



Magazine

SUMMER 2023

The Wellness Issue



Summer '23

10 Practice with Purpose

The University's student-run pro bono occupational therapy center to include pediatric clients, further enhancing community healthcare.

12 Promoting a Culture of Care

WNE faculty and staff become certified in a new first aid approach.

16 Embracing a Healthy Lifestyle

Dr. Melissa Mattison underscores the difference between health and wellness, emphasizing the significance of a healthy lifestyle in shaping future practitioners at WNE University.

20 Commencement 2023: Messages of Leadership, Empathy, and Resilience

Empowering speeches inspire graduates with resilience and a drive for positive change.

26 Byrnes Guillaume L'06 Pays it Forward

By establishing an endowed scholarship, Byrnes aims to create a lasting legacy that enables diverse perspectives and experiences while paving the way for future lawyers.



Happy Birthday, Bear!

Bear the Comfort Dog joined the WNE Department of Public Safety in July 2022 and serves as the University's first comfort dog. Read about Bear on page 15.

IN EVERY ISSUE

4 CAMPUS NEWS

Stay updated on the latest happenings and events on campus.

8 ATHLETICS RECAP

Catch up on the recent achievements and highlights from the University's athletic teams.

28 ALUMNI NEWS

Discover the latest accomplishments and updates from Golden Bear alumni.

32 CLASS NOTES

What have your classmates been up to? Find out in Class Notes.

WNE

Magazine

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

PRESIDENT
Robert E. Johnson

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADVANCEMENT
Beverly J. Dwight

VICE PRESIDENT FOR MARKETING AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Mercedes Maskalik

EDITOR
Brittney Mihalich

CONTRIBUTORS
Judith Curran
Patricia Gagnon
Briana Kubik '17
Alex Lyman '12/G'16
Mercedes Maskalik

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION
Mercedes Maskalik
Matthew Reilly

DIGITAL DESIGN
Shaun McGrady '02/G'09
Ed O'Connell
Matthew Reilly
Becky Turner '16/G'18

FRONT COVER ILLUSTRATION
Jillian Goeler

PRINTER
AM Lithography

PHOTOGRAPHY
Luke Haughwout
Laura McGrady
Chris Marion
Matthew Reilly

EDITORIAL OFFICES
Magazine of Western New England University
Office of Alumni Relations
Western New England University
1215 Wilbraham Road
Springfield, MA 01119-2684
(413) 796-2240
alumwne@wne.edu

Address and email changes should be sent to the Office of Alumni Relations at alumwne@wne.edu.

Every effort has been made to contact copyright holders of any material reprinted in this magazine. Any omissions will be corrected in subsequent issues if notice is given to the Office of Alumni Relations, Western New England University. The University reserves the right to make editorial changes prior to publication.

Western New England University is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in education and employment. The University does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, national origin, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, genetics or disability in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Associate Vice President of Human Resources, Western New England University, 1215 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA 01119-2684. Inquiries concerning the application of nondiscrimination policies may also be referred to the Regional Director, Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, J.W. McCormack.

HOME COMING

2023

WESTERN NEW ENGLAND UNIVERSITY



SAVE THE DATE FOR HOMECOMING: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21

Mark your calendars, break out your favorite blue and gold apparel, and join the Western New England University community for Homecoming on Saturday, October 21! Enjoy a day full of fun for everyone, from children's activities and food trucks, to reunions and your favorite teams fighting for the win! Homecoming is the best weekend to celebrate your Golden Bear spirit, reconnect with friends, and see how the WNE campus has grown. Once a Golden Bear, always a Golden Bear.

LET'S CONNECT!

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



Wellness in Action

BY ROBERT E. JOHNSON

As president of Western New England University, I am often asked, “what keeps me up at night?”

The answer revolves around mental well-being and how I can ensure members of our campus community have the tools to succeed and thrive.

My tenure began in the midst of a global pandemic, and one of my top priorities was providing mental and physical health resources for students, faculty, and staff. This continues to be a priority today.

As you'll read in this issue, one of the ways we do this is through our Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) program. Much like you would be trained to administer CPR to an individual whose heart stops beating, MHFA is a certification program that equips individuals with the ability to identify mental health crises, such as depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and suicide. It also provides participants with essential skills to offer initial support and guide individuals in crisis to professional help when necessary.

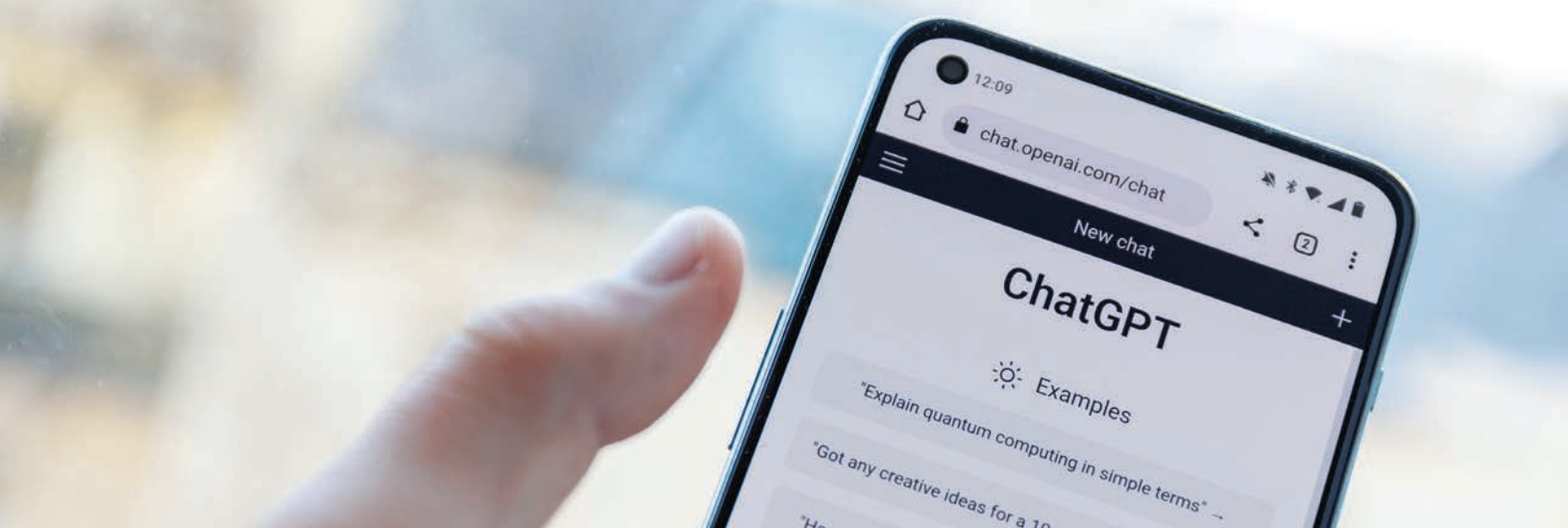


Under the leadership of Dr. Kam Capoccia, clinical professor of community care at WNE's College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, I am proud that more than 200 members of the campus community are now trained in this important and lifesaving skill.

The MHFA program, along with our 24/7 mental health crisis hotline, constantly-evolving counseling services available to meet students' needs, and even our campus comfort dog, Bear, proves that we are deeply committed to taking the mental health of our community seriously.

At WNE, we empower students with an agile-mind education in preparation for the future of work. By offering opportunities for personal exploration and growth, we help students discover their “why” and find their place in the world. If they hit mental health roadblocks, we provide the support to get back on track.

WNE is dedicated to continuing conversations with the campus community and growing our resources. Together, we will ensure that no one is left behind and everyone has the ability to succeed in all aspects of their life.



CAMPUS NEWS

For the latest news from Western New England University, visit wne.edu/news.

WNE PROFESSOR OF BIOLOGY THOMAS MENNELLA ARGUES AGAINST CHATGPT BAN IN CLASSROOMS



Western New England University Associate Professor of Biology Thomas Mennella has published an article defending the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in classrooms, titled "Why Banning ChatGPT in Class is a Mistake." The article, which appears in *Campus Technology*, suggests that banning AI in the classroom would be a disservice to students, as it could be a valuable learning tool for facilitating engagement and the understanding of complex concepts.

Mennella acknowledges the concerns of some educators who worry that AI, specifically ChatGPT, could be used for plagiarism or to undermine critical thinking. However, he argues that with proper guidance, AI can be used to enhance students' abilities to think critically and learn more effectively.

In the article, Mennella highlights that ChatGPT's natural language processing capabilities could help students comprehend course materials by simplifying complex concepts. Additionally, ChatGPT could facilitate classroom discussions and provide personalized feedback to students.

Mennella also emphasizes the importance of teaching students how to edit, fact-check, and analyze AI-generated content. He suggests that educators should model, coach, and teach these skills, as they will be essential for the next generation. With proper guidance, AI can be a valuable tool for facilitating engagement, understanding, and critical thinking among students.



ZELDA B. HARRIS APPOINTED NEW DEAN OF SCHOOL OF LAW

Zelda B. Harris, currently the director of the Dan K. Webb Center for Advocacy and Mary Ann G. McMorrow Professor of Law at Loyola University Chicago School of Law, has been appointed as the new incoming dean of the Western New England University School of Law.

For more than a decade, Harris has been responsible for overseeing all aspects of the Loyola University Chicago Law School's Center for Advocacy, including curriculum development for both the J.D. certificate and L.L.M. degree

programs in advocacy. Under her leadership, the School of Law's trial advocacy program became nationally ranked.

"Zelda's experience in academic leadership, clinical legal education, and advocacy, along with her commitment to social justice and anti-racism, make her an ideal fit for Western New England University," said WNE Provost Maria Toyoda. "We are thrilled to welcome her to our community and look forward to her leadership as the new dean of the Western New England University School of Law."



GREGORY MATTHEWS NAMED VICE PRESIDENT FOR ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

Gregory Matthews has been appointed vice president of enrollment management at Western New England University. He comes to WNE from Norwich University, where he served as vice president of enrollment management.

Matthews has more than 30 years of experience in higher education admissions and over 15 years in senior leadership positions. His responsibilities include leading enrollment management initiatives, including admissions, recruitment, and financial aid, and he is a key

member of the senior management team at WNE. Matthews is committed to promoting a safe, inclusive, and engaging campus environment for WNE students.

