

BUFFALO STATE NAMES NEW PRESIDENT

1300 Elmwood

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF BUFFALO STATE UNIVERSITY SPRING 2024 > NO. 38

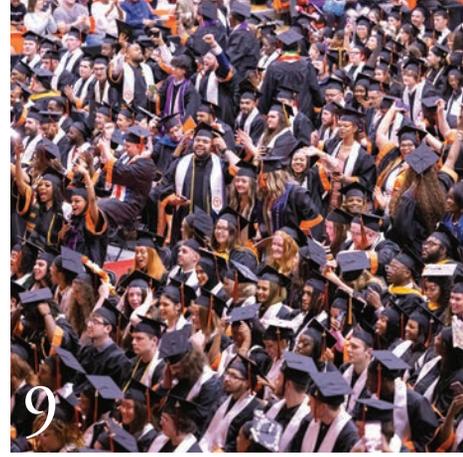
ORIGIN STORY

HOW KYLE BRADSTREET, '02, '04,
WROTE HIS WAY INTO THE
MARVEL CINEMATIC UNIVERSE



MURIEL A. HOWARD, PH.D., BUFFALO STATE'S SEVENTH PRESIDENT, visited campus on December 7 to spend time with staff and students of the Honors Program that bears her name. Buffalo State's Muriel A. Howard Honors Program offers academically challenging opportunities for high-achieving and intellectually committed undergraduate students. Students in the program enjoy an exhilarating academic journey of shared intellectual and creative pursuits, scholarship, and service learning, both in and outside the classroom. This was Howard's first visit to the new Honors Program suite in South Wing.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JESSE STEFFAN-COLUCCI



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Bonita R. Durand, Ph.D.
Interim President, Buffalo State University

Thank You

It has been a true honor and privilege to return to serve my beloved Buffalo State University as interim president for the 2023–2024 academic year.

When I retired as chief of staff in 2018 after 22 years on this campus, I never imagined that I would be asked to come back in a leadership role—even for a short time like this. I never had that on my bingo card or bucket list, but sometimes life’s adventures come to us in unexpected ways. I consider it a blessing to be a bridge between the presidential tenures of Dr. Katherine S. Conway-Turner and Dr. Chance M. Glenn Sr., and I foresee great things ahead for this university.

Although I returned with an insider’s knowledge of Buffalo State from my previous role, it has been fascinating to view the university’s current triumphs and challenges with new eyes and from a new perspective. I can tell you this: We have a wonderful array of academic programs; talented faculty members who are experts in their disciplines; and dedicated, hardworking professionals and support staff. And we have terrific students. We all work together to carry out and uphold the mission of SUNY’s premier comprehensive university.

I will head back into my retirement knowing this:

- Our academic programs are strong. I have had the unique opportunity over the past year to go “behind the curtain” and gain an even deeper appreciation and understanding of Buffalo State’s unwavering commitment to academic excellence. Our programs in the School of Arts and Sciences, School of Education, and School of the Professions are continuously updated with rigorous curricula to meet the demands of today and the anticipated needs of tomorrow. I have been highly impressed with the forward-thinking nature of our programs.
- Our faculty members are doing great things. I’ve met with countless faculty members over the past year who have eagerly—and patiently—explained their work to me. Their subject knowledge and passion are strengths of this university. Their innovation and ability to connect with students is our core business.
- Our professionals and support staff have demonstrated, on a daily basis, their expertise and dedication to excellence. I truly appreciate the work they do, often behind the scenes and with little fanfare, to keep Buffalo State operating efficiently.
- Everything we do at Buffalo State is driven by student success. At its best, our university strives to prepare students to be good citizens and successful professionals who serve and lead our communities. It has been a joy getting to know our current students and hearing their stories of perseverance and accomplishment. They have certainly inspired me!

I hope I am leaving this sacred place a little better than I found it. And I am grateful to all who have worked with me, trusted me, and supported me during the past year, including SUNY Chancellor John B. King Jr.

Thank you all for allowing me to serve you.

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› Kimberly (Schweitzer) Evering, '94

♥ David Lofvers, '74, and Susan (Polukort) Lofvers, '75



GRATEFUL FOR COMMUNICATION DEGREE

I am a proud alumna of the communication program at Buffalo State University, where I earned my bachelor’s degree. I am writing to share some exciting news about recent accomplishments.

I am thrilled to inform you that my podcast, *Gal on the Go Unplugged*, was recognized with seven industry awards:

- 2023 Signal Award, Gold, General Interview | Talk Show
- 2023 W3 Award, Gold, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- 2023 W3 Award, Silver, Interview
- 2023 W3 Award, Silver, Best Use of Writing
- 2023 Davey Award, Silver, Interview | Talk Show
- 2023 Davey Award, Silver, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- 2022 Davey Award, Silver, General Interview | Talk Show

I am deeply grateful for the education and experiences I gained in the communication program at Buffalo State. They have been instrumental in achieving this level of success and recognition. Not only did my time at Buffalo State lay the foundation for my current success, but my role as a DJ and news director for WBNY, the college radio station, also provided me with invaluable skills and insights that continue to influence my podcasting work today. I would be honored if you could share this news with the current students, faculty, and the alumni community as a testament to the strong foundation your program provides.

50 YEARS SINCE WE MET IN TOWER 4

This photo was taken during our last Mediterranean cruise. It was a momentous occasion for us, as exactly 50 years ago to the day, we met for the first time—in the lounge area of Tower 4 at Buffalo State College. Since then, we’ve been married for decades, had a family of three children and two grandchildren, and have literally traveled the world together, including the 50 U.S. states and all seven continents. Since Buffalo State is the reason we are together, we made it part of our special anniversary event by bringing along the latest *1300 Elmwood* magazine to read as we glided through the beautiful Venetian canals in Italy.

—David Lofvers, '74, and Susan (Polukort) Lofvers, '75

— Kimberly (Schweitzer) Evering, '94

ontheweb www.youtube.com/buffalostate

The Buffalo State  channel is full of great video content. Check it out!



• **A Tribute to Dr. Katherine Conway-Turner**
Honoring our ninth president upon her retirement in June.



• **Commencement 2023 Highlights**
A look back at a wonderful celebration.

• **10th Presidential Appointment**
Welcoming Buffalo State’s next president.

yourturn

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



“

Academics and research have played an integral role in my career, and I am excited to build on the excellent education provided by Buffalo State.

— *Chance M. Glenn Sr., Ph.D.*

”



CHANCE M. GLENN Sr., Ph.D., Appointed President of Buffalo State University

The State University of New York Board of Trustees announced the appointment of Chance M. Glenn Sr., Ph.D., as the 10th president of Buffalo State University on December 5, 2023.

Glenn, whose appointment is effective July 1, 2024, is a professor of electrical engineering, an inventor, and an innovator with over 30 years of experience. He has served as provost and vice president for academic affairs at the University of Houston-Victoria since 2019.

“This is an extraordinary opportunity to lead Buffalo State University and partner with the SUNY campuses in the Western region and across the state,” Glenn said. “Academics and research have played an integral role in my career, and I am excited to build on the excellent education provided by Buffalo State. My thanks to the SUNY Board of Trustees, Chancellor John King, and the Buffalo State search committee for this appointment.”

Glenn received his bachelor of science in electrical engineering from the University of Maryland and his master of science and Ph.D.

in electrical engineering from Johns Hopkins University. He also holds a certificate in management development from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

He previously served as the dean of the College of Engineering, Technology, and Physical Sciences at Alabama A&M University. He also served as associate dean in the Office of Graduate Studies at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

Glenn is a member of the Starlink Initiative (SpaceX) Board of Directors, the Victoria Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors, the Victoria Chamber of Commerce, the Golden Crescent Black Chamber of Commerce, and the University of Houston System Black Leadership Network Board of Directors.

“We are thrilled our search has come to a successful conclusion with

the appointment of Dr. Chance Glenn as the 10th president of Buffalo State University,” said Linda A. Dobmeier, chair of the Buffalo State Council and chair of the Buffalo State Presidential Search Committee. “Dr. Glenn is a scientist, innovator, inventor, electrical engineer, and most importantly educator. He is the perfect combination of a futurist and visionary to lead and inspire Buffalo State University as we move forward at this exciting point in our history.

“I would like to congratulate and welcome Dr. Glenn, as well as express my heartfelt gratitude to the Buffalo State Council, the Presidential Search Committee, Chancellor King, the SUNY Board of Trustees, Interim President Bonita Durand, and the entire Buffalo State University community for its support, direction, and guidance during this search that maintained the high standards of our institution.”

Buffalo State University has been led by Interim President Bonita R. Durand, Ph.D., since the retirement

of President Katherine Conway-Turner at the close of the 2022–2023 academic year.

“Dr. Durand has been a steadying force for the campus as the search committee did their work to find an excellent candidate to move the campus forward,” Chancellor John B. King said. “I am grateful for her leadership and her extraordinary commitment to Buffalo State and the students we serve.”

“I am thrilled to extend a warm welcome to Dr. Chance Glenn,” Durand said. “His exceptional leadership, demonstrated through a distinguished academic career, positions him perfectly to guide our institution into the future. As we transition, I look forward to partnering with Dr. Glenn, our governance leadership, and the Buffalo State family to ensure a smooth handover.

“Dr. Glenn’s return to Western New York marks an exciting new chapter for Buffalo State; under his guidance, I am confident we will flourish, strengthening our position as SUNY’s premier urban-engaged comprehensive university.”



Durand Serves as Interim President

State University of New York Chancellor John B. King Jr. appointed Bonita R. Durand, Ph.D., officer in charge of Buffalo State University on May 31 before her official confirmation as interim president by the SUNY Board of Trustees at its June meeting.

Durand is serving in the interim role during the transition from former president Katherine Conway-Turner, who retired from Buffalo State at the end of May, to incoming president Chance M. Glenn Sr., who will assume office in July.

Durand retired in 2018 after 22 years of service to Buffalo State, where she served as chief of staff and secretary to the Buffalo State College Council. She served under five presidents at Buffalo State during her tenure. In addition, she was a graduate faculty member in the university's Higher Education Administration Department, where she taught courses on the history of American higher education and strategic planning and finance in higher education.

Durand earned a doctor of philosophy from the University at Buffalo with a concentration in higher education administration and a focus on institutional advancement. She also holds a master of science in applied public affairs from the University at Buffalo and a bachelor of arts in business administration and curriculum development from the Union Institute in Cincinnati, Ohio. In 2010, she received certification in educational management and leadership from the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University.

Read more at <https://bit.ly/bsuinterim>.

Four New Members Added to Buffalo State Council



Clockwise from top left:
Patricia Farrell;
Kevin Horrigan, '92;
Gary Siddall, '12;
Mo Sumbundu, '13, '17

New York Governor Kathy Hochul has appointed Patricia Farrell; Kevin Horrigan, '92; Gary Siddall, '12; and Mo Sumbundu, '13, '17, as the newest members of the Buffalo State Council. Composed of nine community representatives and one student, the Buffalo State Council serves as the primary oversight and advisory body to the university, its president, and senior officers. Members of the council are appointed by the governor and serve a seven-year term.

Farrell is head of sales for the Western New York division of Wilmington Trust, an affiliate of M&T Bank. Horrigan is the vice president of public affairs for People Inc., Western New York's largest human services agency. He earned a bachelor of arts in political science from Buffalo State. Siddall is president and CEO of the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences. He earned his bachelor of arts in psychology from Buffalo State. Sumbundu is an international trade manager with Empire State Development's (ESD) Global New York division, where he oversees contacts between New York companies and ESD's foreign offices. He earned his bachelor of arts in political science and his master of public administration from Buffalo State.

Read more about Farrell, Horrigan, and Sumbundu at <https://bit.ly/bsucouncil23>.

Read more about Siddall at <https://bit.ly/bsusiddall>.



Buffalo State welcomed prospective students to its Fall Open House on November 10.



Buffalo State Welcomes Largest Incoming Class in Three Years

Buffalo State's new undergraduate class for fall 2023 comprises 2,045 students, a 19.5 percent increase from a year ago and the largest incoming class of the last three years.

"These excellent enrollment results are a testament to the efforts and support of our entire Buffalo State community who, led by our enrollment management team, worked together to bring a promising group of students to campus," said Buffalo State University Interim President Bonita R. Durand, Ph.D. "I am very proud of my Buffalo State family and all they do to serve our students and their families. They truly make a difference in the lives of many."

Buffalo State has the largest incoming freshman class of SUNY's university college sector (formerly known as SUNY's comprehensive colleges) for the fifth time in six years.

Read more at <https://bit.ly/bsc23enrollment>.

Join us for
Spring Open House
Saturday, April 20



Middle States Reaffirms Buffalo State's Accreditation

Buffalo State University received reaccreditation from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) in June 2023 following a rigorous self-study process, a four-day campus evaluation visit by MSCHE peer reviewers, and five additional visits to Buffalo State's International Graduate Programs for Educators locations in Brazil, Colombia, and Qatar.

Buffalo State successfully met MSCHE's seven standards for accreditation and requirements of affiliation, as well as verification of compliance with accreditation-relevant federal regulations.

"The successful outcome is a testament to our collective efforts as an institution, which reflects positively not only on Buffalo State but also on each individual involved with this endeavor," said Buffalo State Interim President Bonita R. Durand, Ph.D.

A supplemental report from Buffalo State is due in September 2024, which will provide additional information related to improving key indicators of student success and periodic assessments of student support programs. Buffalo State's next self-study evaluation will take place in 2030-2031.

Read more at <https://bit.ly/bsumsche>.



Buffalo State Establishes 5.14 Memorial Scholarship

The Buffalo State University Foundation has established a 5.14 Memorial Scholarship to cover the cost of books and other educational supplies for Buffalo State students who hail from Buffalo's 14208 zip code. This neighborhood is where an avowed white supremacist opened fire at a Tops Market on May 14, 2022, killing 10 Black people.

The scholarships are available to both first-time undergraduate and graduate students starting in fall 2023. The scholarship will automatically be applied to students' financial aid awards; recipients do not need to apply. Students can renew the scholarship through civic engagement to the East Buffalo community or in social justice projects dedicating 10 hours or more each semester, allowing them to give back and create a positive influence within the community.

Read more at <https://bit.ly/514scholarship>.

Buffalo State Celebrates 'Year of the Eclipse'

Buffalo State has designated April 8, 2023, through April 8, 2024, as the "Year of the Eclipse" on campus in celebration of the highly anticipated celestial event. Western New York will be in the path of totality for the solar eclipse on April 8, 2024, which will bring thousands of visitors to the region, and Buffalo State, with its state-of-the-art Whitworth Ferguson Planetarium, is at the center of the yearlong celebration.

"We are thrilled to have the opportunity to discuss and celebrate this very rare occurrence," said Kevin Williams, associate professor of geosciences and director of the planetarium. "For most locations, a total solar

eclipse occurs only once every 300 to 400 years. For it to happen, there must be an exact alignment of the moon between the earth and the sun," he said. "For just a few minutes at any location along the path of totality, the moon's shadow will block out the sun's light. In Buffalo, totality will last just under four minutes," starting at 3:18 p.m.

Planetarium programming throughout the year will focus on eclipse-related themes. On April 8, 2024, the campus will host an Eclipse Fest with guided viewing at several designated locations on campus. For the most current schedule of events, please visit eclipse.buffalostate.edu.



Wall Named to May 14th Memorial Commission

State University of New York Chancellor John B. King Jr. in May appointed Buffalo State University Interim Provost Amitra A. Wall to serve as a fellow to the May 14th Memorial Commission. In this role, Wall will collaborate with the University at Buffalo Regional Institute on the community survey that will inform the commission's creation of a living and lasting memorial in East Buffalo to honor the victims of the racially motivated mass shooting at Tops Market on May 14, 2022. As part of her commission fellowship, Wall, who is also a professor of sociology, will work with students to analyze the data from the community survey. The May 14th Memorial Commission consists of 11 community volunteer members and is chaired by Buffalo NAACP President Rev. Mark E. Blue.

Those lost during the May 14 mass shooting were Celestine Chaney, Roberta A. Drury, Andre Mackniel, Katherine Massey, Margus D. Morrison, Heyward Patterson, Aaron Salter Jr., Geraldine Talley, Ruth Whitfield, and Pearl Young.

Commencement 2023



Commencement 2023 honored 1,800 graduates

Buffalo State University conferred degrees on nearly 1,300 undergraduate and more than 500 graduate students during its 151st Commencement celebration on May 20, 2023, in the Sports Arena.

Class of 2023 graduates Mikala Highsmith, Maimouna A. Samba, and Miggie K. Wong were honored with the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence in recognition of their academic and extracurricular achievements, leadership, and service.

