Millersville Students Witness Support for Mandela Firsthand

On December 5, the world fell into mourning as the modern day symbol of the fight against oppression, Nelson Mandela, passed away at age 95.

A group of Millersville University students and faculty members studying in South Africa last June witnessed the outpouring of support as Mandela recovered from the same lung infection that would eventually claim his life.

“Everyone was constantly watching the news to see how Mandela was doing,” said junior Lauran Seitz. “There were signs all throughout South Africa saying, ‘Get well Mandela’ and ‘We love you.’ Being a witness to such historic events was incredible.”

For two weeks, the students took classes on apartheid and women’s activism with government and political affairs associate professor, Dr. Robert Bookmiller, and associate professor of history and director of women’s studies, Dr. Tracey Weis.

During their stay, the students spent time touring landmarks such as Robben Island Prison, where Mandela was incarcerated from 1964 to 1982, and his home in Soweto.

During the commotion surrounding Mandela’s health, the students were led by a guide to an informal meeting with someone whom, at the time, had remained nameless. During their meeting, the students and two professors realized they were in the living room of Denis Goldberg, a man who had fought side-by-side with Nelson Mandela in their battle against apartheid and was convicted along with Mandela of treason in 1964.

“Goldberg is truly a remarkable man,” Seitz said of the meeting. “Being in the house of Goldberg and having a personal interview with him is still a surreal memory.”

The experiences gained from the trip were not limited to just those of historical value. Students were also able to take away a newly found sense of the culture and aesthetic beauty of South Africa.

“The atmosphere in South Africa in general was amazing and very uplifting,” Seitz said. “Cape Town is possibly the prettiest city I have ever seen.”

Though the trip abroad lasted only two weeks, Seitz and the 11 other Millersville students were able to experience the culture and beauty of South Africa firsthand, giving new insights into the storied life of Nelson Mandela and the history of the nation he came to lead.
On Christmas Day, Mandela’s biopic “Long Walk to Freedom” will open nationwide. The film’s debut comes nearly two decades after the release of the former president’s autobiography of the same name.

**SAMSON and Robotics Team Win Big at National Robotics Competition**

On Nov. 20-23, Millersville University’s Robotics Team traveled to New Orleans, where they attended the 2013 Association of Technology, Management & Applied Engineering (ATMAE) Conference. The Millersville ATMAE student chapter, aka the Millersville Robotics Team, competed against seven other teams and won first place for “Performance, Technical Poster and Technical Report” with their robot SAMSON, which is an acronym for “Semi-autonomous Marauder with Sensor Optimized Navigation.” The team also won the Overall Robotics Competition and brought home their second Robotics Cup, the first was won in 2010.

“We rejoiced,” said Joel Wells, a senior who is an applied engineering major with a concentration in robotics and control systems. “Our hard work really paid off in the end.”

With the theme of the competition being “Robo-Hoops,” the ATMAE students built a robot that would be able to pick up 36 ping-pong balls of various colors, sort the balls by color and then shoot the balls into the appropriate hoops within five minutes. The competition was semi-autonomous—part of the tasks requirement was autonomous control, and the other part allowed tele-operation via remote control. The teams were given an overall score based on the technical report, technical poster, performance, electronics/controls and manufacturing/design of the robot.

“We have a very well-rounded team with the right chemistry of talent and team dynamics,” said Dr. John Wright, professor of automation and electronics technologies and advisor of Millersville’s ATMAE chapter. “We also need to have good resources. Our robot cost about $8,000 to build.”

With these three recent wins, the chapter has won 28 awards since they first started competing in 2001.

In addition, Wright received the Charles W. Keith Award for the contributions he has made to the field of technology and engineering. He was honored for the development and implementation of the student division’s popular Robotics Contest, the co-development of the journal’s electronic submission process, his recent selection to join ATMAE’s Board of Certification and his leadership in the strategic planning and reinvention of ATMAE.
“I was really surprised to earn this prestigious award,” Wright said. “It is the highest honor that ATMAE awards. It was created in 1986 and only eight recipients have earned this award since then. I am very excited and proud to be on this short list.”

