DB WOODSIDE HITS HIS MARK

How the unexpected theatre major became a busy, buzzy Hollywood star
President Havidán Rodríguez steps off UAlbany’s new all-electric trolley at an ice cream social event for faculty and staff held on the Uptown Campus on Aug. 9, 2023.

(Photo by Patrick Dodson)
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University Launches New College of Nanotechnology, Science, and Engineering

In August, the University announced the creation of the College of Nanotechnology, Science, and Engineering (CNSE), a newly expanded academic unit that strengthens UAlbany’s position as a leader in engineering, nanotechnology, semiconductor research, computer science and artificial intelligence.

The college is the product of a union between UAlbany’s College of Engineering and Applied Sciences (CEAS) and the former College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (CNSE), which was founded at UAlbany two decades ago before spending the last nine years as the Albany campus of the Utica-based SUNY Polytechnic Institute.

The reunified CNSE began serving new and continuing students with the start of the fall 2023 semester.

Helping the U.S. Lead in Semiconductors

“Today is a historic day for UAlbany. The federal government is making unprecedented investments in domestic semiconductor research and development, and a reunified UAlbany and CNSE will ensure New York leads the pack in critical fields such as next-generation chip design,” President Havidán Rodríguez said.

The union comes after eight months of close collaboration to transfer 10 academic programs and approximately 90 continuing students, 29 faculty and lecturers, and more than 100 post-docs, staff members and Research Foundation personnel back to UAlbany. It also marks a significant milestone toward the realization of Gov. Kathy Hochul’s ambitious vision to double SUNY’s external research funding and cement the system’s four research centers as national and global epicenters of innovation and discovery.

“For the researchers who will push the limits of science, for the students who have an unparalleled opportunity to study and enjoy experiential learning, for the industry partners who will thrive, and for the workers who will enjoy good-paying jobs, CNSE continues to unlock new synergies and new opportunities,” said John B. King Jr., chancellor of the State University of New York. “The commitment to high-technology advancement in this region is strong, and I have no doubt it will bear extraordinary fruit in the coming years and decades.”
“I look forward to watching UAlbany shells racing up and down our beautiful Hudson River.”

— President Havidán Rodríguez on the addition of women’s rowing as the Great Danes’ 19th NCAA Division I sport, set to begin fall 2024.

University Art Museum Opens Three New Exhibitions

Textiles, large-scale film and handcrafted books open the University Art Museum’s fall season.

Barrow Parke: Systems and Mythologies combines handloomed textiles and painting to explore the patterns of thinking that form mythological and scientific systems for understanding the cosmos.

Yelaine Rodriguez’s film, EBBÓ (Sacrifice) encompasses video, photography, costume design, and sculptural objects that offer new representations of Afro-Caribbean religious and aesthetic heritages.

Libros/Arte: Handmade Books from Latin America & the Caribbean features more than 80 books by small presses that push the boundaries of traditional printing techniques while addressing a range of political, social, and cultural subjects. The exhibition is a collaboration between UAlbany’s M.E. Grenander Special Collections and Archives; the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures; and the Department of Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Studies.

New Building Nabs Honors

ETEC has been named Green Building of the Year by the U.S. Green Building Council, a nonprofit that promotes sustainable construction and awards LEED certification. ETEC received LEED Platinum, the highest level. The award, which will be presented in November, honors a project team for exceptional leadership in sustainable design, construction and operation, and for its commitment to “a built environment that is ecologically, socially and economically healthy, resilient and prosperous for all.”
Deans Named for School of Education, Rockefeller College

Professor Virginia Goatley (left) has been appointed dean of the School of Education and Professor Julie Novkov as dean of Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy. Both are long-serving and distinguished UAlbany faculty members.

Arena Renamed Amid Renovations

With more than $12 million in renovations and upgrades underway, the home to UAlbany’s men’s and women’s basketball, formerly SEFCU Arena, will now be known as Broadview Center. “We are excited to present a completely renovated arena to the community. When our fans walk through the doors into Broadview Center, they won’t believe their eyes,” said UAlbany Athletic Director, Mark Benson. “Our partnership with Broadview allows us to provide a first-class venue for our basketball programs, students and friends in addition to the many community-based events for all throughout the Capital Region.” Renovations to Broadview Center and the adjacent University Gym are scheduled for completion in November.

$75M
Investment from New York State to support AI Plus — UAlbany’s holistic approach to integrating teaching and learning about AI across all academic and research programs

Grant amount given last year from the National Science Foundation to support the SUNY Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation program to recruit, retain and graduate underrepresented minority students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. UAlbany is the lead institution.

$2.5M

Number of first-year students welcomed to campus as part of the Class of 2027

$500k
Pounds of CO2 expected to be avoided with the introduction of UAlbany’s new all-electric trolley that will displace 25,000 gallons of diesel fuel.

$2.5M

Effective identification rate for analyzing biological stains at crime scenes utilizing laser spectroscopy, a novel technique developed by Professor Igor Lednev and being brought to market by his startup, SupreMEtric.

99%

Age of the University at Albany’s Police Department’s new therapy dog, Roxy, an English Labrador retriever, who is part of the Community Response Unit trained to assist individuals experiencing trauma or mental crisis.

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GIFTS AT WORK

Stuart Rubinstein ‘85 has never been to a class reunion. But in the 38 years since earning his degree, he’s attended all but one of the Five Quad anniversaries on campus. “I always call my class ‘Five Quad,’” he says, referring to the mix of under and upperclassmen he served with on the volunteer student-run ambulance squad during his four years at UAlbany. “That’s the group that was really meaningful to me in school.”

Logging thousands of on-call hours as an ambulance attendant, then crew chief and, later, as a lieutenant overseeing shifts, Rubinstein helped countless people in distress. “It was about giving back to the community,” he says. But at the end of his junior year, he was given an opportunity that he credits as being foundational to his lifelong career success.

University Administrator Neil C. Brown, or “Dean Brown” as he was affectionately known on campus, had been instrumental in facilitating the founding of Five Quad and served on the Five Quad Board of Directors with Rubinstein. “Dean Brown was very special to me,” Rubinstein explains, “because in the summer of 1984, he hired me to figure out how the University could use some brand-new piece of technology they had just received.”

That new technology was an IBM desktop computer, one of the first PCs on campus.

Five Quad Gets a Lift
A former member pays tribute to his past with an endowment for the future.

By Sarah Hacker

Patrick Dodson, BA ’12

Patrick Dodson, BA ’12
Rubinstein, a business major, embraced the bulky but cutting-edge tool. Using a spreadsheet program, he was able to track the medical forms of incoming freshmen and transmit that data from Student Health Services to the Office of Student Affairs over the phone line. The process was so innovative that Rubinstein was asked to present it at a SUNY-wide Student Health Services directors meeting.

By the following summer, the experience had landed him his first job as a UAlbany graduate. He was hired by a group of insurance companies to overhaul their computing system. “All the old guys knew the big mainframe computers and minicomputers, but they needed some kid out of college who knew this new technology,” Rubinstein reflects. “I’ve always connected all the dots back through my career to that [Five Quad] job.”

With the 50th anniversary of Five Quad in 2023, Rubinstein wanted to give back. He had also been searching for a way to commemorate Neil Brown and Five Quad founder, Barry Bashkoff, who had both recently passed away.

Rubinstein established The Five Quad Tribute Fund to remember and celebrate those who served, while supporting Five Quad’s future. “I want it to be a tribute to those who are still there, who are leading, who have led, who have passed away, in honor of students or faculty or administration,” he explains.

The fund provides general support and an annual award recognizing a current Five Quad member for leadership, service and volunteerism. Nate Foster ’23 was selected as the first recipient this past spring. He was honored at the President’s Award for Leadership Ceremony and presented with a monetary prize. “Receiving the Five Quad Award meant a significant amount to me,” he says. “It was a nice recognition for the countless hours I have worked.” Foster now attends medical school at the University at Buffalo.

Rubinstein hopes that his generosity inspires others to give and that the fund grows significantly enough to support additional aspects of Five Quad. He is happy to deliver a boost for students as they prepare to graduate and begin their careers, just as he was given.
“I constantly look at these kids and watch their growth through skating, and I’m just so excited for them, and just so proud to be able to provide this opportunity to them.”

At age 6, Ashleigh Ellis (née Whitfield) put on ice skates for the first time and never looked back. “I was just gone! It was like I knew how to ice skate with the first seconds of stepping on the ice,” says the Long Island native who went on to compete nationally, even reaching the Junior Olympics.
A day in the life of Ashleigh Ellis ’12
CEO and Founder, Unity Ice Academy

Yet for Ellis, a Rhetoric & Communication major at UAlbany, something was missing from her experience. “I would go to these competitions nationwide and there were no other Black skaters.” She made a vow to, one day, change that if she could. UAlbany Magazine joined Ellis on the ice to see her promise realized in the Unity Ice Academy.
A tremendous amount of planning goes into our summer camp every year, from securing the ice skating venue and camp personnel to planning and implementing the marketing and fundraising.