La'Shea Green-Thomas delivered the student address at the School of the Professions ceremony; Orlando J. Hill, recipient of the President's Medal for Outstanding Graduate Student, delivered the student address at the School of Education and Individualized and Multidisciplinary Studies ceremony; and Daniel P. May, recipient of the President's Medal for Outstanding Undergraduate Student, delivered the student address at the School of Arts and Sciences ceremony.

Raven Baxter, '14, '16, molecular biologist and educator; Deneen Hernandez, '88, retired forensic examiner with the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and Mildred Otero, senior vice president of national impact for Leadership for Educational Equity, each delivered a Commencement address.

In addition, the President's Distinguished Service Award was presented to Lucy A. Candelario, executive director of the Belle Center; John C. Starkey, '98, principal of Lafayette International School; and Mo Sumbundu, '13, '17, international trade manager for Empire State Development's Global New York Division.

The 152nd Commencement will be held on May 18.

Read more at <https://bit.ly/151commencement>.

SBDC Receives \$750K Grant

Congressman Brian Higgins, '85, U.S. representative for New York's 26th Congressional District, visited campus in May to announce a \$750,000 federal grant for Buffalo State University's Small Business Development Center. The funding is specifically designated to help existing small businesses develop websites and facilitate opportunities to grow online sales.

With the resources Higgins secured, the SBDC set up a free program to help minority- and women-owned businesses in Western New York develop and improve their online business platforms. Owners complete a detailed survey about their business, brand identity, desired website features, and company goals before working with experienced website developers to improve or create a website. More than two dozen local entrepreneurs have already benefited from the program.

Read more at <https://bit.ly/sbdcgrant>.



Athletics

buffalostateathletics.com



Estarfaa, Hart Named Head Coaches

Buffalo State has named Blair Estarfaa as the new head coach of the women's basketball program. Estarfaa, who officially joined the university June 5, returns to the Buffalo area after spending the 2022-2023 season with the Syracuse University women's basketball program, working as the video coordinator and director of player personnel. Before Syracuse, he was part of the women's basketball staff at the University at Buffalo from 2019 to 2022. Estarfaa played three seasons for the men's basketball team at SUNY Cortland from 2013 to 2016.



Stephen Hart, '16, '20, has been named the first head coach of the Buffalo State women's wrestling program. He will begin to build the program this year in preparation for the inaugural season of competition in the 2024-2025 academic year. An accomplished wrestling coach in the Western New York area for nearly 20 years, Hart previously served as the head wrestling coach at Starpoint High School in Lockport from 2014 to 2023 and the head wrestling coach at Iroquois High School in Elma from 2012 to 2014. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in individualized studies and a master's degree in higher education and student affairs administration from Buffalo State.

Estarfaa (Top)
Hart (Bottom)

Read more about Estarfaa at <https://bit.ly/estarfaa>. Read more about Hart at <https://bit.ly/stephenhart>.

Men's Volleyball Joins AMCC

Buffalo State has accepted an invitation to join the Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference (AMCC) as an affiliate member in the sport of men's volleyball for the 2024-2025 season. The inaugural men's volleyball team at Buffalo State will compete as an independent for the upcoming 2023-2024 season. Head coach Daniel Miranda's squad will join AMCC member institutions Carlow, Hilbert, Mount Aloysius, Penn State Altoona, Penn State Behrend, Wells, and fellow newcomer Houghton to form an eight-team conference in 2024-2025. Upon joining the AMCC, Buffalo State will immediately be eligible to compete for a conference championship and the automatic NCAA berth that is awarded to the winner of its postseason tournament.

Read more at <https://bit.ly/amcc23>.

Class of 2023 Icers Ink Pro Hockey Contracts

Several Buffalo State men's ice hockey players from the Class of 2023 have signed professional contracts. All-America forward **Nikita Kozyrev**

has signed with the Birmingham (Alabama) Bulls of the Southern Professional Hockey League (SPHL). Kozyrev graduated with a degree in business and was a four-year member of the hockey team. He was just the fifth Bengal to be selected on an All-America team after earning CCM/American Hockey Coaches Association (ACHA) second team and All-United States College Hockey Organization (USCHO) third team honors. He was the 2022-2023 State University of New York Athletic Conference (SUNYAC) Herb Hammond Player of the Year. Defenseman **Hayden Ford** and forward **Tyler Vanuden** have signed with the SPHL's Evansville (Illinois) Thunderbolts. Ford earned his degree in business management and was a four-year member of the Bengals team, while Vanuden earned his degree in psychology and was a member of the team for two seasons. Forward **Joel Frazee** has signed with the SPHL's Quad City (Illinois) Storm. Frazee graduated with a degree in health and wellness and was a two-year member of the men's hockey team after transferring from



Nikita Kozyrev, '23

Wisconsin-River Falls. Goaltender **Emil Norrman** signed with Gjøvik Hockey of the Norwegian First Division. Gjøvik is located in southeastern Norway, about two hours north of the capital city Oslo. The team plays its home games at Gjøvik Olympic Cavern Hall, site of the 1994 Winter Olympics and the world's largest cavern hall for public use. Norrman graduated with a degree in business after playing three seasons on the Bengals team.

Read more about Kozyrev (<https://bit.ly/kozyrev>), Ford (<https://bit.ly/haydenford>), Vanuden (<https://bit.ly/vanudnen>), Frazee (<https://bit.ly/frazee>) and Norrman (<https://bit.ly/norrman>).



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University Hosts Space Fair and Trade Show



NASA captured the excitement of space exploration and celebrated its successful Artemis I mission at a Space Fair and Trade Show on August 23 at Buffalo State's Science and Mathematics Complex.

The free, family-friendly event geared toward K-12 students featured a variety of fun educational activities—from constructing paper rockets to exploring internships and interacting with engineers and scientists. An evening session highlighted the work of Western New York companies Moog, Eaton, Taber Industries, and Taylor Devices, which all contributed to the Artemis I mission.

Buffalo State prides itself on meeting the needs of high-tech industries with its academic offerings in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and its state-of-the-art facilities.

Read more at <https://bit.ly/spacefair23>.

Buffalo State to Host SUNY Model EU 2024

The State University of New York Model European Union (SUNYMEU) returns to the Buffalo State campus in April 2024. SUNYMEU is an exercise in diplomacy and foreign affairs, with students from across SUNY's 64 campuses convening to simulate policymaking at the ministerial and head of government levels in the European Union. SUNYMEU 2024 opens Friday, April 12, and closes Sunday, April 14. An optional pre-event trip to Niagara Falls will be available for students on Thursday, April 11.

SUNYMEU is sponsored by the Institute for European Union Studies at SUNY (IEUSS), but the simulation itself is designed as a student-run, student-directed activity—from writing and selecting the agenda items to chairing the meetings, agreeing on the conclusions, and selecting awardees. SUNYMEU is managed by a SUNY campus on a two-year basis; a SUNY campus hosts even years, and the SUNY Global Center hosts odd years. The IEUSS board awarded the directorship of SUNYMEU 2024 and 2025 to Buffalo State University, which last hosted the event in April 2022.

New Inclusive Preschool Classroom Opens on Campus

Buffalo State University and the Summit Center—a leading provider of behavioral health and autism services—have collaborated to create an inclusive full-day preschool classroom for 16 students on the Buffalo State campus.

The integrated classroom, which opened in January within the Buffalo State Child Care Center in Buckham Hall, serves children with and without disabilities in the same space, addressing a shortage of inclusive preschool programs in Erie County and the city of Buffalo. The classroom is staffed by one general education teacher, one special education teacher, and two special education classroom assistants, who are supervised by professionals at Summit.

Buffalo State students will play an important role in the inclusive preschool classroom, one of a kind on a college campus in the region. Additionally, the education and services provided by the Child Care Center are enhanced by contributions from the university's academic programs, including early childhood education, speech-language pathology, psychology, music education, and art education, as well as Buffalo State's unique educational facilities such as the Burchfield Penney Art Center, Whitworth Ferguson Planetarium, and greenhouse.

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ORIGIN STORY

HOW KYLE BRADSTREET, '02, '04,
WROTE HIS WAY INTO THE
MARVEL CINEMATIC UNIVERSE

All superheroes have an origin story—an established background narrative that informs their identity and motivations. They usually start with humble beginnings. A childhood spent in a quiet country setting or a small apartment in the city. Then a coming-of-age. Then a life-altering lesson or challenge issued by a mentor. And sometimes a bite from a radioactive spider just for good measure. The result is an ordinary person with extraordinary strengths.

THIS IS KYLE BRADSTREET'S ORIGIN STORY.

CHAPTER 1: A RURAL UPBRINGING

Born in 1979, Kyle Bradstreet grew up in Palmyra, New York, a small town with a big history.

Located about 20 miles southeast of Rochester, Palmyra is regarded as the birthplace of the Latter-day Saints movement and as a prominent stop on the Erie Canal. Mormon founder Joseph Smith and his family lived on a farm in Palmyra, and he published the Book of Mormon there in 1830. Meanwhile, the western section of the Erie Canal dug its way through Palmyra in the 1850s; Lock 29, with a lift of 16 feet, was added around 1914. Henry Wells, who founded the companies that became Wells Fargo and American Express, lived and worked in Palmyra, too.

Fast forward to the 1980s, when young Kyle, like many of his classmates, enthralled by *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones*, occasionally watched cartoons before school. He wasn't what you would call a movie or TV junkie. He was more a reader than a viewer. Most of all, he loved stories.

"I was always read to. My mother would read to me every day," remembered Bradstreet, whose mother, Lauren, worked as a literacy specialist in the local school district for 32 years. "And I learned to read at an early age. I was surrounded by books. That was just part of my family life. I loved to jump into different worlds."

Reading led to writing.

Recently, his mother found a book in the family archives that Bradstreet wrote when he was 7 years old. It was a lengthy tale with a fairly detailed plot—at least for a second-grade author.

"When my mom showed me that book, I couldn't remember writing it, but I guess it did prove that I was interested in writing from the start," Bradstreet chuckled.

CHAPTER 2: A MOVE TO THE CITY

When it was time to apply to college, Bradstreet knew he wanted to go to a city. He applied to many schools—in rural, urban, and suburban locations—but he felt drawn to metropolitan living and the change it would bring to his life. Buffalo, it seemed, offered unique urban neighborhoods like the Elmwood Village and Allentown.



(FROM LEFT) MARCIA MULÉ, '81,
AARON DANIEL ANNAS, BRADSTREET, AND
TOM FONTANA, '73



"I just had this idea that living there would be exciting," Bradstreet said. "Walking to corner restaurants and cafés and bars. Having everything just outside the door of your apartment. I thought to myself, 'I'd love to be a part of that.' When you grow up in a rural area, you don't walk to the corner café."

Bradstreet enrolled at Buffalo State as an English major with the intention of becoming a secondary education teacher. But as it often happens, he met new people at college, experienced new opportunities, and decided to go down a different path.

While dabbling in theater classes, he met his first mentor—faculty member Gerry Trentham.

There was something about the way Trentham approached storytelling that captivated Bradstreet. Trentham's classes were fascinating and left students wanting to learn more and to put ideas into action on stage. Many of these students joined Casting Hall, Buffalo State's famed student-run theater company—and Bradstreet, an avowed non-actor, became an honorary member of the troupe by helping with backstage and office work.

'NEVER SAY NO TO OPPORTUNITIES, EVEN IF YOU DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHERE THEY'LL LEAD.' THAT WAS SOME PROFOUND ADVICE.

He also began to try his hand at writing scripts and sketches, casting, and producing short five-to-seven-minute films for Casting Hall. His efforts resulted in a \$3,000 award from Buffalo State's Undergraduate Research Office for an Undergraduate Summer Research Fellowship. Most useful, though, he had access to immediate feedback—good and bad—from professors and classmates.

"I wasn't really looking to get into theater," Bradstreet admitted. "But I received the advice: 'Never say no to opportunities, even if you don't know exactly where they'll lead.' That was some profound advice."

Recognizing Bradstreet's enthusiasm and talent, Trentham hired him to assist with various productions that the professor's dance company was staging in Toronto. Bradstreet ran video projections and met new people. He explored various theater venues and experienced show business on a much bigger scale in one of North America's largest cities. It opened his eyes to a whole new world.

"I think that's when I developed the curiosity and level of ambition that still drives me today," Bradstreet said. "I can't speak highly enough of those times. I was with a new group of friends speaking a different vocabulary. It forced me to look at the world differently and broaden my horizons. And it grew my confidence and made me start to think that New York City is where I should head next."

CHAPTER 3: A CHANCE MEETING

After earning his bachelor's degree in 2002, Bradstreet remained at Buffalo State to customize his master's degree in creative writing through the university's multidisciplinary studies program.

His timing was impeccable. It was during his graduate studies, in 2003, that he met Tom Fontana, '73, Buffalo State's venerable showbiz veteran.

Fontana was teaching a class at Buffalo State and commuting from his home in New York City. Trentham, knowing that Bradstreet had a reliable personality as well as a reliable car, asked him to chauffeur the Emmy Award-winning writer/producer from campus to the airport for the semester.

"There's a huge difference if you read the genius of *The Catcher in the Rye* or *On the Road* at the right time in your life or at the wrong time," Bradstreet explained. "At the right time, it can be life changing. At the wrong time, it might not register. It was kind of like that when I met Tom. I met him at the right time in my life. If it had been a few years earlier, I wouldn't have had the



PEABODY AWARD FOR 'MR. ROBOT'

MEET KYLE BRADSTREET

Kyle Bradstreet is an award-winning writer and producer. His television credits include the Marvel Studios event series *Secret Invasion* (Disney+); the critically acclaimed *Mr. Robot* (USA Network/Amazon), for which he received Golden Globe, Peabody, and Writers Guild of America awards; *Berlin Station* (Epix); *Copper* (BBC America); *Borgia: Faith & Fear* (Netflix); and *The Philanthropist* (NBC). As a playwright, Bradstreet has developed and produced dramas off Broadway, regionally, and in Europe. He is also a short-fiction author whose stories have been published in literary journals, and he regularly guest lectures at colleges and universities. A member of the Dramatists Guild of America and the Writers Guild of America, East, Bradstreet resides in Brooklyn.

2016 COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS



ability to talk writing with him in any meaningful way. If it had been a few years later, when I was looking for a job, I probably would have been too much in awe of him. Instead, I just knew Tom was a professor who needed a ride, and he was a really fun guy to talk writing with."

That time did become life changing. Over the course of the semester, Bradstreet and Fontana spoke in detail about writing and the writing process. Fontana impressed upon Bradstreet the value of writing every single day. No excuses. And Bradstreet took the advice to heart. They became friends and stayed in touch through letters after the semester ended.

Later, Bradstreet visited New York City, and Fontana took him to a television set where he was filming a new series. Bradstreet was awestruck and decided that he had to take the leap and move to the Big Apple to pursue a career in writing.

"I was 25 years old at the time I moved to New York," Bradstreet said. "I figured, 'Let's give it a couple years. If it works, fantastic. If it doesn't work, I'll still be in my late 20s and I had some fun and I can move forward with something else.' But I knew going in that overnight success is not common."

It was tough to even find restaurant work at first, but Bradstreet wrote every day, kept hustling, lived on rice and hot dogs, and focused on his ultimate goal.

Then Fontana called in 2005. He said he was working on a pilot for a TV series called *The Bedford Diaries* and was looking for short-term crew. He wanted to know if Bradstreet was interested. Bradstreet jumped at the chance to be a production assistant.

He loved being on the inside. Contributing to a major project starring Matthew Modine and

Audra McDonald slated to air on the WB Television Network. Seeing the way people collaborated. Learning about strengths and weaknesses. Finding out whom to ask for advice.

From Fontana, he learned these lessons: Write every day. Always surround yourself with good people. To the degree that you can, make your own way. Never throw away any of your writing. Stay consistent.

His excellent work during *The Bedford Diaries* turned into an office assistant job with Fontana's production company and the hope of an eventual writer gig. Although the hours were long, Bradstreet continued to write his own material before and after work. He wrote short stories that went unpublished. He penned a full-length play that turned into a two-hour disaster of a staged reading.

But he just kept writing. Filling notebook after notebook with longhand. Tapping passages into his laptop. Emailing himself on his phone at 3:50 a.m. with ideas that interrupted his sleep.

Then, a spark of success. He wrote a one-man show—a play called *Alcohol*—that was to be produced off Broadway at the historic Players Theatre Loft in Greenwich Village in 2008.

Fontana had a longstanding rule that he would not read the writing of his office assistants while they were working for him. But that didn't stop others in the office from letting Fontana know that they needed to see Bradstreet's play.

