged us to always show up for ourselves and never underestimate the power of who we are. As a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion champion, she has

changed the landscape of what social justice looks like at WNE and has left a legacy to be remembered for years to come. I am so proud to have Dean Bogle in my life and there aren't enough words to conjure to share how much I love her and how much she is loved by U&ME alumni," said Lashawna.

"I'm most proud of those relationships I've built with students. So many of them still keep in touch with me on a regular basis and check in. I'm invited to weddings and baby showers," Yvonne said with a smile. "They tell me how much I've helped them, but I've learned so much from them too. They've helped me see there are multiple realities. They've lived lives and had experiences that I've never had, some extremely challenging, and a person can learn so much from that."

As for a message she would like to leave for students at WNE she said, "Learn to realize there are multiple realities. Learn to walk in someone else's shoes. Give them the benefit of the doubt. When you help someone, you get an adrenaline rush, and it makes it that much easier to pay it forward."





# 1972

Title



Enacted

# 1975



Women's Basketball

# 1979



Women's Softball



Women's Tennis

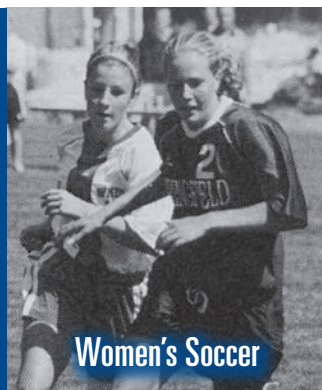
# 1981

# 1982



Women's Swimming

# 1984



Women's Soccer

# 1997



Women's Lacrosse

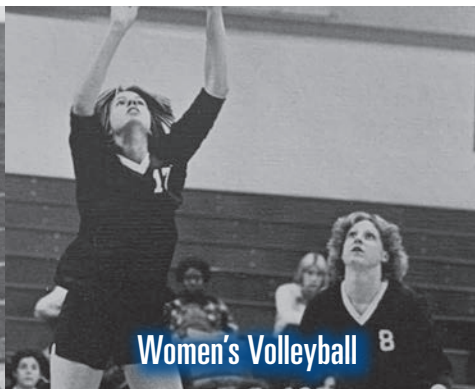
# 2021



Women's Ice Hockey

# 2022





# A LANDSCAPE PAINTED WITH PROGRESS

**Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Title IX  
and the Evolution of Golden Bear Women's Athletics**

**By Kate Burke**

**Organized competition for both men's and women's intercollegiate athletics was a landscape painted exclusively for men at the start of the twentieth century, most notably with the start of the Intercollegiate Athletic Association, now known as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Well over a century later, the scene has been painted and repainted with brittle brushstrokes that illustrate the mountains and valleys of the uphill journey for women to achieve equality, equity, and access to sport.**

Prior to the advent of Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, the canvas of intercollegiate athletics for women was shaped and shifted with shades of progress dating back to the early 1940s, starting with the development of the Division for Girls' and Women's Sports of the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation. In the three decades to follow, opportunities for women in intercollegiate athletics evolved with various iterations of associations, committees, and commissions, ultimately resulting in the development of the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) in 1971. Coupled with the passage of Title IX, the AIAW created the women's sports equivalent to the NCAA, providing opportunities for the national scope of competition, championships, and travel that the NCAA had been providing men for decades. By the early 1980s, the NCAA absorbed women's intercollegiate athletics, and the shared and skewed landscape of the NCAA we know today, emerged.





**WNE Athletics leadership in the late 1960s and early 1970s included Eric Geldart, Jr., Athletic Director; Patrick Ricci, Baseball Coach; William Arthur "Red" Downes G'83, Men's Baseball, Basketball, Soccer, and Golf Coach; and Patty (Best) Barbalunga L'80, Women's Basketball and Volleyball Coach.**

## SHIFTING GEARS: A FINITE LAW AND AN INFINITELY ROCKY ROAD

Title IX historically impacted women in the university environment in a number of notable ways with the emphatic directive that "no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

Through the lens of intercollegiate athletics, Title IX set the wheels in motion for women to begin driving on the road to achieving a level playing field in sport, a road that has since seen and continues to experience its fair share of rough terrain, but that has nonetheless provided women the opportunity to access programs, resources, and ultimately equal participation to men in organized sport.

"While opportunities for women in sport clearly exist, the industry is still very much male-dominated, and although change, hopefully for the better, is inevitable, it sometimes seems to come too slowly," said Curt Hamakawa L'84, Chief of Staff and Secretary to the Board of Trustees, and WNE Sport

Management Professor. "While female student-athletes have come a long way since the AIAW and being fully integrated into the NCAA championship structure, there are still pinch points."

With a bright light cast by Title IX, and the newly compulsory emphasis on enhanced financial support, facilities, travel, equipment, etc., intercollegiate athletics began to find firmer footing and focus in providing opportunities for women to excel. Nationwide, schools like Western New England University had to redefine intercollegiate athletics, leave the male-dominated field in the rearview, and focus on planting the seeds and nurturing the growth of women's athletics full speed ahead.

"So many people have fought for equity in the sports world," said Dr. Sharianne Walker, Dean of the College of Business and the first professor in the WNE Sport Management program. "We're not there yet. We're making progress and the 50th anniversary of Title IX is a great time to stop and reflect on the progress made, but also to evaluate and think about where we need to go and what kind of work is left to be done."

## THE 1960s: SPORT AT WNE—A JOURNEY BEGINS

Prior to Title IX, WNE was young in comparison to universities nationwide in developing and implementing men's varsity athletics, in addition to men's and women's club sports and intramurals. In the mid-1960s the landscape of sports on campus featured three men's varsity sports (basketball, soccer, and baseball) in addition to limited club sports and intramural sports programs. Men's wrestling, football, and tennis were soon to follow in the 1970s, along with men's ice hockey and lacrosse in the early 1980s.

Led by Athletic Director Eric Geldart, Jr., great change began to take effect in the late 1960s and early 1970s with the

*"So many people have fought for equity in the sports world. We're not there yet. We're making progress and the 50th anniversary of Title IX is a great time to stop and reflect on the progress made, but also to evaluate and think about where we need to go and what kind of work is left to be done."*

**—Dr. Sharianne Walker,  
Dean of the College of Business**

addition of Physical Education instructors and coaches including William Arthur "Red" Downes G'83 in 1968, coach for men's baseball, basketball, soccer, and golf; Patrick Ricci in 1974, leading baseball; and Patty (Best) Barbalunga L'80 in 1976, the first coach of women's intercollegiate athletics programs on campus, leading women's basketball and volleyball. In conjunction with Geldart, the four led the development and forward progress of Physical Education at WNE, not only as department administrators, instructors, and coaches, but also as the



visionaries for the future of Golden Bear Athletics, including the enhancement of women's sports.