We're fortunate to have the help of incredible professional instructors and amazing on and off ice volunteers who make the camp possible.

We like to encourage bonding early on, so we'll rent out a movie theater and have a great time watching a film with plenty of popcorn for all.

During the camp, we try to make the experience fun so that the skaters learn and progress. Our goal is to build their confidence, resilience, drive and teamwork. Skills that will serve them well in life.

Off the ice, we hold character-building workshops which include dance instruction and arts and crafts projects where the children learn about vision boards and how to build their own.

At the end of the camp, we perform a recital where our skaters get to show off their new skills for family members.

Fundraising is crucial for providing free access to this unique experience for our low-income campers. Our main fundraiser is held in January and we're so pleased that the support continues to grow.
We start with the basics with learning how to lace skates and balance. For many of the kids, it’s their first experience on the ice.

We bring in guest speakers to talk about their journeys in sports and how they have overcome challenges and adversity. The kids get the chance to interact with the presenters and ask any questions they may have.

One of our signature activities is an all-expense paid trip to Knotts Berry Farm, an amusement park in the L.A. area. This fun day includes a barbecue lunch and plenty of rides.

Our programming is slowly expanding beyond summer camp with the addition of more free classes that the kids can take throughout the year like special pop-up events and a holiday “skate-tacular.”
Acclaimed actor and director DB Woodside ’91 talks college, craft and owning your success.

By Jim Sciancalepore, MA ’93
Actor and director DB Woodside knows a thing or two about plot twists.

After all, he’s been a high school principal with a dark secret on “Buffy the Vampire Slayer,” a terrorist-thwarting U.S. president on “24,” a fallen angel on “Lucifer” and a secret service agent with a troubled past on “The Night Agent.” These are just a few of the more than 50 TV and film roles he has played over the course of a steady, successful 27-year acting career, in addition to recent stints as a director and writer.

Perhaps the biggest plot twist in Woodside’s life happened not on a film set, but on the UAlbany campus – a college from which he had never intended to graduate, and certainly not with a theatre degree.

Back in 1991, Woodside had eschewed a football scholarship to Northeastern University in order to attend UAlbany with his high school girlfriend. The two had a “secret plan” (unknown to their parents) to transfer after two years. In the meantime, Woodside had secured a spot on the UAlbany football team, where he would work toward his dream of becoming a star running back in the NFL.

Girlfriend. Football. Transfer. What could go wrong? Early into his first semester, however, Woodside suffered a severe back injury on the football field, and the “secret plan” suddenly unraveled.

“My football career was over, my girlfriend broke up with me and I’m here at UAlbany – with no clue about what to do with my life,” said Woodside. He quickly added with a grin: “It was the best thing that ever happened to me.”
A PAC Attraction

Woodside had not yet declared a major at that point, and he was leaning toward psychology. However, he felt an inexplicable connection to the University’s Performing Arts Center (PAC). Without football to occupy his time, Woodside had rekindled his passion for playing guitar and piano, and he started jamming with a friend in the PAC’s rehearsal spaces.

The center also offered another attraction. “We noticed that the most interesting women on campus – smart, strong women – were all in the PAC building,” noted Woodside, who found himself spending more and more time there. He finally decided to stop observing and take an acting class. Like a scene from a show or movie that Woodside might later star in, his life suddenly changed dramatically.

“I had found my people!” said Woodside. “What I loved about theatre was that I loved everyone there. These were people who may have felt like an outsider in every other part of their lives – so many cultures, so many ways to live your life – but here they had a home. It became like a second family to me.”

It was in that same acting class that a UAlbany professor told Woodside something that would both inspire him and challenge him to this day.

“She said ‘You have something special. If you take it seriously, if you focus on your craft—you can be something special,’” recalled Woodside. “This is where that seed was first planted.”

A Killer Opportunity

After graduating from UAlbany, Woodside pursued graduate classes in acting, writing and direction at the University of Iowa and later earned his master’s degree from the Yale School of Drama. He then moved to New York City, not far from his birthplace in Queens (his family had moved upstate to Wappingers Falls when he was in elementary school). Woodside diligently auditioned for acting work on both coasts, while workshopping with other aspiring New York actors in Manhattan. One fateful day in 1996, a call came in. Or, rather, a buzz.

“I was in NYC with a girlfriend. We were walking uptown to Central Park because we had no money...
among his many on-screen roles, Woodside named his five favorite parts below. “I’m drawn to complex characters,” he explained. “I like playing a character that’s not all good or all bad...someone who’s finding where that line is.”

Woodside had gotten his first big break: a recurring role on “Murder One,” a network drama from writer-producer Steven Bochco, the 80s-90s TV titan whose previous megahits included “Hill Street Blues,” “L.A. Law” and NYPD Blue. While “Murder One” would only last two more seasons, it gave Woodside the exposure and big-name credibility that would open many more doors.

“I got the part, and my life changed overnight,” said Woodside. This remarkable trajectory is evident with one glance at Woodside’s imdb.com page, where his credits stretch with almost no interruption from “Murder One” to his present-day role on “9-1-1 Lonestar.” Along the way, Woodside has found himself in some of the biggest, buzziest hits of the past 25 years – including a recent stint where he was simultaneously on two of Netflix’s top 10 shows (“Lucifer” and “The Night Agent”).

A Foundation for Success

“I consider myself fortunate and blessed,” said Woodside. “But not ‘lucky.’ My family and friends have told me to stop using that word because they know that I’ve worked really hard for this. Yes, in this business, you need to be in the right place at the right time – but you also need to be prepared.”

Woodside attributes his work ethic and dedication to his craft to the foundation he learned at UAlbany and to lessons instilled by his parents. His mother was a registered nurse and department administrator of a cardiovascular intensive care unit, and his father, now deceased, worked for IBM. Both placed a great value on education and hard work, but they also exposed their children to theatre, dance and the arts.

“I have fantastic parents, always supportive,” said Woodside. “And I told them ‘It’s your fault I’m in acting – you made sure we were well-rounded!’”

He also credits his family with keeping him grounded in real life. “What I love about my parents is that they’re very proud of me, but they’re not going to...”
treat me any differently,” said Woodside with a laugh. “They would say ‘You’re not better than anybody—you just happen to have a job where you’re on TV.’”

Beyond adding to his acting credits, Woodside is focused on expanding his sphere of influence—both in the industry and in society. He was recently able to direct an episode of “Lucifer” and he’s in the process of pitching his own projects to major studios and streaming services.

“Look at any successful artist— they’re vulnerable, they’re putting themselves out there,” he noted. “If you’re not a little nervous, you’re not doing it right.”

Woodside was recently invited to Washington, D.C., by the prestigious Brady Center to participate in a forum about promoting gun safety in films and on TV and is also busy raising his 13-year-old daughter.

**COMMENCEMENT QUOTES: WOODSIDE WISDOM**

On a perfectly sunny Saturday morning on May 13, 2023, Woodside returned to his alma mater for the first time in 30 years to deliver the keynote address at UAlbany’s 2023 Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony. From amusing anecdotes to inspiring oration, Woodside made a relatable connection with this year’s graduates. Here are a few of his notable quotes:

“My older brother is a financial planner. My younger sister is a lawyer. And I’m an actor. So, you can imagine when I first told my parents about my career choice, they were worried. But now, I’ve got two top 10 shows on Netflix, and I’ve been asked to give the commencement address to my alma mater. So, Mom...and my older brother...and my little sister...I win.”
Thirty-two years after graduating from UAlbany — the school from which he thought he would transfer — he returned as the 2023 commencement speaker.

It’s clear that, after all the plot twists in both his life and in his many on-screen roles, Woodside remains ready and eager for new challenges and it was a message he shared with the class of 2023: “Be bold. Hold true to your purpose, hold true to your optimism, your dreams. Let no one diminish you.”

“Folks will tell you there will be no shortage of issues facing you. I see the promise of a better tomorrow in you. Keep moving forward towards hope — hope is powerful.”

“Use your power, your voice to shape your world. Be agents of change for the country you want to live in.”

When Woodside earned his first TV role on “Murder One” back in 1996, four major networks, along with a handful of cable channels and small upstarts, created the majority of original TV programming. New shows usually debuted in the fall of each year, and made-for-TV movies with modest production budgets were sporadically released. Viewers watched programs on a TV in their homes, or they could record them on a VCR for later viewing.

Fast forward to 2023. There are now dozens of broadcast and cable networks plus global streaming services like Amazon Prime, Netflix, Max, Disney+ and Apple+ churning out an endless array of big-budget shows, movies and limited series all year long. And we, of course, can watch all of this on our TVs, computers, tablets and phones. Anywhere and anytime.

Woodside has had a front row seat for this remarkable evolution — and he sees both pros and cons.