"We are thrilled to welcome Gregory to our team," said WNE President Robert E. Johnson. "He brings tremendous experience and insight to the position, and I am sure he will be an invaluable asset to our University. We look forward to making WNE a leader in higher education."



MARGARET BOYLE NAMED ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT FOR GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Margaret L. Boyle, former communications director for U.S. Congressman Richard E. Neal, has been named assistant vice president for governmental affairs and public relations at Western New England University.

Boyle brings extensive experience in political and external communication to her new role, where she will promote the University's interests and work to support its continued growth and success. Boyle is a proud lifelong resident of Springfield, and her father, the late William J. Boyle, received degrees from WNE. She is excited to continue his legacy on campus as the University enters its second century.

"Margaret has an exemplary reputation for integrity and performance here in Springfield, and across the Commonwealth," said Vice President for Marketing and External Affairs Mercedes Maskalik. "She is a welcome addition to the Marketing & External Affairs team, and I am confident she will skillfully represent the University's interests in her new role."



DR. TIM VERCELLOTTI HONORED FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Dr. Tim Vercellotti has been awarded the prestigious 2023 Excellence in Teaching Award at Western New England University.

As a professor of political science and director of the University's Polling Institute and London Summer Program, Vercellotti's teaching excellence and advising abilities have been recognized by students, faculty, and administrators.

Vercellotti's focus areas span survey research, media and politics, and political behavior. His current projects aim to understand public school assessments in the US, youth political participation

in the US and Britain, and changing norms of political discourse in the British House of Commons.

His students have praised him for creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment, being kind and compassionate, and providing structure during challenging times, such as the pandemic. Vercellotti's dedication to his students has left a lasting impact on them, and his knowledge, flexibility, and exceptional feedback make him a beloved and respected member of the Western New England University community.



ASHLEY RANDLE L'14 BECOMES FIRST FEMALE COMMISSIONER OF DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Western New England University celebrates the appointment of alumna Ashley Randle as commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR). A WNE University School of Law graduate in 2014, Randle will be the first woman to lead the Department, overseeing various programs and services to support Massachusetts's agricultural industry.

Randle's appointment comes after her tenure as the member services director for Northeast Dairy Producers Association, Inc. and the marketing specialist/special projects coordinator at the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation,

and Forestry. In her new role, Randle plans to build a more equitable, robust, and resilient local food system that supports Massachusetts farmers, fishers, and stakeholders.

"My legal education at Western New England University laid the foundation for a career in public service through a dynamic curriculum, externship opportunities, and professors who remain valued mentors to this day," said Randle.

WNE President Robert E. Johnson expressed confidence in Randle, stating that her environmental policy and law expertise, combined

with her passion for supporting sustainable agriculture, make her the ideal choice for this critical leadership position.

WNE is proud to congratulate Randle on this well-deserved appointment, and the University community looks forward to following her leadership and accomplishments in this significant role.

LAW GRANT FOR STUDENTS STUDYING FOR THE BAR

The Western New England University School of Law has received a \$150,000 grant from AccessLex Institute to enhance the School's efforts to improve bar passage rates and promote student success. AccessLex Institute is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting law students and institutions in their academic and professional goals.

The grant will provide a cost-of-living stipend to a small number of students to alleviate their need to work during the summer bar preparation study period.

Additionally, the grant will provide a 10-week intensive preparation program that includes a customized study plan, accountability coaches, practice tests, and wellness check-ins.

The program aims to equip students with the resources and support they need to overcome the final hurdle of entry into the legal profession: the bar exam.





RICCARDO CLEMENTE '20 RECOGNIZED GLOBALLY AS “TOP TALENT” FOR INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING

Western New England University graduate student Riccardo Clemente '20 has been recognized as part of the Top 10 Student Talent for Industrial Engineering on Nova: Global Top Talent Network for the Italy 2022 Student List.

Nova is a merit-based access network where the top 3 percent of high-potential professionals and students can connect, develop personally, and accelerate their careers through mentorship

and educational fellowship programs. The 13,000-member network is present in more than 72 countries. Access to the network community is granted with nomination by a Nova member and rigorous assessment of the candidate's professional and personal growth potential.

Clemente is a working toward his PhD in Engineering Management.

BRIGHT NIGHTS BALL SPONSOR

Western New England University has been announced as the sponsor of the 2023 City of Bright Nights Ball, the largest annual fundraiser organized by non-profit organization, the Spirit of Springfield. The event, which features the theme “Gilded Glamour,” will bring together business and community leaders of greater Springfield to celebrate and support the mission of the Spirit

of Springfield with a night of gourmet dishes, auctions, and dancing on November 11. The Spirit of Springfield aims to promote unity and civic pride in the Springfield community. Western New England University and its students have maintained active involvement in the event since its inception in 1996.

“It is an exciting time for the city of Springfield, it is an exciting time for Western New England University. The stars have aligned and as we enter into our second century at WNE, this is a great opportunity for all of us to come together for a better community,” President Johnson explained.





WNE ATHLETICS SEASON IN REVIEW

The Western New England University Athletics Department soared to new heights over the 2022-2023 seasons, seeing a first-time champion, an inaugural season, and countless memories that will hold a place in the Western New England athletic record books.

Fall 2022 Season

The **WNE women's soccer** team took their program to new heights after capturing their first ever Commonwealth Coast Conference (CCC) Championship, defeating the University of New England by a final score of 3-0. The Golden Bears finished the regular season with an 11-5-1 record, including a 6-2-1 mark in CCC play, garnering their first ever top seed in the league's tournament. Western New England would sweep their way through Wentworth Institute of Technology (3-0), Roger Williams University (2-2, 7-6 PKs) and UNE to capture the program's first CCC Championship. The talented blue and gold squad, led by seventh-year Head Coach Kristin Hensinger '07, moved to the NCAA Division III Women's Soccer Championships and defeated York College (Pa.) in the opening round of the championships by a final score of 2-0, winning the program's first NCAA Tournament game. WNE would wrap up their 2022 season with a 14-6-2 mark, winning their most games in a season since 2002.

WNE field hockey put together their second straight 11-win season, securing together back-to-back double-digit wins in a season for the first time since 2005 and 2006. WNE closed the regular season by winning their final five games by a 23-2 scoring margin. Graduate student Taylor Klesyk (Hamden, Conn.) entered her name into the WNE field hockey record books, becoming the fifth Golden Bear to record 100 career points and the first to do it since the 2017 season. Klesyk now holds records seven different statistical categories.

WNE football captured their 11th President's Cup in program history, defeating Westfield State University 38-14, grabbing their 20th all-time win over the Owls. In the four victories on the season that the Golden Bears collected, WNE would outscore their opponents 149-36, dominating on both sides of the football.

Winter 2022-2023 Season

WNE women's wrestling competed in their inaugural season during the winter of 2022-2023. WNE women's wrestling marked the 21st varsity sport for Western New England and 11th women's sport to compete. The Golden Bears opened their season on November 3, 2022, facing 14th-ranked East Stroudsburg University. WNE saw Kendall Branchaud (San Leandro, Calif.) win the first match in WNE women's wrestling history, winning the 143 lb. match. The Golden Bears would win their first match in their program history on January 11, 2023, defeating Delaware Valley University by a final score of 30-9.

The **WNE men's basketball** team reached the 20-win plateau for the first time since 2006 in 2022-2023 and made it to their first ever CCC Championship game in the program's history, finishing the season 21-7. WNE was led by sophomore Jake Harrison (South Boston, Mass.), who was named Commonwealth Coast Conference Player of the Year, All-CCC First Team, D3hoops.com All-Region II First Team, and National Association of Basketball Coaches All-American Second Team, becoming the first All-American in WNE men's basketball history.

WNE women's ice hockey recorded 15 wins in just their second season of competition. The Golden Bears collected countless records and program bests and grabbed ten wins in conference play, earning the three seed in the CCC playoffs, the best mark of their two seasons of varsity play. Two Golden Bears claimed their first ever All-CCC Awards, as Maddie Pope (Plantation, Fla.) and Rieleigh Jessie-Gerelli (Cranton-on-Hudson, N.Y.) both earned First Team All-CCC honors while Pope collected CCC Rookie of the Year and Jessie-Gerelli CCC Goaltender of the Year.

Spring 2023

WNE men's lacrosse captured their second straight CCC Championship, posting a 12-9 record on the season. Senior Dylan Hanley (New Fairfield, Conn.) led the Golden Bears on the season with 122 points, which sits tied for second in NCAA Division III men's lacrosse. Hanley's career year earned him All-CCC First Team, USA Lacrosse Magazine Honorable Mention All-American, NEILA All-New England Second Team, and USILA Division III Honorable Mention All-American. Hanley broke the WNE men's lacrosse single season points record as well as single season assists record. Teammate Mike Bannon (Edmond, Okla.) collected 74 points on the season, marking 280 points in his illustrious five-year career, breaking a near 20-year-old record in the program's history. WNE captured their 10th CCC Championship in program history, defeating Endicott College for the ninth time.

WNE softball was involved in their third straight CCC championship series this season, finishing with 28 wins on the year for the second consecutive season. Senior Kailey Carrano (West Haven, Conn.) collected a single-season record 14 home runs on the season, totaling 28 total home runs in her four-year career, a career record in the program. Graduate student Dina DiBlasio (Norwalk, Conn.) broke an over 30-year career record in batting average, hitting .404 in her five years with the Golden Bears.

WNE baseball's CJ Willis (Auburn, Mass.) broke the program's career home run record as a sophomore, hitting 13 more home runs to top his 14 home runs from a season ago, totaling 27 home runs over his two years with the Golden Bears. WNE tallied 25 wins on the season, their most since the 2018 season. 🐾





Practice with Purpose

The Intersection of Student Learning and
Community Wellness

By Judith Curran

For the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences a transformative initiative is quietly evolving the landscape of community health-care. Western New England University's new Bear Paw Center, a student-run pro bono occupational therapy center has emerged on the university campus.

“The Bear Paw Center has been a great resource for the WNE community and for our local community members. It has provided them with access to high-quality occupational therapy services at no cost and it all takes place right here on campus,” said Chair and Program Director of the Department of Occupational Therapy Dr. Brittany Adams.

