

# 1300 Elmwood

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE

SUMMER 2021 > NO. 34



## FOUNDING MOTHERS

*The fascinating stories of our female educational pioneers and how their legacy has opened opportunities for others at Buffalo State College and beyond.*







With a state-of-the-art projection and sound system, the new Whitworth Ferguson Planetarium in the Science and Mathematics Complex provides a fully immersive, out-of-this-world experience. The venue offers programming to the general public and seats up to 48 visitors under its 35-foot-diameter dome.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRUCE FOX

SKYMAP





“Women who were trailblazers  
in the field of education.”  
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## 10 Founding Mothers

The fascinating stories of our female educational pioneers and how their legacy has opened opportunities for others at Buffalo State College and beyond.

## 16 School Spirit, Captured in a Song

New alma mater lyrics to debut at September kickoff event.

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**Katherine S. Conway-Turner, Ph.D.**  
President, Buffalo State College

## Dreams Are Voices of Ancestors

As I sit and reflect on this issue of *1300 Elmwood*, I think of the ancestors who have opened doors, created pathways, suffered, loved, died, and dreamed of today. This fall we will mark the beginning of the 150th anniversary of Buffalo State College. The college was founded 150 years ago with the modest goal of preparing teachers. Over the years, our ancestors expanded their dreams to imagine a college that was multi-layered, outstanding with cross-ranging curricula and degree offerings, steadfast in its commitment to equity and justice, central to the development and expansion of our surrounding communities—an institution that continues to grow in ways that respond to the world around us.

Starting in September, we will take a full year to unravel the history of our campus. We will discuss the high points—and low—that have marked our transformation into the college we have become today. We will share historical facts that may be surprising and often truly inspiring. We will celebrate our strengths and reflect on the work yet to be done. This year will be like no other as we boldly untangle our historical threads and weave the fabric for the future.

Each member of the Buffalo State community has ancestors who forged unique paths that today converge with us. We represent ethnic, cultural, and racial backgrounds that, once upon a time, could learn, live, and work together only in our wildest dreams. We are a mixture of those who were born here and those who found their way to these shores through varied means. Native

Americans, our first ancestors, who stood and protected the ground our current campus is built on; African Americans who were forced into enslavement to develop this country; immigrants who came from every corner of the world in hopes of a better life; and students from near and far who come together to study in an urban-engaged campus make up our current Bengal family. Our personal differences range across every dimension within these groups: sexual orientation and gender identity; levels of ability and education; the languages we speak at home; and the religions, perspectives, or faiths we hold dear. In all ways, our campus is truly diverse, and far richer for it.

In this issue, you will read about some of the women who played central roles in the earliest years of Buffalo State. I hope you enjoy learning more about a few of the many who represent the voices of our ancestors. I have a dream that our campus will continue to build on its tremendous history. I dream that our collaborative work will always be a model of fairness and excellence, aimed toward a future that elevates our best selves. As I think of yesterday, I also dream of tomorrow, where the voices of today whisper messages of strength, resilience, justice, equality, and inclusion, so that the Buffalo State dream elevates not only our work but also the neighbors, communities, and families we touch. Dreams are voices of ancestors, and one day our current voices will help future dreams become realities.

Follow the President Katherine S. Conway-Turner, Ph.D., is a regular on social media.

Follow her at @BuffStatePrez <https://kateconwayturner.tumblr.com> @BuffStatePrez

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**REMEMBERING HUGH NEIL**

*Editor's Note: Hugh M. Neil, associate professor emeritus of art education, died on March 26, 2020.*

Sometimes, if you are lucky enough, a high school teacher or college professor will enter your life and change the trajectory of your journey. One such Buffalo State professor did that for me. Dr. Hugh M. Neil was an art education professor for 36 years at Buffalo State. During our time together, inside the classroom and out, he became more than a teacher—he became a mentor, a confidant, and a friend. Our friendship lasted from the classroom days of the late 1960s until his passing last year. We worked very closely together, and he guided me through the process of writing my master's thesis. Knowing first-hand of his personality and his teaching style, I know that he inspired a lot of other students during his years, as he did me. He will be missed, but his legacy will continue on forever through the teachings of his students and their students.

—Tom Prestopnik, '70, '71

**RETIRED AND WRITING BOOKS**

I recently received my *1300 Elmwood* magazine for alumni and friends of Buffalo State College. I am a 1980 graduate with a degree in criminal justice. I treasure my years at Buffalo State and enjoyed my professors, curriculum, and the people I met while attending. I returned to my hometown of Jamestown, New York, and began my career in our family-owned industrial supply company. I retired as a third-generation vice president and sales manager of the company. I have just published my first book, *Swedish Traditions: A Smorgasbord of Scandanavian Recipes*. The book is dedicated to my grandmother from Stockholm, Sweden. I have written several other books, including *Walker*, about my Scottish heritage.



—Kathleen A. (Edstrom) Walker, '80

**ontheweb**

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The Buffalo State  channel is full of great videos. Check them out!



• **'Students Who Soar' Series**  
Meet some of Buffalo State's finest students.



• **'Faculty Engaged' Series**  
Meet some of Buffalo State's innovative faculty members.



• **RUNWAY 14: History Retailored**  
The Fashion and Textile Technology Department and M&T Bank present the creative talent of the Class of 2021 in an exquisite fashion show.

• **25 Years of Service Celebration**  
A virtual event recognizing employees who have reached the milestone of 25 years of service at Buffalo State and in the SUNY system.

**yourturn**

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*Comments for publication may be edited for style, length, and clarity.*



## Williams Named Newman Civic Fellow



Alia Williams, '22, is among 212 students from across the country who have been named a 2021–2022 Newman Civic Fellow by Campus

Compact, a national nonprofit organization. The Newman Civic Fellowship is a yearlong program for students from Campus Compact-member institutions. Students selected for the fellowship are leaders on their campuses who demonstrate a commitment to finding solutions for challenges facing communities locally, nationally, and internationally. Throughout the year, Campus Compact provides fellows with a variety of learning and networking opportunities that emphasize personal, professional, and civic growth.

An early childhood and childhood education major, Williams has mentored first-year Buffalo State students, tutored area children in kindergarten through sixth grade, and served as a leader in Tha Ink Club, Buffalo State's poetry-based group. With Tha Ink, Williams has also volunteered with community organizations, including the Salvation Army and local nursing homes.

## Conway-Turner on Higher Ed Power 100 List

Buffalo State President Katherine Conway-Turner ranks 74th on *City & State New York* magazine's 2021 Higher Education Power 100 list. The publication notes that "the chancellors, presidents, and deans of New York's colleges and universities—as well as a few public officials and philanthropists—are featured on this list due to their extra-curricular activities outside the classroom as they seek to make the state a better place." Conway-Turner is lauded for leading campus efforts in community service and racial justice.



## Puccio Named SUNY Distinguished Professor

Gerard Puccio, '85, '88, professor and chair of the Creativity and Change Leadership Department, has been appointed distinguished professor by the State University of New York Board of Trustees.

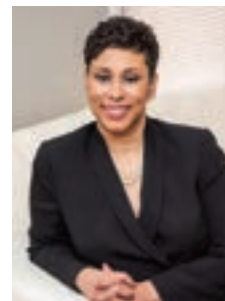
The distinguished professorship is conferred upon faculty who have achieved national or international prominence and a distinguished reputation within their chosen field through significant contributions to research and scholarship.

Puccio joined the college in 1990 and has carved out an international reputation as an expert in creativity and creative studies. He ranks among the most sought-after speakers in his field. Under his leadership, Buffalo State's creative studies program has developed partnerships with international campuses in Taiwan, Canada, and China.

His scholarly publications include eight books, 19 chapters, and 26 refereed journal articles. He has provided training, facilitation, and consulting services to more than 100 organizations in more than 20 countries. He made a major contribution to the field when he developed FourSight, an instrument used by more than 125,000 people around the world to gain insight into their own personal creativity.

## Rodriguez-Dabney Named ATHENA Award Finalist

Crystal J. Rodriguez-Dabney, chief of staff and chief diversity officer, was a finalist for the 2021 ATHENA Leadership Award from the Buffalo Niagara Partnership. The ATHENA Awards is the Western New York region's most prestigious event recognizing the professional accomplishments of exceptional individuals and organizations dedicated to the advancement of women. Rodriguez-Dabney leads the college's efforts in eliminating barriers based on race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and various differences with intentional, more productive policies.





## Carlineo Appointed Director of Intercollegiate Athletics

Renee Carlineo has been named the new director of intercollegiate athletics for Buffalo State College, effective June 1, 2021.

A native of Corning, New York, Carlineo returns for her second stint at Buffalo State, having previously served as the Bengals' head strength and conditioning coach and assistant women's lacrosse coach from 2007 to 2012.

Most recently, she served as the associate vice president of athletics at Elmira College, where she was responsible for 22 NCAA Division III programs in addition to varsity clubs, campus recreation, intramurals, and physical education. She also served as a member of the president's senior leadership cabinet and is on the NCAA Regional Advisory Committee for women's lacrosse. She has held professional positions at Rochester Institute of Technology, Ithaca College, and Lehigh University.

Carlineo began her career as a graduate assistant lacrosse coach at her alma mater, Ithaca College. She played stints as a goal-keeper with the women's lacrosse team at Ithaca after transferring from Penn State University and during a year abroad in Queensland, Australia. She completed her bachelor's degree in sport psychology with minors in exercise physiology and coaching from Ithaca and a master's in sport and exercise science with a concentration in performance psychology.

# Commencement 2021

Buffalo State conferred degrees on roughly 1,650 undergraduate and 700 graduate students during its 149th Commencement celebration on Saturday, May 15. The celebration was presented virtually due to pandemic restrictions.

Joy Harjo, United States Poet Laureate, received a SUNY honorary doctor of humane letters and delivered the Commencement address.

Gabriella J. McKinley delivered the baccalaureate student address as the recipient of the President's Medal for Outstanding Undergraduate Student, while I'Jaz J. Eberhardt delivered the graduate student address as the recipient of the President's Medal for Outstanding Graduate Student.

Kelly E. Glowny, Lila M. Rollo, and Matei Schwartz were honored with the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence in recognition of their academic and extracurricular achievements, leadership, and service. Victoire-Grace D. Karambizi received the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence Special Award: Overcoming the Odds.

The Honorable Byron W. Brown, '83, mayor of the City of Buffalo, and Ross B. Kenzie, former chairman and CEO of Goldome Bank, received the President's Distinguished Service Award.

Raven P. Baxter, '14, '17, science educator and molecular biologist, and Nathan Mroz, '16, owner and founder of the BFLO Store, received the Young Alumnus Achievement Award.

The Distinguished Alumnus Award was granted to Linda R. Appleby, '80, music educator, and Michael J. Garner, '83, chief diversity and inclusion officer of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, State of New York.

In the week leading up to Commencement, graduates had the opportunity to walk across a stage set up in the Campbell Student Union Plaza and be professionally photographed in their academic regalia alongside college leadership.

## College Adds New Programs

### > 3+3 Program Leads to Law Degree

Buffalo State recently approved a new bachelor's degree program—a political science/law 3+3 combined pathway—between the Political Science and Public Administration Department and the University at Buffalo (UB) School of Law. Students who declare the public legal studies concentration within the major and the 3+3 program by the end of their freshman year will complete their major requirements in three years. Provided they maintain the grades and earn the entrance exam score required for acceptance into UB, they can start law school classes immediately after their junior year.

### > Technical Writing Certificate

A technical writing certificate program submitted by the English Department recently received formal approval from SUNY System Administration and the New York State Education Department. The 12-credit program trains students to hone their writing skills to produce professional documents for a variety of business environments. It's composed of three core courses—Writing for the Professions, Technical Writing, and Writing Grants and Proposals—and an elective from one of several disciplines.

### > Advanced Certificate in Disaster and Emergency Management

The college's Political Science and Public Administration Department now offers a new advanced certificate program in disaster and emergency management. The program covers the theory, legal structure, doctrine, planning, and practice of disaster and emergency management. Emergency managers deal with traditional problems like natural disasters, fires, law and justice issues, and now, pandemics. They're also involved in conversations around crumbling infrastructure, climate change, and environmental issues. Students who earn the certificate will be poised to work in public agencies, nonprofit organizations, private businesses, or international aid agencies.

## Runway Salutes Black Fashion Designers



Following a year underscored by the worldwide pandemic and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, Buffalo State's annual Runway fashion show highlighted the accomplishments of past and present Black fashion designers on a virtual platform. The Fashion and Textile Technology Department and Africana studies program collaborated to produce "History Retailored." The show premiered on May 14 on the college's YouTube channel, where it is now archived and viewable.

The hour-long show features the creations of seven senior designers, modeled by a diverse group of Buffalo State students. It also includes student-produced animations for the digital show and student dance performance. Proceeds fund an annual FTT scholarship; this year's proceeds will be dedicated to a new Black Fashion Scholarship.

## SRCC Goes Digital (Again)

The coronavirus pandemic may have isolated students over the past year, but it certainly didn't dampen their desire to pursue creative and challenging research projects at Buffalo State. Many of those projects are included in the college's 23rd annual Student Research and Creativity Conference, which launched on the Digital Commons platform May 10 and will remain there indefinitely for public viewing.

The 2021 SRCC features almost 150 research papers, posters, oral presentations, and other applied-learning projects. A longtime Buffalo State tradition, the conference allows undergraduate and graduate students to present their preliminary and completed research and creative activities in a supportive environment across the college's five schools. The SRCC was presented in virtual format in 2020 and 2021 because of pandemic restrictions.

Visit [digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/srcc-sp21](https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/srcc-sp21) to view the work.





# College to Launch Social Justice Learning Institute

A Social Justice Subcommittee of the President’s Council on Equity and Campus Diversity is collecting campuswide recommendations for a new Social Justice Learning Institute (SJLI) at Buffalo State College. As SUNY’s urban-engaged institution, the college aims to elevate social justice as a key priority. Buffalo State seeks to create significant and demonstrable progress toward social justice on campus and in the community by engendering equity, valuing diversity, and committing to an innovative teaching and learning culture that centers efforts on creating a justice-oriented future. The SJLI will launch in fall 2021 to serve that vision.

## Students Create Bicentennial Story Maps

Students in Buffalo State’s Geography and Planning Department have been working on a unique way to help commemorate Erie County’s bicentennial throughout the next year. Through a collaboration with the county, students in the GEG 485 Web Mapping course created themed story maps that will be considered for use on the county’s bicentennial website. The story maps are a web-based representation of facts and data that integrates maps, legends, text, photos, and video to convey information in a visually appealing way. They’re meant to be stand-alone resources and may also include functional abilities, like swiping, pop-ups, or time-sliders. Topics for the story maps include the Buffalo Green Book, Buffalo Breweries, Arts and Cultural Institutions, Trailblazing Women, and LGBTQ History.



## Speech Clinic Offers Therapy for Parkinson’s

Students in Buffalo State’s speech-language pathology (SLP) graduate program will soon have the opportunity to learn about and apply new therapies to treat Parkinson’s disease in the campus’s Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic, thanks to a grant from the Parkinson Voice Project.

Roughly 90 percent of individuals living with the degenerative disease are at risk of developing a weakened voice that can lead to serious speech and swallowing difficulties, according

to the Parkinson Voice Project, a nonprofit organization based in Richardson, Texas. Its clinicians developed a program that combines education, individual speech therapy, and ongoing group sessions.

“The Parkinson Voice Project is funded entirely by donors, and its vision is to make its speech therapy program accessible to Parkinson’s patients, speech pathologists, and SLP programs worldwide,” said Christina Mulé, clinical supervisor in the campus’s

speech clinic, which is open to adults and children in the community.