Taking the Plunge for Special Olympics

Millersville’s Sigma Tau Gamma fraternity will take part in the annual Polar Plunge for Special Olympics at Harrisburg’s City Island on February 1. Polar Plunge has become an increasingly popular fundraising tradition for the city of Harrisburg, with estimates of 1,000 plungers last year raising money for Special Olympics. This year Sigma Tau Gamma will join the ranks of other brave participants by taking their maiden plunge into the frigid Susquehanna River.

“I am beyond excited to participate and help out a great cause all while having fun at the same time—even though it will be really cold,” said Christopher Junkin, a senior studying business management and president of Sigma Tau Gamma. “One of our alumni participated last year, but this will be the first year the active chapter will participate.”

The fraternity hopes to raise $200 at Polar Plunge. “The event will help fund Special Olympic programs, raise community awareness of the organization and show that Greek life likes to be involved in positive events that support a great cause,” said Junkin.

Sigma Tau Gamma’s principles are value, learning, leadership, excellence, benefit and integrity. Special Olympics, which is the national philanthropy of the fraternity, represents the main focus of their fundraising efforts. The brothers have also spent the last two springs in Dillsburg, Pa., organizing Zumbathon, a fundraising event for Special Olympics based on the aerobic dance program Zumba.

Two New Rankings for Millersville

The Online College Database has recognized Millersville University as a top college for teacher education. And AffordableCollegesOnline.org (AC Online) has ranked Millersville’s online degree programs as one of the most affordable.
The teacher education ranking titled “Top Colleges in Pennsylvania Shaping the Next Generation” was based on the number of future educators that post-secondary institutions graduated in 2012. Millersville University was ranked 38 on a list of 88 schools.

And, Millersville University has yet again been recognized by AC Online for its affordability. The online college guide recently analyzed online degree programs from more than 2,000 accredited colleges and universities across the nation. Out of 67 colleges in Pennsylvania, Millersville ranked at number three on AC Online’s Most Affordable Online Colleges.

The criteria Online College Database used to determine the top colleges shaping the next generation consisted of being fully accredited, a four-year institution, public or private, not-for-profit, U.S. based and having a minimum of 10 graduates from education or teaching programs.

Online College Database is a relatively young nonprofit organization, and they bill themselves as “a leader in providing educational information to colleges, high schools, libraries and career centers across the nation.” The organization provides free tools and resources on its user-friendly Website and is also known for informing students, parents and all others interested about educational options.

During its analysis, AC Online leveraged cost and accreditation from some of the most respected and reputable data sources available, including the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the Carnegie Classification framework and PayScale.com. Millersville University has individual courses and workshops, as well as degree and certificate programs online, where students can access class material 24/7.

Additionally, Dan Schuessler, president of AC Online, says, “Millersville University offers an exceptional collection of distance learning options at a very affordable price. This combination of quality, affordability and flexibility earned Millersville a place on our list.”

This isn’t the first time Millersville has been recognized by AC Online. Earlier this year, the company listed the colleges and universities in Pennsylvania with the greatest lifetime return on investment (ROI), where Millersville was ranked No. 25 in the state.
Millersville Student Wins Honorable Mention at Debate Competition

Bradley Bixler, a Millersville University international studies major with a minor in Arabic, won an honorable mention award at the Capitol Area Regional Model Arab League Conference. Bixler, along with other members of Millersville’s Middle Eastern Studies Organization, attended the debate competition with 17 other colleges in the Mid-Atlantic Region of the conference on Nov. 9-10 at Georgetown University.

The Capitol Area Regional Model Arab League is one of many debate competitions throughout the U.S. that is organized by the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations that allows student leaders to walk in the shoes of Arab diplomats and other foreign affairs practitioners. Each school that attended the conference was assigned a specific Middle Eastern country to represent in the debate.

Millersville University represented the Syrian National Coalition and students debated on topics ranging from economics to political affairs, joint defense and social affairs. Students also decided what council they wanted to be in based on the topics chosen. Bixler was on the Council on Economic Affairs, where his topics included discussing national-level subsidies in the commodity market, determining polices on economic sanctions and solving the issue of unemployed youth in the Middle East.