*I LOVE STEPPING INTO
SOMEONE ELSE'S WORLD,
AND I LOVE TAKING AN
AUDIENCE WITH ME.*

"I had invited everyone I knew to the play. Fortunately, it was very well received," Bradstreet recalled. "One of my daily tasks was to print out Tom's emails and report back to him. After the show premiered, a bunch of people emailed Tom—'I just saw Kyle's show and it was fantastic. You have to see it.' It felt a little weird to hand those emails over to him, but I guess that was one way to work around his rule. He knew I was writing, that I was working hard."

A year later, in 2009, Fontana offered Bradstreet his first full-time staff writer position for the TV series *The Philanthropist*.

"When Tom offered me that job, I took 10 minutes to walk around the West Village, called a few people, and felt like I had made it," Bradstreet said. "Like I finally achieved one of the primary goals I had set for myself when I moved to New York."

CHAPTER 4: ANOTHER WINNING MOMENT

Bradstreet followed up *The Philanthropist* with writing and producing credits on Fontana's *Borgia* (2011) and *Copper* (2012–2013) series.

In 2015, creator/director Sam Esmail asked Bradstreet to join him on Season 1 of *Mr. Robot*, a drama-thriller about an anxiety-plagued cybersecurity engineer and hacker played by Rami Malek.

Bradstreet traveled back and forth from the writers' room in Los Angeles to the set in New York City. With his extensive experience working on television sets, Bradstreet soon gained Esmail's trust and was relied upon for rewrites and other critical production duties. He learned that Esmail was a visual director, so he adjusted his writing to be more visual and detailed.

The critically acclaimed series with a cult following earned the 2016 Golden Globe Award for Best Television Series—Drama.

Bradstreet was thrilled to see his co-workers lauded for their efforts. And Bradstreet was being noticed by others for his contributions.

"During that season, I was offered an overall deal from our studio, Universal Content Productions, which meant a salaried position for me to develop and produce new series, in addition to my work on *Mr. Robot*," Bradstreet said.

Bradstreet spent four seasons and 44 episodes on *Mr. Robot*, from 2015 to 2019. And largely because of the show's success, Marvel called in 2020 to ask Bradstreet to take on an epic task: to head a new miniseries.

The Marvel Cinematic Universe is, simply put, one of the highest-grossing media franchises of all time. It focuses on superhero films based on characters from comic books published by Marvel Comics. This universe has become ubiquitous in American culture and attracts some of the finest acting talent in the world.

Created by Bradstreet, *Secret Invasion* is a Marvel live-action miniseries that premiered in June 2023 with six episodes on the Disney+ streaming platform. It's based on a 2008–2009 comic book storyline of the same name.

As head writer, Bradstreet led viewers back into the world of Nick Fury (played by the incomparable Samuel L. Jackson) and Talos (played by Ben Mendelsohn) as they uncover a conspiracy by a super-charged alien race of shape-shifting Skrulls to conquer Earth. This sophisticated, modern extension of the story, with a searing political aspect, speaks to the power of paranoia, trust, alliances, and idealism.

"Throughout my life and career, I've taken things incrementally," Bradstreet said. "From living in a small town to Buffalo to Toronto to New York City. And from working on small writing projects

to larger and larger and larger projects. When people ask about my path that led to Marvel, it really is a case of working hard and getting there one step at a time."

CHAPTER 5: A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

Bradstreet currently has two pilots in development, both of which were brought to him. And he's pitching a few more ideas as well, including trying to get his first feature film off the ground.

During his spare time, he still writes plays and short fiction.

He is driven by his love of storytelling.

"I always try to find the emotion. That hasn't left my writing," Bradstreet said. "I never thought I'd be writing sci-fi or genre stories, but they all have the same basic foundation—human emotion. I love stepping into someone else's world, and I love taking an audience with me. And I get the same thrill knowing that 99 people enjoyed my play at a regional theater in Washington, D.C., or 8 million people enjoyed a Marvel series at home on their TV."

Like his mentor Fontana, Bradstreet has been extremely generous, sharing his advice and insights with the next generation. Both alumni returned to the Buffalo State campus in late September for events with students. Bradstreet screened the pilot of *Secret Invasion* at Warren Enters Theatre in Upton Hall and then discussed his writing process in a session moderated by Aaron Daniel Annas, associate professor and director of the television and film arts (TFA) program. He also visited TFA classes during the week. Fontana participated in a separate panel discussion with longtime casting executive Rosalie Joseph in Ciminelli Recital Hall in Rockwell Hall, moderated by Jeffrey Hirschberg, associate professor of TFA.

"It's so much fun to talk to TFA classes and see what the students are working on," Bradstreet said. "They're very impressive. My favorite part is when students come up to speak with me one on one. I can see their passion for writing and creative ideas. I get to hear their origin story."

WANT TO BE LIKE KYLE?

Buffalo State's television and film arts (TFA) bachelor of arts program combines coursework from the Communication, English, and Theater departments as well as several courses designed specifically for the major. The program is housed within the Communication Department and has a singular purpose: creating great storytellers—regardless of the medium. The program's interdisciplinary nature ensures that students receive a broad-based curriculum, preparing them for a variety of careers in the entertainment industry. The emphasis is on hands-on training through internships and professional networking. In addition to required courses, TFA offers electives related to two professional tracks: writing/storytelling and directing/producing.

"Television and film arts is a selective program, accepting approximately 15 students each year," said Aaron Daniel Annas, associate professor and director of the TFA program. "Each year, our seniors create an original 30-minute television pilot. They go from idea to completed pilot in one semester. Kyle is a huge supporter of this yearly project. In addition to donating funds to help students create the project, he participates in a workshop with the students every year. Although Kyle has had great success in the industry, he always makes time for up-and-coming storytellers in the TFA program. We are so thankful for his friendship, support, and connection with our program and students."



BRADSTREET RETURNS TO CAMPUS TO MENTOR STUDENTS



MAKING AN

Impact

Buffalo State
alums lead several
of the region's major
charitable foundations

From left: Sawicki, Hunt, and Gura

As New York State's second-largest city, Buffalo has its share of wealth and resources. It also has its share of needs. Fortunately, Buffalo State alumnae Catherine Gura, '79; Mary Jo Hunt, '78; and Tracy Sawicki, '84, work diligently each day to connect those two sides of the equation for the betterment of the entire community.

The three alums, who lead three of the region's major charitable foundations, agree that Western New York has a proud philanthropic tradition and that the future success of the region will be spurred by a continuation of that spirit of generosity. Not only do these foundations provide funding and resources for those in need; they also shape larger discussions about public policy and drive social change.

CATHERINE GURA: *"Western New York is truly unique in its deep-rooted betterment of the community."*

Catherine Gura serves as president of the Children's Guild Foundation (TCGF), which is dedicated to improving the lives of children and young adults with special needs in Western New

York through its grant funding and advocacy work focused within health care, research, education, and therapeutic recreation.

Over the past several years, TCGF has made transformational grants within the Western New York community, including the creation of the TCGF Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the John R. Oishei Children's Hospital, TCGF Foundation Autism Spectrum Disorder Center, TCGF Summer Athletes Bold at Heart Program, TCGF Mildred M. Seegler Respite House, and TCGF Down Syndrome Research Program at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center.

As president, Gura represents the foundation in the community as its lead professional and chief executive officer, overseeing operations, grantmaking, endowment, and advocacy initiatives.

"I always say, 'I have the best career in the world!'" Gura said. "I am able to work with an engaged and committed board of directors who truly are committed to making a positive impact in the lives of children with special needs. And we do this by partnering with some of the hardest working and caring nonprofit workers anywhere in the country."

When she graduated from Buffalo State with a degree in journalism, she did not imagine a career in the nonprofit world.

"My thoughts at the time were focused on working in the public relations field," Gura said. "I became a writer at Buff State. This skill has translated into every position I have held. I wanted to stay in Western New York, so I kept an open mind on how to take the skills I learned to lead me into opportunities in both the nonprofit and corporate worlds."

She has used the experience she gained in positions at the University at Buffalo and the Muscular Dystrophy Association, among others, to lead the evolution of TCGF for the past 28 years.

Her favorite part of the job is helping facilitate transformational change for children and their families. "Seeing a smile on a child's face when something our foundation funded brings them joy. Nothing could be better," she said.

TCGF has also funded scholarships for Buffalo State's newly established applied behavior analysis (ABA) program, a master's-level program designed to serve the educational needs of professionals who provide behavioral health

treatment for individuals with autism and autism spectrum disorders and related needs.

Gura worked with Buffalo State's special education professionals in the creation of the ABA program and believes that bringing more dedicated professionals to this field is vital. In addition, she encourages students to become leaders driven by focused passion.

"Volunteer with passion," Gura said. "You can make a difference. It may sound like a cliché, but it is the small positive acts we do quietly in life that add up to a more fulfilling life—for others and residually, for ourselves. Accomplishment is often in direct proportion to the intensity of the leader's passion. It is contagious, sustaining in difficult times, and hope giving. Focused passion ensures integrity of leadership. Lose yourself in a cause greater than yourself."

MARY JO HUNT: *"Be collaborative when attempting to solve community problems."*

Mary Jo Hunt is the executive director of the James H. Cummings Foundation, which focuses on funding not-for-profits making strides in medical research, science, and postsecondary education. Its funding helps generate programming for vulnerable people of all ages.

Locally, the Cummings Foundation has provided funding to the Erie County Medical Center's Trauma Center and Emergency Department, Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, and multiple higher education institutions including Buffalo State.

After earning her master's degree in elementary education at Buffalo State, Hunt went right into teaching in the Buffalo Public Schools. At the same time, she was involved with volunteer work that led her to the nonprofit sector.

"My career path has been pretty curvy," Hunt said. "I worked for the Buffalo Public Schools and then Head Start, where I spent over 15 years training early childhood teachers. I taught at Buffalo State and ECC as an adjunct. I was also the executive director of Leadership Buffalo in the early 2000s. I spent some time in the private sector in small-business development, leadership training, and human resources. I helped start several nonprofits and learned about grant writing. I have served on a variety of local and national boards of nonprofits and chaired several. Perhaps the most important thing I have done in this community is establishing the Child Care Coalition—now the Child Care Resource Network. When the Cummings position became available, it was the right time in my life and a good fit."

In her leadership role at the Cummings Foundation, Hunt is responsible for all aspects of the organization—reviewing intent, grant applications, site visits, board meetings, remission of funds, and staying abreast of community needs.

"I have the opportunity to see many different aspects of the community and ways to improve things," she said. "I have watched the trends in philanthropy for 40 years. While we continued to improve in how we address the needs of the community, the gains have been slow. In my current role, I have the opportunity to have more of an impact on how issues are addressed through philanthropy."

Hunt believes in Buffalo and Western New York and is committed to doing her part to make it a better place—for all citizens.

"I am a transplant to Western New York," Hunt said. "I came here in 1976 and never left. I have always lived in the city and worked with the public sector. While this is a community rich in so many ways, there are way too many people whose needs are not being met. I decided I could help to change that in any way I can."

Hunt said Buffalo State and its students are positioned to be key players in the region's future success.

“

I have the opportunity to see many different aspects of the community and ways to improve things.

"The university has a unique role in educating many local students and hopefully enticing them to remain in Western New York," she said. "As a leader in educating and training teachers, it can work to research and develop best practices for education that will help teachers ensure that students learn. My advice to students: be collaborative when attempting to solve community problems."

TRACY SAWICKI: *"Some of our best work has been guided by these new power dynamics."*

Tracy Sawicki is the executive director of the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation, a family foundation that helps children, adolescents, and young people affected by intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health issues, and substance use disorders. The organization's goal is to improve the lives of young people in the geographic footprint of Erie and Niagara counties in Western New York, and Barnstable, Dukes, Essex, and Nantucket counties in Eastern Massachusetts.

The Tower Foundation is a longtime supporter of Buffalo State, and Sawicki serves on the Buffalo State Foundation Board of Directors, chairing the Development Committee that assists with fundraising events such as Bengala.

"My role as executive director of the foundation is to work closely with the family and the board

to inspire and achieve our mission," Sawicki said. "And I get to lead a staff of four program officers and two support staff who do great work. Leading a foundation—especially a family foundation—is a privilege. It really makes my heart sing."

While the founders of the foundation have passed away, second- and third-generation family members carry on their vital work as trustees. In addition, the family has always thought it important to have board members from the community involved with decision making. This has resulted in a foundation very in tune with current local needs.

"We concentrate on four areas that have been largely underrepresented in philanthropic circles for a long time," said Sawicki, who previously served as assistant executive director of the American Red Cross—Western New York Chapter. "It's been very interesting to take a deeper dive into these areas and their intersection with race and income. We look at the data and beyond the data to identify who needs assistance and to focus on ensuring equitable help."

Sawicki started at Buffalo State as a social work major but quickly realized she didn't want a career in clinical social work. While she was more interested in administration and program development, there were no academic programs in that area in the 1980s. So she switched to a business major with a concentration in social work and a minor in creative studies.

"That path definitely prepared me and helped shape my career," said Sawicki, an Albany native. "The faculty was great. Shirley Lord encouraged me—she saw my talent and potential for leadership. And Ruth Noller in creative studies took me under her wing. I was involved in fieldwork right out of the gate, and campus clubs gave me leadership opportunities."

Sawicki noted that the Tower Foundation is more than a source of money. It provides access to knowledgeable people, community partners, and technical expertise. She is particularly proud of the foundation's concerted efforts to get young adults involved with representative service—turning those who benefit from services into active participants in the grantmaking process.

"We started an advisory group of young adults—18 young adults representing our four areas—and they manage \$200,000 in funding," Sawicki explained. "They identify what is most important to them. It's a great way to build a pipeline of new leaders and role models. Some of our best work has been guided by these new power dynamics. This is happening in the philanthropic world—a trend to empower those being helped. It's a big shift and one we're very excited about. Young people will pay it forward, and that will help Western New York thrive well into the future."

Creating Pathways to *Thrive* in Higher Education

Hermen Díaz III, '08, wants to understand how Latino men survive and thrive at institutions of higher education while also recognizing the phenomenon that they're vanishing from college campuses.

While Latinos make up the second-largest racial or ethnic group in the United States, Latino males have some of the lowest baccalaureate and postbaccalaureate degree completion rates, said Díaz, who joined the Buffalo State faculty as an assistant professor of higher education administration in fall 2019.

"Basically, half of the Latino men who walk onto campus won't walk across the stage to accept a diploma," Díaz said. "They are not matriculating at the undergraduate level due to a number of barriers and realities."

Díaz chaired the 18th annual conference of the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education—"La Lucha Sigue: Refusal, Resistance, and Praxis at Critical Junctures"—held in Las Vegas, Nevada, March 1–3, 2023.

In addition to serving as conference chair, he and his co-researchers from the University of Rhode Island and the University of Texas at Austin presented their national study of

Latino men enrolled in higher education administration master's degree programs.

"We discussed how this group of men refuse and resist practices that are barriers to their academic and personal success," Díaz said, adding that the research revealed that it's often other men of color who influence Latino men to pursue higher education.

That was the case for Díaz, who joined a Latino fraternity during his second attempt at an undergraduate degree. When he originally enrolled in college immediately after high school, as a first-generation student, he dropped out after his first semester.

"I had no clue how to do college," he said. "I took a short break and worked in construction for a while."

Interestingly, his construction co-workers were the ones who encouraged him to give college another try. He enrolled at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan, and discovered that living on campus and joining a fraternity made a huge difference.

"Being surrounded by men with similar experiences and having a social network provided a culturally relevant space," he said. "I don't think I would have graduated or been successful without them."



In addition, while Díaz worked a campus job in the student union, he said, his boss, a man of color, changed his career trajectory.

“He hired me as a naïve first-year student and introduced me to individuals across the institution,” Díaz said. “I developed confidence working in that office. It’s where I realized that administrators work in a university, not just faculty members.”

This experience also inspired Díaz to pursue his master’s degree in student personnel administration at Buffalo State and his doctorate in higher education leadership at Colorado State University. His dissertation, “Sense of Place: Sense of Belonging for Latinx Men in a Latinx Cultural Center at a Predominately White Institution,” informed his research interests.

Díaz said he isn’t interested in pursuing or researching negative trends and deficit narratives of men of color but instead creating pathways for more men of color to thrive in higher education.

“While my research situates the reality of Latino men in higher education,” he said, “my research agenda really hopes to center the success and persistence of Latino men in higher education through an asset-based lens.”

“My research agenda really hopes to center the success and persistence of Latino men in higher education through an asset-based lens.”