Mulé applied for the competitive grant with Anita Senthinathan, assistant professor of SLP. They will receive free access to the Parkinson Voice Project’s Research, Intent, and Teletherapy webinar for themselves and all graduate students in the SLP program. The grant also includes a sound level meter, workbooks, flashcards, and marketing brochures, valued at about \$38,000.

# Athletics

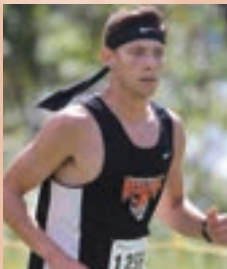
• [buffalostateathletics.com](http://buffalostateathletics.com)



## Castello Earns Regional, Conference Honors

Sophomore centerfielder **Oriana Castello** was named State University of New York Athletic Conference (SUNYAC) Softball Co-Player of the Year and earned a spot on the National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) third team All-Northeast region team after leading the Bengals with a .437 batting average. The All-SUNYAC team also included **Taylor Benton** (first team), **Sydney McIntosh** (second team), and **Makena Adams** (second team). In addition, the Bengals coach staff of head coach **Jamie Brown** and assistants **Courtney Smith** and **Greg Willats** were named the conference's Sandra Hollander Coaching Staff of the Year. The team completed the season with 13-14 overall record and a run to the SUNYAC semifinals.

## Men's Track and Field Places Fifth at SUNYAC Championships



Junior **Josh Jeziorski** earned third team All-SUNYAC honors and Buffalo State's 4x400-meter relay team of **Jeziorski, Nick Abdo, Noah Reed-Eason,** and **Larry Durski** placed third to lead Buffalo

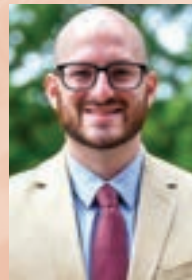
State to a fifth-place finish in the SUNYAC Championships at Cortland in May. Jeziorski placed third in the long jump with a mark of 6.71 meters, which qualified him to compete in the event at the NCAA Division III Outdoor Track & Field Championships at the Irwin Belk Track Complex in Greensboro, North Carolina, May 27–29.

## Women's Track and Field 4x400 Relay Team Takes Second at SUNYAC Championships

Buffalo State's 4x400-meter relay team of **Jenna Raczka, Mikayla Thompson, Halle Moore,** and **Clara Sensini** finished runner-up to lead the Bengals at the SUNYAC Championships in Cortland in May. Thompson added a sixth-place finish in the 100-meter dash (13.09), and Raczka was sixth in the 400-meter dash (1:04.12).

## Margolis Named Head Women's Soccer Coach

Buffalo State named **Greg Margolis, Ph.D.,** its new women's soccer coach effective April 20, 2021. Margolis served as the head coach of both the women's and men's soccer programs at Elmira College for the past year. Prior to Elmira, he spent one season as an assistant coach with the women's program at Williams College and was responsible for recruiting and scouting, performed sports psychology on a group and individual basis, and assisted in all practice and game planning, with a focus on the defensive tactical setup for the team. He helped the Ephs reach the 2019 NCAA Quarterfinals and obtain a national year-end ranking of No. 13. He also coached at Allegheny College (2018–2019), Methodist University (2017–2018), and Springfield College (2012–2016). Margolis is a 2012 graduate of Ursinus College with a bachelor's degree in exercise and sport science with a minor in coaching. He completed his master's in sport and exercise psychology, as well as a doctorate in sport and exercise psychology from Springfield in 2014 and 2017, respectively.



## Four Bengals Tapped for SUNYAC Basketball All-Decade Teams

SUNYAC announced its Men's Basketball All-Decade Team for players who competed from 2010–2020, and Buffalo State's **Jake Simmons** was named a member. Simmons finished his four-year basketball career in 2013 as the school's all-time leading scorer with 2,079 career points, smashing former NBA All-Star Randy Smith's previous school mark of 1,712 points. Simmons was a four-time All-SUNYAC selection, including earning first team honors three times. He was also a three-time All-Region honoree, and was the SUNYAC Rookie of the Year in 2009–2010. He set school career records for steals (234) and 3-pointers (321), and led the team to a SUNYAC Championship and a run to the "Sweet 16" in the NCAA Playoffs in 2010–2011.

SUNYAC's Women's Basketball All-Decade Team for players who competed from 2010–2020 includes Buffalo State's **Liv LeBaron, Staci McElroy,** and **Bianca (Jaylen) Smiley.** LeBaron, who wrapped up her career with the Bengals in 2020, ranked second in school history with 1,463 career points, despite playing just three seasons at Buffalo State. (She played her freshman year at Brockport.) She was a three-time All-SUNYAC selection, including earning first team honors as a senior, when she was also named WBCA honorable mention All-American. She set the school's single-season scoring record with 587 points and also finished her career ranked 11th in career rebounds with 620. McElroy played four seasons for the Bengals from 2009 to 2014, earning All-SUNYAC honors all four years, including three times earning first team distinction. She was also the SUNYAC and ECAC Upstate Rookie of the Year. She ranks third in school history with 1,412 career points and is fourth with 691 rebounds. Smiley played three seasons with the Bengals after transferring from Medaille. She was a three-time All-SUNYAC selection, including first team twice and was also a WBCA honorable mention All-American as a senior. Despite playing just three seasons, she is one of 15 players in school history to score 1,000 points, reaching 1,048, and she is also fifth all-time with 651 rebounds.





# Herbarium Finds New Home

Buffalo State's Eckert Herbarium has a new home in the Science and Mathematics Complex (SAMC). Named for the late Theodore Eckert, a professor emeritus of biology, the herbarium is a collection of dried and preserved plant specimens. It houses multiple samples from the Western New York region, some dating back to the 1860s.

About 16,000 species of vascular plants are contained in the collection. Most of the species have been collected from the eastern Great Lakes, the Niagara Frontier, and southern Ontario, but some have come from as far as Florida or Quebec. The new space in SAMC 245 contains special metal cabinets that seal tightly to prevent moisture or insect damage to the specimens, and new microscopy, among other enhancements.

The herbarium, which also houses the Dr. James D. Haynes Mycological Collection and the James Battaglia Lichen Collection, provides a hands-on teaching resource for students.

## Great Lakes Center, EPA Team Up on New Tool

A collaboration between Buffalo State College's Great Lakes Center and the Environmental Protection Agency has led to a new, quicker way to monitor invasive mussel populations in the Great Lakes. Using what's called the benthic imaging system tool, researchers are able to substantially reduce the time required to map distributions of quagga mussels (*Dreissena rostriformis bugensis*) and zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) on the lake floor. The imaging tool, which is a steel frame mounted with GoPro cameras and lights, is both cost-effective and significantly faster at producing results than older ways of measuring invasive mussel populations, said Alexander Y. Karatayev, director of the Great Lakes Center. The data that come out of the research inform decisions on where to bolster ecosystems in the lake, and how to do it. It's also a way to monitor new invasive species to the Great Lakes.

# Student Creates COVID-Friendly Desk

The topsy-turvy world of the coronavirus pandemic has required businesses, educators, workers, and parents to find innovative ways to make everyday life work. And this often means creating a space in the home to accommodate spreadsheets, Zoom meetings, and fifth-grade math lessons.

Buffalo State College wood/furniture major Susan Koloski considered such needs when she designed a collapsible desk this fall. The stylish yet practical desk was an assignment for the

Wood Design II course taught by Sunhwa Kim, associate professor and coordinator of the college's wood/furniture program, which is housed within the Art and Design Department.

Koloski's innovative design won the department's Mike Lang Wood/Furniture Studio Award for Excellence in both the fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters. Koloski received more than \$500 worth of lumber from Lang's company, Trathen Logging Company in York, New York.



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# FOUNDING MOTHERS

*The fascinating stories of our female educational pioneers and how their legacy has opened opportunities for others at Buffalo State College and beyond.*





**W**E'VE ALL HEARD about founding fathers—those men who established countries and companies, industries and institutions. Buffalo State College itself was led in its early days by the likes of Henry B. Buckham, James M. Cassety, Harry W. Rockwell, and other learned men whose names now adorn buildings across campus.

But did you know that Buffalo State also had its share of founding mothers? Women who were among the first in the country to earn doctoral degrees. Women who were trailblazers in the field of education. Women who were world travelers. Women who played a formative role in the history of this institution and in the lives of thousands of students. Women who held administrative positions at a time when men dominated these posts—despite the fact that nearly 75 percent of America's teachers were female. Strong, bold women who were well ahead of their time.

As we prepare to celebrate Buffalo State's sesquicentennial—marking 150 years since the college was founded—this is an ideal time to look back at a few of our female educational pioneers and how their legacy has opened opportunities for others at Buffalo State and beyond.

**GERTRUDE M. BACON**  
*50 Years of Unsurpassed Service*

Gertrude Bacon was born in 1866 in Elma, New York. She graduated from the Buffalo Normal School in 1886, and then received her bachelor of science and master of arts degrees from the University of Buffalo, while also studying at Columbia University and the University of Chicago. After one semester teaching in the North Tonawanda schools, she joined the faculty of the Buffalo Normal School in 1887 and would remain there until her retirement in 1936.

She served as a seventh- and eighth-grade critic teacher before being promoted to principal of the School of Practice, and then to head critic and teacher of methods. Later, she was appointed superintendent of practice teaching and finally to full professor of elementary education and associate director of training.

Known as a strict and formal instructor, Bacon delighted students and colleagues when she purchased a Ford automobile, which she called her "pride and joy." It is said that she humorously and graciously accepted the well-intended joshing of her associates, temporarily engaged a student chauffeur, and rode around town in style.

Upon her death in 1937, President Rockwell said: "Generations of Normal School and College students will always think of her as one who maintained with vigor and dignity the highest professional ideals. She kept abreast of the best in education, and thousands of teachers can testify to the value of her instruction and example. Her loyalty to her Alma Mater; her devotion to her friends; her gracious hospitality, will endure in the memory of all who were associated with her."

During a Special Dedication Week in April 1963, one of the Elmwood campus's four original buildings, built in 1928, was dedicated in Bacon's name as a lasting testimony to her life of service to future teachers.

**CATHERINE E. REED**  
*The First Dean of Women*

Catherine Reed was appointed Buffalo State's first dean of women in 1926, a position she would hold until 1955. Her hiring was a progressive move at the time.

Known for her radiant smile and compassionate attitude, she was a favorite of students for generations. Each year, it seemed, grateful and admiring acolytes showered Reed with praise in the yearbook.

As she began her career, the 1927 *Elms* read: "To our dean, we waited eagerly for her coming and we now welcome her with open hearts. May she have all the health and happiness that she richly deserves!"

Years later, the 1944 *Elms* noted: "To Dean Reed we owe much of what we got out of our four years at State. Through her insistence that we assume responsibilities, we have become increasingly self-directing persons. We admire



Gertrude M. Bacon



Catherine E. Reed

“  
To our dean, we waited eagerly for her coming and we now welcome her with open hearts. May she have all the health and happiness that she richly deserves!  
”

Ruth E. Houston



Katheryne Thomas Whittemore

“

A real patrician lady dignified, always courteous—gentle but firm, a backbone of steel, and devoted to truth and justice.

”



Anna Porter Burrell

her for her magnificent ability at organization; we are grateful for her expert guidance and helpful advice.”

And in dedicating the 1955 *Elms* to Reed upon her retirement, the editors wrote: “Dean Reed, in her capacity as teacher and dean since 1926, has kept the doors of her office open with welcome to the countless students who have needed and received her counsel. Her eager eyes have been constantly looking for new ways in which she can counsel the student in adjusting his character, not only for college, but for his life. The traditions and services of the college which she has initiated, have always been promoted with this leadership development in mind. Her personality reflects the keen interest she has in others and the constant faith she has in students. Many are those who can testify to her readiness to lend a willing hand. To Miss Reed, who has dedicated so much of herself to us, we dedicate this.”

These words remind us of Reed’s legacy in higher education—teaching is a profession based on human relationships. Nothing can replace that.

### RUTH E. HOUSTON

#### *The Nation’s First Female Coed Athletic Director*

Ruth Houston was the first female chair of a coeducational physical education department in the United States. That bears repeating in another way—Buffalo State was the first college in the country to employ a woman to chair a phys ed department for both male and female students.

Houston organized the Department of Physical Education at the Buffalo Normal School in fall 1917 and started its accompanying intercollegiate athletics program. Before that year, some female students at the college had participated in basketball and tennis sponsored by other local schools’ organizations.

During the 1920s, Houston and an advisory board of three faculty members oversaw 12 teams in various sports, including basketball, baseball, tennis, and swimming, that competed under the college’s name.

Houston continued to expand the athletics program. Under the new constitution of the college’s Athletic Association, which was adopted in 1931–1932, sports were arranged on a seasonal basis, and archery was added to the campus activities. A new athletic field was prepared for

soccer practice and competition the following year. In the ensuing years, other Play Days were held, and additional athletic contests and tournaments were conducted.

Credit for the steady progress of Buffalo State’s women’s athletic program in its early decades is due to Houston, who efficiently guided and directed the program with the help of a small group of associates.

Buffalo State’s Houston Gymnasium bears her name to this day, as does the annual award given to the college’s outstanding female athlete for career accomplishments. Houston was inducted into the Buffalo State Athletics Hall of Fame in 1985.

### KATHERYNE THOMAS WHITTEMORE

#### *The Original Indiana Jones*

In her 37 years at Buffalo State, Katheryne Thomas Whittemore rose to full professor, served as chair of the Geography Department, and, in 1957, was appointed to the newly created post of director of the Division of Arts and Sciences, which oversaw all academic departments at the college. But her academic pursuits outside of campus may have been even more fascinating.

Born in 1899 in Nebraska, Whittemore earned a bachelor of arts from Vassar College in 1921. After graduation, she embarked on an around-the-world trip, where she taught English in Fairbanks, Alaska; Tokyo, Japan; and Manila, Philippines.

When she returned from her travels, she enrolled in Clark University in Massachusetts, earning her master of arts in geography in 1925 and her doctorate in 1936. She joined the staff of the State Normal and Training School as an instructor of geography in 1925.

In 1933, she married Charles Wyman Whittemore.

Even while teaching, Whittemore continued to travel the world. She took an extended trip to Africa in 1957, traveling 1,000 miles by riverboat on the Congo River to visit agricultural experiment stations and reforestation projects. In 1960, she went to Stockholm, Sweden, for meetings of the International Geophysical Union, adding a side trip to Finland. She wrote extensively in her field on the United States and Canada. One of her textbooks, *The United States and Canada*, was selected for exhibit at the Brussels World’s Fair. She wrote and presented the Learn and Live television series for WBEN in Buffalo. She also served as president of the National Council



for Geographic Education, an organization that rapidly expanded its membership and programming under her direction.

When Whittemore died in 1981, a colleague summed up her life: “A real patrician lady—dignified, always courteous—gentle but firm, a backbone of steel, and devoted to truth and justice.”

**ANNA PORTER BURRELL**  
*The First African American Faculty Member*

Born in 1902, Anna Porter Burrell graduated with a bachelor of science in chemistry from the University of Pennsylvania in 1923. She taught chemistry at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri, from 1923 to 1925, and earned a master’s degree in medical sciences from the University of Pennsylvania in 1926. She was one of 81 women to receive a master’s degree in a class of nearly 300.

She accepted a teaching position at Howard University in Washington, D.C., and met her future husband, Robert Burrell. In 1945, she enrolled in the doctoral program in psychology and human relations at New York University.

In 1948, the Burrells moved to Buffalo. Robert accepted a position as an attorney in the Buffalo District Attorney’s Office and later became a City Court judge. Anna was the first African American faculty member to be hired by Buffalo State.