Since its inception in the fall of 2022, the Bear Paw Center has been a beacon of wellness in the WNE community. It has delivered quality occupational therapy services to a diverse roster of individuals, including WNE’s adult students, staff, and faculty members, not to mention the residents of the surrounding area. The center’s strength resides in its dual-purpose mission, one that aligns the provision of essential community services with experiential learning opportunities for its students.

An acronym embodying its mission, Bear Paw stands for “Bringing Equity Accessibility and Rehabilitation to People Achieving Wellness.” The team behind this venture comprises students pursuing an Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD), working under the discerning supervision of licensed occupational therapists. The center exists not only as a haven of healing, but also as a training ground for burgeoning healthcare leaders.

Offering an array of services, the Bear Paw Center extends comprehensive evaluations, interventions, and consultation services for individuals grappling with an assortment of medical conditions, developmental disabilities, and mental health needs. It’s a mission that has, in the words of Adams, “received overwhelming support from the community.”

WNE’s OTD curriculum ensures that every student garners hands-on experience across an impressive range of at least seven different practice settings. The Bear Paw Center, through real-world interactions with clients, contributes to these experiences. The goal is clear: to sculpt students into competent, well-rounded practitioners ready to navigate the complexities of their field.

Energized by the community’s embrace and the tangible impact made so far, the Bear Paw Center is now poised to expand its sphere of influence, and stretch its reach further into the fabric of the local community. This summer, the center intends to extend its beneficial services to a new demographic: pediatric clients. Emily Labrie, an OTD student and an integral part of the clinic, shares the collective enthusiasm: “We are excited to offer our services to those in need from the broader community.” A key facet of this expansion involves cultivating relationships with potential community partners and formulating plans to address the needs of underserved populations and those with limited or no insurance coverage.

As the Bear Paw Center continues to expand its horizons, its commitment to practical, purposeful, and transformative healthcare remains at its core. “We are committed to promoting health and wellness in our community,” said Adams. “Our students are passionate about occupational therapy, and we are proud to support them in their efforts to make a positive impact.” 🐾





Promoting a Culture of Care

Faculty and Staff Engage in Mental Health Training

What would you do if you saw someone having a mental health crisis right in front of you? Could you help them?

That's what the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) program at Western New England University is trying to do—equip people with the skills and training to provide initial help to someone experiencing a mental health crisis or substance abuse problem.

MHFA allows certified individuals to identify, understand, and respond to someone going through a crisis. Proponents of the movement aspire for MHFA to be as normalized as basic first aid. The same way you might automatically give someone CPR when they aren't breathing or use the Heimlich maneuver on a choking person, you would also know to provide MHFA to someone in crisis.

Answering the Call for Aid

MHFA began at WNE in 2019 when Clinical Professor of Community Care, Dr. Kam Capoccia became the first employee to complete training. In 2020, Capoccia became an instructor as a way to help her students manage their mental health.



By Alex Lyman '12/G'16

“My ‘why’ started in the classroom with our pharmacy students,” said Capoccia. “I teach a particular lesson about how to assess patients and how to screen for depression. During that week in class, I encourage them to reach out if they need support. Over the last several years, more and more students have been asking for help with their mental health challenges. So, when the Mental Health First Aid certification came about, I immediately signed up and became a mental health first aid provider.”

In subsequent years, more than 300 students, faculty, and staff have been certified as mental health first aiders. However, the need to support students

and the campus community and their mental well-being has only grown in importance since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, 50 percent of young adults (ages 18–24) reported anxiety and depression symptoms in 2023, making them more likely than older adults to experience mental health symptoms.

Having seen the value of MHFA firsthand, Capoccia teamed up with Vice President for Student Affairs Kristine Goodwin, and a movement was born to not only support MHFA training and certification on campus, but also educate their own coalition of trainers.

WNE's flagship MHFA program seeks to be a sustainable initiative that will cultivate and certify MHFA trainers, who, in turn, will run their own MHFA courses and train community members. This multiplying effect will offer more access to help for those in distress while reducing negative attitudes about mental illness and substance abuse.



"The program takes the fear and hesitation out of starting conversations about mental health and substance-use problems by improving understanding and providing an action plan that teaches people to safely and responsibly identify and help someone," said Vice President Goodwin. "When more people are equipped with the tools to start a dialogue, more people can get the help they need."

In January 2023, thanks to funding from the Office of the President, 15 faculty and staff members, including President Robert E. Johnson, were certified as instructors to teach MHFA to the campus community.

"Mental health and access to mental health assistance has always been of utmost importance on college campuses, but the pandemic heightened the need. I am a proud mental health first aid trainer, and my immediate involvement demonstrates WNE's dedication to providing adequate resources on campus," said President Johnson. "We must all work together to destigmatize mental health by having conversations, listening to what the campus community needs, and ensuring that we have the tools in place to meet the challenge."

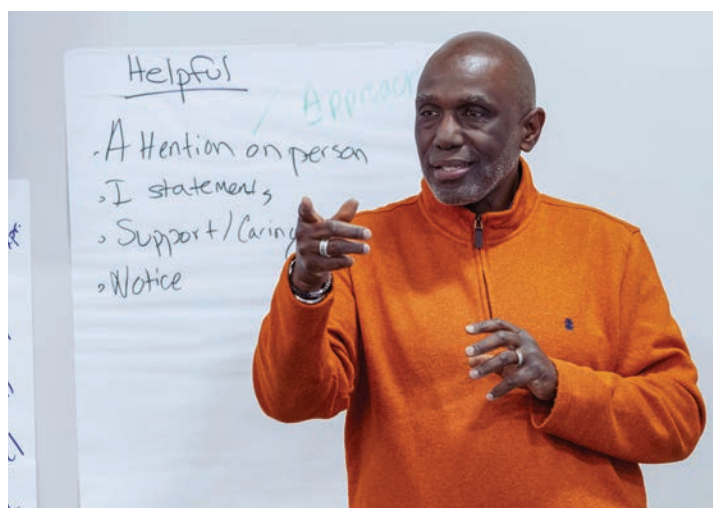
Creating a Culture of Mental Health Care on Campus

Now that MHFA instructors are in place, their mission is to conduct at least three certification programs each year, with the overall goal of having 35–50 percent of the campus community certified in mental health first aid in the coming years.

This target number isn't arbitrary; in fact, studies suggest that a community needs a minimum of 25 percent of its population to be committed to a cultural shift for it to be successful. A new study from the University of Pennsylvania suggests that if at least 25 percent of a community's population is committed to changing what is considered the social norm, the group will see a shift, with the majority adopting the new behavioral norm introduced by the minority.

The MHFA program plans for this shift to have both immediate and far-reaching effects, from benefitting wellness on campus now to expanding its reach to the greater Springfield community and empowering the average person to help those in distress.

"Western New England is embracing the mental health of our community, whether that be faculty, staff, students, parents, or our local collaborators. Instructing our mental health first aid trainers and getting our community mental-health-first-aid-certified has already had such an amazing impact. I am proud we are leading this front in the Springfield community and providing support and awareness," added Capoccia.



Individuals who support the concept of MHFA but feel daunted by the idea of assisting someone in crisis should know that training as a mental health first aid provider will give them the capability to help. However, they are not expected to exceed their training.

"One of the biggest things we learned in training is that mental health first aiders notice, but we don't diagnose," explained Associate Dean for Law Student Affairs Jordan Hall,

"We must all work together to destigmatize mental health by having conversations, listening to what the campus community needs, and ensuring that we have the tools in place to meet the challenge."

—President Robert E. Johnson

who is an inaugural MHFA instructor. “Although we’re able to recognize signs and symptoms, we’re not necessarily attributing the symptoms to a specific disorder because we’re not doctors, we’re not psychologists, and we’re not therapists. However, being able to use language that doesn’t perpetuate harm and directing someone to resources is invaluable.

“Mental health is important to any person and profession, regardless of what you’re doing or who you are. It is, by far, one of the main reasons that we succeed or do not succeed. Being able to recognize when someone is suffering or going through challenges is essential to a positive outcome.” 🐾



CAMPUS INITIATIVES INTRODUCE EXPANDED COUNSELING AND A CANINE COMPANION

Mental Health First Aid certification is only one step in WNE’s comprehensive plan to make the health and wellness of community members the highest priority.

From the newly-expanded Center for Health and Wellness, which has absorbed counseling into its folds and widened its scope, to the 24/7 Mental Health Urgent Care Line, which connects students in crisis to an on-call counselor, services are continuing to expand to meet the needs of Golden Bears.

Among the most popular of the new initiatives is a 1-year-old furry four-legged friend who has paws on the ground in the pursuit of support.

Bear the Comfort Dog joined the WNE Department of Public Safety in July 2022 and serves as the University’s first comfort dog, working alongside his handler, Sergeant Alexandria Capen-Parizo.

Typically, comfort dogs are available during police investigations to reduce anxiety and increase witness or victim communication with investigators. They also provide comfort to people in times of crisis, tragedy, or traumatic events. However, Bear’s role on campus tends to focus on supporting campus safety efforts and helping to encourage a safe and comfortable environment at WNE—often through a game of fetch between classes or cuddles in the University Commons.

Bear has already proven to be a valuable asset to the WNE Police Department by fostering dialogue and communication between the department and the community. He has become a much-loved presence at WNE and makes appearances at community events and around campus to provide fun and stress relief for our students, faculty, and staff.

Much like the community he serves, Bear is furthering his education to ultimately become a certified therapy dog, which he hopes to accomplish by the time he is 2 years old in May 2024. He lives with Sergeant Capen-Parizo and her partner and his canine brother, Ragnar.





Embracing a Healthy Lifestyle

Walking the Talk of Health and Wellness with Dr. Melissa Mattison

By Patricia Gagnon

As the world enters a post-pandemic state, the outcomes of experiencing years of a global and deadly virus are starting to surface. Adding to the existing health concerns of an aging population are a host of problems aggravated by COVID-19, including the growing mental health crisis, sense of isolation, delays in receiving medical care, and economic impacts that exacerbate issues like food insecurity and insufficient nutrition.

The encouraging news is that people are more aware of their personal health and wellness and its importance than they were before the pandemic. A study conducted by Ipsos in 2021 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic looked at how well-being might change in a post-pandemic world. The study found that 62 percent of Americans believe their health is more important to them now than before the pandemic.