Hermen Diaz III, '08, is an assistant professor of higher education administration.

Bengala 2023 Salutes President Conway-Turner

Bengala 2023, the 26th annual Buffalo State Foundation Scholarship Gala, was held on April 29 in the Campbell Student Union. Co-chaired by Stacy E. Lewis Beauford, '01, and Michael Garner, '83, Bengala 2023 was a smashing success and a fitting tribute to retiring Buffalo State President Katherine Conway-Turner. A stirring video paid homage to Conway-Turner's impact on the campus over the past nine years, and the vibrant and festive Frida Kahlo-inspired theme and décor was a nod to Conway-Turner's admiration of the famed artist.



26th Golf and Tennis Classic Supports GRIT Scholarship

Ninety-six golfers gathered at the Orchard Park Country Club on September 26 to support the Buffalo State Foundation's 26th annual Golf and Tennis Scholarship Classic. This year's tournament included brunch, a round of golf, and on-course snacks and beverages, as well as dinner and awards. All proceeds generated from the event went to Buffalo State's GRIT Scholarship Fund, a student assistance program that combines financial support with a robust mentorship component.

First-place winners were teams from two of this year's Silver Sponsors—software company Arbol and accounting firm the Bonadio Group—with scores of 61 overall and 69 in the mixed-couple category, respectively. Local developer Sinatra and Company was the tournament's Gold Sponsor. Culinary students from Buffalo State's Hospitality and Tourism Department, headed by Kathleen O'Brien, department chair, served as volunteers for the event.



Buffalo State Students Benefit from Recent Grants

Several grantmaking institutions have provided recent grants to Buffalo State:

> For the second consecutive year, the Harry T. Mangurian Jr. Foundation funded travel to the Toronto International Film Festival for students in Buffalo State's television and film arts program. This year, the foundation increased its donation from \$10,000 to \$15,000 to also support the students' independent film development.

> Bank of America awarded a two-year \$57,000 grant to support the Small Business Development Center's Bengal Entrepreneurship Club for students, which has returned to in-person meetings for the first time since before COVID.

> UnitedHealthcare awarded a two-year \$30,000 grant to Milligan's Food Pantry—Buffalo State's on-campus food pantry for those experiencing food insecurity—to hire a graduate assistant to support student orders as well as to purchase a new freezer.

Join in! To make your gift, contact the Buffalo State Foundation at (716) 878-3467 • gradyes@buffalostate.edu • giving.buffalostate.edu

A Lasting Legacy

The Peterson Society

The Peterson Society is Buffalo State's planned giving or legacy society for those who have given to the university through a bequest, gift annuity, charitable trust, life insurance, or other estate-planning vehicle. In total, the society has more than 440 members; one-quarter are current or former faculty or staff members at Buffalo State or the Burchfield Penney Art Center.

Who can be a Peterson Society member? Anyone interested in establishing a lasting legacy at Buffalo State by making a gift that will support students for years to come.

Twelve new members joined the Peterson Society this past year, including Buffalo State Interim President Bonita R. Durand, Ph.D. Nine members were present for the group's annual induction ceremony, which enjoyed a total of 150 attendees at the Richardson Hotel on October 5.

With a theme of "A Lifetime of Influence: Celebrating Buffalo State's Esteemed Faculty and Staff," the induction ceremony acknowledged one of the primary motivations for giving—it is a fitting way to honor past and present faculty and staff members who have had an enduring influence on the campus.

This year's inductees were Bonita R. Durand, Ph.D.; Judith H. Edgar, '76; Rogernelle Griffin, '87; Jeremy C. Hudson; Stephen V. Musolino, '76;

C. Arthur Plant, '64 (posthumously); Thomas J. Rookey, '66; Kenneth R. Sciog, '89; Paula F. Sćiuk, '94; Michael Starks; Sandy Starks, '72; and Guy A. Tomassi, '93.

The event also memorialized members who died in the past year: Efner "Lucky" Davis; Barbara J. Hole, '84; Ulysses Kontos, '63; and Paul Thoms, '63.

"I'm happy to say that I made my provisions in my estate plans to support Buffalo State University to provide opportunity for students," Tomassi said. "Opportunity not only to learn, but to discover themselves and their passions. My experience at Buffalo State University guided me not only to a rewarding career, but an enriched life. It is my hope that my investment in the university will have a similar impact on future students."

Current faculty and staff members in attendance appreciated the recognition.

"I appreciated the opportunity to express to donors the ways in which my students, many of whom are first-generation master's students, benefit directly from their gifts and support," said Kimberly Kline, Ph.D., professor of higher education administration, who was invited to the luncheon as a faculty guest.

The Peterson Society is named for the late Harold F. Peterson and his late wife, Lucille Mattern Peterson, '39,



in honor of their legacy of giving to Buffalo State. Dr. Peterson served as a professor and chair of the History Department and was later honored with the title of Distinguished Professor, the highest honor awarded by the SUNY system. He was also the first faculty member from Buffalo State to receive the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. Upon retirement, he established a trust that first provided for Lucille during her lifetime and now provides scholarships for Buffalo State students.

To learn more about the Peterson Society, please contact Scott Burns, associate vice president for development, at burnsrs@buffalostate.edu.

Find out all the ways you can make a difference.

Contact the Buffalo State Foundation at (716) 878-3395 or giving.buffalostate.edu.

Investing *in the* Healing Power *of* Stories

Drew Kahn, SUNY Distinguished Service Professor and founding director of Buffalo State's Anne Frank Project, explained the Kinyarwanda greeting "Muraho" to those assembled in the newly renamed Donn Youngstrom Global Learning Lab at Buffalo State University on October 5. "Muraho," he said, connotes "We celebrate your presence." It extends far beyond the traditional American greeting of "hello."

A few moments later, that gathering on the fourth floor of the Campbell Student Union offered a hearty "Muraho" to a classroom clear across the globe in Muhanga, Rwanda, using the Global Learning Lab's newest technologies. The global connection, "like Zoom on steroids," as Kahn calls it, is allowing an enhanced collaboration and dialogue between Buffalo State students and Rwanda's Urukundo Learning Center to blossom.

"This lab allows us to sustain the work we are doing in the classroom on a weekly basis," Kahn said. "It is because of Donn Youngstrom. This would not be possible without the generosity of Donn Youngstrom."

Youngstrom is an associate professor emeritus of theater who taught at Buffalo State for nearly 25 years. The technology to make the lab a reality is just one result of over \$2 million in gifts from Youngstrom to Buffalo State's Anne Frank Project over the past two years. In addition to the fourth-floor lab in the Campbell Student Union, two similar labs have been outfitted in East Africa.

Over his theater career, Youngstrom landed more than 50 stage roles, including Polonius in *Hamlet*, Couthon in *Danton's Death*, and Valentine in *Faust* in off-Broadway productions. Youngstrom also served in various roles after joining Buffalo State's Theater Department in 1994, including lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, and department chair. He also directed 24 Casting Hall productions before



Interim President Bonita R. Durand and Associate Professor Emeritus Donn Youngstrom

“ This lab allows us to sustain the work we are doing in the classroom on a weekly basis. This would not be possible without the generosity of Donn Youngstrom.”

retiring in 2018. His contributions to the university have continued in his role of philanthropist.

“We are deeply grateful for all that you did for Buffalo State then, and continue to do now,” Buffalo State University Interim President Bonita R. Durand, Ph.D., told Youngstrom at the dedication event.

Youngstrom, in turn, attributed his philanthropy to his mother, who spent years working with an organization that provided housing for mothers and their families. “That’s where I get my sense of giving,” he said. “Philanthropy is not dollar amounts; it is volunteering and support.”

Buffalo State has operated a study-abroad program for students in Rwanda most summers since 2010, led by Kahn under the aegis of the Anne Frank Project. In total, 154 Buffalo State students have traveled to East Africa as part of the program.

The Anne Frank Project uses the power of stories as vehicles for community building, conflict management, and identity exploration, Kahn said. Inspired by the wisdom of Anne Frank, the project uncovers, develops, and shares stories stifled by oppression.

“The spirit of this room reflects what the Anne Frank Project is,” Kahn said of the Youngstrom Global Learning Lab.

Kahn recalled an earlier instance of Youngstrom’s philanthropy, leading up to the first Rwanda trip for Buffalo State students. “Donn came up to me asking, ‘How short are the students?’” Kahn said. “He covered the costs for students and didn’t want them to know where it came from. That’s true altruism.”

Robert M. Zak, Buffalo State Council member, read the official proclamation renaming the Donn Youngstrom Global Learning Lab at the unveiling.

During a connection with the Urukundo Learning Center—six hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Time—a group of Rwandan students presented a story-based learning performance to the Buffalo State audience. Story-based learning provides an experiential template for teachers to attend to the academic and socioemotional needs of their students, using stories as the curricular platform for classroom instruction.

The Urukundo performance used aspects of what Kahn’s Buffalo State contingent facilitates in Rwanda each summer.

“We can’t wait to see you next year in June,” said Viateur Ngiru, headmaster at the Urukundo Learning Center.

A final “Muraho” from the Buffalo State gathering concluded the emotional ceremony.

alumni profile Karl Leonard, '80

Karl Leonard, '80, noticed a disturbing trend soon after being elected sheriff in a county in Virginia in 2014. About eight in 10 Chesterfield County jail inmates were addicted to heroin or prescription painkillers. While serving their sentences, they'd get sober. But, once released, they'd quickly resume their drug habit, sometimes with deadly consequences.

"In my four decades in law enforcement, I've dealt with cocaine, crack, and synthetic drugs," said Leonard, who started working in Chesterfield a year after graduating from Buffalo State with a degree in criminal justice. "Nothing has come close to the amount of people dying with opiates and heroin. I thought, 'Let's stop this insanity.'"

Leonard started the grassroots Helping Addicts Recover Progressively (HARP) program, a peer-to-peer model of recovery open to both inmates and individuals who haven't been arrested.

"I opened my jail 24/7 for anyone who needed help with addiction," he said. "It's an unconventional approach, but it's also an unconventional epidemic."

The result, a sharp reduction in both overdoses and recidivism, turned heads and led to Leonard's gritty recovery program's being featured in *Jailhouse Redemption*, a four-episode documentary that aired on the Discovery Channel in May 2022. Although Warner Bros. has since bought the Discovery Channel and pulled hundreds of shows, including *Jailhouse Redemption*, plans are in place to make it available on the HBO+ platform soon, Leonard said.

News stories about the project captured the attention of Beth Wichterich, a New York City-based film producer. Wichterich told the *Chesterfield Observer* she had an interest in the story of addiction around the time pharmaceutical giant Purdue's role in cultivating the opioid epidemic was coming to light. "I wanted a community that was actually doing something to change."

In 2021, Wichterich and her film crew embedded themselves in the jail for four months, then spent six months editing 3,000 hours of footage down to four.

"We gave them full access" Leonard said. "What they captured was very raw and very real. I was blown away with the final product."

The documentary includes emotional reactions to court verdicts, heartfelt accounts of the scourge of drug addiction, and even the aftermath of one inmate's death. At the center of it is Leonard and his holistic approach to treating addiction, which combines medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) with individual and group therapy.

He identified four male and four female inmates in the program who showed leadership skills and tapped them to be

"mentors" in the program. Because they'd already kicked the drug habit, he said, they were in the best position to understand those in the throes of addiction. His jail became the only one in the state to provide peer recovery specialist (PRS) training to certify many of the mentors as peer recovery counselors. They facilitate daily activities for those in the jail's Recovery House, including group assignments and Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous 12-step meetings. Together, they work with HARP participants to get at the heart of what's fueling their hunger for drugs.

"Drugs are not the problem," Leonard said. "People are using drugs to mask pain or fill a void. In this program, we peel back the onion layers, take a deep dive into what the trauma was that makes them use drugs. Until you address that, nothing changes."

He and his staff also prepare inmates for release, helping them with résumés and insurance and housing, even provide pro-bono removal of facial tattoos, to ensure they have every chance to live a successful, sober life in the community.

Soon after HARP was created, Leonard also launched the Jail to Jobs (J2J) initiative, where he worked with employers to hire people coming out of HARP. "Employers started asking to hire our people," Leonard said. "They do make some of the best employees. They won't take a job for granted."

The HARP and J2J projects round out a career that started with criminal justice courses at Buffalo State for Leonard, a graduate of Frontier High School. He joined the U.S. Coast Guard and worked security jobs before deciding to go into law enforcement. At the Chesterfield Police Department, he rose through the ranks to the position of major.

After retiring in 2012, he was hired by the Pentagon in an active-duty role, helping returning servicemen and women reintegrate into society. That all changed when a former sheriff contacted Leonard about running for the seat. At first Leonard was reluctant to leave his Pentagon job.

"Then I thought, What a great opportunity to lead from the top and shape an organization," said Leonard, who became the sheriff in a special election in 2014.

He said he's grateful he returned to Chesterfield, ran for the seat, and launched the drug-recovery program.

"The reason I wanted to do this was to break down the stigma of drug addiction in our community," he said. "I wanted these people to have a chance at redemption."



The Gift of Redemption

by Laurie Kaiser



Alumni Legacy Family Tree Barbecue

Buffalo State legacy families and local alumni came together on June 22 for the second annual Alumni Legacy Family Tree Barbecue at the LoRusso Alumni and Visitor Center. This event honoring families with multiple generations of Buffalo State alumni is a new tradition that was started during the university's 150th anniversary.

Bengals Practice Homecoming Happy Hour



Alumni, faculty, and staff were invited for a happy hour to celebrate Homecoming Week as the Bengals Football team practiced on Coyer Field on September 27. Fans enjoyed food and drinks on the Bengal Deck and tours of the Press Box and President's Suite. More than 60 attendees joined the fun, and we look forward to making it an annual part of Homecoming!

Homecoming Tailgate and Football Game

This all-new Homecoming Tailgate event brought together alumni, students, and families to celebrate the legacy of Buffalo State on September 30. Attendees enjoyed food, games, and music by alumnus DJ Jett, B.A. '19, before cheering on the Bengals against the University of Rochester. Greek alumni returned to represent their sororities and fraternities at the Greek Tent as an example to current students of the lasting impact participation in Greek life and student orgs can have. Alumni Engagement gave out special Homecoming shirts designed by Natalie Tombak, B.F.A. '23, and printed by Buff-a-Logo, co-owned by alumnus Erik Westfield, B.S. '11.



Interim President Bonita R. Durand, Ph.D., celebrated Homecoming decked out in Bengal orange with her friends, family, and sorority members.

Building Business Pathways to Success

The Alumni Engagement Office and Buffalo State's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) hosted an alumni entrepreneur panel on October 19 that focused on the topics of leadership, small-business development, and civic responsibility. Attendees had time to network and ask questions of panelists Therese Deutschlander, B.A. '03, of Thin Ice Gift Shop; Dennis Scovazzo, B.S. '99, of Small Business Consulting; Stephen Forman, B.S. '92, regional executive chef for Delaware North Sportservice and owner of Thyme-N-Honey; and Abby Spindelman, B.F.A. '08, of Five Points Framing.



50-Plus Club Luncheon Reunion

Alumni who have passed their 50th graduation anniversary were invited to attend this annual luncheon on July 16. Attendees were welcomed by Interim President Bonita R. Durand, Ph.D., and heard about what's happened on campus this past year, including Buffalo State's new university designation. They reconnected with former classmates and shared stories of their times at Buffalo State, ending with a singing of the alma mater. The Senior Service Award was presented at this year's event to Barbara Blackburn, B.S. '64, M.S. '67, who has received national recognition for her long, successful career as a food writer and cooking instructor in Western New York.



STAY CONNECTED AND GET IN THE KNOW The Alumni Association regularly sends emails about Buffalo State news, events, volunteer opportunities, and benefits for alumni. Contact alumni@buffalostate.edu or go to alumni.buffalostate.edu to update your contact information and receive communication from your alma mater.

FLORIDA REUNIONS 2024

BUFFALO STATE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI living in Florida are invited to meet fellow alumni at three different locations in March 2024. Whether you are a Florida resident or snowbird, you are invited to attend. Meet fellow alumni from The Villages, Naples, and Sarasota as well as staff members from Institutional Advancement at Buffalo State University.

SAVE THE DATES: MARCH 5-7, 2024

NAPLES

Tuesday, March 5 | 6:00-8:00 p.m.
Wyndemere Country Club, 700 Wyndemere Way, Naples, FL 34105

THE VILLAGES

Wednesday, March 6 | 5:00-7:00 p.m.
The Waterfront Inn | 1105 Lake Shore Drive, The Villages, FL 32162

SARASOTA

Thursday, March 7 | 6:00-8:00 p.m.
Sarasota Yacht Club | 1100 John Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34236

Registration for all events ends at 5:00 p.m. Friday, March 1. If you need assistance with registering, please call the Alumni Engagement Office at (716) 878-6102 or visit alumni.buffalostate.edu/florida-reunions-2024.