Burrell’s interest in child development, human relations, and international education led her to the country of India. In 1959, she was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to study at Jabalpur University. This was followed by an appointment to the post of director of the India Project at Buffalo State, which resulted in several trips with students, in 1968–1969 and 1970–1971, to study the educational system and culture of that country. She was also the college’s director of human relations workshops and lectured throughout the United States on labor, children, and discrimination. She retired from the college in 1972 and died in 1981.

The Dr. Anna P. Burrell Underrepresented Minority Scholarship Fund was established in her honor.

## More Founding Mothers



**LOUISE M. CASSETY** was the daughter of Dr. James M. Cassety, who served as principal of the Buffalo Normal School from 1886 to 1909. She followed in her father’s footsteps as a dedicated and inspirational teacher. During a Special Dedication Week in April 1963, the regents of the State University system changed the name of the North Hall dormitory to Cassety Hall in honor of Louise Cassety’s many years of service to the college.

**MYRTLE VIOLA CAUDELL** served for nearly two decades as director of the home economics department of the Normal School and the College of Education. When a new \$1 million home economics building was planned, the college decided to name it Caudell Hall. She died just one month before the formal building dedication ceremony in April 1963.

**SUSAN FRANCES CHASE**, who was born in 1859 in Shanghai, China, where her father was a marine merchant, earned her doctor of pedagogy in 1898 and joined the staff of the Buffalo Normal School a year later. She spent the next 27 years as a devoted teacher of psychology and literature. Students dedicated the 1926 edition of the *Elms* yearbook to her, and the college dedicated Chase Hall, formerly called South Hall, to her memory during a Special Dedication Week in April 1963.

**MAY LOUISE PERRY COOKE** was a well-known alumna and teacher of elocution for three years at the Normal School. She left the school to marry Walter Platt Cooke, a prominent attorney and executive in numerous large industrial and financial corporations of Buffalo. After World War I, the couple traveled to The Hague, where Mr. Cooke served as president of the Arbitral Tribunal of Interpretation of the Dawes Plan, and to Paris, where he was American citizen member of the Reparations Commission. Mrs. Perry forged friendships throughout America and Europe and led philanthropic efforts on behalf of numerous Buffalo institutions and causes. During a Special Dedication Week in April 1963, the former West Hall was formally dedicated as Perry Hall, to honor the memory of May Louise Perry Cooke.

*Information in this article comes from These Were Builders (1973) by Sister Martin Joseph Jones. In 1969, Jones came to Buffalo State as a reference librarian and later worked as an assistant in the Periodical Department. In 1975, she became the college’s first archivist. Jones retired in 1995. She died in 2013.*



# Join Us for a Yearlong Celebration as Buffalo State Turns 150!

This year, Buffalo State College is celebrating an amazing milestone in our college's history—our sesquicentennial anniversary!

On September 13, 1871, we began teaching students and changing lives.

This September, we will begin a year-long celebration featuring special events, speakers, performances, athletic competitions, and more.

As we look back on our past 150 years and ahead to our next 150 years, we want you with us as we continue to believe, inspire, and achieve at Buffalo State.

Be sure to visit [buffalostate.edu/150](http://buffalostate.edu/150) and the college's social media outlets for all the latest sesquicentennial news.



SAVE THE DATE FOR THESE FALL SHOWCASE EVENTS

September 17

Buffalo State College Day

September 25

Bengals Dare to Care Day

September 27–  
October 3

Homecoming Week





October  
13-15

Anne Frank Social  
Justice Festival

Visit [buffalostate.edu/150](http://buffalostate.edu/150) to

- \* Download your official 150th anniversary Zoom backgrounds, wallpapers, and more
- \* Purchase your official 150th anniversary gear

#Buffstate150



# School Spirit, Captured *in a* **Song**

New alma mater lyrics to debut  
at September kickoff event

By Michael Canfield

**Buffalo State College's alma mater is getting a makeover.**

This spring, the college held a contest, open to anyone who's part of the Buffalo State community, to rewrite the lyrics of the alma mater for the 150th anniversary of the college. The updated song will debut at Buffalo State College Day on September 17 as part of the anniversary kickoff event.



The current alma mater, “Our Finest Hour,” was written by L. Harry Ray and was first published in the Elms yearbook in 1951, Ray’s graduating class year. His version was reintroduced to campus in 1993, when the college held its Commencement ceremonies on campus—in the newly built Sports Arena—for the first time in 23 years.

By the time Buffalo State held its quasiquicentennial celebration three years later, during the 1996–1997 academic year, “Our Finest Hour” had become a cherished campus tradition, and the song has been sung by the college choir at Commencement ceremonies ever since.

But it’s time for an update, said Victoria J. Furby, associate professor and chair of the Music Department. “I think it’s time for us to have something that’s more reflective of the mission of the college and the student population as it exists now.”

The contest rules included rewriting the lyrics using the original sheet music. Submissions are being judged by the Alma Mater Committee, composed of five faculty members and administrators who will review the submissions.

“It’s an exciting chance to be a part of Buffalo State’s story going forward,” Furby said.

The committee is tasked with narrowing the entries to three selections and presenting those to President Katherine Conway-Turner, who will make the final decision.

The winner, who will be notified by July 1, will receive official recognition at Buffalo State College Day and a financial award of \$2,500.

The alma mater has had several iterations over the history of Buffalo State. For instance, in the 1913 Elms yearbook, the song is listed as “Class Song,” and its lyrics pay homage to the Buffalo Normal School, as the college was known at the time.

“Then farewell, dear Buffalo Normal, though we must leave thy care, we’ll always love and cherish our alma mater fair,” the lyrics read.

It’s an exciting chance to be a part of Buffalo State’s story going forward.

In fact, many early editions of the *Elms* contain different versions of an alma mater. Even the 1999 *Elms* got in on the action, reprinting a self-titled alma mater from 1928, written by Helen M. Buyolark.

“A branch that is lifeless and fragile, when caught by the gleam of red coals, is fanned to a quivering torch flame; so love changes all human souls. So we whom you love, Alma Mater, are touched by the warmth and the glow,” Buyolark’s lyrics read.

A November 1916 issue of the *Record* student newspaper lists the alma mater as “By Niagara’s Rippling Waters,” by Ruth M. Rounds. Its lyrics pay tribute to

the college without ever mentioning its name, just its location in the city at the time—on Buffalo’s lower West Side.

“By Niagara’s rippling waters stands our city’s pride, dearer to her sons and daughters than all else besides,” they read.

The college used to have “interclass sings,” according to a 1943 version of the *Record*. Each class would sing a verse of the alma mater, and they’d sing other songs, as well.

In a 1928 issue of the *Record*, a student laments the lack of singing of the alma mater during assemblies in an anonymous contributor column. The student implores other students to write their own versions of the alma mater, and announces a competition to do just that.

“Show us what you can do. Pick your music, write your verse, put them together, present your song and hope that the prize is yours,” the student writes. “When we sing in our assemblies, we ought to be heard for a block around. Never mind the neighbors, they’ll take care of themselves.”

There are actually several songs dedicated to Buffalo State, recorded and forever saved for posterity in the school’s digital archives. Take a look and listen at [digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/buffstate-songs](https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/buffstate-songs).

OUR FINEST HOUR

A toast to State, to all the days,  
All the laughter, all the tears,  
You have made our friendships great,  
We’ll triumph through the years.  
With hope anew we’ll face the storm  
Beyond which stands your lofty tower—  
That will be our finest hour.

In years to come we’ll look to thee,  
Yearning for your guiding light.  
You’ll not fail us, Alma Mater,  
Keep us through the night.  
When darkness comes and all hope dies,  
You will give us strength and power—



That will be our finest hour.

—L. Harry Ray, '51

BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE 1871–2021





# Education Can Change *Your Life*

**G**rowing up poor in the projects of Mobile, Alabama, Ron Stewart, professor and chair of the Sociology Department, knew at a young age that education was the way to get where he wanted to be in life.





After earning two graduate degrees from the Ohio State University and a doctorate from Howard University, and 30-plus years of teaching at Buffalo State College, Stewart is living proof that education pays off. It's that idea that he strives to impress upon the students he teaches and mentors.

"I saw education as a vehicle where I could be upwardly mobile," he said. "I've come a long way, and

education has been that vehicle. I see students who come from similar backgrounds. Many of them are first generation, and many of them are looking for a way to get away from home. I use school and try to impart to them the advantages that an education can give, and how an education can change your life."

Stewart started the African American Male Empowering Network (AAMEN) at Buffalo State in 1998, and continues to mentor students. The group aims to help African American males navigate college, and it works: Like Stewart, AAMEN's first president, Christopher St. Vil, earned his doctorate from Howard University and is now a tenure-track assistant professor in the School of Social Work at the University at Buffalo. Stewart keeps in contact with many of the students he's mentored as they make their way through graduate and doctoral programs and on to their careers.

"They remain in my life," he said, referring to past mentees. "I just care about students."

Stewart has taught a number of courses over the years, including Introduction to Sociology, Analyzing Social Problems, Sociology of the Family, the African American Family, Classical Sociological Theory, Sociology of Sport, Race and Ethnicity, and a topical seminar on the African American Male.

His own road to graduation was difficult, Stewart said. He once hitchhiked over 200 miles on the highways of Alabama in his senior year to get from Mobile to Tuskegee University, where he earned his bachelor's degree.

"When I reflect back, I shudder to think how stupid and crazy that Black guy on the highways of central Alabama—Klan country—was," he said. "But I was committed to making this education stuff work."

Stewart lets his students know up front that, like his path to Tuskegee, his classes won't be easy and will involve a lot of work. He'll challenge them, and hold them to a high standard. Some students are intimidated by his methods at first, but they usually come around.

"They work hard, and they learn to get their money's worth," he

**"I know what they need. I know they need encouragement. I know they need support. I know they need to be lifted up."**

said. "Some students believe all the rumors they hear: that I'm tough, or that I don't like this or that. But once they take a class with me, they come back and take all the others that they can."

Stewart takes his discipline seriously, and wants his students to take sociology seriously, as well. There are no "blow off" classes with Stewart.

"I take as much pride—and I take my classes and my discipline as seriously—as a physicist or a chemist," he said.

While Stewart can relate to students who come from tough

backgrounds, he's able to build rapport with all of his students. He tries to stay up on current trends in music and style, as well.

"I connect with all students when they come into my classroom," he said. "I don't see race. I don't see color."

In the more than 30 years he's been at Buffalo State, Stewart has seen a lot of changes. Students today are different than they were when he first started, he said. It's important to adapt and still be able to provide what students need. Sometimes that means helping students build up their "fortitude," and helping them understand that they "have to have strength of character to deal with adversity," he said.

Teaching isn't a job, Stewart said. It's his full-time hobby.

"Hobbies are things you love," he said.

Buffalo State offered Stewart his first teaching job as he was finishing up his doctorate, and while Buffalo is quite a bit different from Mobile, he said he wouldn't change a thing. Two of his three children are Buffalo State graduates, and he loves the community.

"I was like a lot of students that come to Buffalo State, and that's how I connect, because I have walked in their shoes," he said. "I know what they need. I know they need encouragement. I know they need support. I know they need to be lifted up."

Ron Stewart holds a Ph.D. in sociology from Howard University. He joined the Buffalo State College faculty as an assistant professor in 1990. He was promoted to associate professor in 1996 and to full professor in 2006. With a primary interest in gender studies, Stewart focuses on the social and economic conditions confronting African American males in U.S. society. He is the author of *African American Husbands: A Study of Black Family Life* (December 1992: Wyndham Hall Press).



Bengalathon 2021 aired live on WBBZ-TV and was livestreamed on the Buffalo State College Facebook page.



## BENGALATHON A STREAMING SUCCESS

Buffalo State presented Bengalathon 2021, a fundraiser designed to provide emergency financial assistance and academic scholarships for its students, on April 24. The event aired live on WBBZ-TV and was livestreamed on the Buffalo State College Facebook page.

Michael, '79, and Madonna, '80, Bonitatibus served as co-chairs of the event, while M&T Bank and Merchants Insurance Group were the presenting sponsors.

For 24 consecutive years, Buffalo State has hosted its largest fundraiser, Bengala, which has generated millions of dollars in scholarship funds. The college's signature fundraising event was reimaged in 2020 to a livestream virtual fundraiser in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

During the event, viewers heard a special message from Buffalo State President Katherine Conway-Turner and stories from Buffalo State students, alumni, and donors. Participants had the opportunity to bid on auction items and donate directly through the Bengalathon website.

"It has been inspiring to witness the generosity of our donors and alumni who have stepped up to remove barriers through financial support and, ultimately, enable our students to envision a path toward earning their degrees and realizing their fullest potential," Conway-Turner said.

### Join in!

To make your gift, contact the Buffalo State College Foundation at (716) 878-3141 [bscfoundation@buffalostate.edu](mailto:bscfoundation@buffalostate.edu) [giving.buffalostate.edu](https://giving.buffalostate.edu)

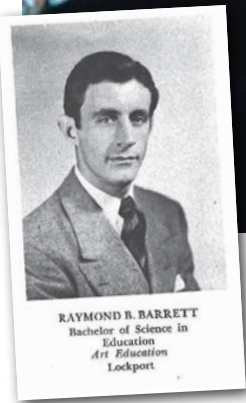


donorprofile

# Raymond B. “Ray” Barrett, ’49



◀ Ray and Jan Barrett



**R**AY BARRETT, '49, who died in January 2017, established a bequest in his will to start the Diversity in the Teacher Pipeline Scholarship Fund at Buffalo State College. The fund provides non-tuition scholarships to recruit and support incoming freshmen majoring in education who will foster a more inclusive and diverse teacher workforce that better reflects the student population, particularly for schools in Buffalo, New York.

The fund is having a major impact as it supports students in the college's Buffalo Urban Teacher Pipeline Residency Program and Urban Teacher Academy. Candidates in these programs are succeeding at a high rate, said Wendy Paterson, dean of the School of Education.

"Students need to see teachers from all backgrounds and ethnic origins and multilingual homes, teachers who look like them, come from backgrounds harmonious with theirs, and whom they may emulate and admire," said Paterson.

"Many if not most of these students are from the same community these children are from," added Kathy Wood, associate dean of the School of Education. "They are great role models. They just need that support to go on to get their teaching certification and to complete their undergraduate or graduate degrees."

Barrett was married to Janet "Jan" Lorene (Wright) (Cope) Barrett for 35 years. She died in 2020. The Barretts were both were lifelong teachers in the Palo Alto Unified School

District in California. Jan was an elementary school special education teacher who loved teaching, especially reading. Ray started his career teaching art and theater at Jordan Junior High. He later headed the English Department, eventually focusing on students with learning disabilities, primarily dyslexia. In 1987, he was recognized by Dartmouth College as Teacher of the Year for his work with dyslexic students, one of whom matriculated at Dartmouth.

Barrett's endless patience and sincere care for all his students made him a much-loved teacher in his district. After his official retirement at age 65, he went back to school as a daily volunteer and reading teacher in a third-grade classroom. After

leaving the classroom, he tutored children after school who needed extra help. He did not fully leave the classroom until the age of 82, and he did not stop his volunteer tutoring until he was 90.

For fun, Barrett was an improv actor with the Illegitimate Theater, and he appeared on the *Merv Griffin Show* in 1962. He also volunteered to facilitate theater therapy for people with post-traumatic stress disorder. Ray and Jan Barrett traveled the world during summer breaks and were devoted subscribers to the San Francisco Symphony and Opera.

Barrett chose to honor Buffalo State with heartfelt gratitude for his teaching education. His college years were interrupted by World War II, but he returned to Buffalo after two years serving in the Merchant Marines. He was always grateful to the college for the support he received that launched a truly meaningful career as a public school teacher.

