

# WNE

Magazine

WINTER 2023



## To Give and to Receive

Golden Bear alumni embody the spirit of service and community.



Winter '23

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

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## **City of Bright Nights Ball**

Western New England University was proud to sponsor the 2023 City of Bright Nights Ball, where President Robert E. Johnson served as honorary chair. More than 500 business and community leaders from throughout New England gathered at the sold-out affair, which plays a crucial role in funding the Spirit of Springfield's community events all year round.

**Pictured:** Executive Director for Career Education Andrea St. James '96/G'00 (left), WNE President Robert E. Johnson (center), Professional Educator of Education Brenda Garton-Sjoberg (right), and WNE student volunteers.

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# What Will Your Legacy Be?

**As you look back fondly on your WNE days, think about how you can help ensure future students have an education that is just as exceptional and life-changing as yours.**

**You may be able to make more of a difference than you ever thought possible by including WNE in your estate plans. Your gift may come in many forms:**

- Remembering WNE in your will or trust.
- Adding WNE as a beneficiary of your retirement plan or life insurance policy.
- Making a tax-free gift with a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD).
- Receiving fixed payments for life in exchange for your gift of cash or securities.

Whatever the size of your estate, it is important to have a plan that will provide for the needs of your loved ones and honor your philanthropic priorities. By creating a lasting legacy with WNE, you'll make a difference by strengthening our ability to provide educational opportunities, create and sustain innovative academic programs, and perform new and groundbreaking research. It just may be one of life's most gratifying experiences.

If you have already included WNE in your estate plans, we hope you will let us know and allow us to count you as a member of the Cupola Society, an esteemed group of alumni and friends.

**For more information, contact Vice President for Advancement Dean Hickey at 413-796-2260 or email: [dean.hickey@wne.edu](mailto:dean.hickey@wne.edu).**

**To download your FREE estate planning guide, visit**  
**[http://legacy.wne.edu/sites/wne/files/2021-05/WNE\\_WillsGuide\\_1.pdf](http://legacy.wne.edu/sites/wne/files/2021-05/WNE_WillsGuide_1.pdf)**



## To Give and to Receive

BY ROBERT E. JOHNSON

As we reflect on the theme of “to give and to receive” in this edition of *WNE Magazine*, it is an opportune moment to celebrate the profound connections that bind us together as a community. These connections extend not only within the walls of our institution but also reach out to touch the lives of individuals and communities beyond our campus borders.

At Western New England University, we are committed to instilling in our students the values of generosity, compassion, and civic responsibility. We encourage our students to contribute their talents, time, and resources to causes that matter to them. Through these experiences, they learn the transformative power of giving and the ripple effect it can have on the lives of others.

Simultaneously, our University community is also a recipient of the generosity of many — alumni, parents, friends, and benefactors who invest in the future of Western New England. Their contributions support scholarships, facilities, and innovative programs that enhance the educational journey of our students. In the spirit of “to receive,” we express our gratitude for the trust and confidence placed in us by those who believe in the transformative power of education.

Furthermore, the impact of Western New England University extends far beyond our campus. We recognize the symbiotic relationship between our institution and the greater community. Through collaborative partnerships with local businesses, community organizations, and government entities, we actively contribute to the economic and cultural vitality of our region. Our students, faculty, and alumni serve as catalysts for positive change, addressing societal challenges and making a meaningful difference.



Just recently, I had the pleasure of acting as honorary chairman for the Spirit of Springfield Bright Nights Ball. Founded in 1989, the Spirit of Springfield is charged with “promoting community events and encouraging civic pride.” It truly is an organization that gives back to the Greater Springfield community with events like the World’s Largest Pancake Breakfast, Star Spangled Springfield, and the Military Concert. The Bright Nights Ball is its cornerstone event aimed at raising funds to defray admission costs to Bright Nights in Forest Park. I was thrilled that Western New England University could play a role in providing visitors with holiday magic through this time-honored tradition.

As we navigate the ever-evolving landscape of higher education, the theme of “to give and to receive” serves as a guiding principle for our community. It encapsulates the reciprocity inherent in our relationships — with our students, our supporters, and the broader community. Together, we form a dynamic network of individuals who understand that the act of giving enriches

not only the recipient but also the giver. I’ve said it before, and I will say it again: it is not enough for us to be present in our community; we aim to have a strong, impactful presence *within* it.

In closing, I am immensely proud of the culture of generosity and collaboration that defines Western New England University. It is a testament to the strength of our community and the enduring impact we can have when we embrace the values of giving and receiving. Thank you for being an integral part of this extraordinary journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert E. Johnson".

# CAMPUS NEWS

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

## UNIVERSITY JOINS NORTHEAST MICROELECTRONICS COALITION HUB

Western New England University (WNE) recently participated in the Northeast Microelectronics Coalition Hub (NEMC), a regional initiative aimed at advancing microelectronics manufacturing and semiconductor technologies. The NEMC is funded by the 2022 CHIPS and Science Act, which aims to onshore microelectronics manufacturing and support workforce training for these industries.

WNE is pleased to be part of this initiative and will leverage its expertise in workforce development and training high-tech specialists to contribute to the NEMC's mission. As College of Engineering Dean S. Hossein Cheraghi stated, "The College of Engineering is thrilled to be a part of the elite coalition of industry partners and universities within the Northeast Microelectronics Coalition. We are

prepared to support the Coalition's technical vision and workforce development activities with our six ABET-accredited engineering programs that provide breadth and depth across the semiconductor ecosystem. The College of Engineering looks forward to creating a regional pipeline of STEM talent that supports new economic development across western Massachusetts and beyond."

The Department of Defense's announcement of \$238 million in funding for Microelectronics Commons is the largest award to date under President Biden's CHIPS and Science Act and will fund eight regional hubs across the country.

WNE's participation in the NEMC reflects its core commitment to workforce development and training the next generation of high-tech specialists.



## OTD STUDENTS BUDDY UP WITH AQUA BUDDIES WITH SPRINGFIELD'S CENTER FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Western New England University Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) students are making waves with local youth in the Aqua Buddies program, offered in conjunction with ALL-IN: Barrier-Free Recreation through the Center for Human Development (CHD).

The Aqua Buddies program pairs OTD students with youth and young adults with disabilities ranging in age between 4 and 21 years old. The weekly aquatic therapy sessions enable student volunteers to apply classroom learning in a hands-on setting.

While the goal of the Aqua Buddies program is to increase comfort with water and focus on therapeutic play for the young participants, the program provides a learning experience for the OTD students as well. The program allows students to connect with a wider variety of populations and provides the opportunity to implement students' own therapeutic ideas during aquatic play sessions.

These mutual benefits of the program capture one of the most rewarding aspects of the field. As second-year OTD candidate and Aqua Buddies program student coordinator, Courtney Colaccio, said, "There is truly nothing better than seeing your aqua buddy move and socialize in ways they hadn't before."





## WESTERN NEW ENGLAND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND FACULTY ENGAGE IN AOTA'S HILL DAY IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Students and faculty from Western New England University (WNE) recently participated in the American Occupational Therapy Association's (AOTA) Hill Day event in the nation's capital.

The WNE delegation brought their passion and expertise, actively participating in discussions, meetings, and advocacy efforts. They joined their voices with others in the field to emphasize the importance of occupational therapy and its role in improving the lives of countless individuals.

Chelsea Monpas, a Doctor of Occupational Therapy student at WNE, expressed, "Attending AOTA's Hill Day in Washington, D.C. was such an amazing experience. Having the opportunity to speak with legislators about the importance of occupational therapy and expanding healthcare access was one of the most impactful experiences I have ever had."

Chair and Program Director of WNE's Occupational Therapy Department Brittany Adams expressed her enthusiasm for AOTA's Capitol Hill Day, saying, "AOTA's Capitol Hill Day is one of my favorite events each year. We strongly encourage our students to attend because it is such a unique opportunity for them to use their passion for the profession of occupational therapy to learn about the U.S. legislative process, embrace the power of advocacy, and feel empowered about making a positive difference. I am so proud of the students who voluntarily attend each year."

One of the highlights of their journey was meeting with Rep. Richard Neal, a prominent figure in Massachusetts politics. Congressman Neal welcomed the WNE delegation, stating, "I am a strong supporter and advocate for OT. As my generation of baby boomers is getting older, we will need OT services more and more."

## WESTERN NEW ENGLAND UNIVERSITY EXCELS IN U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT 2024 BEST COLLEGES RANKINGS

In the latest U.S. News & World Report 2024 Best Colleges rankings, Western New England University (WNE) has solidified its standing as a prominent national institution. Securing an impressive #236 position in the Overall Rank National Universities category, WNE reaffirms its commitment to excellence in higher education.

The University's dedication to providing accessible and quality education is evident in its consistent performance in the Top Performers on Social Mobility category, maintaining its spot at #207. Notably, WNE's College of Engineering has once again excelled, securing the #86 position in the Best Undergraduate Engineering Program nationally.

WNE College of Engineering Dean S. Hossein Cheraghi expresses enthusiasm for this achievement, attributing it to the exceptional quality of education and the dedication of WNE's faculty and staff. "The College of Engineering serves as a hub for innovation and entrepreneurship, emphasizing hands-on learning experiences and a supportive community.

Undergraduate and graduate programs across various engineering disciplines prepare students for leadership roles, with a remarkable 100% internship placement rate and 98% of 2020 graduates securing employment within six months of graduation."

Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and University Provost Maria Toyoda commends WNE's commitment to excellence, emphasizing

## WNE SCHOOL OF LAW ALUMNA APPOINTED TO WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS SUPERIOR COURT BENCH

Attorney Tracy E. Duncan L'88, a distinguished alumna of Western New England University School of Law, has been appointed to serve as an associate justice on the Massachusetts Superior Court, becoming the second Black woman in western Massachusetts' history to hold this esteemed position. Her appointment was confirmed unanimously on October 25, 2023.

With over three decades of dedicated service in the legal field, Justice Duncan's appointment is a testament to her outstanding contributions, particularly in the areas of criminal defense, juvenile delinquency, and landlord-tenant law.

School of Law Dean Zelda Harris expressed her pride in Duncan's achievement, saying, "Tracy E. Duncan's appointment reflects the excellence and dedication we foster at Western New England University School of Law. We are thrilled to see our alumna making history and serving the community."



the University's mission to prepare students for successful careers. "The latest rankings underscore the hard work and dedication defining WNE's academic community, reinforcing its position as an institution dedicated to shaping successful futures."