“On one hand, as an actor, there are now more opportunities than ever,” said Woodside. “But in making all this content, are we losing some of the craft, the storytelling and attention to detail?”

That’s one reason why Woodside is hoping to add more director, writer and even producer credits to his already voluminous resume — to give himself more creative control over his own projects.

His commitment to quality goes back to lessons learned in his very first UAlbany acting class. “This is not a job, it’s a craft,” noted Woodside. “It needs to be studied, respected and revered.”
50 YEARS of Five Quad

The inside story of the lifesaving ambulance service and its dedicated crews

By Erin Frick
Barry Bashkoff ’72, MS ’73 conceives

1970 idea of an ambulance service

1971 Initial request for the campus ambulance service rejected

Oct. 1972 More than 100 students take the American Red Cross standard and advanced first aid training courses

Above: Circa 1981, members of Five Quad pose for a group photo. Right: Five Quad ambulances patrol the snowy Uptown campus. (photos provided by Amanda Kimler ’18 - former Five Quad Corps historian and vice president)
Through work and play, the University at Albany community is under constant, attentive care. In a nondescript service building on the western edge of the Uptown Campus, UAlbany’s vigilant guardians are on 24/7 duty, awaiting the electronic wail of tones that signal a call for help. This is Five Quad Volunteer Ambulance Service — a crew of highly trained student EMTs — which celebrates fifty years of service this year.

For half a century, Five Quad members have responded to emergencies at UAlbany and in surrounding municipalities, supervised athletic matches and special events on and off campus, trained UAlbany students in lifesaving care and partnered with community groups to promote public health and safety. Today, with 70 current members and a deep bench of active alums who return to take shifts, the student-run volunteer agency responds to around 800 calls per year. All services are provided without charge.

It all started with an injured football player and a first-semester transfer student who wanted better care for his community.

45 Minutes That Inspired 50 Years

In the fall of 1970, Barry Bashkoff ’72, MS ’73 was starting his first semester as a transfer student at UAlbany. Itching to feel some school spirit, he headed to the football stadium to take in a home game. All was going smoothly until a UAlbany player got hurt. The injured athlete was examined on the field, where he lay motionless on the grass. Officials carried him to the sidelines on a stretcher and the game resumed. Bashkoff watched, stunned, as the player lay in agony for more than 45 minutes before an ambulance finally arrived.

With experience in emergency response as a volunteer firefighter, Bashkoff was spurred to action. UAlbany needed an on-campus ambulance service.

Marc Stern ’75 was the only attendee at the first general interest meeting that Bashkoff arranged. “Creating an ambulance from scratch was an exciting idea, and Barry was a charismatic type – with his many documents and plans,” says Stern, now a career physician specializing in correctional medicine and also a clinical associate professor at UAlbany’s School of Public Health. “Although neither of us had any ambulance experience, we were committed to the project. I will say that we didn’t necessarily go in a logical order. At the start, we were more worried about buying sirens and lights long before we had anything to put them on. But that’s ok. We got there.”
Accounting major Jane Reich ’75, who later married Stern, learned about the embryonic ambulance service from a friend who encouraged her to connect with Stern. One conversation later, she dove in — an important addition to the team since she was already an EMT and the only one with ambulance experience.

“There was a lot of skepticism among members of the University’s leadership around the idea we were proposing,” Reich explained. “It was a big responsibility, and we were students who had lots of other things going on. How could they rely on a bunch of undergrads to go to class, maintain 24-hour service and give up their weekends?”

Yet, from inception to present, 50 years of “Five Quadders” have done exactly that.

“It is a rare breed of person who’s willing to sacrifice personal time and take energy away from their work as a student to do something that benefits the community,” says Reich. “But that has been a constant through Five Quad’s history. Every Five Quadder I know has that same set of shared values and commitment to serve.”

As a fully certified state EMS agency, Five Quad responds to calls within a five-mile radius of the Uptown Campus through mutual aid agreements with EMS agencies in Guilderland and Albany. When there is a need further afield, Five Quad is ready to assist: In the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks, Five Quad sent a crew to Manhattan to help workers involved in remediation efforts. In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, Five Quad worked with NY State EMS to blend their services and resources with other agencies, primarily Nanuet EMS in Rockland County, to continue providing care at a time of critical need. Five Quad’s partnership with Nanuet EMS continues to this day.

Matthew Zoda ’20 was the chief of Five Quad when the pandemic began. “Five Quadders were in the middle of it, and they saw things they never would have encountered on campus before. We were using PPE that most members had never even heard of. There was a lot of unknown,” says Zoda, whose brother Kevin Zoda is the current chief. “That so many were willing to go into new territory, work with new people, go to hospitals they’d never been to — it all highlights the dedication and selflessness of everyone involved.”
President O’Leary pledges $10,000 in support of building new Five Quad base

1985

1992 Purchase of “Moduvan” ambulance approved

1993 Budget: $38,117

1995 Purchase of 1995 Wheeled Coach Moduvan ($59,603), 2 stretchers, 2 Motorola GP300 portable radios
On call at New York Giants football training camp on campus

Mobilizes response to aid in rescue efforts at Ground Zero 1997

Implements defibrillators into protocols, they are first used a year later 1997


2003 Budget: $84,000

2000 Wins 2005 national trauma skills competition at Philadelphia conference

2000 On call at New York Giants football training camp on campus

In this 2000 archival photo, members of Five Quad are all smiles inside one of the ambulances.
Training the Crew

In 1971, Bashkoff’s first official request for a campus ambulance service was rejected. How would a student group with no budget obtain an ambulance, equipment and training in emergency medicine? To make administrative headway, they had to prove they could meet those needs.

Bashkoff continued organizing meetings to drum up student interest. These gatherings evolved to feature First Aid training led by Stern and formative member Bob Davis ’77, both of whom had American Red Cross teaching experience. The training was a popular draw and helped students secure basic and advanced first aid certifications – both of which were required to undertake Emergency Medical Technician training. Bashkoff worked with doctors from Albany Medical Center to coordinate courses for students to become EMT-certified. Over three semesters, they trained more than 60 members.

That rigorous preparation continues today, as does the tradition of Five Quad members taking the lead in the training process. Prospective members first apply and interview. Those selected undertake a semester-long training course, led by Five Quad members, during which they learn key lifesaving skills including CPR, First Aid, patient transport, assessing vital signs, splinting and bleed mitigation. Student trainers administer written and practical exams to confirm skill proficiency. Additionally, members must take an EMT course with an EMS agency or other authorized entity to obtain their New York State EMT certification.

“We know we face extra scrutiny as a collegiate EMS agency,” says Shauna Fowler ’23, Five Quad lieutenant and 2022-23 treasurer, who logged nearly 1,000 on-duty hours that academic year. “That’s why we require members to take observer shifts, interview senior members, undergo regular evaluations and do skills assessments at the beginning of every semester. We are dedicated to this work and take seriously our responsibility to uphold the agency’s reputation.”

This feeling of commitment is intrinsic to the agency and is part of what drives members to maintain an exacting standard of excellence in procedure and patient care.

“In the beginning, we knew that we were on thin ice – in that we were a new, student-run volunteer agency shouldering a big responsibility,” Reich says. “Even when we [the chiefs] weren’t on shift, we would carry radios so we could help if someone on duty needed guidance during a call. If something went wrong, it could be the end of the agency.”
Adopting Sea Biscuit, White Lightning and Goldenrod

With trained members at the ready, next, the squad needed ambulances. Responding to the crew’s community all-call for used vehicles, local emergency response agencies generously donated Five Quad’s first three ambulances: Sea Biscuit, White Lightning and Goldenrod. Further donations of equipment and supplies provided the fledgling agency with ample materials to begin their work.

On Oct. 1, 1973, after clearing a series of additional hurdles — obtaining insurance, securing a local ambulance service for summer coverage — Five Quad Volunteer Ambulance Service was ready to deploy.

Its first headquarters was a disused luggage room in the basement of State Quad. Today the agency operates two fully equipped ambulances and a fly-car — an SUV used for calls that don’t require patient transport — out of their designated station, which also houses a dispatch room, two bunkrooms and a conference room.

In the 2022-23 academic year, Five Quad responded to 780 calls. This community resource is made possible with funding from the student activity fee, which supports the agency’s operating expenses, and the volunteer members who give countless hours to learn, teach and deliver lifesaving care.

Members’ service often continues after graduation. Alums pursue careers in healthcare, emergency preparedness, law enforcement, business and other diverse fields that honor the agency’s tradition of helping others.

“The once I got involved in training and caring for people, it clicked. I realized that emergency medicine must be my purpose,” says Deb Funk Valois ’91, now a career emergency department physician. “Without my experience in Five Quad, I don’t think I would have chosen this field,” says Funk Valois, who entered UAlbany wanting to become a teacher. “Even today, I sometimes ask myself ‘Why do I do this?’ It’s hard — emotionally, physically. I primarily work nights and I often drive a good distance. There are no weekends, no holidays, no ‘off’. But every once in a while, you help just the right person who has just the right words, or you realize that you truly made a difference in someone’s life — and in those moments, you remember why.”