Health and wellness have never been more vitally important, and while often used interchangeably, the terms *health* and *wellness* are different and distinct. WNE's own Dr. Melissa Mattison, clinical associate professor of community care and assistant dean of experiential affairs, has spent most of her life both experiencing and teaching the powerful link between the two. Mattison asserts that health is a state of being associated with the physical, mental, and social well-being of a person, and wellness as the state of living a healthy lifestyle that can enhance that well-being.

"Healthy living is a cornerstone of my life; I eat well (most of the time), exercise daily, drink lots of water, and practice stress management. So many disease states are impacted by obesity, stress, nutrition, and lack of sleep, and I want the WNE students that we develop into future practitioners to be well-versed in living healthfully. By doing so, they will have the tools they need to counsel their patients on how to move in that direction," says Mattison.

Mattison graduated from the University of Rhode Island with a Bachelor of Science degree in pharmacy. After practicing for 10 years, she went on to earn her Doctor of Pharmacy degree at the University of Florida. Before joining the faculty at Western New England University, Mattison worked in community pharmacy for Walgreens in Connecticut, Louisiana, and Massachusetts, where she says she loved helping people, being a part of patient care teams, and helping the community at large. "I always loved science, so leaning toward the pharmacy profession seemed to make sense," she says. "I did not know much about it when I started, as I didn't have



a family member or close friend who influenced me. However, it has turned out to be a fascinating and rewarding career. I am so glad I pursued my talent and passion."

Improving Wellness Through Public Health

Public health has been of particular interest to Mattison. In 2023, she was selected as the sub-awardee of a \$50,000 grant with the University of Rhode Island (URI) for naloxone education. The grant aims to educate healthcare professionals and the community about naloxone, a life-saving medication that can rapidly reverse opioid overdose. The main goal of the grant is to promote online modules and resources to community partners, residents, healthcare professionals, and students about naloxone administration, its importance, and the proper steps to take in case of an opioid overdose.

“WNE was fortunate to have URI reach out to be a partner to increase naloxone education in rural areas and train anyone and everyone to use naloxone. We hope the education will decrease stigma, increase awareness, answer any questions people might have, and ultimately, decrease the number of overdose deaths,” says Mattison.

“When it comes to public health, I think we need to look at messaging. Are we educating people about the importance of regular checkups, screenings, and immunizations? Do we promote services that make healthcare accessible? Do we address transportation needs? Do we address the underlying social determinants of health that affect people? Do all people have insurance so they can receive healthcare? Is there trust in the community of healthcare? There are so many pieces to the puzzle. We also have a shortage of healthcare professionals, and that will impact healthcare too, especially in the future,” stresses Mattison. “Partnering with community leaders in towns and cities may help build trust and address issues with receiving care. I would like to see more access to routine care, thereby preventing or delaying chronic issues. Let’s be creative and think about where people go in the community. If we had clinic before or after church on Sunday, would we be better able to provide routine care? If we were at the food bank, could we have more access to an important stream of patients?”

Tackling the Negative Effects of Obesity

In her role as clinical associate professor of community care at WNE, Mattison specializes in obesity and weight loss. She is the clinical director of the Community Patient Care Center on campus.



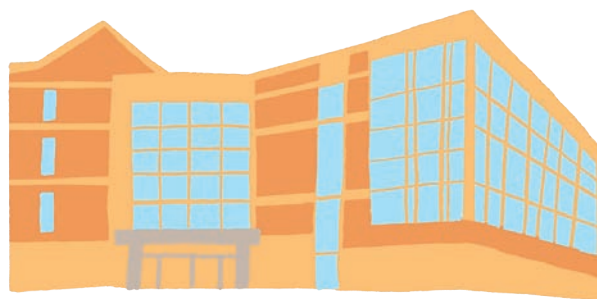
“When I started seeing patients in the clinic, I provided ‘lifestyle medicine.’ In other words, I counseled that through lifestyle modifications, patients would see positive results in their health outcomes,” says Mattison. “I worked with patients who wanted to lose weight to improve their health. Sometimes it was to improve their diabetes, and other times it was to reduce blood pressure or cholesterol conditions and decrease medications. I worked with patients who needed to lose weight to qualify for knee replacement or bariatric surgery. Sometimes patients just wanted to lose weight to feel better

and move better. Traveling with patients on their weight loss journey is a very rewarding part of my work, only second to watching WNE students graduate after completing the PharmD program.”

Creating Interdisciplinary Clinical Education

Mattison was recently named assistant dean of experiential affairs, a role in which she oversees experiential and interprofessional education. She engages students in the classroom by teaching Self-Care Therapeutics, a professional pharmacy practice lab, an interprofessional elective with partner institutions, and a research elective.

“With my team, I get to place students on rotations



throughout the country, which is very exciting and rewarding,” says Mattison. “I’m lucky to work with eight to 10 area institutions and promote interprofessional education. These are dedicated faculty and clinicians who want to change healthcare and work as a team from the very beginning of a student’s education.” The goal, she says, is to make sure students “are not siloed in their learning so that when they enter the workforce, they are team-ready.”

A Life Lived in Health and Wellness

Mattison lives what she teaches. The healthy lifestyle she enjoys includes running and biking—she even hiked part of the Long Trail in Vermont last summer. She met her partner, Glenn, more than 20 years ago when she walked into his bike shop in New Orleans to buy a bike for cross-training. She and Glenn have competed in triathlons together and are both Ironman triathletes.

“Glenn would tell you I’m very competitive,” she laughs. “So, when we bike together, we are usually trying to ride each other into the ground!” They have two children, Jack (17) and Cole (13).



Both children are competitive swimmers and golfers. “I love being a sports mom and seeing the positive impact it has on my kids. As a family, we enjoy being outside at the beach, hiking, skiing, and snowshoeing.”

Her grandparents lived to be over 90, and she notes her father, who is 78, still downhill skis. “I want to be healthy and active as I grow old. A side benefit for everyone in my life is that exercise helps me manage my stress and makes me a nicer person,” she says, smiling.

Mattison says her work at WNE is fulfilling in many ways. She enjoys her role as an educator, and even more, she appreciates what she learns from her students. “They make me a better parent and a better communicator. They inspire me to do more, and we work together to better our profession. They keep me on my



toes every day—and nothing can slide. I love their enthusiasm, and I love graduation. That is the moment when I reflect on how far they have come in four short years and am proud of what we accomplished together.”

Grateful for the opportunities she has been given, Mattison looks forward to continuing her journey of caring for and educating others about the vital link between health and wellness and the impact that both have when practiced in tandem.

“Now more than ever, health and wellness should be prioritized,” she says. “It’s an honor and tremendously fulfilling to guide people toward making positive, impactful decisions so that they in turn live fulfilling, active, and balanced lives.” 🐾

Wellness in Action: Five Tips for Healthy Summer Living

1. MAINTAIN YOUR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.

Exercise has immediate benefits like better sleep and reduced anxiety. However, in the summer, take precautions not to overheat. Exercise in the morning or evening when it’s likely to be cooler.

2. DRINK PLENTY OF WATER. STAY HYDRATED!

Don’t wait until you’re thirsty. Water can help your body sweat and cool down. Avoid sugary or alcoholic drinks.

3. WEAR SUNSCREEN AND COVER UP.

Use a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. Reapply every two hours and after swimming or sweating. When you are out in the sun, wear clothing and a wide-brimmed hat to protect as much skin as possible.

4. EAT HEALTHY.

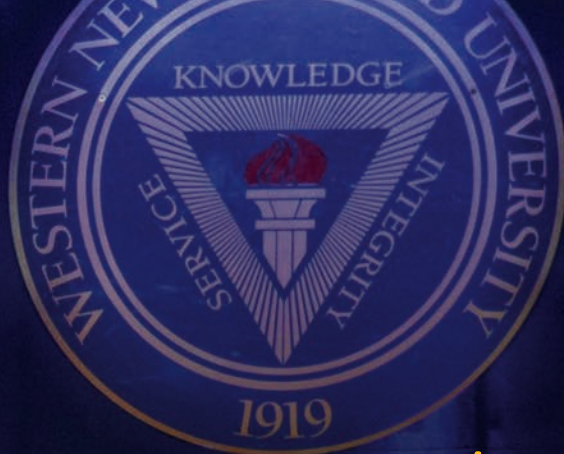
Summertime vegetables and fruits like salads, melons, and berries add color and flavor to picnics and cookouts.

5. BEWARE OF HIGH HEAT.

Extreme heat is dangerous for everyone, though especially so for the young, the elderly, and those with chronic medical conditions.







*Messages of Leadership,
Empathy, and 2023 Resilience*
**Commencement
Ceremonies**

BY MERCEDES MASKALIK

Amidst an atmosphere of celebration and accomplishment, Western New England University's Class of 2023 bid farewell to their alma mater and stepped foot into a future brimming with boundless opportunities. Undergraduate and graduate addresses captured the culmination of personal growth, years of hard work, and triumph over unprecedented challenges.

“You chose to pursue a college degree—something that is difficult under the most ‘normal’ of conditions. But you did so in the face of the pandemic. You have proven yourselves to be a class of persistence and perseverance,” said University president,



Dr. Robert E. Johnson, addressing the graduates. “Stay curious in this ever-changing world. Remain agile so that you are able to learn, unlearn, and relearn.” President Johnson further urged the graduates, buoyed by their resilience in navigating adversity, to embrace their roles as catalysts for positive change, both in their chosen professional paths and as influential forces in society.

These ideals of positive change and unwavering determination were exemplified in the selection of student commencement speaker Emily Wambach ’23 and the honorary degrees conferred by WNE upon Jon Clifton and Thomas Lines.

For his contributions to the world of data analytics, leadership, personal exploration and growth, and global polling, Gallup CEO and undergraduate commencement speaker Jon Clifton was presented with an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree. Founder and CEO of Quercis Pharma and graduate commencement speaker Thomas Lines received the honorary Doctor of Science degree for his leadership and significant contributions to the field of biopharmaceuticals and drug development. Prior to their addresses, WNE recognized these two individuals whose dedication, intellectual prowess, and profound commitment to improving society have served as driving forces behind their impactful contributions and enduring personal legacies.