# CAMPUS NEWS

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

## WNE SCHOOL OF LAW PROFESSOR CHAMPIONS HUMAN RIGHTS OF MIGRANTS AT AFRICAN COMMISSION EVENT

WNE School of Law Professor Luwam Dirar recently marked the culmination of a three-year journey with the formal acceptance of the African Guiding Principles on the Human Rights of All Migrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). This historic achievement, acknowledged in October of this year in Arusha, Tanzania, underscores Dr. Dirar's commitment to migrant workers' rights and her dedication to a human rights approach to migration policies.

As a highly regarded legal scholar with extensive international experience, Dr. Dirar collaborated with the ACHPR and colleagues to draft these guiding principles. Her personal connection to migration and the narratives of human rights abuses she encountered fueled her efforts to enhance legal protection for migrants.



Dr. Dirar emphasized the significance of these principles in safeguarding the rights of those on challenging journeys. Her collaboration with the ACHPR highlights the importance of a human rights-based approach to migration policies, reflecting a commitment to protecting the dignity and well-being of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Africa and beyond.

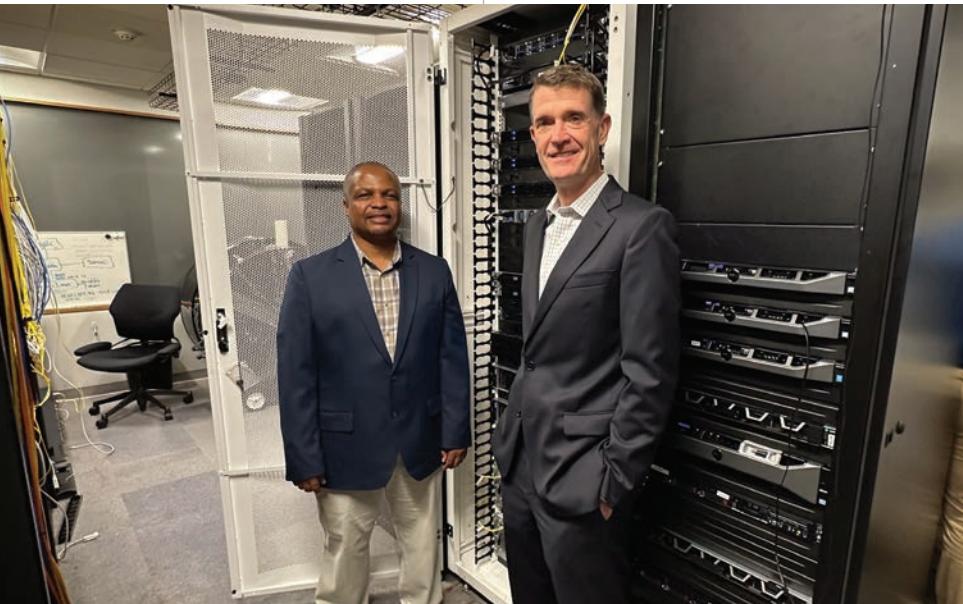
## WESTERN NEW ENGLAND UNIVERSITY WELCOMES CUTTING-EDGE LAMBDA ECHELON GPU CLUSTERS FOR FINTECH INCUBATOR

Western New England University (WNE) has welcomed Lambda, a leading computational solutions provider, and their cutting-edge Echelon cluster hardware to the heart of the WNE FinTech Incubator. This million-dollar supercomputer, made possible by a generous \$1.37 million grant

from MassTech, enhances WNE's technological capabilities. Dr. Charles Mutigwe, leading the FinTech Incubator, emphasizes the significance of the Lambda Echelon GPU clusters in providing students hands-on experience with state-of-the-art technology for real-world applications.

WNE College of Business Dean Sharianne Walker highlights the outstanding performance of the clusters, enabling students to tackle complex computational tasks, including AI and deep learning training. The FinTech Incubator, a hub for FinTech ecosystem advancement, will prepare students for AI/ML and FinTech careers through hands-on classes, local events, collaborations with startups, and sponsored research projects. Mutigwe notes that this addition significantly boosts the University's capabilities in AI and machine learning workloads.

Lambda, known for innovative computational solutions, aligns with WNE's mission to prepare students as work-ready and world-ready graduates in the dynamic technology field. The introduction of the Echelon GPU clusters further solidifies WNE's commitment to providing exceptional opportunities for student learning and engagement with cutting-edge technologies.



## WNE'S INAUGURAL NEW WRITERS READING SERIES SHOWCASES ACCLAIMED AUTHOR JUNG YUN

Western New England University (WNE) was honored to host the inaugural event of The New Writers Reading Series in October, featuring the distinguished author Jung Yun.

The College of Arts & Sciences spearheaded the development of The New Writers Reading Series, a distinguished literary initiative bringing celebrated authors to campus to engage the community in vibrant literary discussions. This series serves as a valuable platform for both established and emerging writers to share their insights, experiences, and creative processes.

Yun, renowned for her remarkable literary career, presented her acclaimed work, *O Beautiful*, acknowledged as a New York Times Editors' Choice and named a *San Francisco Chronicle* Book of the Year. Additionally, Yun's *Shelter* received acclaim,

earning nominations for the Center for Fiction's First Novel Prize and the Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers Award.

Yun's literary contributions have been featured in esteemed publications such as *Tin House*, *Massachusetts Review*, *Indiana Review*, *The New York Times*, *Atlantic*, and *The Washington Post*. Furthermore, Yun holds the esteemed position of associate professor of English at The George Washington University and serves on the board of directors at the PEN/Faulkner Foundation.

Supported by the Department of English and Cultural Studies and the Creative Writing Program, the audience had a unique opportunity to directly engage with Yun, gaining insights into her creative process and literary contributions. The event provided an enriching experience for literature enthusiasts and aspiring writers in attendance, marking the beginning of a new series at WNE.



## WNE WELCOMES NEW VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADVANCEMENT

Western New England University (WNE) is pleased to welcome Dean Hickey as the new vice president for advancement. As a member of the WNE senior leadership team, Hickey will lead the University's fundraising and alumni engagement efforts.

Holding a master of arts degree in philanthropy & development from St. Mary's University of Minnesota, MN, and a bachelor of science in business management from Central Connecticut State University, Hickey's educational journey is a testament to his commitment to excellence and continuous growth.

Before joining WNE, Hickey held various significant fundraising roles in higher education and the non-profit sector, including UMass Dartmouth Foundation, Lasell University, and Becker College.

Hickey shared his excitement about joining the WNE community and leading its advancement initiatives, saying, "I look forward to working alongside the Golden Bear community to inspire support for our educational mission. We are all energized by the opportunity to support WNE students as they pursue their educational goals."

WNE President Robert E. Johnson lauds Hickey as an accomplished professional with the vision and expertise to lead WNE's advancement endeavors. "Dean's wealth of experience, dedication to collaboration, and visionary leadership will undoubtedly guide our institution's advancement efforts into the future and contribute to WNE's continued growth and success."

## WESTERN NEW ENGLAND UNIVERSITY WINS GOLD AT EDMAWARDS FOR INNOVATIVE WEBSITE REDESIGN

Western New England University (WNE) has achieved remarkable recognition, winning gold at the prestigious 11th Annual Education Digital Marketing Awards (EDMAwards) for its innovative website redesign. This award, from over a thousand entries, highlights WNE's excellence in digital marketing and user experience in the education sector.

The redesigned wne.edu website, a result of an eleven-month collaborative effort, showcases WNE's commitment to enhancing its digital presence. It features a modern, engaging design, intuitive navigation, and dynamic content that captures the spirit of WNE. Key highlights include

a program finder for easy exploration of academic offerings and multimedia showcases reflecting campus life and educational impact.

"Receiving the gold award at the EDMAwards is more than a recognition; it's a testament to the strength, determination, and brilliance of the team behind this project," says Vice President for Marketing & External Affairs Mercedes Maskalik. "It exemplifies WNE's ability to not only meet but exceed expectations in branding, design, and user experience, solidifying our position as a leader in educational digital marketing."





# Golden Bear Athletics

## **WNE Men's Soccer Reaches NCAA Tournament for First Time in Seven Years**

The Western New England men's soccer team advanced to the NCAA Championships for the first time since 2016 under ninth-year head coach Devin O'Neil. Despite a 1-4-2 record to open the season, WNE came around to finish 5-1-2 in Commonwealth Coast Conference (CCC) play to earn the top spot in the playoff round. WNE opened the semifinal round with a thrilling victory over the Rams of Suffolk

University, needing penalty kicks to decide a winner as the Golden Bears came away with a 4-3 shootout victory to advance to the CCC Championship game. WNE matched with Roger Williams University, again needing penalty kicks, where the Golden Bears came away with a 5-4 victory in the shootout to win their first CCC Championship in seven years. WNE then competed in their first NCAA Championship since

the 2016 season, falling on the road to fourth-ranked Middlebury College by a final score of 3-0. The Golden Bears finished the 2023 season with a 6-6-7 record, including a 4-1-4 mark on home grass.





## **WNE Field Hockey Records Best Season in Nearly 20 Years**

Western New England field hockey started off the season with nine straight wins, a new program record, while going on to finish the season with 14 wins, their most in the program since the 2006 season. WNE allowed just five goals through their first nine games of the season, recording five shutouts over that span. The nine-game win streak was highlighted by an upset victory over the 12th-ranked Engineers of Massachusetts Institute of Technology at Golden Bear Stadium, where the Golden Bears came away with a 1-0 double overtime victory. Sophomore goalkeeper Ella Henry played in 18 games this season for WNE, recording 81 saves and a .844 save percentage, which ranked top among qualifying goalkeepers in the Commonwealth Coast Conference (CCC) and seventh overall in NCAA Division III. Henry and three others grabbed All-CCC recognition at the end of the season, including top scorer, sophomore Haley Kaczka, who registered 13 goals and three assists this season, good for 28 total points on the year.



## **Football Hosts Second New England Bowl Game, Defeats UMass-Dartmouth 37-7**

The Western New England football team completed their regular season schedule with a 7-3 record, winning their last four regular-season games. The Golden Bears were selected to compete in a New England Bowl Game for the second time in program history. WNE matched with Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference's runner-up, UMass-Dartmouth, in the Bowl Game. WNE capped off their

season with a win in the game, coming away with a 37-7 victory. Senior Jake Chiasson recorded 11 tackles in the win, notching five total tackles for loss and four total sacks, earning the New England Bowl MVP. The Golden Bears finished the season on a five-game win streak, defeating opponents 206-78 during that span.