*Editor’s note: Barry Bashkoff’s (1950-2020) firsthand account of Five Quad’s formation was an instrumental resource and was generously shared for this story by Five Quad alum Amanda Kimler ’18, now a registered nurse and who served as historian and vice president, and Barry’s wife Allison Bashkoff MBA ’93.
The Cyprus Connection

Discovering UAlbany’s rich history with the island nation

By Paul A. Miller, MA ’21
On the quiet third-floor corridor of the University at Albany’s main library, behind a simple door, is a room brimming with ancient treasures from a distant land: shards of Bronze Age metalwork; shimmering silver coins imprinted with the likeness of Roman Emperor Lucius Verus; beautiful ceramics that could grace a modern dinner table; and a trove of figurines commemorating long vanished individuals of note. These priceless antiquities hail from the sunbaked soils of Cyprus, the third largest island in the Mediterranean, roughly three-fifths the size of the state of Connecticut.

How these rare objects made their way through millennia and across the globe to the campus of UAlbany is a story that reveals more than a half-century of history forged with the island nation: a legacy of academics, athletics and an uncommonly energetic group of Cypriot alumni who keep alive what is arguably one of the University’s deepest and most enduring of international connections.

It began with an invitation

In 1969, while on a Mideast lecture tour, James Heaphey, professor of public administration in the Graduate School of Public Affairs, (later to become Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy) received an invitation from his friend, Taylor Belcher — then U.S. Ambassador to Cyprus — to visit the island and meet its leader, President Archbishop Makarios III. At the time, Cyprus was roiling with increasingly violent disputes between its Greek and Turkish communities, which could not agree upon the direction of the country following its 1960 independence from Britian. It was an opportunity for American diplomacy that was, perhaps, not lost on Ambassador Belcher.

“Let’s put it this way: Cyprus is a small island and the United States wanted to make sure that it stayed in the Western camp,” says Stuart Swiny, esteemed archaeologist and UAlbany associate professor emeritus in anthropology. Swiny notes that Makarios was also keen to establish academic ties within the U.S. since his country had no institutions of higher learning at the time.

Out of that initial meeting between a president, an ambassador and a professor came the idea for a social science research and training center to assist the development of Cyprus. It was to be the first of its kind in the United States and would be located at the University at Albany. In that moment, the Institute of Cypriot Studies was born.

Exchanging ideas and experiences

With the approval of then University President Evan Collins, the institute was quickly up and running. UAlbany faculty members traveled to Cyprus to conduct research projects and provide expertise in water rights management, regional economic policy, international political science and — befitting UAlbany’s own origins — recommendations for the development of a Cypriot teacher training college. The pedagogical development idea came from then associate dean of the Graduate School of Public Affairs, David Martin, MA ’53, who had been given the reins of the institute from Heaphey, the founding director. However, of all the research endeavors the University brought to the island, perhaps none was more visible nor more popular with the Cypriot community than the archaeological expeditions.

From tragedies to discoveries

The first expedition arrived in the spring of 1970, but it immediately suffered a devastating loss when the group’s co-leader drowned in a swimming accident after arrival in Cyprus. Classics Professor John Overbeck assumed leadership for the team and engaged Swiny, who was not yet affiliated with the University but happened to be on the island. The results of that expedition led to the publication of Overbeck and Swiny’s book, *Two Cypriot Bronze Age Sites at Kafkallia (Dhali)*, which they dedicated in memory of the colleague who had died.

The University’s footprint on the island grew as more archaeological digs broke ground and cultural exchanges blossomed. Martin’s spouse, Frances Martin ’71, an artist, (cont. on page 34)
The University at Albany has more than five decades of rich history connecting it to the island nation of the Republic of Cyprus, the third largest and third-most populous island in the Mediterranean Sea. It is situated north of Egypt, to the east of Greece, south of Turkey, and west of Lebanon and Syria. Nicosia serves as both its capital and largest city. The northern third of the island is under the de facto governance of the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, recognized solely by Turkey in the international community.

1973 – Nicosia
University Chorale performs in capital for Summer ’73 Cyprus-American Music Festival with President Makarios in attendance

1984 – Professor Paul Wallace uncovers remnants of a 3,000-year old city
The old city known as Marion, evidence of what may be the first trade link between Athens and Cyprus—which provided Athens with copper.

1992 – The University of Cyprus, the nation’s first university opens its doors to students. Among the faculty are University at Albany graduates and fellows from Albany’s Institute of Cypriot Studies

1997 – UAlbany undergraduate students uncover a Late Roman sarcophagus lid during the Sotira Archaeological Survey
The sites were found near the ancient city of Kourion, which was continuously occupied from around 1000 BC through the 8th Century AD. Over a six-week period, students surveyed an area of 13 square kilometers, walking hundreds of miles in hot weather. The terrain featured hills and gorges and was covered with olive trees, carob trees, pine and gorse.

2002 – UAlbany explores Sotira ruins
A dozen UAlbany students, led by Professor Stuart Swiny and joined by students from Harvard and Columbia universities, uncover the remains of the Early Bronze Age site of Kaminoudhia (ca, 2250 BC).
1970 – UAlbany’s first archaeological expedition in Cyprus. Led by Professor John Overbeck at the ancient city of Idalion (Dali), the expedition is disrupted by tragedy when the co-leader, Paul Lapp from the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, drowns in a swimming accident. The team explores the fortified settlement of Kafkallia instead.

1977 – University offers six-week “Summer in Cyprus” archaeology program in Larnaca. Students offered practical work on the “dig” with formal academic instruction in archaeological techniques, Cypriot archaeology and history led by the country’s director of antiquities, Dr. Vassos Karageorghis, who also served as a visiting professor in classics at the University.

Institute of Cypriot Studies directors
David Martin (1970-72)
Paul Wallace (1972-1997)
Stuart Swiny (1997-2014)*

*The Institute of Cypriot Studies ended operations with the retirement of Professor Swiny in 2014.

UAlbany Cypriot soccer players (since 2002)
- Andreas Assiotis 2017-2019 Nicosia, Cyprus Midfielder
- Konstantinos Louvaris* 2018-2019 Nicosia, Cyprus Midfielder
- Neophytos Scottis** 2021-2022 Nicosia, Cyprus Defender
- Pantelis Panteli 2021-2022 Limassol, Cyprus Midfielder
- George Pitsillidis 2022-2023 Nicosia, Cyprus Defender
- Miltiadis Hadjipanayiotou 2022-2023 Nicosia, Cyprus Midfielder
- Nicos Savva 2003-2004 Nicosia, Cyprus Defender
- Savvas Theofilou 2002-2004 Nicosia, Cyprus Midfielder

*1st Team All-Conference 2019 **2nd Team All-Conference 2021

2002-2023 – Soccer players
Cypriot soccer players have attended the University at Albany since 2002. Most have come from the capital city of Nicosia.

2022-2023 – Soccer players
- Andreas Assiotis 2017-2019 Nicosia, Cyprus Midfielder
- Konstantinos Louvaris* 2018-2019 Nicosia, Cyprus Midfielder
- Neophytos Scottis** 2021-2022 Nicosia, Cyprus Defender
- Pantelis Panteli 2021-2022 Limassol, Cyprus Midfielder
- George Pitsillidis 2022-2023 Nicosia, Cyprus Defender
- Miltiadis Hadjipanayiotou 2022-2023 Nicosia, Cyprus Midfielder
- Nicos Savva 2003-2004 Nicosia, Cyprus Defender
- Savvas Theofilou 2002-2004 Nicosia, Cyprus Midfielder

*1st Team All-Conference 2019 **2nd Team All-Conference 2021
led a popular printmaking workshop for other artists and art teachers. More than 50 members of the University Chorale group performed before President Makarios in the Summer ’73 Cyprus-American Music Festival. A Times Union newspaper article covering the event reported “a spontaneous outpouring of appreciation from the people of Cyprus themselves, Greek and Turk alike with all the political implications contained therein.”

The good feelings would not last: The next summer, a military coup overthrew Makarios, who fled to Malta, barely escaping an assassination attempt. In response to the coup, Turkey invaded and seized control of the northern one-third of the island. In the violence of 1974, thousands went missing and hundreds died. Professor Paul Wallace, an archaeologist in the classics department, was leading an expedition in Cyprus when the hostilities broke out.

“I was in the middle of all that,” recalls Wallace, now retired and living in Vermont. “It was a scary time for sure, but we finally got out.” Wallace and his team were evacuated to Beirut.