Find out all the ways you can make a difference. Contact the Buffalo State College Foundation at (716) 878-4658 or [giving.buffalostate.edu](http://giving.buffalostate.edu).

## 150th Sponsorship Packages Available

Various sponsorship packages are available to support the Buffalo State College 150th anniversary celebration during the 2021–2022 academic year. Help the college celebrate while reaching a sizable audience with your own brand and message. *To learn more, call the Institutional Advancement Office at (716) 878-4324.*



BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE 1871–2021



## Buffalo State Gives

Buffalo State Gives, a 24-hour annual online giving event, generated \$58,240 from 377 donors after it kicked off at noon on March 30. Student stories were featured at #BuffaloStateGives, and donors could direct gifts to the following funds and programs: the College Fund, the Student Emergency Fund, the 150th Anniversary, Buffalo State Athletics,

the George Floyd Memorial Scholarship, Civic and Community Engagement Programs, Art Conservation Student Fellowships, the Jaelah Jenkins Educational Opportunity Program Fund, the Anne Frank Project, the International Center for Studies in Creativity, the Black Fashion Scholarship, and the Muriel A. Howard Honors Program.

## Peterson Society to Induct 16 Members

Buffalo State will induct 16 new members into the Peterson Society in September. The Peterson Society—Buffalo State’s planned giving or legacy society—recognizes those who have made a commitment to Buffalo State through a bequest, gift annuity, charitable trust, life insurance, or other estate-planning technique.





scholarshipprofile { Genevieve C. and Richard C. Brown Scholarship }

## Tanisha Robinson, '20, '22



Robinson said she was inspired by her professors, particularly Martha Skerrett, professor of biology, who taught Robinson's first biology course at Buffalo State.

"I liked how organized she was and how confident she was in the material," Robinson said. "When I found out she was involved in undergraduate and graduate research, I figured she would play a pivotal role in my growth at Buffalo State. And she has."

Skerrett believed in Robinson to the point that she invited her to serve as a teaching assistant in her Foundations of Biology course just one year after Robinson completed it.

"That's where I first gained experience in teaching," she said. "I grew a lot, and she gave me feedback. Working with Dr. Skerrett helped me develop strategies and reassured me that teaching was for me."

Serving as a student teacher in the public schools also reinforced Robinson's belief in a career as a science teacher. "I honestly thought I would dislike teaching middle schoolers. I didn't want any part of classroom behavior management," she said. "But that experience was more rewarding than I thought it would be. The kids are hilarious. They're unpredictable, and every day is fun."

In the spring, she completed her second school placement in Clarence, New York. She taught in a synchronous mix of virtual and in-person science classes.

"If I had a day that was challenging or if I felt like I was moving clumsily, the students didn't care," she said. "They roll with the punches right along with you. They're resilient. They've done such a great job of having to be independent students at home and swapping out the virtual setting with in-person instruction. I commended them for their strength."

She also challenged them, especially the girls, who surprised Robinson by not engaging with the material or working as hard as their male counterparts.

"I'd tell them: 'You can dominate science, too,'" she said. "If the boys win today, they win today. I'm going to challenge you girls tomorrow. I'm not going to let you off the hook."

Robinson said she's learned from both this experience and a previous placement in Depew, New York, that to be an effective teacher, you have to get creative. For one science writing assignment, she used concepts from a Super Bowl commercial to inspire the students.

Along with conveying science concepts to students, Robinson wants to connect with larger audiences through a YouTube channel she recently created.

**W**hen Tanisha Robinson first took Organic Chemistry II as a transfer student at Buffalo State College, she felt overwhelmed and ended up dropping the course.

"I had way too much going on," she said. "I was working 30 to 50 hours per week as a pharmacy technician at Buffalo General Hospital and commuting a long distance. I wasn't focused and wasn't keeping up."

Sujit Suwal, the assistant professor of chemistry who taught the course, seemed disheartened, she said, but understood.

"When I re-enrolled in the class the following semester, he was ecstatic," said Robinson, who earned a degree in biology in 2020. "He challenged me, and I was prepared for the challenge."

"Even though I was taking 17 credit hours, working, and raising my daughter, I was determined to get a good grade. It was worth it."

Robinson not only excelled, but she also said it was her favorite undergraduate class. It also contributed to her decisions to add a chemistry minor to her degree plan and to pursue a master's degree in science education. She's wrapping up her coursework at Buffalo State this summer and expects to earn her master's degree in August.

"Tanisha is a very independent and detail-oriented student," Suwal said. "She has an audacity for asking the question until she finds the satisfying answer."

This propensity for finding answers led Robinson toward science, beginning in high school.

"My family was more into literature and music," explained Robinson, who grew up in North Buffalo and graduated from Bennett High School. "I was a rebel. I wanted something more hands-on and focused on the 'why' and 'how' of life. You can push scientific arguments a little further, and I like that science is a universal language; it's cross-cultural."

“My goal is to find ways to take challenging, complex content that people usually run away from and make it

tangible and visual.”



alumni profile Colin Dabkowski, '20, '22

# Journalism

FOR A SMALLER AUDIENCE

*STORY BY MICHAEL CANFIELD*



**A**fter spending 15 years as a journalist and art critic, graduate student Colin Dabkowski decided he needed a change. Dabkowski, who worked at the *Buffalo News* for nearly 13 years, wanted a career that aligned with his values as a journalist. He decided to get into education, and now he teaches at Alden High School while working toward a master's degree in English education at Buffalo State College.

"I've had my eye on education for a long time, because I consider journalism education," Dabkowski said. "This job, teaching, is just journalism for a smaller audience."

It's no secret that the newspaper industry has undergone significant changes over the last 30 years, and journalism jobs are hard to come by and even harder to keep. Dabkowski had a front-row seat for the sea changes the industry has undergone, and making the change to teaching made sense to him, both philosophically and practically.

"It didn't seem like too much of a leap for me to go from newspaper reporting, which is distilling complex concepts and information into an understandable form for an audience of varying reading levels and abilities," he said. "That's what teaching is, distilling complicated information and presenting it in a way that it can be taken and put into action by students."

Dabkowski, who earned a B.A. in magazine journalism from Syracuse University, had strong opinions on what English education should look like and how teaching should be done. When he first attended Buffalo State for the English education postbaccalaureate teacher certification program in 2018, he said, he was blown away by what the college was offering.

"I spent a long time living a mile and a half from Buff State without realizing that they had an English education department that was so closely aligned with

my beliefs about education," he said. "The department was promoting ideas I had deeply believed for years, and had a view of education that I couldn't have hoped for in my wildest dreams."

In working with faculty members like James Cercone, associate professor and coordinator of the English education program, and Kristen Pastore-Capuana, assistant professor of English, Dabkowski found like-minded educators who prioritized genuine audiences, real projects, student voices, and collaboration.

"I walked into my first English ed class and met Jim and Kristin, and it was like, What is this?" he said. "This is the most amazing thing ever. I felt like they were preaching to the choir. They got me fired up and really excited."

They also got Dabkowski into a classroom early on, giving him hands-on experience right away.

***"IT'S THE PERFECT BALANCE OF SOLID RESEARCH FOUNDATION, HANDS-ON CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE, AND MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES," HE SAID. "IN MY MIND, WHY WOULD I GO ANYWHERE ELSE? IT'S JUST AN INCREDIBLE RESOURCE."***

Dabkowski is now in his first year at Alden High School, where he teaches English, creative writing, and multimedia production to a mix of ninth- through 12th-graders. On a recent Wednesday afternoon, his students were listening to podcasts they had produced and giving each other feedback. Dabkowski offered his own constructive comments when necessary but was clearly enjoying his role. He said it wasn't easy leaving the world of journalism to embark on a new career, but now that he's making his way, he couldn't be happier.

"I have absolutely no regrets," he said.

## Message from the Alumni Association Board President

I hope you and your families are enjoying your summer! Buffalo State College faculty and staff are busy preparing for the fall semester, Homecoming and Family Weekend (September 27–October 3), and the 150th Anniversary kickoff. Although alumni engagement has been primarily virtual since last March, our graduates have stayed connected to Buffalo State through social media, online events, and digital communication.

We thank all our alumni for their continued support and connection to the college during such challenging times. You can stay updated on activities during our yearlong sesquicentennial celebration by visiting [alumni.buffalostate.edu](http://alumni.buffalostate.edu) and [buffalostate.edu/150](http://buffalostate.edu/150).

I look forward to seeing new energy on campus, and in our Alumni Association, as each of us returns to a more normal way of life.

*Richard J. Trigilio, '90*  
*President,*  
*Alumni Association Board of Directors*



Kayla James '14, '20  
*College Career Counselor*

## Spring Virtual Events Mix Business and Pleasure

Alumni can participate in virtual events, which provide an opportunity to meet up with friends, make new ones, and stay connected to Buffalo State. This spring, the Alumni Association hosted virtual trivia and “Price It!” (a spin on the popular game show *The Price Is Right*) so alumni across the country could join the fun virtually. Three young alumni served on a virtual panel to offer advice on their experiences navigating their career paths and education after graduating from Buffalo State and how they adapted and responded to job changes in their distinct industries, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Andrew Lidowsky, '14  
*Attorney*



Jessica Zimpfer, '10  
*Corporate Manager*

## Alumni Association Board of Directors

### President:

Richard J. Trigilio, '90

### Vice President:

Stacy E. Lewis Beauford, '01

### Secretary:

Jane E. Gilbride, '91

### Treasurer:

David J. Zapfel, '85

### Members at Large:

Sheldon L. Anderson, '14, '18

Rita A. Auerbach, '54, '74

Ara H. Bagdasarian, '95

John D. Byron, '97

James W. Duncan, '94

Claudine M. Ewing, '92

Maureen Hammett, '85, '88, '92

Paul M. Herlan, '85

Marsha D. Jackson, '81, '85

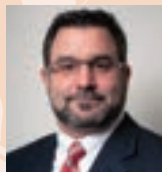
Claudia A. Marschall, '78

Latrese N. Myers, '08

Sue C. Sims, '13

Raven Baxter Travis, '14, '17

Jerome E. Wszalek, '75



TRIGILIO



LEWIS BEAUFORD



GILBRIDE



ZAPFEL

[alumni.buffalostate.edu](http://alumni.buffalostate.edu)

### STAY CONNECTED AND GET IN THE KNOW

The Alumni Association regularly sends emails about college news, events, volunteer opportunities, and benefits for alumni. Contact [alumni@buffalostate.edu](mailto:alumni@buffalostate.edu) or go to [alumni.buffalostate.edu](http://alumni.buffalostate.edu) to update your contact information and receive communication from your alma mater.

## Buffalo State Success Engages Students, Alumni, and Corporate Partners

The Alumni Engagement Office and the Honors Program recently concluded a 12-month virtual mentoring program matching 16 students with M&T Bank professionals, and four students secured internships or paid positions at M&T. All alumni and students can sign up for Buffalo State Success, a free platform that allows Bengals to connect through networking and mentoring opportunities. Alumni mentors can offer guidance to students including how to navigate coursework, school-life balance, and prepare for life after graduation. Alumni interested in signing up or becoming mentors can go to [success.buffalostate.edu](http://success.buffalostate.edu) or email Kevin Diver, the program coordinator, at [diverkp@buffalostate.edu](mailto:diverkp@buffalostate.edu).





## Homecoming and Family Weekend Marks 150th Anniversary Kickoff

Homecoming and Family Weekend, slated for September 27–October 3, will begin the yearlong celebration of Buffalo State’s sesquicentennial. The Alumni Association will celebrate the landmark reunions of graduates from the classes of 1970 and 1971 during Homecoming.

The campus is planning for a year of special events, speakers, performances, athletic competitions, and more. Visit [buffalostate.edu/150](http://buffalostate.edu/150) for the latest information.



### Is Your Family an Alumni Legacy?

How many of your family members graduated from Buffalo State? Did your spouse, child, parent, sibling, cousin, aunt, uncle, grandparent, or great-grandparent graduate from here? We want to hear from you! Share your family’s history, register, and participate in our Alumni Legacy Family Tree contest. More information about this contest, which will launch this summer and run until April 2022, can be found at [alumni.buffalostate.edu/legacy-family-tree-contest](http://alumni.buffalostate.edu/legacy-family-tree-contest).

### Alumni to Gather for Landmark

Class of 1970 and 1971 graduates are invited back to campus for a reunion on Saturday, October 2, during Homecoming Week. This event will coincide with Buffalo State’s 150th Anniversary kickoff celebrations. If you are a ‘70 or ‘71 graduate and would like to receive information about the upcoming reunion, email [alumni@buffalostate.edu](mailto:alumni@buffalostate.edu) or call (716) 878-6001.

## College Engages in Oral History Project for 150th Anniversary

Buffalo State College and the Alumni Association embarked on an Oral History Project in fall 2020 with our partner Publishing Concepts Inc. (PCI) to collect perspectives from more than 8,000 alumni. Some of these stories will be included in a commemorative book celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the college. All the transcriptions and original audio files of the interviews will be housed in the E. H. Butler Library Archives, and the book will be printed later this year. If you have any questions about an order placed with PCI, you may contact PCI at (800) 982-1590 or [customerservice@publishingconcepts.com](mailto:customerservice@publishingconcepts.com).

### Alumni Association Recognizes Graduates

Each year, the Alumni Association celebrates the achievements of graduates whose professional accomplishments bring pride to the college. These alumni also engage in meaningful community service and volunteerism at Buffalo State, making them integral in shaping the college story and the Alumni Association network. If you would like to learn more about these awards or to make a nomination, please email [alumni@buffalostate.edu](mailto:alumni@buffalostate.edu).



Kenneth Huff, '92, '98  
2020 Distinguished Alumnus Award



Rick W. Kennedy, '77  
2020 Distinguished Alumnus Award



Aitina Fareed-Cooke, '12, '16  
2020 Young Alumnus Achievement Award



Linda Appleby, '80  
2021 Distinguished Alumnus Award



Michael Garner, '83  
2021 Distinguished Alumnus Award



Raven Baxter-Travis, '14, '17  
2021 Young Alumnus Achievement Award



Nathan Mroz, '16  
2021 Young Alumnus Achievement Award

Our 2020 and 2021 alumni award recipients were honored during the virtual Commencements. A special event will be held for the recipients in October 2021 during Homecoming Week.

40s



FIRESTONE

**Pauline (Martin) Firestone, B.S. '42**, taught home economics at Lake Shore High School

in Angola, New York, and supervised student teachers from Buffalo State. She met her husband, **Edward Firestone, B.S. '40**, while teaching in Angola. They moved to Williamsville in 1957 and had two children, who also graduated from Buffalo State. Firestone writes, "In February, I celebrated my 101st birthday. Fortunately, my 100th birthday occurred before the pandemic, so I was able to have a big celebration!"

**Eleanor (Flick) Reynolds, B.S. '49**, married Douglas Reynolds in 1950. She taught in Scio, New York, for 33 years. Reynolds, who is 94, writes, "I have lived a blessed life, still driving, enjoy my grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and many activities."

50s

**Joyce (Harbeck) Farr, B.S. '52**, lives in Geneseo, New York, and attended her granddaughter's wedding via Zoom in December.



JOHNSON

**Ruth (Kimmler) Johnson, B.S. '52**, was married for over 50 years to **Norman Johnson, B.S. '53, M.S. '62**. They had six

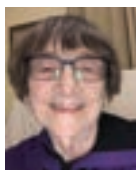
children, two of them adopted. Ruth taught elementary grades in Cleveland Hill and Lancaster Central schools and worked as a library assistant at the University at Buffalo before retirement. She celebrated her 80th birthday by going skydiving and started writing haiku poems during quarantine.