# To Give and to Receive

What if giving and receiving isn't about expecting something in return? What if, instead, it's about the intangible rewards that amass over a lifetime of dedication to a calling?

Sometimes the benefits of a gift given are ones that we don't see for years. Maybe those benefits come with the harvest of a seed planted and forgotten. A first-year student steps into office hours for help and discovers an instructor who believes in their abilities. That student later becomes an advocate for others. Or a casual acquaintance at an internship endures to a mentorship that withstands the test of time.

Gifts can take a variety of shapes. While we typically associate them with envelopes or packages wrapped in ribbon, some of the greatest gifts are without form: they are time, energy, and compassion. We invite you to take a moment to reflect on where you give your time, your energy, and your compassion. You may find that your gifts define an aspect of yourself.

The Golden Bear alumni featured in the following stories embody the spirit of giving. Their various gifts are rooted in the love of a childhood sport, the drive to defy stereotypes, and the will to bring out the best in others. And, while it may be easy to spot the tangible rewards with a championship win or a new facility, the true impacts of their gifts have a far greater reach.

Clockwise from top left:  
Janet Johnson Bullard '69,  
Sara Taylor L'02,  
Kristen McClintock G'19,  
Mike Murray '12/G'18,  
Christine Pollender '99/G'09, and  
Gina Kos '88/G'95



# Janet Johnson Bullard '69

By Beverly Dwight,  
Former Vice President for Advancement

A true philanthropist with a heart of gold, Janet Johnson Bullard coupled determination and humility to create a life of abundance that, by her standards, is only worthwhile when shared.



"Everyone you meet has a story." These simple yet profound words, spoken by Janet Johnson Bullard at the June 6, 2023, Alumni Awards event where she was honored as the inaugural recipient of the Delbridge Spirit of Philanthropy Award, serve as a reminder that each person's life is a narrative, often marked by struggles, challenges, and triumphs. Bullard's own story is remarkable. She defied stereotypes, shattered glass ceilings, and pursued her dreams. Paving the way for future generations, Bullard is a quintessential philanthropist who believes that giving back is a key ingredient to happiness. A woman of abiding faith, Bullard regularly quotes the following biblical verse: "To whom much is given, much is required." Living each day in that spirit, Bullard leaves an indelible mark on all those she meets and the University she holds dear.

### BREAKING BARRIERS

In the early 1960s, Janet Johnson Bullard embarked on her educational journey with a determination to prove her skeptics wrong, hearing over and over again that a woman could not achieve what she was aspiring to accomplish in a field dominated by men. Instead, those very sentiments served as the catalyst that propelled her forward. Enrolling in evening classes to study business administration at Western New England College, Bullard recalls the first night she walked into the classroom, finding herself to be the sole woman among many aspiring business students. Far from deterring her, this stark reality fortified her resolve. With a deeply felt desire to excel, Bullard went on to challenge societal norms and redefine what women of her generation were capable of achieving.

Throughout her scholarly career at WNE, Bullard was blessed with dedicated and motivated faculty who expanded her horizons. They encouraged her to embrace opportunities, explore new ideas, and break free from any imposed limitations. Six years of part-time evening school later, Bullard emerged with a bachelor's degree and a clear sense that she had made a tangible step toward reaching her dreams. In that same year, she received a promotion at work, earning the title of assistant trust investment officer — a position that allowed her to manage investments just as her male counterparts did.



Bullard did not stop at that milestone. Equipped with a solid education and her natural tendency for self-motivation, she went on to establish her own investment management firm, breaking even more barriers in the process. Over time, she built a successful career in a field still traditionally dominated by men, all the while making a lasting impact on both the academic and financial worlds.

### A DEDICATED ALUMNA

Having graduated from Western New England's College of Business in 1969, Bullard remains passionate about the power of education and the pivotal role the University played in her journey. Not surprisingly, Bullard's appreciation translates into action. She served on the University's Board of Trustees and was an honorary co-chair of the Second Century Campaign. She also served on the College of Business's Portfolio Management Advisory Board, and in 2019, was the keynote speaker for the WNE Beta Gamma Sigma National Honor Society induction ceremony, where she was made an honorary member. Bullard is a current member of the College of Business Advisory Board, and she is especially delighted each time she connects with students.

Dr. Sharianne Walker, dean of the College of Business, aptly captures Bullard's remarkable impact: "Janet Johnson Bullard's unflagging support and generous contributions have significantly enriched our College of Business. Her dedication to our students and her commitment to

providing opportunities for their growth are truly inspiring. Janet's passion for our University is immeasurable, and we will be forever grateful for her presence in our lives."

## A PHILANTHROPIST WITH A HEART OF GOLD

Philanthropy is a philosophy that embodies the selfless act of giving to create a positive impact on society. Janet Johnson Bullard exemplifies the spirit of philanthropy in its truest form, with her altruism extending beyond the financial realm. She engages with those who are recipients of her generosity, and she hears their stories and touches their lives with her warmth and kindness.

Bullard's giving to the University is thoughtfully designed to support a wide range of needs. Several years ago, she established the Janet Johnson Bullard Endowed Scholarship and the Janet Johnson Bullard Finance Educational Enrichment Endowed Fund, both designed to benefit students and faculty in the College of Business. During the Second Century Campaign, Bullard made a \$3 million lead gift through a planned gift to establish the University's first-ever endowed chair, the Janet Johnson Bullard Endowed Chair in Finance, and the University was delighted to recognize Bullard's commitment and generosity by naming the College of Business Dean's Suite in Churchill Hall in her honor.

Bullard's leadership giving peaked in May of 2023 with the creation of two more remarkable funds through her bequest intentions: the Janet Johnson Bullard Women of Distinction Endowed Scholars Program and the Janet Johnson Bullard Endowed Fund for Financial Literacy. These funds exemplify her desire to empower and educate the next generation. The Women of Distinction Fund will support female students in their pursuit of excellence, while the Financial Literacy Fund will provide essential resources to help students gain a deeper understanding of both personal and professional financial matters.

## A RECORD-SETTING LEGACY

Janet Johnson Bullard's incredible generosity has made her the largest donor in the University's history, with her giving now exceeding \$10 million. Bullard's

*With a deeply felt desire to excel, Bullard went on to challenge societal norms and redefine what women of her generation were capable of achieving.*

philanthropic efforts not only transform Western New England's educational landscape, but also enrich the lives of countless students. Through her various endowed funds, Bullard will make a profound impact that extends beyond the confines of the classroom. Her carefully crafted giving reflects her determination, resilience, and steadfast commitment to breaking down barriers. Bullard's story is not only one of personal success but also serves as a beacon of hope and inspiration for all those who strive to challenge the status quo and create a more inclusive and equitable world.

Western New England University President Robert E. Johnson expresses his admiration for Bullard's remarkable and transformative philanthropy: "Janet's contributions to our University have been nothing short of extraordinary. Her generosity and devotion to WNE make a profound impact on our students and the entire University community. Janet's legacy is a testament to the power of philanthropy, and because of her magnanimous support, we are able to further our mission and provide opportunities for students and faculty that will last a lifetime."

## INAUGURAL RECIPIENT OF THE DELBRIDGE FAMILY SPIRIT OF PHILANTHROPY AWARD

The Delbridge name is well known at Western New England University and has





become synonymous with philanthropy and leadership. In September 2022, in honor of Kevin '77 and Sandra Delbridge's remarkable philanthropy and the positive impact they make on our students, the University created the Delbridge Family Spirit of Philanthropy Award.

Last spring, the University selected Janet Johnson Bullard '69 to be the inaugural recipient of the Delbridge Family Spirit of Philanthropy Award, with her impressive contributions and never-failing commitment to Western New England serving as the embodiment of the values that Kevin and Sandra Delbridge have championed. She mirrors their charitable intentions, and like them, she keeps students at the heart of her philanthropic endeavors.

At the Alumni Awards Ceremony last June, Kevin and Sandra Delbridge personally presented this award to Bullard. During their remarks, Kevin said: "Sandra and I could not imagine a more deserving first recipient of our award. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for all you do for Western New England University. It is an honor, and with overwhelming gratitude, that we and the University bestow upon you the Delbridge Family Spirit of Philanthropy Award."

## A ZEST FOR LIFE

Beyond her philanthropic endeavors, Janet Johnson Bullard is an exceptional individual. To meet her is to be lucky, and to know her is a gift. Her relationships are lifelong, and she is a devoted friend who cherishes the bonds she shares with others. She is a keen listener, a world traveler, an avid reader, and a student of history — among many other interesting attributes. Her infectious smile and twinkling eyes reflect her zest for life. To Bullard, life is a wonderful and fulfilling journey, even in the most challenging of times. Generous in spirit, Bullard is always willing to offer her wisdom and support to those in need. Her greatest joy is getting to know people on a personal level, valuing the unique qualities and experiences that make each individual special.

## A BEACON OF LIGHT

Janet Johnson Bullard's inspiring journey is a reminder that every person has the potential to overcome adversity and break barriers. Her life story is filled with anecdotes where determination, confidence, and courage were the underpinnings to her personal and professional satisfaction and achievements. Always a role model, Bullard continues to

challenge herself — and others — to be agents of positive change and advocates for progress.

A shining example of how one individual can make a profound impact on the world through the power of generosity and a heart filled with compassion, Bullard shared the following with the audience when she received the Delbridge Family Spirit of Philanthropy Award: "My current goal is to encourage students to pursue whatever career that will provide them with a sense of accomplishment and service. And to enjoy life to the fullest! May some of your children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren have the privilege of standing at this podium one day to express their thanks for what their education enabled them to achieve. Western New England University did it for me and will do it for them."

The entire University community is honored that Bullard has chosen to share her story, her life, and her philanthropy with them. Indeed, Janet Johnson Bullard is a beacon of light and inspiration to all who have the privilege of knowing her.

# *Sara Taylor L'02*

By Brittney Mihalich

**From college hoops to horses and affordable housing, Sara Taylor finds her joy along a winding path to nonprofit legal assistance.**

The financial crisis of the late 2000s presented a time of hardship for many. Institutional trust worldwide was collapsing, unemployment and defaults on housing loans hit record highs, and the country plummeted into the Great Recession.