Music Alumni Homecoming Concert

Alumni from the Music Department performed at Ciminelli Recital Hall in Rockwell Hall on September 28. The performance was followed by a wine and cheese reception. Featured alumni performing in the Homecoming Concert were Daniel Fronckowiak, B.Mus. '22; Joshua Wagner, B.A. '10; and Emily Bauerlein B.A. '15, along with staff accompanist Ivan Docenko.



Bengals Dare to Care Day of Service

Alumni joined the Buffalo State campus community at sites across the City of Buffalo for the university's annual Dare to Care day of service on September 23.

Texas Alumni Networking Reception

Alumni in the Dallas-Fort Worth-Plano area were invited to network with local alumni at Union Bear Brewing Company on November 2.



Father-Son Alums Debut Play

Jim Keller, B.A. '79, and his late father, Loren Keller, B.S. '55, co-wrote *A Pitch from Satchel Paige*, a one-man play that will make its world premiere at the Paul Robeson Theatre every weekend in April (Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 4:00 p.m.). The play won first place at the most recent New York New Works Theatre Festival in Manhattan. For tickets and information, visit paulrobesontheatre.org.

Richardson Hotel Tour and Happy Hour

Alumni were guided through the yet-to-be-developed sections of the Richardson Olmsted Campus by tour guide Patrick Ryan, B.A. '17, M.A. '21, on October 5. The tour included the history of the building and plans for renovations. Alums then met at Bar Vaux inside the Richardson Hotel for appetizers and drinks.



Class of 1973 50th Reunion Brunch

Graduates of 1973 celebrated their 50th reunion at the Burchfield Penney Art Center on October 7, starting with a docent-led tour of the galleries. Attendees then enjoyed brunch while they caught up with former classmates. After assembling for a class picture, alums were invited for a tour of campus that focused on recent updates and highlighted familiar buildings from the 1970s.

Buffalo Nite in DC

The Alumni Engagement Office hosted a table on September 27 at Buffalo Nite in DC, an annual event in the Washington, D.C., area that celebrates all things Buffalo. Buffalo State took second place with 19 alumni attendees in the "Alumni Cup" competition that recognizes the Buffalo-area college with the most alumni present.



50s

Rita Widman, B.S. '53, writes, "Since my beloved husband, Manny, Class of '53, went to sea for the last time four years ago, I have continued to enjoy Tarpon Springs, Florida. At 92 years of age, I decided to be near my sons' families to watch my clan grow. I have moved to Edmond, Oklahoma, to live out the rest of my life and enjoy all the memories I have as a Navy wife blessed with an awesome marriage."



George Clever, B.S. '58, is the author of three new books on

KDP Amazon this year: *Bad Art Murders* (mystery novel), *Crossing Waves* (poetry), and *Dripping Springs Murders* (mystery novel). In addition, his art was displayed at the Forsyth County Central Library in Winston Salem, North Carolina, for National American Indian Heritage Month and was also shown in the Clemmons Library Gallery and the Broyhill Gallery in Clemmons, North Carolina. He also traveled with 104 veterans to Washington, D.C., for the Triad Honor Flight. There are three men named Clever listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall.



Thomas Elliott, B.S. '58, writes, "Since 1961, my wife, Paula, and I

have enjoyed life in Canada. We are retired musicians, having played mainly in the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra. Paula played flute and I played bassoon. At Buffalo State, I had the pleasure of playing under Joe Wincenc in the Buffalo State Orchestra. Besides music, Canada is a great country for wilderness tripping by canoe, and snowshoe camping; these were a big part of my life. In addition, I played underwater hockey and underwater rugby in many countries, including the U.S. My best sport is free diving. Currently, I am addicted to running, and in spite of my very slow speed, I have been awarded many medals, since there is no competition in the over-80 categories."



Robert Jennette, B.S. '58, M.S. '65, notes that longtime Buffalo State friends reunited once again at the Roycroft Inn in East Aurora, New York, on August 23, 2023. The group included **Carol (Vertalino) DiLiberto, '58; Bob Jennette, '58; Helen (King) Jennette, '58; Norm Plezia, '58; Rose Marie (Acquino) Sugg, '58; Rich Thompson; and Beverly Zucker, '58.**

Many from this annual gathering have passed away and are deeply missed: **Barbara (Ernst) Plezia, '56; Joanne (Waskey) Echaniz, '58; Bob Levesque, '58; Marcia (Hicks) Pawlaczyk, '58; and Paul Sugg, '58.**

NICOLINO



Pat Nicolino, B.S. '58, started his teaching career in January 1958 at East Islip High School. He went to North Shore Schools from September 1958 to July 1968. He then worked for the Babylon Schools as an assistant superintendent of schools for seven years and as superintendent for 15 years before retiring to start Nicolino Associates. He has spent the last 30 years as a consultant or interim superintendent for more than 30 school districts, thanks to Buffalo State.

Bobbi Mastrangelo, B.S. '59, won honorable mention for her "Metropolitan Cover" at the City Life art competition sponsored by Ten Moir Gallery in May 2023. Her sculpture relief displayed artistic skill and creativity, and Ten Moir was honored to showcase it. Her artwork was featured alongside other talented artists from around the world in Ten Moir's *Concrete Canvas* virtual art exhibition.

BLACKBURN (RIGHT)



60s

Barbara Blackburn, B.S. '64, M.S. '67, continues doing the activities that helped her win the Senior Service 2023 Alumni Award: Niagara Frontier Radio Reading and Saints Peter & Paul Church. She is a live reader of *USA Today* every Tuesday from noon to 2:00 p.m. At church, she is a lector, Eucharistic minister, bereavement minister, and RCIA Committee member. She also still functions as a home/hospital instructor for Williamsville Central Schools and as a community education cooking instructor. She and her

husband, Alan, enjoy spending time with their two children and four grandchildren when they visit their St. Petersburg home.



Holly Gordon, B.S. '64, published the book *Parallel Perspectives:*

The Brush/Lens Collaboration with watercolorist Ward Hooper in 2020, which has led to many exhibitions and gallery talks. Their uncanny connection to Arthur Dove and Helen Torr led to Gordon's invitation to speak at the Dove Block Project Gallery in Geneva, New York, in 2022. She

A Career-Spanning Celebration

Rita Argen Auerbach, B.A. '54, M.S. '74, has enjoyed a prolific career in art. Like the legendary



Charles E. Burchfield, Auerbach has used watercolor as the primary medium to express her artistic vision. The Burchfield Penney Art Center (BPAC) honored that vision with a retrospective exhibition, *Rita Argen Auerbach: Legacy*, on view at the center June 9–September 24.

Legacy was a career-spanning celebration featuring watercolors lent by the artist and her children, along with works from private collections and the BPAC's own collection. These connections bridged the creative and the familial in paintings selected by Auerbach's children—Brad, Glenn, and Carrie—revealing personal perspectives on their mother's work.

Legacy was presented through the generosity of Mary Lou and Tom Segalla and also made possible by gifts from ABC-Amega, Jim and Joy Brandys, Gary and Willow Brost, and Cindy and Francis Letro. Additional support was provided by Bob Jeffrey, Patricia Beagle, and John and Shelley McKendry. The John R. Oishei Foundation and the Margaret L. Wendt Foundation provide generous ongoing support of the BPAC's programs and exhibitions.

NUWER



and *Juliet* that played in July 2023 on the University of Alaska campus. Nuwer was cast as Prince Escalus, and Gosia performed as a dancer.

Matt Gryta, B.A. '69, editor of the *Record* during his sophomore and senior years at Buffalo State and a *Buffalo News* reporter for 48 years, has published his seventh nonfiction book, *Life in a Mafia Kingdom*, which is available on Amazon and at the Buffalo History Museum. His latest nonfiction book, *A Place of Their Own*, is also on sale at Amazon.

Donna Miller, B.S. '69, has enjoyed a 30-year career as a home economics teacher and five years as a diet tech at a local hospital. She is now retired. She spends six months in Texas near her two sons and six months at home in Avoca, New York. She loves to travel, especially cruises. Life is good!

70s

Marie Braun Feltz, B.S.Ed. '70, continues to use the broad range of her home economics education. She recently led an interior design roundtable discussion, "Buyer's Remorse," at the Decorating Den Interiors (DDI) International Conference in New Orleans. She has been an award-winning

DDI franchise owner and regional manager since 1986. Previously, she operated a drapery workroom, was head teacher of a preschool, and taught high school home economics. She is also a past president of three chambers of commerce. Feltz followed in her mother's footsteps. In fact, the *Buffalo Evening News* published an article about the two on April 4, 1969, titled "Daughter Joins Mom in Home Ec Field." Margaret Ullrich Braun was also a Buffalo State graduate. Like her mother, Feltz attended the Merrill Palmer Institute and was selected for membership in the Phi Upsilon Omicron honor sorority. She lives in Meadville, Pennsylvania, where she and her husband enjoy their grandchildren.



Tom Prestopnik, B.S., '70, M.S. '71, has had one of his paintings,

Letters to Theo, accepted for the permanent collection of the Elliott Museum in Stuart, Florida.



David Lanz, B.S. '71, M.S. '74, received the Buffalo State University

Elementary Education, Literacy, and Educational Leadership Department's warmest congratulations on his retirement as a lecturer. Lanz is a longtime (18-year) adjunct faculty member of the department. He began



Sixty Nine Seventy Debuts at Buffalo State

Michael Eichler, '72, hosted a staged reading of his new play, *Sixty Nine Seventy*, at Buffalo State's LoRusso Alumni and

Visitor Center on November 18. The public event featured a reading of the script followed by a critical discussion. Buffalo theater veteran Kyle LoConti directed the reading.

Sixty Nine Seventy tells the story of four Buffalo State classmates navigating the tumultuous social and political events of 1969–1970 and the protests on campus that led to the cancellation of final exams.

Presented in a direct-address style, each character breaks the fourth wall, speaking directly to the audience. The characters include Barry, a student-protest leader from New York City; Naomi, a SEEK student and aspiring teacher; Sharon, a home economics major from suburbia; and Andy, a working-class student from Buffalo.

Sixty Nine Seventy examines such issues as misinformation and public manipulation, women's rights, racial equality and inherent racism, abortion access, political corruption, and federal surveillance of activist groups. The play, which Eichler wrote while combing through online archives of Buffalo State's student newspaper, the *Record*, incorporates vintage television news footage of events such as the Kent State shootings, the draft lotteries, and the first Earth Day.

While workshoping the play with the Yale University School of Drama and IRT Theater in New York City, Eichler received fascinating feedback from audiences comprising multiple generations, from baby boomers to Gen Zers, who all agreed that the critical issues of the time remain current today.

"In order to really launch the play out in the world," Eichler said, "I wanted to go back to my hometown—and the place where the play is set—for a reading and discussion with the public and current Buffalo State students. And, hopefully, that will lead to a first full production at a theater in Buffalo."

teaching for Buffalo State in 2006 following his 36-year career as a teacher, director of instructional computing, and chief school planning officer for the Buffalo Public Schools. Lanz and his wife, **Patricia (Hartnett) Lanz, '69**, continue to enjoy living in Western New York and relishing time with their children and grandchildren.



Kathleen Gaffney Shea, B.A. '71, M.S. '13, is the founder and president of

Kasey's Key Inc., a not-for-profit organization that focuses on information, education, and empathy for those who have lost someone they love to suicide.

is currently exhibiting at Molloy University. Her book is available on Amazon and other venues. She is pictured with Jim Spates, honorary Dove chair.

Beverly Smith, B.S. '64, writes, "My husband, Paul, and I have enjoyed traveling to 70 countries and every state in the U.S. as well as most provinces in Canada. We currently live in Florida and Tennessee and previously lived in Rochester, New York. For six years, we full-timed in our RV and loved the experience."

Donald Miklas, B.S. '66, M.S. '68, writes, "Buffalo State was a solid foundation in my career as a director of training, education, and organization development for Rutgers University, the Institute for Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE), M&T Bank, NJ Transit, and Occidental Petroleum. My home is in Buffalo and in Central New Jersey. Based on personal experience, my advice to Bengal undergraduates is to focus on acquiring a primary skill, aggressively moving in the job market, and enjoying the process of learning."

Hank Nuwer, B.S. '68, moved from managing editor of the *Celina Daily Standard* to managing editor of the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* in Alaska. His scholarship on hazing prevention was the subject of a profile in the September 5, 2023, issue of *Athletic Business*. For recreation, he and his wife, Gosia, auditioned for *Romeo*

Investigation Prompts New Focus on Cold Case

A recent article by a Buffalo State alumnus has spurred a reinvestigation of the oldest missing-teen cold case in the country.

Rolling Stone magazine published a story on August 5, 2023, by **Eric Greenberg, '78**, about the mysterious disappearance of two teenagers headed to a massive rock concert in Central New York 50 years ago. The fascinating long-form article details the case of Mitchel Weiser and Bonnie Bickwit, two Brooklyn students who vanished while hitchhiking to Summer Jam at Watkins Glen, a concert featuring the Grateful Dead, the Allman Brothers, and the Band that drew an estimated 600,000 fans in July 1973.

The article was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize; it was also named one of the top 20 most engaged stories of 2023 by Chartbeat.

Greenberg has been reporting on the case since 1998. Various leads have filtered in over the years, but no conclusions have been reached as to the couple's fate. Law enforcement agencies have been accused of incompetence, misfeasance, and neglect in relation to the case, which was initially dismissed by local investigators as a hippie runaway case.

As a result of Greenberg's article and an online petition following its publication, New York Governor Kathy Hochul directed the New York State Police to work with the Sullivan County Sheriff's Office and all law enforcement agencies previously involved in the investigation on a renewed effort to solve the case. In addition, U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer has asked the Federal Bureau of Investigation to look into the case, and New York Attorney General Letitia James has endorsed a joint law enforcement initiative to follow up on a series of leads presented in the article.

A graduate of Buffalo State's journalism program, Greenberg received a SUNY honorary doctor of humane letters from the university in 2022.



Edward Robinson, B.A. '72, is fully retired and settled in Japan,

just south of Tokyo, after a 30-year career in the U.S. Navy, Medical Service Corps, followed by a second career in the Foreign Service, where he served as a political and consular officer in Washington, D.C.; Rangoon, Burma (Myanmar); Mumbai, India; and Manila, Philippines.



Ilene Fleischmann, M.A. '73, retired in October after serving 38

years as vice dean and executive director of the UB Law Alumni Association (LAA). She is deeply grateful to all the distinguished lawyers and judges who have supported her over the decades,

especially the many past presidents who continue to support the LAA. She is now vice dean emerita and will continue to work part time on special projects, including the ongoing LAA Oral History Project.

Gerhard Paluca, B.A. '73, retired from his supervisory position in the environmental chemistry section of the Erie County Public Health Lab in August 2023.

Rhonda Backinoff, B.A. '74, notes that an unplanned multi-class Buffalo State reunion took place on the Oceania *Insignia* cruise ship in April 2023. From left: **Mary Jo Mandel Skeet, '62**; **Douglas G. Skeet, '62**;



BACKINOFF

Rhonda Backinoff, '74; **Charles Kaplan, '74**; and **Linda DeVeronica Smith, '78**, enjoyed reminiscing and comparing recollections of their days at Buffalo State!



Frank Lock, B.S. '74, has been selected as an eclipse ambassador for the

Astronomical Society of the Pacific. Each eclipse ambassador will work with an undergraduate partner to inform people in the community about the total solar eclipse that will be visible in North America on April 8, 2024. Undergraduate students and eclipse enthusiasts will engage their local communities, providing solar viewing glasses as well as context for underserved communities off the central path. Lock retired in 2009 after 35 years teaching high school chemistry,

physics, and astronomy. He taught middle school in the Barker Central School District (New York) for five years after graduating from Buffalo State. He then taught in the Charlotte County School District (Florida) until he retired. He has done extensive science outreach since his retirement. He now resides in North Georgia.



Dr. Catherine Collins, B.S. '75, received the Black Achievers Legend's

Award at the 51st annual Black Achievers Awards dinner on September 30, 2023.

Melanie Reim, B.S. '76, retired after 25 years at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City as a professor of illustration in the undergraduate School of Design, an architect and chair of the illustration M.F.A. program in the School of Graduate Studies, and the last four years as the associate dean for the School of Art and Design. Post-retirement, she has just published her first monograph, *Different & the Same: My Drawings and Stories of Women around the World*, published by Sketcher Press. Her work appeared as part of the Rockefeller Center Flag Project, and she exhibited in the group show *Scribbles* at Carter Burden Gallery in Chelsea. She continues to travel to deliver figure-drawing workshops.