"The key is that institutions need to provide equitable participation opportunities by being able to demonstrate that they are fully and effectively accommodating their students' athletic interests and history, the continuous practice of program expansion, and/or their student-athlete participation is substantially proportionate to the student body," said Professor Hamakawa, who is also the former Director of the WNE Center for International Sport Business (CISB), former Director with the United States Olympic Committee, and former Compliance Representative with the NCAA.

## 1970s: EMERGING WOMEN'S SPORTS

The early 1970s saw sports and Physical Education flourish at WNE, including the opening of Rivers Memorial Gymnasium, the first indoor athletic facility on campus. Initially intended for varsity sports, clubs, and Physical Education, the facility quickly outgrew the intended utilization as women's varsity athletics was soon on the horizon.

A short three years after Title IX became law, WNE Athletics quickly evolved as Patty Barbalunga ushered in the first women's sports teams, basketball and volleyball, in 1975. As a PE Instructor at WNE, prior to making history as the first Golden Bear women's sport coach, Coach Barbalunga, a former intercollegiate student-athlete herself, had a firm understanding of the challenges ahead, including limited staff, resources, and facility spaces. "I coached looking at the present against a backdrop of the past and into the future," said Barbalunga, who also earned her Juris Doctor from the WNE School of Law while coaching and teaching on campus.

Leading through a lens of relentless optimism and unforgiving tenacity, Coach Barbalunga was committed to advancing women, advancing sport, and advancing WNE. Along with Eric Geldart, Bill Downes, and Patrick Ricci, she laid the foundation for organized women's sports on campus and as the 1970s came to a close, progress in the

WNE arena of athletics was undeniable with the addition of softball and tennis. "I just hope everybody keeps the eye on the ball; this is a continuum, this is not the end," said Coach Barbalunga regarding the celebration of 50 years of Title IX.

## 1980s: THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF PROGRESS

The rise of WNE women's sports continued in the early 1980s with the addition of field hockey in 1981, swimming in 1982, and soccer in 1984. By the mid-1980s, gender diversity within the WNE sports landscape was greatly enhanced, but there was still an uphill climb for the five women's sports to compete for resources with the eight men's sports that existed at the time. It was evident that the 13 programs had collectively outgrown the physical footprint of athletics on campus.

With Rivers as the only dedicated space for athletics and a number of men's and women's teams practicing and competing off-site, the need for a long-term vision for the future of Golden Bear athletics was imperative.

"There have been many advancements in women's sports through the years, from facilities to travel and other opportunities that were not around in the 1970s and 1980s," said Associate Athletic Director and former head men's and women's tennis coach Jenn Kolins. "The overall respect of female athletes has grown in society, and that respect for our WNE student-athletes is apparent."

## 1990s: THE START OF A "GOLDEN ERA"

The 1990s saw the start of what has been historically dubbed the "Golden Era" of WNE Athletics. Much of the spotlight was cast from the shining moments of women's sports teams, but also the development of the "Walker Report," a comprehensive evaluation of WNE Athletics that set the stage for many of the advances in facilities, staffing, and resources that Golden Bear athletics programs enjoy today.

In 1996, Dr. Anthony Caprio became the fifth president of WNE and in short order tasked Dr. Sharienne Walker, the first faculty member in the new Sport







Management program in the College of Business, to conduct an evaluation of WNE Athletics. In conjunction with a team of industry experts, what affectionately has been referred to as the "Walker Report," emerged with 34 recommendations for the future of WNE Athletics, in addition to the development of a robust intramural program. The report, based on observations and evaluation of people, finances, facilities, equipment, and technology, ultimately led to the development of a short and long-term strategic timeline driven by a defined and evolving work plan.

"A good foundation was in place," said Dean Walker of the state of WNE Athletics prior to the report. "But if we wanted to offer a quality student-athlete experience we really needed to develop the infrastructure to support that. The hallmark of a good athletic program is to be responsive and open, not only to seek opportunities but to be responsive to student interests and be responsive to the environment."

The Walker Report led to a number of near-immediate changes to Athletics including the 1998 hiring of Dr. Mike Theulen, the second Director of Athletics in school history; the addition of the sixth women's sport, lacrosse, in 1997; the elevation of administrative staff and coaches to full-time status; the development of the Athletics Council and the Downes Hall of Fame; and the restructuring of the athletic training function to meet the guidelines and standards set forth by the NCAA.

Complementing the profound successes being made to the infrastructure of WNE Athletics in the late 1990s, the women's soccer team helped close the decade with groundbreaking history on the field as the first WNE women's program to clinch an East Coast Athletic Conference (ECAC) title in 1998 and reach the NCAA Tournament in 1999. Additionally, the inaugural class of the Downes Hall of Fame was inducted in 1999, including the first female student-athlete inductee Margaret (Apanell) Bastiaanse '83/G'88.

## 2000s: A GROWING LANDSCAPE OF SPRAWLING SUCCESSES

The "Golden Era" of Golden Bear Athletics continued to shine in the 2000s with the countless successes of women's programs, including 14 appearances in NCAA Division III championships.

By the start of the 21st century, WNE Athletics had grown to encompass 10 men's sport programs, nine women's

sport programs, and a robust intramural program. With 19 varsity sport programs and hundreds of student-athletes, a number of new facilities were in the works and renovations were on the horizon. Golden Bear Stadium and Trelease Park were unveiled in 2002, becoming the home for football, field hockey, women's lacrosse, and men's lacrosse. Additionally, renovations were completed at Suprenant Field, the Volvo Outdoor Tennis Courts, and Golden Bear Softball Park.

The decade was highlighted in 2002 by softball earning the program's first NCAA Division III New England Regional Championship title and punching the program's first ticket to the coveted Women's College World Series. The following year, the team made history again by earning the New England Regional title again, repeating their trip to the World Series, and closing out 2003 with an appearance in the NCAA Final Eight and an esteemed 10th ranking in the final national poll.