Within 10 days of the coup, the military junta responsible for it collapsed and its installed president resigned. Makarios eventually resumed the presidency, but the country remained physically divided, with Turkey in control of the north. It would take another five years before UAlbany expeditions returned to Cyprus, but they would do so in full measure. In those subsequent years, Swiny, now as the director of the institute, led more than 50 undergraduate and graduate students on six archaeological expeditions on the island. The classes were so popular and the experiences so transformative that two students penned a book entitled All Things Cypriot: Studies on Ancient Environment, Technology and Society in Honor of Stuart Swiny.

It was the Eighties

Due to the success of the Institute of Cypriot Studies, the undergraduate population from Cyprus swelled in Albany during the late 1970s and early ‘80s. More than 30 Cypriot students enrolled during the 1982-83 academic year, with another nine students intending to transfer from the Junior College of Albany (Russell Sage College today.) In a 1990 letter inviting Cyprus’s President George Vassiliou to campus, President H. Patrick Swygert celebrated the presence of the Cypriot students: “Here at the University at Albany, students from Cyprus have constituted the largest undergraduate population from a single country other than the United States.”

Cypriot students like Maria Iakovou ’79 says her experience at the University was lifechanging: “It was the best thing that happened to me. Otherwise, I could not have gone to university a year after the war of 1974. My family had lost everything.”

Iakovou, now a professor of prehistoric and protohistoric archaeology at the University of Cyprus, gives special credit to former institute director Martin and his wife, Frances, as particularly “wonderful” to her and her country.

Some 22 individuals from various ministries of the Cypriot government pursued master’s degrees as institute fellows. Two of those students, Andreas Mantovanis, MPA ’82 and George Charalambides, MPA ’83 ascended to the highest levels of the Cypriot government in the ’90s as the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Defence, respectively. Since then, dozens of Cypriot UAlbany alumni have held senior public positions and continue to do so today.

Feelings of deep regard and connection to the University still reverberate throughout the UAlbany Cypriot alumni community, says George Crassas ’83, the unofficial “coordinator” of the group. Crassas, the senior officer at the Office of the Commissioner for Administration & Human Rights (National Ombudsman’s Office), has thrown well-attended and boisterous reunions for more than 20 years and has hosted at least three UAlbany presidents. In March of 2023, he welcomed President Havidán Rodríguez, Vice President for Advancement Fardin Sanai and more than 120 alumni and guests in the capital city of Nicosia.

He recalls living as an undergrad on Alumni Quad with other Cypriots and the feeling of belonging it created.

“It was pleasant. People would come and it would feel comfortable from Day 1 because you could easily associate with a guy from your own country, which is 6,000 miles away,” said Crassas, who recently returned to campus to tour the ETEC building. “It was this feeling of being at home.”

That feeling was so strong that Crassas later sent his son, Panayiotis, to UAlbany to receive his degree — 29 years after he had graduated. These strong familial ties to the University,

SICILY

TUNISIA
are not unique, says Crassas. He knows of several Cypriot UAlbany alumni who also sent their children to become Great Danes.

In the ’80s, the senior Crassas helped establish the Greek and Cypriot Student Association — known for its civic engagement, cultural celebrations and a few legendary parties that are well-documented by ads in the Albany Student Press from the time. He was also part of a recreational soccer team lovingly dubbed “The Aliens” (later “the Olympians”) whose roster was filled mostly by Cypriots.

Soon thereafter, a connection of Cypriot soccer was established at the University, a 20-year throughline that exists to this day.

The Cypriot Squad

In 2015, UAlbany’s Men’s Soccer Head Coach Trevor Gorman was into his fourth year at the helm of the team when he received an email recounting UAlbany’s historic Cypriot connections. Gorman learned of the archaeological digs, the vibrant alumni group, and of talented young soccer players whose family members had come to the school in the ’80s. He also learned from the Office of International Education that Cypriot soccer players have played for the University since 2002, perhaps even earlier. Within the year, an intrigued Gorman was on a plane to the Mediterranean.

“I took a trip over to Cyprus, spent about four or five days watching players and meeting people, and kind of getting a greater sense of the country, the culture, everything about it,” recalls the coach over a Zoom call. “I actually ended up having dinner one night with five guys who had all graduated from the University at Albany and they had this amazing story where they had grown up best friends...in the city of Nicosia.”

Since 2016, Gorman has recruited a half dozen Cypriots to the team. Four of those players were on the roster in the fall of 2022 — including Miltiadis Hadjipanyiotou, a senior midfielder from Nicosia whose uncle graduated from UAlbany in the ’80s. “I found that UAlbany was the best fit for me, both academically and soccer-wise,” says Hadjipanyiotou who returns to the team with best friend and fellow Cypriot, George Pitsillides. “It’s been a great experience ... I’ve enjoyed it all.”

In 2017, the Great Danes won their second straight America East Conference Championship on the foot of Cypriot player Andreas Assiotis, who scored the game-winning goal in a thrilling double-overtime win against UMass Lowell.

Bringing it home

At precisely 3 p.m. on Nov. 16, 1989, a crowd of dignitaries, including former Ambassador Belcher, gathered on the third floor of the University Library for the inauguration of The Taylor and Edith Belcher Cyprus Room. Hundreds of Cyprus-related books and research journals lined the walls. The Cypriot flag stood in the corner of the room. Glass cases filled with antiquities, once buried by time, would serve as cultural emissaries to the future. The room itself would act as a reminder of the decades of international collaboration, academic exchange and cultural goodwill between UAlbany and the people of Cyprus. Today, the room is slated for renovation in the fall of 2023, its future uncertain.

In 1992, the University of Cyprus became the first university in the country as it opened its doors to undergraduates. Among the new faculty were two Cypriot alums from UAlbany’s School of Education, Christos Theophilides, MPA ’79, EdD ’82 and Nicos Valanides, MS ’86, EdD ’90, PhD ’90. Both students were part of UAlbany’s Institute of Cypriot Studies and had returned to their home country to help usher in a new era of higher education, fulfilling the vision first set out in 1969 when a president, an ambassador and a professor dared to dream great things.
1952
Margaret “Meg” Gemmell Delea passed away May 27, 2023 at the age of 93. Meg grew up in Schenectady and spent most of her life on Long Island, where she was an English teacher at West Islip High School. She was a brilliant photographer, painter, birder and volunteer for a variety of civic organizations. Meg attended numerous college class reunions while living in New York.

Class Councilor: Joyce Leavitt Zanchelli, jjzanch@yahoo.com

1953
The Class of 1953 Red Devils 70th-anniversary reunion will be held as a virtual gathering on Zoom, Thursday, Nov. 9. Watch your email for an invitation.

Class Councilor: Rose Mary (Rosie) Keller Hughes, rosemaryk.hughes@gmail.com

1954
Rev. Jim Thompson passed away June 8, 2023, at the age of 90. Active in ministry for over 40 years, he retired in 1996 as pastor of Jermain Memorial Presbyterian Church in Watervliet, N.Y. He continued to serve in various pastoral roles as a member of Westminster Presbyterian Church of Albany. Jim met and married Lois Porter while attending NYSCT. They were married 51 years before her passing in 2004. Jim is survived by daughter Barbara, sons James, David, and Scott Thompson ’91, niece Susan Smith ’83, MS ’13, a nephew, 10 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Class Councilor: Joan Paul, fpaul1@nycap.rr.com

1957
Sheila Lister Bamberger of Utica passed away April 16, 2023. She served as class counselor and was a member of several reunion planning committees.

Sheila Lister Bamberger ’57 greets a classmate at Homecoming Breakfast during the Class of ’57 60th Anniversary Reunion.

1959
Ronald Short passed away May 11, 2023. He served as class councilor and enjoyed attending reunions for NYSCT.

1964
Norma Abel, Ralph Grimaldi, Lenore Rich Reinhard, Frances Harris Jones, Sheila Stromwasser Foraker, Constance Bentley Mulligan, Harry Thornhill, Richard Kelly, and Bill Robelee were among the alums who attended the Classes of ’55-’65 Luncheon at the Italian American Community Center in June. Photos, memorabilia and lively chatter were enjoyed by all.

The 2023 recipient of our Class of ’64 scholarship is Albany native LeAsia Royall, a 2nd year student in the Special Education and Literacy program. LeAsia is a substitute teacher, volunteers with
students in different capacities and is interested in working with autistic nonverbal students at the elementary level. Our 2022 recipient, Matthew Maldonado, was accepted into the School of Education graduate program.

We’ll be contacting everyone early 2024 as we make plans for our 60th-anniversary reunion, so please share any changes in your contact information with the Alumni Association by emailing alumniassociation@albany.edu.

“The chance to get together is never bypassed ...” – from the 1964 Torch

Class co-counselors: Bill Robelee, wmrrobelee31@gmail.com; Columba DeFrancesco Heinzelman, heinzel779@aol.com

A Message from Lee Serravillo
Executive Director UAlbany Alumni Association

**Where It All Began**

When you first stepped foot on UAlbany’s campus as a student, you probably didn’t know what to expect. If you’re reading this now, it means you found your way – through the hallways and across the grass of the downtown campus, along the podium and around the quads of the uptown campus. You grew as a person, learned a lot both inside and outside the classroom, built lifelong friendships and maybe even met your partner for life.