**Rita (Haas) Widman, B.S. '53**, writes, "Buffalo State holds a treasured place in my heart. My entire adult life was molded by Buff State, not only because I learned how to be a good teacher, but because I met my beloved husband, **Manny Widman, B.S. '53**. Widman was twice selected as Teacher of the Year in her district and retired from the Washington Township School District in New Jersey after 22 years of service. Manny died in October 2019. Widman has three sons, seven grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

**Rita Argen Auerbach, B.A. '54, M.S.Ed. '74**, donated her painting *The Jacqueline Vito LoRusso Alumni and Visitor Center* to Buffalo State College in recognition of the 150th Anniversary. The painting is permanently exhibited in the LoRusso Alumni and Visitor Center. Auerbach is a 2004 Distinguished Alumnus Award recipient, serves on the Alumni Association board, is a former trustee of the Burchfield Penney Art Center, and is a retired art teacher from the Clarence Central School District. She is an internationally recognized award-winning artist whose watercolors are represented in numerous public, private, and corporate collections, including the Burchfield Penney Art Center. She and her late husband, **Richard Auerbach, B.S. '52, M.S. '55**, also donated her Buffalo Architectural Series paintings to Buffalo State; those are displayed in Moot Hall.

**Dennis Doan, B.S. '54**, recently celebrated his 88th birthday.

**Ivi (Ajango) Kilaspea, B.S. '55**, has four children, seven grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

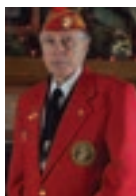


SHULMAN

**Joan (Rosenthal) Shulman, B.S.Ed. '55**, lives in Torrance, California.

She has two grandchildren and three cats.

**Virginia (Cardot) Cannon, B.S. '57**, is retired and living in New Paltz, New York. She stays active by serving on a library committee, gardening, and tracing her ancestors.



CLEVER

**George Clever, B.S. '58**, published his 10th book, *Cat of 9 8 7 Tales*, a mystery

collection of seven short stories about travel to strange places in the world. The book is available on Amazon. He has also finished a memoir on his work with American Indian communities. Clever's cedar chest painting of his son Keith's Navy P-3 aircraft was selected for publication in *As You Were: The Military Review*, Vol. 14. His poem "What Can You Do" was recently published by the *Deronda Review*.

**Barbara (Ruben) Friedman, B.S. '58**, lives in Palm Desert, California, and has worked as a travel agent for 26 years.

**Jacqueline (Gotti) Carboy, B.S.Ed. '59**, has lived in Lincroft, New Jersey, since 1971 and has been married to her husband, Dave, for 57 years.

**Barbara "Bobbi" Mastrangelo, B.S.Ed. '59**, is writing a book, *Grate Impressions*, about her experiences as a manhole artist.

60s

**Nancy (Skłarski) Crutchfield, B.S. '60**, writes, "One of the proudest experiences in my life is that I graduated from Buffalo State. That degree allowed me to have a career that I love and have an income that helped put our four children through university.... I was helping fulfill the dream of my immigrant parents, which was to see their children become college graduates." Crutchfield and her husband recently celebrated 61 years of marriage.

**Martha Falsone, B.S. '60, M.S. '67**, is 82 years old and has three children and nine grandchildren.

**Bob Sprenger, B.S. '60, is 87** years old, lives in Florida, and loves playing tennis daily.

**Marilyn Randolph, B.S. '61**, lives at Florida Presbyterian Homes in Lakeland with her husband, Lee.



WANTUCK

**Karen Wantuck, B.S.Ed. '62**, is a realtor for Coldwell Banker and was presented with a 2020

International Silver Award. She lives in Sarasota, Florida.



VENTURA

**Bonnie (Robinson) Ventura, B.S. '63**, received an M.F.A. from Syracuse

University after graduating from

Buffalo State and has had a small pottery business her entire career. She and her husband will celebrate their 49th wedding anniversary in September. She has two sons and has resided in Washington state since 1976.

**Marie Jakiel, B.S. '64**, retired in 1997 from the Buffalo Public Schools after teaching at Lincoln Academy for her entire teaching career. She lives in South Carolina.

YOUNG



**Jim Young, C.A.S. '64**, was a professor and vice president of administration at Buffalo State for several years. He also served as president of SUNY Potsdam before becoming chancellor and distinguished professor of education at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Since retiring in 1995, Young has authored 31 spiritual books ([www.theinwardway.live](http://www.theinwardway.live)).



KAMLET

**Judy (Jacobson) Kamlet, B.S. '65**, is married with two children and four grandchildren. She

taught in the Croton-Harmon School District for 26 years and has been retired for the past 10 years.

**Carol (Skripek) Rotando, B.S. '66**, is enjoying retirement as a member of the Corvettes of Buffalo. She has two grown sons, Paul and Ryan, and a 15-year-old granddaughter, Emily.



**Alan Booth, B.S. '67**, is 77 years old and recently started a mentoring program.



LANGELIER-LEBEDA

**Suzanne Langelier-Lebeda, B.S. '67**, was a director and award-winning graphic designer of

publications at SUNY Potsdam. She retired to focus on her nature-based fine artwork and freelance design projects, including illustrations for the Cumberland Island National Seashore Visitor Center in St. Mary's, Georgia, and panels for the 2,000-square-foot exhibit *The Mary E. English Commons*, celebrating the history and traditions of SUNY Potsdam. She was recently awarded the North Country Citation by St. Lawrence University during Commencement for her vision and artistry in endeavors that enhanced the Adirondack Mountain and St. Lawrence River Valley regions, and St. Lawrence University. She is an exhibiting member of the Adirondack Artists Guild Gallery in Saranac Lake, New York.

**Bonnie Kelm, B.S. '68**, celebrated being cancer-free in 2021 after a lengthy battle with non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

**Hank Nuwer, B.S. '68**, wrote a chapter, "Don't Haze Pledges: Mentor Them," for a new book on Greek life, *From Letters to Leaders*, edited by Mike Ayalon, director of Greek University speaking bureau. Nuwer recently presented on hazing prevention at the University of Texas and on penitentiary reforms via Zoom at a conference sponsored by the Higher School of Criminology and Penitentiary Science in Warsaw, Poland.

**Stanley Kacherski, B.S. '69**, recently retired from his private dental practice. He also is a licensed nutritionist in New York State and practices medical nutrition two days a week. He and his wife, **Carol Ann Calandra, B.S. '65**, live in the Hudson Valley.

**Donna Krusin Miller, B.S. '69**, taught for 30 years in Western New York. Now retired, she visits her sons in Texas during the winter months and loves to travel.

**David Passmore, B.S. '69**, retired after 41 years at Penn State and 51 years in higher education. He was named a distinguished professor of education at Penn State in 2014 and held positions as director of the Office for the Protection of Human Subjects, director of the Multimedia Technology Classroom Group for the Center for Academic Computing, director of the Institute for Research in Training and Development, and faculty associate of the Center for the Study of Higher Education. He received 18 national or international awards for his research, writing, and service; authored over 400 scholarly publications; presented at more than 500 conferences; and supervised 86 doctoral dissertations. Over his career, Passmore was also employed by the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and the University of Northern Iowa. He was a track and field student-athlete at Buffalo State and earned his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota in 1973. He resides with his wife, Alice, in Pittsburgh, where their three children and four grandchildren also live.

SANDORO



**Mary Ann (Walas) Sandoro, B.S. '69**, co-founded the Buffalo Transportation Pierce-Arrow Museum with her husband, Jim. Established to honor the history of transportation in Western New York, the museum features Pierce-Arrow and Thomas Flyer automobiles, bicycles, and motorcycles; the 1927 Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Buffalo Filling Station; and more ([www.pierce-arrow.com](http://www.pierce-arrow.com)).



SMITH

**Deborah (Dinovitch) Smith, B.A. '69**, is running for commissioner of Morris County,

New Jersey, and is currently serving her second three-year term. Previously she served as a council member for Denville Township, New Jersey, for 20 years.

## 70s



ELLERBROCK

**James Ellerbrock, B.S. '70, M.S.Ed. '73**, has been an adjunct instructor of mathematics

at Valencia College in Orlando, Florida, since 2013.

**William George, B.S.Ed. '70, M.S.Ed. '74**, moved to Florida after living in Western New York for 33 years. He and his wife are enjoying retirement by cruising and traveling in their camper.



### Empowering Youth to Succeed

**Jerrell Braxton, B.A. '73**, a retired school social worker and clinical psychotherapist, has plenty to be proud of. He has won multiple awards for his exceptional work, including Wisconsin School Social Worker of the Year. Yet his book, *Brothers of Kwanza: An African-American Male Self-Empowerment Group Process* (Dorrance Publishing, 2021), may be at the top of his list of career accomplishments.

"I first published this information for an in-house program we started more than 20 years ago in the Milwaukee Public Schools," Braxton said. "This new edition brings the principles of that program to a national, and even international, level. This is a step-by-step manual for how people can bring about change through self-empowerment."

Braxton said his program is not a cure-all or quick fix. Rather, it is a proven, data-backed strategy that produces results when implemented consistently over time. This program uses clinical, educational, and cultural strategies—along with mentoring—to empower youth to find success in school and other areas of their lives, he said.

"I still get calls from students we worked with 20 years ago who appreciated the program and have gone on to very successful careers and happy lives," Braxton said. "It's beautiful to see."

**Tom Prestopnik, B.S. '70, M.S. '71**, had his interview with rock-and-roll singer Leapy Lee—known for his song “Little Arrows,” which reached No. 16 on the U.S. music charts in 1968 and sold 3 million copies worldwide—published in the March 2021 issue of *Goldmine* magazine.



WILLIAMS

**Frank R. Williams, B.S. '70**, was on the Buffalo State Faculty-Student Association

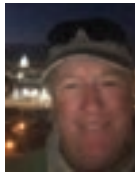
from 1966 to 1968 and was an adjunct instructor at the college from 1971 to 1980. He was a manager at Service Systems Corporation Food Service Management, which was acquired by Marriott, and later served as a regional vice president. He also spent 20 years as a management consultant in contract food service. Williams has a master's degree from Trinity College and Seminary and taught Sunday school for 25 years. He was recognized as an Outstanding Alumni by Erie Community College in 1996 and as a Hall of Distinction Member at Kenmore East High School in 2012. Williams has been married to Florence Ann Farrell for 58 years; they have three children, eight grandchildren, and 13 great-grandchildren. His two books, *From My Way to the Highway and Created to Serve*, can be found online ([www.frankwilliams.com](http://www.frankwilliams.com)).

**Sharon (Wager) Adams, B.S.Ed. '72**, has been married for 49 years and has three children and



ADAMS

one grandchild. She has been pursuing a career in acrylic and oil painting and is the founding director of a Christian counseling ministry for emotionally wounded people, where she has worked for over 30 years. Adams lives in Greensboro, North Carolina.



MCDONALD

**Kevin McDonald, B.S. '72**, is the former director of the Probation Department

in Columbia County, New York, and returned to work six years ago after retirement to be the administrator of the Office for the Aging in Columbia County. McDonald has been married for 47 years, has three children, and six grandchildren.

**Christine Mickelsen, B.S. '72**, writes, “Buff State was a good place to grow up. And it made possible a 30-year teaching career that I wholeheartedly loved.”

**Meryl Meisler, B.A. '73**, published her third monograph, *New York PARADISE LOST Bushwick Era Disco* (Parallel Pictures Press, 2021).



CUVILLO

**William Cuvillo, B.S. '74**, retired after 38 years from Vishay Intertechnology,

where he worked as a senior product manager specializing in thin film, thick film, and bulk metal foil technologies. He also worked at Emerson Electric for nine years in a variety of design engineering roles. He continues to develop his technical knowledge of resistor film technology through industry-related study

and seminars. He has published and presented papers at CARTS and has authored articles for *Microwaves & RF Magazine* that were published in Europe, Asia, and the United States.

**Mike Sexton, B.S. '74**, retired as vice president of enrollment for Santa Clara University after 11 years and a total of 41 years in the field of admissions and enrollment.

**Jim Valenti, B.A. '74**, retired in April 2018 after 40 years of practicing law.

**Judith (Hagg) Edgar, B.S. '76**, served 32 years in the Baltimore County Public Schools as an English teacher, department chair, coordinator, assistant principal, principal, and executive assistant to two superintendents and the Board of Education. She earned her M.S. in special education at Johns Hopkins University in 1981 and studied at the Harvard Principals' Center in 2003. She also trained aspiring principals, audited special education programs, and served as the principal in a secure juvenile detention facility for the Maryland Department of State. Edgar taught and supervised student teachers at Towson University in Maryland. In 2019, she was named to the Sweet Home High School Alumni Wall of Fame. She and her husband own and operate a small horse farm.



COLLIER

**Diane Collier, B.S. '77**, retired over 10 years ago from the Buffalo Public Schools as associate

superintendent for student support services. In retirement, Collier serves as an educational

consultant with the National SAM Innovation Project and collaborates with school leaders across the country in support of improving student achievement.

COLLIN



**Robert Collin, B.A. '78**, published a chapter, “Environmental Justice and Sustainability: The U.S. Experience,” with Robin Morris Collin in *The Cambridge Handbook of Environmental Justice and Sustainability* (Cambridge University Press, 2021). He also published several chapters on citizen science and environmental nonprofits in *Sustainable Planet: Issues and Solutions for Our Environment's Future* (ABC-CLIO, 2021).

**Larry Lundy, B.F.A. '78**, is a production designer and set decorator ([vimeo.com/543313208/c10f5f5d61](https://vimeo.com/543313208/c10f5f5d61)).

**Elaine (Stolarek) Ruszczyk, B.S. '78, M.S.Ed. '82**, retired in January 2021 after 43 years in education. She was a special education teacher in the Rochester School District and a science teacher for the Buffalo Diocese at various Catholic schools. She and her husband, Norm, have been married for 37 years and have two children. She resides in Lancaster, New York.

**Howie Vetter, B.S. '78**, writes, “Thanks for all the great memories. I hope everyone is safe and well!”

**Jesse Townsley, B.S. '79**, authored a paper, “Adding a Design Perspective,” that was published by the Australian Rock Art Research Association.

## 80s



PFLERGER

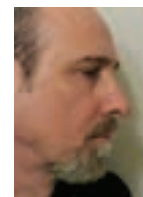
**Suzanne Pfleger, B.S. '80**, has worked for the Grand Island Central School

District as a personnel clerk since 2005. She lives in Tonawanda and has a daughter.

BEDNAREK



**William Bednarek, B.S. '81**, served 10 years in the Marine Corps and was a member of the United States Secret Service in Washington, D.C., retiring as a supervisor after 27 years. In his free time, he plays hockey and coaches youth hockey at the Naval Academy and sponsored 11 midshipmen. Bednarek resides in eastern Maryland, has three children, and four grandchildren.



FLOERSCH

**Russell Floersch, B.F.A. '81**, recently completed an academic year teaching in Nebraska

as a visiting professor of painting at Hastings College. He was an adjunct assistant professor of drawing for five years at City College, CUNY. Floersch lives in Manhattan and maintains a studio in Long Island City.





MCKENNA

**Joe McKenna, B.A. '81**, relocated to Iowa City from Washington, D.C., for an art residency.



NACCARATO

**Joseph Naccarato, B.S. '82**, has worked as a broker and investor for 15 years in Charlotte, North Carolina. He is currently employed at EXP Realty LLC.



THOMAS

**Myrtha (Millien) Thomas, B.S. '82**, has been married for 28 years and has three children.

She launched a digital book, *Building on Your Skills*, in June and volunteers for the Garden State Episcopal Community Development Corporation to provide low-income housing in Jersey City.