"No one expected us to win, but that team worked hard all year and left it all out on the field," said Lori Mayhew '95, WNE Associate Athletic Director and former Golden Bear softball coach from 1997 to 2018.

Throughout the decade, women's sport programs continued to dominate the GNAC with 13 tournament titles collectively earned by softball (5), soccer (3), cross country (3), swimming (1), and tennis (1). Additionally, lacrosse won the ECAC Division III New England Championship in 2008 and 2009; Women's Head







## THE GOLDEN ROAD

### WNE Women's Sports Titles & NCAA Championship Appearances

#### 1995-2006

##### *Great Northeast Athletic Conference (GNAC) Tournament Titles*

Softball: 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006  
 Soccer: 1995, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2006  
 Cross Country: 2000, 2005, 2006  
 Swimming: 2003-04  
 Tennis: 2003

#### 1998-2015

##### *Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) Tournament Titles*

Soccer: 1998  
 Lacrosse: 2008, 2009, 2011  
 Volleyball: 2012, 2013

#### 2000-2006

##### *North Athletic Conference (NAC) Tournament Titles*

Field Hockey : 2005

#### 2002-2007

##### *New England Women's Lacrosse Alliance Tournament Titles*

2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007

#### 2007-2022

##### *Commonwealth Coast Conference (CCC) Tournament Titles*

Softball: 2015, 2018  
 Lacrosse: 2015  
 Basketball: 2018-19  
 Soccer: 2022

### NCAA Division III Championship Appearances

1998: Soccer  
 2001: Soccer  
 2002: Softball, Lacrosse, Soccer  
 2003: Softball  
 2004: Lacrosse, Softball  
 2005: Lacrosse, Softball, Field Hockey  
 2006: Lacrosse, Softball, Soccer  
 2007: Lacrosse  
 2014-15: Lacrosse, Softball  
 2017-18: Softball  
 2018-19: Basketball  
 2019-20: Basketball  
 2022: Soccer

Basketball Coach Wendy Davis became the first coach in WNE women's program history to achieve 100 wins in 2004; field hockey earned the North Atlantic Conference Tournament title in 2005; and women's lacrosse claimed five New England Women's Lacrosse Alliance Tournament titles within a span of six years.

## 2010s: ACHIEVEMENTS AND ENHANCEMENTS

In the 2010s, WNE women's sport programs continued to thrive on the national stage with five appearances in NCAA Championships, including women's lacrosse in 2014 and 2015, softball in 2015 and 2018, and women's basketball in 2019.

Enhancement of athletics facilities continued as renovations to Golden Bear Stadium, including the FieldTurf® playing surface, were unveiled in 2011. The \$1.5 million Flynn Family Golden Bear Pavilion, featuring state-of-the-art locker rooms for eight of the Golden Bears' outdoor sports teams, training rooms, public restrooms, and a concession stand, opened in 2015.

"I have seen tremendous growth as a coach here at WNE, both as an institution and within the Department of Athletics," said Aimee Klepacki, Women's Lacrosse Head Coach and former college student-athlete. "It is truly special to me to have worked with the lacrosse program from its inception and see how it has evolved and succeeded, not just as a women's team, but as a sport that has given so many young girls such a great opportunity to play."

## 2020s: PROGRESS AND PERSPECTIVE

In the past 50 years, Title IX has undoubtedly changed the landscape of intercollegiate athletics, paving the road for women's sports into the 21st century. With the start of the 2020s at WNE, continued progress couldn't be more evident as the University now offers 11 women's programs, with the addition of women's ice hockey in 2020 and women's wrestling in 2021.

"All of our 'firsts' are memorable," said Women's Ice Hockey Head Coach Katie Zimmerman. "One of the awesome aspects of starting a new program is having the opportunity to hit so many milestones together."

Tabbed by the NCAA as an emerging sport, women's wrestling now exists at the NCAA Division III level in New England due exclusively to the pioneering efforts of WNE and the true passion of Mike Sugermeyer G'17, Director of WNE Wrestling and Head Men's Wrestling Coach. WNE celebrates the inaugural year of women's wrestling in 2022-2023 as one of only 25 NCAA DIII programs nationwide and the first in New England.

Continue to follow the journey of WNE women's sports programs and learn more about all Golden Bear Athletics programs and opportunities at [wnegoldenbears.com](http://wnegoldenbears.com).



# Festivities & Fun For All at HOME COMING

By Kate Burke

**With crisp leaves underfoot and perfect fall weather on the horizon, Western New England University alumni, fans, and friends returned to campus October 21-23 to celebrate Homecoming 2022.**

Festively clad in hues of blue and gold, Homecoming 2022 attendees had a lot to celebrate, including reunion gatherings for the classes of 1987, 2002, 2011, and 2021; various sport reunions, alumni games, and varsity games; and special events and honors including the Downes Hall of Fame, the Billy Evans '02 memorial dedication, and the U&ME mural unveiling.

Take a ride down Golden Bear Boulevard and beyond to enjoy a look back at Homecoming 2022 at [alumni.wne.edu/homecoming2022](https://alumni.wne.edu/homecoming2022).



## Downes Hall of Fame

The Downes Hall of Fame awards ceremony kicked off the weekend festivities with Golden Bear alumni athletes Emily Savino '13 (Women's Basketball), Erin Whitcomb '06 (Softball)\*, Eric Hedberg '14 (Men's Golf), and Bryce Brown '12 (Football) honored as Class of 2022 inductees.

Learn more about honorees at [wnegoldenbears.com/information/downes-hall-of-fame](https://wnegoldenbears.com/information/downes-hall-of-fame).

*\*Recognized posthumously*





## GOLDEN BEAR BOULEVARD

With a wide array of food trucks, inflatables, yard games, Golden Bear gear, giveaways, and so much more—friends, fun, and food paved the way to action on the fields of play spotlighting home events for Golden Bear football, men's soccer, and women's soccer.



## GOLDEN BEAR ATHLETES IN ACTION

Through four quarters of action, Golden Bear football claimed a 31-8 win over Curry College, while two halves of play resulted in 0-1 losses for both men's and women's soccer against Roger Williams University. Additionally, Golden Bear volleyball earned a 3-1 win over Roger Williams at home and field hockey earned a 10-1 victory on the road against Nichols College.

Alumni athletic reunions also took place in addition to alumni games for men's ice hockey, men's lacrosse, men's soccer, and women's volleyball.

Check out the results of all the weekend athletics action at [wnegoldenbears.com](http://wnegoldenbears.com).