REFLECTING ON GROWTH AND EMBRACING NEW BEGINNINGS

Emily Wambach ’23, of Auburn, MA, was selected among her peers to deliver the undergraduate student address. The three-year peer advisor and former president of the Society of Women Engineers recounted the fears and obstacles she and her classmates overcame to make it across the stage—from the anxiety of leaving home for the first time, to living up to expectations, to the change and uncertainty that came with a global pandemic.

“Our time as college students was far from normal or from what we expected, but we didn’t let that stop us from following

our dreams or reaching our goals,” said Wambach, a Biomedical Engineering major and Psychology minor. “It is not possible for me to stand here today and accurately tell each of our stories, but that’s the beauty of our time here. We cannot say that we all walked the same path, but we can say that we ended at the same point, walking out today as alumni. You were all able to take advantage of the different opportunities in front of you and shape yourself into who you wanted to be.”

Wambach eloquently highlighted the diversity of experiences that united her fellow graduates as a class, urging them to cherish the connections they have formed and to remember the impact each individual has made on their journey.

THREE PILLARS OF SUCCESS



Bringing a global perspective to the undergraduate commencement ceremony, Gallup CEO Jon Clifton drew upon Gallup’s research and insights to reflect on three qualities shared by accomplished leaders: the importance of active listening, building resilience in adversity, and awareness of our own unique strengths.

Clifton shared several stories that illustrated his first pillar of success: the power of simply taking the time to ask and listen. He recalled an emotional encounter with a woman he interviewed in Vietnam, saying, “She told us about her work and boss, and we eventually asked about her happiness. Everything went quiet. She cried and said, ‘No one has ever asked me about my happiness or health.’” Clifton added that this woman is not alone, and the encounter represents the current state of loneliness for many. “We find that just here in the American

workplace, 25 percent of people feel totally ignored. In fact, globally we find that 330 million people don't have a single interaction with another human being over a two-week period of time." The heartfelt moment served as a powerful reminder of the effect that genuine listening can have on others.

In illustrating the second pillar of success, Clifton underscored the importance of resilience in moments of adversity. Drawing from Gallup's "Leading with Strengths" project, which explores the qualities of successful leaders, he emphasized that setbacks are an inevitable part of life. The ability to face adversity head-on and use it as a driving force for growth is a shared trait among accomplished individuals. Clifton recounted the inspiring tale



of Walt Disney, who, after being fired, harnessed his strengths, persevered, and went on to create one of the most iconic characters in history—Mickey Mouse. The message to the graduates was clear: cultivate resilience in the face of challenges, understanding that setbacks do not define their future but can serve as stepping stones toward success.

Clifton's final pillar called upon graduates to know their own strengths. Gallup's research has shown that each person's unique strength sequence is incredibly rare, with the likelihood of finding someone with the same sequence being one in 34 million. Clifton urged his audience to embark on a journey of self-discovery, to uncover their gifts, and to embrace their uniqueness. By understanding and harnessing their strengths, graduates can make a profound impact on the world. "Among us I believe are the world's next great generals, the next great school teachers, the next great nurses, and maybe the next great president. The world needs you to find what it is you're greatest at...because if we're going to build the better world of tomorrow, we need you to help lead it."

LESSONS IN RESILIENCE, CULTURAL AGILITY, AND KINDNESS

Tom Lines, founder and CEO of Quercis Pharma, shared personal anecdotes and invaluable life lessons with his inspiring graduate ceremony address. As a first-generation graduate, he spoke of breaking down barriers and achieving what was once

impossible, contending that our origins are not our destiny. Recounting his impoverished childhood in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, Lines shared a crucial lesson he learned early on: ask questions when faced with the unknown. He reflected on his experience as a young boy sent on a frivolous errand by his employer, learning only after his failed mission that the items he had been in search of did not exist. Lines emphasized the importance of seeking knowledge and guidance rather than making assumptions or being too embarrassed to ask for help.

Lines then told of a profound exchange with the late President Nelson Mandela, when Lines had impulsively suggested a national day of racial role-reversal. President Mandela reminded him of the importance of thinking before speaking, and Lines welcomed the lesson on the value of listening and humility. "As graduates, you will undoubtedly encounter situations where you may feel the urge to act impulsively or seek retribution for perceived wrongs," he said. "The better way is to listen to others, to try to understand their perspectives and experiences, and to think carefully before speaking or acting. This requires a willingness to be humble, to acknowledge our own biases and blind spots, and to seek out diverse opinions and viewpoints." By embracing this approach, Lines stated that graduates will build stronger relationships, foster understanding and empathy, and contribute to a more connected and compassionate society.

Recounting the 2008 financial crisis when a major business deal nearly fell through, resilience emerged as another key theme in Lines' speech. With bankruptcy looming days away, he persuaded PepsiCo to enter equal partnership and purchased Merck Natural Products. Lines persevered in the face of obstacles, took a risk, and remained unwavering in the pursuit of his goal, and he encouraged graduates to do the same.



Following his acquisition of Merck, Lines detailed his mistake of exploiting cultural assumptions at a meeting with management in Brazil. He highlighted the importance of understanding and appreciating different cultures, effectively communicating across cultural barriers, and fostering collaboration with individuals from diverse backgrounds. He advised graduates to embrace cultural diversity by building bridges and making positive impacts on a global scale.

Lastly, Lines shared the timeless lesson of kindness. He circled back to his childhood with a memorable encounter with a local locksmith, who taught him the power of treating others with respect and empathy. Kindness, he emphasized, costs nothing but can make all the difference in the world.

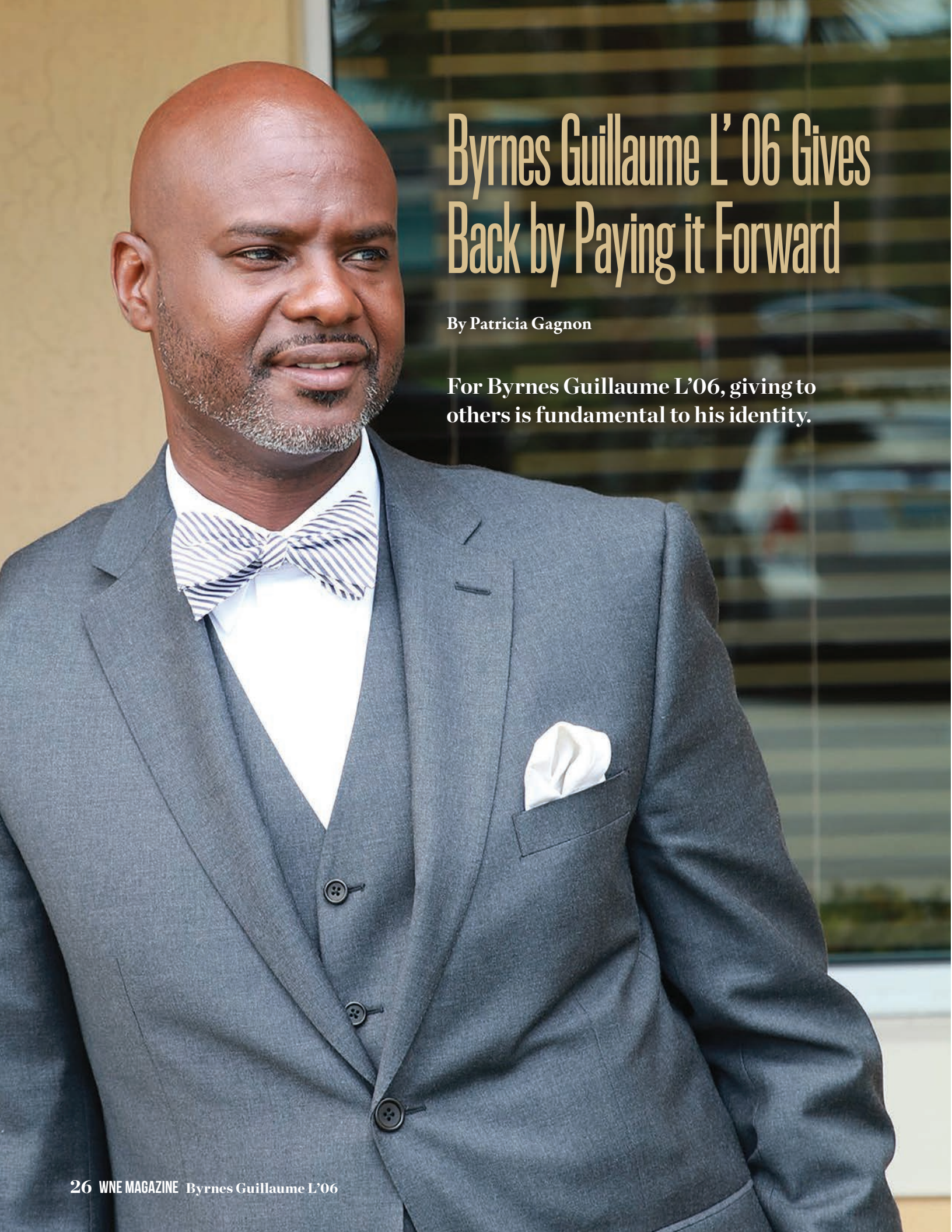
Lines urged the graduates to embody kindness in their interactions with others, emphasizing its profound effect on personal and professional relationships.

The commencement ceremonies were a testament to the collective achievements and growth of the Class of 2023. As they embarked on their individual paths, Western New England University's graduates stood ready to leave an indelible mark on society, armed with the wisdom shared by each distinct yet interconnected message.

May our graduates continue to embrace the lessons learned, pursue their dreams with unwavering determination, and inspire positive change in the world. 🐾





A portrait of Byrnes Guillaume L'06, a Black man with a shaved head and a short beard, wearing a grey suit, white shirt, and striped bow tie. He is standing in front of a window with horizontal blinds. The title text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Byrnes Guillaume L'06 Gives Back by Paying it Forward

By Patricia Gagnon

For Byrnes Guillaume L'06, giving to others is fundamental to his identity.

Born in Haiti, Byrnes Guillaume L'06 immigrated to the United States with his parents in the early 1980s when he was 5 years old. The family settled in Florida, where Guillaume attended school in Miami-Dade County. His father drove a taxicab and earned his degree to become a registered nurse. His mother worked as a housekeeper while going to school to become a nursing assistant. "I saw firsthand how hard work and dedication pay off, and they taught me to go after my goals and dreams," said Guillaume.