Counseling Center Receives Reaccreditation

Millersville University’s Center for Counseling and Human Development has been re-accredited by the International Association of Counseling Services, Inc., (IACS) an organization of United States, Canadian and Australian counseling agencies. The counseling center was evaluated by IACS against high standards of counseling practice and was found to offer competent and reliable professional services to its clientele. Approval by IACS is also dependent upon evidence of continuing professional development, as well as demonstration of excellence of counseling performance.

The center is directed by Dr. Kelsey Backels and offers individual and group counseling, consultation and crisis intervention services for Millersville’s undergraduate and graduate students.

IACS was established in 1972 to encourage and aid counseling agencies to meet high professional standards through peer evaluation and to inform the public about counseling services that are competent and reliable.
Dodgeball for a Cause Benefits Boys and Girls Club of Lancaster

To the casual onlooker, the dodgeball tournament that took place in the Student Memorial Center on Nov. 24 was just that, a dodgeball tournament. To the children of the Boys and Girls Club of Lancaster, however, the tournament was much more.

The Millersville University Athletic Training Club organized Dodgeball for a Cause to raise funds for the Boys and Girls Club of Lancaster. The initiative collected approximately $300 at the event, $200 of which came in the form of two checks received from parents of tournament participants. Funds will be used to buy medical supplies such as band aids, first aid kits, hand sanitizer and ice packs for the Boys and Girls Club.

“Dodgeball for a Cause turned out to be a huge success,” said Maddie LaCesa, a senior at MU majoring in biology and athletic training and president of the Athletic Training Club. “We were looking to establish a relationship with the Boys and Girls Club that can continue for years to come.”

The members of the Boys and Girls Club between the ages of 10-12 even had the opportunity to play with the students from the tournament. Each of the kids received a T-shirt with “Champions” emblazoned on the back.

“Seeing the enjoyment on the kids’ faces really said it all, honestly,” said Millersville University junior Ben Smith, who participated in the tournament. “The tournament was intense all in all. It was awesome knowing I was able to help.”

Need to Know

There is still time to give.
Giving can make an impact on various MU entities.

The goal this year is $25,000

We have raised $12,112, and we need your help.

Millersville University has joined with the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education in participating in the State Employees’ Combined Appeal (SECA) Campaign.

How to give: SECA provides two ways to make a tax deductible contribution to the charity of your choice (payroll deduction or a one-time gift with a check).

Each donation to SECA provides much needed support to local, national and international human service agencies. You may designate your gift to a specific participating agency (or agencies) of your choice.

Visit seca.state.pa.us and click on “printable pledge form.” You can also visit the SECA Resource Guide on the website to view different agencies supported through SECA.

You can also contact Lori Rodriguez in the payroll office or Denise Weidman in the development office for a pledge form.

The University’s campaign will run through Dec. 31. Give today!

12/19/13 Activities

Here are the faculty and staff activities for December 19, 2013.

Faculty and Staff Activities

Dr. Alex DeCaria, earth sciences, is the author of a recently published book, “A First Course in Atmospheric Numerical Modeling,” along with co-author Glenn Van Knowe, who was a full-time, temporary faculty member at Millersville during the 2001-2002 academic year. Their book
is published by Sundog Publishing and is based on a course that DeCaria developed and teaches at Millersville.

**Dr. M. P. A. Sheaffer**, English, sang as an alto ringer with the Richmond Hill Sacred Music Chorale in the December 8 concert of Bach’s Weihnachtsoratorium “Christmas Oratorio” at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Queens, N.Y.

**Dr. John Wright**, applied engineering, safety & technology, with Gilbert Ramos, an AETM Robotics & Control Systems senior, gave their blinded peer-reviewed national presentation, "Programming the NAO Robotic Humanoid with Object-oriented Programming Methodology," at the 2013 Association of Technology, Management and Applied Engineering (ATMAE) Conference in New Orleans, La. Also at the ATMAE Conference, Wright was presented with the Charles W. Keith Award, ATMAE's highest honor. The award, last presented in 2003, is given only when an individual is judged to have displayed exemplary accomplishments toward the significant development of the association.

**Congratulations to:**

**Lilly Leon**, Center for Student Involvement & Leadership, on her marriage to Robert D. Vicks on November 16, in Las Vegas, Nev.

**Obituary**

Marilyn A. (Husson) Shirley, 85, of Lancaster and formerly of Millersville, died December 7. She worked as a secretary at Millersville University before retiring in 1993.