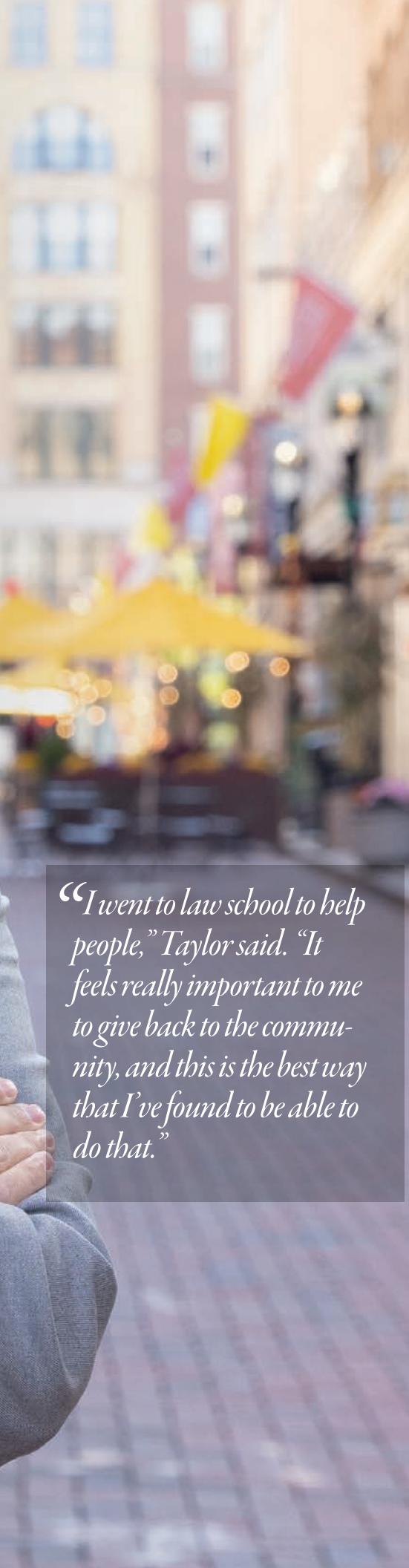
Sara Taylor had been working in private practice as an attorney for several years when she found herself among the 8.8 million Americans suddenly without employment. After graduating from Western New England College School of Law, she secured a position as a commercial real estate attorney and capitalized on the opportunity to gain experience in transactional law. In 2009, when many attorneys working in the transactional space could no longer sustain a full caseload, Taylor knew she had to find an alternative solution.

"During that time, I heard this quote," Taylor recalled. "It's attributed to Albert Einstein: 'In the midst of every crisis, lies great opportunity.' I remember being a little cynical about it, but then letting it sink in. Once I changed my perspective and looked for the opportunity, that's when I found another job."

This shift in perspective led Taylor to a position in insurance compliance, where she spent the following seven years broadening her skillset and advancing to the rank of associate director. The role deviated from her anticipated career path, and Taylor reflected on its broader benefits. "It wasn't where I thought I would end up," Taylor said, "but I learned a lot there. The biggest thing I learned was not to be afraid to try something new and not be afraid to fail."

In the winter of 2022, Taylor left the





*“I went to law school to help people,” Taylor said. “It feels really important to me to give back to the community, and this is the best way that I’ve found to be able to do that.”*

corporate sphere to accept a position as a staff attorney with Pro Bono Partnership, a Hartford-based firm that provides legal assistance to nonprofit organizations. The Partnership has mitigated risk, spotted potential pitfalls, and navigated business transactions for their constituents in Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York for 26 years, all on a pro bono basis. Through the generosity of Robinson & Cole, Pro Bono Partnership houses their Hartford office on Trumbull St., just across from Hartford Stage and the XL Center. The view from the 28th floor offers a panorama of Bushnell Park, Travelers Tower, and the State Capitol. On a clear day, Taylor can see all the way to Springfield.

“Everything that I’ve been through along the way has really prepared me for this,” Taylor said, speaking of her present role. Her clients’ legal needs call upon many of the areas in which she has practiced, including construction, real estate, transactional and business law, and compliance.

One of Taylor’s clients is Shepard Meadows Equestrian Center. Based in Bristol, CT, the nonprofit organization provides equine-assisted therapy for individuals struggling with mental and emotional issues. The team at Pro Bono Partnership arranged for a volunteer attorney to assist in negotiating a long-term lease needed to build a new barn and learning center. As her first client when she joined the Partnership, Taylor feels a particular kinship with the program and its director. “The nonprofit arena is really full of people who want to leave the world a better place, and I do, too” Taylor said. “I see myself somewhat as a kindred spirit with those people and want to help them do that.”

In her work with the Partnership, Taylor has also assisted a client that works directly with the housing insecure. The organization, which started as a grassroots nonprofit more than two decades ago, is renovating a facility to build more capacity for residents. “Their legal needs have hit on many areas where I’ve practiced,” Taylor said. “Those clients have a special place in my heart, and I want to try to help them.”

As staff attorney for Pro Bono Partnership, Taylor enjoys a variety of roles. In addition to working directly with clients, she acts as a supervising attorney, matching volunteer

attorneys with pro bono work opportunities in their areas of practice. “I get to see our volunteers in action and see how excited they get to help our clients,” she reflects.

Taylor’s commitment to nonprofits exceeds the scope of her job description. Her work in the field has helped her see how integral nonprofit organizations are to everyday life, from social service organizations helping children and the elderly, to animal rescue and rehoming initiatives. She consistently looks for ways to support nonprofits by encouraging them to become clients if they qualify or encouraging others to get involved through financial aid or volunteerism. Taylor truly lives by example, too.

“I went to law school to help people,” Taylor said. “It feels really important to me to give back to the community, and this is the best way that I’ve found to be able to do that.”

Taylor looks back on her time at WNE School of Law with both fondness and gratitude. She credits her aptitude for spotting issues and solving problems to her early preparation in law school, and she uses these invaluable skills daily with her clients. Taylor has maintained close ties with the University since graduation, and she praises how the School of Law and the University itself has “evolved over the years, how it’s grown, and how it’s been willing to change in ways to remain strong.”

Outside the office, you’ll find the Springfield native on the golf course or cheering on the local women’s basketball teams. She adds, with a smile, that she once graced the courts with the WNE Law basketball team herself.

To present law school students and young professionals aspiring to make a greater impact on their community, Taylor’s advice is clear: “Find something that you enjoy doing. That could be something where you get involved in volunteering, or it could be something that you just want to do with a group of people that you really enjoy spending time with. It’s that simple.”

While she may not have followed the route that she anticipated as a young law school graduate, Sara Taylor has turned her career into a conduit for meaningful impact, proving that the most rewarding paths are often those we least expect.

# Gina Kos '88/G'95 and Christine Pollender '99/G'09

By Alanna Grady

## After transitioning from careers in banking and healthcare, Gina Kos and Christine Pollender create opportunities for clients to “give and grow” at Sunshine Village.

When Gina Kos thought of life after graduation from Western New England University, she had one thing in mind: banking. She was ready to don her business suit and embark on the world of financial administration and management. But as time went on, Kos found herself searching for more.

“Something was missing in my life,” Kos recalled. Seeking to fill the void she felt, Kos decided to explore new experiences beyond her banking career. This exploration led her to volunteer at a golf tournament benefiting Sunshine Village, a nonprofit organization based in Chicopee, MA.

Founded in 1967, Sunshine Village serves 400 adult clients with developmental disabilities across three campuses in the Greater Springfield area. The organization provides therapeutic and life skills development programming along with work and volunteer opportunities that help clients achieve independent lifestyles.

After learning more about Sunshine Village through her experience at the tournament, Kos decided to return the following year. Though she didn’t know it at the time, her simple act of giving back would eventually lead to a career with the organization. Kos joined Sunshine Village in 1991 as its director of marketing and development. Five years later, she was promoted to executive director.

Even in those first years, Kos knew she had found her calling. “Two weeks after I started at Sunshine Village, I felt like I was home,” Kos said. “It’s an incredibly special place ... I saw how the organization was doing great things and [thought] how

I, myself, would then be able to do great things.”

Though more than 30 years have passed since that first golf outing, an experience from early in her career gave Kos the perspective that she has carried with her ever since.

“One of my first couple of weeks here, I was bringing a client to her job,” Kos said. “She started talking to me about all of these things that she does at the job and how she loves it, and she asked, ‘Can you drive a little faster? I can’t wait to get there!’ ... It really inspired me that we have individuals who want to be productive members of society and are so grateful for the opportunities that they receive.”

Kos recalls that when Sunshine Village was originally founded, there weren’t many opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities to continue to learn and achieve independent lifestyles beyond their school-age years. Now, through the organization and partnerships with companies including Sanderson MacLeod and Westover Air Reserve Base, clients can pursue work and community involvement well into adulthood.

“What we’ve learned is that people can have wonderful and meaningful lives,” Kos said. “It might be a very different life than what the ‘traditional’ track is. But that doesn’t mean it can’t be wonderful and meaningful.”

Just as Kos discovered a fulfilling career path at Sunshine Village, the organization attracted another Western New England University alumna, Christine (Chris) Pollender. After more than a decade in the

*“Sometimes, people think that community is everyone working together,” Pollender said. “But I think it’s also [about people] giving what they can, giving what their abilities are. And we can be fulfilled by giving to others.”*

healthcare industry, Pollender was drawn to the nonprofit sector, finding a new sense of purpose at Sunshine Village in 2018. Her decision to switch sectors was not just a career change but a step toward a deeper connection with her community and work.

The impacts of the switch, according to Pollender, were almost immediate: “I said [to myself], this is where I belong. This is where I should be. All of my experiences in corporate and healthcare, I think, have led me here.”

The effects Sunshine Village has on its clients further cemented Pollender’s belief in the organization and the work that she achieves as part of it. “Nothing could have prepared me for how connected I would feel to the work that [our staff] does on a daily basis with the people that they serve,” Pollender said.



**Chris Pollender (left) and Gina Kos (right)**

Both Kos and Pollender, natives of Springfield, MA, returned to their alma mater to join the University's graduate MBA programs. Kos graduated from the weekend MBA program, while Pollender earned her degree through an early hybrid format. Both Kos and Pollender described the value of being able to complete their courses while maintaining their careers.

"I learned not only from the course descriptions, but really from the people in my cohorts who were working at other local organizations," Kos said. "It was a great way to learn from each other."