Inspired by his parents' passion for education, Guillaume earned a Bachelor of Science in Marketing from Florida State University, an MBA from Howard University, and a JD from Western New England University School of Law. As a graduate of the Florida Bar Leadership Academy, he has served as president of both the Haitian Lawyers Association and the F. Malcolm Cunningham Bar Association. Guillaume is also a member of the Palm Beach Bar Association and the Virgil Hawkins Florida Chapter Bar Association of the National Bar Association.

Prior to becoming a lawyer, Guillaume worked for United Technologies P&W Commercial Engines Legal/Contracts team as a contract manager, where he oversaw proposal preparation activities associated with the delivery of large commercial engine contracts. Guillaume also worked as a senior financial analyst for Sikorsky, Travelers Insurance, and ADT. After leaving United Technologies, he relocated to South Florida, where he gained experience as a prosecutor for the State Attorney's Office in the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit of Florida.

Guillaume is now the managing attorney of Byrnes Guillaume, Attorney at Law, PLLC, providing legal services in personal injury, criminal law, commercial litigation, foreclosure, deportation, family law, and ad hoc law areas.

A Passion for Law

"I'll never forget that day," said Guillaume of the incident that sparked his passion for law. "I was stopped by the police for a procedural stop in Orlando and was accused of speeding. I knew I wasn't speeding. My license was checked and I stayed calm, though I was given a ticket for speeding," he recalled. "I was overwhelmed

trying to defend myself in traffic court. That experience made me want to be a lawyer. I didn't want others to feel the way I did, and I wanted to help them. My business and law degrees helped me to establish my own law firm."

When Guillaume came to Western New England University School of Law, he immediately fell in love with the campus and University. "It felt like home. They were so welcoming. I call it the 'jewel.' It really is the top-notch law school in the Northeast," he said.

***"It's only right
that we give back
a portion of our
blessing so we can
pave the road for
others."***

"The professors were caring, understanding, and smart, and you can just see their love of teaching. The classes sparked an excitement in me for trial work, specifically in criminal law," Guillaume said. "Professor Arthur Leavens taught criminal law, and I loved his class. He championed diversity. My viewpoint was different from others in the class, and he told me he loved having me in class because I brought a different set of life experiences, which created rich discussion."

Giving Back

In addition to his dedication to law, Guillaume has committed his time to volunteering in his community. "Growing up in the '80s as a Haitian immigrant in South Florida, I saw unfair treatment of the people in my community. I knew when I grew up, I wanted to be there to protect my community. At the time, I didn't know it was going to be as a lawyer," said Guillaume.

Guillaume is board chair for the Florida State University (FSU) Black Alumni Association, and to help ensure financial resources are available to support students in their pursuits. To increase diversity in the program, he established the Byrnes

Guillaume, Esq. Scholarship for a Black Student of Caribbean Descent at FSU. He also volunteers as a legal analyst at local poll stations in Palm Beach County, assisting citizens with questions or concerns while voting.

Guillaume also serves as the president of the Board for Families First of Palm Beach County, an organization that addresses systemic racism and oppression and provides assistance to families to help them find their way back to self-sufficiency and provide safe, loving homes for their children. "We serve 51,000 children and family members in the Palm Beach area to help them return to being contributing and self-sustaining members of our communities," Guillaume said.

Through a generous gift to his alma mater, Guillaume awards a scholarship to a deserving student each year at the WNE School of Law. In 2015, he established the Byrnes Guillaume, Attorney at Law, PLLC Endowed Scholarship, awarded to a law student with an achieved academic average of a B or higher. In support of diversity, preference is given to a student who is a member of the Black Law Students Association (BLSA), who actively participates in BLSA-sponsored activities, or who was born in the Caribbean.

Paying it Forward

"It's my hope that my endowed scholarship provides a lasting legacy so that a student of color's financial means will not be a deterrent to receiving an education at such a jewel as WNE," said Guillaume.

Guillaume credits WNE with providing him an exceptional legal education, instilling in him a passion for applying the principles of law to benefit others, and a clear path for future lawyers of color. "There is a phrase, 'To whom much is given, much is required.' I believe my success is due to the education I received from WNE, and if any of us are in the position to give back . . . we should do so," said Guillaume. "It's only right that we give back a portion of our blessing so we can pave the road for others." 🐻

Explore ways to make your impact on the Golden Bear experience at alumni.wne.edu/ways-to-give, or make a gift today at alumni.wne.edu/make-a-gift.

ALUMNI NEWS

Alumni Board presidents are here to keep you connected and involved.



Hello Golden Bears!

On behalf of the WNE Alumni Association Board of Directors I wanted to take a moment to introduce the Board and let you know that we are here for YOU. The Alumni Board is a diverse body of alumni representing each and every one of you. With your best interests in mind, we work closely with the Office of Alumni Relations to bring you fun events and programs throughout the year to keep you connected with your alma mater. To see your Alumni Board representatives, please visit alumni.wne.edu/association. We would love to connect further with you!

Want to stay connected? Follow us on social media, @WNEalumni to stay up to date on all the alumni happenings. If you have any suggestions or feedback for the Board, please let us know, alumwne@wne.edu.

Go Golden Bears!

Brandon O'Brien '15/G'16
President, WNE Alumni Association



Hello Fellow Alumni,

Your Law Alumni Association is committed to building closely-knit groups of local alumni across the country to serve as resource networks for each other, as well as for current and future students. In doing so, we have been working diligently to create more opportunities for you to connect with one another and showcase your talents and achievements.

So far this year we have partnered with various offices, clubs, and organizations to support their endeavors with the help of our talented alumni. Additionally, alumni have volunteered their time and expertise as panelists, given their time as participants in promotional videos, and mentored current students through their Moot Court cases. While we have a lot to be proud of during the 2023 academic year, we are now looking forward to recognizing the accomplishments of our peers at the Law Alumni Awards Dinner on November 3.

We would like to get you all involved. Please join us! With your help we can make the most of our progressing initiatives and put your new ideas into action.

Cordially,

Navid Ansari L'05
President, Law Alumni Association
Board of Directors

HIGHLIGHTING GOLDEN BEARS IN HEALTHCARE

Meet Dr. Ryan Turner '08 (Biomedical Engineering)

Dr. Ryan Turner, an endovascular neurosurgery fellow at the University of Buffalo Department of Neurosurgery (UBNS), is in the final year of his 19-year medical journey that all started at Western New England University when he was a Biomedical Engineering student. When asked why he chose WNE, Turner said, "my goal was always to be a neurosurgeon, and when selecting undergraduate programs, my parents encouraged me to pick a program that would allow me to gain employment if my dreams couldn't become reality." With that, it was a no-brainer to select WNE, "as it was the perfect match, with one of the best and most strenuous programs out there."

Following his graduation from WNE, Turner completed his MD/PhD programs at West Virginia University (WVU), where he also began his neurosurgery residency in 2022. During his residency at WVU, Turner has been able to participate in the one-year in-fold fellowship. This fellowship at WVU opened the door for Turner to join UBNS and receive advanced training in cerebrovascular neurosurgery, both open and endovascular, specializing in minimally-invasive procedures, using catheters and wires to treat conditions such as brain aneurysms, carotid stenosis, ischemic strokes, and arteriovenous malformations.

Although Turner's medical journey has been long, he reflects on his career and describes neurosurgery, and medicine in general, as "a team sport." Due to the significance of his role, Turner speaks about the satisfaction he receives from "restoring patients' functions in many cases, and experiencing the gratitude and relief of their loved ones."



Turner is presently working on three different cutting-edge clinical trials through his fellowship at UBNS: CereVasc (eShunt) for treatment of communicating hydrocephalus using an endovascular shunt, the Command trial (Stentrode by Synchron) for treatment of paralysis through endovascular implantation of venous brain-computer interface, and the Thunder trial (Penumbra) for treatment of ischemic stroke using cyclic aspiration technology.

Meet Dr. Kim Phu '18/OTD'21

Dr. Kim Phu is an occupational therapist specializing in hand therapy and rehabilitation. Phu helps people regain function of their hand, wrist, elbow, or shoulders after surgery, accidents, or cumulative disorders. As a hand therapist, she works very closely with orthopedic hand surgeons and primary care providers, providing pre- and post-op conservative care. She also provides care for upper-extremity conditions such as carpal tunnel, de Quervain's, arthritis, and various tendinopathies.

A dual graduate of WNE, Phu discussed what inspired her to go into occupational therapy: "As a Health Science major at WNE, I genuinely enjoyed learning about anatomy and cellular pathways. I also enjoy interacting with others, enriching people's lives, and getting to know others." She added, "occupational therapy—specifically hand therapy allowed me to do both."

Because the field of occupational therapy is so small, Phu places value on and encourages current students in the program to find mentors. Mentors in hand therapy have guided Phu both clinically and professionally, and she credits these mentors with her growth in the field. Similarly, she advises current students in the OTD program to "network as much as they can. It's important to develop relationships with future colleagues, peers, and industry professionals. These relationships can be valuable sources of support, advice, and mentorship throughout your career."

One of Phu's most rewarding moments as a hand therapist is the appreciation that her patients have for her and the work that she does. "I've had many patients come back to visit me and thank me for the work I've done helping



them regain use of their hand." Using what she has learned at WNE, specifically in anatomy and compassionate care, Phu looks forward to continuing to provide hand care services to those in need.