**Bernadette (Bosinski) Thomson, B.S. '82**, is a clinical psychologist in private practice as well as a wife, mother of three, and new grandmother.



EVANS

**Janis (Leslie) Evans, B.A. '82**, is a licensed professional counselor in Washington, D.C. She

founded Evans Counseling and Consultation PLLC, specializing in counseling services for individuals and couples with increased stress, anxiety, and

depression due to increased reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic and racial trauma. She has a master's degree from Howard University.

NEWELL



**Terry Newell, B.S. '83, M.S. '89**, recently retired after 27 years in aerospace manufacturing and 15 years in health care. During his career, he implemented a continuous improvement methodology at a large Midwest health-care system, which was based on the principles and techniques of the Toyota Production System.



BUNKER

**Paulette (Pinkowski) Bunker, B.S. '84**, is a senior sales engineer of building automation

systems integration and temperature controls in the mid-Atlantic area for Capron Company Inc. of Rockville, Maryland.



HAMULA

**Scott Hamula, B.A. '84**, was promoted to full professor at Ithaca College. He is chair of

the Strategic Communication Department and program director of the integrated marketing communications major at the Roy H. Park School of Communications.

**Karen Clinton Jones, B.S. '84**, serves as vice president of diversity, equity, and inclusion at Binghamton University.



SANTUCI-SOFRANKO

**Rose Santuci-Sofranko, B.S.Ed. '84**, taught special education for nine years at Our Lady of Victory

Infant Home after graduation. Since then, she has worked as a home teacher for adults with special needs. She married her husband, Paul, in March 2008 and they enjoy day trips and gardening. Santuci-Sofranko is also a photographer and artist ([www.artist4god.net](http://www.artist4god.net)).

**Paul Herlan, B.S. '85**, has been named vice president of the board of directors for Southeast Foundation, which raises funds to enhance employment opportunities for adults with disabilities served by People Inc. Herlan has served on the board for 13 years and serves on the Buffalo State Alumni Association Board. He is director of business development with Lumsden McCormick and Brisbane Consulting Group.

**Gerald Mead, B.A. '85, B.S. '86**, received an honorary doctor of fine arts from Niagara University during its 2020 virtual commencement ceremony. He was also invited by SUNY Geneseo to present a 30-year retrospective exhibition of his work in its Kinetic Gallery in fall 2020.

**Nina (Deutschman) Silberstein, B.A. '85**, accepted a position in January 2021 as a scientific editor for ZRT Laboratory in Portland, Oregon.

**Millicent Thomas, M.S. '85**, is a semi-retired adjunct instructor at Lone Star College in Texas. Her latest published project is *Leadership Matters: A Walk Down Memory Lane* (Balboa Press, 2020).

**Cynthia Christmas, B.A. '86**, wrote and designed all the knitting patterns for her book *Christian Knitting Patterns* ([knittingbycindy.shutterfly.com](http://knittingbycindy.shutterfly.com)).

**Mary Dianne Richardson, B.S. '86**, has been a career counselor supporting individuals with substance abuse and mental illness since 2000. She lives in Rochester, New York.



WATSON

**Melissa Watson, B.S.Ed. '86**, is Durham Public School's first director of school

relations, a position serving as a liaison to families needing assistance in working with their schools. Watson previously served as interim executive director of elementary learning and leadership and director of the high school curriculum. She was a principal at Rocky Mount Prep and multiple schools in Charlotte, North Carolina; she was also the executive director of the Northeast Learning Community in Charlotte. Watson earned a doctoral degree in school leadership and innovation from St. Thomas University and master's degrees in school administration and pre-elementary education from UNC-Charlotte and Norfolk State, respectively, after graduating with honors from Buffalo State.



FELTRINELLI

**Scott Feltrinelli, B.A. '87**, retired from a 28-year career in pharmaceutical and

biologics sales. He has 27 years of experience fly fishing, both fresh and saltwater, and is a certified U.S. Coast Guard captain and licensed fly-fishing guide. He was an appointee to the NYSDEC Lake Ontario Fisheries Management Group from 2018 to 2021, working to implement a conservational strategy for a trout and salmon fishery in the Great Lakes region. Feltrinelli served as vice president of the Canandaigua Lake Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Fly Fishers International, and was a featured writer and photographer for *On the Fly* magazine. He is president of the New York Chapter of Bold Face Fly Fishing, a volunteer organization that provides mentorship for first responders and military personnel to learn the therapeutic effects of fly fishing.



KILLILEE

**Patrick Killilee, B.S.Ed. '87**, is director of residential services at the University of Pennsylvania

and lives in Philadelphia with his dog, Lyla. He writes, "Being a resident assistant at Buff State launched a career in higher education, which has taken me to Mankato State University for my master's degree, then on to the University of Maryland Baltimore County, Niagara University, Marist College, Georgetown University, and now Penn."

**Thomas Knab, B.S.Ed. '87, M.S.Ed. '94**, was a 2020 inductee into the National Teachers Hall of Fame. He is a K-4 visual arts educator at Dodge Elementary School in East Amherst, New York, with 31 years of teaching experience.

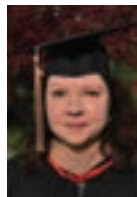


BISSETT

**Wally Bissett, B.A. '88**, was inducted into the Western New York Baseball Hall of Fame as an umpire. He is currently an NCAA Division I umpire on staff with two conferences and has worked five NCAA D3 Regionals. He is also a local fill-in professional baseball player in the Eastern League (AA) and International League (AAA). He works as an information technology specialist at Lippe Mathias Wexler Friedman LLP.

**Paul Wahlgren, B.S. '88**, is co-founder and chief marketing officer of BeautyStat Cosmetics. He writes, "I love what I do and the people I work with, so there is hope that one can find the dream work-life balance!"

**Stay connected with Buffalo State anytime, anywhere.**



URBANSKI-FARRELL

**Elizabeth Urbanski-Farrell, B.A. '89**, earned an M.S. in health-care leadership, policy, and research from the Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences and an M.B.A. from Cornell University's Johnson School of Business in May. She served as an editor of *Cornell Healthcare Review* in fall 2019.

## 90s

**Brad Gold, B.S. '90**, recently celebrated his ninth wedding anniversary with his wife, Lara, whom he met at Buffalo State and reconnected with years later, in their new hometown of Raleigh, North Carolina.

**James Kegler, B.A. '90, B.S. '93**, has been working for Sodexo for over 24 years and is currently the food service director for the Cheektowaga Central School District.

**Michael Hoffman, B.A. '92**, has been married to his wife, Emily, for 23 years. He met her through her brother and Hoffman's classmate at Buffalo State. They have five children ages 10 to 20. Hoffman is a teacher at Pembroke High School and a coach for varsity cross-country and track at Frontier Central High School. He recently celebrated 25 years of teaching.



PYNE

**Melanie (Shaw) Pyne, B.S. '92, M.S.Ed. '99**, entered her 29th year of teaching, 25 of those at the International School 45 in Buffalo as a first-grade teacher.

**Francisco Vaquero, B.A. '92**, writes, "Greetings to my fellow Buff State alumni, especially to my brothers of Sigma Tau Gamma!"

**Shakora (Kory) Banks, B.S. '93, M.S. '02**, opened a private practice in psychotherapy in Baltimore, Maryland.

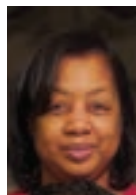
**Sherry, B.S. '93**, and **Chris Ionta, B.S. '95**, have been married for 25 years.

**Lawrence Cook II, B.A. '94**, is senior vice president of programs for the Oishei Foundation and was recently elected chairman of the Niagara Falls Housing Authority.



HOWARD

**Craig Howard, B.A. '94**, was promoted to tenured associate professor of educational psychology at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville in fall 2021. He is the director of the Ph.D. program in learning, design, and technology and the M.S. program in instructional technology, and is an affiliated faculty member in linguistics. During the 2020–2021 academic year, he was appointed University Fellow for Technology-Enhanced Teaching. Howard lives in Knoxville, Tennessee, with his wife and two children.



COOK

**Rosemary (Howard) Cook, B.S. '95**, has three children, works in human resources, and lives in Atlanta, Georgia.



RUGNETTA

**Adam Rugnetta, B.S. '96**, traveled with a college friend to Brazil after graduating

from Buffalo State, where he worked in international schools. He also lived in Barcelona for 11 years, where he met his wife. The Rugnettas and their two children have lived in India and are currently living in Milan, Italy. He published a graphic novel, *Beyond Choice*, which is available on Amazon (@rugnettanews).

**Grant Van Leuven, B.A. '96**, has been hired as a community engagement coordinator for the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, where he will serve as the West Coast representative for development, church relations, and events. He will also coordinate public and media relations for the alliance and assist with grant writing, print publications, and the editing of various online magazines. Van Leuven has been serving as minister of the Puritan Evangelical Church in Paradise Hills since 2010. He lives in Chula Vista, California, with his wife and six children. He earned his M.Div. from the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh, where he also served as director of development and communications. He enjoys songwriting and performing his original Christian music (dumb-sheep.org).

**Bryon McIntyre, B.S. '96**, retired from the Buffalo Fire Department and now lives in San Antonio, Texas.

**Michelle (Freedman) Maess, B.S. '98**, is celebrating her 50th birthday this year.



MEYER

**Dan Meyer, B.A. '99**, was recently reappointed to the Southtown Teachers' Center Policy Board as a business and media representative for the volunteer consortium that serves the Frontier Central and Hamburg Central school districts.

## 00s



HARRIS-KADRI

**Charlene Harris-Kadri, B.S. '00, M.S.Ed. '04**, earned a master's in educational administration from the University at Buffalo and taught special education in Western New York before advancing to administration in 2008. She has three grandchildren.

LOWERY



**Robert Lowery, B.S. '00**, relaunched his company, RL Experience LLC, in March 2021. The company empowers professionals with leadership, personal development, and life-coaching services. His 20 years of professional experience in leadership, mentorship, and coaching includes a term as the chief program officer for the Boys & Girls Club of Buffalo. He was honored by the Boys & Girls Clubs of America as the Professional of the Year in 2017. He was named to the *Buffalo Business First* 40



under 40 list and is a recipient of the Buffalo Black Achievers Award, both in 2014. Lowery serves as chairman of the board of trustees of True Bethel Baptist Church; treasurer and trustee of the Buffalo United Charter School; and treasurer and councilmember of the Communities of Giving Legacy Initiative. He also serves on the boards of the Cheektowaga Economic Development Corporation and the Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens and Resource Council of WNY, and as a member of Buffalo State College President's Community Advisory Committee.

**Lakita Reeves, B.S. '00**, works as a supervising offender rehabilitation coordinator.

**Jessica (Boczkowski) Barrett, B.S. '02**, is a teacher at a maximum-security correctional facility. She writes, "Classroom management classes gave me a foundation. My grit and strength have led me on to success both personally and professionally" ([www.ted.com/tedx/events/35785](http://www.ted.com/tedx/events/35785)).



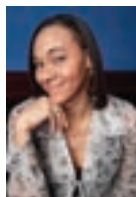
HAICK

**Dan Haick, B.S. '02, M.S.Ed. '05**, earned his doctoral degree in educational leadership

from D'Youville College. He has been a lecturer for the Buffalo State Business Department for the past 10 years and is a Buffalo Public Schools teacher.

**Dawn (Hill) Swan, B.S. '02, M.S.Ed. '06**, completed her 13th year teaching in Pasco County, Florida. She celebrated her 20th wedding anniversary in 2020. She has a 19-year-old daughter attending Florida Gulf Coast

University, and a 25-year-old daughter getting her master's degree at St. Leo University.



GIBBS

**Tascha (Moore) Gibbs, B.S. '03**, moved to Philadelphia in 2008, where she currently lives with her husband and five children. She is a scheduling coordinator for a health-care corporation and is working on her own clothing lines, which she hopes to turn into a full-time career.



GUADAGNO

**Joseph Guadagno, B.S. '03**, retired from the automotive industry in 2003 and from education in 2012. He loves spending time with his family and is teaching one of his grandchildren how to drive.

RUGNETTA



**Kevin Rugnetta, B.S. '03**, is head of product for BEX Sunglasses. He has worked as a product developer for New Era, as an accessories designer at Quicksilver, and for Will Leather Goods. He lived in California and Oregon before moving to Las Vegas in 2015, where he currently lives with his wife and three children. He writes, "My career and life led me to travel all over the world, and I do not

think I would have been as successful without the degree I earned at Buffalo State."

**Jennifer Murphy, B.S. '04**, was promoted to manager of firearms for the crime section of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI). She began her career with the GBI in 2005 in the toxicology section as a laboratory technician. In 2007, she transferred to the firearms section and was promoted to a firearms scientist, where she supported the law enforcement community in both the investigation and trial-preparation stages of criminal cases involving a firearm or other tool. Murphy was promoted to technical leader in 2015 and assistant manager in 2017 and will continue to serve the law enforcement community in her current role. She currently resides in Douglasville, Georgia.



PINSLEY

**Alison Pinsley, M.S. Ed. '05**, moved to Coconut Creek, Florida, in 2014. She was diagnosed with stage 4 breast cancer upon moving and is doing well. She would love to hear from alumni living in South Florida.

**Steven Baker, B.S. '06**, is the middle school principal of College Park Academy in College Park, Maryland. He has over 15 years of teaching and administrative experience in K-12 public schools. His professional experience includes teaching all subjects and leading teams in grades 4-6. In 2011, Baker became an assistant principal in Prince George's County Public Schools at Glenridge Elementary School. During this time, he joined the Aspiring

CALHOUN



Leaders Program for Student Success, which trains select assistant principals to become school principals. As the first assistant school principal of College Park Academy, he helped create a rigorous, individualized, and comprehensive college-preparatory program that challenges students to think critically and creatively while instilling a passion for artistic growth and lifelong learning.



THOMPSON

**Cheryl (Chera) Thompson, M.S.Ed. '06**, retired from teaching adult education for the Buffalo Public Schools. She coauthored a novel with N. F. Johnson, *A Time to Wander*, about college life in the turbulent 1970s after reconnecting and reminiscing with a long-lost boyfriend.

**Christina Yenchik, B.S. '06**, recently bought a house in Orange County, New York, with her husband, also a Buffalo State graduate. They have an 8-year-old daughter and are expecting their second child. Yenchik works for the New York State Department of Education.



ALHOBABI

**Ali Alhobabi, B.S. '07**, is a client systems supervisor at Buffalo State College.

**Dominique Calhoun, B.S. '07**, ran for Erie County Legislature District 1 in June. She graduated from Buffalo State College with a B.A. in criminal justice in 2007. She writes, "I learned about constitutional law from one of the greatest professors I ever had, Judge Joseph Mattina. I found a passion for policy, law, and legislation. This has been a major part in shaping who I have become as a community advocate."

**Kristy (Zulawski) Kellick, M.S.Ed. '07**, got married and had a baby girl in 2017. She has been working at GEICO for four years.

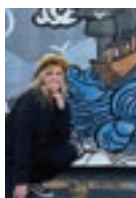


HENRY

**Keith Henry, B.A. '09**, is married to Dionne Henry, and they have three children:

Alahana, 11, and twins Davion and Dabria, 9. In 2020, he was named commissioner of Texas City District 1. Henry was featured on the Galveston County 40 under 40 list and named to the Texas Coalition of Black Democrats 40 under 40 list.

# 10s



CHERRY

**Nicole Cherry, B.A. '10**, writes, "Been rocking all the knowledge I learned at Buffalo State by creating large-scale murals all around this beautiful city!"