Kos credited her collegiate experiences with not only helping her to keep a pulse on conversations that were going on in her work community, but also helping her develop the leadership skills that she would

need for the nonprofit world. These skills allowed her to build, as she described, the internal and external networks necessary to make Sunshine Village successful. Building these communities, Kos said, creates more opportunities for clients "to work and learn and to give and grow."

"We like to give back to the community that has been so supportive of us," said Kos. She listed several partnerships with local organizations such as The Gray House and the Dakin Human Society, both located in Springfield.

Pollender reflected on the reciprocal relationship among different facets of the community. "We are an organization that serves people," Pollender said. "But the people that we serve also serve in the community with our assistance. I think that

has opened my eyes to the fact that there can be less limitations."

For Gina Kos and Chris Pollender, both long-standing members of the communities where they live and work, their everyday experiences at Sunshine Village, with the clients they serve, and the partnerships they've formed instill a broader understanding of what "community" means and what its possibilities are.

"Sometimes, people think that *community* is everyone working together," Pollender said. "But I think it's also [about people] giving what they can, giving what their abilities are. And we can be fulfilled by giving to others."

# Mike Murray '12/G'18

By Brittney Mihalich

## Driven by the power of positive relationships, Mike Murray empowers urban youth to reach their fullest potential—on and off the playing field.

Coach Mike really has it figured out. He has a college degree and a full-time job. He's put together. He's professional. To a kid killing time in a Harlem in-school suspension room, what Coach Mike has is a pipe dream.

Mike Murray has an advantage when it comes to motivating student-athletes: the lessons he delivers come from personal experience. And for those kids in the suspension room, Harlem Lacrosse may be their ticket out.

With programs in Baltimore, Boston, Los Angeles, New York, and Philadelphia, Harlem Lacrosse changes the life trajectories of inner-city youth through hands-on academic support, mentorship, counseling, and — of course — lessons from the field. The non-profit organization uses the sport of lacrosse as a vehicle to open doors and opportunities.

As managing director for Harlem Lacrosse, Murray oversees 10 programs in New York. He ensures effective budget planning, strategizes student retention measures, maps season plans, and collaborates with other regional directors to achieve their three pillars: academic, athletic, and social-emotional growth.

His students are often surprised to learn that the coach who leads their study halls and talks to their teachers did not have a perfect record himself. In fact, it was quite the opposite.

### FROM CHALLENGE TO TRIUMPH

The Long Island native grew up with a lacrosse stick in his hands. The sport was his identity, and he arrived at Western New England University eager to join the men's lacrosse team and major in Sport Management — admittedly, because the field included the word *sport*. Then, during his sophomore year, Murray became academically ineligible to play lacrosse.

"Priorities were all mixed up," he said. "I really didn't understand what it meant to be a successful student-athlete. I just thought I was there to play lacrosse."

Murray dedicated the remainder of his sophomore year to personal growth and regaining the confidence of his teammates and coaches. Recognizing the need for a significant change in his approach, he committed to a complete turnaround. During this period of self-improvement, Murray drew strength from the support of his teammates, academic advisors, and coaching staff, particularly Head Coach John Klepacki.

"I understood the importance of relationships," Murray said. Coach Klepacki had recruited Murray to play on the team, and Murray concentrated his efforts on maintaining the trust that he earned back. "It was an eye-opening experience about how to go about my life in a professional way, the right way, an effective way, a confident way," he recalls.

By the time he graduated, Murray had not just reestablished that trust; he had earned himself a seat on John Klepacki's coaching staff. Murray coached six seasons of WNE men's lacrosse under Coach K, and he completed a master's degree in English for Teachers while he was at it.

As a coach, Klepacki saw in Murray an ability to connect with athletes on and off the field. "He was here to make sure the athletes had someone to go to," he said. "He wanted to make an impact. He wanted to be part of something bigger than himself."

In the 10 years that spanned Murray's playing and coaching career at WNE, he became a member of the Klepacki family. Murray credits his character development and ability to overcome adversity to tough love and the strong relationship he and Klepacki built.

"He told me he was proud of me. That



meant a lot." Murray said of his coach. "I want to do what he did for me and apply it to my kids every single day now."

At Harlem Lacrosse, Coach Mike does exactly that.

### MORE THAN A WINNING RECORD

Murray sees elements of his younger self in many of the students he has coached. His ability to relate to their struggles and his openness about his setbacks allows him to break down the barriers and create trust to meet them at their level. Murray relates that he, too, "had to get out of somewhere to be who I am right now." He provides the same level of investment and support for his students at Harlem Lacrosse that his WNE community did for him.

By this point, Murray has noticed a pattern: "I realized that it wasn't about the X's and O's that I knew about; it's about the Jimmys and Joes and the relationships I build with those kids." The effort he invests in stacking offense, planning defensive strategy, and writing academic intervention plans doesn't pay off unless he invests in that relationship of trust.



One season in particular stands out in Murray's memory as a Harlem Lacrosse coach. He was leading one of the strongest teams in the city, the student-athletes were working together and peeling off wins, and they were on a championship push. Then, Murray lost both his grandmother and his aunt. Coach Mike was off his game, and his guys noticed.

Just two days before a pivotal rivalry, Coach Mike walked into the locker room to find his team waiting for him, refusing to dress and get on the field. Instead, they huddled around their coach and sat with him until he released the emotion he had been hiding under his sunglasses.

"This is the family that I'd been trying to create for the longest time, and it took me going through this to realize I'm part of the family, too. I'm ingrained in this."

That year, the team dedicated their championship win to Coach Mike and his family. "When you talk about give and receive, it's the love that's two ways, it's the care that's two ways, it's the emotional investment in each other's lives that's two ways," Murray said. "I'm making those kids better every day, I know that. But they're making me better also."

## CHANGING THE LANDSCAPE

Murray has been with Harlem Lacrosse for six years now. In that time, he has witnessed the city become a hotbed for lacrosse. Where basketballs once dominated gray sidewalks and open lots, he sees kids with lacrosse sticks flocking to green fields.

"I could be biased," Murray said, "but we are opening so many doors, opportunities for these kids with the sport of lacrosse, and the families are seeing it, the communities are seeing it, and they're coming on full force to support us."

Colleges and universities are noticing, too. When Murray was one of six Black athletes on the WNE men's lacrosse team ten years ago, they took pride in having one of the most diverse teams in the country. Though Murray prepares his student-athletes to be one of few students of color on a college roster, he expects to see more diversity soon. Harlem Lacrosse has become a nationwide pipeline for recruiting, and four HBCU schools have adopted lacrosse as a varsity sport — with more on the horizon.

Back in Harlem, Murray activates this



*"When you talk about give and receive, it's the love that's two ways, it's the care that's two ways, it's the emotional investment in each other's lives that's two ways,"*

change one student at a time. In his former role as program director within a school, he focused especially on the kids facing academic or behavioral trouble. He once awarded an A on an exam with a new lacrosse stick and the encouragement: "You just showed me, your mother, your teachers, and yourself what you're capable of because you are motivated by a lacrosse stick. I want you to be motivated for your life."

Now, as managing director, Murray's reach extends further. The highlight of his day is when he closes his laptop at 2:00 p.m. and heads over to practice. On Thursdays at M.S./H.S. 223, he can watch four programs at once when he stands in the middle of the field. "I can see, this coach needs help

here, who needs more support. I'm really enjoying being coach director of all the teams, because now I'm impacting and affecting more kids at a higher rate."

While Coach Mike's journey to success was marked by academic challenges, he credits his experience at WNE with developing his skills in building relationships and leading a team of student-athletes and coaches. Those who held Murray accountable through his lowest points — his coaches, teammates, and the Student Success Center staff — and then guided him through his years as graduate assistant and coach, set him up to thrive. Now, he's paying it forward.

# Kristen McClintock G'19

By Sarah Leete Tsitso

## Serving with Heart: Kristen McClintock Leads with Compassion at The Gray House.

Kristen McClintock is dressed in jeans, a T-shirt, and sneakers. She immediately apologizes for her outfit.

"I feel so under-dressed," she says.

Why is the executive director of The Gray House sporting this particular outfit on this particular day? It's Thursday, which means it's Distribution Day. And on Distribution Day, McClintock — along with the rest of her staff and a cadre of volunteers — spends several hours loading 50-pound boxes of food into clients' cars.

"We don't like to call it a food pantry," says McClintock. "We call it The Market. It's one of the ways we are trying to reduce stigma. For many of the families we serve, it's really hard for them to ask for help. We do what we can to make it a little more dignified." The Gray House serves between 300 and 400 families on Distribution Day. "People can drive right up, pop their trunk, show us their card, get their groceries loaded up, and go on their merry way," McClintock shares.

*Merry* is a good word to describe McClintock. There is something cheerful and fully present about the way she approaches her work — and life in general.

McClintock has been executive director of The Gray House in Springfield since March 2020, just days before the pandemic shut the world down. For almost 40 years, The Gray House has been serving local residents with a variety of social services, from The Market to after-school programming for children, adult English language classes to diaper distribution.

For McClintock, staying involved in direct service is an important part of her role at The Gray House.

"This is why we all do this work — to interact with the community," she says. "If I was just here at my desk, behind my computer, I wouldn't be able to connect to the people we serve. You can't make those connections with the community if you

don't know what people's needs are, what their hopes and dreams are."

McClintock remembers her own childhood, and how being raised by a single mother who was reluctant to ask for help made her want to use her talents to help others in the same situation.

"Growing up without a lot of money made me aware that when you live on the edge financially, the smallest little incident can snowball into a catastrophe," she says. "I wish my mom felt she could have asked for help without that stigma. She was a very

*"Growing up without  
a lot of money made me  
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can snowball into  
a catastrophe."*

proud woman. And we see that all the time here at The Gray House. It is incredibly difficult for families to take that first step, to come for food or other services. So, for me, I love when we can make someone feel respected and welcome when they come in for the first time. It's about removing those barriers."

McClintock's history with The Gray House began long before she took over as executive director. As a matter of fact, she credits Western New England University for introducing her to this important organization.

On the wall in her office is a laminated clipping from the WNE Westerner, dated

Oct. 28, 2018, that features a photo of McClintock and several of the students she led during her tenure as assistant director of volunteerism at the University. That day, she and a group of students from the CARE Club spent time at The Gray House, volunteering to help with food distribution and landscaping. It's a day McClintock will never forget.