This fall, I invite you to come back to campus and reignite those great memories! Take a walk through history and share your UAlbany stories with family and friends during Homecoming weekend, Oct. 20-22. Whether it’s your first time back to campus since graduating, or a part of your fall traditions, there’s no better weekend to rekindle old memories and create new ones. Walk through the tunnels for old times’ sake, enjoy the fall colors around the pond, and of course, set aside some time to “podiate” by the fountain with your closest friends and family.

As always, the Alumni Association is here to make things easy and fun by offering an all-inclusive game day package with pregame food and entertainment, football game ticket and giveaway (last year’s rugby-striped scarves were a hit, so we’re following up with a knit UAlbany logo hat). The Great Dane Pregame has become a staple among alumni groups, reunion classes, schools and colleges. It’s the best opportunity to experience the true spirit of UAlbany and reconnect with your fellow Great Danes. Get all the details about Homecoming events at www.alumni.albany.edu/homecoming.

We’ll see you in October!

**Connect and engage with your most valuable network:**

Sign up for email updates on programs, events and news: alumni.albany.edu/update

- @UAAlbanyAlumni
- @UAAlbanyAlumni
- fb.com/UAlbanyAlumni
- @UAAlbanyAlumni
- linkedin.com/company/uablaybulnuni
 Psi Gamma Sorority celebrated its 125th anniversary reunion May 19-21.

The Psi Gamma reunion committee members planned a successful and enjoyable reunion weekend.

which honors an individual who has “done the most to ‘pass on’ our outdoor heritage.” Leo and his wife, Carol, are avid campers.

**Class Counselor:**
Canon Kay Carol Hotaling, FHC, aspenpaepke@msn.com

**1968**

**Sandra Clark**, ACSW-DCSW, ABE-BCD, NBCCH-CFCH, Emeritus, is part of the first accredited class establishing the SUNY MSW Grad Program.

**1970**

**Glenn Sapir**, past president of the New York State Outdoor Writers Association, received the 2023 Hans Peller Memorial Award which honors an individual who has contributed distinguished and long-time service to the organization. Sapir is a regular contributor to NYSOWA and has received awards from other writers’ organizations.

**1981**


**1982**

**Christine Galvin** works through the Legal Project in Albany, an organization created in 1995 by the Capital District Women’s Bar Association to assist those with civil legal needs who cannot afford legal services. Christine is currently volunteering to help abused and neglected children who have fled their homelands in hopes of building a better life in the United States.

**1984**

**Curt Spalding** is a senior consultant at GZA GeoEnvironmental. He previously served as regional administrator of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency New England, as
Legendary track and field coach Roberto Vives reconnected with alumni during the America East Conference Championships hosted at UAlbany. Winsome Foderingham '92.

Dickie Smolicki, executive director of Providence-based environmental advocacy organization Save the Bay and as a Professor of the Practice at the Institute at Brown University for Environment and Society. As the owner and principal consultant for a private consulting firm since 2017, Spalding also served as founding organizer of the Brown-based Providence Resilience Partnership.

1986

Deirdre Sanders, principal at Hamilton Brook Smith Reynolds, was elected to serve on the advisory board for the newly established chapter of the National Academy of Inventors (NAI) at Northeastern University.

Geoffrey Stein was the 2022-23 Artist-in-Residence at the Elizabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University. He holds an MFA from the Slade School of Fine Art, London and lives and paints in New York City and Westport, Conn.

1989
William J. Cea of Palm City, Fla., retired after 30 years of practicing law at his prior firm. He co-founded Inked Mediation, LLC and will be working as a mediator full time.

1992
Seth Madnick Marnin was confirmed in June as a Court of Claims judge in Manhattan. Judge Marnin will be the first openly transgender judge in New York State and the first openly transgender male judge in the United States.

1993
Jason LeConte-Nelson was named assistant administrator for Human Capital, Transportation Security Administration. He holds a master’s degree from North Carolina State University and a Ph.D. from Columbia.

Alumni Association vice president Joe Bonilla ’11 (left) joined fellow Great Danes in Florida for a series of receptions in Naples, Fort Lauderdale and North Palm Beach. VP for Advancement Fardin Sanai and University President Rodríguez were also in attendance.

Jennifer Manner

Deirdre Sanders

Geoffrey Stein

William J. Cea

Seth Madnick Marnin

Jason LeConte-Nelson

Class of 1973
50th-Year Anniversary Reunion
Homecoming Weekend
October 20-22, 2023

More info: www.alumni.albany.edu/1973
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT
Grace Claxton ’17

Former UAlbany Track & Field star and 2016 Olympian Grace Claxton has been putting her public health degree to good use since graduating in 2017. Today, the San Juan, Puerto Rico, native is a certified and licensed massage therapist and owner of Paradise Wellness Center, located on the island of St. Kitts. She continues to train as a professional track athlete for Puerto Rico, though she recently took some time off for her pregnancy. Grace welcomed a son, her “little prince” Thyree, on June 6! “I’m still in awe with his beautiful existence,” said Grace. “I’m embracing motherhood and extremely excited for this new journey as a mom, business owner and professional track athlete. I still have goals to accomplish. God is Good.”

Grace holds a BS in Public Health. She was featured in the story “Going Places,” published in the Fall 2016 issue of UAlbany Magazine.

1999
Aaron Thiell was selected as the North Colonie Schools Principal of the Year for 2023. He is the principal at Latham Ridge Elementary School.

Hon. Michelle Holmes Ladouceur was elected Surrogate’s Court Judge for St. Lawrence County in November 2022.

2002
Robert Stoddard is lead tax partner for the gaming industry at KPMG, Stamford, Conn. He has spoken at several industry events, including KPMG Malta’s Gaming eSummit, SBC Barcelona, CasinoBeats, and the University of Arizona Global Symposium on Racing.

2006
The Community Builders named Jesse Batus regional vice president for real estate development in New York/New Jersey. Jesse has been with TCB for 16 years.

2007
Frank Ditta was promoted to director at Goulston & Storrs. He is a real estate attorney in the firm’s New York office. Frank holds a J.D. from the Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra.

Myles Fischer was named one of Albany Business Review’s Class of 2023 “40 Under 40” honorees.

2009
Julie Bush was named one of Albany Business Review’s Class of 2023 “40 Under 40” honorees.

Ricardo Estremera finished 5th in the 2023 Central American & Caribbean Games. He won the 2023 CDPHP Workforce Team Challenge in May.

Kendra Jenkins Rubin was named one of Albany Business Review’s Class of 2023 “40 Under 40” honorees.

Grads of the Last Decade (GOLD) met up for a Knicks game at Madison Square Garden in April.
2010

Jason Zarillo was named one Albany Business Review’s Class of 2023 “40 Under 40” honorees.

2011

Raymond Blanchard graduated with a Ph.D in Counseling from Montclair State University and joined Manhattan College’s Counseling and Therapy Department as an assistant professor this fall.

Jonathan Wiggins is the assistant director of Residence Life and Housing at Columbia School of General Studies. He previously worked at NYU as a residence hall assistant director and UAlbany as a residence hall director.

James Dodd was named one of the Albany Business Review’s Class of 2023 “40 Under 40” honorees.

Holly McKenna was appointed executive director of the International Center of the Capital Region (ICCR). Holly previously served as ICCR’s director of Community Engagement. She is a media lecturer at UAlbany, and former journalist for Reuters. Holly's family bleeds purple and gold; the UAlbany legacy family includes husband Chris ’85, son Peter ’14 and son Aidan ’22.

2012

Dr. Lina Uribe Correa was appointed rectora of the Unicomfacauca university in Popayán, Colombia. She holds a Ph.D. in Educational Administration from UAlbany.

John Scott was named one of Albany Business Review’s Class of 2023 “40 Under 40” honorees. He is co-founder of 4th Family Inc., a nonprofit created to address issues faced by inner-city youth.

Christopher Babiarcz is an associate in Barclay Damon’s Real Estate and Financial Institutions & Lending Practice Areas.

Umaru Barrie, a dual-degree M.D./Ph.D. candidate at University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, earned his Ph.D. in the spring. He will finish his eighth and final year at UTSMC with an M.D. in 2024.

Will Brunelle was listed among City and State New York’s Albany 40 Under 40. He is vice president at communications and political consulting firm SKDK.

Jessica Dubowski joined Twomey, Latham, Shea, Kelley, Dubin & Quarataro, LLP as a corporate attorney. She holds a J.D. from New York University School of Law.

Justyn Turner was promoted to vice president of Strategic Partnerships, New York City Economic Development Corporation. He previously served as Brooklyn Borough Director.

2015

Joe Mahoney was named one of the Albany Business Review’s Class of 2023 “40 Under 40” honorees.