## MILESTONE REUNIONS

Weekend festivities also featured a number of alumni gatherings for special milestone years including the 35<sup>th</sup> reunion for the Class of 1987; the 20<sup>th</sup> reunion for the Class of 2002; the 11<sup>th</sup> reunion for the Class of 2011; and the first reunion for the Class of 2021.



## BILLY EVANS '02 MEMORIAL DEDICATION

WNE community members and friends gathered to honor the life and legacy of Billy Evans '02 at a special memorial dedication event in celebration of the impact Billy made on campus, in the community, and through his service to our country.



## U&ME GATHERING & MURAL UNVEILING

Alumni and students from the United and Mutually Equal (U&ME) celebrated recently retired Assistant Dean of Inclusive Excellence Yvonne Bogle '83/G'91 at a special gathering and mural unveiling, and then danced the night away at the annual reunion dinner dance.



# 33<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL SKOOKUM AWARDS CEREMONY HONORS EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS

By Kate Burke

The Western New England University Alumni Association hosted the 33rd Annual Skookum Awards ceremony on Sunday, September 26, inducting 15 exceptional students into an exclusive cohort of outstanding Golden Bear alumni.

The top three candidates, awarded the highest honors of Grand Skookum and Royal Skookum, include:



**Kathryn Henry**, 2022 Grand Skookum, is a Forensic Chemistry major from Palmer MA.



**Brendan Cassidy**, 2022 Royal Skookum, is a first generation student and double major in Criminal Justice and Business and Computer Forensics from Taunton, MA.



**Adell Gadzey**, 2022 Royal Skookum, is an Information Technology major from Colchester, VT.

The following 12 students received Skookum honors:



**Nelson Brunette**, a Biomedical Engineering major from East Longmeadow, MA



**Michaela McCormick**, a Finance major from West Hartford, CT



**Carly Schneider**, an Industrial Engineering major from Fishkill, NY



**Christa-Elizabeth Cicerone**, a Civil Engineering major from West Warwick, RI



**Kyle Nelson**, a Business Analytics and Information Management major from Westfield, MA



**Samantha Sterner**, a Computer Science major from Easton, PA



**Alley Estrella**, a Social Work major from West Tisbury, MA



**Megan Ross**, a Political Science major from Thomaston, CT



**Nick Tartsinis**, a Law and Society major from Colchester, CT



**Ryan Hoover**, a Criminal Justice major from East Bridgewater, MA



**Irakunda Roza**, a double major in Marketing Communication/Advertising and Management and Leadership from Tanzania, Africa



**Angelina White**, a Political Science major from Hunlock Creek, PA

The Skookum Award was established by the Alumni Association in 1989 to recognize the outstanding achievements of students for their commitment and dedication to service through their leadership roles on campus, community service and volunteerism, and participation in athletics and cocurricular programs.

Learn more about the Skookum honorees at [alumni.wne.edu/skookum2023](http://alumni.wne.edu/skookum2023)



# LAW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION HONORS ACCOMPLISHED ALUMNI

By Kate Burke

**The Western New England University School of Law honored four accomplished alumni for their leadership, contributions to law, and commitment to service at the annual Law Alumni Awards Dinner on November 4 at The Log Cabin in Holyoke, MA.**

Hosted by the Law Alumni Association, the event celebrated recipients of the Dean's Alumni Excellence Award, the Distinguished Alumni Award, and the Ascending Alumni Award. President Robert E. Johnson and Interim Dean of the School of Law Beth Cohen shared remarks at the event, and Stefan Sjoberg L'18/G'18 served as Emcee of the event.

Learn more about 2022 award recipients and awards history at [alumni.wne.edu/2022lawhonorees](https://alumni.wne.edu/2022lawhonorees).



## DEAN'S ALUMNI EXCELLENCE AWARD

At the discretion of the Dean of the WNE School of Law, the Dean's Alumni Excellence Award recognizes the professional accomplishments of alumni who have a record of service to the school, community, state, nation, or world that demonstrates the core values of the Western New England University School of Law.

**Hon. Mary Beth Ogulewicz L'89**  
Associate Justice of the District Court



## DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Recognizing alumni who have made significant contributions, not only to the legal profession, but also to society as a whole, the Distinguished Alumni Award honors those who exemplify leadership, ethics, and integrity while appreciating the impact the WNE School of Law has made on their accomplishments and successes.

**Dr. Jodie Roure L'97**  
Associate Professor, CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice; CEO, Hurricane Maria Assistance & Relief Institutional Alliance



## ASCENDING ALUMNI AWARD

Spotlighting the achievements of alumni who graduated from the School of Law within the past 10 years, the Ascending Alumni Award honors graduates who have shown leadership, drive, and potential in their chosen fields and/or in the community.



**Erica Bruno L'15**  
Associate, Law Offices of Joseph D. Bernard



**Ryan McLane L'16**  
Managing Partner, McLane & McLane





# ALUMNI NEWS

By Katie DeBeer

For the latest alumni news from Western New England University, visit. [alumni.wne.edu/news](http://alumni.wne.edu/news).

## HELP WRITE OUR NEXT CHAPTER: REFER A GOLDEN BEAR PROGRAM

Our students, faculty, staff, and alumni are the greatest ambassadors of the WNE spirit—that special sense of Golden Bear pride and community. As someone with strong ties to Western New England University, no one knows better than you what type of student would thrive at WNE.

The Refer a Golden Bear program provides an opportunity to support and contribute to the WNE

community by introducing us to prospective students. When you make a referral, we will personally follow up with your prospective student to answer any questions and encourage them to learn more about WNE. Once a prospective student is referred, one in four choose to apply.

**Thanks for staying connected to WNE and taking this opportunity to help shape our future.**

### DID YOU KNOW?

WNE has nearly 50 majors, 40 minors, and a growing number of accelerated bachelor/master's or law programs.

With 21 varsity sports and more than 70 clubs and organizations, everyone belongs at WNE.

98% of WNE students receive financial aid, with the average student receiving more than \$25,000.

Referred students can waive the application fee by using code "WNEVIP" on the Common App or getting the signature of a WNE graduate on their application.



Learn more and share a referral today at [wne.edu/refer](http://wne.edu/refer)

If you would like to be more involved with Admissions efforts at WNE, consider joining our Alumni in Admissions program. Share your experiences with prospective students in admissions communications, and at college fairs and regional events. To get started, contact **Cory Pfau, Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admissions**, at [cory.pfau@wne.edu](mailto:cory.pfau@wne.edu) or (413) 782-1289.