EGGERT-KNOX

**Michele Eggert-Knox, B.S. '10, M.S.Ed. '17**, accepted a position at the Buffalo State Child

Care Center after graduation. She earned a master's degree from the Exceptional Education Department at Buffalo State in 2017. After graduate school, she married her husband, David, and took a teaching position at Carousel Academy in North Tonawanda. Eggert-Knox will begin her fifth year teaching pre-kindergarten in September.



CIESIELSKI

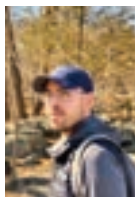
**Joseph Ciesielski, B.S. '11**, has been an assistant principal for the Cleveland Metropolitan

School District for five years, during which graduation rates increased from 60 to 90 percent. After graduating from Buffalo State, Ciesielski was accepted to Teach for America and worked as an intervention specialist and central office administrator for the Oklahoma City Public Schools and earned a master's degree from the University of Oklahoma.

GAMBINI



**Christie (Jok) Gambini, B.A. '12**, married her college sweetheart, **Mike Gambini, B.A. '10**, in Melbourne, Florida. They met working for the *Record* at Buffalo State.



JAEGER

**Michael Jaeger, B.A. '12**, has worked for three years as a multimedia specialist at the Penn

Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement, where he manages all web and social media content for the center. Jaeger has lived in Washington, D.C., for five years. He writes, "My experiences and education from Buffalo State have allowed me to work for significant policymakers, such as current Secretary of State Antony Blinken and President Joe Biden. I have utilized the skills I learned from the media production program and combined them with my passion for foreign and domestic policy."



OLDEN

**Kent Olden, M.S. '12**, started a position as communications content manager for the Health

Foundation for Western & Central New York in September 2020. He is also a member of Leadership Buffalo's Rising Leaders Class of 2021. Olden was accepted to Northcentral University's Ph.D. program in business administration for fall 2021.

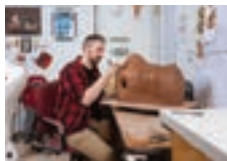


RYDER

**Alana Ryder, M.A. '12**, was appointed director of the Art Bridges Fellows Program in

April 2021. The newly created program supports early-career museum professionals for a three-year fellowship to develop collection projects that get art out of storage, create access for others, foster community engagement, and inspire experimentation.

STURGESS



**R. J. Sturgess, B.F.A. '12**, recently earned his M.F.A. from Georgia State University and has been hired as a ceramic studio manager at the Hudgens Center for Art & Learning in Duluth, Georgia.



EVANS

**Steven Evans, B.S. '13**, started his career at an equities fund management firm in Boston

before moving abroad in 2016. He has been working for a real estate investment firm that is a subsidiary of a large advisory firm headquartered in London, England. In March 2021, Evans was promoted to oversee the firm's global risk management, and he also chairs a disability, mental health, and well-being committee. He is involved in a West London cycling club and participates in races to raise money for mental health advocacy, including for the Sea Sanctuary in London.

**Quanira (Nira) Irby, B.A. '14**, was named an Alumni Star by On Point for College, a United Way nonprofit agency and a nationally recognized college access and success model.

**Tobiloba Oyenola, B.S. '14, M.S. '18**, graduated from the New York City Department of Environmental Protection as a police officer and now works in Washington, D.C. She and her partners were recognized by the chief of police in April for saving the life of an 18-day-old infant. Oyenola was an officer for the New York City Transportation Security Administration and has a master's degree in adult education.



SAMUELS

**Ryan Samuels, B.A. '14**, writes, "Thank you, Buffalo State, for everything you have

been able to provide for me! The Samuels Clan continues!"



HORNBERGER

**Chad Hornberger, B.F.A. '15**, relocated back to Buffalo from New York City,

where he worked for the Disney Theatrical Group. Hornberger is currently a graphic designer and illustrator for Nickelodeon, along with other various entertainment clients. He writes, "Thank you to all of the educators at Buffalo State who have given me the knowledge and inspiration to push forward throughout this crazy journey. I express my deepest gratitude especially to my professors in the Art and Design Department for their life-changing guidance" ([www.chadhornberger.net](http://www.chadhornberger.net)).



BURR

**Amanda Burr, M.A. '17**, is a book and paper conservator at the Huntington Library, Art

Museum, and Botanical Gardens in San Marino, California. Her elderly cat, Marcello, is doing well and enjoying the California sunshine.



GRANT

**Terron Grant, B.S. '17**, was included in the *Buffalo Business First* 30 under 30 list in 2021.

HODGE



**Brande Hodge, B.A. '17**, is a clinical laboratory scientist. She and her husband, who is also a Buffalo State alumnus, recently purchased their first home, and they have a 3-year-old daughter. She writes, "I'm very grateful for my forever love, my forever friends, and professional connections, all due to my Buffalo State education."

## Got news?

Keep us informed.

### Class Notes

Alumni Engagement Office  
LoRusso Alumni and  
Visitor Center

Buffalo State College  
1300 Elmwood Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14222

Fax (716) 878-6050  
[alumni@buffalostate.edu](mailto:alumni@buffalostate.edu)





KALATA

**Alison Kalata, B.S. '17**, is a marketing specialist and has spent the last year working

on her company's rebranding, which included launching a new logo and website.

experienced Zoom University. Your perseverance and resilience paid off! We did it!"



HAMILTON

**Diamond Hamilton, B.A. '18**, pursued an internship at Walt Disney World after graduating

from Buffalo State. She then pursued a role in the accounting department for the film *A Quiet Place Part II*. She relocated to New York City and currently works in the accounting department for the Emmy Award-winning series *Succession* on HBO. Hamilton is a finalist for Miss New York 2021 and will compete in the Catskills this August to represent the state in Miss USA (@Diamondfromny).



JAMES

**Marlyce (Godoy) James, B.S. '17, M.S.Ed. '19**, married **Jermaine James, B.S. '10**, on

December 12, 2020. Marlyce recently joined the faculty at SUNY Erie's School of Dental Hygiene. Jermaine has joined MOOG Inc. as a supplier quality engineer.



BABUL

**Imtaj Shabbir Babul, B.S. '19**, works remotely as a software engineer for a company located in Dallas, Texas.

MEHLMAN-DAVIDOW



**Nicole Mehlman-Davidow, M.S. '18**, welcomed her child, Lincoln Charles, on January 29, 2021. She writes, "Our little Bengal loves to cheer for the track and cross-country team and can't wait to hang out with all the athletes soon!"

**Tabatha McNab, B.S. '19, M.S. '21**, has three children and earned her master's degree in creative studies from Buffalo State. She writes, "Thank you for four great years!"



EVE

**Shiana Denise Eve, B.S. '18, M.P.A. '21**, writes, "Good luck to all the graduating Bengals

who stuck it out over the past year, many of whom only

## 20s

**Alyssa Gendron, B.A. '20**, was hired as an account coordinator for the Buffalo-based full-service marketing agency FIFTEEN. She was formerly a digital marketing coordinator at Colton RV.

# CALLING FUTURE BENGALS

Alumni, help spread the word about Buffalo State College. Encourage prospective students to learn more at [admissions.buffalostate.edu](https://admissions.buffalostate.edu).



**BUFFALO STATE**  
The State University of New York

# Bengal Bookshelf

## Equality Pioneer to Publish Memoir



← Leslie Cohen, '69



← Cohen's new memoir will be released in September.

Leslie Cohen, '69, and her partner (now wife) of more than 50 years, Beth Suskin, graced the cover of the Spring 2016 issue of *1300 Elmwood* magazine. The cover story detailed the couple's inspirational relationship and how they became the models for the iconic *Gay Liberation* sculpture located in Stonewall National Monument in New York City.

Now Cohen is set to publish a memoir, *The Audacity of a Kiss* (Rutgers University Press, September 2021), which recounts her personal struggles and accomplishments as part of the gay and feminist movements.

A cofounder of Sahara, the groundbreaking women's nightclub in New York City that played host to many luminaries of the 1970s, Cohen transports readers back to a decisive time when gay men and women established spaces to live and love equally and freely.

"About 10 years ago, a group approached me about putting together a documentary on the Sahara nightclub," Cohen said. "The producers spent about two years collecting interviews and stories, but unfortunately the project fizzled. I thought it was still important to tell the story—to record it somehow—and my Buffalo State classmate Adrienne Rubin knew an editor at the *New York Times*, and so I pitched an article idea to her. The *New York Times Magazine* ran a piece in October 2011 that I wrote about Beth and me and the sculpture."

That article led to Cohen's writing more fully about her life. "I didn't

really consider myself a writer, but I knew that I wanted to tell this story in depth, so I just kept writing things down over a long period of time," she said. "I then found a copy editor, Kim Green, who totally restructured my work and gave it a more narrative flow. At that point, I had something to show publishers."

Cohen is pleased with the finished product and hopes that her memoir will inspire others. She has worked for inclusiveness and acceptance throughout her life and recognizes the struggle that continues in those areas today.

"Once you're in your 70s, something wonderful happens, I think," she said. "You get to see the whole package of your life. When you're younger and you're going through terrible pain, and you don't know exactly where your life is going or what your purpose is, it can be tough. But when you have a chance to look back, you feel like there is some divine force that saw you through those times. This book reminds me of that."

She notes that the book has brought some unexpected joy as well—like hearing from Buffalo State classmates whom she last saw at graduation more than 50 years ago.

"The feedback has been overwhelming so far," she said. "It's been nice to hear from so many friends who have heard about the book. I've especially enjoyed reconnecting with friends from my Buffalo State days. In the end, this life is made so wonderful by friendships and human connections. Love is everything. I hope that message resonates in this book."



# Bengal Bookshelf

**Bonnie Kelm, '68**, authored *La Conchita: A Different Kind of Paradise* (America Through Time, 2019). The book tells the true story of a failed beachfront resort development in Punta, California, that was renamed La Conchita del Mar in 1923. Abandoned by wealthy investors, the seaside enclave was resettled by Filipino farmhands, Mexican railroad workers, and white oil workers, and became a unique, multicultural, working-class neighborhood. The recollections of La Conchita residents reveal a fascinating history of an early integrated community.



**Judy (Bagneschi) Bradbury, '74**, has written a chapter book series for ages 7–9 (grades 1–3). *The Cayuga Island Kids* series (City of Light Publishing) features five resourceful friends and is set on a residential island located a few miles upstream from the mighty Niagara Falls. Loosely based on a true story, the first book in the fictional contemporary series, *The Mystery of the Barking Branches and the Sunken Ship*, offers young readers a little history, a little mystery, and a lot of laughs as the kids uncover a link to one of the most intriguing mysteries of the Great Lakes—the sinking in 1679 of the never-recovered treasure ship, the *Griffon*. Book 2 in the series, *The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek*, releasing in September 2021, follows the Cayuga Island Kids as they organize a community project.



**Sheila Fein, '77**, has illustrated and designed Okelani's *Enchanted Wheelchair: Space Bound!* (BookBaby Publishing, 2021) by Alexandra Sanchez. The book and companion coloring book version are available on Amazon. Fein loves being a children's book illustrator and is happy for the time she spent at Buffalo State.



**Kenneth Keller, '80**, coauthored a textbook, *Human Geography for the AP Course*, that was published by Bedford, Freeman, Worth Publishing in January 2021.

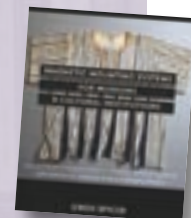


**John Zito, '84**, published *Why the Government is Failing... "We the People"* in September 2020. The book offers ideas on how the United States can do better regarding the economy, health care, education, the environment, and basic infrastructure. Zito's observations are based on 30 years of traveling the world for his job. He is donating 100 percent of the net proceeds of this book to various charities that are highlighted in the book.

**Ross Conrad, '85**, co-published his second book, *The Land of Milk and Honey: A History of Beekeeping in Vermont* (Green Place Books, 2020) with Bill Mares. Conrad has been an organic beekeeper in Middlebury, Vermont, for more than 20 years.



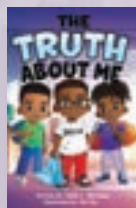
**Gwen Spicer, '91**, co-published his second book *Magnetic Mounting Systems for Museums and Cultural Institutions* (Spicer Art Books, 2019). The book explains magnetic behaviors and the procedures involved in developing a magnetic mounting system used for the display of art and artifacts. Featuring case studies and over 80 photograph images and drawings, the book explores a broad range of artifact types and magnetic systems that can be employed and manipulated for uses in exhibition and storage.



**Bonnie (Eleanor) Parsons, '92**, has published *Young Love: An Adoptee's Memoir* (Friesen Press, 2019), which details her lifelong, innate curiosity about her adoption. Born in Montreal, Canada, and relinquished into foster care by her birth mother at six weeks, Parsons was adopted and raised in a family with love and support. Nevertheless, she became frustrated not knowing anything about her biological family and her heritage. As a young mother, she finally decided to ask for answers and began a 35-year search for her birth parents. This memoir informs and inspires adoptees who are searching to never give up. The answers are out there.



**Nykki Matthews, '07**, recently published a children's book, *The Truth About Me* (Mylestones & Co., 2021). Matthews is on a mission to change the narratives of Black and Brown children, especially boys, one book at a time. She believes that representation in literature is important in debunking stereotypes, improving literacy, and redefining healthy relationships filled with understanding, empathy, and connection. *The Truth About Me* is an adventure story about a typical kid who finds strength in who he is, just as he is. The book encourages children to talk about their truths and includes a short, interactive activity to get children, and adults, talking.

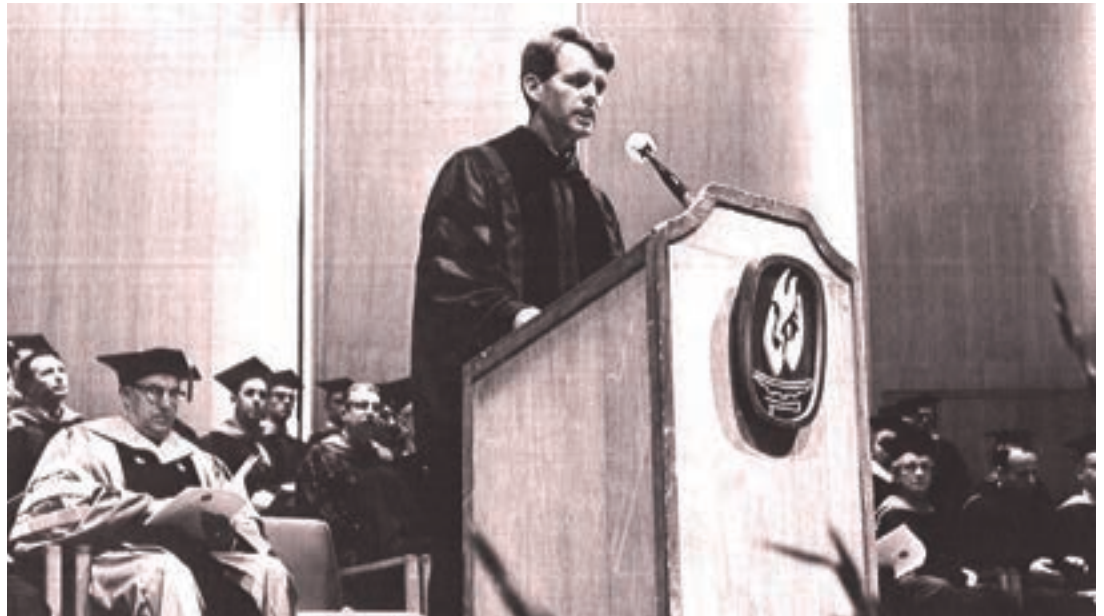


**Samantha Wulff, '14, '20**, has written *Django the Greyhound: Gets Adopted!* (2021), an informative, heartwarming, and whimsical account of one racing greyhound's experience with leaving the track and entering the adoption process to find a family of his own. Readers meet Django, learn about how he grew up, and see what comes next for him after his last race. This hound shows that no matter what life throws at us, there are good people out there to help us through it all.