"I had volunteered for so many great nonprofits," she says. "But there was something different about The Gray House. I loved our experience here. We were handing out food and the clients were sharing their stories with us. It was really impactful, and so after we left that day, I said we have to come back. We have to do as much as we can for them. So, we started doing drives at WNE for [The Gray House's] back-to-school backpack drives and food drives with Res Life."

McClintock says she really enjoyed working with the WNE students.

"I loved WNE and working with the students in the volunteer coordinator role," she says. "These students really are the crème de la crème. They actively sought out volunteer opportunities simply because they wanted to give back to the community."

While working at WNE, McClintock took advantage of the free tuition benefit and obtained her MAET (Master's of Education for Teachers). However, it took her a little longer to finish than she expected, and the 15-month program turned into a four-year journey to finish her degree.

"Some of the students I worked with at WNE knew I was on the slow track for my master's," says McClintock. "I was taking one class at a time, working full time, and raising a family. A lot of these students were with me through the whole process. We bonded over having to go home and study."

When she finally received her degree, some of her students presented her with a special gift that still sits on a shelf behind her



desk. It's a nameplate that reads "Master McClintock, Master of Greatness."

"It made me laugh," she says. "For a while, they called me Master McClintock."

Two brief years later, the executive director at The Gray House moved out of the area, and there was an opening for her replacement. While McClintock loved her job at WNE, she couldn't pass up the opportunity to apply.

"This was an opportunity for me to make even more of a difference," she says.

Since then, McClintock successfully led the organization through the pandemic, coming out the other end even stronger, serving 198% more people. The pandemic also allowed them to re-imagine several

programs and find new ways to reach their community.

"I wasn't scared of failing because there was no precedent for what we were doing," she says. "It was kind of liberating; the pandemic gave us a chance to try new things. Things that ended up being a better fit. But we kind of had to be forced into an innovative way of thinking."

As McClintock continues making a difference every day in the lives of her clients at The Gray House, she maintains a close connection to WNE. Her husband, Dr. Sean McClintock, is a professor there, teaching organic chemistry. And her 17-year-old son was just accepted into the WNE College of Engineering.

She credits WNE for much of what she learned about volunteerism and giving back to her community.

"I'm proud knowing that when I leave work each day, I've helped make somebody's life a little easier, made a difference," Kristen McClintock says, getting a little emotional. "I know that sounds corny, but the littlest act of kindness can really change the course of someone's day, or week, or month. That makes me feel good. Of course, there are rough days, but there are so many good things that can happen. People have come to rely on us. And they know we are here for them. This is what we should all be doing for one another."

# HIGH SPIRITS AT HOME COMING



**With looming wet and windy weather, Western New England University alumni, fans, friends, and family returned to campus October 21 to celebrate Homecoming 2023.**

Golden Bears in attendance did not let the rain dampen their spirits, as there was still a lot to celebrate here on Wilbraham Road, including a milestone reunion for the class of 1993, various sport reunions, alumni games, varsity games, U&ME dinner dance and reunion, the Downes Hall of Fame dinner, and the first ever Homecoming Brew & Gold event held at Loophole Brewing in downtown Springfield.

**Relive, experience, and enjoy a look back at Homecoming 2023 at [alumni.wne.edu/homecoming2023](http://alumni.wne.edu/homecoming2023)**



## Downes Hall of Fame

The Downes Hall of Fame awards ceremony kicked off the weekend festivities on Friday night with Golden Bear alumni athletes Kara (Acken) Landon '03 (field hockey), Jim Bayne '08 (men's basketball), Matt Rogers '11 (baseball), and Jeffrey Wagner '12 (men's cross country) honored as Class of 2023 inductees.





## Golden Bear Boulevard

While Golden Bear Boulevard looked a bit different this year, the wide variety of food trucks, kid zone games, Golden Bear gear and giveaways, and so much more remained the same. Alumni, friends, and fans were able to shop Golden Bear Boulevard for the first time ever, with several WNE alumni- and student-owned shops, as well as an athletics table and school store.

## Golden Bear Athletics Scoreboard

On Saturday, despite heavy rains and strong winds, Golden Bear football was able to secure a last-minute touchdown to ensure a 10-9 victory over Husson University. Sunday, both the men's and women's soccer teams took on Endicott College. After a full 90 minutes, the women finished their game with a 0-0 tie and clinched the first-seed moving into the CCC tournament, while the men took home the 1-0 win, which helped set them upon the top of the CCC standings.

Alumni games for field hockey, men's ice hockey, women's basketball, and men's lacrosse also took place.

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

## Homecoming Brew & Gold

Capping off Homecoming with a celebration that highlighted what it truly means to be a Golden Bear, over 100 alumni and friends gathered at Loophole Brewing. The Class of 1993 celebrated their 30th reunion at the event at the alum-nus-owned brewery in downtown Springfield.

## U&ME Dinner Dance

Alumni and students from United and Mutually Equal (U&ME) reconnected with fellow Golden Bears, faculty, staff, and current students while dancing the night away.



# ALUMNI NEWS

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

## ALUMNI & FRIENDS TEED OFF FOR THE 54TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

On Friday, May 26, at the Country Club of Wilbraham, WNE alumni and friends kicked off the unofficial start of the summer with the 54th Annual Alumni Golf Tournament. With tournament play supporting the Alumni Association Golf Tournament Endowed Scholarship, those in attendance were in high spirits as they competed on the course and helped to raise over \$16,000. For the past 17 years, the Alumni Association Golf Tournament Endowed Scholarship has been awarded to qualifying and

deserving students who demonstrate commitment, academic excellence, and community engagement. Support of the Alumni Tournament allows WNE to grow the scholarship fund and continue the tradition of providing annual support to our students with financial needs. Learn more and view photos at [alumni.wne.edu/news](http://alumni.wne.edu/news).

**Save the date for the 55th Annual Alumni Golf Tournament – Friday, May 24, 2024.**



## PRESIDENT'S DONOR RECEPTION CELEBRATES GOLDEN BEAR PHILANTHROPY

The annual President's Donor Reception was held on Wednesday, September 27, at GreatHorse during an evening full of celebration and gratitude. Alumni, families, friends, faculty, and staff were recognized for their loyal and generous support of Western New England University. As the sun set overlooking the rolling hills of the Pioneer Valley, Western New England University President Robert E. Johnson welcomed guests and expressed his appreciation for their philanthropic support. Appreciation was truly the theme of the evening and was shared repeatedly by the students who have benefited from scholarships made possible by the generosity of the WNE community. With over 100 Golden Bear supporters present, Dr. Johnson took this opportunity to thank them all for their kindness, as

they have, "time and time again, demonstrated their commitment to the values and missions of WNE."

A tradition of the President's Donor Reception is the presentation of the Benefactors' Award. This year, Dianne F. Doherty G'81 and, in memory, Paul Spence Doherty, Esq. were formally inducted into the Benefactors' Society. Paul, who served as a trustee from 1973-1986, and later Dianne, who joined the board in 2018, have been long-standing friends and supporters of the University. In 2007, Dianne and Paul established the Doherty Family Endowed Scholarship, which supports students from the counties of Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin, in Massachusetts. Learn more and view photos at [alumni.wne.edu/news](http://alumni.wne.edu/news).



## GOLDEN BEARS CELEBRATED AT THE ALUMNI AWARDS

The saying "Once a Golden Bear, Always a Golden Bear" is a testament to the unwavering commitment students and alumni have to Western New England University. This profound devotion to the University was on full display at the Alumni Awards event on Monday, June 5, at the Marriott Downtown in Springfield, as four deserving alumni were honored for their dedication, integrity, generosity, and contributions to the WNE community and beyond.

### THE DELBRIDGE FAMILY SPIRIT OF PHILANTHROPY AWARD

This award recognizes the sustained and significant philanthropic service of a WNE graduate over their lifetime. This award is named in honor of Kevin S. Delbridge '77/H'19, whose extraordinary support over more than 35 years has significantly impacted the WNE student experience, including transforming the delivery of career services and providing scholarships to hundreds of students from Springfield and surrounding communities.



Janet Johnson Bullard '69

### OUTSTANDING YOUNG ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR AWARDS

This award honors young alumni who have graduated within the last ten years that have demonstrated a commitment to Western New England University and its mission in conjunction with contribution and service to society, or through accomplishment and leadership in their profession.



Zeno Temple '20

### THE MICHAEL A. SERAFINO '77 ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Michael A. Serafino '77 Alumnus of the Year Award recognizes an alumnus who has displayed an extraordinary commitment to professional achievement, civic responsibility, high personal standards, and to Western New England University in the spirit of knowledge and service. This award has been presented to alumni for over 50 years. In 2022, the award was named in tribute to and in fond remembrance of Michael (Mike) A. Serafino '77, who passed away in November 2021. The Michael A. Serafino '77 Alumnus of the Year Award celebrates Serafino's legacy and the impact that dedicated Golden Bears like him continue to make on campus and in the community.



John Turgeon '83

Learn more about our honorees, the event, and view photos at [alumni.wne.edu/alumniawards2023](https://alumni.wne.edu/alumniawards2023).



Laura Madaio '13



## THE COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING HOSTS ITS 22ND ANNUAL ALUMNI MENTORING PROGRAM

With over 45 alumni from across the country registered, the Western New England University College of Engineering hosted the 22nd Annual Alumni Mentoring Program kickoff event on Thursday, October 5 — the first in a series of mentoring events slated for fall 2023 with the intention of connecting first-year engineering students with engineering alumni professionals. Hosted on Zoom, the event — an academic requirement for all first-year engi-

neering students — provided close to 200 students exclusive access to engage with over 40 alumni from across New England and as far as California, Florida, Missouri, Virginia, and Texas. Through an array of breakout rooms and roundtable discussions, alumni collaborated with students to offer guidance, expertise, and advice as they look to develop their areas of interest, chart their academic paths, and enhance their aspirations for future careers.

# Beverly Dwight

## A Transformative Journey

Longstanding Vice President  
for Advancement, Retires

By Vea Carabine



**On June 30, 2023, Beverly Dwight, vice president for advancement, retired after an incredible career spanning nearly 24 years at Western New England University. Her retirement marks the end of an era, during which she played a pivotal role in elevating our University's fundraising and alumni engagement efforts.**

Dwight joined Western New England on September 13, 1999, with a clear mission in mind. She was brought in to set the stage for the University's first-ever comprehensive campaign. "We had to build a team and build the infrastructure to launch a campaign, and we did. The campaign results exceeded our expectations, and it felt like we really had done something very special," said Dwight as she reflected on her first campaign.