Michael Sorenson, B.A. '76, retired after 43 years as a journalist. He is spending time on his genealogy hobby and following the careers of his daughter and son, a TV show editor and a college ice hockey coach, respectively.



Brian McCarthy, B.Tech '79, notes that Buffalo State and Alfred ag

tech degrees launched him on a great career path and created great memories and friendships. He is now enjoying retirement.

ROTH



Leo Roth, B.A. '79, retired in May 2020 after a 41-year career as a sportswriter and columnist in Cleveland and Rochester. His work was honored numerous times by the Pro Football Writers of America and the New York State Associated Press. He covered the Buffalo Bills for the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*. In retirement, he is the owner-operator of Finger Lakes Pontoon Boat Tours LLC in Watkins Glen, where he gives cruises on Seneca Lake. He is also head coach of the SUNY Geneseo men's club hockey team and frequently visits his dear hometown of Buffalo (leospontoonboat.com).

80s



Michael McManus, B.A. '80, retired from NBC after 42 years. The skills learned at Buffalo State were influential in his advancing from security guard to digital production supervisor, winning six Emmy Awards along the way. His credits as

videotape operator include *Letterman, The Tonight Show, Today, Nightly News, and Dateline*. He's traveled the country for NBC Sports covering NBA Finals, World Series, and Super Bowls, and traveled the world covering the Olympic Games. None of it would have been possible without the unwavering support of his wife of 34 years, Maureen, and his children, Patrick, Margaret, and Timothy.

Pictures Generation Reunion

A group of Buffalo State alumni from the famed Pictures Generation gathered on June 28 in New York City at the book launch party for *The Pictures Generation at Hallwalls: Traces of the Body, Gender, and History* (Routledge, 2023) by Vera Dika.

The Pictures Generation in American art refers to a group of young artists who came of age in the early 1970s. The Metropolitan Museum of Art notes that the group brought a "return to recognizable imagery, exploring how images shape our perceptions of ourselves and the world." Several former Buffalo State students were at the forefront of this movement, which had strong ties to Buffalo and New York City.

Larry Lundy, '78, attended the June gathering and reported that the group enjoyed celebrating "the energy created by an amazing creative universe that existed then at CEPA, Media Study, Galleries 229 and 219 (University at Buffalo), Hallwalls, and the Albright-Knox, as well as so many artists, film and video makers, musicians, performance folks, and writers who were living in Buffalo at the time."



FROM LEFT: JOHN MAGGIOTTO, KEVIN NOBLE, CHARLES CLOUGH, ROBERT LONGO, '76, VERA DIKA, NANCY DWYER, AND LARRY LUNDY, '78
CINDY SHERMAN AND CHARLES CLOUGH



Mark H. Mushkin, B.Tech '80, writes, "While I'm sad to report

the passing of a long-term friend and fellow Buff State BET 1980 graduate, John J. Monaco, here's a great story of how we met: We both were students in the bachelor of engineering technology curriculum, with plans to graduate in May 1980. While we knew each other, we really never talked. But one day in our Microwave Electronics class, the professor linked us together to work on a senior project. We made it through, though we parted ways after graduation. While I was traveling cross-country for my new job at Hewlett-Packard Company in Northern California, I found myself in line at Universal Studios (Hollywood, California) next to John! Once we compared notes, we found we both accepted engineering jobs with HP... on the same start day, in the same location, and on the same team! That was in 1980, and we remained close friends ever since...over 40 years! Unfortunately, John became ill early in 2022 and passed away in November 2022. We loved telling people that story, as it all started at Buff State!"

Christopher Connelly, B.A. '81, writes, "I am retired and worked for 30 years for ECMC hospital. I am involved in volunteer work at FeedMore and Lothlorien Therapeutic Riding Center. I have been married for 35 years to



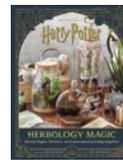
Mauri Coover, B.S. '81, B.S. '84, writes, "I retired from the Buffalo School District in 2018 after the loss of my only child, Laurel Hope, at age 23 from an accidental overdose. She had an infected tooth pulled and bought two pills that she thought were Lortab painkillers but were pure fentanyl. The pain of her loss was excruciating. I will never "get over it," but in the five years since her death, I have built up my personal "coping tool kit" to navigate the strange, painful new reality of my life living with a broken heart. In 2019, I flew to Portland, Oregon, to be trained by the Dougy Center, the National Grief Center for Children and Families, based on the Dougy model of peer facilitators. COVID-19 postponed my plans to open the center in 2020-2021. Great news! I have a great board of directors, and we are excited to announce Laurel's Love Center for Grief and Hope, an all-volunteer peer- and trauma-informed grief center offering support and a safe compassionate place for children, families, and adults to process and navigate their pain from loss of a loved one. We will be training volunteers to be peer facilitators to support children and families in February and March 2024."

Margaret Griffin, who truly is a saint for putting up with me all these years."



Dennis Caldwell, B.S. '84, M.S. '86, taught special education (Office

of Vocational Rehabilitation) for 25 years at the Attica Correctional Facility after retiring from the Marine Corps. He has been married for 54 years and has two kids and four grandkids. He transports kids to the Shriners Hospital in Erie, Pennsylvania, as a pastime.



Jim Charlier, B.S. '84, co-wrote *Harry Potter: Herbology Magic*, which

was released in September 2023. The book is published by Insight Editions of California and was created in collaboration with Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. Charlier is an award-winning designer, photographer, writer, artist, garden blogger, and owner of JCharlier Design, a graphic design studio in Buffalo. He is a garden art and tourism speaker; current board member of the Buffalo & Erie County Botanical Gardens; current board member of Gardens Buffalo Niagara; past president of Garden Walk Buffalo, America's largest garden tour; past vice president of Frank Lloyd Wright's Graycliff; past president of the Art Directors Club of Buffalo; and the coauthor of *Buffalo Style Gardens: Create a Quirky, One-of-a-Kind Private Garden with Eye-Catching Designs*. He is married to **Leslie (Adams) Charlier, '84.**



Eugene Alexander Peters, B.S. '84, M.S.Ed. '88,

is a newly appointed member of the Buffalo State Foundation Board. Having recently retired as a 25-plus-year higher education professional at SUNY Farmingdale State College, he is the founder of SANKOFA Educational & Exhibition Consultants, an educational resource company based in New York City, focused on African American history education. He is also the immediate past board president of the Schomburg Corporation (an advisory affiliate of the New York Public Library Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture) and a life member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc.

GOT NEWS?

Keep us informed.

Class Notes

Alumni Engagement Office
LoRusso Alumni and Visitor Center

Buffalo State University
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Buffalo, NY 14222

Fax (716) 878-6050
alumni@buffalostate.edu

Marty Stanford, B.S. '84, a 36-year veteran of state and federal law enforcement, was appointed chief of investigations for the Western Region of the Offices of the Inspector General by New York State Inspector General Lucy Lang. A lifelong resident of Western New York and a graduate of Cleveland Hill High School in Cheektowaga, Stanford began his distinguished career with the United States Customs Service, where he served as a customs inspector before being promoted to the position of intelligence officer for the Port of Buffalo. Stanford would go on to become a senior special agent with the Customs Service, a role in which he was called upon to participate in investigation and recovery activities at Ground Zero following the terrorist attacks of 2001. Stanford, who is a commercial pilot, also spent a year conducting air operations for the Customs Service. Since joining the Offices of the Inspector General in 2019, Stanford has spearheaded several significant investigations into thefts, frauds, and other malfeasance committed by state employees and against the state. He and his wife, Sue, to whom he has been married for over 35 years, reside in Erie County and are the proud parents of four children.



Gerald Mead, B.A. '85, B.S. '86, was invited to serve as the honorary

advisory board chair of the West Seneca School District Academy of Visual Arts and was appointed to the Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center's Art Committee.



Glenda Noel-Ney, B.S. '85, has been named director of development

for the Folger Shakespeare Library. Noel-Ney is a proven leader in the arts with more than 30 years of experience in fundraising, strategic planning, and team building. Before joining the Folger, she worked as a consultant with the Arts Consulting Group, collaborating on projects for the Newark Museum of Art, the Association of Performing Arts Professionals, and Bucks County Playhouse. Before that, she was vice president of advancement at Bethune-Cookman University, a private historically black university in Daytona Beach, Florida. Her professional experience also includes service as director of principal gifts at Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York and vice president of advancement at the Overture Center for the Arts in Madison, Wisconsin. As development director for the Wisconsin Union at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, she raised \$25 million for the historic union's restoration. Earlier in her career, she was manager of the philanthropic program at American Express in New York and assistant director of the Institute of African American Affairs at New York University. Noel-Ney earned a bachelor of science in business studies with a concentration in management and marketing from Buffalo State. She served on the advisory board of the Romare Bearden Foundation, the Simpson Street Free Press board, and the Wisconsin Arts Board, and as a cultural affairs commission member for Dane Arts in Wisconsin.



Rev. Bruce Burton, B.S. '87, M.S. '97, was newly installed as senior pastor

of Mt. Zion Progressive Missionary Baptist Church in Rochester, New York, on October 16, 2023. He retired in June 2019 from the Buffalo Public Schools as a social studies teacher after serving brilliant students for 32 years.



Ingrid Neuman, M.A. '87, is completing her 16th year working in

the art conservation department at the RISD Museum in Providence, Rhode Island. There she enjoys teaching the undergraduate students all about art conservation. She partners with Brown University on another course titled The Chemistry of Art. Several of her students are currently pursuing advanced degrees in art conservation, which is very gratifying. She is also starting her 22nd year teaching in the graduate Museum Studies Department, which is part of the School of Professional Studies at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts, where she teaches the course Collections Care and Preventive Conservation. She says the graduate art conservation program at Buffalo State was an amazing opportunity for lifelong learning.



Karl Shallowhorn, B.A. '87, M.S. '98, has a radio program, *Mindful Music*, that premiered in spring 2023 on WBFO-FM 88.7 in Buffalo.



Scott Feltrinelli, B.A. '88, notes that at Buffalo State, he

was a participant in student government representing the College Commuter Council and was also captain of the Rugby Football Club. He recently retired in 2020 after a 30-year career as a manager in the pharmaceutical industry. He lived and worked in the New York City area during most of his career and traveled the world chasing big fish with a fly rod on his days off. He has authored several articles published in some of the largest outdoor publications in the country. He is an appointee to the NYSDEC Fisheries Management and Research Group and much more. He is busier in retirement than he was during his career and owes it all to his educational experience at Buffalo State.

Lynn Hugenschmidt, B.S. '88, has been married to her husband, Russ, for 26 years, and they have three children. She is currently an assistant vice president at



HSBC Bank in Buffalo. She has many fond memories and long-lasting

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friendships from her college years at Buffalo State. Her daughter, Jenna, an early childhood and special education major, is a senior at Buffalo State and one of the leaders on the women's volleyball team for the last three years. Hugenschmidt writes, "It's been great being back on the beautiful campus watching her matches and tournaments in one of the best sports arenas in the SUNYAC! Her team also made the playoffs the past three years, so that's been exciting!"



Alexandra Zamor, B.S. '89, armed with a degree from Buffalo State, first

worked at the National Basketball Association as a marketing assistant. She then worked at Uptown Records in the 1990s, which was her springboard to a career in the music industry. She worked at RCA Records when it first launched the Wu-Tang Clan. After many years at RCA, she worked as a Northeast regional promotion manager and as director of marketing for Virgin Urban Division. After 15 years in the music business, she worked at American Express in trade-show sales for seven years. Now she works as a sales representative for a Warren Buffet-owned company called Empire Distributors. She believes part of her success was due to a strong business foundation at Buffalo State.



Sherry Rosso, B.A. '90, moved west shortly after graduating from Buffalo

State. For the past 30 years, she has been happily married to Marc Rosso, living in the San Francisco Bay Area. They have two sons, one in college and one a graduating high school senior. Her career began in the art field, working to relocate the Castellani Art Museum to the main Niagara University campus, before she moved to California. Since then, she has been a corporate paralegal, a public librarian, and now an educator, teaching public secondary college prep English 1 & 2 for the Dublin Unified School District. Before teaching, she spent many years giving back to her community through school and government volunteering, building an elementary school garden, and serving on her city's Library Advisory Committee, redesigning the city's new library building and establishing a story walk. She is a writer and member of SCBWI Northern California. She enjoys being a teacher and mentoring future writers. She values the education she received at Buffalo State and has fond memories from that time.

Schuyler A. Banks, B.S. '92, is an assistant professor in SUNY Erie's business administration program who is helping shape Erie County's next generation of business professionals

with the kind of long-term commitment to student excellence and community that changes lives. As a Buffalo State alumnus, he also brings common ground and an example of where a SUNY education can take you. His degree in business studies laid the foundation for a fruitful career.

Claudine Ewing, B.A. '92, has been named lead anchor for WGRZ-TV's 5:30 p.m. newscast, *Channel 2 News at 5:30*.



Venessa Garcia, B.A. '92, is an associate professor of criminal

justice at New Jersey City University, specializing in women and criminal justice as well as crime and the media. After presenting her research at the 2022 NGO CSW 66 Forum, the civil society forum of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, she published her work in the *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*. Garcia has published several peer-reviewed research articles and books in her field.

John Olszowka, M.A. '92, was recently appointed associate vice president of strategic initiatives at Mercyhurst University.

William Asklar, B.S. '93, had a few teaching jobs before moving to Ithaca, New York, in 1998. He has been teaching English at Ithaca High School ever since.

Craig Howard, B.A. '94, notes that after a number of emails in the summer of 2021 with his former advisor at Buffalo State, Professor Emeritus George Hole, he made the hard decision to change his family's lives. A year later, in July 2022, his family moved to Tokyo, where he took a position as an associate professor of education at International Christian University. He now teaches the design of online learning in English for graduate students and in Japanese for undergraduates. His children are close to their grandparents and are being educated bilingually in Japanese and English. He is at the forefront of leading Japan's only bilingual university to compete with the world's larger institutions in online education. Howard said that 29 years after he graduated from Buffalo State, a conversation with a faculty member helped him make the most of his life and take big strides that he would have otherwise been too afraid to take.



Gretchen Pepper, B.S. '95, has been living in Vermont for the last 25

years with her family. After graduation, she worked as a graphic designer for several years. After moving to Vermont, she fell in love with the outdoors and ended up taking her career in a different direction. She went back to school and took classes in greenhouse management

and landscape design, and many years ago, started her own business called Gardens by Gretchen. Pepper now designs, maintains, and cares for residential and commercial gardens. She said her time at Buffalo State gave her the experience and courage to head out on her own and find a truly rewarding, fulfilling job.



Christine Marrano, M.S. '98, has been named chief human resources

officer at Goldberg Segalla. Her duties entail enterprise-wide HR operations, including talent and total rewards management, employee engagement and retention, payroll, DEI, learning and development, and regulatory oversight. Before working at Evergreen Health, she was with M&T Securities Inc. for eight years, during which time she obtained her master of science in adult education with a concentration in human resource management from Buffalo State. She is also very involved in the Buffalo community, serving on the agency board of directors for Crisis Services and as an advisory board member for the West Seneca Central Schools Finance Academy. She also recently joined the Westminster Economic Development Initiative as a business mentor. Since 2009, she has been a wish grantor for the Make-a-Wish Foundation of Western New York. Marrano is a graduate of the State University of New York at Fredonia, obtaining

her bachelor of science in business administration. She also holds professional certifications from Leadership Buffalo, the Buffalo Niagara Partnership Diversity and Inclusion Academy, and the Society of Human Resource Management Certification (SHRM-CP) and is a certified leadership facilitator with the Development Dimensions Institute and a certified facilitator with the Crisis Prevention Institute.



Scott A. Zepowitz, B.S. '98, has been named to the 2023 Chairman's

Council of New York Life. He is a financial professional with ROI Financial Group, which is associated with New York Life's Buffalo-Erie General Office. His commitment and outstanding performance were recognized with multiple accolades, including a nomination for the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors 2014 Rookie of the Year award. He earned the prestigious title of New Org Agent of the Year for the Buffalo-Erie General Office of New York Life (NYL) in both 2014 and 2016, as well as Buffalo-Erie Office Established Agent of the Year for 2023. His journey of success continues with his contributions as an NYL Executive Council member since 2015. His unwavering commitment to his clients' financial well-being was acknowledged through the NYL Long-Term Care Award,

a distinction he consistently received for the Buffalo-Erie General Office from 2017 to 2019. His achievements further extend to his membership in the esteemed Million Dollar Round Table since 2020. His academic foundation includes a bachelor of arts in business from Buffalo State. He finds balance in family life, residing in Buffalo with his wife, Allison, and their two sons.