## MORE THAN 1,200 GOLDEN BEARS SHARE FEEDBACK IN 2022 ALUMNI SURVEY

Over the summer, the WNE Alumni Association invited feedback from 45,000 WNE alumni through the 2022 Alumni Survey. 1,247 respondents completed the survey, sharing insights into their relationship with their alma mater, including attitudes about student and alumni experiences, communication preferences, program performance, loyalty, and more.

Four \$100 VISA gift cards were awarded at random to survey participants. Congratulations to drawing winners: Cass B. '21 (Brooklyn, NY), Don B. L '78 (Normal, IL), Nick S. '15 (Palos Verdes Estates, CA), and Roger S. '70 (Templeton, MA).

Feedback collected through the survey will help shape alumni engagement initiatives in the upcoming year and beyond.

### SURVEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

- **3 in 4 respondents held a positive or very positive opinion of Western New England University currently.** A majority of respondents indicated that the value of their degree was the most important factor in their opinion of the University. Campus buildings and grounds and accomplishment of alumni/students/faculty were also highly influential factors.
- **90% of respondents** promote Western New England University to others.
- The top three ways respondents engage with the University are **networking with other alumni, visiting campus, and attending alumni events.**
- **Email, WNE: The Magazine, and social media are the top three ways respondents stay informed about the University.** 66% rated the University's email communications as either good or excellent, while 62% said the same of the magazine.
- **Class Notes, University and alumni events, and alumni profiles and achievements** were deemed the most important types of content by a majority of alumni.
- In freeform responses, participants noted pride in the school's **academic programs and the campus, lifelong friendships, feeling of community, career preparation, and increased earning potential.**

LEARN MORE AT [ALUMNI.WNE.EDU/SURVEY](https://alumni.wne.edu/survey).

## SAVE THE DATE SPRING 2023 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### January 24

Brew & Gold Social  
Albany, NY

### February 7

A Conversation with the C-Suite  
Springfield, MA

### March 8

WNEgives  
Virtual & Springfield, MA

### March 29

Brew & Gold Social  
Providence, RI

### May 26

54th Annual Alumni Golf Tournament  
Wilbraham, MA

### June 5

2023 Distinguished Alumni Awards  
Springfield, MA

### June 14

Brew & Gold Social  
Springfield, MA

### June 15

Golden Graduates Reunion Luncheon  
Springfield, MA

## LET'S CONNECT!

For the latest alumni news, events in your area, nostalgic #tbt pics, and more, follow **@WNEalumni** on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.





# Class Notes

## STAY CONNECTED

Your classmates want to know about the milestones in your life. Send your news including weddings, career changes, accomplishments, and publications to the Office of Alumni Relations at [alumwne@wne.edu](mailto:alumwne@wne.edu) or visit [alumni.wne.edu/classnotes](http://alumni.wne.edu/classnotes) to submit your note online.

## 1960s

**David Erickson '63** (Mechanical Engineering) recently retired after 50 years of a career practicing corporate and business law in Denver, CO. In that time, David also wrote three books and published more than 70 articles, stories, essays, and historical studies.

## 1970s

**Peter S. Benton '73** (Accounting) is a member of the Board of Directors of Sunshine Village and was recently elected Treasurer of the organization. Sunshine Village is an organization that provides day habilitative services and employment opportunities for mentally challenged adults throughout western Massachusetts.

**Philip Adams '75** (Law Enforcement) was named Grand Marshal for the East Longmeadow, MA, Fourth of July Parade. The Grand Marshal is selected based on their actions and impact on the community.

**Hyman Darling L'77** (JD) was recognized as a *2023 Best Lawyers in America* for his work in elder law at Bacon Wilson, P.C.

**Stanley Light L'77** (JD) is a member of the Pioneer Valley Symphony, where he plays the French horn, and was recognized as a Musical Gem of the Valley for his dedication of time and talent to the orchestra.

**Michael Ligorano L'78** (JD) has returned to Norris McLaughlin, P.A. following a nine-year stint as the General Counsel for the Diocese of Metuchen. Michael previously worked at Norris McLaughlin from 2001-2003.

**The Honorable Michael E. Riley L'78** (JD) was named 2023 "Lawyer of the Year" by *The Best Lawyers in America* for arbitration in the Hartford, CT, area. Judge Riley is a member of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) practice at Connecticut law firm, Pullman & Comley. He retired from the bench in 2017 after 13 years of service as a Connecticut Supreme Court Judge.

## 1980s

**Gary Breton L'81** (JD) has been included in the *2023 Best Lawyers in America* for his work in banking and finance law, at Bacon Wilson, P.C.

**Robert Craig, Jr. '82** (Industrial Engineering) graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), School of Education with a PhD in Education, specializing in Educational Research, Assessment, and Evaluation.

**Gerri Roberts L'82** (JD) has been appointed to her second term on the Board of Trustees at the University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford, CT.

**Irve Goldman L'84** (JD) Chair of Pullman & Comley's Bankruptcy, Creditors' Rights and Restructuring practice, has been named a 2023 "Lawyer of the Year" in the area of litigation—bankruptcy in Stamford in the 2023 edition of *Best Lawyers in America*. This is Irve's second consecutive year earning the prestigious award, with last year's distinction being in bankruptcy and creditor debtor rights/insolvency and reorganizational law.

**Willie A. Deese G'84** (MBA) has been named to President Biden's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. He was also recognized as the newest member of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Board of Trustees.

**Kenneth Albano L'85** (JD) was included in the *2023 Best Lawyers in America* list for his work at Bacon Wilson, P.C. Kenneth specializes in business organizations, including LLCs and partnerships.

**Francis Wright, Jr. L'85** (JD) retired in June 2022 after 23 years in the Somerville (MA) Law Department. For the last 12 years Frank had served as the City Solicitor. From 2005 until 2020 Frank also served as a Melrose City Councilor.

**Lynne Wilson L'86** (JD) was included in the *2023 The Best Lawyers in America* list for her work in real estate law. Lynne is a Partner at ShuffieldLowman in Florida.



**Joseph Aberdale '87** (Mechanical Engineering) has been named Superintendent of Great Barrington's Public Works Department. Joseph oversees the town's highway and wastewater operations, cemeteries, waste transfer facility, and other town infrastructure.