# The Day Eunice Kennedy Shriver Came to Campus

Robert F. Kennedy spoke at Buffalo State's Commencement exercises in 1965. ▶



“She expressed great interest in Buffalo State and the students who graced its campus for this event.”

It was another beautiful fall day in Buffalo, New York—vintage 1964. As I remember, the leaves of the autumn season always seemed golden, although I suspect there was an abundance of every hue in the Queen City. The fall political campaigns were in full throttle and the campus at 1300 Elmwood Avenue was in a politically festive mood.

The officers of the various classes gathered together on this warm October day for a luncheon with a political celebrity—Eunice Kennedy Shriver. I was the vice president of the class of 1965, so I attended the gathering along with fellow class officers and members of the Buffalo State student congress.

Beginning with the 1952 senatorial campaign of the late President John F. Kennedy, hosting campaign teas and luncheons with a small group of people was a Kennedy political hallmark. Rose Kennedy, President Kennedy's mother, introduced this idea of dressing up and having high tea and cookies with various groups of women in the state of Massachusetts. Polly Fitzgerald, a cousin of Rose Kennedy, organized many of these teas across the state during the 1952 campaign. When Henry Cabot Lodge lost the 1952 senatorial election to a young JFK, he said Kennedy won “floating to victory in a sea of tea.”

So, on this fine fall day in Buffalo, the quad behind Rockwell Hall was absolutely buzzing with excitement. Eunice Kennedy Shriver was the one causing the stir by appearing at a small gathering in the tradition of the Kennedy teas to promote her brother Robert F. Kennedy's senatorial campaign.

It seemed that we had an abundance of historic figures visit our college in the 1964–1965 timespan. An amiable Governor Nelson Rockefeller came to Buffalo State in the fall of 1964 and I had the pleasure to meet him after he spoke on our campus. Governor Rockefeller was largely responsible for the expanded growth and considerable construction at Buffalo State and other State University of New York institutions in the 1960s and 1970s. Arthur Schlesinger Jr., legendary historian and confidante of the Kennedy family, appeared at Buffalo State in 1965, as did musical icon Louis Armstrong. And Robert F. Kennedy offered an address at the Buffalo State commencement in 1965.

I arrived at the luncheon event with the other officers and student congress members for lunch with Mrs. Shriver. She was sharply dressed in a blue business suit and a matching hat in the dazzling Kennedy political tradition. She was tanned, smiling, and beautiful.



## LET'S PUT ROBERT KENNEDY TO WORK FOR NEW YORK



## Campaigner Visits Campus



Dear Father, Linda Hall, Mrs. Harter, Nancy Williams, Mrs. Coyle

◀ The *Record* chronicled Eunice Kennedy Shriver's visit to campus.

"Shy" is not in my lexicon, so it seemed natural that I would have the chance to chat with her—and the next thing I knew we were seated at the same round table. The tables were filled with student politicians breaking bread with Buffalo State officials. Mrs. Shriver and I talked easily and ate together. We had a great conversation.

A student photographer, who was taking pictures of the event for the *Record*, kept snapping away at the two of us as we talked. Some of her words have stayed with me for these many years.

She expressed great interest in Buffalo State and the students who grace its campus for this event. She then smiled easily and remarked, "You have the look and mind for being a successful politician." I explained to her that my family often had discussions at dinner about the news and politics of the day. The newspaper in our house was passed around to all family members. She said she had similar discussions at the Kennedy dinner table.

She inquired whether I was interested in running for political office. "Yes, I am," I remarked enthusiastically. I went on to explain that politics was in my DNA. It started with my father and mother naming me after a senator, Gerald Nye. My dad was a Democratic committeeman and official for the Democratic Party in Rochester, New York, for over 50 years. I told her that I handed out Kennedy political literature with my father, engaging neighbors during the 1960 presidential campaign. Through the 1960 election, the Democrats took over city government in Rochester while simultaneously electing JFK president.

Mrs. Shriver continued our conversation saying, "You would make an excellent candidate for political office. I wish you the best." The event ended and Mrs. Shriver walked away with Buffalo State officials and other students. That day of the golden conversation, Mrs. Shriver gave me a piece of Robert F. Kennedy campaign literature.

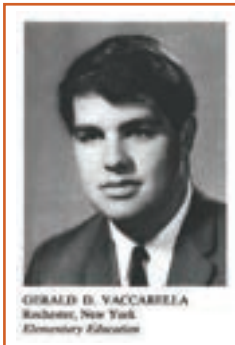
She signed it: "Eunice Kennedy Shriver, 10/14/64."

After receiving that encouragement from Eunice Kennedy Shriver, I had just one serious political moment in my life. I was chosen to run for Monroe County Legislature in the summer of 1969. I had worked within the Democratic Party after graduating from Buffalo State and was excited about my future in the political mainstream. Unfortunately, I received a phone call from one of the party officials about three weeks or so after being chosen to run. He had learned that my recent change of residence placed me three doors outside of the district I was going to run for in the legislature. This made me ineligible for the position.

I was young and stunned as the air slowly seeped out of my political balloon. My brief political life ended. This was my first and last foray into the world of politics. A growing family, a burgeoning teaching career, graduate school, and other interests put me on a different path in life.

Eunice Kennedy Shriver was a leader in the formation of the Special Olympics and many other charitable and vital causes for the United States. For her role in "fighting the good fight" on behalf of our country, she was just the second woman to have a portrait medal on official United States coinage and she was the only living recipient of a United States commemorative medal. Her commemorative medal was issued by the U.S. mint in 1994. I have one as a keepsake. Mrs. Shriver received numerous other awards in her lifetime, including the highest a United States civilian can receive, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, which was presented to her in 1984 by President Ronald Reagan.

As much as we try to plan, set goals, and achieve them, it's sometimes the serendipitous moments in our life that we remember the most. I cherish that day at Buffalo State when I had a chance meeting and discussion with a great American, Eunice Kennedy Shriver.



GERALD D. VACCARELLA  
Rochester, New York  
Elementary Education

Gerald D. Vaccarella, '65, spent his career teaching elementary students in the City School District of Rochester, New York. He also served as a principal and vice principal in the district, taught English to immigrants at night school, and worked as an adjunct professor of education at St. John Fisher College.

## Alumni

### 1940–1949

Catherine Phyllis (Pickup) Newcomb, '40  
Anita (Rumble) Kennedy, '42  
Margaret Elizabeth (Morton) Stewart, '43  
Kathryn (Rupert) Akers, '44  
Olive O. (Lightfoot) Burch, '44  
Gomer R. Lesch, '44  
Albert Elias Maroone, '44  
Arlene M. (Jerold) Miller, '44  
Elizabeth (Hiemenz) Batt, '45  
Ellen (Davey) Catalano, '45  
Mary (Schiener) Drumsta, '45  
Amelia Edna (Burg) Hays, '45, '74  
Helen J. (Buszka) Weiksnar, '45  
Carolyn (Sega) Clouser, '47  
Mary R. Kogler, '47  
Arlene R. (Ebert) Nuwer, '47  
Wanda J. (Markowska) Slominski, '47  
Gloria (Giardino) Uvanni, '48  
Marie (Whitney) Conley, '49  
Betty (Beyer) Gregoire, '49  
Jane B. (Gucwa) Hughes, '49, '72  
Wyatt Franklyn Potter, '49  
Joseph W. Sciumeca, '49

### 1950–1959

Marguerite (Fattay) McCarty, '50  
Carol M. (Castle) Murphy, '50  
Charles Joseph Blakeslee, '51, '57  
Thomas F. Cicatello, '51  
Truman Henry Teed, '51  
Evelyn Elaine (Jordan) Wiesnet, '51  
Janice Emelie Woodard, '51  
Donna M. (George) Caves, '52  
Jane Loretta (Schlierf) Geiser, '52  
Geraldine (Turner) Horohoe, '52, '57  
Barbara (Van Der Meid) Blum, '53  
Shirley M. (Harrison) Frauenhofer, '53  
Jean R. Hebel, '53  
John Grant Yacos, '53  
Elaine A. Batcho, '54, '61  
Carol May (Green) Brewer, '54  
Helen Teresa (O'Leary) Foley, '54, '77  
Donald Robert Harter, '54  
Mary (Asma) (Thompson) McDonough, '54  
James M. Zatlukal, '54, '61  
Barbara J. (Hulburt) Anderson, '55  
Joan (Burgstahler) Bridge, '55  
Jean (Dolce) Doctor, '55, '71  
Venka (Vanoff) Richards, '55  
Elizabeth (Jardin) Richardson, '55, '60  
Elsie Ruth (Laier) Stoddard, '55  
Mary Jane (Wickham) Hoare, '56  
Doralyn M. (Boye) Marshall, '56  
Thomas Leonard Beachy, '57, '64  
Janet Marie (Boehler) De Forest, '57  
Laurence A. Stephens, '57, '60  
Paul B. TerHorst, '57  
Denis H. Funseth, '59, '61  
Joyce N. Graves, '59  
Paul S. Luczak, '59, '62  
Mary Jane (MackKay) McCarthy, '59, '65  
Mary Catherine (Leitten) Stevens, '59

### 1960–1969

Morag H. (Todd) Abbott, '60  
Marie A. (Przemielewski) Cegielski, '60  
Salvatore J. Incardona, '60, '69  
Jone Velma (Hess) Nares, '60  
Charles H. Powers, '60  
Paul K. Findlay, '61, '68  
Virginia M. (Rinaldi) Schultz, '61, '79  
Paul I. Lawton, '62  
Robert E. Marusza, '62

Richard C. Parkman Jr., '63  
William Robert Stewart, '63  
Wallace J. Whetham, '63  
Georgia (Manos) Yeager, '63  
Sharon L. (Clark) Bykowski, '64  
Robert M. Dee, '65  
Jacqueline C. (Wajtkus) Groszkowski, '65, '91  
Carol A. (Mowry) Piech, '65  
Erminio J. Sapio, '65, '68  
Anita (Spooner) Smythe, '65  
Robert Lloyd Arnold, '66  
Shirley L. (Smith) Courton, '67, '70  
Norman L. Kopeck, '67  
Judith R. (Lewis) Sobczak, '67  
Gary Gordon Swartz, '67  
Rita (Kohl) Zwick, '67, '72  
Joseph C. Catalano, '68  
Raymond A. Engler, '68  
David T. Mangus, '68  
Constance M. (Clemente) Panzarella, '68  
Robert C. Parmentier, '68  
Ralph C. Baumgartner, '69  
Francis J. Bialy, '69  
Elizabeth A. (Meier) Hogan, '69  
Mary Kay Ward, '69  
Kathleen Mary (Dygula) Williams, '69

### 1970–1979

Marcia L. Garrity, '70  
Daniel J. Quinn, '70  
Patricia (Simet) Weihing, '70, '86  
Nathlie Anne (Wimsett) Badian, '71  
Nancy (Norton) Druelinger, '71, '85  
Owen Richard Grad, '71  
Marilyn Catherine Majchrzak, '71  
Patricia (Halpin) Maroney, '71  
Richard L. Odien, '71, '73  
Donald A. Ogilvie, '71  
Laura (Criswell) Tarbell, '71  
Linda L. (Scott) Tolhurst, '71  
Richard A. Wood, '71  
Vera (Baker) Zimowski, '71  
Daniel J. Bauer, '72  
Sonya Marie (Hoszowski) Cahill, '72  
Richard Gallivan, '72  
Paul A. Bohanna, '73  
Kevin Joseph Delaney, '73  
Theodore Edward Wilson, '73  
Laura (Olsen) Airey, '74  
Stephen Harry Bligh, '74  
Ross R. Fuller Jr., '74  
Glenn D. Gardner, '74  
Lorence Victor Urban, '74  
Danene M. (Kuncio) Harkness, '75  
Darryl J. Heuser, '75, '78  
Martin Wukovits, '75  
Bruce R. Adams, '76, '82  
Deborah J. Baxter, '76  
Michael P. Bellafaire, '76  
Mary Alice Bresadola, '76  
Carl R. Brown, '76  
Michael Andrew Cap, '76  
John Eberhardt Jr., '76  
Alan John Ferri, '76  
Keith E. Freeland, '76  
Edward Paul Furlani, '76  
Patrick J. Roach, '76  
Jeffrey Allen Van Blargan, '76, '84  
Maryrose B. Zupa, '76  
Darla J. (Winder) Jakubiec, '77  
Bruce D. Krauss, '77  
Sister Mary Michele Mazur, '77  
Frances (Gane) (Breen) Prescott, '77  
Alison (Briggs) (Birkemeier) Sasiadek, '77  
Susan Grace (Castleberry) Garner, '78

Thaddeus John Komorowski, '78  
Christopher J. Chamuris, '79  
Jonathan M. Katz, '79  
James P. Pikul, '79

### 1980–1989

Elaine Marie (Dieteman) Haberland, '80  
Daniel J. Kemp, '80  
John F. Angiel, '81  
Patricia Ann (Hehir) Hicks, '81, '86  
Martin A. Lembo, '81  
Shirley (Ruston) Schagrinn, '81  
Gregory T. Burke, '82  
Alfred J. Domino, '82  
Nancy E. Jawor, '82  
Andre J. Lapres, '82  
Jean Marie (McAtteer) McLaughlin, '82  
Judith Louise (Hacherl) Hicks, '84  
Timothy Bernard Obstarczyk, '84  
Donald P. Olds Jr., '84  
David John Morrison, '85  
Gail Jean Slocum, '85  
Michael J. Szemplenski, '85  
Patricia Ellen (Wilder) Richter-Vogt, '86  
Patricia Ann Solleder, '86  
Jon J. Ecelbarger, '87  
Maryann (Milani) Reszel, '87  
Paula Ann (Gapik) Witherell, '87  
Debra (Gates) Vallett, '89

### 1990–1999

Francis X. Schwab IV, '90  
Nancy Ann Kick, '91, '96  
James Michael Fox, '92  
Lisa M. (Elardo) McNeil, '92  
Mary Teresa Novak, '92  
Brian Banes Snelling, '92  
Mariah Elizabeth Gaughan, '93  
Rebecca L. (Hens) Formwalt, '94, '96  
Andrea M. Okonski, '94  
Kathleen Noelle Ocon, '96  
Roberta S. Meister, '98  
Amalia M. Quinlan, '99

### 2000–2009

Nancy L. (Genet) Reichert, '00  
Carey D. Franklin, '01  
Caitlin E. (McCunn) Iannone, '03  
Anne Elizabeth Nagle, '03  
Gwendolyn (White) Zinerman, '03  
Ricardo D. Hernandez, '04  
Sean G. Doherty, '07

### 2010–2019

Christina Marie Hutterer, '10  
Cassandra L. (Krajewski) Russell, '11  
Nathaniel James Casey, '17

### Faculty, Staff, Emeriti, Retired Staff

Bruce R. Adams, '76, '82  
Lois E. (Swalm) Aichinger  
Margaret A. (Burns) Banak  
Rudolph James Cherkauer, '47, Ed.D.  
Ralph R. Dykstra, '55, '71, Ed.D.  
Mildred J. Fischle, '50, Ed.D.  
Robert Alan Foster  
Judith M. (Blackwell) Jones, Ed.D.  
Frederick J. Kuhn, '68  
Charles R. Lefcourt, Ph.D.  
Myron E. Lewis, Ed.D.  
Paul D. Martin  
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## UPCOMING EVENTS

Buffalo State College Day  
September 17

Homecoming Week  
September 27-October 3

Anne Frank Social Justice Festival  
October 13-15