That first comprehensive campaign laid the foundation for future success, generating both momentum and excitement for Western New England University. With an unwavering commitment to excellence the support of her team, she went on to raise

over \$100 million in funds for WNE over the course of her career.

When Dwight first arrived in September of 1999, the program of philanthropy was relatively young. She succeeded by developing compelling strategies that resonated with donors, aligning their philanthropic desires with the University's evolving needs.

One of Dwight's guiding principles throughout her tenure was maintaining a high level of integrity in all endeavors. She emphasized the importance of not only achieving objectives, but also ensuring transparency and accountability in gift management and stewardship. "It was an honor to facilitate the philanthropic desires of our alumni and friends on behalf of Western New England," she remarked.

While it is unusual for advancement professionals to remain in one position for as long as Dwight did, it was the steep trajectory of growth at Western New England University that kept her engaged throughout her tenure. The University was in the midst of significant growth, and it was a dynamic place to be. Dwight observed, "It was exciting. We added the College of Pharmacy and Health

Sciences, we moved from being a College to a University, which was a huge shift in our brand, we added PhD programs." As the University evolved and expanded, the traditions remained. We were still recognizable as Western New England College, and at the same time, we'd grown and matured. Through it all, Dwight remained devoted to the mission, "It was a pleasure to work at Western New England. I was challenged all the time — challenged in a good way."

Over the years, the University underwent substantial changes, but Dwight remained a steadfast advocate for our institution's growth and traditions. She emphasized the importance of respecting individuals' experiences with the University and building trusting relationships. As Dwight said, "We respected where people were coming from and we honored their experience with the University. In doing so, we held true to our job, which was to bring them with us in the direction that the University was going. It was most important to me that we build a trusting relationship where a healthy dialogue could be had about the University's past and present."

When asked what she will miss most about her time at Western New England, her answer was simple, "the people." Dwight's lasting legacy is built on trust, dedication, and the ability to create opportunities that match the interests and philanthropic desires of alumni and friends with the University's needs.

Since her retirement, Dwight has embraced the opportunity to shape her own calendar. She is exploring many new and different interests, and she continues to challenge herself to learn and grow. She is trying new things, succeeding at some and not so much at others, but she is having fun. She faces this next exciting chapter of her life with the same enthusiasm that defined her career at Western New England University.

We celebrate the mark Beverly Dwight has left on Western New England University and express deepest gratitude for her unwavering commitment and dedication. Her legacy is a testament to what can be achieved when a passionate and dedicated individual works alongside an enthusiastic team.





## Honoring Exceptional Students at the Annual Skookum Awards

As one of the first events celebrating the Class of 2024, the Office of Alumni Engagement held the 36th annual Skookum Awards on Sunday, September 24, inducting 15 exceptional students into an exclusive cohort of outstanding Golden Bear alumni.

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.

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



**Grant Manley**,  
2023 Grand Skookum, Political Science major from Lake Elsinore, CA



**Riley Franzo**  
2023 Royal Skookum, Biomedical Engineering major with a double minor in Biomedical Physics and Mathematical Science from Canyon Lake, CA



**Abigail Hay**  
2023 Royal Skookum, Neuroscience major with a minor in Chemistry from Plattsburgh, NY

The following 12 students received Skookum honors:



**Sean Alvord**, Accounting and Finance double major from Westfield, MA



**Helen Gillespy**, Mechanical Engineering major from Bedford, MA



**Natalie Parker**, Health Science major with minors in Biology, Chemistry, and Spanish from Slingerlands, NY



**Max Brouillard**, Psychology major with a minor in Theater from Wolcott, CT



**Taylor Keegan**, Sport Management major with a minor in Marketing from Bristol, CT



**Loredanna Randazzo**, Psychology major and Doctor of Occupational Therapy student from Agawam, MA



**Brian Cooper**, Mechanical Engineer with a double minor in Computer Science and Mathematics from Glendale, NY



**Janis Negron**, Psychology major from Springfield, MA



**Kimberly Ngo**, Neuroscience major with a minor in Criminal Justice from Southbridge, MA



**Owen Feindel**, Civil Engineering major from Ellington, CT



**Dante Talamini**, Mechanical Engineering major from Stafford Springs, CT



**Kyle Zemba**, Marketing major with a minor in Computer Science from East Longmeadow, MA

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

# Recognizing Accomplished Alumni at the 2023 Law Alumni Awards Dinner

**Western New England University School of Law held the 9th Annual Law Alumni Awards Dinner on Friday, November 3, at the Delaney House in Holyoke, MA, where four accomplished alumni were honored for their leadership, contributions to law, and commitment to service.**

Hosted by the WNE Law Alumni Association, the event recognizes and celebrates recipients of the Dean's Alumni Excellence Award, the Distinguished Alumni Award, and the Ascending Alumni Award. President of the WNE Law Alumni Association Navid Ansari L'05 emceed the event, while President Robert E. Johnson and Dean of the School of Law Zelda Harris shared remarks.

Learn more about 2023 award recipients and awards history at [alumni.wne.edu/2023lawhonorees](http://alumni.wne.edu/2023lawhonorees).



## DEAN'S ALUMNI EXCELLENCE AWARD

At the discretion of the dean of the WNE School of Law, the Dean's Alumni Excellence Award is given in recognition of alumni who have a record of service to the school, community, state, nation, or world that demonstrates the core values of the School of Law.

### Byrnes Guillaume L'06

**Attorney & Owner of Byrnes Guillaume, Attorney at Law, PLLC**



## DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

The Distinguished Alumni Award is given to alumni who have made significant contributions, not only to the legal profession but to society as a whole while exemplifying leadership, ethics, and integrity.

### The Honorable Mary-Lou Rup L'78

**Senior Council at Bulkley Richardson LLP  
Retired Massachusetts Superior Court Judge**

## 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.



### Gustavo Mayen L'13

**Attorney & Sole Proprietor of the Law Offices of Gustavo Mayen**



### Ashely Randle L'14

**Massachusetts Commissioner of Agriculture**

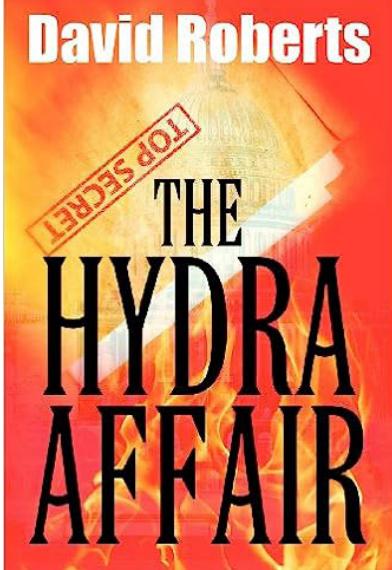
# Class Notes



## 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.

## 1970s



David Roberts G'77 (MBA) has published an action-thriller novel, *The Hydra Affair*.

**The Honorable Michael Riley L'78** (JD) is a member of the Pullman & Comley Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) practice that was recognized by the 2023 New England Legal Awards, presented by the Connecticut Law Tribune. Riley and his team were the recipients of the Litigation Department of the Year - Specialty award, given to departments whose work had a significant impact in the practice of mediation and arbitration in New England.

## 1980s

**Vincent Liberti, Jr. L'82/LLM'08** (JD/LLM) is an attorney at Halloran Sage and was recognized by peers for inclusion in the 2024 *The Best Lawyers in America*. Liberti focuses his practice in elder law and trusts, as well as estates.



**The Honorable Mark Powers L'84** (JD) was recently appointed to the New York State Appellate Division, Third Department. This is the second highest court in the state.



**Mara Veronesi '85** (Psychology) is the owner of Mara M. Veronesi, LLC, and is a licensed independent clinical social worker, practicing psychotherapy.



**Lynne Wilson L'86** (JD) was recognized by peers for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America* (2024), as published in dozens of city and regional publications in the U.S., including *U.S. News & World Report*. Wilson is a partner at ShuffieldLowman in Orlando, FL, where she focuses her practice on commercial real estate transactions, commercial lending, banking, and finance.

**Kevin Roche L'87** (JD) is an attorney at Halloran Sage and was recognized by peers for inclusion in the *2024 The Best Lawyers in America*. Roche focuses his practice in insurance law, litigation in insurance, personal injury litigation, and professional malpractice law.

**Jeffrey Williams '89** (Industrial Engineering) has joined IKO (Innovation, Know How, Originality) as the national distribution sales manager.

## 1990s

**Timothy Deshaires '91/G'97** (General Business/MBA) earned Florence Bank's 2023 Community Support Award. This award is given to Florence Bank employees who are active in the community and give their personal and professional time to local nonprofit organizations.

**Mary Howie L'91** (JD) was presented with the Clients' Security Board's William J. LeDoux Award. The award is offered to a lawyer who, on a pro bono basis, has demonstrated extraordinary skill and perseverance in representing one or more claimants before the board. Howie is the 15th recipient of the award, which was last presented in 2018.

**Kris VanBeek '92** (Finance) has been named the next president and executive officer at Rockland Federal Credit Union.

**Stephen Zajchowski '94** (Psychology) has been named the new chief human resource officer for the City of Chicopee. In this role, Zajchowski will be responsible for the management of all human resource functions for the city.

**Allen Falke L'96** (JD) was selected by his peers for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America* for 2024 in the field of tax law. This is the third consecutive time Falke has been recognized.

**Susan McCoy L'96** (JD) is an attorney at Halloran Sage and was recognized by peers for inclusion in the *2024 The Best Lawyers in America*. McCoy focuses her practice in trusts and estates.

**Nicholas Capotosto G'98** (MBA) was elected to Brouse McDowell's Executive Committee. This is his second term on the committee. He is co-chair of the firm's Litigation Practice Group and represents clients in litigated matters.

**Christina Turgeon '98/L'01** (Criminal Justice/JD) has joined Fitzgerald Law's Litigation Department. Turgeon concentrates on bankruptcy law, representing debtors and trustees before the United States Bankruptcy Courts in Massachusetts and Connecticut, commercial evictions, real estate law representing buyers, sellers and financial institutions in real estate transactions, and general civil litigation representing plaintiffs and defendants in District and Superior courts.