**Deborah Etlinger L'87** (JD) joined the law firm of Neubert, Pepe & Monteith, P.C. as a Principal. Deborah practices in the areas of insurance defense and insurance coverage.



**John Mutchler G'87** (Engineering Management) has joined Robinson+Cole as a Partner in the firm's Intellectual Property and Technology Group. John has a global practice advising clients on their intellectual property rights with specific experience in patent, trademark, and copyright prosecution, as well as patent appeals before the USPTO Patent Trial and Appeal Board, and intellectual property litigation.

**Margaret Mantoni G'89** (MBA) has been elected to the Springfield Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors.

## 1990s

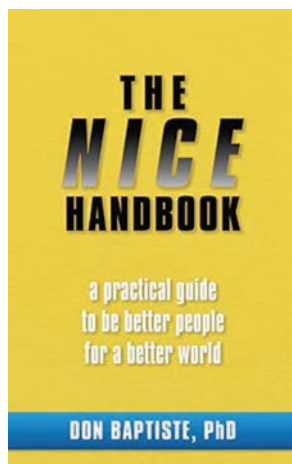
**Scott Aitken '90** (Technical Management) retired from coaching high school boy's lacrosse in Pittsfield, MA, after 30 years. Scott began coaching following his graduation from WNE. Scott was most recently inducted into the Western Massachusetts Chapter of the USA Lacrosse Hall of Fame.

**Karen DeMaio '90** (Accounting) has been promoted to Assistant Vice President, IRA, and Operations Risk Management at bankESB. Karen will be responsible for IRA services, vendor management, business-continuity planning, and insurance for the Hometown Financial Group family of banks, which includes bankESB, bankHometown, and Abington Bank.

**The Honorable Patrick Moriarty L'90** (JD) has been appointed to the Snohomish County Superior Court in Washington state. Patrick fills a newly created judicial seat in the county. He was previously a Court Commissioner for the Snohomish County Superior Court, a position he has held since 2018.

**Kristen Komer '91** (Marketing) was hired as Vice President, Head of Marketing at Foresight Insurance. In this new role, Kristen will oversee marketing and brand initiatives for Foresight, the first insurtech specializing in work comp for core industries such as construction, manufacturing, and agriculture. She will also be overseeing the existing and growing Foresight Marketing team.

**Michael McNulty G'91** (Engineering Management) and his firm McNulty and Associates was acquired by Citrin Cooperman. Michael has joined Citrin Cooperman as a Partner leading the McNulty team under the Government Contracting Specialty Advisory practice.



**Donald Baptiste, Jr. G'92** (MBA) recently published his book *The Nice Handbook: A Practical Guide to be Better People for a Better World*.

**John Rota '92/G'03** (Law Enforcement/Criminal Justice Administration) received a Master in Public Administration from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government as a member of the class of 2022.

**Lisa Wray-Schechterle '92/G'17** (Marketing/Communication) became the Director of Community Benefits for Holyoke Medical Center.

**Andrew Hirshfeld L'93** (JD) stepped down after a 30-year career at the United States Patent Office (USPTO) and joined the law firm Schwegman, Lundberg & Woessner as a Principal.

**Amy LaBelle '93** (English) of LaBelle Winery in New Hampshire, was named 2022 Business Leader of the Year by *Business NH Magazine* and the New Hampshire Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives.

**Sarah Turano-Flores L'93** (JD) was elected Partner at Nutter McClennen & Fish, LLP. She is a member of the firm's Real Estate Department and Land Use practice group. She has been with the firm since 2006.

**Thinh Pho '94** (Mechanical Engineering) was hired by Williams as President and General Manager. Williams is a leading provider of HVAC heating equipment.

**Jeffrey Hastings '95** (Biomedical Engineering) accepted a one-year position for 2022 as the top-ranking member of the Western Massachusetts Melha Shriners. During the year, Jeffrey acted as CEO and Chair of the organization's Board of Directors. He has also helped celebrate the organizations 125th year of community service.

**Allen Falke L'96** (JD) was named 2023 "Lawyer of the Year" by *The Best Lawyers in America* for his work in tax law in Worcester, MA. This is the second year in a row that Allen has been recognized by Best Lawyers. Allen is a member of the Business and Trusts & Estates group at Mirick O'Connell.

**Scott Rogoff L'97** (JD) has been named to 2023 *The Best Lawyers in America* for his work in labor and employment. Scott works for Barclay Damon LLP, out of the Rochester, NY, office.

**Elizabeth Tanner L'97** (JD) has been appointed as Rhode Island's next Secretary of Commerce by the Rhode Island Governor Dan McKee.

**Kevin Mealy G'98** (Criminal Justice Administration) was promoted from Lieutenant to his current position of Deputy Superintendent of the Brookline (MA) Police Department.

**Gina Barry L'99** (JD) has been recognized as a 2023 *Best Lawyers in America* for her work in elder law at Bacon Wilson, P.C.

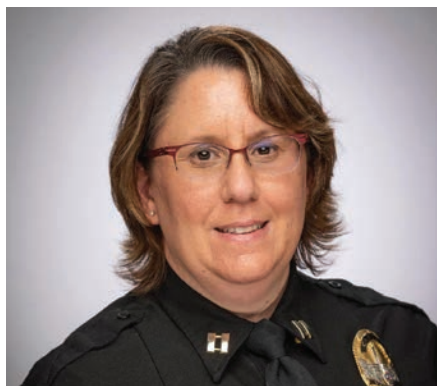
**Cheryl Molloy G'99** (Criminal Justice Administration) has been promoted from Officer to Sergeant within the Brookline (MA) Police Department.



# 2000s

**David Stefanelli G'00** (Criminal Justice Administration) and the Stoneham (MA) Police Department were honored for crisis intervention outreach by the Metro Boston Crisis Intervention Team Training & Technical Assistance Center (MB CIT-TTAC).

**Andre Charbonneau '01** (Accounting) was promoted to Executive Vice President at Adams Community Bank.



**Kristen (Chipoletti) Clark '01** (Criminal Justice) was promoted to Patrol Captain with the Vanderbilt University Police Department in Nashville, TN. November 2022 marked Kristen's 15th year employed with Vanderbilt University, and a total of 18 years in law enforcement.

**Dr. Gianleo Duca '01** (Education-History) has been appointed as the new interim Superintendent at Ballston Spa Central School District for the 2022-23 school year. Gianleo has been with the Ballston Spa district since 2005, serving as an Assistant Principal and Interim Principal before being appointed to Principal in 2018.