ALUMNI NEWS

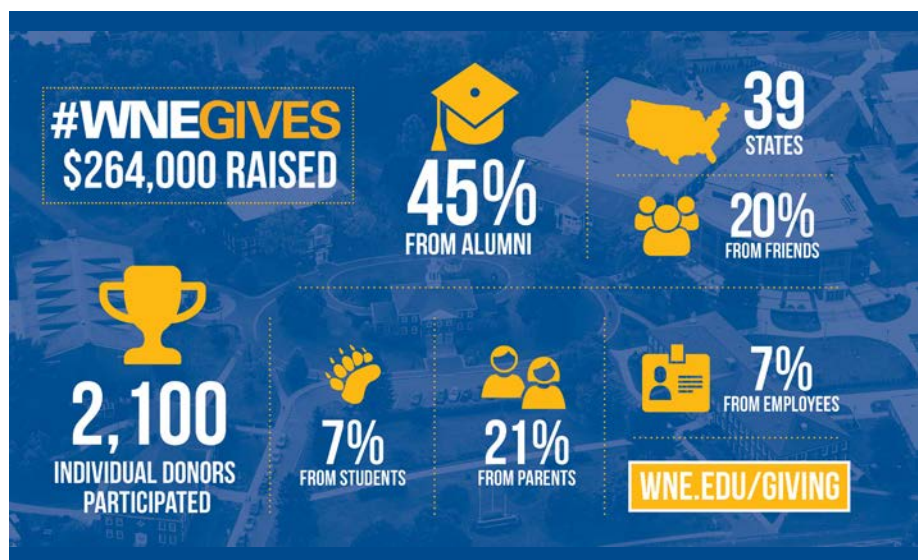
For the latest alumni news from Western New England University, visit alumni.wne.edu/news.

GOLDEN BEARS MADE A BIG IMPACT DURING WNEGIVES

On Wednesday, March 8, Western New England University hosted WNEgives, our annual community day of giving event. With the support of 2,079 alumni, parents, friends, faculty, staff, and students, WNEgives made a BIG impact and raised more than \$260,000 in support of 39 different areas of campus. While donors showed up and supported every area of campus, Athletics claimed the top spot on the leaderboard, raising \$138,203 with gifts from 1,333 donors.

To add excitement to the day, 28 challenges were hosted by alumni, family, faculty, staff, and trustees to inspire giving in support of their favorite areas of campus. Laura Sturgis Boulé '01/G'02,

an alumna of the women's lacrosse program, has been hosting a challenge during WNEgives for the last four years. When asked why it's important for her to give back to the women's lacrosse program, she said, "as a women's lacrosse alumna, I host an annual challenge to motivate other alumni and students to make a donation towards a common goal." Boulé added that "giving is a way for alumni to reconnect with existing student-athletes, and if we support existing students during their time at WNE, they will in turn do the same for others in the future. Together through our alumni, students, friends, and family, we have created a cycle of giving that will continue to grow into the future."



While much of the support throughout the annual day of giving could be found from members of the Western New England community across the country and the globe, the support felt right here on Wilbraham Road was just as strong. Students, faculty, and staff showed their love for WNE with signs and smiles encouraging others within the community to support not only our current students, but future Golden Bears alike.



BREWING UP A GOOD TIME WITH WNE ALUMNI

With communities re-opening and a desire for connection, the WNE Alumni Association has hosted a series of Brew & Gold events taking place in various New England locations and one in New York state. These events encouraged Golden Bears to meet up with old friends and make new friends, all with the goal of strengthening the WNE connections within each area.

The series of events kicked off in Worcester, MA, at the Worcester Beer Garden in early September, followed by an event in West Hartford, CT, at New Park Brewing. The event series continued by starting the new year off with an event in Albany, NY, at Fort Orange Brewing, a brewery co-owned by alumna Jennifer Eaton '99 and her

husband Jim. This event also provided guests with food from Bull & Basil food truck, another alumnus connection. The final Brew & Gold event took place at the end of March in Providence, RI, where many Golden Bears were eager to reconnect and mingle at Bayberry Beer Hall.

With big plans to bring everyone home for the final Brew & Gold event, the WNE Alumni Association hopes to see you during Homecoming weekend, on Saturday, October 21, for a Springfield location Brew & Gold event. More information coming soon!



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, or visit alumni.wne.edu/classnotes to submit your note online.

1980s

Lee Phenner '85 (English) wrote the book and lyrics *A Pint of Understanding*, a new musical featured in the New York Theatre Barn's Choreography Lab. The show's varied jazz-inspired score drives a fresh exploration of race, class, perspective, and hope.

Michael Skeary L'85/G'12 (JD/LLM) has been promoted to partner at Nelson Mullins within their Boston office. Skeary practices in insurance, property, and casualty coverage, as well as bad faith and extracontractual litigation.

Francis X. Wright, Jr. L'85 (JD) has been selected by the Massachusetts Municipal Lawyers Association (MMLA) to receive the President's Award. Wright was honored for his substantial contributions to municipal law and his distinguished tenure as long-time solicitor to the city of Somerville, MA, and the MMLA. Additionally, Wright has joined the Edward J. Collins Jr. Center for Public Management at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, advising municipalities on charter and organizational structure matters.

Marc Mandel '88 (General Business) was appointed to vice president of North American sales & account management at QuestionPro, a global provider of online surveys, research services, and customer and employee experience. In this role he will lead the company's Customer Experience Go-to-Market teams in North America.

Debra Purrington L'88 (JD) was featured in *The Top 100 in Finance Magazine* for 2023 for her decades of professional accomplishment in the field of trusts and estates. Purrington serves as chief fiduciary and legal counsel at the Bank of Clarke in Winchester, VA.

Karlene Barry '89 (Accounting) has been promoted to partner at Fiondella, Milone & LaSaracina LLP. Barry is a CPA with over 20 years of public accounting experience servicing a variety of industries.

1990s

Darcy Gruttadaro L'90 (JD) joined the leadership team as chief innovation officer at the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI). Previously, Gruttadaro served as a leader at NAMI for 17 years before joining the American Psychiatric Association Foundation (APAF).

James Winston '90/L'00 (Integrated Liberal Studies/JD) was named president of the Hampshire County Bar Association.

Jennifer Petrarca '91/G'97 (Electrical Engineering/Engineering Management) is the new manager of industry standards for mastercard in O'Fallon, MO.



Robert Rhodes L'92 (JD) was named to Connecticut Super Lawyers in 2022. Rhodes specializes in personal injury litigation.

John Lynch '93 (Marketing) was named CEO of Kush.com, the nation's largest business-to-cannabis marketplace, when his company TradeCraft Origin was acquired by MacDonald Ventures.

Jeffrey Fialky L'94 (JD) has been named managing partner of Bacon Wilson, P.C. Fialky has been with the firm since August 2006, following a decade in eastern Massachusetts where he held senior attorney positions within Fortune 100 telecommunications and cable television companies.

Sheryl McQuade G'94 (MBA) was announced as the regional president of TD Banks New England Metro. In this role, McQuade will lead TD Bank's New England consumer and small business, commercial, and middle-market banking and lending services throughout a network of approximately 310 stores and nearly 2,900 employees in the greater New England region.

Julie Riggott '94 (English) has written and published the book *B.F. Skinner and the Revolutionary Science of Behavior*. This biography takes young readers through Skinner's life and work. Riggott is a writer and editor in communications in Los Angeles, CA.

Thomas Dawley '95 (Criminal Justice) has been named interim chief of police for the Pittsfield Police Department. Dawley has served in the department since 2002 and previously acted as the Detective Bureau captain.

Matthew Wells '95/G'99 (Biomedical Engineering/MBA) has been appointed as director of operations and continuous improvement at L.S. Starrett, a manufacturer of precision tools, gages, measuring instruments, and saw blades for industrial, professional, and consumer markets worldwide.



Kimberly Holmes L'97 (JD) has joined Dykema as senior counsel in the firm's data privacy and cybersecurity practice group. In this role, Holmes will focus her practice on managing and overseeing data privacy, security matters, and breach responses for Fortune 100 and 200 companies as well as midsize organizations across industry verticals.

Sarah Caggiano '98 (Sociology) has been named the new executive director of expanded education at the New England Conservatory (NEC). Caggiano will be responsible for expanding the NEC Preparatory School's program offerings and identifying new opportunities for NEC to reach and educate more students of all ages and backgrounds.

Juan Lopez '99 (Computer Science) recently published the research article, "Pattern Matching for High Precision Detection of LINE-1s in Human Genomes." Read more about Lopez's research at <https://rdcu.be/cVxgg>.

2000s

James Moore G'00 (Criminal Justice Administration) has been promoted to lieutenant in the Methuen, MA, Police Department. Moore is a 28-year veteran of the Methuen Police Department.



Dr. Gianleo Duca '01 (Education - History) was appointed to superintendent of schools for the Ballston Spa Central School District. He had previously held the interim role.

William Broneill L'02 (JD) has joined Kahan Kerensky Capossela, LLP (KCC) as head of the firm's Real Estate Department. Broneill joins KCC with 20 years of experience in residential and commercial real estate.

Michael Collins G'02 (Criminal Justice Administration) has been appointed as director of abuse response & prevention for the Springfield Diocese's Office of Safe Environment and Victim Assistance (OSEVA). Collins has served as a social worker for the last 26 years in the states' foster care system.

Randy Haggart G'02 (Criminal Justice Administration) has been appointed to deputy chief of the Methuen, MA, Police Department. He previously served as commander, overseeing both field operations and administrative bureaus.

Joanne Cerrone G'03 (Criminal Justice Administration) recently became the senior securities specialist for the State of Maine's Department of Professional and Financial Regulation. In this role, she helps to identify evidence of financial fraud or other related violations of the Maine Uniform Securities Act and other laws. Cerrone has been with the State of Maine since 2004 and began working in the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation in 2022.

Melissa Ruminot '04 (Marketing Communication/Advertising) started her two-year term as International Board president for the Themed Entertainment Association (TEA). TEA is an international non-profit association representing the world's leading creators, developers, designers, and producers of compelling places and experiences.

Gregory Daniels L'05 (JD) was appointed by Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont as executive director of the State Contracting Standards Board. Prior to his appointment, Daniels was the director of procurement contracts and compliance for the University of Connecticut.

Jay Green L'05 (JD) was elected to the Board of Directors at 2nd Street Second Chances, an organization supporting formerly incarcerated men and women in Berkshire County. Green is currently town administrator for the town of Adams, MA.

Nicole Orluk-Goncalves '06 (Accounting) has started a new position as controller at Elms College in Chicopee, MA.

Jessica Mueller '07 (International Studies, Economics, and Commerce) started a new role with Prudential Financial in March, serving as vice president of strategic initiatives in the marketing organization.

Ashley (Cornelius) Allsop '08/G'09 (Accounting/MSA) was recognized by Columbia County of New York for 40 Under Forty. Allsop is a controller at A. Colarusso and Son, Inc.