**Charles VanDerMiller III L'98** (JD) has joined the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration as senior counsel. After 12 years of services as an Army active-duty judge advocate, VanDerMiller has been assigned to the Intelligence Law Section, Office of Chief Counsel at DEA Headquarters in Arlington, VA.

**Mark Germain '99/G'06** (Accounting/MBA) has been named chair of the Ludlow, MA Boys and Girls Club.

## 2000s

**Brad Malicki L'00** (JD) is an attorney at Halloran Sage and was recognized by peers for inclusion in the *2024 The Best Lawyers in America*. Malicki focuses his practice in real estate law.

**Matthew McGinty '01/G'05** (Management Leadership/MBA) is the newest chief executive officer (CEO) at CareConnect.

**Jamie Platt '03** (General Biology) has been promoted to associate athletic director and director of physical education at St. Francis Episcopal School. She was also selected as the head coach of the New Balance All-America Southwest Girls Lacrosse team in Baltimore, MD.

**Joshua Brookman '07** (Accounting) has been promoted to divisional secretary for business administration at The Salvation Army in Pittsburgh, PA. Previously, Brookman was a finance officer for The Salvation Army in Cleveland, OH.



**Matthew Reed L'07** (JD) was appointed as the first town administrator of Ellington, CT.

## 2010s



**Olivia M. Corso '10/G'18** (Marketing Communications & Advertising/MSOL) has been promoted to associate director of operations and marketing at the Career & Life Design Center at Trinity College, Hartford.

**Andrea Momnie O'Connor L'10** (JD) was named a shareholder at Fitzgerald Law. O'Connor counsels corporate and consumer clients in all aspects of insolvency law, primarily including bankruptcy, asset protection, taxation, real estate, and commercial matters.

**David Oliva '10/G'11** (Sport Management/MBA) was recognized as a member of the B2B Innovator Class of 2023. He was honored at the 2023 B2B Sales & Marketing Exchange in Boston earlier this year. Oliva is the general manager of Organamation, a well-known manufacturer of laboratory evaporators.

**David Griffin '11/G'16** (Mechanical Engineering/MBA) recently started a new position as GTFA EDSIT lead at Pratt & Whitney.

# Class Notes

**Amelia Holstrom L'11** (JD) was recognized as one of the 2023 Top Women of Law by *Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly*. The Top Women of the Law program celebrates the outstanding achievements of exceptional women in the legal profession.

**Rafael Llano '11/L'14** (Political Science/JD) joined Archer & Greiner's Business Litigation Group as a new associate.

**Rebecca Mahoney '11** (Chemistry) is MicroCare's newest senior quality control chemist. MicroCare is a manufacturer of high-performance fluids and tools for critical cleaning, coating, and lubrications.

**Katy Malouin L'12/G'12/LLM'14** (JD/MBA/LLM) has joined Goldberg, Miller & Rubin as an associate attorney.

**Casey O'Connell L'12** (JD) is an attorney at Halloran Sage and was recognized by peers for inclusion in the 2024 *The Best Lawyers in America*. O'Connell focuses his practice in real estate law.

**Catherine Rioux '12** (Management) has been promoted to commercial loan officer at Monson Savings Bank.

**Victoria Cascarelli L'14** (JD) has recently joined Verrill as an associate and will be practicing in the fields of matrimonial, commercial, and civil litigation.

**Eric Sorenson '14** (Sport Management) has joined UMASS Lowell as the new assistant men's ice hockey coach. He joins Lowell after spending two years as an assistant hockey coach at Holy Cross in Worcester, MA.

**Kelsey Armstrong '16** (Secondary Education) started her new position as associate athletic director for student-athlete support services at Sacred Heart University.

**Mark Handfield '16/G'20** (History/MBA) has been promoted to credit analyst II at Greenfield Co-Operative Bank.



**Alicia Jacobs G'16** (Communications - Public Relations) was presented with the Environmental Stewardship Award for her outstanding volunteerism, service, and leadership to the town of Clifton Park, NY. Jacobs has served on the Town of Clifton Park Open Space, Trails, and Riverfront committee for the last 10 years. She is also a member of the Communications subcommittee, a Clifton Park Little League coach, and a member of the Community Action Fund.

**Lindsee Keefe '16** (Industrial Engineering) has been promoted to continuous improvement manager within the Northampton, MA Coca-Cola branch.

**Amanda Poris '16** (Finance) is now a senior advanced supply chain associate at General Dynamics Missions Systems.

**Jessica Rounds L'16** (JD) joined Goldberg Segalla's Civil Litigation and Trial group in Albany, NY.

**Christopher Jurkiewicz '17** (Mechanical Engineering - Mechatronics Concentration) has joined Eppendorf Group as a mechanical engineer.



**Miranda Wyse '18** (Business Analytics and Information Management) has been promoted to value stream manager at Collins Aerospace.

**Dr. Alexander Fletcher '19/G'20/PharmD'21** (Pharmacy Studies/MBA/PharmD) has started a new position as senior manager, cardiovascular medical scientist at Bristol Myers Squibb.

**Caitlyn Marchand '19** (English) is a success coordinator for Northeastern University's Student Support initiative.

**D'Naysia Stonick '19** (Marketing) has been promoted to assistant vice president, social media at State Street Global Advisors.

## 2020s

**Tyler Brault '20** (Psychology) started a new position at Mental Health Association as a mental health counselor in Springfield, MA.

**Ryan Hartnett L'20** (JD) has joined Hancock Estabrook, LLP as an associate in the firm's Corporate, Tax and Startup & Emerging Business Practice areas.



# Class Notes

**Sean McCusker '20/G'21** (Business Administration/Accounting) has been promoted to senior audit associate at Grant Thornton, LLP.



**Dr. Isabella Moniz '20/PharmD'22** (Pharmacy Studies/PharmD) accepted a position at Walgreens as a pharmacist. She was also recognized as a top pharmacist by the Worldwide Leaders in Healthcare.

**Mia Cariglia '21** (Creative Writing) has joined Clark University as student activities coordinator after completing her Master of Education at Springfield College. In this role, she plans and executes events for graduate students in the School of Professional Studies. Cariglia also joined Worcester State University as an adjunct professor in the Department of Communications, where she is teaching public speaking.



**Kevin Hummer '21/G'23** (Sport Management/MS) is Saint Michael's College first assistant director of athletic communications. In this role, Hummer will be responsible for heading new media efforts in addition to handling the athletics general communications.

**Heather Iampietro L'21** (JD) has joined Legacy Counsellors, P.C. as an associate attorney. She will be focusing her practice on real-estate transactions and estate planning.

**Caitlyn Kunz '21** (Communications - Media Theory & Production) has joined the Community Action Partnership of Stafford County as a marketing and communications manager. Previously, Kunz was the marketing and promotion specialist for the University of New Hampshire.

**Tenneille McFarlane-Smart L'21** (JD) is the new director of the Project Management Office at BigY. In this role, McFarlane-Smart will be responsible for all project activity across all divisions at Big Y, including Big Y Supermarkets, Big Y Express Gas and Convenience, Big Y at Fresh Acres, and Table and Vine.



**Melissa Modzelewski L'21** (JD) has recently joined Goldberg Segalla's civil litigation and trial group in Hartford, CT. She currently counsels and defends clients in a broad range of general liability matters.

**Yassine Sahbani L'21** (JD) joined Goldberg, Segalla as a member of the firm's Civil Litigation and Trial group in Hartford, CT. Sahbani focuses his practice on counseling and defending clients in a range of civil litigation matters.

**Danielle Skates '21** (Actuarial Science) has started a new role as a small commercial senior market analyst at The Hanover Insurance Group.

**Chloe Wood '21** (Accounting) has been promoted to senior audit associate at KPMG.



**Meaghan Collins L'22** (JD) passed the Connecticut bar exam and has been named an associate attorney at Kahan Kerensky Capossela, LLP.

**Alyra Donisvitch G'22** (MSOL) has been promoted to digital experience platform manager at the National Apartment Association.

**Aminder Singh '23** (Finance) recently opened his own restaurant Motu Indian Kitchen in East Longmeadow, MA. Singh opened the restaurant after years of working at his family's own restaurant, Panjabi Tadka, in downtown Springfield.

**Brian Shermeyer G'23** (Sport Management) is the newest assistant coach for the Lycoming College wrestling team.

**Cameron Stansbury '23** (Biomedical Engineering) has started a new job as a quality engineer at Stewart EFI, LLC.

**Samantha Sterner '23** (Computer Science) has been promoted to associate application developer at ADP.

## 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*



Klaire Bielonko '17 and Dr. Thomas Padrevita PharmD'21, July 9, 2023, in Suffield, CT



Katelyn Bigelow '18/G'22 and Joseph Connors '19/G'21, July 1, 2023, in South Windsor, CT



Amanda Ebel '08 and Will Dutton, May 13, 2023, in Saugerties, NY



Briana Kubik '17/G'23 and Kevin Strobel '17/G'19, June 10, 2023, in Granville, MA



Brian Michaud '09/G'14 and Elizabeth Michaud, August 11, 2023, in Middletown, CT



Grace Trupe '18 and Patrick Sands '18, July 24, 2022, in Harwichport, MA

## Baby Golden Bears



Jackson Phillip, May 11, 2023, to **Alyssa (Obin) Gittleman '12** and **Michael Gittleman '11**



Maxwell Jon, May 24, 2023, to **Christina (Pizzella) Polaski '11** and **Jon Polaski '11**



Emerson Elizabethe, May 27, 2023, to **Kaitlyn (Hall) Cameron '13** and **Patrick Cameron '13**



Gabriel Patrick, April 14, 2023, to **Grace (Trupe) Sands '18** and **Patrick Sands '18**



Leo Trent, April 30, 2023, to **Cassie (Bonenfant) Silvester '14** and **Nikko Silvester '13**



Nicholas Joseph, July 19, 2023, to **Alyssa (Gehm) Sopet '15** and **John Sopet '15**



# UNRESTRICTED OPPORTUNITIES

At Western New England University, we provide students with the opportunities that will 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 encourage our students to expand their horizons so they can become innovators and leaders that are well-prepared to solve the challenges of their everyday lives. Your gift to The Fund for WNE makes that possible.

Give online at [alumni.wne.edu/opportunities](http://alumni.wne.edu/opportunities) or scan the QR code to ensure that our students continue to excel by making your gift today.



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