2016

Assembly Member Kenny Burgos was named one of the Albany Business Review’s Class of 2023 “40 Under 40” honorees.

Colin Cooper was appointed by the Geneva City School District as head coach of the Geneva High School varsity football team. Cooper was a standout for the Geneva Panthers before playing at UAlbany.

Kathleen Digan was listed among City and State New York’s Albany 40 Under 40. She is the public policy manager at Amazon.

Brian Navichtoque started a new position as marketing manager, creative partnerships at NBCUniversal.

2019

Angel Mejia is an engineering project manager at Apple.

Melissa Ertl is an assistant professor of Counseling Psychology at the University of Minnesota.

2022

After earning a master’s degree from UAlbany in May 2023, Nicholas Chin started a new position at KPMG US as an advisory associate for the state and local government solutions team.

Career Webinar Series

Get career tips and networking tricks, learn how to navigate your workplace and more! Join us this fall for live conversations on Zoom with alumni career experts who will cover a variety of topics. Participate during your lunch hour or watch the recording later!

Learn more, register and access the webinar archive at www.alumni.albany.edu/careerwebinars

Coming up:
Oct. 26, noon-1 p.m.
Code Switching, presented by CaTyra Polland ’10

Future webinars:
Nov. 16, Dec. 13
# Calendar of Events

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| JAN. 2024 | 9 | Network NYC |

## 2024 Excellence Awards

**Call for Nominations**

Recognize alumni and friends of the University for their outstanding achievements and service! We’ll celebrate the honorees at the 2024 Excellence Awards Gala on April 20.

More details and nomination forms are available at [www.alumni.albany.edu/awards](http://www.alumni.albany.edu/awards).

Nomination deadline is Oct. 11.

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**NEW & IMPROVED FOR 2023!**

Join fellow alumni on the enhanced UCAN online platform and offer your expertise to UAlbany students and graduates seeking career advice. Or, connect with an alumni career advisor to gain insight into a specific field or industry.

Quick sign up · Accessible from all devices

Get started: ualbany.peoplegrove.com

[www.alumni.albany.edu](http://www.alumni.albany.edu)
Author Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah ’13 was honored with the 2023 Excellence in Arts and Letters Award. His nominator and fellow Great Dane Paul Grondahl ’84 received the same award in 2005.

School of Social Welfare alum Audrey LaFrenier, MSW ’85 (middle) received the Milk Excellence in Public Service Award. The award was renamed in honor of civil and human rights leader Harvey Milk ’51.

Excellence in Science & Technology Award recipient Perry Samson ’72, MS ’74 (second from left) reunited with UAlbany DAES faculty and staff.

Excellence in Education Award recipient Dana Basnight-Brown, MA ’04, PhD ’10 (right) celebrates with longtime mentor and dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Jeanette Altarriba.

Guilderland High School English teacher Alicia Wein, MS ’03, delivers heartfelt remarks after receiving the Bertha Brimmer Medal.

Alumni Association President Stefanos Marcopoulos ’07, MS ’08 and University President Havidán Rodríguez presented actor Nick Creegan ’13 with the Irvis Outstanding Young Alumni Award.

UAlbany Foundation board member Elda Di Re ’83 accepts the Excellence in Business Award.

Members of the University’s art department celebrated with Stoneman Distinguished Alumni Award recipient Leigh Wen, MFA ’94 (middle).
AUTHORS & EDITORS

John V. Amodeo, MA ’73, is the author of Leaving Gary, a story of a young man’s perseverance against all odds. This is Amodeo’s eighth book.

Roy Bliven ’73, president of IAM Publishing Company, is the author of World Beneath Our Feet—and Above! The book is described as an adventure into inner-earth civilization and details NASA’s Artemis Project.

Les K. Wright ’75 is the author of Resilience: A Polemical Memoir of AIDS, Bears, and F*cking. Reviewers have called it “an essential text of Queer Studies” and “a daring confessional.” Wright is working on an anthology of personal stories called Children of Lazarus: Voices from the “Forgotten Generation” of AIDS Survivors.

Edward P. Moser ’77 is the author of The Old Town Horror: Murder and Theft in America’s Most Historic Locale. He has published multiple books and leads a popular White House-area history tour, the Lafayette Square Tour of Scandal, Assassination & Intrigue.

Bill Fitzgerald, MS ’81, Ed.S. ’81, is the author of How to Find a New Job Without Looking, a guide that highlights the importance of networking and relationship-building for career success. Fitzgerald is the co-founder of FitzDrake Search, Inc., and has been in the executive search and recruiting industry for over 18 years.

Robert Nearing ’82 is the author of four historical fiction books under the penname Calvin J. Boal. Last Run of the Whisperer, St. George’s Cross and the Siege of Fort Pitt, Valiant Warrior, and The Spaniard are available at amazon.com.

Marc Lichtenfeld ’89 is the author of Get Rich with Dividends, now in its third edition. A previous version won the Book of the Year Award from the Institute for Financial Literacy and has been published in several languages.

Amanda McKoy Flanagan ’02 is the author of Trust Yourself to Be All In: Safe to Love and Let Go, an inspirational memoir delivering uncompromising self-love that heals deep wounds. McKoy Flanagan is the co-founder of non-profit organization Castle Rock Clubhouse, a recovery and meeting space for various 12-step programs, in Castle Rock, Colorado.

Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah ’13 is the author of New York Times bestseller Chain-Gang All-Stars (Pantheon). CGAS was selected as the “Read With Jenna” pick for May 2023 and has received rave reviews from Kirkus, Publishers Weekly, Washington Post and more. A frequent guest of the New York State Writers Institute, Adjei-Brenyah was honored with the UAlbany Alumni Association’s Excellence in Arts & Letters Award in 2023.

Sarah Giragosian, PhD ’14, is the co-author of Marbles on the Floor: How to Assemble a Book of Poems (University of Akron Press). She also is the author of poetry collection Queer Fish, a winner of the American Poetry Journal Book Prize and The Death Spiral. Giragosian is a lecturer in UAlbany’s Writing & Critical Inquiry program.

Victoria Romanski ’18 published her first science fiction novel, Escape Velocity: A Dystopian Time Travel Sci-Fi Thriller.
Of all the extraordinary journeys that award-winning travel writer Mark Chesnut has experienced in his career, perhaps, none has been more profound than the one that led him right back home. In his debut memoir, Prepare for Departure, Chesnut unfolds a map of his movingly memorable (and thoroughly amusing) life as a self-described “misfit son” being raised by his single mother. He chronicles their final journey together as they grapple with a devastating illness in the way he knows best — with heart and humor.

By Paul A. Miller, MA ’21

**Q:** What was your journey from UAlbany to your travel writing career?

**A:** I was willing to stay in Albany after graduation because I love Albany, but I didn’t have a job. My best friend from high school had moved to New York City and said, “You can crash on my couch until you find a job.” I moved there and I started getting jobs in publishing as an editor and writer. I worked for a small group of weekly free community newspapers, but my passion had always been travel, ever since I was little, which is the focus of the book. So, on the side, I started doing freelance travel writing. I did a travel column with no pay for a small newspaper in Manhattan. Gradually, I used my freelance work to steer my full-time career. Eventually, I got a job as an editor and writer at a travel publishing company. That same company, after almost nine years, laid me off, but kept me on as a freelancer. I’ve been with them for 30 years, so it’s worked out pretty well.

**Q:** How does travel writing compare to memoir writing?

**A:** It is really different. There are travel essays that are somewhat creative, but in general, I tend to write more hotel reviews or destination guides that are factual. My goal is to communicate facts that will help you to plan your next vacation better and make better travel choices.

With the book, it’s more about transmitting emotions and telling a story from beginning to end. It’s been a really interesting journey. I hadn’t done this type of creative non-fiction before, so it took longer as a result. But it’s been a really interesting challenge and very rewarding to hear how people relate to it personally.

**Q:** How would you characterize your relationship with your mother, Eunice?

**A:** We had an interesting relationship that was almost always positive. She was a smart and funny woman and really tried to give me space to explore my own interests, which I truly appreciate. She tried not to judge. She did have trouble feeling comfortable with the fact that I was gay, and of course I wasn’t always the perfect son, so like any relationship, ours wasn’t perfect. But overall we got along very well, and her sense of humor, which she got from her father, was one of the greatest gifts she gave me. Plus, she gave me a typewriter and the travel bug, so it all worked out pretty well.

**Q:** Humor is a big part of your book. Why did you decide to use it and where does your sense of humor come from?

**A:** The humor in the book is very much my everyday humor because I’m easily bored by reality. I tend to invent things that are funny just to entertain myself. I’ve always imitated people. Since I grew up with family in the North and the South, I imitate different accents. My best friend in seventh grade and I worshipped flight attendants. We thought they were the coolest, the way they strutted down the concourse in the airports. Some of them were kind of snotty and that just made them cooler. So, we would imitate them on abandoned school buses in the fields near my house. It’s all just part of who I am. My humor comes from my mother and grandfather mostly. I learned to not take reality too seriously. In some of the more difficult moments in the book that deal with illness or not fitting in, humor stills plays a big part because if you can’t laugh at something horrible that’s happening to you, then what’s the point?