Jessica Caron '08 (Social Work) has joined Elevance Health as provider quality manager, supporting community mental health clinics across New Hampshire in quality outcomes. Caron is a licensed independent clinical social worker (LICSW).

Sarah Shugrue '08 (Communication) has been promoted to director of grantmaking & capacity building for the Greater Worcester Community Foundation. Shugrue has been with the foundation since 2016.



Benjamin Cadwell '09 (Communication) was promoted to director of client service at Mintz + Hoke, an advertising agency in Avon, CT.

Andrew Sciarra G'09 (MBA) was elected to partner at CohnReznick, a leading advisory, assurance, and tax firm. Previously, Sciarra was a senior audit manager.

Jennifer Voyik-Morrison '09 (Accounting) was named the 2023 recipient of the Daniel J. Gallican Award. This award is given out by the Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade Committee and recognizes longstanding committee members and non-Holyoke residents who have contributed to the parade and associations successes. Voyik-Morrison is the 50th recipient of this award and joined the organization in 2012.

2010s

Edward Flood L'10 (JD) was named to the Eastern Suffolk County Assembly Board, representing Assembly District 4.

Michael J. Introvigne '10 (Management Studies) has been elected to his first term as a member of the Executive Committee of the Connecticut Funeral Directors Association. Introvigne is a licensed funeral director and embalmer at Introvigne Funeral Home, Inc. in Stafford Springs, CT.

David Oliva '10/G'11 (Sport Management/MBA) was named to *Worcester Business Journals'* 40 Under Forty Class of 2022. Oliva is the general manager of Organomation, a manufacturing company that supplies laboratory instruments for evaporation and extraction.

Erin Doherty '11/G'15 (Sport Management/MBA) has recently joined Virginia Tech Roanoke Center as an administrative, program, and marketing coordinator.

Justin Goldberg L'11 (JD) has joined The Royal Law Firm as an attorney specializing in corporate formation, commercial agreements, bankruptcy, estate planning and probate, and landlord/tenant practice matters.

Lindsey Steward '11 (History) was recently promoted to education coordinator at the Three Village Historical Society in Setauket, New York. Her previous positions were visitor services associate and education committee volunteer.

Kathryn Crouss L'12 (JD) was elected as a new shareholder of the firm Doherty, Wallace, Pillsbury, and Murphy, P.C. (DWPM). Crouss joined the firm in May 2022 and has extensive experience in both family law and employment matters. She is currently president elect of the Hampden County Bar Association and serves on the board of Community Legal Aid.

Alyssa Caliguri '13 (Psychology) has been promoted to associate director of admissions and student affairs at Webb Institute.

Gustavo Mayen L'13 (JD) was selected as a Boston Top Lawyer 2022 by *Boston Magazine* for his work in criminal law. Mayen was invited to teach at the fall 2021 and 2022 Trial Advocacy Workshop at Harvard Law School and was selected as a Latin Amplifier by Amplify LatinX in 2022.

Emily Fitzgerald '14 (Political Science) has recently accepted a promotion as associate director for strategic fundraising initiatives at Smith College in Northampton, MA. Fitzgerald has previously served as the assistant director for regional volunteer engagement.



Rose Colon L'15 (JD) was elected to be Board vice president of the Martin Luther King Jr., Family Services. Colon practices in the probate and family courts in western Massachusetts for the Massachusetts Department of Revenue.



Tasheena Davis L'15 (JD) has joined Lawyers for Civil Rights (LCR) as a litigation fellow. LCR provides free legal support to people of color, immigrants, and low-income communities. The organization's litigation team focuses on education, employment, housing, policing, immigration, voting rights, and climate justice.

Erika Benlisa '16 (Biomedical Engineering) is now the senior validation engineer at Defibtech.

Nathaniel Munson '17 (Business Administration) was promoted to vice president, credit officer at bankESB. In this role, Munson manages credit analysts and portfolio managers.

Cole Magee '18 (Mechanical Engineering - Mechatronics Concentration) has joined Conval, Inc. as a sales engineer. Conval is a premier manufacturer of high-quality, high-pressure forged steel valves.

2020s

Julia Garvey '20 (Political Science) has started a new role as community organizer and legislative advocate at Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless.

Hunter Malone '20 (Psychology) has recently joined Venture Community Services as an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) employment specialist.

Britaney N. Guzman-Bailey L'21 (JD) has joined Bacon Wilson, P.C. as part of their Domestic Relations and Family Law practice group.



Kevin J. Hassett, Jr. L'21 (JD) joined Fitzgerald Law in January 2022 as an attorney. Hassett focuses on business law in the areas of contract drafting and negotiation, commercial loans, commercial real estate development, regulatory and government enforcement actions and investigations, and employment law.

Kyra Palumbo '21 (Marketing Communication/Advertising) began a new position in Customer Services at Southwest Airlines.

Alexander Pattacini L'21 (JD) has joined the law firm of Bacon Wilson, P.C. as a member of the Estate Planning and Elder Law department.

Alexander Pimentel '21 (Criminal Justice) has received his commissioning through the Army's Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia. Pimentel was branched into the Military Police corps and will now be serving as a second lieutenant in Vilseck, Germany.

Viktoriia Protsyk L'21 (JD) has joined the Goldberg Segalla firm's Workers Compensation group in Hartford, CT. Protsyk specializes in defending insurers, employers, and third-party administrations in workers' compensation matters.

Joseph Britton L'22 (JD) was appointed Board of Education counsel for the City of Waterbury Public Schools in Connecticut. Waterbury Public Schools is the third-largest district in Connecticut with over 18,000 students.



Rachel Fancy L'22 (JD) has joined Fitzgerald Law as an attorney. Fancy will advise business owners and leadership teams on the resolution of commercial disputes, litigation tactics and procedures, and land use.

Sarah Federation L'22 (JD) has joined Bacon Wilson, P.C. as a part of their Business and Corporate Law practice group.

Joshua Goldstein L'22 (JD) joined Bacon Wilson, P.C. as a member of the Business and Corporate Law practice group and the Banking and Finance practice group.

Ethan Kagno '22 (Sport Management) started a new position with Hawk-Eye Innovations as a baseball systems operator for the 2023 Major League Baseball season in Atlanta, GA. Kagno also works at *The Boston Globe* as a high school sports correspondent.

William LaFosse '22 (Marketing) accepted the position of assistant director of gift processing within the Advancement Division at Western New England University.



Jason Vereneau '22 (Sport Management) is the new East Region assistant director for Little League International. Vereneau will assist day-to-day operations of more than 1,700 local leagues within the East Region while providing ongoing support to its volunteers and supporting the growth and development of new leagues throughout the region.

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.

Marriages



**Ryan Guers '19/L'23 and
Baylee Houldson '19/L'23,**
May 29, 2022 in Hartford, CT



Ellen Serra '16 and Zachary Jenkins '16, September 16, 2022 in Greenfield, MA



Anthony DeVita '18/G'22 and Erica Clayton '17, March 25, 2023 in Haddam, CT



**McKenzie Pezze '16 and
Sean Lawton '14,** September 24, 2022
in Saratoga Springs, NY



Erika Benlisa '16 and Nathaniel Bodnar '16. September 23, 2022 in Farmington, CT



Bridgit Fradette '11 and Brad Couture '10, September 10, 2022 in Jefferson, NH



Caroline Andros '19 and Eric Mazzarella, September 3, 2022 in Southwick, MA



Alexa D'Errico '16 and David Venegas '15, October 8, 2022 in East Haddam, CT



Kaitlyn Hall '13 and Patrick Cameron '13, June 18, 2022 in North Stonington, CT

Baby Golden Bears



Christopher and Nolan, January 17, 2022 to **Rachael (Gotta) Dore '14** and **Matthew Dore '15**



Cora Anne, October 11, 2022 to **Lisa Covert '11** and Jason Rashkow



Owen Reed, December 15, 2022 to **Dr. Cindy (Howe) Drzyzga '14/PharmD'16** and Brian Drzyzga



Bruno Matthew, June 21, 2022 to **Emily Dubuc-Delmonaco '14/G'16/L'16** and Steven Delmonaco



Logan Thomas, September 22, 2022 to
Torie Egan '15 and Jeff Webb



Kailani Quinn, January 29, 2023 to
Lindsey (Fenton) Seifel '10 and **David Seifel '08**



Meir Hiram, April 5, 2023 to
Omojola (Hebron) Dickert '06 and Matthew Dickert



Grace Marilyn, October 2, 2022 to
Angela (Monaco) McCarten '11 and
David McCarten '11



Lukas Anthony, February 16, 2022 to
Brianna (Sylvia) Olender '09/G'10 and
William Olender

UNRESTRICTED GROWTH

At Western New England University, we produce leaders who are agile and will continuously grow in order to create value throughout their careers—even in industries yet to be imagined. Unrestricted by routine, each student is empowered to chart their own path toward their passion and purpose. As a community, together we can encourage our students to expand their reach in order to become innovators and leaders that are well-prepared to thrive in the future of work. Your gift to The Fund for WNE makes that possible.

Give online at alumni.wne.edu/growth, or scan the QR code to ensure that our students continue to flourish by making your gift today.



Contact The Fund for WNE at
thefund@wne.edu or 413-782-1335.



CURTAIN CALL

Spellbinding performances and breathtaking stagecraft with WNE's Stageless Players' *Little Shop of Horrors* captivate audiences.



A LEADER IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Ranked in the top 6% of colleges and universities by ROI in a study by Georgetown University, your WNE degree has appreciating value.

Stay connected, and share in our bright future.

Join our Alumni Online Community at **alumni.wne.edu** for the latest news, alumni events, and resources.



View the expanded digital version at **magazine.wne.edu** to access exclusive content and share your favorite stories on social media.

WNE.EDU

BIG DATA BRINGS BIG OPPORTUNITIES

**Revolutionize the Future of Business with the
MS in Business Analytics**

The **MS in Business Analytics** will prepare you to be an innovative, big-picture thinker who can utilize data to optimize and innovate through the changing business landscape.

Courses will be offered on campus during the fall and spring semesters, with the first cohort enrolling in the Fall 2023.

Are you ready to be a pioneer in business?

LEARN MORE AT [WNE.EDU/GRAD](https://www.wne.edu/grad)