**Thomas Keleher '01** (Law Enforcement) is the new Deputy Chief of Operations for the Canton (MA) Police Department.

**Nicholas Delmolino '02** (Sociology) has joined Berkshire Community College as Executive Director of Institutional Advancement.

**Andrew Lawendowski L'02** (JD) is now a partner at Morrison Mahoney, LLP. Andrew specializes in professional malpractice and general liability, with a focus on dental and medical malpractice.

**Timothy Netkovick L'02** (JD) has joined Bacon Wilson, P.C. He is joining as a member of the firm's Employment Law Practice group.

**Christopher Wuorinen '02** (Sport Management) joined TimelyMD as their Director of Strategic Partnerships. In this new role, Christopher will be dedicated to removing barriers and increasing access to care for college students.

**Christina Anstett L'03** (JD) was appointed to Senior ERISA Council at Smart, a leading global retirement technology provider. Christina has 27 years of ERISA retirement plan industry experience.

**Adam Moreau '03/G'09** (Marketing/MBA) has joined Marketing Doctor, Inc., as part of their management team. Marketing Doctor, Inc., is one of the fastest growing media planning and buying agencies in the world.

**Laurie Borrelli G'04** (Criminal Justice Administration) was promoted to Sergeant in the Methuen (MA) Police Department. Laurie began her career in the Methuen Police Department in 1995.

**Tahirah Amatul-Wadud L'05** (JD) was the keynote speaker at The New England Learning Center for Women in Transition's annual fundraiser and celebration in April 2022. Tahirah was recognized for her legal work and advocacy.

**The Honorable Jason Bergevin L'05** (JD) was appointed by Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts as District Court Judge in the Fifth Judicial District. Jason has served as an Assistant Attorney General in the Criminal Bureau of the Nebraska Attorney General's Office since 2015.

**Allison McKeen L'05** (JD) and **Ryan McKeen L'05** (JD) own Connecticut Trial Firm, LLC which was named by *Hartford Business Journal* as Connecticut's top family business with under 25 employees.

**Timothy McMahon L'06** (JD) joined Bond, Schoeneck & King's litigation department in their Syracuse, NY, office as Senior Counsel.

**David Wright '06** (Political Science) was named Assistant Principal of the Year in the state of New York by the National Association of Elementary School Principals. David has recently accepted the position of Principal at Pearl River Middle School.

**Mary Gallant-Cote L'07** (JD) was selected by MA Governor Charlie Baker to serve as Clerk Magistrate of the Berkshire Juvenile Court. Mary is a Springfield-based Assistant Regional Legal Counsel for the Department of Children and Families.

**Chelsea Prizio '08** (Accounting) has been promoted to Vice President, Credit Manager at Cornerstone Bank. Chelsea began her career in 2006 as a part-time teller while attending WNE and has worked her way up through the deposit operations and commercial credit departments.

**Rebecca Michaels L'09** (JD) is a Northwestern Assistant District Attorney and was honored with the Massachusetts Bar Association's Access to Justice Prosecutor Award. This award is given to state and federal prosecutors for distinguished efforts in public service activities and a commitment to justice.

**Jared Pabis '09** (General Business) was inducted into the Western Massachusetts Chapter of the USA Lacrosse Hall of Fame earlier this year.

**Jonathan Proulx '09** (General Biology) is the newest member of the New England Cancer Specialists (NECS) medical team.

# 2010s

**Ashley LaRocque '10** (Marketing Communication/Advertising) was promoted to Director of Client Services within the regional marketing, advertising and public relations agency of Market Mentors. Ashley has been with Market Mentors for six years.

**Michael Monti '10/G'12** (Integrated Liberal Studies/MBA) has been named the Assistant General Manager, Director of Player Development, and Assistant Coach of the Omaha Lancers Hockey Club.

**Bill Garcia '12** (Finance) joined Coastal Bridge Advisors in Westport, CT, as an Operations Strategy Associate.

**Angelina Stafford L'12** (JD) has been elected as a new shareholder at Doherty, Wallace, Pillsbury and Murphy P.C. Angelina, who was previously an Associate Attorney at DWPM, concentrates her practice on trust and estate matters, including estate and tax planning, estate and trust administration, business succession planning, and probate litigation.

**Lan Kantany L'13** (JD) was promoted to Chief Counsel of the Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations (DLR) in May 2022. Lan has been working for the DLR for the past two years as a Hearing Officer, Mediator, and Arbitrator.



**Laura Penney L'13** (JD) has been recognized as a 2023 *The Best Lawyers in America: Ones to Watch* in the areas of commercial litigation, insurance law, and personal injury litigation. Laura is a Partner at Fitzpatrick, Lentz & Bubba, P.C. in Connecticut.



**Emilie Wallace '13** (Sport Management) started her fifth year as a high school soccer official this past fall. Emilie began this season as the first female on the executive board serving as Vice President of the Western Massachusetts Soccer Officials Association (WMSOA).

**Rochelle Duyan L'14** (JD) has joined Suisman Shapiro Attorneys at Law as an Associate. Rochelle will concentrate on probate, estates, and wills.

**Angelia Nystrom LLM'14** (Estate Planning & Elder Law) was recently installed as the 41st Chair of the Tennessee Bar Foundation. Angelia was first elected to the Board in 2015, serving as an East Tennessee Trustee and Secretary.

**Laura Fisher L'15** (JD) has been named Executive Director of the nonprofit community organization Just Roots in Greenfield, MA. Just Roots manages a community farm and community gardens on 61 acres of protected town farmland and operates one of the highest Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-enrolled community supported agriculture programs in Massachusetts.

**Daniel McKellick L'14** (JD) was recognized by *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch in America* for his high-caliber work in real estate law with Bacon Wilson, P.C.

**Lenore Montanaro L'15** (JD) was honored by *Providence Business News* for its *Top 40 Under Forty* 2022 Award. Lenore was also selected as a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation (ABF). Members are nominated by their peers and selected by the ABF Board.

**Jordan Freeman L'16** (JD) is an Associate at Vaughan Baio, a mid-sized firm based out of Philadelphia, PA.

**Bradley Kneeland L'16** (JD) has been appointed the role of Standing Master for the State of Montana's Judicial Branch, in Billings, MT. Previously, Bradley served as a Domestic Violence Prosecutor with the Billings City Attorney's Office.