**Who Makes Millersville Special**

This edition of Who Makes Millersville Special features Blaze Cambruzzi, adjunct professor.
Q: When you aren’t working as an adjunct professor at MU, what is your full-time job?

A: I am the chief operating officer at ROCK Commercial Real Estate, a multifaceted service firm offering brokerage, management and consulting services to businesses throughout Central Pa.

Q: What turned you on to teaching in the first place?

A: I currently hold three degrees, two from Millersville and one from American University, so it goes without saying that I feel at home on a campus. So either I pursue teaching or enroll for another degree, the latter is less popular with my wife. While that is 100 percent accurate, I also really enjoy teaching… it offers me another way to look at the world, i.e., when world events happen I ask myself, “How can I explain that so someone can learn from it?”

Q: When did you start teaching at MU?

A: I started teaching BUAD 355, Business and Society during the Spring 2013 semester.

Q: What is your educational background?

A: At Millersville I earned my undergrad in business as well as my MBA, in addition I earned a master’s degree in finance and real estate from the Kogod School of Business at American University in Washington, D.C.

Q: What was your first job, and how old were you?

A: My first real job was working in my family’s business, Cambruzzi Real Estate, as a sales agent. I was 19 and working for my father, who was committed to teaching me a lifetime of real estate knowledge as quickly as possible.

Q: Do you still follow MU wrestling?

A: Wrestling was what originally brought me to Millersville. Since that time I have not only participated as an athlete but also as an assistant coach. Wrestling, and especially MU wrestling, has played a huge role in my life. Every year I attend one or two matches to support the team and always donate what I can to support the program and its future.

Q: What is your favorite part of Millersville/its campus?

A: I love Millersville’s campus. It is so beautiful and full of character. However, my favorite part of Millersville is by far the students. One of the first things I noticed when I came to visit Millersville while still in high school was how so many students wore MU clothing. There is an interesting spirit that returns to this campus year after year that you just do not see at most universities. Most importantly, some of my very best memories were made on this campus. I met my wife Nichole while we were both students at Millersville (actually we met at the Village). I proposed to Nichole while sitting in the gazebo at the MU pond.
Q: What are some of your hobbies/things you do in your spare time?
A: I grew up in Western Pa. on a small farm, so I love anything agricultural. Admittedly, I am a huge geek, so I love reading, documentaries, etc.

Q: What is your favorite part of your job(s)?
A: I work with great people in an industry that I truly love.

Q: What is something you are passionate about?
A: Family, faith, and maybe it sounds strange, but learning. I love learning and education.

Q: What is a moment from your life that will stick with you forever?
A: Sept. 11, 2001. I was in the SMC checking my email before class and watched the events unfold on the television in the lobby. Even though I was 23 at the time, I have come to reflect on that day as the end of my childhood.

Q: Do you believe being a younger professor has an impact on your students/teaching style (positive or negative)?
A: I try to mirror a few professors I had during my education that taught in a manner I connected with. I am not sure if that has anything to do with it, but hopefully the impact is positive.

Q: What is a little known fact about you?
A: I showed beef cattle and horses in 4H for 10 years.

Q: Do you have any “guilty pleasures”?
A: “Duck Dynasty.” Does that count?

Q: What is your favorite part about teaching?
A: Good test scores and class participation. It makes me feel like I am doing a good job.

Q: Because it was inevitably going to be asked, where did the name “Blaze” come from? Is it your birth name?
A: It is my birth name. Long story short, my father wanted to give me a unique name and was considering Rope… yes Rope. My mother went in search of something unique but reasonable and thanks to Father Miller she learned of Saint Blaise. She liked the name but opted for a different spelling, so that for the rest of my life people could make jokes every time there is a news headline such as “Blaze Destroys Historic Building.”
Q: If you could only watch one movie, read one book and listen to one album for the rest of your life, what movie, book and album would you choose?

A: Movie: “Tombstone” or “Austin Powers.” It’s a toss up.

Book: “A Walk in the Woods,” by Bill Bryson or “I’m a Stranger Here Myself,” by Bill Bryson.

Album: “Kenny Chesney Greatest Hits.”