**Q:** In keeping with the travel theme, what is the final destination for Mark Chesnut?

**A:** Wow, you’re good. I don’t know what my final destination is, which I think that’s how it should be. I have things that I’d like to do in my life, but I am also flexible. I’m open to anything. The last chapter of this book ends in the parking area of State Quad [at UAlbany]. That represents the end of one era and the beginning of the next era. Some of my college friends that I lived with here in Albany, they’re saying, “So the next book has to be about Albany.” It’s interesting to come back to places from your past. It makes you remember the thoughts at that point in your life, right? So maybe it will be.

**Q:** How does your sense of humor come from?

**A:** I've always imitated people. Since I was little, which is the focus of the book. So, on the side, I started getting jobs in publishing as an editor and writer. I worked for a small group of weekly free community newspapers, but my passion had always been travel, ever since I was little, which is the focus of the book. So, on the side, I started doing freelance travel writing. I did a travel column with no pay for a small newspaper in Manhattan. Gradually, I used my freelance work to steer my full-time career. Eventually, I got a job as an editor and writer at a travel publishing company. That same company, after almost nine years, laid me off, but kept me on as a freelancer. I’ve been with them for 30 years, so it’s worked out pretty well.
IN MEMORIAM

1930s
Bessie Giambra ’39, Sept. 22, 2015

1940s
Margery Cramer Smith ’46, June 20, 2014

1950s
Heinz Engel ’50, March 30, 2018
Margaret H. Howard Jones ’50, March 27, 2023
Rhoda Riber Mones ’50, Dec. 28, 2022
Anne Marie Kozlowski Proc ’50, Feb. 25, 2015
Nancy E. Wagoner Dixon ’51, Feb. 4, 2023
Albert Holliday, Ed.D. ’51, April 22, 2023
Ada Elian Gollub ’55, May 2, 2023
Edward A. Franco ’55, March 22, 2023
Arnold E. Elman, Ed.D. ’55, March 18, 2023
James R. Thompson ’54, June 8, 2023
Duane O. Shuster ’54, March 4, 2023
Joy P. Longo ’54, Sept. 19, 2022
John J. Hanevy ’54, Jan. 5, 2022
Ruth E. Dunn Reed ’53, Feb. 6, 2023
Alice Goewey Goebel ’53, Dec. 17, 2020
Marilyn J. Johnson VanDyke, Ph.D. ’52, Feb. 5, 2023
Evelyn N. Knapp Stewart ’52, May 10, 2023
Kathleen C. Cody Sengle ’52, April 21, 2023
Harold F. Reichenthal ’52, Oct. 9, 2021
Ruth A. Lagraff Phillips ’52, April 18, 2023
Anna Morrissey Karpiak ’52, May 12, 2023
Estelle L. Weisblatt Halperin ’52, March 13, 2023
Bruce W. King, Ed.D. ’56, April 18, 2021

1960s
William Gustafson ’61, May 14, 2023
Joseph Hickey ’61, July 10, 2021
Gary Lynch ’61, April 25, 2023
Robert McEnroe ’61, Oct. 7, 2021
Judith Pfeiffer-Stoehr ’61, Dec. 8, 2016
Frances W. Wnuk Seligman ’61, May 10, 2017
C. L. Green ’62, June 32, 2021
Jane B. Baylis O’Brien ’62, May 18, 2023
Paul J. Villani ’62, March 26, 2023
John M. Gibichi ’63, June 16, 2021
Dorothy Truskolaski Hogan ’63, May 31, 2023
Augusta Spellman Leibowitz ’63, Feb. 21, 2023
Bessie Giambra ’39, Sept. 22, 2015
Barbara A. Hillman Newman ’59, March 30, 2023
Dolores Havens Marasco ’59, March 29, 2023
Thomas J. O’Connor, Esq. ’70, March 7, 2023
Jeanette Beckerman Stern ’70, Oct. 5, 2015
Jane E. Streiff ’70, March 11, 2023
Geoffrey D. Strobel ’70, April 7, 2023
Dwight L. Burden ’71, April 9, 2023
Paula M. Evangelista Burden ’71, April 9, 2023

1970s
Randall F. Reese ’69, Jan. 4, 2023
John P. Duffy ’69, April 7, 2023
Marilyn M. Dehoney ’69, March 18, 2023
Marcia Gussow Stekloff ’67, March 21, 2023
James Morton ’67, March 23, 2023
Douglas W. Flagg ’67, Jan. 26, 2022
Edward K. Griesmer ’66, April 11, 2023
Francis M. D’Amico ’66, April 10, 2023
Edward F. Bollinger ’66, Jan. 22, 2023
Michael Schwartz ’65, July 9, 2022
Richard L. Sartore ’65, Jan. 23, 2023
Douglas W. Flagg ’65, March 22, 2023
Edward F. Bollinger ’66, Jan. 22, 2023
Lawrence Seligman ’63, Dec. 13, 2014
John J. Rossette ’63, March 9, 2023
William T. Quinn, Ph.D. ’74, May 28, 2023
Judith M. Rockefeller ’74, June 4, 2023
Lawrence V. Tullar ’74, March 22, 2023
Thomas A. Maltby ’74, Nov. 4, 2022
Robert R. Kulikowski, Ph.D. ’76, April 22, 2023

1980s
Sharon A. Rasmussen ’76, June 5, 2023
Richard L. Parke ’76, August 22, 2021
Brian H. Caldwell ’76, April 17, 2023
Joan H. Wieber ’75, May 21, 2023
Martin Schumacher ’75, Feb. 2, 2023
Richard L. Parke ’76, August 22, 2021
William T. Quinn, Ph.D. ’74, May 28, 2023

1990s
Brian H. Caldwell ’76, April 17, 2023
Joan H. Wieber ’75, May 21, 2023
Martin Schumacher ’75, Feb. 2, 2023
Richard L. Parke ’76, August 22, 2021
William T. Quinn, Ph.D. ’74, May 28, 2023
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George A. Eadon, Ph.D., Feb. 5, 2023
Harvey Kahalas, Feb. 4, 2023
James M. Leonard, Nov. 25, 2017
Brian S. Macherone, May 22, 2023
Mary L. Mormile, March 26, 2023
Wren Panzella, May 8, 2023
Sambamurthy Thyagarajan, Feb. 16, 2023
Dan E. Willard, Ph.D., Jan. 21, 2023
Julie Winters, Feb. 27, 2023
As the president of the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (CICU), I lead an Albany-based nonprofit organization that represents New York’s 100+ independent colleges and universities on issues of public policy. I am a proud graduate of UAlbany, having earned dual Bachelor of Arts degrees in Criminal Justice and Sociology, and a Master of Public Administration from Rockefeller College.

After a 26-year career in public service, including most recently as the commissioner of the NYS Department of Civil Service, I am honored to work for an organization whose mission is to provide opportunity and access to higher education through fairness, equity, and humanity. Higher education has the power to transform individuals into the best version of themselves, and we must continue to do everything possible to ensure that it is attainable to all who wish to pursue a degree.

Unfortunately, the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling banning affirmative action in college admissions is a major setback in our efforts to provide that access. Echoing Justice Sonia Sotomayor’s dissent, Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, the court’s first Black female justice, stated “With let-them-eat-cake obliviousness, today, the majority pulls the ripcord and announces ‘colorblindness for all’ by legal fiat. But deeming race irrelevant in law does not make it so in life.”

Fortunately, New York remains committed to diversity and inclusion and breaking down the institutional and systemic barriers that have long denied underrepresented students access to higher education. One of the most effective ways to break down those barriers and build pathways to upward mobility and success is to provide assistance to colleges and universities in administering educational opportunity programs to support students from underserved communities.

Programs such as the Higher Education Opportunity Program, the Science and Technology Entry Program, the Liberty Partnership Program and others provide access to higher education for talented students from underserved communities, which in turn helps increase representation and diversity on campus. We know that learning from and alongside people with experiences, beliefs, and perspectives different from our own enriches the educational experience.

Our future is in the hands of tomorrow’s college students. They are the next generation of entrepreneurs, healthcare workers, and educators and it is critical that these future leaders reflect the diversity of our state and our nation. They need our collective support in prioritizing increased student aid and college completion, especially for students who face the most difficulty in accessing and graduating college.

Investing in higher education, and particularly in pipeline programs that target students from underrepresented groups, will help build the workforce, economy and society we need to remain vibrant, strong and competitive on the world stage. These investments will also ensure that all students, regardless of race or background, can benefit from the transformative impact of higher education.

By Lola W. Brabham ’96, MPA ’00
President, Commission on Independent College and Universities
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