Daniel Meyer, B.A. '99, was recently appointed to the board of directors of

Plants for a Purpose, a newly founded nonprofit organization in Western New York that offers free yard work services to the elderly, people with disabilities, and anyone facing a major life crisis.

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Mona Abdulla, B.A. '00, M.S. '07, received her B.A. and M.S. from Buffalo

State. Her past experiences include working in the private and public sectors. Highlights include serving two terms as a school board member for the Lackawanna City School District. She is also the co-director of the Care Management Coalition of WNY, an alliance of 10 nonprofit organizations on the East Side of Buffalo. Outside of work, she volunteers with a national organization called the Arab

America Foundation. She has received several awards, including the Arab America's national Emerging Leader Award and the Buffalo Lafayette High School Agent of Change Award. She has two sons who are in their early 20s.

ROBERTS



Jamie Roberts, B.S. '02, notes that the support and guidance of her professors in the Buffalo State Design Department made a significant impact on her and gave her the knowledge to confidently begin her creative career shortly after graduation in 2002. After 20 years in the design and advertising industry, she decided it was time to pay it forward and leave her role as senior creative director to launch her creative career-coaching business, Rock That Creative Job. She now works with all levels of creative professionals across the globe to ensure they have the personalized support they need to thrive in their careers. She also delivers live keynote speeches, virtual talks, webinars, guest lectures, and Q&A panel discussions to organizations and universities across the globe, including AIGA (USA), RGD (Canada), and TernHeads (UK). She also hosts a weekly *Rock That Creative Job*

podcast and offers online courses to ensure that all creatives can get the help they need, no matter where they are in their careers. She would like to extend her heartfelt gratitude to Buffalo State faculty emeriti Richard Ross, Jim Astrella, Stan Friesen, and the late Rand Schuster for their dedication, patience, and knowledge.



Therese Fuerst, M.S. '03, has been appointed to the newly created

executive team role of chief marketing and development officer for BestSelf Behavioral Health. She holds a B.A. in pre-law/political science and communication studies from Canisius College and an M.S. in public relations management from Buffalo State. She is also a graduate of the University at Buffalo's Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership in the Allstate Minority and Women Emerging Entrepreneurs Program. She currently runs a consulting practice and is a faculty member in the Communication Department at Buffalo State. She has proudly served on BestSelf's Foundation Board and on the Capital Campaign Committee for the Child Advocacy Center. Her many awards and honors include the 2019 May C. Randazzo Outstanding Practitioner Award from the Buffalo Niagara Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America, the 2020 SUNY Buffalo State

University Communication Department Professional Achievement Award, the 2021 Buffalo State College Community Engagement Award for Service Learning, the inaugural Amherst Chamber of Commerce Young Professional of the Year Award, and the *Business First* 40 Under 40 Award. She was a finalist for the Athena Young Professional of the Year Award and is a graduate of Leadership Buffalo. An active community member, she volunteers her time with several community, civic, and professional organizations including Canisius University, Nardin Academy, the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County, the BISON Fund, and the Public Relations Society of America (Buffalo Niagara Chapter and National Chapter).



Loni Blandford, B.A. '04, is a senior corporate recruiter for Nexstar

Media Group. She joined the recruiting team after serving as news director for Nexstar's WDTN in Dayton, Ohio, for almost five years. She has held management positions at stations in Indianapolis and Las Vegas. She got her start in the industry as a news producer. She married her fiancé this summer in Aruba.

BROWN



Wayne Brown, M.S. '04, opened a new behavioral health group therapy practice, Willow Grove Counseling in Cheektowaga, New York. A practicing therapist, he plans to provide the community with the highest-quality mental health services from nine therapists, as well as group therapy services, when the office is fully established.

Brian Dubenion, B.A. '05, M.S. '08, was recognized as an outstanding alumus by the higher education and student affairs administration graduate program at Buffalo State. He currently serves as associate vice president and dean of students at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, the nation's first degree-granting historically Black university (HBCU). Before joining LU, he served at Buffalo State and Ithaca College. Dubenion has been recognized with several distinctions as a student and a professional, including the Buffalo State President's Medal for Outstanding Graduate Student. He was also selected to participate in NASPA's inaugural class for its prestigious Ujima Institute and recently served as a panelist at the White House for mental health and HBCUs.



Laurian Kidd, B.S. '05, is a fifth-grade teacher for the New York City

Department of Education. She has been a teacher for 16 years. She has also helped adults obtain their general equivalency diplomas (GEDs) as well as taught English language learners.



Dave Hartzell, B.S. '06, wrote for the *Record* newspaper, was a member of

Phi Kappa Tau Fraternity, volunteered for the big brother/special needs program, and even briefly served as the mascot while at Buffalo State. He was a member of the water polo club team as well as the men's cross-country team, making it all the way to the SUNYAC Regionals. He worked his way through school, mainly via the on-campus groundskeeping department and Pano's and Cecelia's restaurants. After graduating in 2006 with a degree in international business, he was accepted to the University of Geneva's International M.B.A. program. He deferred and enlisted in the U.S. Navy, graduating SEAL training (BUD/S) with class 268 in San Diego, California, in 2008. After the Navy, he launched a detective agency in 2015, focusing on white-collar crime, including a high-profile case and subsequent conviction of a Hollywood con artist. This work caught the attention of a group of financiers in Los Angeles. Hartzell eventually earned his FINRA Series 7

and 63 securities licenses and now trades pre-IPO stock for Park Lane, a boutique sports investment bank in Santa Monica, California. He currently resides in Southern California but is a lifelong Bills fan.



Tamara Parker, B.S. '06, graduated with a bachelor's degree in

graphic design and a minor in creative studies. Currently, she owns her own business, TMP Signs, producing signs and vinyl graphics in Corfu, New York. Last year, she earned an award for Polish American Business Owner of the Year. She currently lives in Corfu with her two children. Her daughter, Cameron, is 20, and her son, Patrick, is 16. She looks forward to the new year and growing her business (www.tmpsigns.com).



Sarah Waltz, B.S. '06, M.S. '20, recently relocated to Greenville County,

South Carolina, after serving in the Maryvale School District as coordinator for the 21st Century Title 1 after-school program. She is currently teaching in Greenville County serving underprivileged students at a Title 1 school. She is also entering her third year as a Teachers Pay Teachers entrepreneur at Sarah Waltz Education.

Alums Help Reopen Buffalo AKG Art Museum

Buffalo State alumni—including Buffalo Mayor **Byron W. Brown, '83**, former U.S. Representative **Brian Higgins, '85**, and entrepreneur **Aitina Fareed-Cooke, '12, '16**—were on the dais for the ribbon-cutting ceremony to reopen the Buffalo AKG Art Museum on June 12. Buffalo State's across-the-street neighbor on Elmwood Avenue underwent a nearly \$200 million four-year campuswide construction and renovation project, highlighted by the new three-story, glass-encased Gundlach Building.



WAULDON



Gwaina D. Wauldon, B.S. '07, joined the Connecticut law firm Pullman & Comley as an associate in the areas of education law and labor and employment practices.

named the May C. Randazzo Outstanding Practitioner by the Public Relations Society of America Buffalo Niagara Chapter. Manne was also part of the UB School of Management team that won three Excalibur Awards. The Randazzo Award is given to a Western New York public relations professional who has achieved exceptional professional success, displays the highest ethics, and is dedicated to serving the community and profession. The recipient must demonstrate excellence in achievement, application, reputation, ethics, service to PRSA, and community service.



Kevin Manne, B.A. '08, associate director of communications in

the University at Buffalo School of Management, was

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Henry Zomerfeld, B.A. '11, received the 2023 Rising Champion for Justice Award from the Erie County Bar Association's Volunteer Lawyers Project. The award recognizes individuals who are committed to providing pro bono legal services. Most recently, he represented a family from Afghanistan in obtaining permanent residency status in the U.S. after fleeing their homeland when the Taliban regained control. Zomerfeld is a senior associate at Hodgson Russ LLP in the firm's Buffalo office.

HICKS



Mario Hicks, B.A. '09, has been appointed vice president for institutional advancement at Daemen University. An accomplished fundraising professional with a decade of experience, Hicks previously served as vice president of financial development at the YMCA Buffalo Niagara, securing \$1.4 million annually for YMCA programs and families. Hicks also led the YMCA's current \$25 million campaign. Before the YMCA, he served in advancement positions leading both annual and leadership giving efforts at UNYTS (now ConnectLife), Buffalo State College, and Trocaire College. He holds fundraising certifications from Boston University and the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. Hicks received his bachelor's degree in English from Buffalo State University, an M.B.A. from the University of New Haven, and a doctorate in business management from George Fox University. He also holds a graduate certificate in public management from Buffalo State.



ZOMERFELD



Sharifa Johnson, B.S. '13, received her bachelor's degree in health and wellness from Buffalo State and her master's degree in applied nutrition from Canisius College. She has worked in the health and wellness industry for over 10 years, serving in several roles, including a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) diabetes prevention coach, a health educator, a wellness coach, and most recently, a nutrition research support specialist at the University at Buffalo. She created a health podcast, now known as *The Mental Health Diet*, during the start of the pandemic as a way to help people overcome anxiety and depression. After three years, the podcast was broadcast on the FAM TV Plus App, Channel VP 1006.



Andrea Wright, B.S. '13, B.A. '13, is happy to announce that she has just taken a job with the DCPCS school system as a math coach. She is also working on her Ph.D. and will graduate in 2024.



Shantel Coleman, B.S. '14, M.S. '19, has been working as a public relations specialist at the Martin Group for over a year. She has assisted with the Super Bowls in Phoenix (LVII), Los Angeles (LVI), Tampa (LV), Miami (LIV), and Atlanta (LIII). She was also a teammate at the 2023 NFL Draft and a media assistant at the 2023 Hula Bowl. She obtained Front Office Sports' NIL (Name, Image, Likeness) Certification in 2022 and was a member of the 2021 cohort of the Marcus Graham Project Sports Marketing Workshop by the Washington Wizards. She also had the opportunity to assist at the 2022 NBA All-Star Weekend. She has become an avid traveler and loves to explore new places. She said it has been a blessing to be a part of the action and working in public relations and media.



Brian Punch-Eastman, B.S. '15, married his college sweetheart, **Chevagne McAlmont-Winston, B.S. '15, M.S. '18**, who works in the Buffalo State Admissions Office. The couple moved into their first home with an 8-year-old pit bull mix named Snickers and most recently fostered a dog from Texas named Zero.



Breanna Rodriguez, B.S. '15, met her husband freshman year (January 2012) in Perry Hall. The two started dating shortly thereafter and got engaged in May 2021 in Central Park in New York City. They got married last year, in May 2022, in Putnam County, New York. She said the two would never have met if not for Buffalo State.



Amy Smith, B.S. '15, has explored various teaching opportunities in the Western New York area since graduating from Buffalo State. In 2019, she received her master's in school librarianship, and she is now a school librarian for the Orchard Park Central School District. She married her husband in October, with many Buffalo State friends in attendance.

Michael Smith, B.S. '15, is currently working as a certified exercise physiologist. He is also enrolled at Liberty University in the master of science in exercise science and wellness program.



Miranda Galligan, B.S. '16, obtained her bachelor's degree from Buffalo State College in 2016, followed by a master's degree from Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College. Acquiring the necessary experience to become a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW), she eventually established her own private practice, Attune Therapy, which specializes in providing comprehensive psychotherapy services. Her practice offers assistance with a wide range of mental health conditions, such as trauma, life transitions, depression, and anxiety. With a commitment to compassionate care and evidence-based approaches, the team strives to empower individuals and guide them toward improved well-being. She is deeply grateful to Buffalo State for providing her with the exceptional education that has played a vital role in shaping her journey and contributing to where she is today.

KLEIN (SECOND FROM LEFT)



Daniel Klein, B.S. '16, B.S. '18, got a job after graduation as a resident teacher at the West Buffalo Charter School. In the 2019–2020 academic year, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, he moved back downstate to help his parents while working remotely. The following school year, he started as a building substitute teacher at J.V. Forrestal Elementary in Beacon, New York. The next year, he moved to Brooklyn, where he has most recently worked with fifth and third grades. He thanks Buffalo State and the wonderful education departments on campus.



Jacob Sandler, B.Mus. '16, earned a master of sacred

music from the Jewish Theological Seminary and has been ordained as a hazzan (cantor). He now lives in Highland Park, Illinois, where he serves on the senior clergy team of North Suburban Synagogue Beth El, a major Conservative movement synagogue and spiritual home to about 1,000 Jewish family units. Sandler has been able to serve his community leading prayer services, holiday programming, and educational opportunities for all ages

(2–102), creating opportunities for music of all kinds. He feels so fortunate to be using his vocal, pedagogic, and ethnomusicological skills regularly.



Melzie Case, B.Mus. '17, M.M. '19, is in her seventh year teaching chorus and

general music at Batavia Middle School. In March 2023, she was inducted into the Batavia City School District Musicians of Note Hall of Fame. She is also in her first year as the Music Department chairperson for the Batavia Central School District.



Lori Consola, B.A. '17, was married on October 22, 2022.

Terron Grant, B.S. '17, was a panelist at the Diversity in Commercial Real Estate Conference hosted at Columbia University in July.



GRANT



Darra Kubera, M.S. '18, and Brian Gould were married on June 24,

2023, in the courtyard at the Mansion on Delaware in Buffalo. Kubera earned a master's degree in public relations from Buffalo State. She works as the director of communications for FOS of CannonDesign. Gould works as a development and operations (DevOps) engineer for FedEx Logistics. The couple celebrated with a honeymoon in France.

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Chrisjarvell Adams, B.S. '21, obtained an M.B.A. in human resource

management in October after completing an intensive one-year program. At Buffalo State, he gained the Newman Fellowship Award and recognition for serving as chair of the Student

Welfare Committee. He hopes to be able to lead his own nonprofit organization soon while also working as an advocate for diversity and inclusion.



Kim Zanti, M.S. '21, notes that as a direct result of learning in Buffalo

State's creativity and change leadership graduate program, her personal relationships have improved, including family. The program helped her break through perceived and real barriers to accomplish long-held goals. She finished the first draft of a novel and made a short documentary about creative placemaking, which continues to gain traction at film festivals, at conferences, and in classrooms. She accepted a position, which required a cross-country move, and her use of creative problem solving (CPS) and creative thinking skills (CTS) made for a smooth transition. She is now using CPS/CTS to train her team. Learning at Buffalo State has improved every part of her life.



Najum Khushik, M.S. '23, writes, "Attending the 2023 graduation

Commencement in Buffalo was truly exciting and amazing. Grateful for the fantastic

arrangements and warm welcome by the International Graduate Program for Educators team—Brandon, Catherine, Kera, and Dr. Alicia. Currently, I am a high school physics teacher at Vision International School in Qatar, concurrently pursuing a doctorate in education. Exciting times ahead!"

Stay connected with Buffalo State anytime, anywhere.