**Nicole Petersen '16** (Business Administration) has joined Mack Prototype as a Project Manager, supporting new and existing accounts across the company's broad service offerings. Nicole brings 20 years of customer and sales support experience to this new role.

**Alan Sincic G'16** (MFA) was recently awarded the 2022 Thomas Wolfe Fiction Prize for his entry "God of the Gator," an excerpt from his unpublished novel titled *The Slapjack*, an 84,000-word depression-era novel set in the hinterlands of Florida. Over the past two years, several short stories from *The Slapjack* have won or placed in contests here and abroad. For details, go to [alansincic.com](http://alansincic.com).

**Lauren Sweeney '16** (English) started a new position as a Library Media Specialist at Naramake Elementary School in the Norwalk Public School District, in Norwalk, CT. Lauren was previously the Children's Services Librarian at the Fairfield Public Library for three years.

**Kylie Brown L'17** (JD) joined The Royal Law Firm. Prior to joining The Royal Law Firm, Kylie worked as a Law Clerk of Court at the Connecticut Superior Court in Hartford, Rockville, and New Britain.

**Payton North '17/G'20** (Communication/Public Relations) has been promoted to Executive Editor at Reminder Publishing. In this new role, Payton oversees the editorial department, managing 12 weekly newspapers, one daily newspaper, and two monthly magazines.

**Abigail (Helfrich) Roy '17** (English) accepted a position as the Digital Marketing Specialist at the digital and video marketing agency Forge Apollo in Newton Square, PA.

**Rebecca (Freitag) Miranda '18** (Psychology) received her Master of Elementary Education from Lesley University in 2019 and recently started teaching fourth grade in the Westfield Public School District in Massachusetts.

**Erika Sheinhait '18/G'19** (Sport Management/MBA) was promoted to Director of Communications for the Bay State Games organization, based out of Woburn, MA. Erika previously held the position of Communications Coordinator.

**Veronice Santana L'19** (JD) was recognized as part of the Class of 2022 for *40 Under Forty* from *BusinessWest*. Veronice is an Assistant District Attorney in the Northwestern District Attorney's Office and is also an adjunct professor at Bay Path University and WNE's School of Law.

## 2020s

**Shirley Arriaga G'20** (Law) was elected to the 8th Hampden District State Representative.

**Kesandra Husselbeck '20** (Sport Management) is the Operations Coordinator for the Philadelphia Union Academy, a professional soccer academy that competes in the MLS Next.

**Caitlyn Kunz '21** (Communication) accepted a position at the University of New Hampshire as a Marketing and Promotion Specialist.

**Carli Ross L'21** (JD) joined Raipher, P.C. in Springfield, MA, as a personal injury and civil litigation attorney.

**Nicole Acevedo '22** (Creative Writing) joined the Eastern States Exposition as Communications and Social Media Manager. Nicole is responsible for print publications and projects, content creation, and maintaining a positive presence across the digital spectrum.

**Meaghan Collins L'22** (JD) joined Kahan Kerensky Capossela, LLP, as a Law Clerk.

**Bailey Devine-Scott '22** was signed to the Calgary Stampeders as a defensive back in the Canadian Football League (CFL) after completing an illustrious athletic career at WNE.

**Peter Picknelly '22** (Management and Leadership) has been named Director of Safety & Security for the Peter Pan Bus Lines. Peter was previously working in customer care and operations within the company.

## SEE MORE ONLINE

For more Class Notes and our *In Memoriam* listing of alumni and community members who have recently passed away, view the online version of *WNE: The Magazine* at [magazine.wne.edu](http://magazine.wne.edu).



## Marriages



**Nicole Veronesi '20 and Jake Petrozza '20**, November 5, 2021 in Berlin, CT



**Eric Sorenson '14 and Dr. Julia Bernas PharmD'17/G'17**, August 28, 2022 in Framingham, MA



**Dr. Allissa Long '17/PharmD'19 and Michael Small '17/L'19**, May 21, 2022 in Moodus, CT



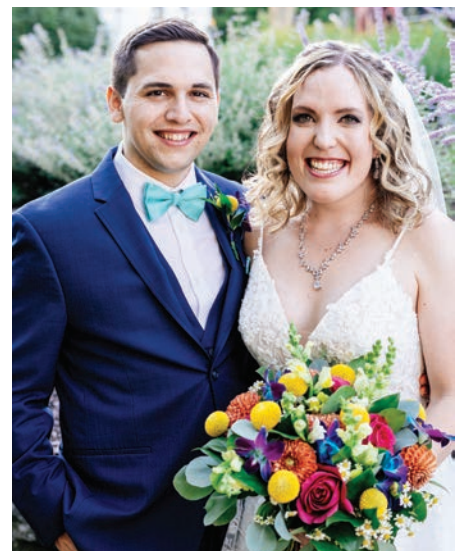
**Dr. Christina Andros '15/PharmD'17/G'17 and Kevin Hannon**, May 28, 2022 in Kohler, WI



**Kyrstyn Petrucelli '10 and Kyle Stewart '10**, June 4, 2022 in Hampton, CT



**Matthew Koslowski '19 and Monica Koslowski**, July 16, 2022 in Stafford Springs, CT



**Rebecca Freitag '18 and Luke Miranda**, August 6, 2022 in Sturbridge, MA



## Baby Golden Bears



Lena Christine, December 27, 2021 to **Emily Lucarelli '21** and Josh MacDonald



Charlotte Lynne, May 17, 2022 to **Cassandra (Deal) Weston '14/G'16** and Gregory Weston



Quinn Devyn, June 2, 2022 to **Emily (Miller) Kimberly '14/G'15** and Jamison Kimberly



Ryan Xavier, April 6, 2022 to **Trish (Wileczek) Geckle '10/G'12** and **Erich Geckle '10**



Sylvie Grace, May 27, 2022 to **Nicole (Prosperi) Kozlik '16** and **Adam Kozlik '17**



Cooper Wells, August 2, 2022 to **Marisa (Harris) Anthonis '13** and **Matthew Anthonis '14**



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[thefund@wne.edu](mailto:thefund@wne.edu) or (413) 782-1335.







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The text "WNE.EDU" in a white, sans-serif font, enclosed within a dotted rectangular border. The background of the entire page is a photograph of a campus scene with trees in autumn foliage, a black lamppost, and a purple banner that reads "WE ARE THE FUTURE of Humanity".

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