1940–1949

Marjorie (Gottlieb) Liberman, '41
Genevieve M. (Abrams) Steffen, '42
John Duncan Armstrong Jr., '43
Ruthada (Epstein-Clark) Hummel, '43, '62
Mary (Clark) Nevalls, '44
Nancy K. (Hedley) Jones, '45
Dorothy R. (Mierzwa) Pieniadz, '45 🌸
Helen L. (Gridley) (Francisco) Tobey, '45
Mary Jane (Holland) Armstrong, '46
Marcella (Tatu) Kingston, '47
Loretta R. (Schelble) West, '47
Rosemarie (Marchese) Guarracini, '48, '53
Mary Ann (Wawrzycki) Lucas, '48
Joseph J. Kilmer, '49
Mary V. (Heinold) Lathrop, '49
Helen Dolores (Gamble) Wheeler, '49

1950–1959

Virginia (Havens) Barrett, '50
Phyllis (Raffauf) Klemp, '50, '64
Earl Samuel McCullough, '50
Margaret (Kupfer) Wickham, '50
Stanley Howard Freeman, '51
Joan M. (Flavin) Godfrey, '51, '53
Evelyn G. (Oliver) Miller, '51
John Wekerle, '51
Joseph A. Carnevale, '52
Dolores E. (Goodian) Cushman, '52
Beverly (Landphair) Holmes, '52, '73
Christine (Hoto) Longyear, '52
Robert K. Nonenmacher, '52, '60
Mary (Schneggenburger) O'Shei, '52
Josephine M. (Ciampa) Giordano, '53
Gloria P. Kamm, '53
Frederick Edward Lesswing, '53
Claire Marie (Metzger) Wiest, '53
Beatrice E. (Neudeck) Williams, '53, '63
William Edward Boa, '54
William J. Boudreau, '54, '65
Robert Verner Carlson, '54
Reverend Kenneth H. Kolbe, '54
David W. Parish, '54
Rita (Hurliman) Wells, '54, '59
Nancy (Halloran) Centra, '55
Jane Harriett (Walburg) Cudney, '55, '77
Anna C. Devaney, '55
John F. Field, '55
Ellen (Mead) Garvey, '55

Doris (Schrader) Hall, '55
Daniel R. Kumiega, '55
Janet E. (Popp) Stout, '55, '60
Elaine R. (Munter) Baren, '56
Sharon (Meegan) Burke, '56
Gretchen (Schillke) Carpenter, '56
Arlene J. (Jankowski) Christiansen, '56
Marjorie Marion (Hickey) Dworakowski, '56
Margaret Lorraine (Julian) Faircloth, '56
Ginevra (Evans) Forbes, '56
Margaret (Gallagher) Keeney, '56
Carolyn L. (Verner) Marion, '56
Barbara Anne (Ernst) Plezia, '56
Gerald Francis Rooney, '56, '63
Janet E. (Frick) Russell, '56
Robert C. Schuler, '56, '63
Jacqueline L. (Ryan) Smith, '56
Richard R. Wiegert, '56
Kathleen Patricia (O'Rourke) Hennig, '57
Janet Mae (MacFarlane) Peterson-Sterling, '57
Barbara Ann (Jakiel) Whalen, '57
Thomas W. Geerin, '58
John F. Hanssel, '58, '61
Robert N. Jones, '58, '61
Judith (Simon) Mestman, '58
Harold H. Roeder, '58, '64
Barbara Ann (Tomaka) Huber, '59
Mary Ann (Abate) Jamieson, '59, '63
Edith J. (Dale) Lewin, '59
Johnnie Mae (Bolden) Mayo, '59, '70
Philip E. Russo, '59
Millicent U. (Gerbracht) Tonner, '59, '65

1960–1969

Robert Delano Battles, '60, '62
Genevieve (Seibert) Boniface, '60
Richard W. Catlin, '60
Sharon R. (Kornaker) Clifford, '60
Nicholas J. D'Innocenzo, '60
Anne M. Murphy, '60
Robert A. Rothman, '60
Arthur C. Shilen Jr., '60, '63
Kenneth L. Haley, '61, '71
Edgar J. Hollwedel, '61 🌸
Karen L. (Joynt) Lucachik, '61
John Warner Misch, '61
Lee R. Thomas, '61
Harold F. Boniface, '62

Robert J. Devito, '62
Margaret Duggan, '62
Jacqueline L. (Harper) Giorgini, '62
Robert P. Giorgini, '62
Mary E. (Kettle) Heath, '62
Norman S. Pawlak, '62
Bonnie (Bitner) (Lombardo) Wells, '62
Gail (Smith) Wheaton, '62
Kenneth W. Gubala, '63, '67
Ulysses John Kontos, '63, '68 🌸
Jeanette (Garwol) Lenczyk, '63, '66
Virginia (Kiezbak) Patwardhan, '63, '69
Bruce R. Burrigge, '64
John M. Ganci Sr., '64
Patricia Lynn (Griswold) Heise, '64
Victor Walter Kaczynski, '64
Linda R. (Villa) Nareau, '64
James J. Prise, '64
Maury B. (McFee) Davidson, '65
Irving William Dehn Jr., '65
Linda R. (Millard) Heinike, '65, '68
Patricia Ann (Pender) Hetzinger, '65, '72
Robert W. Petrie, '65, '66
Ernest Thomas Bettcher, '66
Jo Ann Betty Casel, '66, '68
Suzanne L. Derylak, '66
Barbara Ann (Inzalaco) Gassman, '66
Donna A. (Senia) Gubala, '66, '74
Henry Amadalo Mulindi, '66
Ruth D. (Zorker) Rados, '66
Marylenn (Spohn) Weston, '66
Richard William Degnan, '67
Elza C. (Zorich) Hyrick, '67, '72
Ann M. (Rademacher) Rothmyer, '67
Glenda Gene (Gibbs) Smyers, '67
Bruce Grasmeyer, '68
Angello E. Pefanis, '68, '76
Sheila (Elliott) Ryczek, '68
George D. Struebel, '68
Joseph F. Toczec, '68
Jeanette R. (Rose) Wojcik, '68
Douglas J. Carstens, '69
Thomas J. Connor, '69
Kristin M. (Goltz) Nazaret, '69
Dennis J. Parisi, '69
Rosemary Catherine (Montalbano) Roberts, '69
Sally A. (Birmingham) Thimmayya, '69

1970–1979

Dominic E. Gaetano, '70
Keith E. Geering, '70
Robert C. Morris, '70
Paula Marie Notarthomas, '70
Thomas R. Anthony, '71, '73
Brenda C. Brown-Tillett, '71
Mary Lou Courtright, '71
Catherine L. (Troicke) Greene, '71
Mary Raymond Kasprzak, '71
Ralph J. Maier, '71
Jeffery P. McLimans, '71
Anne A. (Glebocki) Nicastro, '71, '96
Elizabeth L. (Ditmars) Prosser, '71
Harry Thaxton III, '71
Stanley J. Amrozowicz, '72
Charles H. Friedmann, '72
Karen Grace (Frauenheim) Genrich, '72
Alvin R. Kalicki, '72, '75
Robert Terragnoli, '72
Julie Urich, '72
Bruce Alan Van Tassell, '72
John Williams Jr., '72, '79
Forrest S. Bazan, '73, '77
Ganesh L. Bhatia, '73
Cynthia F. (Wilczynski) Diaz, '73
Dwight Michael Jemison, '73
Rona Lee Knobel, '73, '78 🌸
Albert S. Kurek, '73
Gregory James Lago, '73
Ronald J. Piwko, '73
Gerald G. Schmidt, '73
Donald M. Sokolowski, '73
David Ray Colkitt, '74
Ronald John Dell, '74
Ronald E. Dybalski, '74
Roberta M. (Prekopa) Eisenhart, '74
Mark D. Evans, '74
Anthony J. Gennaro, '74
Pamela K. (Kramer) Gibbs, '74
Steven N. James, '74
Francine E. Modica, '74
Eileen M. (Termer) Oberg, '74
Robert A. Radke, '74
Anne Eleanor Richmond, '74
Toby Ray Sheiman, '74, '78
James Anthony Valenti, '74
Susan Jane (Ross) Wolf, '74

Karl Aarseth, '75
 Timothy G. Decker, '75
 Daniel Fragnito, '75
 Russell Thomas Mesi, '75, '95
 Daniel B. Tauriello, '75
 Nancy A. Walsh, '75
 John B. Askey, '76
 Jane E. Collins, '76
 James W. Hauswirth, '76, '78
 The Honorable Frederick J. Marshall, '76
 Emmet Joseph McNamara Jr., '76
 Reba (Anderson) Thomas, '76, '78
 Gordon N. Willis, '76
 Vincent Caito, '77
 Richard Clark, '77
 Stephen A. Imerese, '77
 Rita S. (Moore) Joyce, '77
 Eirin T. Muentner, '77
 Linda S. (Nederik) Wagner, '77
 Bernard Youra, '77
 Theresa R. (Bryant) Barnack, '78, '98
 Susan M. Indilla, '78
 Michael J. Peglau, '78, '85
 Lawrence Sayres, '78
 Nancy Elizabeth (Shenk) Sheffer, '78
 Geoffrey A. Froewiss, '79
 Anne (LaDuca) Herman, '79
 Paul H. Moylan, '79
 Timothy Powers, '79

1980–1989

Barbara C. (Reed) Connor, '81, '85
 Annie C. Davis, '81
 William F. Daw Jr., '81
 Denise A. (Gargiulo) Keller, '81
 Karen Ann (Thomas) Benson, '82
 Thomas J. Lohr, '82
 Michael J. Matyas, '82
 John F. Adamczyk Jr., '83
 David Edgar Bahn, '83
 Elio L. Dicarolo, '83
 Lucille (Colston) Hicks, '83
 Brent E. Starr, '83
 Barbara (Johnson) (Harasym) Hole, '84 🌻
 Judith A. (Wexler) Kowalski, '84
 Michael T. Preskop, '84
 Patricia A. (Dempsey) Weaver, '84
 Tyrone R. Heard, '85
 Eric Scott Speier, '85
 Sean P. Jordan, '86

Stephen P. Neilson, '86
 Laura Jean (Barnett) Lemon, '87
 Marie Francine (Ciocca) Muscarella, '87, '96
 Joseph G. Panzarella, '87
 Sharon Ann Gach, '88
 Paul M. Connelly Jr., '89
 John M. Lavin, '89
 Lisa A. (Stoklosa) Leach, '89, '95
 David O. Samson, '89, '94

1990–1999

Mark J. Ryan, '90
 Joseph J. Ciminelli, '91, '95
 Joseph L. Leftwich, '91
 Edward P. O'Brien Jr., '91
 Sandra Lee (Trifilo) Pezzino, '91
 Bradley Wells Timerson, '91
 Daniel R. Leahy, '92
 Samuel A. Messina, '92
 Thomas F. Peterson, '94
 Frank L. Steffen Jr., '94
 Eileen A. Burke-Huddler, '95
 Michael F. Crawford, '95
 Lauren L. (Smith) Hayes, '95, '05
 Edward Patrick Langan Jr., '95
 Mary (Beiring) McMahon, '95
 Deborah L. Evancho, '96
 Kelly L. Zuzze, '96
 Richard M. Welker, '98
 Jammie L. Ferguson, '99
 Thomas Joseph Karpe, '99

2000–2009

David M. Lovullo, '00
 Brian M. Noah, '01
 Kristen Marie (D'Auria) Simon, '01, '04
 Bruce A. Mann, '02
 Lederise N. Curry, '03
 Scott W. Friedman, '03
 Thomas W. Lozinsky Jr., '03
 Jack R. Sage, '04
 Jacqueline M. (Bell) Kelly, '05, '14
 Jeanne M. Barrett, '09
 Kathryn M. Buell, '09
 William Robert Dickerson, '09

2010–2019

Cheryl L. (Jividen) Cullinan, '11
 Glen R. Stewart, '14
 Kara Margaret Stein, '15, '18
 Giovambattista E. Giacco, '16
 Alexander R. Kumm, '18, '19

Faculty, Staff, Emeriti, Retired Staff

Paul J. Bardak
 John B. Beach
 Harold D. Becker
 John J. Bruno, '56, Ed.D.
 Richard F. Coates
 David L. Cummings, '74, '97
 Henry S. Dowski, '59, Ed.D.
 Brunetta Dudley
 Gordon E. Ederer
 Marillyn M. (Fassett) Flavin, '49, '58, Ed.D.
 Margaret Ann (DeWeir) Forrester, '67
 Christine J. (Pratt) Giambra, '09
 James A. Gold, D.Ed.
 Edward N. Gollwitzer Sr.
 Virginia E. (Engquist) Grabiner, Ph.D.
 Debra B. Howard
 Elizabeth (Meng) Howell, '79
 Mary Ann Hurliman
 Maureen E. Lougen, '14
 Stephen S. Mangione, '00
 Sarah E. Meredith, Ph.D.
 Myron H. Nadel
 Susan Mary Paige, '73, Ph.D.
 Alexander J. Ratkowski, Ph.D.
 Deborah K. (Corthals) Renzi 🌻
 Carol J. Richards
 Albert B. Santini
 Roseann M. Sciortino
 Gregory P. Stein, Ph.D.
 Irving H. Tesmer, Ph.D.
 Paul L. Thoms, '63 🌻
 Penny J. Williams
 Joseph S. Zingaro, Ph.D.

Gail Johnstone

July 10, 1941–November 30, 2023

Buffalo State University mourns the passing of Gail Johnstone, one of the institution's great champions, who died November 30, 2023. Mrs. Johnstone and her husband, former Buffalo State President D. Bruce Johnstone, have supported Buffalo State in numerous ways over many decades.

Mrs. Johnstone served as first lady of Buffalo State during her husband's tenure as the college's fifth president, from 1979 to 1988. Since that time, the Johnstones have stayed connected with Buffalo State people and programs, invested in the university's vision for the future, and attended countless events throughout the years.

Mrs. Johnstone's impact on Western New York extended well beyond Buffalo State. As the *Buffalo News* noted, she "transform[ed] the impact of local philanthropy during 10 years as president and CEO of the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo." Her other roles included director of planning for the city of Buffalo, vice president for planning at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center (then known as Roswell Park Memorial Institute), chair of the advocacy group Women for Downtown, and a member of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra board of directors. Her efforts laid the groundwork for Buffalo's waterfront revival and the creation of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus.

A memorial service will be held in June at Trinity Episcopal Church in Buffalo.

The Peterson Society is Buffalo State's honor society for those who have made a gift to the university in their wills or through other estate-planning techniques.

Way Back When

Morris “Murry” Smilkstein, ’53

After reading the Spring 2023 issue of the alumni magazine, I was pleased to know that Buffalo State has been upgraded to university status. This is the 70th anniversary of my graduation, Class of 1953. I would like to reminisce with the readers about what Buffalo State was like for me 70 years ago.

The campus at 1300 Elmwood, located next to the state mental hospital, was made up of just seven buildings: main administration, library, science and industrial, elementary education, athletics, student union/women’s dormitory, and the Albright building across the street from the main campus. To my knowledge, there was not a medical office or any medical personnel on campus. My yearbook did list two psychologists. Not sure what they did or where they were located.

There were approximately 3,300 students enrolled. My graduation class consisted of 850 people. Bachelor’s degrees were awarded in only four disciplines: elementary education, art, industrial, and home economics. A few master’s degrees were also offered.

President Dr. Harvey M. Rice had taken over from longtime president Dr. Henry W. Rockwell. This was the year Dr. R. Fretz retired. He was the longtime dean of men and associate dean of students, and also taught in the science department.

Buffalo State had only four varsity sports teams. Of course, in 1953, these sports were male only. The cross-country coach was Bob Murray; the soccer coach was Joe Adessa; the swimming and diving coach was Paul Mahoney; and the basketball coach and athletic director was Hube Coyer. The all-female cheerleading squad performed at the basketball games only. Any other sports were intramural or club. These teams were either all male or all female; co-ed sports were not a thing then.



Smilkstein (standing, second from left in top photo) served as student manager of the basketball and soccer teams

I was student manager of the soccer team during my senior year. The team finished the season with a record of 6-1-1. We would have been undefeated; however, we lost our last game to Brockport State. I was also student manager of the JV basketball team, which finished their season 6-9.

The women attending Buffalo State either commuted from the general Buffalo area or lived in the student union women’s dormitory building. Being that there was not a men’s dormitory, the men either commuted from the general Buffalo area or lived in boarding houses near campus.

Buffalo State convocations were required of freshmen, sophomores, and juniors with assigned seats. In class, roll call was taken. If it was noted that you were missing in class or convocation, the result would be a dire invitation to visit the dean.

In the 1950s, there was no worry about scammers or identity theft. In the yearbook, all the faculty and graduating students’ names and addresses were printed on the back pages.

Each spring, at the conclusion of the school year, the college would sponsor a parade with floats and bands that would travel along Elmwood Avenue. The floats were built by different fraternities, sororities, and college clubs. I’m not sure if the floats were judged or not, but I do know that once the parade finished, the end-of-the-year festivities began.

After completing my four years, I left with my B.S. in elementary education. Thanks to Buffalo State (University) for enabling me to enjoy my seven years of teaching at Lake Mohegan, New York, and 28 years in Upland, California.

Times have changed, but my memories of Buff State from 70 years ago remain some of the best times in my life. Go, Buff State!



Murry Smilkstein taught in the Upland Unified School District (CA) for nearly three decades before retirement.



Take care of the people and causes most important to you.

If you are among the majority of Americans who have not created a legal will, Buffalo State is pleased to offer you an estate-planning resource—**100% free to you**. We have invested in **FreeWill** so you can plan for your future and protect your loved ones. **FreeWill** is easy to use, guiding you through the simple process of creating a will in approximately 20 minutes.

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If you have questions, please contact Scott Burns in the Buffalo State Gift Planning Office at (716) 878-3395 or via email at burnsrs@buffalostate.edu.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Eclipse Fest

April 8

Bengala Scholarship Gala

April 13

Spring Open House

April 20

152nd Commencement

May 18